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Activities and administration of the TIR Executive Board:
Activities of the TIR Executive Board:
International databases and electronic tools
managed by the TIR secretariat

Revised data requirements for the customs offices module of the International TIR Data Bank

Note by the secretariat

I. Background and mandate

1.   The Administrative Committee (AC.2), at its fifty-seventh session (February 2014), considered the proposal by the TIR Executive Board (TIRExB) to launch an electronic database on customs offices approved for TIR operations, as contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2014/4. The Committee invited TIRExB to start working on this project, taking into account existing national and regional initiatives on the matter and on the assumption that the database could be developed and maintained by the TIR secretariat within the current resources of TIRExB (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/117, para. 21). Further, the Committee, at its sixty-seventh session (February 2018), was informed about the progress of the new International TIR Data Bank (ITDB) module on customs offices (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/137, para. 21).

2.   The customs offices module of the ITDB, prepared on the basis of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2014/4, was released in May 2018 for restricted use by customs authorities. At its seventy-ninth session in December 2018, TIRExB considered and finalized the data requirements of the new module, taking into account the initial reflections from customs authorities, and requested the secretariat to submit the data requirements to AC.2 for consideration and approval. The Board, taking note of the ongoing work of the secretariat to eliminate discrepancies with data imported from existing data bases of contracting parties, decided   to   make   the   data   public   once   the   work   is   completed (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2019/11, para. 10–14).

3.   The secretariat drafted this document summarizing the past discussions and presenting the data requirements as adopted by TIRExB. Once these requirements are adopted by the Committee, the secretariat will start working with contracting parties on how to import these data in ITDB and how to keep them updated at all times.

II. Mandate for the customs offices module

4.   First and foremost, Article 8, paragraph (a) of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of TIRExB envisages the establishment and maintenance of an international Governmental TIR data bank accessible to all contracting parties including on "approved customs offices for accomplishing TIR operations (Article 45)".

5.   TIRExB Programme of Work for the years 2013–2014 included as activity: "expanding the scope of the ITDB to include data on customs offices approved for TIR operations and, possibly, on certificates of approval of vehicles" as one of the outputs expected for this period (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2013/7, activity 2). In this regard, at its fifty-fifth session (October 2013), the Board considered Informal documents Nos. 2 and 7 (2013) on a proposal by the secretariat to launch an electronic database on approved customs offices. TIRExB requested the secretariat to submit the proposal to AC.2 for endorsement, including resource requirements, if any (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2014/3, para. 42).

6.   At its fifty-seventh session (February 2014), AC.2 considered the proposal by TIRExB to launch an electronic database on customs offices approved for TIR operations, as contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2014/4. It invited TIRExB to start working on this project, taking into account existing national and regional initiatives on the matter and on the assumption that the database could be developed and maintained by the TIR secretariat within the current resources of TIRExB. The Committee invited all interested contracting parties to provide their comments on the project to the secretariat and to indicate if they would like to be involved. Furthermore, while agreeing with the need for an international customs offices database, in particular for the implementation of eTIR, the delegation of the European Union underlined that the maintenance of such an international database should not require additional resources for those contracting parties which have already implemented similar systems, nationally or regionally. In this respect, the Committee took note that the regular updating of the customs offices database will have to be made possible both by means of an automatic exchange of information between systems and, manually, using a web interface. The Committee requested TIRExB to keep it informed of any further developments in this area (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/117, para. 21).

III. Discussions by the TIR Executive Board

7.   In May 2018, the secretariat released the customs offices module for restricted use by customs authorities. TIRExB, at its seventy-seventh session in June 2018, noted that the new module already contained data on New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) countries due to the import of data from the existing European Commission data base and that the European Union Member States had started analysing the data for verification purposes. The Board concluded that the customs offices database should only be made public upon completion of the work (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2019/1, para. 11).

8.   At its seventy-eight session (October 2018), TIRExB decided that a minimum set of mandatory data would suffice for data entry at a first stage, but that other relevant fields should also be available as optional. In this regard, the Board decided to set the following fields as mandatory:

- name
- office identification number (office ID)
- country
- city
- roles.

9.   Regarding the "office ID" field, the Board decided to keep it as an open field in order to allow different data structures in contracting parties. With regard to the "roles" field, taking into account reflections from NCTS countries on the difference between the transit office in NCTS and the customs office en route in the TIR system, the Board decided that the "transit

(TRA)" role in the existing class diagram be amended as "en route (ENR)" to align with the provisions of the TIR Convention. The Board underlined that, in line with the TIR Convention, the module allowed selecting all available roles for an office (i.e. departure, destination, en route). The Board added that the data entry to the ITDB should not lead to restrictions in the use of the TIR procedure, but rather reflect the practice (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2019/2, paras. 15–19).

