

## **UN CEFACT OPEN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

The mission of UN/CEFACT is to support activities dedicated to improving the ability of business, trade, and administrative organisations from developed, developing, and transitional economies to effectively exchange products and services. The principal focus of UN/CEFACT is facilitating national and international trade transactions through the simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and information flows, and in so doing to contribute to the growth of global commerce.

One way in which CEFACT fulfils its mission is by publishing standards, specifications, recommendations, and user guides collectively referred to as *instruments*. UN/CEFACT produces initial versions of instruments by executing a process called *The Open Development Process*, which is generally referred to by its acronym *ODP*. The ODP for a Project to produce a CEFACT instrument starts with a request from a stakeholder, either a person or an organisation (public or private sector) within the Forum or externally.

### **CEFACT Activity Request (CAR).**

A stakeholder wanting UN/CEFACT to develop an instrument submits a request in writing to any Forum Management Group (FMG) member or to TBG16, the Entry Point to the Forum. CARs include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Requests that would result in new publication production (not revisions)
- (b) Requests that would result in revised publication production where the revisions would likely have a major impact on implementers
- (c) Requests that require considerable resources, leadership, coordination among CEFACT groups, or expert engagement

TBG 16 allocates the CAR to the appropriate Permanent Group (PG) within the Forum.

### **Open Development Process Steps**

ODP1: Project Proposal and Team Formation

ODP2: Requirements Gathering

ODP3: Internal Draft Development

ODP4: Internal Review

ODP5: Public Review

ODP6: Implementation Verification or Plenary Approval

ODP7: Publication

ODP8: Maintenance

### **ODP1: Project Proposal and Team Formation**

The Open Development Process officially begins when a PG prepares and submits a Project Proposal to the FMG. Approved proposals are notified to the UN/CEFACT Plenary. The FMG also reports rejected projects to the Plenary for further consideration and decision. Some projects are cross-domain, i.e. successful project execution depends upon the expertise of contributors to two or more PGs. In such cases, the FMG will designate one PG the *host* group that is then accountable for the project. Multiple Working Groups within a PG may also need to cooperate on a project.

The formation of a Project Team includes a *call for participation*, an announcement to interested parties of the intention to execute a project with an invitation to contribute. Project Teams typically comprise of a Project Leader, an Editor and a small number of members. Some CARs may include contributions from the submitting stakeholder regarding a proposed solution. Such contributions are called *initial contributions*, and are set aside for consideration later in the ODP. If major changes occur during the project that result, or would result, in a significant departure from the project proposal, a revised project proposal must be submitted to the FMG for approval.

## **ODP2: Requirements Gathering**

The project team engages stakeholders and domain experts to document requirements. A comment log may serve as the requirements document for projects that change existing publications.

## **ODP3: Internal Draft Development**

The project team writes an Internal Draft while continuing to engage project stakeholders and domain experts as required. This draft must be substantially content-complete, but need not be polished.

## **ODP4: Internal Draft Review**

The parent PG circulates the Internal Draft within the group, to other PGs as appropriate, and among project stakeholders and contributing domain experts, inviting comments. The project team logs and processes comments, and circulates updated Internal Drafts. The comment, update, circulation cycle continues until the PG approves a project team recommendation to conclude ODP4. While the criteria, evaluation, and ultimate decision to conclude ODP4 is left to the PG, it must ensure that the project team has met all comment processing requirements. The draft resulting from this step is called a *Public Draft*.

## **ODP5: Public Review**

The UNECE Secretariat provides links on the UNECE website to the Public Draft and related information. The FMG notifies Heads of Delegation and various email distribution list subscribers that the Public Draft is available for review and provides them with review-process details. The project team processes comments and posts updated Public Drafts and comment logs to the PG website or the UNECE website (through the Secretariat). The comment/update/posting cycle continues until the PG approves a project team recommendation to conclude ODP5. While the criteria, evaluation, and ultimate decision to conclude ODP5 is left to the PG, it must ensure that the project team has met all comment processing requirements. The draft resulting from this step is called a *proposed instrument*.

## **ODP6: Implementation Verification or UN/CEFACT Plenary Approval**

### **(i) UN CEFACT standards**

The UNECE Secretariat provides links on the UNECE website to the proposed instrument. The FMG notifies Heads of Delegation and various email distribution list subscribers that the *Implementation Draft* is available for implementation verification and provides details regarding the process for submitting comments. The project team processes comments and posts updated Implementation Drafts and comment logs to the PG website or UNECE website (through the Secretariat). The comment/update/posting cycle continues until at least two independent implementations have been confirmed and the PG approves a project team recommendation to conclude ODP6. While the criteria, evaluation, and ultimate decision to conclude ODP6 is left to the PG, it must ensure that the project team has met all comment processing requirements. If comments are received that require substantial revisions of the standard the project reverts to ODP3. The draft resulting from the completion of ODP6 is called a *Final Draft*.

### **(ii) UN CEFACT Recommendations**

With the endorsement of the parent PG (usually TBG) the Project Team submits the *Final Version* of the proposed Recommendation to the UNECE Secretariat. The Secretariat submits the proposed Recommendation to the UN/CEFACT Plenary for approval either at a Plenary Session or inter-sessionally.

## **ODP7: Publication**

The UNECE Secretariat updates the *Final Draft or Final Version* to meet UNECE requirements (e.g. add copyright statement, modify headers and footers, modify formats) and publishes the result (called *publication*) to the UNECE website. The FMG notifies Heads of Delegation and various email distribution list subscribers that the publication is available for implementation or adoption.

## **ODP8: Maintenance**

During ODP8, organisations implement or adopt the instrument. Implementers and adopters may offer comments. The PG that developed the instrument will process all comments. If stakeholders determine that a revision is required, they may initiate a project at ODP Step 1.