Activities of the Informal ad hoc Expert Group

eTIR Questionnaire and letter to the Directors General of Customs

Note by the secretariat

At its sixth session, the Expert Group welcomed a proposal from the secretariat to undertake a survey to gather information from Customs administrations on existing systems and on their needs and constraints regarding the eTIR system. The results of the survey should be presented to the Expert Group at one of its future sessions. (ExG/COMP/2004/24, para. 8).

To this end, the secretariat drafted a questionnaire, which was sent to Director-General of Customs (with a copy to the TIR Customs Focal Points) on 28 February 2005. The deadline for replying to the questionnaire was set at 1 April 2005. This document contains the introductory letter to Director-Generals of Customs in Annex 1 and the eTIR questionnaire in Annex 2.
Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

The TIR Administrative Committee (AC.2) has mandated the UNECE secretariat to undertake a survey amongst the Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention with a view to verifying the strategic and political support in connection with the development and deployment of the computerization of the TIR Procedure, the so-called “eTIR Project”, in particular in order to determine the vision, requirements and constraints of the Contracting Parties.

I should like to recall the basic principles of the eTIR Project, as they have been endorsed by AC.2 so far:

- eTIR is, primarily, a Customs-to-Customs facilitation tool;
- eTIR is an electronic platform allowing for the international exchange of TIR data;
- eTIR is built on a centralized database;
- eTIR communicates using secured Internet connections;
- eTIR shall be built following a step-by-step approach;
- eTIR will, in the long run, replace the paper-based TIR Carnet.

In view of the crucial importance of the eTIR project for both the public and private partners in the TIR system, I should like to kindly ask you, personally, to ensure that a reply to the questionnaire is submitted to the UNECE secretariat before 1 April 2005. In this context, I should like to appeal to you to attribute adequate resources and to involve policy, TIR as well as IT experts when replying to the questionnaire.
For further details on how to access and proceed with the questionnaire, I refer to the Annex to this letter. The Annex also contains references to the TIR Reference Model, containing a detailed description of the eTIR Project as well as a high-level description of the future eTIR system, prepared by the UNECE secretariat. Both documents provide additional information which can be of assistance when replying to the questionnaire.

I should also like to take this opportunity to remind you that the AC.2 has stressed the necessity of a broader-based participation of Contracting Parties in the work of the Expert Group on the eTIR project. Therefore, I invite you to send a representative from your administration to take part in the next session of the Expert Group, which will take place on 26 and 27 May 2005, in Geneva. The session will, in particular, focus on defining the eTIR system on the basis of the replies to the questionnaire. Considering that, for the time being, the Expert Group has no chairperson, you may also wish to nominate your delegate to become chairperson of the Expert Group.

In advance, I should like to thank you for your contribution to making tangible progress towards realizing the important task of computerizing the TIR procedure. I look forward to your continued support and cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

José Capel Ferrer
Director
Transport Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Taking into account the forward-looking aspect of the eTIR Project, the secretariat has prepared a Web questionnaire.

The questionnaire can be accessed at the following Internet address:

http://unece.unog.ch/eTIRQuestionnaire/quest.aspx

Please submit the questionnaire before 1 April 2005

Before replying to the questionnaire, the respondents are advised to consult document ExG/COMP/2003/1, version 1.4, containing the Reference Model of the eTIR Project, which provides all relevant information with regard to background, definition and state of play of the eTIR Project as well as document ExG/COMP/2004/23, prepared by the UNECE secretariat, containing the high-level description of the future eTIR system. Both documents, together with all other documents prepared by the secretariat for the informal Ad hoc Expert Group on the Computerization of the TIR Procedure (ExG), can be found at the following Internet address:

http://www.unece.org/trans/bcf/adhoc/conc_tech/conc_tech_index.htm

As the questionnaire specifically focuses on Customs’ requirements and constraints, only replies from Customs administrations will be considered and only one per administration is expected. In order to ensure that only Customs administrations can answer the questionnaire, the secretariat has set up a secure login mechanism. To access the questionnaire the respondent will need the following personal user name and password:

User name: «U_login_name»
Password: «U_password»

In order to allow various persons to participate in providing the requested information, the application allows the user to save the questionnaire at any stage of the process. When doing so, the application will provide the user with a code, which he will be asked to provide when reloading the questionnaire. Thus, in order to allow others to access the questionnaire in its last saved form, the initial user will have to provide any successive user with the user name and password, together with the code displayed by the application when last saving the questionnaire.