10.   At its seventy-ninth session (December 2018), TIRExB recalled that, at its previous session, it decided to set the following fields related to customs offices as mandatory: name, office identification number (office ID), country, city and roles. The Board decided that the rest of the fields were set as optional. In consideration of the matter, the Board took into account the proposal from Mr. Guenkov (IRU) to include the latitude and longitude coordinates of customs offices within data requirements. However, considering the fact that currently the location of the customs offices were not kept in this format by the national authorities in most countries, the Board decided not to include it in the data set for the time being. The secretariat informed the Board that producing an online map displaying the customs offices available for the TIR procedure was assessed during the development of the module and was not included in the work for the same reason. The Board took note that the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) was conducting the International Transport Infrastructure Observatory Project funded by the Islamic Development Bank which also aimed at accommodating transport infrastructure information, including customs offices, in a geographical information system (GIS) environment and that there could be an interaction with that project in the future for that purpose.

11.   The Board decided that it would be appropriate to launch the module with minimum necessary data to avail the contracting parties keeping it up-to-date, hence providing a reliable database for the beneficiaries. The Board noted that, nevertheless, it was important to enter data both in the mandatory and optional fields, to the extent possible.

12.   The Board requested the secretariat to submit the data requirements to AC.2 for consideration and approval. The Board, taking note of the ongoing work of the secretariat to eliminate discrepancies with data imported from existing data bases of contracting parties, reiterated its position to make the data public once the work is completed (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2019/11, paras. 10–14).

13.   At its eighty-third session in October 2019, TIRExB endorsed the draft Explanatory Note to Article 45 that stipulates the use of electronic applications developed by the TIR secretariat, under the supervision of TIRExB, to fulfil the requirement in Article 45 to publish the list of the customs offices approved for accomplishing TIR operations (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/146, agenda item 5 (b) (ii)).

IV. Data requirements for the customs offices module

14.   The secretariat developed the ITDB customs offices module mainly on the basis of the data requirements set in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2014/4.

15.   However, in order to facilitate the automatic exchange of data with existing systems, as requested at the fifty-seventh session of AC.2, the following class and values from document 2014/4 were temporarily left out during development:

• Goods (excluded from an office)

• Roles not related to current TIR transports.

Still, all these features may be easily added into the module upon request.

16.   Further, the following optional fields were added to the data requirements, following the example of the European Commission customs offices database:

• Country Region (country sub-category)

• Holiday

• Transport type/mode.

17.   It is also worth reflecting on how the "role" and the "border office" fields were described in document 2014/4, as these fields might be described or applied in another way in national or regional databases. Among the nine roles described in document 2014/4, so far, the following three have been included:

- Customs office of departure: customs office of a contracting party where the TIR transport of a load or part load of goods begins.

- Customs office of destination: customs office of a contracting party where the TIR transport of a load or part load of goods ends.

- Customs office en route: customs office of a contracting party through which a road vehicle, combination of vehicles or container enters or leaves this contracting party in the course of a TIR transport.

18.   In the module, the roles are identified as: departure (DEP), destination (DES) and en route (ENR). A customs office may have one or more of these roles. Additionally, information about a border office is foreseen which would allow indicating the bordering country (additionally three optional new fields for bordering offices have been added to the Office class). These categories together may help in differentiating between ports and road and rail border offices approved for accomplishing TIR operations.

19.   In this regard, by reflecting also the comments by TIRExB during discussions on the module, the class diagram of the module is as in Annex I and the classes are as in Annex II. The classes table in Annex II also shows if a field is mandatory or optional.

