UN/CEFACT FORUM

OPERATING PROCEDURES
BETWEEN THE TBG, ATG & ICG

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1 Introduction

The bi-annual UN/CEFACT Forum was created to allow the concurrent meeting of all the UN/CEFACT Groups in order to facilitate closer liaison and full interaction as a single working body. This new structure and organization of the UN/CEFACT Permanent Working Groups was approved at the eighth session of UN/CEFACT (27 and 28 May 2002), as document TRADE/2002/8/Rev.1.

Three of the UN/CEFACT groups, the International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG), Applied Technologies Group (ATG) and the Information Content Management Group (ICG) serve as the operational groups and as such are very strongly dependent on one another insofar as one group defines the business requirements, another group transforms the requirements and the third group registers the results for publication. It is therefore important that the groups in question have a coherent set of operating procedures enabling a consistent and seamless flow of information between them.

The UN/CEFACT standardization process requires a considerable amount of business user involvement in all steps of the process. The business user is generally situated in the TBG, therefore the TBG also needs to oversee the coherent transformation of the business requirements and to agree with the information that is posted to the different repositories. Consequently each TBG working group needs to follow its projects from its inception through to conclusion.

The procedures laid out in this document have been devised to support these requirements so that the responsibilities of each group are respected and the interfaces between each group are clearly identified.

To this end, every project that is initiated for the development of a business requirements specification (BRS) must have a nominated TBG project manager who has the responsibility of ensuring the successful progression of the specification through approval, transformation and publication. The project manager shall also be responsible for ensuring that the end deliverable meets the business requirements including managing the resolution of any issues arising during the lifetime of the project.

2 Definitions

Audit: An official examination and verification of UN/CEFACT official documents by the ICG (in the role of an independent party) to ensure that all procedures and documentation requirements have been respected.

Conformance: Compliance with a referenced set of rules and/or standards

Core Component: This term is used generically within this document to cover all categories of Core Components as defined in the Core Components Technical Specification.

Validation: The examination of a given document or object for being incorrect in respect to defined rules.

Verification: The action of establishing or testing the accuracy or correctness of something.

UML Artifact: A piece of information that is produced as part of specification development process in compliance with the UN/CEFACT UMM UML profile.

3 Project Manager.

The Project Manager is the key actor in ensuring the successful implementation of a project.

The TBG must identify a Project Manager before the TBG approves a project.

The Project Manager's role is to:

1. Solicit the necessary resources for the development of the BRS and RSM, as appropriate.
2. Prepare the project plan with all the major milestones. This plan may already have been submitted as part of the "new project request", in which case the TBG project manager shall confirm that the original project plan is still applicable. If not, the project manager shall revise the plan as required.
3. Ensure the approval of the BRS and RSM by the TBG.
4. Provide progress updates to the TBG steering committee.
5. Interface with the ICG and the ATG to ensure that the RSM is correctly transformed and is in compliance with the BRS.
6. Resolve any issues that arise during the lifetime of the project.

Within this process the project manager is responsible for signing-off the technology solution as a correct interpretation of the BRS on behalf of the TBG.

The Project Manager shall be available during the ICG Audit of the resulting technology solution.

4 Workflow process procedure

4.1 Overview

The following sections describe the UN/CEFACT Forum workflow procedure that will enable business requirements to be developed into technology solutions in an efficient and effective manner.

