

AFACT

EDI HANDBOOK
for
Trade Facilitation & e-Business

October 2003

(Revised after the AFACT Steering Committee Meeting on 2003/10/12 in Taipei)

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PREFACE

The AFACT EDI Handbook outlines the structure and mission of the Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT). It also provides details on EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) implementation and EDI standards achievements of the various member countries/economies.

This handbook aims to educate and create an awareness among the general public on EDI and UN/EDIFACT and its application in the Asia Pacific countries/economies. It is published by the AFACT Awareness & Education Group (AFACT-AEG). The list of members of this group, who are also the various countries' contact points for EDI/EDIFACT Awareness & Education, is shown in the succeeding pages.

The handbook is revised every after the AFACT Plenary meeting. Copies can be obtained from the secretariats of EDI/EDIFACT Committees of the respective member countries/economies or can be downloaded from the AFACT homepage at <http://www.afact.org.tw>.

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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION TO EDI AND EDIFACT

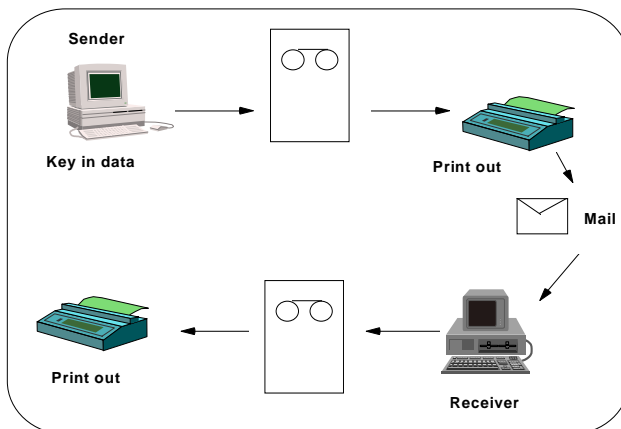
This section gives a short introduction of EDI and EDIFACT.

1 Introduction to EDI

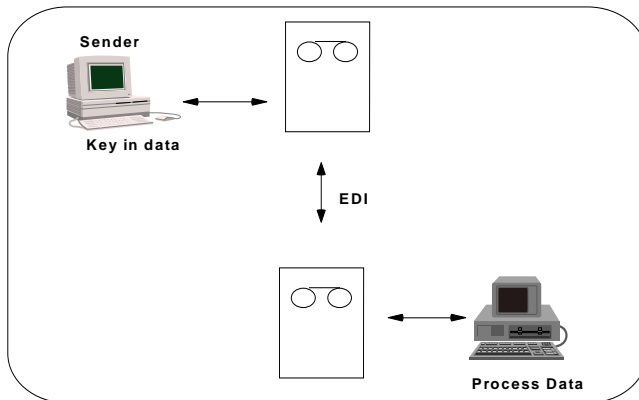
“EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) is the direct transfer of business information between computer systems in different organization (without human intervention or with minimal human intervention) using widely agreed standards to structure the transaction or message data.”

With a structured message, such as a purchase order, the data is formatted according to an agreed standard, thus facilitating the electronic transfer from one computer system to another.

The present way of business communication:



The EDI way of business communication:

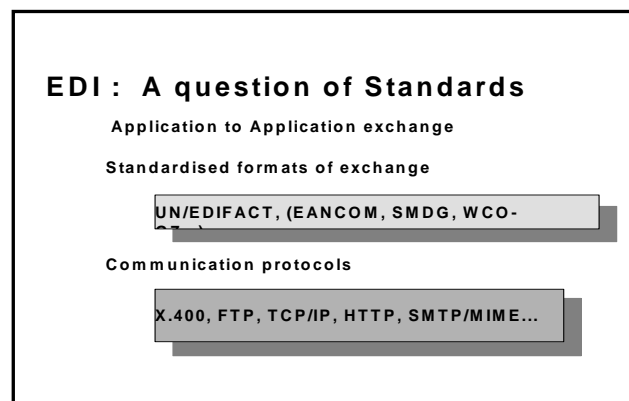


2 The Necessity of Standards

A standard is, according to ISO's, "a technical specification or another document accessible to the public established with the co-operation and the consensus or the general approval from all the parts interested, based on the combined relations of science, technology and the experiment, aiming to the optimal advantage of the community as a whole, and approved by an organisation qualified on the national, regional or international level".

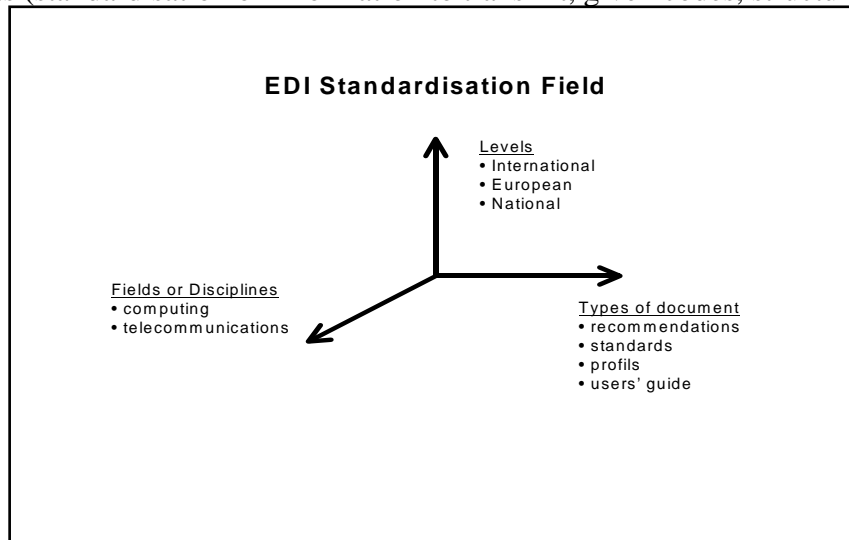
The communications between computers, like the human communication, need a common language or a system of interpretation. The interpretation or the data conversion can function very well between two partners according to a mode of specific agreement of exchange or owner but with a higher number partners, the process of exchanges, in many specific formats associated to each partner, quickly becomes "hard to handle".

A common language, using only one standard, facilitates the exchanges, allows the opening to other partners and the adaptability according to its own needs on the various levels international, European, national or sectorial.



Standardisation in EDI thus concerns:

the contents (standardisation of information to transmit, given codes, structures of



messages);

the container (protocols of telecommunication allowing to transmit the various types of EDI); and

in a bound way, the organisation of the exchanges themselves, in a total context ("sequencing" of the messages, description of scenarios, concept of open "EDI "). For this last point, one can refer usefully to work of the international working group ISO/IEC/JTC1/SC30 on "Open EDI".

In the field of telecommunications or safety for EDI, it goes without saying each time that is possible, the actors of EDI may find it beneficial to use the already existing standards in these fields.

What follows only deals with language UN/EDIFACT.

3 UN/EDIFACT Standards

For the Electronic Data Interchange, the common language, called UN/EDIFACT ¹ and retained at the international level, rests on: 1

¹ UN/EDIFACT: defined as United Nations rules for Electronic Dated Interchange For Administration, Commerce and Transport. They comprise a set of internationally agreed standards, directories and guidelines for the electronic interchange of structured data, and in particular that related to trade in goods and services, between independent computerized information systems. This chapter does not want to be an exhaustive course on the use of UN/EDIFACT. It gives only the basic elements. For more information to refer to the existing formations on this subject, please visit UN/CEFACT Website www.cefact.org.

² one often uses without distinction the term of repository or dictionary.

UN/EDIFACT Syntax, recommendation of the United Nations, taken again by the ISO, international organisation of standardisation, as a standard ISO 9735, it is the equivalent of a grammar;

a vocabulary corresponding to the data items. The data are also standardised. There is the standard ISO 7372, dictionary of the data items of the International Trade.

The steps of organisation or structuring of data to make exchanges are not new. Thus, in the past, of the sectorial agreements, national or international on the structuring of the data to be exchanged had allowed the "take-off" of EDI in particular in the sector commercial and transport.

It is only in 1987 that the recommendation of UN/EDIFACT Syntax was adopted by the United Nations and taken up again as a standard by ISO 9735 (cf. will infra, left 3: History). Whole sectors now use this standard for the Electronic Data Interchange, while others still employ formats specific to their socio-professional sector while waiting for the migration towards international standard UNEDIFACT.

Recommended within the framework of the United Nations, the rules are approved and published by the UN/CEFACT (United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business) in the United Nations Trade Data Interchange Directory (UNTDID) and are maintained under agreed procedures.

