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Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975

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Item 4 (a) (iii) of the provisional agenda
Activities and administration of the TIR Executive Board:
Activities of the TIR Executive Board –
International databases and electronic tools of the TIR secretariat

Central database for approved customs offices

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1.   At its fifty-fifth session (October 2013), TIR Executive Board (TIRExB) considered TIRExB Informal documents Nos. 2 and 7 (2013) on a proposal by the secretariat to launch (pursuant to TIRExB's Terms of Reference, item 8, sub-item (a)) an electronic database on approved customs offices. TIRExB requested the secretariat to submit the proposal to the Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975 (AC.2) for endorsement, including resource requirements, if any.

2.   Further to this request, the secretariat has prepared this document for consideration by the Committee.

II. TIR Customs Offices Database – Project Brief

A. Background of the project

3.   The Committee may wish to recall the tasks assigned to the TIR secretariat according to paragraph 8(a) of its Term of Reference, i.e. the establishment and maintenance of an international Governmental TIR data bank accessible to all Contracting Parties on:

- approved and excluded transport operators (Annex 9, Part II, paragraphs 4 and 5);

- stolen and falsified TIR Carnets;

- approved Customs sealing devices;

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• approved Customs offices for accomplishing TIR operations (article 45);

• contact points (Customs, enforcement agencies, national associations, etc.).

4.   According to Article 45 of the TIR Convention, each Contracting Party shall cause to publish the list of Customs offices of departure Customs offices en route and Customs offices of destination approved by it for accomplishment of TIR operations. At this moment, the TIR secretariat has developed and maintains a page on the TIR website[1], which aims at providing links to Customs administration's web pages containing that information. Unfortunately, in most cases, the links either do not lead to the list of Customs offices that have been approved for TIR or are broken and, thus, have a very limited use for Customs administrations and transport companies. Furthermore, this approach to provide information about TIR approved Customs offices will not allow any integration into eTIR.

5.   Consequently, the creation of a proper international database of TIR Customs offices would not only allow the TIR secretariat to fulfil its mandate but also contribute to the eTIR project.

B.   Objective

6.   The objective of the TIR Customs offices database is to provide a unique and internationally recognized repository of information about Customs offices approved for accomplishing TIR operations. It would be securely updated by Customs authorities in each Contracting Party and made available publicly to all other stakeholders, including the transport industry and the future eTIR international system.

C.   Scope

7.   The project scope will be limited to the design and development of this database as well as the necessary interfaces to allow the secure updating by Customs authorities and the dissemination of the information to stakeholders.

D.   Deliverables

8.   The project deliverables are:

• A relational database;

• Secure services allowing direct updates from national Customs IT systems;

• A secure website allowing TIR Customs focal points to manually update information;

• A public website and public web services for consulting the database (possibly also in the form of maps);

• An administration website for user management, traffic monitoring and for other statistics.

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[1] www.unece.org/tir/customs/approvedcus.html

E. Benefits

9.   The TIR Customs offices database will increase transparency of the TIR system by providing up-to-date and standard information on where TIR operation can be processed. It will benefit both Customs administration, by further securing the TIR system, and the transport industry, by simplifying the selection of itineraries. Furthermore, this database will constitute an essential building block for the computerized TIR System.

F. Stakeholders

10.   The database will be updated by Customs Administrations, in particular TIR Focal Points. The database will be made publically available to (i) Customs Administrations, (ii) the transport industry and (iii) the eTIR international system. The database will be maintained by the TIR secretariat on behalf of TIRExB.

G. Assumptions

11.   It is assumed that up-to-date lists of Customs offices approved for TIR are currently available in each Contracting Parties. In those countries where such lists are maintained by means of an IT system it is envisaged that the updates of the TIR Customs offices database will be made automatically by mean of secure web services. In other countries, it is expected that TIR Focal Points will maintain the database using a secure web interface.

H. Major Dependencies

12.   In order to develop the most suitable secure interfaces for Customs authorities to update the database (automatically by means of web services or manually), it will be important to analyse how the lists of TIR Customs offices are maintained at the national level. Furthermore, the analysis will allow to define which attributes of the TIR Customs offices could be centrally made available (Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates, types of operations possible (departure, en route or destination), limitations with regard to types of goods, etc.).