4.2 Business requirements definition

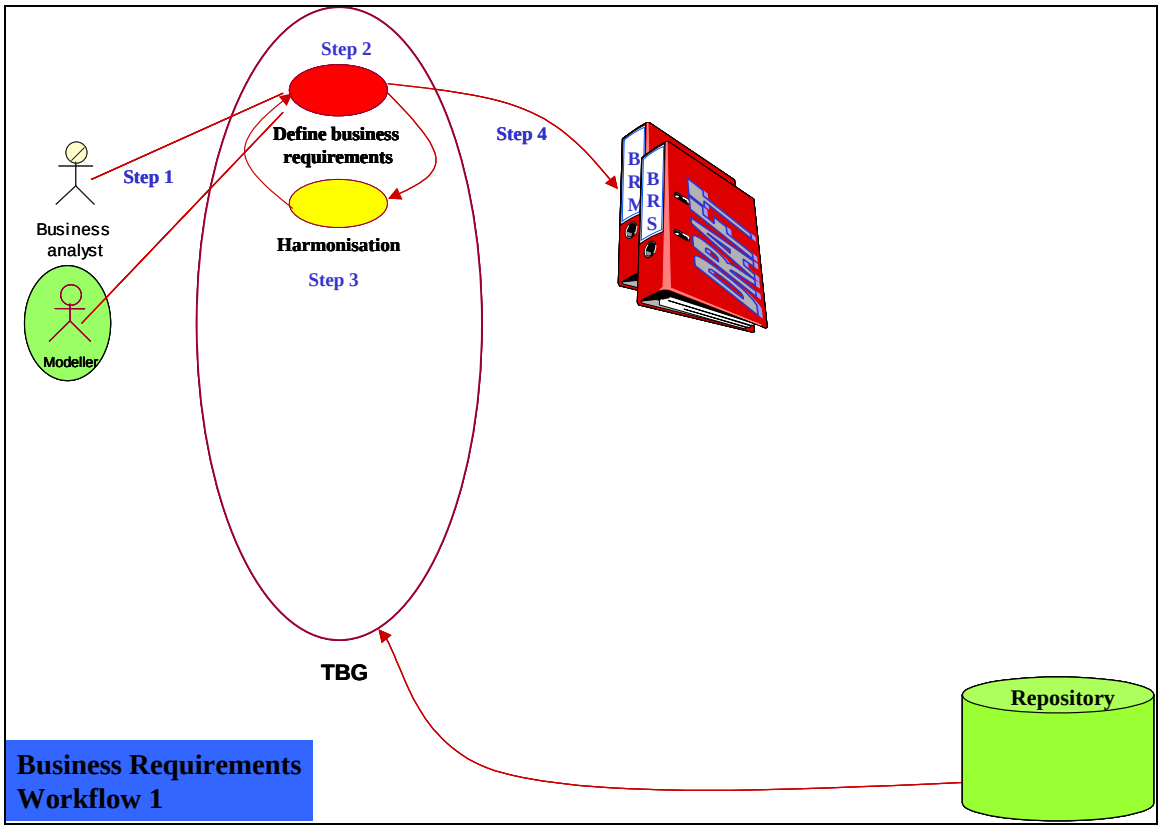

Figure 1: Workflow 1

4.2.1 Business requirements project request submission

The process begins when the TBG receives a new project request (Figure 1, Step 1). New project requests may be submitted by any UN/CEFACT group or by a recognised organisation external to UN/CEFACT.

All new project requests shall be processed by the TBG.

The TBG Chair shall forward TBG approved project requests to the FCT for information in the case of TBG specific projects or for approval in the case of UN/CEFACT projects.

Projects are assigned to a particular TBG working group or to a specific project team. Prior to project approval a project manager must have been assigned to the project by the TBG.

4.2.2 Business Requirements Specifications development

The BRS (Business Requirements Specification) document is developed within the TBG working group or project team in accordance with the UN/CEFACT Modeling Methodology (UMM). The TBG project manager shall lead the project team in developing the BRS.

The BRS contains the necessary UMM artifacts (e.g. use case diagrams, collaboration diagrams, class diagrams, etc.). It is the formal document that describes the business requirements. The BRS shall conform to the BRS Template (CEFACT/ICG/005). It is a document that must be formally approved by all interested parties through the TBG. Collectively the BRS content becomes the foundation of the business information content of the UN/CEFACT repository.