What one commonly calls UN/EDIFACT is in fact a vast unit made up of the following elements:

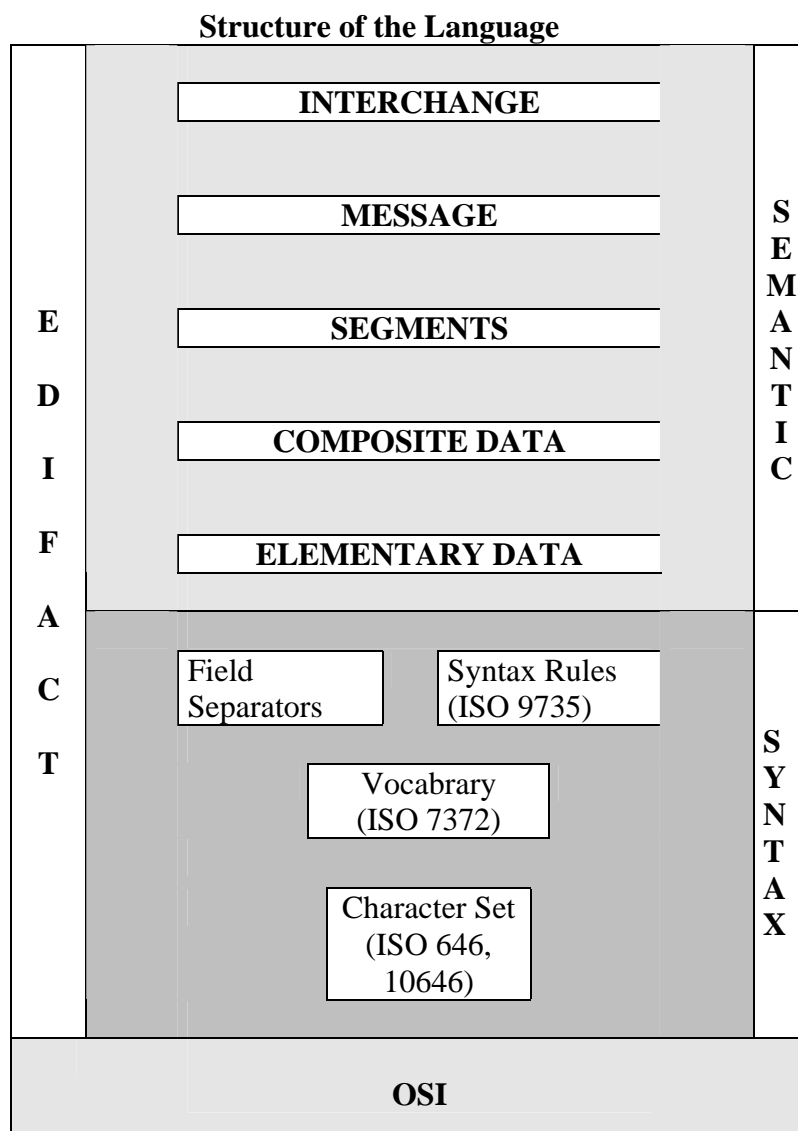
the UN/EDIFACT Syntax, taken again as a standard ISO 9735;
Syntax Implementation Guidelines (Trade/WP.4/R.530 document);
Message Design Rules (Trade/WP.4/R.840/Rev5 document); and
United Nations Rules of Conduct for Electronic Data Interchange by Teletransmission (UNCID);

and of the following directories² which constitute the UNTDID, Trade Data Interchange Directory:

UN/EDIFACT Data Element Directory – EDED, a subset of ISO 7372;
UN/EDIFACT Composite Data Element Directory - EDCD;
UN/EDIFACT Segment Directory - EDSO;
UN/EDIFACT Standard Message Directory - EDMD ;
UN/EDIFACT Codes List - UNCL.

Messages (EDMD) and their supporting directories (EDSO, EDCD, EDED and UNCL) are published twice a year in the form D.xxA and D.xxB, for instance, for the year 2002: D.02A and D.02B.

The structuring of information to constitute an EDIFACT message is represented on the following diagram:



3.1 Basic concepts

The elements of the language are composed of a syntactic part (taxis = order) and of a semantic part (= direction sowed).

The semantic part corresponds to the use of the various components of the message which translate the function of this one and give a signification to EDIFACT message.

- The simple data identify elementary information like, for example, the produced code, the postal code, the unit price, the date of a document.

A data is represented by a code with 4 digits, the wording, a description and a format:
example:

2380 DATE OR HOUR OR PERIOD an..35

Value of a date, of a date and hour, or one period in a specified format

- These simple data can be combined to form composite data and to translate logical information. For example, a date will be represented by the combination of three elements of simple data:

- qualifying date, to specify if it is about a date of order, of bill, ...;
- the date, i.e. the value itself;
- qualifying format of this date, to specify for example format
- YYMMDD.

example: the composite C507 (a letter C and 3 digits) made up like is indicated below:

C507	DATE OR HOUR OR PERIOD		
	Date and/or hour or period of a specified type.		
2005	Qualify the date or hour or period		an..3
2380	Date or hour or period		an..35
2379	Qualify the format of the date or the hour or the period		an..3

- the segment gathers simple data and/or composite data in logical entities translating a mini function, segment PRI " detailed information on prices for example detailed on the prices " for example.

PRI	DETAILED INFORMATIONS ON PRICES		
Desc:	Providing information on prices		
C509	INFORMATIONS ON PRICES	C	
5125	Price's qualifying	M	an..3
5118	Price	C	an..15
5375	Type of price encoded	C	an..3
5387	Type of price qualifying	C	an..3
5284	Unit price basis	C	an..9
6411	Unit of measure qualifying	C	an..3
5213	PRICE MODIFICATION OF A PART OF THE ARTICLE ENCODED	C	an..3

Representation:
a= alphabetic
an= alphanumeric
n= numeric
..= variable length
3= number of character at a maximum

Status:
M= mandatory
C= condition

Simple Data Element

Data Element Tag
Cxxx= composite data element

- a message EDIFACT is composed of segments to translate a business function , for example an order, a payment order.
- the exchange (in English " interchanges ") constitutes the true communication and the dialogue between two partners. An exchange contains one or more messages (messages in the same way standard within functional groups). The exchange of a message made up of structured data and retraits automatically in the data-processing applications of the partners constitutes an optimal communication EDI between partners of businesses.
- The Directives for the design of messages³ are intended to the originators of new messages with an aim of ensuring the coherence of use of the various elements.

The syntactic part specifies the alphabet to be used to represent information and grammar EDIFACT.

- syntax rests on an alphabet (ASCII 7 bits, standardised ISO 646_83, with two UNOA, character sets and UNOB). A revision of syntax ISO 9735 (Amendment 1 to the standard ISO 9735 of 1992) made it possible to enrich the number of character sets usable in syntax EDIFACT. That gives the possibility of taking account of the accents, of the alphabets Greek and Cyrillic, that is to say:
 - UNOC, ISO Standard 8859-1: Latin alphabet No.1;
 - UNOD, ISO Standard 8859-2: Latin alphabet No.2;
 - UNOE, ISO Standard 8859-5: alphabet Latin/Cyrillic;
 - UNOF, ISO Standard 8859-7: alphabet Latin/Greek.

The use of other alphabets between partners is possible and must be specified by the partners of the exchange.

The following diagram describes the use of the alphabet ISO 646-83 with two levels of possible character sets.

In the character set of level A (Cf. diagram), the separators used are:

Name	Graphic Representation	Functionality
Colon	:	component data element separator
Plus sign	+	data element separator
Question	?	release character
Asterisk	*	repetition separator
Apostrophe	'	segment terminator

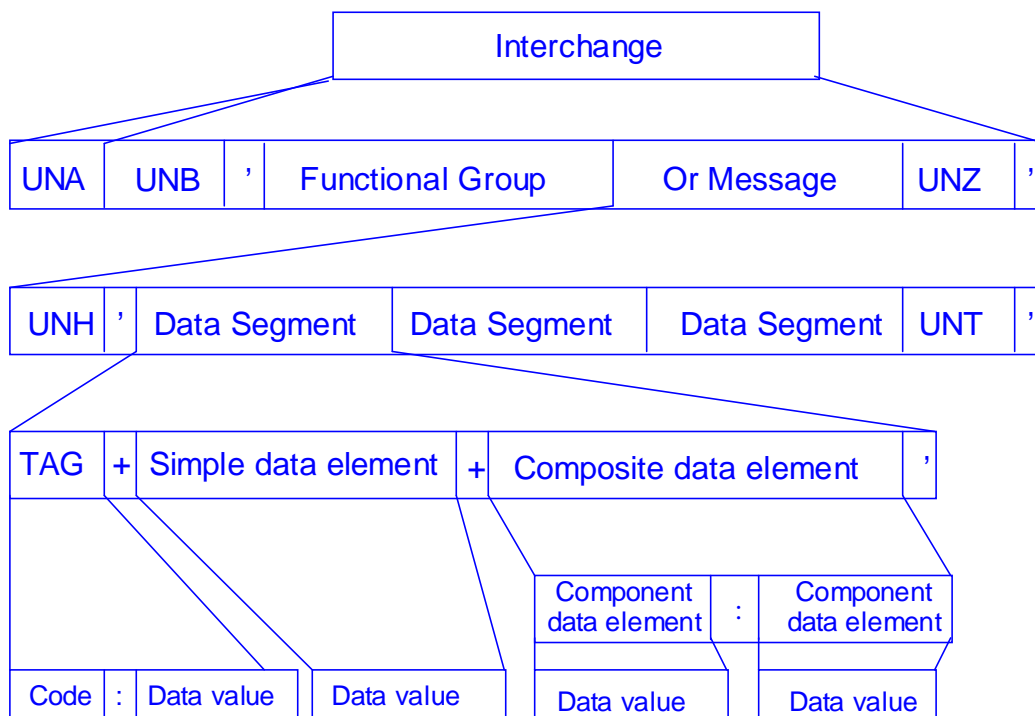
³ Cf. Trade/WP.4/R.840/Rev4 document, Directives for the design of messages, at the end of this part.

The character set of level B includes the small letters and other separators are used which are IS4 for the end of segment, separating IS3 of heading of segment and elements of data and separating IS1 of constitutive elements of data.

The rules of syntax⁴ specify grammar EDIFACT, i.e. the way in which the various elements are organised together: simple and composite data, segments and messages.

Structure of an exchange (interchange)

Interchange Structure



An interchange contains, if necessary, the segment of service UNA, character string of service, segment UNB, heading of interchange, of the functional groups, if used, or only of the messages, the segment:

UNZ, end of interchange.

A functional group contains the UNG, heading of the functional group, of the messages of same type, one, end of functional group.

