

TBG4 – Customs

The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) focuses on facilitating national and international transactions, through the simplification and harmonisation of processes, procedures and information flows over the entire trade transaction chain, from the initiation of the order for the goods right through to their final delivery to the buyer.

Through its TBG working groups a host of business areas are covered encompassing Finance, Architecture & Construction, Statistics, Collection & Reporting, Customs, International Trade Procedures and Entry Points, Insurance, Travel, Tourism & Leisure, Healthcare and Social Services.

TBG4 Customs working group's project is to standardise and reduce the amount of data necessary to meet Customs requirements, and is developed externally through the World Customs Organisation (WCO) through their Information Management Sub Committee (IMSC) and its Data Modelling Project Team (DMPT).

One of the aims of the group is to exchange information and raise awareness of the WCO's Data Model, Unique Consignment Reference (UCR) Recommendation, and the Integrated Supply Chain Management (ISCM) Guidelines and security of the international trade supply chain, formally known as the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards.

Their target audience includes the 21 other working groups participating in TBG, and in particular Trade, Transport, Environmental Management and the e-Cert Ratification Project Team. TBG4/WCO liaises with about 45 International Global/Regional Governmental and non-Governmental organisations on legal and non-legal matters.

Background.

The G7 Heads of States and Government, in meetings at Lyons (1996) and Denver (1997), agreed to standardise and simplify Customs data requirements of the G7 countries and to standardise the format in which data should be reported electronically in order to facilitate international trade, reduce costs for businesses and governments, and promote economic growth.

Following a request from the G7, the WCO took over the maintenance and management of the G7 Initiative from January 2002, with a view to advance the work into a global Customs standard. Initially the data set and the Message Implementation Guidelines were simply renamed into WCO Customs Data Model. Version 1.0.

As a consequence of the events of 11th September 2001 a Task Force on Supply Chain Security was established by the WCO. In order to meet the requirements defined by the Task Force the WCO Customs Data Model was updated to version 1.1.

Current projects.

Currently TBG4/WCO is developing version 3 of the WCO Data Model, this version will also cover a number of data elements required by Other Government Agencies for electronic messages used in cross border transactions of goods or services. As the Customs Data Model now encompasses the cross border requirements of Other

Government Agencies the title was modified to Data Model, thus removing the inference that it was purely for customs purposes. In addition TBG4/WCO, participate actively in ISO/TC204.

Information and documentation are key elements in the control of international cross-border trade. In today's interconnected electronic environment these controls will increasingly include Customs-to-Customs information exchange prior to the arrival of goods in order to provide the necessary level of security as well as acceptable release times.

Standardised and harmonised information requirements and procedures are essential to establish the common understanding which allows for an effective and efficient exchange of information between all parties involved in the international cross-border movement.

The WCO Data Model provides this common understanding on regulatory information requirements. The Data Model also provides Contracting Parties to the Revised Kyoto Convention with a global standard to implement provisions dealing with reduced data requirements and electronic submission of declarations and supporting documents.

The WCO understand that the Data Model is an important contribution to the facilitation of international trade. It is crucial for its successful implementation to have comprehensive participation of the various sectors of business involved in international trade and transport.

The WCO actively encourages international trade and transport associations to become involved in this work through their own meetings and via liaison with other UN/ECEFACT TBG working groups to ensure compatibility with business practice.