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Recommendations and standards:

Implementation support material

Executive Guide on streamlining formalities and documentary requirements

Summary

In recent years, trade has grown rapidly due to decreased trade barriers and transportation costs and advancements in information and communication technology. This increased flow of trade has put a lot of pressure on the administrative and customs agencies that manage this traffic and on businesses trying to comply with numerous trade requirements.

This document provides an executive guide on streamlining formalities and documentary procedures related to the import, export and transit of goods. The goal is to assist governments to identify redundant information and to apply data harmonization and standardization tools and techniques to simplify and eliminate these formalities.

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I. Introduction

1. Streamlining formalities and documentary procedures allows governments, governmental agencies and business communities to take advantage of the elimination of redundant data and duplication of information. This process entails a regular review of domestic and cross-border trade documents. The review ensures that (i) the regulatory and official requirements and the business needs of the trading community are fully considered in an open, transparent and inclusive way; (ii) all the data requested is justified by a regulation or a specific business need – the legislative framework should also be reviewed regularly to correspond to actual business practices; (iii) the information requested is still pertinent and up-to-date; and (iv) the data requested cannot be inferred from any other sources.

2. The review of all the documents used in domestic and international trade should be conducted on a regular basis. For ease of conducting this review, the documents should be divided into specific functional groups: Commercial, Transport, Financial (including international payments) and Official.

II. Application

3. In recent years, trade has grown rapidly due to decreased trade barriers and transportation costs and advancements in information and communication technology. These increased flows of trade put a lot of pressure on the administrative and customs agencies managing this traffic and businesses trying to comply with numerous trade requirements.

4. The manual on streamlining formalities and trade procedures aims to provide a set of strategies and tools to assist countries to identify redundant information and to apply data harmonization and standardization tools and techniques to simplify and eliminate these formalities.

III. Benefits

5. Streamlining trade formalities and documentary procedures brings numerous benefits to governments, governmental agencies, and business communities. Elimination of redundant data and of duplication of information enables authorities to more efficiently use the scarce resources available for combating illegal trade, to enhance risk management techniques and official controls, and therefore induce traders' compliance and secure governmental revenues. Likewise, simplified, consistent and predictable information requirements will benefit business communities and make it easier for them to meet legal, regulatory, and administrative requirements through reduced time, effort and financial resources, therefore making them more competitive in international markets. Finally, reduced costs for producers will create benefits for consumers through lower prices.

IV. More information

UNECE Recommendation 1, United Nations Layout Key for Trade Documents:
http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/Publications/ECE_TRADE_432E_CF-Rec1.pdf

UNECE Recommendation 14, Authentication of Trade Documents:
http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/recommendations/rec14/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFAC2014_6E_Rec14.pdf

UNECE Recommendation 34, Data Simplification and Standardization for International Trade: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/Publications/ECE-TRADE-400E_Rec34.pdf

UN/CEFACT Core Component Library:

http://www.unece.org/cefact/codesfortrade/unccl/ccl_index.html

UN/CEFACT Reference Data Model:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/cf_plenary/2017_Plenary/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFAC_T_2017_11E__White_Paper_on_RDM_.pdf

<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/GuidanceMaterials/ReferenceDataModelGuideline-v1.0.0.2.pdf>

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/cefact/brs/BRS_T_L-MMT.zip

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/unccefact/BRS/BRS_SCRDM_v1.0.0.2.pdf
