ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development

Team of Specialists on Internet Enterprise Development

<u>**Seminar on The Regulatory Framework for Internet-based Entrepreneurship:**
The E-Business Repository Project</u>

Geneva, 9 February 2005

<u>Information Notice No.1 by the UNECE secretariat</u>

<u>Introduction</u>

1.   The key mission of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is fostering economic cooperation in its region. The UNECE region consists of 55 countries and covers the North America, the whole Europe, the Commonwealth Independent States, Turkey and Israel. Relatively recent changes in the structure of national economies and sources of economic growth, driven by the rapid advances and diffusion of information and communication technologies, have also reshaped the prerequisites and nature of such an economic cooperation. It has become clear that the information and communication technologies play the key role not only in the structural changes but also in opening new growth avenues and in supporting desirable rates of economic growth, productivity and employment in the UNECE region.

2.   The widespread use of the information and communication technologies has become a cornerstone of economic growth both in developed market economies and emerging market economies.

3.   The UNECE governments have also reshaped their way of operation in the last 10 to 15 years relying on the advances in use of the information and communication technologies. The automation of government-to-business (G2B) transactions has been one of the key focuses of

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governments. G2B transactions have become much easier and faster leading to higher transparency, lower cost and more fact-based decision-making.

4.   One of the key G2B transactions is the registration of business information. In this role the government fulfills many services to the industry and markets both nationally and internationally. The repository of business information contained in business repositories, whether revenue, judicial statistical and even non-governmental, provide a source of basic trust in business transactions.

5.   Non-governmental business repositories exist in various sectors such as Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Banking Associations and other industrial sectors. These rely on the basic government information and add licensing or other information to the publicly available data on a company.

6.   Many commercial business information services such as Dun and Bradstreet, Kompass and others are active in the region offering service for a fee.

Mandate of the E-Business Repository Project

7.   The overall objective of the e-Business Repository project is to strengthen trust in and sustainability of e-business in the UNECE area, with particular emphasis on the transition countries. Reliable and official business data already exist through country-specific company registration processes, it is necessary to organize and present this information in such a way that they can be posted and accessed on the Internet by using low-cost software (e.g. web services or application interfaces).

8.   The project will add value and contribute to fostering the development of e-business in the region. It will also be instrumental to the development of SMEs and the business-to-government (B2G) transactions.

9.   While company registration data already exist through country-specific registration processes, it is necessary to organize and present them in such a way that they can be posted and accessed on the Internet by using low-cost software (e.g. web services or application interfaces). Technically the project seeks to provide standards for

a.   The collection, storage and dissemination of reliable commercial information on companies,
b.   The federating or presenting disparate information bases as an "e-business repository" which can be queried by government officers, Export-Import Banks and other interested parties,
c.   Providing standards for this repository based on ebXML, Web Services and other relevant standards,
d.   Provide methods based on these standards for country-specific legacy company registration repositories to present existing information in an manner accessible to the Internet and Web Services,
e.   Provide for application interfaces to these repositories,

f.   Providing for the knowledge transfer of the methods, standards, good practices and roadmaps among all the countries of the UNECE in order to promote the further building of e-Business repositories.

Purpose and scope of the Seminar

10.   The project envisages several phases leading to the implementation of prototype systems. The current TSEID proposal is to create several prototypes that would interoperate – demonstrating the capability of using standards in this Government-to-Business (G2B) application arena. The first phase of the project has been completed. Information is being gathered through qualitative interviews with respondents in the United Kingdom, Russia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Macedonia, and Kyrgyzstan. A key point of this seminar is to share this information widely among the members of the region.

11.   Additionally, the Seminar will address the issue of how to roll our prototype project within chosen countries of the region. The TSIED has already begun developing a list of possible target countries. There will be discussion at this seminar on the targeting several different countries within a small geographical region for prototype implementations.

12.   If three different prototype target countries can be identified and the project plans started it is possible that several different technological solutions could be demonstrated and their interoperability tested. It may be possible to develop a series of prototypes that would use separate software platforms (as determined by each country) and could demonstrate regional interoperability through the use of standard interfaces.

13.   Some preliminary interest from the South East Europe region of the UNECE has been expressed in the feasibility study phase. Already in this preliminary phase, TSIED we have been in contact with the USAID project in Macedonia targeting modernizing the business registration and G2B processes. The TSIED contacts in Bulgaria in Romania have also expressed interest. The South East Europe region offers a wide variety of potential issues and a relatively compact geography with reasonable access.