The saving mechanism also ensures the possibility to perform a final check before submitting the questionnaire to the secretariat.

In case you experience any problem in filling-in this questionnaire, or for any other question, please do not hesitate to contact the UNECE secretariat (Tel: +41-22-9172403; Fax: +41-22-9170039/0614; E-mail:eTIRQuestionnaire@unece.org).

1 In case your administration has not access to the Internet the secretariat can provide you, upon request, with a Microsoft Word, PFD or a paper version of the questionnaire.
Annex 2 - eTIR Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE FILLED IN BY

1. Country:

2. Name:

3. Email:

STATUS OF COMPUTERISATION IN GENERAL IN YOUR CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION

The aim of this section is to depict the status of computerization in general in Customs administrations. Since IT is evolving very rapidly, it also gathers information on the investments already planned for the 5 coming years. This information will both serve to identify national constraints and estimate national costs implied by the eTIR project.

4. Which computerized system do you use today for the management of Customs procedures?
   _ System developed nationally, please specify
   _ National system based on another system, please specify the name of the system it’s based on
   _ ASYCUDA or ASYCUDA++
   _ Other, please specify
   _ None
5. Which computerized system will you use in 5 years (2010) for the management of Customs procedures?
   - System developed nationally, please specify
   - National system based on another system, please specify the name of the system it’s based on
   - ASYCUDA or ASYCUDA++
   - Other, please specify
   - None
   - Don't know

6. What is the level of inter-connection of your Customs system today?
   - No computers
   - Stand-alone computers
   - Local networks
   - National network
   - National network + supra-national connectivity

7. What is the level of inter-connection of your Customs system will you use in 5 years?
   - No computers
   - Stand-alone computers
   - Local networks
   - National network
   - National network + supra-national connectivity
   - Don't know
8. What type of connectivity do you use today for the electronic transmission of data?
   - Dedicated lines
   - Dial up (private networks)
   - Dial up to ISP (Internet Service Provider)
   - Permanent Internet connection (DSL, T1, T3, LAN, …)
   - Other, please specify

9. What type of connectivity do you plan to use in 5 years for the electronic transmission of data?
   - Dedicated lines
   - Dial up (private networks)
   - Dial up to ISP (Internet Service Provider)
   - Permanent Internet connection (DSL, T1, T3, LAN, …)
   - Other, please specify
   - Don't know

10. Which of the following standards do you use today for the transmission of data?
    - TCP/IP
    - IPV6
    - ATM
    - HTML (Web based system)
    - FTP
    - Email (POP3, IMAP, …)
    - UN/EDIFACT
    - ebXML
    - XML
    - Others, please specify
    - None
11. **Which of the following standards will you use in 5 years for the transmission of data?**
   - TCP/IP
   - IPV6
   - ATM
   - HTML (Web based system)
   - FTP
   - Email (POP3, IMAP, …)
   - UN/EDIFACT
   - ebXML
   - XML
   - Others, please specify

   _ None
   _ Don’t know

12. **Which technologies do you use today to secure your connections?**
   - VPN (Virtual Private Network)
   - SSL (e.g. HTTPS)
   - Certificates
   - Other, please specify

   _ None

13. **Which technologies will you use in 5 years to secure your connections?**
   - VPN (Virtual Private Network)
   - SSL (e.g. HTTPS)
   - Certificates
   - Other, please specify

   _ None
   _ Don’t know
14. **What could be the reasons for not connecting computers at Customs offices to the Internet?**

- Security issues
- Financial constraints
- Management policy
- Other, please specify

- None

**STATUS OF THE COMPUTERIZATION OF TRANSIT**

The aim of this section is to depict the status of computerization of transit procedures in Customs administrations. Since IT is evolving very rapidly, it also gathers information on the investments already planned for the 5 coming years. This information will both serve to identify national constraints and to estimate national costs implied by the eTIR project.

