



TIR EXECUTIVE BOARD (TIRExB)

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Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975

TIR Executive Board (TIRExB)

Fifty-second session

Geneva, 4 February 2013

Agenda item IX

Central databases on approved Customs offices and Certificates of Approval

Note by the secretariat

I. Background and mandate

1. At its fifty-first session, the Board requested the secretariat to submit, for discussion at a future session, first considerations about the possible establishment of a central database on Customs offices for accomplishing TIR operations (further referred to as TIR Customs office database) and Certificates of Approval with the TIR secretariat, as further contribution to the eTIR Project. (TIRExB/REP/2012/51, para. 37)
2. In line with this request, the secretariat prepared this informal document containing project briefs for both potential projects.

II. TIR Customs Offices Database – Project Brief

a. Background of the project

3. With regard to the establishment of a central database on TIR Customs offices, the Board may also 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
 - 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, TIR secretariat has developed and maintains a page on the TIR website¹, which was aimed at providing links to Customs administrations web pages containing that information. Unfortunately, in most cases, the links do not point at the list of Customs offices approved for TIR or are broken, 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 will 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 a 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 web site and public web services to consult the database (possibly also in the form of maps)
- An administration website, including for user management, traffic monitoring and for other statistics

¹ <http://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 (AC.2). 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 national level. Furthermore, the analysis will allow to define which attributes of the TIR Customs offices could be centrally made available (GPS coordinates, types of operations possible – departure, en route or destination, limitations with regard to types of goods, ...).

13. The authentication of users (and systems) allowing to secure the system will most likely be made by the same system as for the ITDBonline+. Both systems will therefore become interdependent with regard to their security procedures.

14. This database is an essential element of eTIR project, which will have 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 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. Database on certificates of approval – Project Brief

a. Background of the project

16. According to Article 12 of the TIR Convention, every road vehicle performing the TIR procedure must have been approved according to the procedure laid down in Annex 3. A certificate of approval that shall conform to the specimen reproduced in the Annex 4 is then delivered to the transport operator of the TIR Convention

17. At the twentieth session of Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (GE.1), in the framework of the discussion on the dematerialization of documents attached to the TIR Carnet, the GE.1 recommended the TIR Executive Board (TIRExB), within its mandate to coordinate and foster the exchange of intelligence and other information among competent authorities of Contracting Parties (Annex 8, Article 10 (c)), to study the possibility of establishing, at the TIR secretariat, an international database for the registration of certificates of approval, issued in compliance with Annexes 3 and 4 of the TIR Convention. GE.1 was of the view that such a database would provide further facilitation for transport companies and, once an eTIR system would be in place, allow replacing the attachment of scanned versions of certificates of approval to each and every declaration by a simple reference (identification number) to the certificate, which information would be securely centrally stored. (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/5, para. 16)

b. Objectives

18. The objective of the certificates of approval database is to provide a unique and internationally recognized repository of information about all vehicles approved for TIR. It will be securely updated by the competent authorities in each Contracting Party and made securely available publicly to Customs authorities.

c. Scope

19. The project scope will be limited to the design and development of a database as well as the necessary interfaces to allow the secure updating as well and secure access by competent authorities.

d. Deliverables

20. The project deliverables are:

- A relational database
- Secure services allowing direct updates from national competent authorities' IT systems
- A secure website allowing responsible persons at national competent authorities to manually update information
- A secure web services to consult the database

- An administration website, including for user management, traffic monitoring and for other statistics

e. Benefits

23. The certificate of approval database will constitute an additional building block of the fully computerized TIR system. It will allow Customs administration to perform advanced and automated risk analysis. Furthermore, this database will integrate in the eTIR project, removing a need for the transport industry to scan the paper certificates of approval.

f. Stakeholders

21. The database will be updated by competent authorities in charge of authorization of vehicle. The database will be made available to Customs Administrations. The database will be maintained by the TIR secretariat on behalf of TIRExB.

g. Assumptions

22. It is assumed that competent authorities in charge of the authorization of vehicles will be in the position either to integrate the require web services in the software they use for the management of certificates of approval, or dedicate the necessary resources to maintain the database using a secure web interface.

32. It is also assumed that Customs authorities in charge of the risk analysis and clearance will have access to data accessible on the internet (this could also be done securely and transparently via the Customs central IT system).

h. Major Dependencies

33. In order to develop the most suitable secure interfaces for the competent authorities to update the database (automatically by means of web services or manually), it will be important to analyse national practices regarding the issuance (possibly storage) of certificates of approval.

34. The authentication of users (and systems) allowing to secure the system will most likely be made by the same system as for the ITDBonline+. Both systems will therefore become interdependent with regard to their security procedures.

35. This database will further leverage the eTIR project, allowing Customs authorities to get access in advance to data on the authorization of vehicles.

i. Resources

36. 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 database of certificates of approval within a reasonable timeframe. Resources will also have to be made available at 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.

IV. Considerations by the Board

37. The Board may wish to consider and discuss the preliminary information contained in the project briefs. It may want to consider the implications on the TIR Convention of the creation of both databases. Furthermore, and considering that resources will be required at national level for the updating of those databases, the Board may consider the necessity to consult with AC.2 before starting any development.

38. Finally, the Board may wish to recommend the next composition of the TIRExB, to include in their program of work the conduct of a feasibility study for these two databases and, possibly, their development.