13.   The authentication of users (and systems) that allows securing of the system will most likely be made by the same system as for the International TIR Data Bank (ITDB) online+. Both systems will, therefore, become interdependent with regard to their security procedures.

14.   This database is an essential element of the eTIR project which will need to be developed in the framework of the eTIR project if not provided by the TIRExB.

I. Resources

15.   The TIR secretariat, building in particular on the experience gained while developing and maintaining all tools related to the ITDB, has the necessary resources and skills to develop a TIR Customs offices database within a reasonable timeframe. Resources will also have to be made available at the national level either for a one time effort to implement the web services or, on a regular basis, to update manually the database using the web interface.

III. Use cases

16.   Table 1 presents the actors involved and their rights and responsibilities.

Table 1
Actors' responsibilities and rights

Actor	*Responsibilities/rights*
Customs authorities	Customs authorities are responsible for providing and maintaining their list of customs offices available for TIR operations (possibly eTIR operations in the future) and the specific procedures that can take place in those offices, i.e. departure, en route, destination, issuance and renewal of certificates of approval of vehicles and containers. Customs authorities may add, amend and delete customs offices in their customs territory and may consult any information from other countries. Countries should also indicate the opening hours of their offices and if any traffic/goods are excluded from that office.
TIRExB	TIRExB (by means of its TIR secretariat) will amend the database on the basis of information received from Custom authorities by other means than the direct online updating.
General public	The information on customs offices will be accessible publicly, in particular for interested trader and transport operators.
eTIR international system	The eTIR international system will be allowed to check that each customs office in eTIR has been adequately authorized for the specific procedures by the competent authorities.

17.   Figure 1 presents the overall use case diagram for the system handling the central database on approved customs offices.

Figure 1
Use case diagram
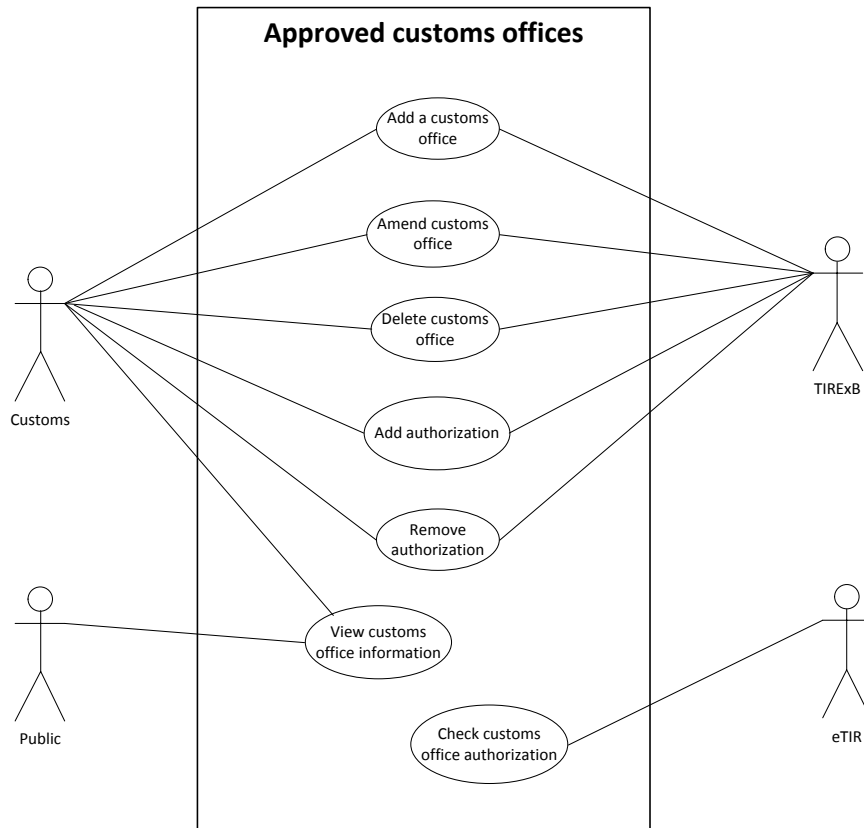
IV. Data model

A. Class diagram

18. In order to allow the development of the database that will store the information about approved Custom offices as well as to design the interfaces (web services/web pages) between the database and the various actors, it is necessary to define which information needs to be available in the database. Table 2 lists and defines the classes that are used in the class diagram presented in Figure 2.