⁴ Cf. TRADE/WP.4/R.530/Rev.1 document, Directives for the use of syntax (cf § 2.3 normative References)

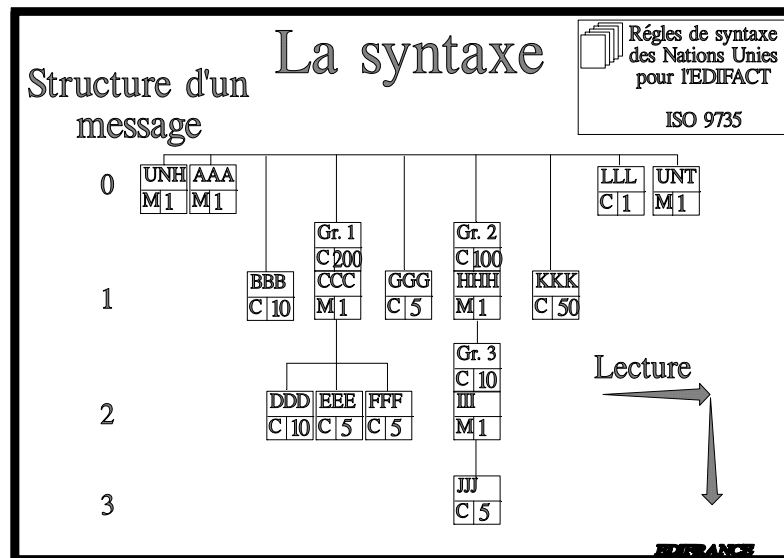
A message contains the UNH, heading of message, of the segments of data, the UNT, end of message.

A segment contains a heading of segment, simple elements of data or composite elements of data or both according to cases'.

A heading of segment contains a code of segment and if one uses the technique clarified, the indication of repetition and overlap, an element of simple data contains only one value of elements of data, an element of composite data contains constitutive elements of data, a constitutive element of data contains only one value of element of data.

Techniques of compression are described in syntax EDIFACT. Thus, for the elements of data for which the Repertory of the Elements of data indicates a variable value without other restrictions, the non-significant characters of the element of data can be omitted. The non-significant characters are not transmitted: for example zeros preceding a numerical value or white characters supplementing an alphanumeric value. The conditional segments not comprising an element of data developed must be omitted. In the same way elements of simple or constitutive data conditional can be omitted, according to certain rules of truncation.

Fictitious example of a branching diagram



3.2 Objectives:

Syntax EDIFACT is defined to be used as support with the design of messages EDIFACT. All the interest of a standard of syntax lies in the use of a common language single, internationally recognised and being able to be used independently of the branch of industry.

The flexibility results of course from the neutrality of the language with respect to the data-processing equipment, of the telecommunications networks used and of the professional uses and "the evolutivity" of the repertories also an adaptation to the various needs of the users allows (addition, modification... of data, codes.). The repertories are thus updated twice per annum (repertories D.99A and D.99B, for example).

This environment allows a design of general, intersectorial but also sectorial messages. EDIFACT thus grows rich by the constant development of new messages which follow the procedure to become standardised messages UNSM (United Nations Standard Message).

The messages are classified in several categories:

- messages UNSM known as standard: they are recommendations of messages of the United Nations which appear in the repertories of the TDID / UNO;
- messages under development (MID): they are projects of messages under development.

They cover the following fields: trade, customs, banks, insurances, transport, BTP, health, social, ...

The use of a message UNSM, whatever the sector, can be done on a level national, sectorial, regional or international, for example, in the shape of subset (subsets), according to the professional need of the user.

With term, it is reasonable to think that the various precursors having developed messages EDI in a specific language gradually will turn to UN/EDIFACT and thus that a migration will take place, the programmed migration following the example of messages ODETTE/GALIA, or the intention expressed by ANSI ASC X12.

To obtain the last state of the list of the messages, consult your focal point.

Standardised references concerning syntax EDIFACT

Several successive versions of syntax were developed since 1988:

- Version 1: ISO 9735 of 1988;
- Version 2: Amended and reprinted in 1990;
- Version 3: Amendment 1 of 1992.

These three versions were published by AFNOR under the references:

- > French standard NF IN 29735 (ISO 9735) of August 1994 (index of classification AFNOR Z13-030), with;
- > amendment 1 to the standard, is NF IN 29735/A1 (ISO 9735/A1) of May 1994 (index of classification AFNOR Z13-030/A1).
- Version 4: This new version of syntax includes/understands nine parts:

- Part 1: Syntax rules common to all parts, together with syntax service directories for each of the parts (published by the ISO on October 1, 1998);
- Part 2: Syntax rules specific to batch EDI (published by the ISO on October 1, 1998);
- Part 3: Syntax rules specific to interactive EDI (published by the ISO on October 1, 1998);
- Part 4: Syntax and service report message for batch EDI (message type - CONTRL), (published by the ISO on December 15, 1998);
- Part 5: Security rules for batch EDI (authenticity, integrity and non-repudiation of origin), (published by the ISO on April 1, 1999);
- Part 6: Secure authentication and acknowledgement message (message type - AUTACK), (published by the ISO on April 1, 1999);
- Part 7: Security rules for batch EDI (confidentiality), (Voting deadline was June 15, 1999);
- Part 8: Associated data in EDI, (published by the ISO on October 1, 1998);
- Part 9: Security key and certificate management message (message type - KEYMAN), (published by the ISO on April 1, 1999).

4. UN/EDIFACT STANDARDS: HISTORY

4.1 Before EDIFACT

The first initiatives of data exchanges goes back to the years 1960 and were launched by the sectors of the automotive engineering and air transport which had important needs for exchanges.

These sectorial initiatives corresponded to the use of formats and messages owners. In this type of step, the users ran up however very quickly against the difficulty in managing a multitude of syntaxes and formats different of messages.

A common system thus proved necessary to obtain a single language allowing a possible opening to multiple partners, i.e. a " standard of data exchange ".

Standards EDI were elaborated as well in the USA as in Europe.

In North America, for the development of EDI, the American National Standardisation Institute, the Accredited Standard Committee X12 (ANSI ASC X12) was instituted in 1978. It carried out, in 1983, its first set of standards.

Known under the name of ANSI X12, this standard was largely adopted in the USA.

Another standard was elaborate under the aegis of the Co-ordinating committee of the data of transport (Transportation Data Coordinating Committee (TDCC/EDIA)).

In September 1979, the first work relating to the some elements of data appearing in the commercial documents is undertaken by the working group on the facilitation of the procedures of trade (UN/ECE/TRADE/WP.4). This initiative made it possible to constitute the bases of the repertory of elements of data of the international trade.

In 1980, the British experts with the working group of the United Nations for the facilitation of the procedures of the international trade deposit directives for the data exchange commercial (Guidelines for Trade Data Interchange, GTDI), adopted by the United Nations and published in 1981.

In 1983, France works out an experimental standard entitled " Exchange of Commercial Files ", EFC.

Work France-British is then undertaken to bring closer the GTDI and standard EFC.

In 1985, the European and American experts also bring closer their work. A committee common UN/JEDI (Joint Electronic Data Interchange Group) is made up while the United Nations encourage this common work to develop a single standard for EDI.

4.2 INTRODUCTION TO UN/EDIFACT

Ever since the introduction of EDI, EDI users in Europe, USA and other countries have developed numerous industry based and national standards. As EDI gained more popularity, the need for a more generic globally acceptable EDI standard became more apparent. In 1985, the UN/EDIFACT ("United Nations/EDI for Administration, Commerce and Transport") was borne from a fusion of the European and the American national standards. UN/EDIFACT is fast gaining recognition and acceptance as the global EDI standard.

In 1987, the acronym EDIFACT (Electronic Data Interchange For Administration, Commerce and Transport) is adopted, work are organised around three reporter in each area represented in Geneva (Western Europe, Eastern Europe and North America). The working group on the facilitation of the procedures of the international trade adopts the rules of syntax EDIFACT which the ISO will take again, international organisation of standardisation to make of it a standard (ISO 9735).

It is then the flight of work UN/EDIFACT, since the deposit of the first message, that of the finalised " invoice " this same year until the hundred messages today while passing by the development of the directives for the design of message and of the procedures of maintenance UN/EDIFACT.

At the end of 1987, in Western Europe, a program TEDIS (Trade Electronic Data Systems Interchange) is adopted by the Council of Ministers of the European Economic

Community (Brussels). Its goal is to promote EDI and UN/EDIFACT and to co-ordinate the initiatives taken by the Member States and the groups of users. This program which started in 1988 is finished at the end of 1994. By the means of invitations to tender, it made it possible various companies to carry out studies and many work in the field of EDI.

It is also necessary to announce during this launching period of EDI work of the GTF, groups French conveyors, having developed messages relating to forwarding and the delivery.

4.3 Benefits of UN/EDIFACT

EDIFACT is a fusion of European and the American national standards. Generally, EDIFACT retains the essence of the two national standards characterized by its flexibility and efficiency while not compromising its functionality.

EDIFACT is flexible enough to be used across industries and across boundaries for both the government and private sector in a wide range of EDI applications.

EDIFACT is also supported by a set of rigorous message design procedure, thus ensuring that EDIFACT messages which are endorsed by the UN conforms fully to the standard and hence are internationally functional.

The essence of a good standard does not lie only in its flexibility, efficiency and functionality. Its acceptance is of paramount importance. EDIFACT is fast gaining popularity not only in the US and Europe, but also in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Singapore, Korea, Malaysia, China, Chinese Taipei, India, Indonesia, Iran as well as in many developing countries in the Asia Pacific region. EDIFACT is the prevailing global EDI standards.

4.4 Migration towards UN/EDIFACT

Progressively, between the years 1987 and 1994, process UN/EDIFACT could continue and show that it was able to take into account the needs for all the sectors, well beyond its field of origin, the facilitation of the international trade. A double movement of migration in its direction spread:

- sectorial: all the European or world precursors, ODETTE, EAN... at least started or practically finished, for some, the translation of their messages in UN/EDIFACT;
- national: after a historical vote, the ANSI X12 programmed stages for the migration towards UN/EDIFACT, it will remain to see how this intention will be concretised. (cf. memorandum of October 1993 of President Clinton in connection with Electronic Trades). To be also noted in Japan a progressive evolution towards standard UN/EDIFACT.