15. **Which transit procedures are computerized today?**

- National transit procedure
- TIR
- NCTS
- Other, please specify

- None

16. **Which transit procedures will be computerized in 5 years?**

- National transit procedure
- TIR
- NCTS
- Other, please specify

- None
- Don't know
17. Which computerized system(s) do you use today for the management of transit procedures?
   __ System developed nationally, please specify

   __ National system based on another system, please specify the name of the system it’s based on

   __ ASYCUDA or ASYCUDA++
   __ NCTS
   __ Other, please specify

   __ None

18. Which computerized system(s) will you use in 5 year (2010) for the management of transit procedures
   __ System developed nationally, please specify

   __ National system based on another system, please specify the name of the system it’s based on

   __ ASYCUDA or ASYCUDA++
   __ NCTS
   __ Other, please specify

   __ None
   __ Don’t know
19. Which data from the TIR Carnet do you capture at the offices of entry/departure and exit/destination?

Entry/Departure, please specify box number(s)

- TIR Carnet number
- TIR Carnet holder ID number (Cover box 3)
- TIR Carnet holder Name/Address/Country (Cover box 3)
- Other information on the cover page

- Goods manifest information

- Information you provide on voucher N°1

- Information you provide on voucher N°2

- Information Customs offices from other countries have provided on counterfoil N°1

- Information Customs offices from other countries have provided on counterfoil N°2
Exit/Destination, please specify box number(s)

- TIR Carnet number
- TIR Carnet holder ID number (Cover box 3)
- TIR Carnet holder Name/Address/Country (Cover box 3)
- Other information on the cover page

- Goods manifest information

- Information you provide on voucher N°1

- Information you provide on voucher N°2

- Information Customs offices from other countries have provided on counterfoil N°1

- Information Customs offices from other countries have provided on counterfoil N°2

20. In relation to the management of TIR operations, which additional data not contained in the TIR Carnet do you key in?

- HS code of the goods
- Value (or estimated value) of the goods
- Consignee
- Consignor
- Other, please specify

- None

21. Do you establish discharge electronically?

- Yes  
- No

22. Will you establish discharge electronically in 5 years?

- Yes  
- No  
- Don't know
23. Do you dispose of a central database in which all data concerning TIR operations are stored?
   _ Yes _ No

24. Will you dispose in 5 years of a central database in which all data concerning TIR operations are stored?
   _ Yes _ No _ Don't know

25. Which of the following electronic devices do you use today in connection to the management of TIR operations?
   _ Electronic seals
   _ Satellite tracking
   _ RFID (Radio frequency identification)
   _ Smart carts
   _ Other, please specify
   _ None

26. Which of the following electronic devices do you plan to use in 5 years in connection to the management of TIR operations?
   _ Electronic seals
   _ Satellite tracking
   _ RFID (Radio frequency identification)
   _ Smart carts
   _ Other, please specify
   _ None
   _ Don't know
**FUNCTIONALITIES OF THE eTIR SYSTEM**

This section tries to identify the stakeholders' needs with regard to the eTIR system and, in particular, those of Customs authorities.

27. **Indicate the degree of necessity for Customs authorities of the following functionalities in the eTIR system?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functionality</th>
<th>Prerequisite</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
<th>Not desirable</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real time information</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advance cargo information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prior notification system (early declaration system)</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Guarantee management for Customs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electronic link with prior and subsequent Customs regimes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>International risk management database</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>International risk management tools (warning systems)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>International validation of TIR Carnet holders against the ITDB (Authorisation, Withdrawal, …)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>International validation of the itinerary (Exclusions of TIR Carnet holders, coverage of the Guarantee,… )</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Third party cargo inspection</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

28. **In your view what is the degree of necessity for guarantors of the following functionalities in the eTIR system?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functionality</th>
<th>Prerequisite</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
<th>Not desirable</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Termination notification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discharge notification</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
29. **In your view what is the degree of necessity for the private sector of the following functionalities in the eTIR system?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prerequisite</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
<th>Not desirable</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International declaration mechanism (for those countries not having developed their own)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>International declaration mechanism (enabling declarations in Countries other than the one of residence of the transport operator)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Access by authorised third parties</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