14.   The Phase four prototyping project(s) will involve establishing public-private partnerships (PPPs) in order to develop and later to maintain the repositories. In view of the limited financial resources available to most governments in the target countries, it would be imperative to establish these business repositories using low-cost or open source software tools that implement international standards for accessing repositories and registries over the Internet. This seminar seeks to invite interested software, hardware and services vendors to discuss developing these PPP's.

15.   A key of the project is to enhance knowledge transfer through these seminars, sharing of learning, standards and eventually an e-Business repository roadmap for implementation in further UNECE transition countries. Regular seminars of the TSIED will be used as forums to spread the knowledge gained.

16.   The Seminar is expected to continue to provide a productive and objective platform for the exchange of knowledge, experience, and ideas among the key government and industry players in G2B systems, transactions and processes. The considerable progress achieved in the exchange

of knowledge and experience and the established substantial level of mutual understanding in the TSIED support the expectation that the forthcoming Seminar will deepen the scope of the work and sustain the benefits for all participating countries and companies.

Participation

17.   Targeted participants for this Seminar are the TSIED members and other interested senior officials from the governments of the UNECE member-countries as well as senior executives of the high-tech companies from the UNECE region. Invitations will be also extended to selected international organisations such as the European Union and appropriate individual experts and major international information and communication technology companies headquartered outside of the UNECE area. A participation of approximately 20-25 experts and officials is envisaged.

18.   In the programme below you will notice that, apart from interested and registered speakers, participants will be invited to comment on relevant topics regarding the state of the information and communication technology policy and regulation in their countries as well as on the practices of the key international high-tech companies in the same area. The TSIED would therefore ask the Seminar participants who would not like to make an elaborate presentation on the matters described to prepare very brief reviews on these topics regarding 'their home situation', preferably with one or two Power Point slides.

Provisional programme

Wednesday 9 February 2005

9:00 – 10:00   Registration

10:00 – 10:15 Welcome and brief introduction, by Mr. George Kowalski, Director, Industrial Restructuring, Energy and Enterprise Development Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, Switzerland

10:15 – 10:30 Introduction and Welcome to TSIED by TBC Vice-Chairman, TSIED, UNECE, Geneva, Switzerland

Session I: Overview of the findings from phase 1 of the E-Business Repository project. Presenter: Mr. David Petraitis

Session II: Short Remarks of the country Participants in the qualitative interviews

United Kingdom	TBC
Russian Federation	TBC
Kyrgyz Republic	Mr. Nurbek Toichubaev
Bulgaria	Mr. Georgi Stoev
Macedonia (FYROM)	Zoran Jolevsky TBC
Hungary	TBC

Session III: Working Session on further steps in the project
Developing Public-Private Partnerships
Discussion on the following phases of the project

13:00 – 15:00 Lunch Break

Organisational Matters

The official language of the meeting will be English. There will be <u>no</u> translation into other languages. To obtain maximum benefit from the Seminar, therefore, participants should be comfortable with the English language or to have an accompanying translator.

All participants are expected to cover their travel and lodging cost. In case of selected participants from economies in transition, the TSIED would be ready to consider providing limited financial assistance to attend the Seminar. Interested participants are invited to complete and return the attached registration form, preferably by e-mail. All enquiries and visa requests should be directed as early as possible to Ms. Marina Dolgova (tel. +41 22-917 19 64, fax +41 22-917 01 78, e-mail: marina.dolgova@unece.org).

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA

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Title of the Conference   Date _____

Seminar on The Regulatory Framework for Internet-based Entrepreneurship:
The E-Business Repository Project, 9 February 2005

Organization or Agency

Participant

Mr. ☐   **Family Name**   **First Name**

Mrs. ☐

Ms. ☐

Participation Category

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On Issue of ID Card **Participant Signature** **Spouse Signature** **Date**	**Participant photograph if form is sent in advance of the conference date.** **Please PRINT your name on the reverse side of the photograph**	**Spouse photograph if form is sent in advance of the conference date.** **Please PRINT your name on the reverse side of the photograph**	**Security Use Only** **Card N°. Issued** **Initials, UN Official**

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Door 6

Bookstore "Naville" Post Office Bank

Rooms I to III H3 & F3

Door 20

UN Library