The important one, in fact not being that everyone is aligned with the blow of gun but that the direction is posted by all without ambiguity; then, it is a question of cost and of

calendar, being understood that if all is clearly affirmed, it is with an acceleration of the migration that one should assist, in the condition which process UN/EDIFACT is not choked by its own success and can simplify its consequently procedures.

4.5 Benefits of EDI

Reduce costs

With EDI, costs associated with paper handling, data entry, transcription, manual sorting, paper matching, filing, reconciling, mailing and lost mails are eliminated.

Save time

Information is delivered instantaneously enabling you to plan your production schedule promptly, thus saving more money.

Improved customer service

With an improved environment and more streamlined communications, you are able to respond more rapidly to your customer's requirements and provide better customer service.

The benefits of EDI are clear...either hook up or loose out.

5 EDI Implementation Planning

Start planning for EDI now.....

Determine your organisation's needs

Study your company's existing procedures and how it can be improved using EDI. Identify the data to be communicated, often starting with the most common transactions.

Identify business partners for EDI

Decide on which partners should participate, usually starting with the larger ones. Discuss with them about how and when they plan to use EDI.

Educate and train your staff

Prepare your people for the changes that are coming. Train your staff in EDI awareness as well as the technical aspects of EDI.

Integrate EDI into existing systems

Consider the possibility of EDI as an integral part of a complete system rather than just a communication peripheral. Review and redesign existing systems, streamline existing procedures and change the paradigms.

Decide on the network service

Decide whether you want to build your own proprietary network or select a third party Value Added Network (VAN) service. Consider the benefits of a VAN as a clearing house for your EDI system. Consider the hosts of support facilities provided by VANs, including EDI implementation support, data communication protocols, technical help desk support and EDI consultancy - not forgetting that VANs have wide network coverage with big user base.

Decide on the EDI standards

Just as voice communication requires a common set of rules which everyone understands and uses to communicate with each other, the use of EDI requires a common set standards to be accepted for communication. Decide on how data is to be presented for transmission. Do not reinvent the wheel, explore the use of existing standards such as UN/EDIFACT.

SECTION 2 New Technologies

1. THE FUTURE : XML/EDI, OO-edi...

In the context of the Electronic Trade, the generalisation of the applications of Electronic data interchange from now on is regarded as a success. Thus for example, the totality of the French supermarkets and hypermarkets daily practise EDI with their suppliers, 90% of the provisioning of the assembly lines of the car is managed in EDI. Important sectors of the distribution specialised like do-it-yourself, the book and the disc, the pharmaceutical products, but also the trade, the tools or the electric components control their flows of goods by using messages EDI.

The total turnover treated in EDI is thus evaluated to 800 billion francs in 1998 what represents a third of the value of the annual production of finished products (2500 billion francs). At the end of 1997, the study "Observatory Commercial and Electronic Exchanges" published by EDIFRANCE and the AFCEE estimated at 60.000 the number of

companies implied in EDI. The evaluations at the end of 1998 show a doubling of this figure with 110.000 companies users of the Electronic commercial tool, no matter if they belong to the Internet family, EDI or a combination of both. For Internet showed that it could facilitate the access of the smallest companies to the tools of productivity reserved hitherto to the large accounts. From this point of view, the complementary between Internet and EDI appeared like an obviousness.

1.1 XML a promising way for the development of EDI

The advent of standard XML⁵ developed within the W3C is highly likely to constitute an additional lever to make progress exchanges EDI of the Electronic Trade. Its fast development and its success require however a clarification of the respective roles of syntax and contents of information conveyed in the professional data exchanges of the Electronic Trade " B to B " or with the administrations.

To carry out automated transactions between the information systems, it is indeed necessary to have a common language and recognised by all the partners. This language must be independent of the systems, of the physical and linguistic borders.

The dictionary of reference used by the many communities implied at the world level in the Electronic Trade between firms is the repertory of elements of commercial data of the United Nations (UN/TDED). This basic element, which is the subject of the standard ISO 7372, is supplemented by other dictionaries which define the components of the language (messages, segments, data and codes).

This " alive " unit constitutes the repertory of data exchange commercial of the United Nations (UN/TDID), dated in a bi-annual way within the Centre for the Facilitation of the Procedures and of the Practices in the administration, the Trade and Transport / Edifact Working Group (see point 5). Independent of any syntax, the various elements of this corpus, already massively used in traditional messages EDI, can easily be re-used for the development of DTD ⁶ XML.

This possibility has many advantages. The first of them is to avoid with the developers and the users of DTD XML to have to reinvent the vocabulary of the Electronic Trade. The risk, indeed, would be great to create a news " Tower of Babel " in which the developments owners would come to imprison the users in logic closed and incompatible with the requirements of the markets which claim information systems interconnection. Thus avoiding the duplication of a considerable energy, the developers would make the saving in already authorised efforts.

⁵ XML: eXtended Markup Language is developed within the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium), the authority which gathers the representatives of the users and industrialists of data processing around the standardisation and the promotion of the Internet services. For more information to refer to the existing formations on this subject, in particular seminars of EDIFRANCE entitled " XML EDI and Electronic Trade " and " future of the exchanges: appraise standards and techniques " during which XML is studied in detail.

⁶ DTD: Standard Document Definition

Another of the advantages - and not of least - would come to the profit from the users. The many companies already committed in the professional data exchanges could indeed develop, to even improve their preceding investments, while profiting from a perfect compatibility between the messages EDI which they use already and new DTD developed on the basis of work of the United Nations.

1.2 Object Oriented-edi

Oriented modelling "object" constitutes a true revolution in the development of the complex information systems. Many directed methods object saw the day these last years. All these methods allowed the emergence of the language unified UML.⁷

For EDI, UML should be used to model the contents of the messages EDIFACT and the commercial or administrative activities which are the framework of the exchange considered. UML opens new prospects to the EDIFACT/ONU which will be able to thus evolve to true EDI Oriented Object.

2. THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF UN/CEFACT

2.1 Organisation UN/CEFACT

Work relating to UN/EDIFACT is within the framework of the Economic Commission on Europe of the United Nations. They are carried out there by the UN/CEFACT (United Nations Centre for the Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport), which is an international centre in which all the countries are allowed to take part, which corresponds to the world character of UN/EDIFACT.

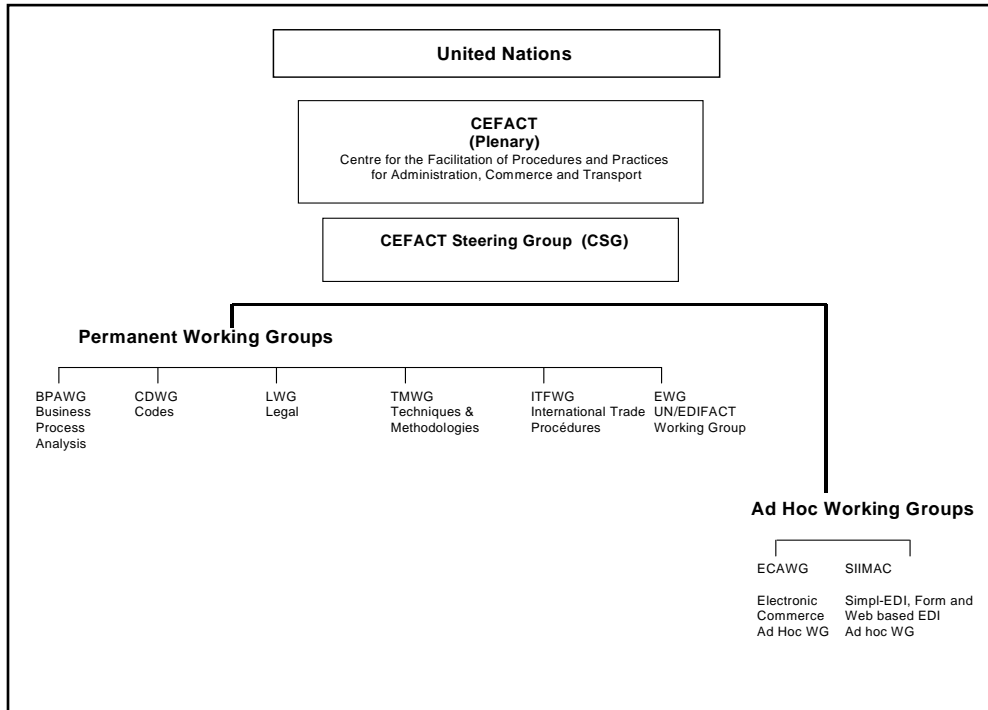
The UN/CEFACT includes/understands the following permanent working groups:

BPAWG	Business Process Analysis Working Group;
CDWG	Codes Working Group;
LWG	Legal Working Group;
TMWG	Technical and Methodology Working Group;
ITPWG	International Trade Procedures Working Group;
EWG	UN/EDIFACT Working Group;

and of the ad hoc groups (temporary):

UN/LOCODE	Coding of the Ports and other places;
EC	Trades Electronic;
Simpl-EDI	EDI on Internet (Web).

⁷ For more information to refer to the formation than EDIFRANCE organizes on this subject, entitled " UML (Unified Modelling Language)"



Among the various working groups from the CEFAC, the EDIFACT Working Group (EWG) is the technical authority of management of EDIFACT. It meets twice per annum and acquired a great autonomy with regard to this technical management, the adoption and the publication of the repertoires.

The first President of the CEFAC is Mr. Henri MARTRE, President of AFNOR, Honorary president of EDIFRANCE.