Normally this is accompanied by a RSM (Requirements Specification Mapping) document. The RSM shall conform to the RSM Template (CEFACT/ICG/006). It represents the technical content of the BRS. It also documents any technology solutions (such as XML or UN/EDIFACT) that are required (Figure 1, Step 2).

4.2.3 Requirements Specification Mapping development

The RSM requests one or more specific technology solutions for the BRS. It becomes the working document that is exchanged between the three operational groups for the development of the technology solutions (Figure 1, Step 2).

The RSM originates in the TBG and is the key liaison document that is circulated between the operational groups during the BRS implementation process. The document goes through several steps.

1. The RSM is initiated within the TBG.
2. The document is approved by the TBG harmonization function for implementation when all existing Core Components and candidate Core Components have been identified to satisfy the business requirements defined in the BRS.
3. The BRS and RSM are forwarded to the ICG for registration after formal approval by the TBG.
4. The ICG transforms the draft Core Components into Core Components, or in collaboration with the TBG project manager and the TBG harmonization function, replaces requested draft Core Component(s) with existing Core Component(s). The RSM is updated accordingly.
5. The ICG registers the BRS and places the RSM in a working repository for processing by the ATG.
6. The ATG uses the RSM to develop the technology solution(s). During the transformation process the RSM may be modified by the ATG in agreement with the TBG project manager. The ATG may also identify new candidate Core Components. In this case, the RSM is recycled through the TBG for processing.
7. Once the transformation process is completed, the finalized RSM is registered in the repository by the ICG.

4.2.4 Harmonization

The BRS and RSM are harmonized within the TBG against the existing repositories. The TBG harmonization function includes the task of transforming candidate Core Components into draft Core Components (Figure 1, Step 3).

4.2.5 Validation and Approval

The TBG as a whole validate and approve the BRS and the RSM (Figure 1, Step 4).

