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Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

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UN/CEFACT ELECTRONIC BUSINESS STRATEGY

Submitted by the UN/CEFACT Plenary Bureau(*

Document for Approval

Summary

UN/CEFACT's vision is to provide "simple, transparent and effective processes for global commerce". In order to realize this goal, UN/CEFACT researches advances in information and communication technology and adopts new approaches to trade facilitation based on simplification and harmonization. The goal of this document is to outline high-level details of the 2005-2007 strategy for UN/CEFACT with respect to electronic business (e-Business).

Strategy, for the purposes of this document, is defined as "a*n agreed-upon course of action that determines the nature and direction to attain defined objectives and achieve a vision*."

(* The Bureau of UN/CEFACT has submitted this document late due to the need for extensive consultations.

UN/CEFACT Electronic Business vision and mission

1.   UN/CEFACT's vision is to provide "simple, transparent and effective processes for global commerce". It's principal focus is to facilitate international transactions, through the simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and information flows to enable sustainable global commerce. UN/CEFACT's strategy to achieve this is to analyze and understand the key elements of international processes, procedures and transactions and working for the elimination of constraints in order to develop methods to facilitate processes, procedures and transactions, including the relevant use of information technologies. This e-Business strategy will focus on leveraging the "information technologies" that constitute its corpus and collaborating with other standards development efforts in order to deliver a cohesive set of standards, guidelines and recommendations.

2.   UN/CEFACT's mission supports UN Millennium Development Goal 8, to "develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory and includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally"[1] and the goal to 'use Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to support Development'. This is achieved by promoting the use and implementation of standards, and associated best practices, through channels such as government, industry and service associations.

UN/CEFACT's definition of and strategy for electronic business[2]

3.   To achieve it's mandate and vision as expressed in its Mandate and Terms of Reference[3], UN/CEFACT has developed this strategy. At the centre of UN/CEFACT's e-Business Strategy, there are three fundamental elements:

- Cross-sectoral analysis (to promote interoperability, reuse and supply chain synchronicity);
- Business process and information modeling (to capture user requirements, independent of any specific technology, through the creation of business collaboration models and business requirements specifications); and
- Mapping to new technologies as they emerge (e.g., eXtensible Markup Language (XML), Web Services, shared and distributed objects, registries, etc.).

4.   The vast breadth of business knowledge will be captured in process models and information models. These models will be independent of the underlying technology and explicit means of implementation. This strategy provides the flexibility to recognize and efficiently deal with both variations in business practices and implementation technology.

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[1] UN Millennium Development Goals, www.un.org/millenniumgoals, October 2002
[2] See also: Colombus Ministerial Declaration on Trade Efficiency, UNCTAD, 1994
[3] Madate, Terms of Reference and Procedures for UN/CEFACT (TRADE/R.650/Rev.4)
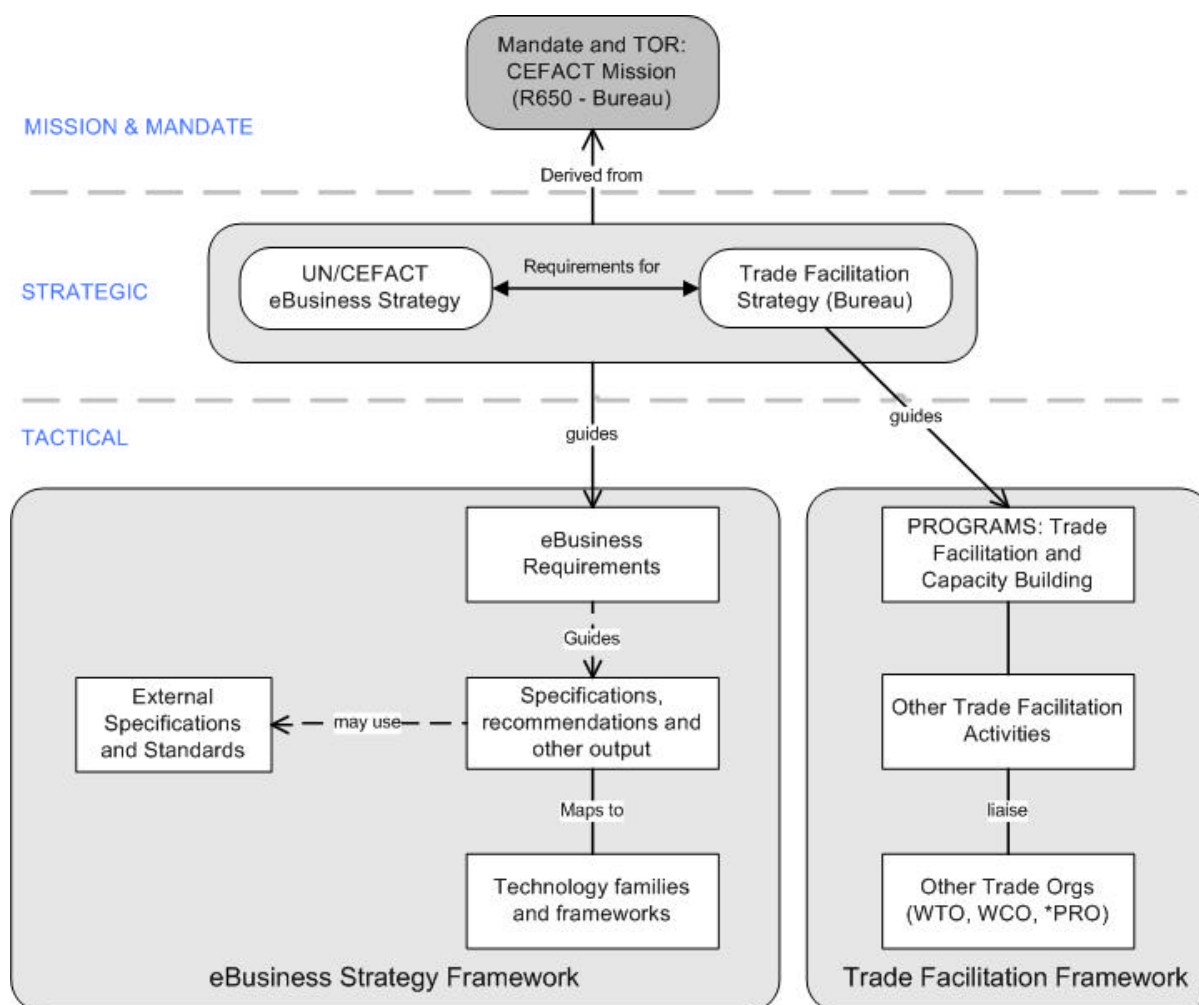
The conceptual view of UN/CEFACT's eBusiness strategy