The management Committee of the CEFAC, consisted of 15 members, is chaired by Ray WALKER (the United Kingdom) and includes/understands Pierre GEORGET, president of EDIFRANCE and vice-president of the EWG.

The EDIFACT Working Group supports work relating to the maintenance of the rules of syntax EDIFACT, with the proposals of new UNSMs or a modification of the existing UNSM. Work of revision of the rules of syntax EDIFACT defined in the standard ISO 9735, as well as the maintenance of the repertoire of elements of data of the international trade based on the standard ISO 7372 are carried out by groups of the work of the ISO in close connection with the experts of the CEFAC.

Within the framework of the CEFAC, procedures exist for the design and the modifications of documentation EDIFACT, in particular with regard to the messages, segments, data items and composite and lists of codes.

Twice a year, the EWG gathers more than 250 experts of all the sectors from all around the world. These meetings constitute the true authority of technical dialogue of the world EDIFACT.

SECTION 3 - The Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT)

(reformed from Asia EDIFACT Board: ASEB in 1999)

This section gives an introduction to the AFACT, including the mission, membership, office holders, organization structure, major milestones as well as meeting schedules.

1 The Mission

AFACT aims to support in the Asia Pacific region policies and activities, especially those promoted by UN/CEFACT (United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business), dedicates to stimulate, improve and promote the ability of business, trade and administrative organisations, to exchange products and relevant services effectively in a non-political environment.

Its principal focus is to facilitate international transactions, through the simplification and harmonisation of procedures and information flows, and so contribute to the growth of global commerce.

2 Membership

The AFACT has, to date sixteen members. They are:

	COUNTRY	MEMBER SINCE	REPRESENTED BY
1	Japan	August 1990	Japan EDIFACT Committee
2	Singapore	August 1990	Singapore EDI Committee
3	Korea	April 1991	Korea EDIFACT Committee
4	China	September 1991	China EDIFACT Committee
5	Chinese Taipei	September 1991	Taipei EDIFACT Committee
6	Malaysia	May 1992	Malaysia EDIFACT Committee
7	India	August 1992	India Ministry of Commerce
8	Thailand	February 1994	Thailand EDI Council
9	Philippines	November 1994	Philippine EDI Committee

10	Sri Lanka	November 1994	Sri Lanka National EDI Committee
11	Iran	June 1996	Iran EDIFACT Committee
12	Indonesia	November 1996	Indonesia EDI Council
13	Pakistan	September 1998	Pakistan EDI Committee
14	Australia	September 1999	TradeGate Australia
15	Vietnam	October 2001	VnPRO
16	Mongolia	October 2002	MonPRO

3 Office holders

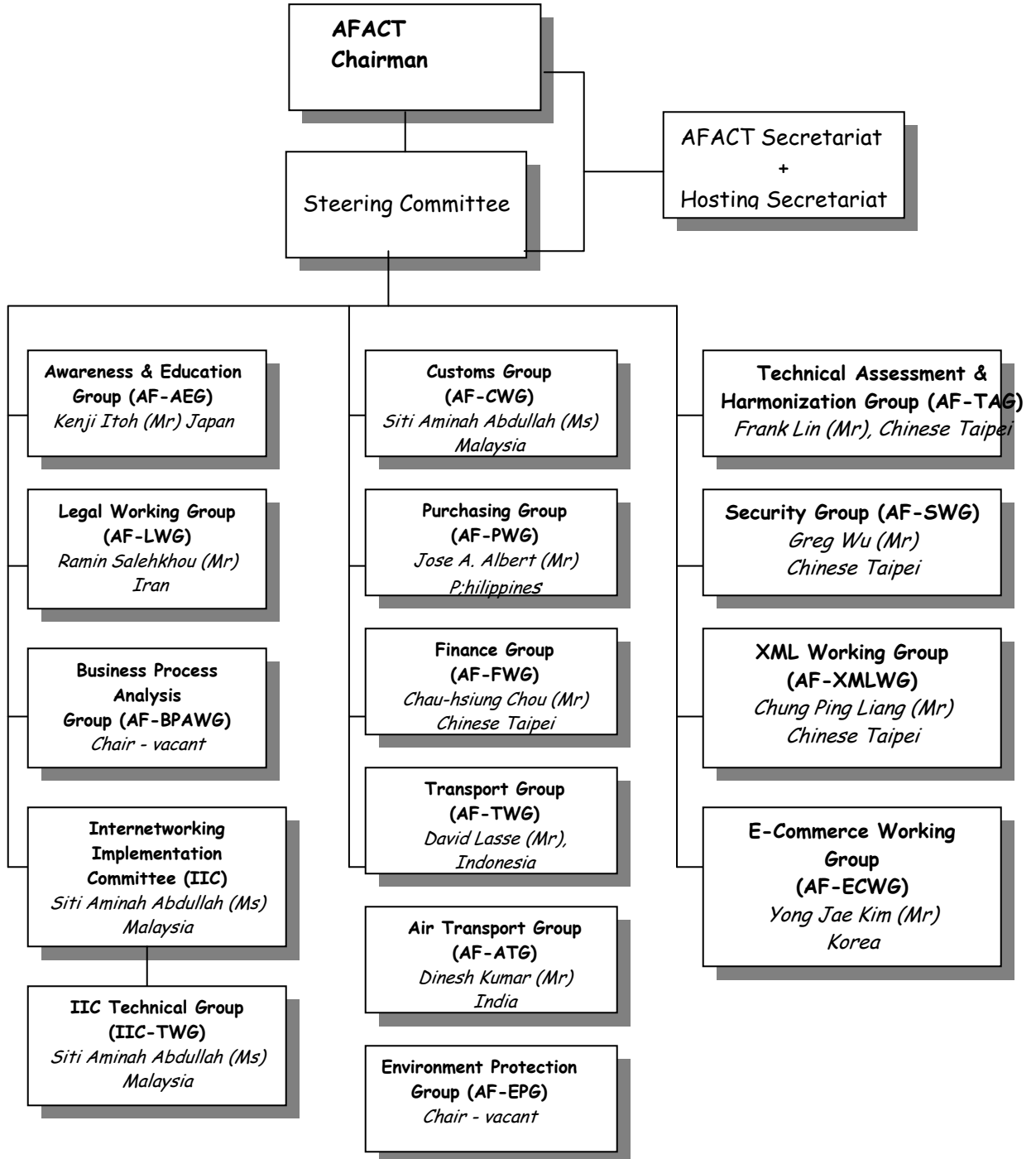
The office holders of the ASEB since Nov 1990 when the Board was set up are as follows:

TITLE	TERM	NAME	COUNTRY
Chairman	Sep 2000 – Oct 2001	Mr. Richard Mengko	Indonesia
	Sep 1999 – Sep 2000	Mr. Ferng-Ching Lin	Chinese Taipei
	Oct 1999		
	Nov 1996 - Oct 1998	Mr. Wan-Soo Sohn	Korea
	Nov 1994 - Oct 1996	Mr. Wan-Soo Sohn	Korea
	Nov 1992 - Oct 1994	Mrs Pearlleen Chan	Singapore
	Nov 1990 - Oct 1992	Mr Edi Ohkubo	Japan
Vice Chairman	Nov 1996 - Oct 1998	Mr. Anuar Maarof	Malaysia
	Dec 1994 - Oct 1996	Mr. Anuar Maarof	Malaysia
	Nov 1992 - Dec 1994	Mr Yasuyuki Sakakubara	Japan
	Nov 1990 - Oct 1992	Mr Martin Tsang	Singapore
UN/CEFACT Rapporteur	Mar 2001 – Mar 2003	Mr T. A. Khan	India

	Oct 1998 – Mar 2001	Mr Kenji Itoh	Japan
UN/EDIFACT Rapporteur	Sept 1990- Oct 1998	Mr Kenji Itoh	Japan
Vice Rapporteur	Nov 1996 - Oct 1998	Mr. T.A. Khan	India
	Dec 1994 – Oct 1996	Mr. C. J. Cherng	Chinese Taipei
	May 1992 - Dec 1994	Mr Wan-Soo Sohn	Korea
	Nov 1990 - May 1992	Ms Jocelyn Ang	Singapore

4 Organization structure

AFACT STRUCTURE



5 Joint Working Groups

A total of fourteen Joint Working Groups were established under the AFACT to promote sharing of information and expertise among members and to represent joint interests of the Asia Pacific region in the UN meetings. The activities of the groups are elaborated in Section 3.

