



United Nations Regional Commissions

TRADE FACILITATION TOOLKIT AND FORMS REPOSITORY

*For developing and publishing
national series of aligned trade forms*

The Trade Facilitation Toolkit and Forms Repository assist Governments and trade associations to simplify their documentary requirements and develop consistent national series of trade documents.

The Toolkit and Repository support the requirements for simplification of documents and transparency in the implementation of trade regulations as set out in GATT Articles VIII and X.

The Toolkit and the Internet based Forms Repository were developed jointly by the five regional commissions of the United Nations:

- **Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)**
 - **Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**
 - **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**
 - **Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**
 - **Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**
-



TRADE FACILITATION TOOLKIT AND FORMS REPOSITORY

For developing and publishing national series of aligned trade forms

OVERVIEW

For international trade to flow smoothly and efficiently, importers and exporters need to have easy access to the required trade documents and forms and to be familiar with the procedures for submitting them.

Aligning trade documents with international standards has now become a prerequisite for accessing international markets. Standardizing the documents is the first step towards document automation and electronic business.

Most trade documents used by advanced trading countries are aligned with the United Nations Layout Key for Trade Documents (UNLK). In this, however, developing countries and countries in transition still need to align and simplify their trade forms.

For traders, locating the forms required to trade with a specific country or obtaining correct information on the necessary procedures can be difficult.

The United Nations Toolkit and Forms Repository (<http://unece.unog.ch/etrade>) are designed to address such problems. This project was developed jointly by the five regional commissions of the United Nations.

- **Trade Facilitation Toolkit:** to assist trade facilitators in developing national series of aligned trade forms in paper or PDF format, based on United Nations and ISO¹ standards and recommendations. The forms may also be “write-enabled”, which allows traders to complete the forms electronically and print or email them.
- **Forms Repository:** a website where countries with national series of trade forms can publish forms and legislation for import, export and transit. The Repository provides a one-stop access to national trade forms. Traders can download the forms, enter data and print the completed documents.

**Trade Facilitation Toolkit
and Forms Repository**
<http://unece.unog.ch/etrade>

¹ International Organization for Standardization

TRADE FACILITATION TOOLKIT

The Trade Facilitation Toolkit enables trade facilitators to develop aligned series of trade forms. It comprises Guidelines for trade facilitators, an electronic United Nations Layout Key form, and background material:

- **The Guidelines for Trade Facilitators** explain specific aspects of the United Nations Layout Key standard and the technical steps for designing an aligned trade form.
- **The electronic UN Layout Key form**, in PDF format, can be used as a template to develop national forms and produce camera-ready layouts for printing companies.
- **The library of prefabricated components** that help the trade facilitator create “write-enabled” trade forms in a cut-and-paste type process.
- **The background material** includes guidelines for using the UN Layout Key, the UN Trade Data Elements Directory (UNTDDED 2005 - ISO 7372:2005) and code lists. It also includes templates of the complete UNeDocs set of international trade documents in “write-enabled” PDF format.

Based on the guidelines and sample documents, a national or regional set of document forms can be developed.

Traders and administrations can fill in the forms, and make printouts using the free-of-charge Adobe Reader. For additional functionalities, extra software is required.

FORMS REPOSITORY

To provide broad access to national trade document sets, the UN has created an Internet portal or “Repository”. Here, countries can publish and maintain their aligned forms, as well as the related administrative and legal instructions such as guidelines and tariff information.

Importers and exporters can readily find here the trade forms they need and thus obtain a clear picture of the documentary requirements for the import and export process.

The Repository also responds to the need for transparency in the administration of trade. In addition, the publication of national forms in the Repository can act as a stimulus for regional harmonization of trade documents.

WHAT GOVERNMENTS AND TRADERS CAN GAIN

Benefits for Governments

- Enhanced control of trade
- Increased revenue
- Streamlined Customs processing
- Support of WTO obligations under GATT Articles VIII and X
- Economic development and increased foreign trade

Benefits for Traders

- Easy access to essential trade documents and forms
- Simplified data requirements
- Faster import/export processing, more transparency
- Fewer delays, lower costs
- Greater access to international markets

Forms developed by using the Toolkit are compatible with the requirements for United Nations electronic Trade Documents (UNeDocs). The forms can later be complemented by a UNeDocs document data model that defines the data structure of the document.

The data model uses the *UN Trade Data Elements Directory*, which is the basis of the World Customs Organization Customs Data Model. The *Directory's* precise and globally accepted definitions greatly facilitate the use of advance information and automated risk assessment.

The data model can be directly transferred into an XML document. XML documents can be used with modern, low-cost Internet-based software products.

First Step towards Paperless Trade

Developing a simplified and well-defined set of trade forms is a first step towards automating trade-document processing and introducing paperless trade.

Regional Integration and Security

When sets of national trade forms are aligned to international standards and best practice, the documentary and information requirements become comparable between countries. This not only simplifies cross-border procedures but also helps to develop *regional* forms for trade and transport.

NOTES:

The project was prepared under the 4th tranche of the UN Development Account: "Interregional partnership for promoting trade as an engine of growth through knowledge management and information and communication technologies".

United Nations Layout Key for Trade Documents (Recommendation 1 of UN/CEFACT (United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business)).



United Nations Regional Commissions

For further information, contact your regional focal point:

Virginia Cram-Martos

Director
Trade Development and Timber Division
United Nations Economic Commission
for Europe (UNECE)
Palais des Nations
Geneva, Switzerland
E-mail: trade@unece.org
www.unece.org/trade

Cornelius Mwalwanda

Principal Advisor
Geneva Liaison Office
United Nations Economic Commission
for Africa (ECA)
Palais des Nations
Geneva, Switzerland
E-mail: cmwalwanda@unog.ch
www.uneca.org/trid

Xuan Zengpei

Director
Trade and Investment Division
United Nations Economic and Social
Commission for Asia and the Pacific
(ESCAP)
Bangkok, Thailand
E-mail: xuan@un.org
www.unescap.org/tid

José Carlos Mattos

Economic Affairs Officer
Division of International Trade and Integration
United Nations Economic Commission
for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
Santiago, Chile
E-mail: mattos@eclac.org
www.eclac.cl/comercio

Nazem Abdalla

Chief
Globalization and Regional Integration Division
United Nations Economic and Social Commission
for Western Asia (ESCWA)
Beirut, Lebanon
E-mail: abdallan@un.org
www.unescwa.org.lb