4.3 Finalize the BRS for publication

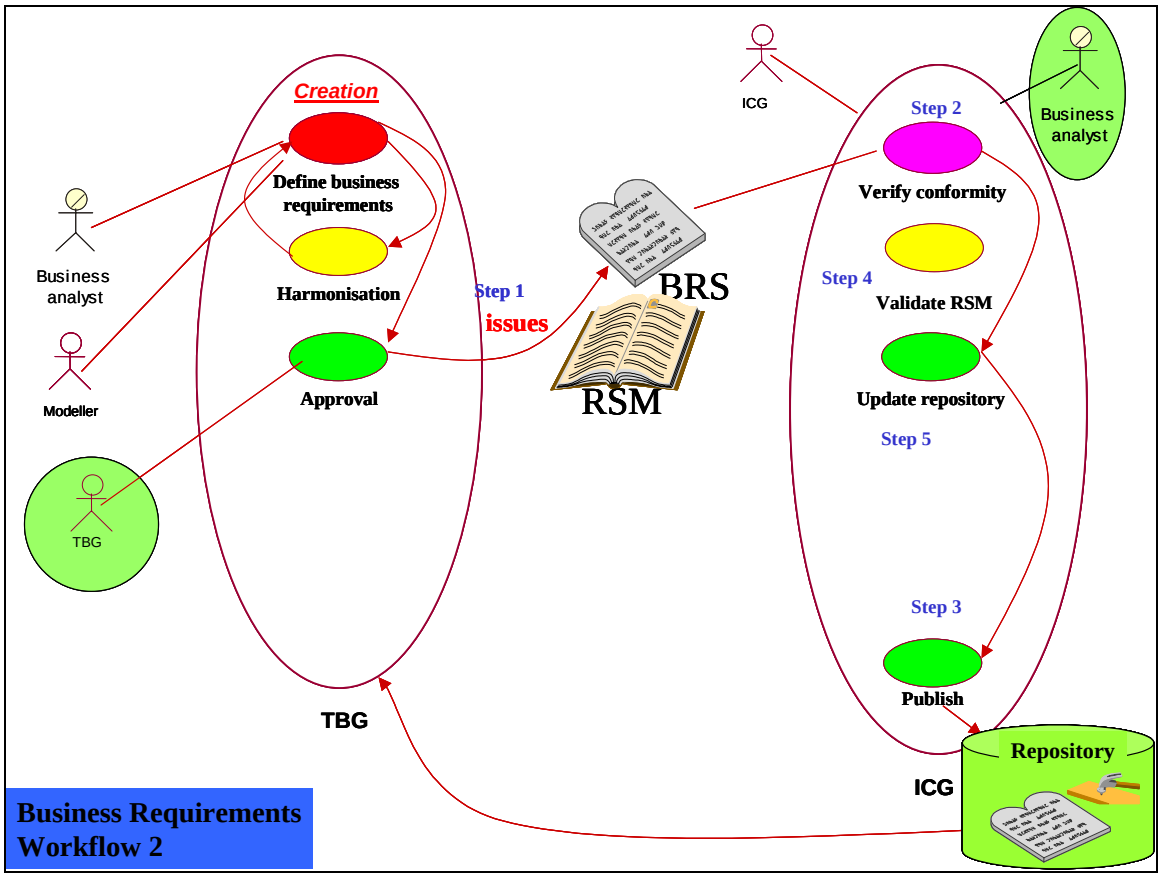

Figure 2: Workflow 2

4.3.1 Verify the BRS

The approved BRS is then submitted to the ICG for publication in the UN/CEFACT repository (Figure 2, Step 1). Any accompanying RSM is submitted at the same time and shall be used within the rest of the process as the base working document.

The ICG shall verify the BRS to ensure that it is in Conformance with the rules defined for its publication. In other words it verifies that the BRS is correctly formatted and contains all mandatory details (Figure 2, Step 2).

4.3.2 Publish the BRS

The ICG publishes the verified BRS at the next public release (Figure 2, Step 3).

4.4 Validate the RSM

The RSM is processed by the ICG to validate any draft Core Components and other UML artifacts for correctness and the registration of new syntax neutral Core Components as appropriate (Figure 2, Step 4).

The RSM is updated to ensure all draft Core Components are assigned to new or existing Core Components in consultation with the TBG project manager and the TBG harmonization function. All new Core Components are published in the repository at the next publication release (Figure 2, Step 3).

The ICG registers the RSM in a working repository and informs the ATG that it is available for progressing with the development of the designated technology solution(s) (Figure 2, Step 5).