6. Meeting schedule

MEETING	DATE	VENUE
16th ASEB Meeting EDICOM '98	Jun 29 to Jul 3, 1998	Tehran, Iran (confirmed)
17 th AFACT Meeting	Sept	Seoul, Korea
18 th AFACT Meeting	Sept	Taipei, Chinese Taipei
AFACT Steering Committee	Apr 19-20, '01	Bali, Indonesia
19 th AFACT Meeting	Oct 1 - 5	Jakarta, Indonesia
AFACT Steering Committee	Apr 18-19, '02	Lankawi, Malaysia
20th AFACT Meeting	Oct 28 – Nov 1 '02	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
21th AFACT Meeting	Sept 2003	Karachi, Pakistan

7. Milestones

SEP 1990	Appointment of the first term Rapporteur, Mr Kenji Itoh and Vice Rapporteur, Ms Jocelyn Ang of Japan and Singapore respectively
NOV 1990	The formation of Japan-Singapore EDIFACT Board (JSEB)
AUG 1990	Inaugural meeting of JSEB
JAN 1991	Korea became a member of the JSEB
APR 1991	JSEB renamed Japan-Korea-Singapore EDIFACT Board (JKSEB)
SEP 1991	China became a member of the JKSEB Chinese Taipei became an associate member of the JKSEB
SEP 1991	Japan-Korea-Singapore EDIFACT Board (JKSEB) renamed Asia EDIFACT Board (ASEB)

- OCT 1991 Rapporteur/Vice Rapporteur of JKSEB changed title to Rapporteur/Vice Rapporteur for Asia
- MAR 1992 Inaugural meeting of the ASEB Finance Joint Working Group (FJWG)
- MAY 1992 Malaysia became a member of the ASEB
- JUN 1992 Mr Kenji Itoh of Japan was nominated as the Rapporteur for the 2nd term and Mr Sohn Wan Soo of Korea was nominated as the Vice Rapporteur
- AUG 1992 India became a member of the ASEB
- OCT 1992 Mrs Pearleen Chan of Singapore was appointed as the new Chairman of ASEB and Mr Yasuyuki Sakakibara was appointed as the new Vice Chairman
- Inaugural meeting of the ASEB Awareness & Education Working Group (AS AEG)
- Inaugural meeting of the ASEB Technical Assessment Working Group (AS TAG)
- MAY 1993 Inaugural meeting of the ASEB Transport Joint Working Group (AS TWG)
- OCT 1993 Inaugural meeting of the ASEB Customs Joint Working Group (AS CWG)
- FEB 1994 Thailand became a member of the ASEB
- JUN 1994 Inaugural meeting of the ASEB Purchasing Joint Working Group (AS PWG)
- Nov 1994 Inaugural meeting of the ASEB Security Working Group (AS-SWG)
- Nov 1994 Inaugural meeting of the ASEB Electronics & Computing Working Group (AS-ECG)
- Jun 1995 Inaugural meeting of the ASEB Air Transport Working Group (AS-ATG)
- JUN 1995 Philippines and Sri Lanka became members of the ASEB
- Jun 1995 Inaugural meeting of the ASEB Internetworking Implementation Committee (AS-IIC)
- JUN 1996 Iran became a member of the ASEB
- NOV 1996 Indonesia became a member of the ASEB

- NOV 1996 MOUs for Inter-VAN connectivity during the pilot stage had been signed during the 13th ASEB in New Delhi between:
 Dagang*Net and KTNET
 Dagang*Net and NICNET
 Dagang*Net and EDINET
- FEB 1997 Signing of MOU for Inter-VAN connectivity in Kuala Lumpur between Dagang*Net and TRADE-VAN
- Apr 1997 Inaugural meeting of the ASEB Environment Protection Working Group (AS-EPG)
- Apr 1997 Inaugural meeting of the ASEB Healthcare Working Group (AS-HWG)

8 Member countries contact points

COUNTRY	NAMES	CONTACT
1 Japan	Mr Shigeki Ogino Secretariat, JEC	JASTPRO Daiichi-Daimon Building 2-10-1 Shibadaimon, Minatoku, Tokyo 105-0012 Japan Tel : 81-3-3347-6135 Fax : 81-3-3437-6136 E-mail: jastpro@jastpro.or.jp
2 Singapore	Ms Lay Chin Cheong Secretariat, SEC	75 Science Park Drive, #B1/01-13 CINTECH II Building, Singapore 0511 Tel : 65-7727578 Fax : 65-7785277 E-mail: laychin@sns.com.sg
3 Korea	Mr Yong-Han Joe Secretariat, KEC	5 th Fl. Dongwon B/D 944-11 Daechi-dong, Kangnam-ku Seoul, Korea Tel : 82-2-3453-0778 Fax : 82-2-3453-0405 E-mail: keb@ktnet.co.kr
4 Chinese Taipei	Mr D H Lin Secretariat, TEC	Institute for Information Industry 10 th Fl., 116 Nanking East Road Section 2 Taipei, Taiwan Tel : 886-2542-2540 Fax : 886-2531-0760 E-mail: dhlin@iiidns.iii.org.tw

5 China	Mr Wu Zhigang Secretariat, CEC	Chinese Electronics Standardization Institute (CESI) No 1 Au Ding Men East St, Beijing, People's Republic of China 100007 P O Box 1101 Tel : 86-10-6400-7689 Fax: 86-10-6400-7681 E-mail: cesi@public.intercom.co.cn
6 India	Mr T. A. Khan Secretariat, IEC	National Informatics Centre Ministry of Commerce Udyod Bhavan New Delhi – 110011, India Tel : 91-11-3015299 Fax : 91-11-3014418 E-mail: takhan@ub.nic.in http://www.nic.in/
7 Malaysia	Ms Salmah Khairuddin Secretariat, MEC	Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Mgt Planning Unit (MAMPU), Prime Minister's Department 4th Floor Wisma PKNS Jalan Raja Laut 50527 Kuala Lumpur MALAYSIA Tel : 603-298-2066 Fax : 603-291-7372 E-mail: salmah@mampu.gov.my selina@mampu.gov.my
8 Thailand	Ms Chanorose Kasipar Secretariat, ThEC	National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC) 6 th Fl., NSTDA Bldg. Rama VI Rd., Rajthevi Bangkok, 10400, Thailand Tel : 662-644-6650 Fax: 662-644-6653, 662-247-1335 E-mail: ck@nwg.nectec.or.th tedic-sec@nectec.or.th

9 Philippines	Mr. Anthony A. Cortez Secretariat, PEC	Garments & Textile Export Board 4 th Floor, New Solid Bldg, 357 Gil Puyat Avenue Makati City, Philippines Tel : 632-890-4651 Fax: 632-890-4653 E-mail: gtebtony@dti.gov.ph
10 Sri Lanka	Ms. Aruni Goonetilleke Secretariat, SrEC	Computer and Information Technology Council of Sri Lanka (CINTEC) 9 Clifford Avenue Colombo-3, Sri Lanka Tel : 941-574737 / 573326 Fax: 941-574799 E-mail: agunatil@cintec.ac.lk
11 Iran	Mr. H. R. Tadjedini Secretariat, IrEC	Institute for Trade Studies & Research P.O. Box 14185-671 240 North Kargar St. Teheran, Iran Tel : 98-21-6432749 Fax: 98-21-926326 E-mail: mostofi@dci.iran.com
12 Indonesia	Mr. David A. Lasse Secretariat, InEC	EDI Indonesia Wisma SMR, 3 rd Floor Suite 02, Jl. Yos Sudarso Kav. 89 Jakarta 14350, Indonesia Tel : 62-21-6505829 Fax: 62-21-6505987 E-mail: jasief@indosat.net.id
13. Pakistan	Mr. Javed A. Naushahi E-Commerce Task Force Ministry of Science & Technology Pakistan	ECOM Technologies 2 nd Fl., Navika Square, G5, Commercial Area off Shaheed Millat Road Karachi Tel: 453-9701 Fax: 452-4976 E-mail: jnaushahi@yahoo.com jnaushahi@hotmail.com javedn@digicom.net.pk
14. Australia		

15. Vietnam	Mr. Nguyen Huu Anh Ministry of Trade	31 Trang Tien Str., Hanoi, Vietnam Tel: 84-4-825 5678 Faz: 84-4-934 4323 E-mail: huanh@mot.gov.vn tmdtu@fpt.vn
16. Mongolia		

9 Observer Countries contact points

COUNTRIES	NAMES	CONTACT
1 Hong Kong	Mr Tradelink	13/F Natwest Tower, Times Square 1 Matheson Street Causeway Bay, Hong Kong Tel : 852-599-1630 Fax : 852-506-0188
2 Brunei		

SECTION 3 - JOINT WORKING GROUPS UNDER AFACT

Joint Working Groups were established under the AFACT to promote sharing of information and expertise among member countries and to represent joint interests of the Asia Pacific region in the UN meetings.

A total of fourteen Joint Working Groups have been established under the AFACT.

1. EDUCATION & AWARENESS JOINT WORKING GROUP (AF AEG)

1.1 Scope

The mission of the Education & Awareness Joint Working Group is to actively promote and encourage Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business by utilizing

international standards/norms in Asia-Pacific region by assisting the AFACT to organise and develop relevant educational and promotional programmes.

The Education & Awareness Group was formed on 28 October 1992 and it is currently chaired by Mr Anthony Cortez of Philippines.

1.2 Terms of Reference

- a) To serve as a focal point for awareness & education of Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business.
- b) To facilitate the sharing of expertise and experience among the participating countries and economies.
- c) To represent the common interests and requirements of AFACT in the relevant international meetings
- d) To collaborate with other AFACT working groups for promoting and training the use of the related international standards.

1.3 Programme of Work

Short Term (One year)

- a) To produce the AFACT Guide (Brochure) – including a basic concept on EB/EC
- b) To update the AFACT Awareness handbook on a annual basis.
- c) To support the AFACT focal point to organize a promotion seminar for local audiences.
- d) To cooperate with the hosting member to organize EDICOM.

Long Term (Five years)

- a) To produce a set of relevant training programmes
- b) To collaborate with UN/ESCAP for developing Trade Facilitation training kit.
- c) To organize a promotion seminar in less-edi-advanced member countries/economies.
- d) To collaborate with other AFACT working groups for initiating a pilot project.

2. FINANCIAL JOINT WORKING GROUP (AF FWG)

The mission of the Financial Working Group is to stimulate joint application of EDI and EDIFACT among the banks in the member countries.

The Financial Working Group was formed on 19 June 1992 and it is currently chaired by Mr. Chao-hsiung Chou of Chinese Taipei.

2.1 Terms of Reference

- a) To serve as a focal point for the development and usage of UN/EDIFACT for the Finance sectors of the member countries/economies.
- b) To develop and promote the use of UN/EDIFACT messages for the Finance sectors within and among member countries/economies.
- d) To represent the interests and requirements of the Finance sectors of member countries/economies in international meetings.

2.2 Current Activities

- a) Provide a communication channel for financial EDIFACT matters.
- b) Work out a corporate payment model.
- c) Track the development of financial EDIFACT messages.
- d) Review the security and legal issues of financial EDI.

