

NES Workshop:

Brussels, February 15th 2007

Participants:

See separate list.

Agenda:

Welcome and introduction to the NES group
Introduction to the NES subset
Other related activities
Plans for eprocurement in countries outside NES
Plans for establishing a CEN workshop
Discussion on future work and cooperation within EU
Closing remarks

Below is a short summary of the workshop. Further information can be obtained from the slides shown at the workshop. They are uploaded at www.nesubl.org.

Welcome and introduction to the NES group

Helle Schade-Sørensen, head of the NES steering group, opened the workshop.

The background of NES was introduced, as a group of countries ready and willing to participate in development of simple e-procurement standards.

UBL was selected because it is open, free, already available and covers the whole procurement process. The NES subset is currently a small part of UBL, to keep it simple and practical.

Lots of work has been put into convergence towards UN/CEFACT and it is our long time goal to harmonize our work into a common European standard.

Introduction to the NES subset

Jostein Freymour introduced the technical aspect of the NES subset.

He stressed that the focus is to keep the subset small and focus on the present needs of governments and participating companies. Also, an important factor has been to agree among the participating countries on common implementation.

The concept of a profile includes

- business rules about how to use documents belonging to that profile.
- It also describes the business process governing the documents. Profiles are therefore useful for addressing different parts of the procurement chain as different companies want to optimise their processes.
- On practical matters there are guidelines on calculation rules, rounding rules, codelists.
- Specific examples on how to solve issues, thereby addressing key issues in implementation.
- When implementing NES, companies implement a whole profile, all of its rules.

In phase one NES has selected 8 documents, used in 8 different profiles. Presently the group has addressed catalogues, simple ordering and invoicing. The simple profiles are intended to support semi automated invoicing.

The reason for developing the profile concept is to eliminate bi-lateral agreements. It has taken a lot of work and discussions among the NES members to come to the agreement of these profiles!

Each document within a profile is restricted to meet that specific profile business goal. All none essential information is kept out. For other needs there will be other profiles. The NES group will supply restricted schemas and schematron rules for these eight profiles.

NES Deliverables were released for public review in December and will be finalised in April 2007. Documentation for the project is on-line in English at www.nesubl.eu.

The NES group is currently setting up a process for maintenance of the products.

Questions were raised about the difference between OIOUBL (the Danish subset of UBL 2.0) and NES. It is clear that there are profiles developed for Denmark that will become part of NES and vice versa. From the content view, there is *full alignment* i.e. NES is a subset of OIOUBL and will eventually grow to cover it all.

Jostein concluded on the NES subset by pointing out that:

- There is strong public support for the subset
- There is support for cross border trade
- It reduces the need for bilateral agreements
- The subset is open and free of use, and can be found at: www.nesubl.eu

Question was raised about infrastructure for the actual transportation of documents.

There is currently no support for that in NES, but – it will be addressed very soon by the participating countries as there are plans to co-ordinate certain parts of transport for cross border trade.

Work is already going on in all participating countries in this area and also in the IDABC-e-link group.

Other related activities

Helle Schade-Sørensen discussed the current situation and other related activities especially in the financial sector and SEPA, which the NES members view as very important. NES is being valued by DG-internal market, within the framework of SEPA. SEPA is currently scoping the market in standards with the aim of setting up a formal group that would recommend a course for the EU banking sector.

Martin Forsberg gave a presentation of the convergence work between UBL and UN/CEFACT cross industry standard. The goal is a unified UN/CEFACT standard for supply chain and transport. Issues at three levels are being looked at:

- Business level, map the UBL req. and describe within CEFACT
- Technical level, schemas and profiles
- Customisation level

A series of workshops is being conducted to address these issues. Martin described the convergence process and how identified differences will be handled. The goal of the work is to map UBL requirements into CEFACT but not back. Also suggest simplification to UN/CEFACT and address the concept of reuse within UN/CEFACT.

A. Grangaard pointed out that there should not be difficulties with reuse of components or coordination between documents within CEFACT.

Some time was used to explain CEFACT working and how to organise UBL/CEFACT coordination.

Plans for eprocurement in countries outside NES

Andriano Leli gave a presentation of current work in Italy. Their problems are to:

- Identify and deal with foreign companies
- Low adoption of electronic signatures
- Supplier classification of goods, (semantic and standards)
- Integration between e- procurement systems and PA legacy system
- Complex legislation
- Security requirements.

José L. Cueva presented the Spanish eTendering project. He pointed out that the situation in Spain is similar to Italy. Interoperability issues and semantic of information is a big problem. Their model is based on ebxml but implemented in UBL to communicate between different services. Focus is on e tendering but there is also focus on information model for the whole procurement cycle to gain reuse of information and semantic compatibility.

Plans for establishing a CEN workshop

Peter Borresen presented a plan for the CEN workshop and it's goals. The plan is to start a pilot project at the beginning of 2008. All documents relating to the workshop are available on-line at:

http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/businessdomains/businessdomains/iss/activity/ws_eppe.asp

The objectives of the workshop are to constitute a basic standard for technical interoperability in Pan European electronic transactions, expressed as a set of technical specifications and to incorporate the requirements and other findings into UN/CEFACT. The workshop will be focused on implementation facilitations and coordinating pilots implementing the technical specifications output by the workshop.

Since UBL 2.0 is recognized as the only open free-of charge (open source?) xml based standard available that fulfils the European requirements, the technical specifications regarding content of messages will be customizations of UBL 2.0 and the starting point will be the NES specifications.

There were some discussion about financing and work procedures within CEN.

Helle pointed out that this kind of financing was in line with the way NES is financed and that has been a very successful model. Also, the aim is to involve government and regional authorities at this stage of the process.

Alain Dechamps filling in with practical information on establishing the CEN WS. A draft for the workshop was handed out. Comments are to be sent to Alain Dechamps. There will be a kick off meeting on 11th of May.

Discussion on future work and cooperation within EU

Emilio Castrillejo outlined the different EU initiatives within the eprocurement area:

- DG Markt / DG Info – eInvoicing
- IDABC – specifications and tools
- CIP implementation project supported by Euro 8 mill. This project is more an “implementation project” than a “pilot”. CIP will prioritize to support 1 big pilot instead of several smaller. Emilio mentioned that it would be wise to use the CEN Workshop to prepare for a proposal to CIP.
- CEN workshops: Emilio Castrillejo found it useful to have a fee as a “filter” for participation. If a Government or another interested party finds it hard to raise this amount, one should probably not attend. But the Workshop should consider having some free and open meetings to gather views from other interested parties.

Antonio Conte advised to prepare a proposal for funding from EC in 2008 (CEN workshop) as soon as possible. Deadline for this is 15th of May. Contracts will be awarded between October and December 2007.

Alain Dechamps ensured that CEN is aware of this deadline and that a proposal will be forwarded.

Closing remarks

Helle Schade-Sørensen finished of the meeting by thanking everyone for the interest they had shown by coming to the workshop and explained how it is possible to join the ongoing work. It was stated that:

- NES will in 2007 focus on maintaining and supporting the established subset. NES members will as public institutions work to market the use of the subset in public and private sector in the participating countries.
- For public sector representatives in other countries the NES steering group is open, they are welcome to contribute and join.
- NES recommend interested parties also the private sector to join the CEN workshop in order to influence and enlarge the scope of NES and CODICE
- Everyone is welcome to participate in the NES working group – to contribute with expertise and knowledge.