4.5 Technology solution transformation and publication

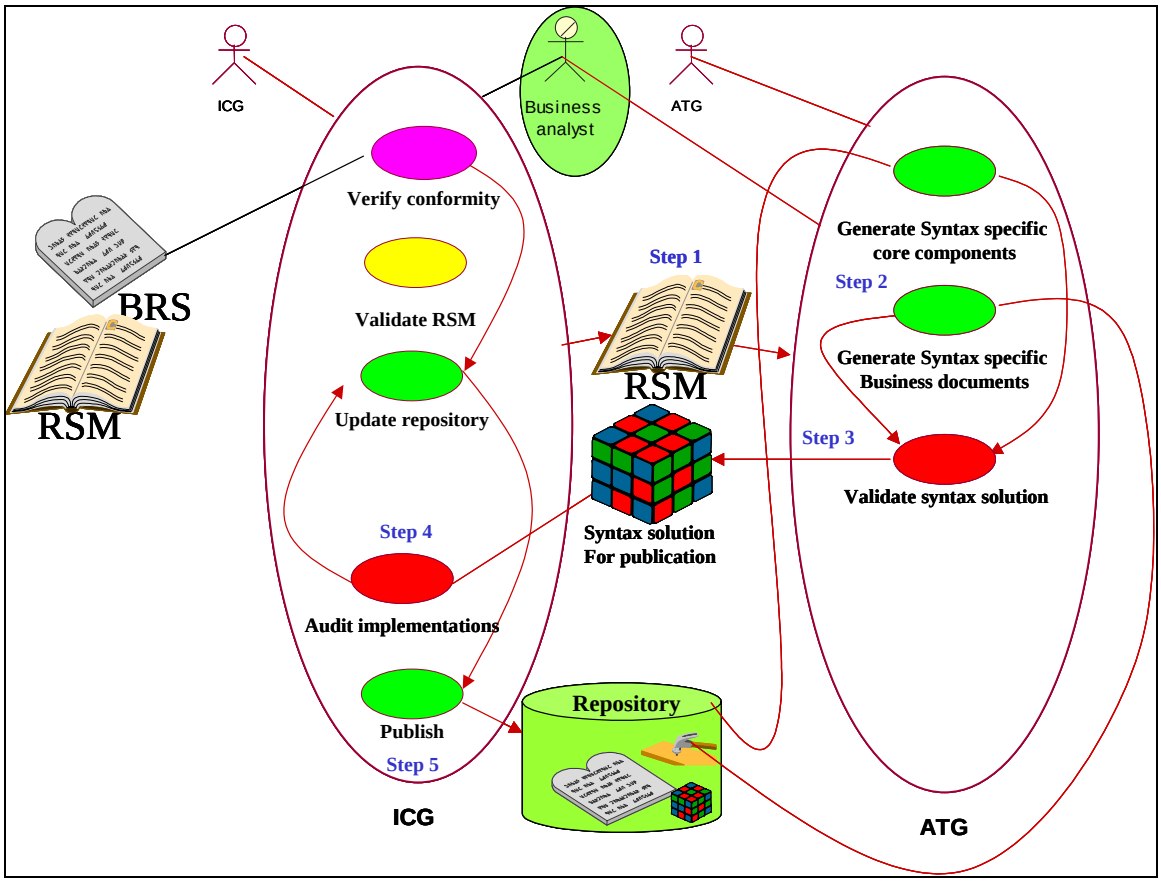

Figure 3: Workflow 3

4.5.1 Technology solution transformation

The RSM is forwarded by the ICG to the ATG for transformation once all the necessary Core Components have been identified or registered (Figure 3, Step 1).

ATG works in close cooperation with the TBG project manager to ensure a successful transformation.

The ATG develops the technology solution specification in the targeted technologies, such as XML or UN/EDIFACT. This is carried out in cooperation with the TBG project manager (Figure 3, Step 2).

The ATG may raise issues that require modification of the RSM. Any modification shall be applied in consultation with the TBG project manager. If necessary, the ATG may make a request to the TBG to create new syntax neutral Core Components.

The ATG shall ensure that the RSM is correctly updated with all modifications.

The ATG may receive change requests to modify the technology solution(s) directly from the TBG. This would occur, for example when the change request does not impact the BRS.

4.5.2 ICG publication

At the conclusion of the ATG activity the final version of the RSM, along with the technology solution, is forwarded by the ATG to the ICG for publication (Figure 3, Step 3).

Prior to publication, the ICG Audits the technical solution to ensure that it correctly reflects the BRS. The Audit does not attempt to determine whether the technical solution is good or bad (Figure 3, Step 4).

After a successful Audit the ICG publishes the technology solution(s) in the appropriate repository (Figure 3, Step 5).

The ICG shall ensure that the newly modified repository content is made available in a timely manner and that the content conforms to the prevailing UN/CEFACT publication rules.

5 Bulk Core Component and/or UML Artifact submission

In general all candidate Core Components and/or new UMM compliant UML artifacts can only be submitted in conjunction with a BRS. However, in certain circumstances it may be necessary to permit the bulk submission of candidate Core Components and/or UML artifacts. These submissions are made through the TBG. For example, a bulk submission is possible when a specific sector submits a set of candidate Core Components and/or UML artifacts that it has extracted from an existing repository of business processes.

This approach is provided only to facilitate the mass update of the repository.