20.   Finally, in order to further facilitate the exchange of data related to customs offices, the secretariat will work on the alignment of the data requirements used in the ITDB customs offices module with the World Customs Organization (WCO) Data Model, and, if required, with other international standards, such as those maintained by UN/CEFACT.
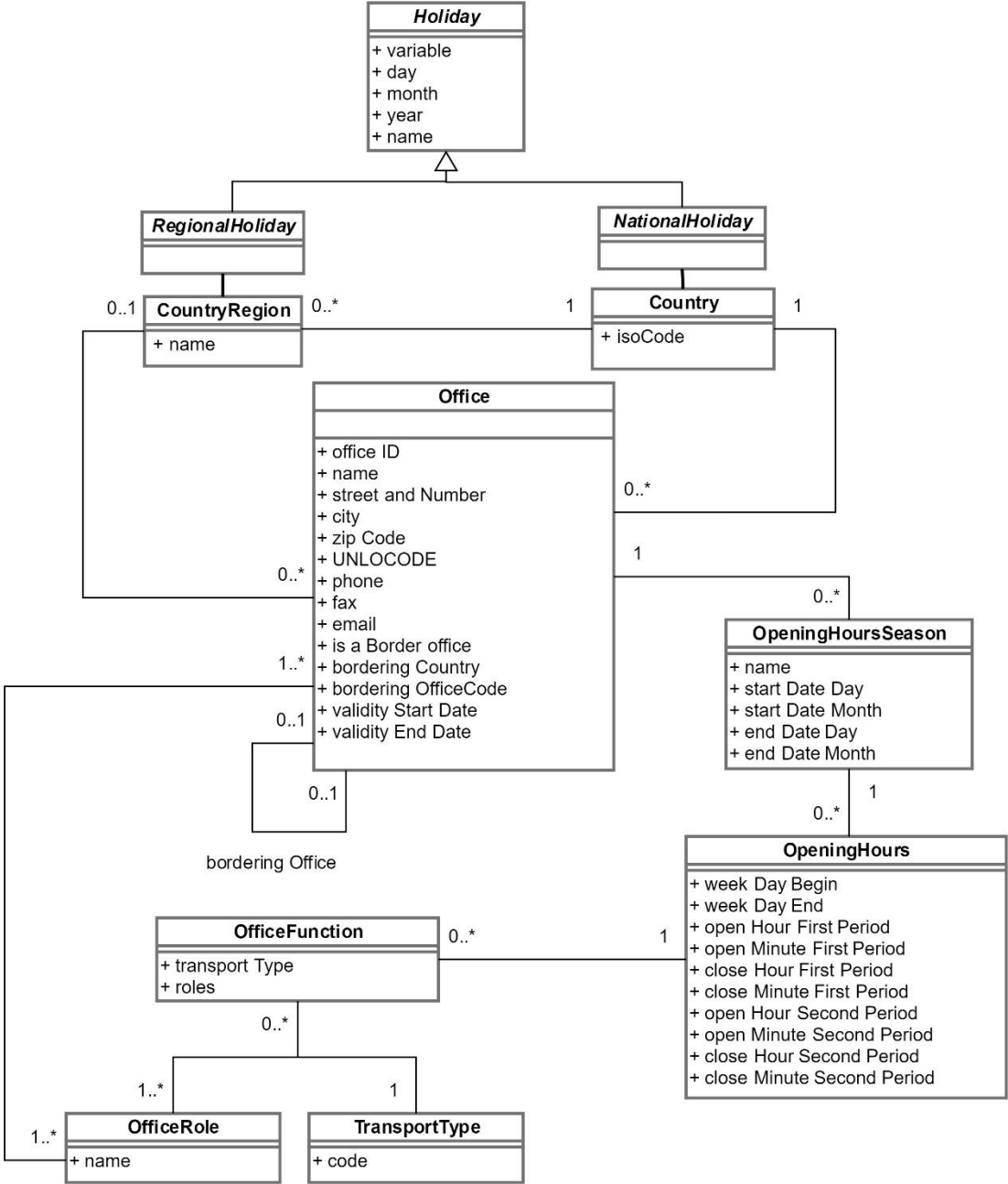
V.   Considerations by the Committee

21.   The Committee may wish to consider and approve the data requirements for the customs offices module. Further, the Committee may wish to invite contracting parties to submit data to the module and decide when the data should be published on the ITDB website.

Annex I

Class diagram

Customs Office Class Diagram

Annex II

Classes

Office	*Name* *	
	Office ID *	
	Country *	
	Country region	
	City *	
	Roles *	Office of departure (DEP)
		Office of destination (DES)
		Office en route (ENR)
	Border office	Bordering country
		Bordering office (ID or name)
Location	UN/LOCODE (United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations)	
	Street and number	
	Zip code	
Contact information	Tel, fax, email	
Opening hours	Season, weekday, hour	
Transport type	Road	
	Rail	
	Sea	
	Air	
	River	
Holiday	Name, day, month, year	

*   mandatory fields