(Refer to the minutes of the meeting of the AS-FWG during the 15th ASEB Meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on November 2-6, 1997 which is under Section 5 of this handbook.)

3. Technical Assessment and Harmonization Joint Working Group (AF TAG)

The mission of the Technical Assessment and Harmonization Group is to support ASEB on the technical aspects of EDIFACT messages development and to assess messages developed by the various working groups for structure and syntax conformance.

The Technical Assessment Group was formed on 28 October 1992 and it is currently chaired by Mr Frank Lin of Chinese Taipei.

3.1 Terms of Reference

- a) To support Rapporteur from a technical perspective.
- b) To support and assist the Joint Working Groups under ASEB.
- c) To evaluate locally-developed messages.
- d) To check change requests (CRs) from the region before official submission.
- e) To participate in JTAG of JRT (Joint Rapporteurs Advisory and Support Team) Meeting regularly.

3.2 Current Activities

- a) To review the following materials and to submit comments to secretariat;
 - SDG Executive Summary
 - Draft Interactive EDIFACT MDG
 - UN/EDIFACT Procedures (R.1042 and CRP.4 issued at 49th GE.1)

4. TRANSPORT JOINT WORKING GROUP (AF TWG)

The mission of the Transport Working Group is to stimulate joint application of EDI and EDIFACT in the transport sectors of the member countries.

The Transport Working Group was formed on 19 May 1993 and it is currently chaired by Mr. David Lasse of Indonesia.

4.1 Terms of Reference

- a) To serve as a focal point for the development and usage of UN/EDIFACT for the Transport sectors of the member countries/economies.
- b) To facilitate the sharing of expertise among member countries/economies.
- c) To develop and promote the use of UN/EDIFACT messages for the Transport sector within and among member countries/economies.
- d) To represent the interests and requirements of the Transport sector of member countries/economies in international meetings.

4.2 Current Activities

- a) To appoint focal points for the following 6 messages to closely monitor the future development and implementation;

MOVINS (Stowage Instruction)
PAXLST (Passenger List)
CODECO (Container Departure Confirmation)
COPARN (Container Pre-arrival Notice)
IFTDGN (Dangerous Goods Notification)
CALINF (Call Information)

(Refer to the minutes of the AS-TWG meeting during the 15th ASEB meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on November 2-6, 1997 which is under Section 5 of this report.)

5. CUSTOMS JOINT WORKING GROUP (AF CWG)

The mission of the Customs Working Group is to focus on the electronic communication requirements between the trading community and the Customs/Trade departments in the various member countries.

The Customs Working Group was formed on 25 October 1993 and it is currently chaired by Ms. Siti Aminah Abdullah of Malaysia.

5.1 Terms of Reference

1. To serve as a focal point for the development and usage of UN/EDIFACT messages for the communication between the trading community and the Customs department and the trade departments of the member countries/economies.
2. To facilitate the sharing of expertise among member countries/economies.
3. To develop and promote the use of UN/EDIFACT Customs messages within and among member countries/economies.
4. To present the interests and requirements of the member countries/economies on Customs related issues in the international meetings.

5.2 Current Activities

1. Review of Customs related messages currently developed and being developed.
2. Share experiences about each country's Customs EDI System implemented or being implemented.

3. Explore collaboration with the APEC work group on the proposal on Customs EDI project.

(Refer to the minutes of the meeting of the AS-CWG during the 15th ASEB Meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on November 2-6, 1997 which is under Section 5 of this handbook.)

6. PURCHASING JOINT WORKING GROUP (AF PWG)

The mission of the Purchasing Working Group is to develop and promote the use of EDIFACT messages for the Purchasing sectors within and among the various member countries.

The Purchasing Working Group was formed on 6 June 1994 and it is currently chaired by Mr Jose A. Albert of Philippines.

6.1 Terms of Reference

- a) To serve as the focal point for the development and usage of UN/EDIFACT for the Purchasing sectors of the member countries/economies.
- b) To facilitate the sharing of expertise among member countries/economies.
- c) To develop and promote the use of EDIFACT messages for the Purchasing sector within and among member countries/economies.
- d) To represent the interests and requirements of the Purchasing sector of member countries/economies in international meetings.

6.2 Current Activities

- a) Promote the setting up of Purchasing Message Development Group (PMDG) of the member countries to expand membership of AS PWG.
- b) Determine the various levels of activities pertaining to message development on Purchasing currently being carried out by AS PWG members.
- c) Set up change request procedures for messages.
- d) Draw up a reporting format at AS PWG meetings for the members.

(Refer to the minutes of the meeting of the AS-PWG during the 15th ASEB Meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on November 2-6, 1997 which is under Section 5 of this handbook.)

7. AIR TRANSPORT JOINT WORKING GROUP (AF ATG)

The mission of the Air Transport Working Group is to stimulate joint application of EDI and use of EDIFACT messages in the aviation sector along with maritime in the transportation of cargo among the various member countries/economies.

The Air Transport Working Group was formed in November 1994 and it is currently chaired by Mr. Dinesh Kumar of India.

7.1 Terms of Reference

- a) To serve as a focal point for the development and usage of UN/EDIFACT for the Air Transport sectors of the member countries/economies.
- b) To facilitate the sharing of expertise among member countries/economies.
- c) To represent the interests and requirements of the Air Transport sector of member countries/economies in international meetings.

7.2 Current Activities

(Refer to the minutes of the meeting of the AS-ATG during the 15th ASEB Meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on November 2-6, 1997 which is under Section 5 of this handbook.)

8. SECURITY JOINT WORKING GROUP (AF SWG)

The mission of the Security Working Group is to focus on security issues pertaining to the development and use of EDI and UN/EDIFACT standard messages among the various member countries/economies.

The Security Working Group was formed in November 1994 and it is currently chaired by Mr. Greg Wu of Chinese Taipei.

8.1 Terms of Reference

- a) To serve as a task force for the development and promotion of the use of UN/EDIFACT security standards among the member countries/economies.
- b) To facilitate the sharing of security expertise among member countries/economies.
- c) To develop and promote the use of UN/EDIFACT Security Services and Messages for information exchange within and among the member countries/economies.
- d) To represent the security requirements and interests of the member countries /economies in international meetings.

8.2 Current Activities

(Refer to the minutes of the meeting of the Security Working Group during the 15th ASEB Meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on November 2-6, 1997 which is under Section 5 of this handbook.)

10. INTERNETWORKING IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (AF IIC)

The mission of the Internetworking Implementation Committee is to work towards setting up of internetwork connections among the members and associate members to further promote the use of EDI and UN/EDIFACT for better business and trade facilitation.

The Internetworking Implementation Committee was formed in June 1995 and it is currently chaired by Mr. Siti Aminah Abdullah of Malaysia.

10.1 Terms of Reference

- a) To identify applications for the inter network link (e.g. Customs Declaration, purchase order and invoice).
- b) Prioritize the implementation of these applications.
- c) Identify pilot countries to set up the first inter network link.

- d) Prepare a schedule for the establishment of the first inter network link.

10.2 Current Activities

(Refer to the minutes of the meeting of the Internetworking Implementation Committee during the 15th ASEB Meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on November 2-6, 1997 which is under Section 5 of this handbook.)

11. ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION JOINT WORKING GROUP (AF EPG)

The mission of the Environment Protection Working Group is to stimulate the development and use of EDI and UN/EDIFACT standard messages in environmental concerns among the member countries/economies.

The Environment Protection Working Group was formed on April 30, 1997 and it is currently chaired by Mr. Howard Shih-How Chen of Chinese Taipei.

11.1 Terms of Reference

- a) To serve as a task force for developing the usage of UN/EDIFACT on the environment affairs in the Asia Region.
- b) To facilitate the sharing of expertise among member countries/economies.
- c) To develop and promote the use of UN/EDIFACT Messages for the Environment Agency sectors within and among the member countries/economies.
- d) To represent the interest and requirements of the Asia Region in various international meetings.

11.2 Current Activities

(Refer to the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Protection Working Group during the 15th ASEB Meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on November 2-6, 1997 which is under Section 5 of this handbook.)

APPENDIX I : LIST OF ACRONYMS COMMONLY FOUND IN AFACT MATERIALS

AFACT	Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business
ANZEB	Australia/New Zealand EDIFACT Board
ASEB	Asia EDIFACT Board
CALS	Continuous Acquisition Life Cycle Support
CDT	Committee on Development and Trade
CEEB	Central and Eastern European EDIFACT Board
CEFACT	Center for the Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business
CSG	CEFACT Steering Group
CTIED	Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development
DAT	Directory Audit Team
EBES	European Board for EDI/EC Standardization
EC	Electronic Commerce
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECOSOC	UN's Economic and Social Commission
EDI	Electronic Data Interchange
EEMA	European Electronic Messaging Association
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
E-mail	Electronic Mail
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
GE.1	Group of Experts on Data Elements and Automatic Data Interchange
GE.2	Group of Experts on Procedures and Documentation
IAPH	International Association of Ports and Harbours
IATA	International Air Transport Association
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
IFIA	International Federation of Inspection Agencies
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITT	International Trade Transactions
JWG	Joint Working Group
MDRG	Message Design Rules Group
NATPRO	North American Trade Procedures Organization
PAEB	Pan American EDIFACT Board
S.W.I.F.T.	Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications
SDG	Syntax Development Group
UN/EDIFACT	UN Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport
UN/LOCODE	UN Location Code

UNCITRAL United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNLK United Nations Layout Key
WCO World Customs Organization
WEEB Western European EDIFACT Board
WP.4 Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures
WTO World Trade Organization
WWW World Wide Web

CEFACT

**Centre for Trade Facilitation and
Electronic Commerce**

An International Private-Public Sector Partnership

Our Mission:

To improve the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transitional economies, to exchange products and relevant services effectively -- and so contribute to the growth of global commerce.