30. **If any, indicate other possible functionalities of the eTIR system.**

**For Customs authorities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prerequisite</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Not desirable</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indifferent</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
For the guarantors

Prerequisite

Desirable

Not desirable

Indifferent

For the private sector

Prerequisite

Desirable
31. Indicate the degree of necessity of the following data elements for the eTIR system?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Element</th>
<th>Prerequisite</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
<th>Not desirable</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HS code</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value of the goods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consignee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consignor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subsequent transport operator</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

32. If any, indicate other possible new data elements for the eTIR system.

Prerequisite

Desirable
NATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

The introduction of the eTIR system will have to take account of existing or future constraints/limitations of a technical, political, economical or other nature, which influence how and under which circumstances the eTIR system can be introduced at the national level. In the course of its work, the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on the Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure has already identified a variety of constraints. This sections aims at identifying the relevance of the identified constraints and at allowing you to add additional constraint, which you think might impede the introduction of the eTIR system at the national level.

Technical constraints

33. The eTIR system should be compatible or interfacing with the following project(s).
   _ ITDB
   _ SafeTIR
   _ NCTS
   _ ASYCUDA++
   _ UNTDED
   _ National Customs system(s)
   _ Other, please specify
   _ None
34. If any, please specify other technical constraints.

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Political/legal constraints

35. Do you have data protection laws preventing the exchange of certain electronic data?

_ Yes _ No

36. What kind of data cannot be exchanged electronically?

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37. Do you consider that the development eTransit Convention would be an alternative to the amendment of the present TIR Convention?

_ Yes _ No

38. Can/should eTIR force direct communications between Contracting Parties?

_ Yes _ No

39. If any, please specify other political/legal constraints.

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40. Should an emphasis be put on the minimisation of investments at the level of...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Not Particularly</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the international public bodies
(TIR Secretariat, United Nations);
the international private bodies
(International Organisations, Guarantors);
national public administrations
(Customs authorities);
national private sector
(Transport, Trade, Associations,...).

41. Indicate how much time would be required, in accordance with standing national budgetary procedures, to get the development/implementation of the national part of the eTIR system funded by your national budget.

Months:

______________________________

42. If any, please specify other financial/economical constraints.

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Other constraint

43. If any, please specify other constraints.

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
LEGAL ASPECTS OF COMPUTERIZATION

This section aims at depicting some information on legal matters that might be of importance to the eTIR project.

44. Does your national legislation accepts electronically lodged Customs declarations?
    _ Yes  _ No

45. Does your national legislation accept electronic signatures?
    _ Yes  _ No

46. Does electronic discharge have a legal value?
    _ Yes  _ No

47. Does electronic data received / sent by your Administration have a legal value (tick boxes when "yes")?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Received from</th>
<th>Sent to</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrations from other countries</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International bodies (UN, ..)</td>
<td>_</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

48. If "No", please specify the nature of the legal impediment(s) preventing your administration from accepting or sending electronic information.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
STATISTICAL QUESTIONS

In order to quantify the investments that will be necessary at national level, this section gathers statistical information.

49. How many Customs offices are there in your Country?

Inland
Total:

Approved for TIR:

Approved for TIR and computerised:

At the border
Total:

Approved for TIR:

Approved for TIR and computerised:
50. Please provide below any additional information or suggestion on the computerization process of the TIR procedure or send them by email to the UNECE secretariat (eTIRQuestionnaire@unece.org). In particular if you have felt that the questionnaire did not allow you to express all your requirements, constraints and views with regards to the eTIR project.
51. The Expert Group has extensively discussed at its last session document ExG/COMP/2004/23. This strategic document contains a high-level description of the future eTIR system as proposed by the secretariat. The Expert Group requested its member to provide the secretariat with written comments on the document for its next session. The AC2, at its last session and in the view of the highly strategic nature of the document, extended this call for comments to all Contracting Parties. In line with AC.2 request, please provide your comments on document ExG/COMP/2004/23.