Table 2
Classes

Classes	Definition
Customs office	-
Country	-
Special notes	Any relevant information regarding the customs office.
Goods	-
Address	-

Classes	Definition
Role	Roles that can be performed by a customs office in the framework the TIR and eTIR procedures.
UN/LOCODE	United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations
Opening hours	Time period during which a customs office is open.

Figure 2
Class diagram
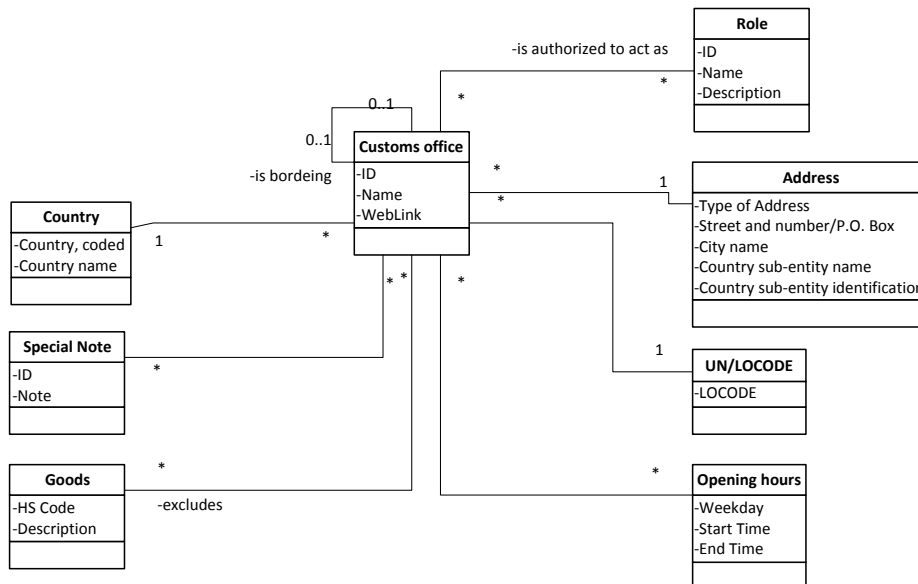
B. Code lists

19. Most of the classes used in the class diagrams presented in Figure 2 either have agreed international codes, i.e. ISO Country codes, UN/LOCODE, HS Code, or do not need any, like opening hours or address. Nevertheless, Roles are specific to the Central database on approved customs offices or do not have an international standard readily available. Table 3 lists the various roles that a customs office can perform in the TIR and eTIR procedures.

Table 3
Role code list

ID	Name	Definition
1	TIR CO of departure	Customs office of a Contracting Party where the TIR transport of a load or part load of goods begins.
2	TIR CO of destination	Customs office of a Contracting Party where the TIR transport of a load or part load of goods ends.
3	TIR CO en route	Customs office of a Contracting Party through witch a road vehicle, combination of vehicles or container enters or leaves this Contracting Party in the course

ID	Name	Definition
		of a TIR transport.
4	eTIR CO of departure	Customs office of a Contracting Party where the eTIR transport of a load or part load of goods begins.
5	eTIR CO of destination	Customs office of a Contracting Party where the eTIR transport of a load or part load of goods ends.
6	eTIR CO en route	Customs office of a Contracting Party through witch a road vehicle, combination of vehicles or container enters or leaves this Contracting Party in the course of an eTIR transport.
7	Issuance of certificates of approval	Customs office of a Contracting Party where certificates of approvals are issued.
8	Renewal of certificates of approval	Customs office of a Contracting Party where certificates of approvals are renewed.
9	Endorsement of the rectification of defects	Customs office of a Contracting Party that endorses the rectification of defects on the certificates of approvals.

20.   Finally, the database will be devised in such a way that all text fields can be translated into different languages if necessary.

V.   Considerations by the Committee

21.   The Committee may wish to consider the project brief and discuss and complement the use cases, the class diagram and the code lists presented above. The Committee is invited to request the secretariat, under the supervision of TIRExB, to pursue the project, subject to resource restraints.

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