Our Focus:

The facilitation of international transactions, through the simplification and harmonisation of procedures and information flows.

Who Are We?

CEFACT is the UN's Centre for Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport. It is open to participation from UN member states, inter-governmental organizations, and sectoral and industry associations recognised by the UN's Economic and Social Commission (ECOSOC). The Centre's objective is to be "inclusive" and not "exclusive" so it actively encourages organizations who use its recommendations and standards to take part in their creation.

The participation of many private sector associations in CEFACT's work at the policy level, and of hundreds of private sector technical experts in CEFACT working groups, is a unique feature of the Centre, forging new cooperative relationships between private business and intergovernmental organizations.

Within the UN system, CEFACT is located in the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) which is part of the UN's network of Regional Commissions. These Regional Commissions report to the highest UN body in the area of economics and development: ECOSOC. This is the ideal location for developing practical recommendations for action, because within the UN system and their work areas, the Regional Commissions have the closest links to national governments at the expert level.

History

Two-thirds of world trade originates from the UN Economic Commission for Europe's (ECE's) region, i.e. Europe and North America -- the region which also pioneered the reduction of tariff barriers to trade internationally. With reduced tariff barriers came a realization of the importance of procedural trade barriers, a great interest in seeing procedural barriers reduced or eliminated, and the beginning of significant work in this area by the ECE in the late 1960s. This work has resulted in trade facilitation techniques, recommendations and norms which have been implemented across the world. As a consequence, the ECE has developed a centre of excellence in trade facilitation within the UN system and, today, over 1500 private and public sector experts participate in the work.

CEFACT was established by the ECE in early 1996 in response to new technological developments, a desire to officially recognise the contributions made by the above mentioned experts (many of whom come from outside the ECE region), and the need to make better use of available resources.

CEFACT

Expanding Global Commerce

Free trade agreements, while a necessary condition, are not sufficient to guarantee continued growth in world trade. Sustainable growth can only be accomplished by increasing the participation of small and medium sized enterprises in international trade. For this to happen, international trade must be easier and simpler, i.e. progress needs to be made in reducing and harmonizing the cumbersome and time-consuming paperwork, formalities and procedures often required for international trading. This is the facilitation of administration, commerce and transport -- and it is CEFACT's goal.

Reducing Bureaucracy and Increasing Transparency

While CEFACT does considerable work in the harmonization and simplification of documents and data formats, these are only the tip of an iceberg. The real problems are administrative and commercial procedures which are based upon the information requirements of each party and the way in which information is transferred between those parties.

To attack the problem of cumbersome and difficult procedures, CEFACT:

- analyzes the key elements in international transactions;
- identifies the constraints that effect them; and
- develops recommendations to eliminate identified constraints and harmonize remaining procedures;

Improving data flows via electronic commerce

Facilitating business and administration requires more than just identifying the minimum data requirements, one must also examine the best methods for transmitting the data. In this area, CEFACT analyzes the use of information and electronic commerce technologies in order to develop recommendations and, where appropriate, methodologies and tools.

Lowering transaction costs

To actually reduce transaction costs, it is not enough to understand the problem and present solutions -- those solutions must be implemented. Since procedures are frequently linked to administrative requirements, implementing often requires cooperation between governments and the private sector. CEFACT therefore works through government,

industry and service association channels, as well as its delegations, to promote and implement facilitation recommendations, tools, and associated best practices.

Developing a network of supporting institutions

To increase its effectiveness, CEFACT actively co-ordinates with other international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the UN Conference on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Many of these organizations also participate directly in CEFACT's work.

In addition, since its work has broad applications beyond global trade, CEFACT recognizes the need to secure coherence, particularly in its electronic commerce methods. To do this, it meets regularly with other interested parties, such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

To enlarge its "local" impact, CEFACT actively supports the establishment of national trade facilitation organizations.

Improving Private and Public Sector Management

In summary, CEFACT's overall goal is to improve the collection, management and exchange of trade and transaction data -- i.e. information that is essential to the management of national economies as well as individual companies and organizations.

CEFACT Recommendations, Tools and Methodologies

The UN Layout Key

Improving Data Flows in Traditional Trade as well as on the Information Super Highway

Most of the international trade documents used throughout the world today are designed in conformity with what is called the "United Nations Layout Key" (UNLK), another CEFACT development. This standardization allows the use of rationalized methods for document preparation where information is typed only once for a full set of export documents. Today, as a reflection of the increasing automation of trade data flows, the UNLK is also used by information systems either for the conversion of data records to printed output or in the screen displays used for data entry.

CEFACT has not forgotten that much of the world's trade and data exchange still takes place on paper (even if the data comes from or is eventually stored on a computer).

Therefore, it continues to develop recommendations for the best use of the UN Layout Key in the design of specific documents such as invoices, purchase orders and the dangerous goods declarations used in international transport.

Trade Facilitation Recommendations Reducing Bureaucracy, Harmonizing Data and Improving Information Flows

There are twenty-six CEFACT Trade Facilitation Recommendations. Five of these recommendations have become International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards. All (except two, which are maintained by ISO) are reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. Some of these recommendations have as their purpose reducing the complexity of existing procedures, while others strive to harmonize transaction data or the methods used for transmitting that data.

Among CEFACT's Trade Facilitation Recommendations are:

- *UN/LOCODE*; a unique international code for locations in international trade which is widely used in the transport and tourism industries.
- *Facilitation Measures Related to International Trade Procedures*; a series of measures which governments should consider implementing, each measure outlining the procedures and documents covered as well as the problems for which solutions are proposed.
- *PAYTERMS*; abbreviations for terms of payment.
- *Transport Status Codes*; codes to harmonize information exchanged on the status of consignments, goods or means of transport at a certain time or place in the transport chain.
- *National Trade Facilitation Organizations*; guidelines for establishing national organizations or committees to encourage the implementation of trade facilitation measures.

Because of their particular importance on a global level, Trade Facilitation Recommendation 1, on the UN Layout Key, and Recommendation 25, on the use of UN/EDIFACT, have been approved and endorsed by the UN Economic and Social Council as a global UN Recommendations.

CEFACT Recommendations, Tools and Methodologies

UN/EDIFACT

Improving Data Flows On the Information Superhighway

Today, exchanging information rapidly and accurately between companies, and even between countries, is indispensable if one is to be competitive. Developed and maintained by CEFACT, UN/EDIFACT (UN Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport) provides the essential rules for data exchange, particularly when data needs to be processed by more than one organization or exchanged at minimum cost.

For the information superhighways of electronic commerce, UN/EDIFACT provides important "rules of the road" -- especially for the fast lane.

Electronic Commerce (EC) combines existing and new technologies and this combination changes the way organizations do business. Electronic mail (e-mail), the World Wide Web (WWW) and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) are the most important EC technologies. EDI is the exchange of structured data between computer applications, using agreed rules. It is indispensable to the automated exchange of large volumes of data and the implementation of modern management techniques such as just-in-time manufacturing or inventory management. UN/EDIFACT is the international standard for EDI.

All of these EC technologies can be used over the Internet, as well as networks based on Internet technology such as internal Intranets and closed group Extranets. Additionally, e-mail and EDI can be implemented among users of almost any private or public sector network.

EDI is widely used by companies around the world, but is seldom mentioned in the popular press. This is because consumers do not "see" EDI or even know when they are using it. For example, someone who fills out a form displayed on the WWW only sees the WWW and the form -- not the software application behind the form. Whether that software uses the entered data directly, or creates and sends an EDI message, is not important to the consumer. But there are clear advantages to EDI for the organization receiving this data: increased security, the ability to combine the consumer's data with large data volumes coming in EDI formats from corporate accounts, and greater ease in exchanging data with third parties.

UN/EDIFACT helps the organizations that use EDI to harmonize their data across national, sectoral and organizational frontiers -- independently of their hardware or software choices. As a common, internationally agreed standard, it is also politically neutral, which can be important when communicating data with a wide variety of partners.

CEFACT A Centre of Competence

The CEFACT secretariat as well as its delegates and participating technical experts have developed an expertise in the area of trade facilitation unrivalled by any organization.

A Trade Facilitation Information Hub

Through its publications, annual CD-ROM and extensive Internet resource site, CEFACT offers a global hub for the collection and dissemination of trade facilitation information, advice, guidance and models.

A Focal Point for Coordinating Technical Work

One of the strongest points of CEFACT as an organization is its ability to coordinate the work of interested experts on a global level.

Who Uses CEFACT's Work?

Many industrial sectors and associations including: the international electronics industry (including companies like IBM, Hewlett-Packard and Digital Equipment), the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the International Article Numbering Association (EAN);

the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (S.W.I.F.T.) for communications between banks and non-bank organizations;

National statistical administrations and central banks throughout Europe, and the world, for the exchange of statistical data between themselves and with organizations like Eurostat, the International Monetary Fund and the Bank for International Settlements.

Well over 50 national administrations in customs, transport, and a variety of other administrative areas such as healthcare, social security and Value-Added Tax declarations, examples being: Australia, Belgium, France, India, Korea, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Zimbabwe;

To Obtain the Greatest Benefit from CEFACT's Work: Join Us

While the results of CEFACT's work are publicly available to use and benefit all governments and organizations, full advantage can only be gained by taking part in the work. Some of the advantages to be gained by participating are:

a thorough understanding of the reasoning behind recommendations, as well as variations on their implementation;

assurance that your national situation and the needs of your organization have been taken into full consideration;

advance information about what other countries and organizations are planning or implementing.

For More Information:

For further information on CEFACT's ongoing work, refer to our Internet WWW address:
<http://www.unece.org/trafix/>

For information on how you, or your organization, could participate in the work -- as well as any other questions -- please contact the secretariat at:

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APPENDIX III CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(This space shall be made available to all member countries/economies for whatever activities they would want to publish in this handbook.)