5.   Additionally, the strategy provides a means of identifying and analyzing requirements to develop cross-industry solutions and allowing the technology provider community to provide consistent solutions to meet business requirements.

6.   Electronic business is still an advanced, technology- intensive way to trade; as such, it bears as many opportunities as challenges for small business and the less advanced among the nations of the world. Bridging the gap between paper and electronic business through the promotion of electronic business worldwide and the development of standards allowing low-cost software solutions should be based on the principle of equality of access of all countries to systems compatible with the international standards recommended by the United Nations. In order to enhance the participation of developing countries in this new form of trade, special **capacity-building** activities may be considered. The efforts towards greater efficiency should also contribute to achieving greater equity among trading partners.

Electronic Business Strategy Priorities and Tactics

001	Codification of Knowledge
Details:	Capture and document Business and Trade Facilitation requirements in a format were they can be analyzed, generalized, preserved, communicated and transmitted. Interface with trade facilitation activities: UMM and Business Requirements Specifications

002	Facilitate open dialog on eBusiness requirements
Details:	Develop and establish organization and collaboration at the international level to collect requirements for trade facilitation and electronic business from business sectors and enterprises. Collect and document the requirements. Interface with trade facilitation activities: Industry and Governments

003	Transfer of Knowledge
Details:	Reach out to transition economy, developing and least-developed members to raise awareness and make available e-business knowledge and respond to their requirements. Interface with trade Facilitation activities: capacity-building and promotion

004	Bridge the gap between Paper and Electronic Business Documents
Details:	Develop relevant standards and methodologies to facilitate a seamless and cost-effective transition between paper and electronic trade. Interface with trade Facilitation activities: UNeDocs Data Model

005	Monitor technological and methodological developments
Details:	UN/CEFACT should monitor technologies and develop standards and methodologies relating to the following (non-exclusive list): - Various architectures and technology families - UN/EDIFACT - UN eDocs - UN/CEFACT Modeling Methodology (UMM) - Core Components Technical Specification (CCTS) - Context framework for CCTS including code list sets - CCTS and Registry/Repository interactions - e-Business specifications and standards developed by external organizations Interface with trade facilitation activities: Single Window

006	Simplify and Promote UN/CEFACT's e-Business Message and Solutions
Details:	Work should be undertaken to build a clear, simple precise message to introduce industry and governments to the work of UN/CEFACT. The marketing message must facilitate users being able to quickly locate information that is relevant to this need.

007	**Ensure Technical Quality of e-business standards**
Details:	Ensure highest Technical Quality of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations. To achieve this objective of high-quality e-business standards will require the mechanism to evaluate new project proposals for technical merit , to ensure they are relevant to frameworks and architectures for electronic business, and implementable and deployable in cost-effective software and business processes.

008	**Develop Methodologies for balancing Trade and Security**
Details:	The requirements to balance trade facilitation with security considerations will have a large impact on electronic business frameworks and information flows. UN/CEFACT will analyze and understand the impact of security requirements on trade efficiency and develop a methodology for incorporating those requirements within existing and future UN/CEFACT e-business work.

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