

United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade and Transport in Asia and the Pacific



↘ **What is UNNExT?**

The United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade and Transport in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT) is a **community of knowledge and practice for experts from developing countries and transition economies from Asia and the Pacific involved in the implementation of electronic trade and transport systems for trade facilitation.**

Established by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), it aims to support national, subregional and transcontinental Single Window and paperless trade initiatives. Its emphasis is on training, knowledge sharing and application of international standards that are developed by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), the World Customs Organization, and other relevant organizations.

↘ **What are its activities?**

Activities of the network are classified under five categories:

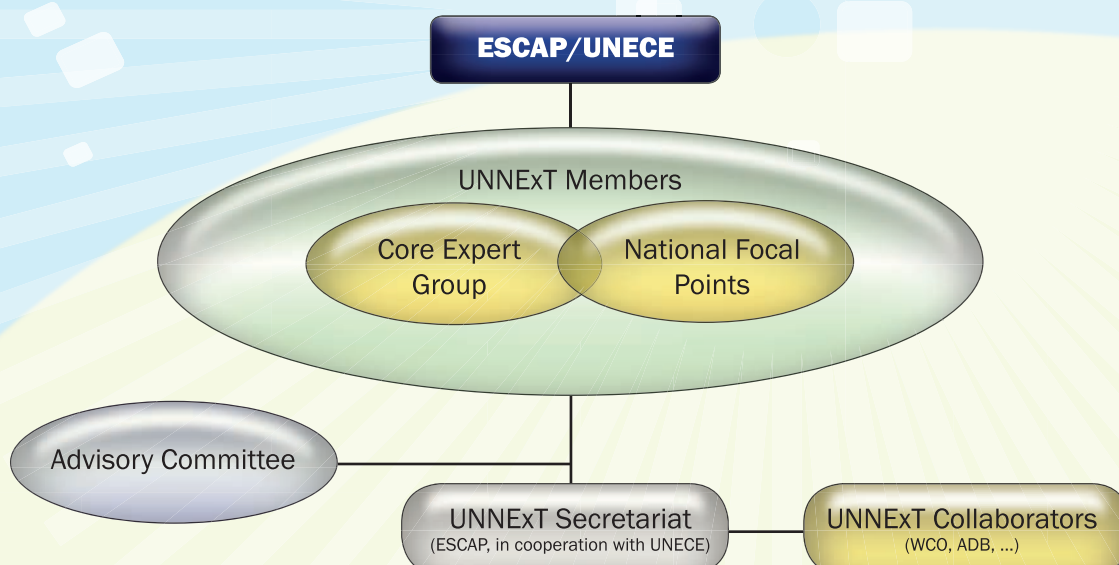
- **Tools and Guides Development:** Develop guides and training materials to bridge the gap between the standards developers and the “implementers” and emerging experts in developing countries.
- **Capacity Building:** Deliver training and capacity building programmes at the national and regional levels.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Provide new and specialized knowledge sharing mediums, such as the UNNExT policy brief series and the Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum. It organizes subregional and regional thematic events to share country experiences on emerging paperless trade issues.
- **Regional Advisory Services:** Facilitate delivery of advisory services on trade facilitation and paperless trade, particularly for least developed and landlocked developing countries.
- **Research and Analysis:** Undertake analytical studies related to trade facilitation and paperless trade in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNet).



↘ **How is UNNExT structured?**

UNNExT Secretariat

The Secretariat of the network is provided by ESCAP (Trade Facilitation Section, Trade and Investment Division), in collaboration with UNECE (Global Trade Solutions Section, Trade Division).



UNNExT Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee provides guidance on the work programme and activities of the network; promotes the network as a multi-stakeholder knowledge platform; and identifies potential synergies between the network and other trade facilitation institutions.

Past and Current Members of the UNNExT Advisory Committee*

- Prof. Iqbal Babayev, Chief of Department, State Customs Committee, **Azerbaijan**
- Prof. Hong Xue, Professor of Law and Director, IIPL, **China**
- Mr. Tahseen Khan, Vice-chair of UN/CEFACT, **India**
- Mr. Hisanao Sugamata, Director, SIPS of UN/CEFACT Japan Committee, **Japan**
- Mr. Kun Nhem, Director General, Department of Customs and Excise, **Cambodia**
- Ms. Mee Wan Wong, Chair, ASEAN Single Window Technical Working Group, **Malaysia**
- Mr. Koh Tat Tsen, Director, Crimson Logic, **Singapore**
- Dr. Somnuk Keretho, Director, KU-INOVA, Kasetsart University, **Thailand**
- Mr. Mostafa Abid Khan, Director, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI), **Bangladesh**
- Mr. Aung Khin Myint, Chairman, Myanmar International Freight Forwarder's Association, **Myanmar**
- Mr. Umar Wahid, Executive Secretary, National Trade and Transport Facilitation Committee, Ministry of Commerce, **Pakistan**

***Please refer to unnext.unescap.org for the most current Committee membership**

UNNExT Core Group of Experts

Experts of the core group are directly involved in delivering UNNExT activities, including as members of Advisory Groups established to build capacity in specific areas (See work programme). They include:

- Legal experts
- Data harmonization experts
- Process Analysis experts
- Trade facilitation research (data and indicators) experts
- Customs, transit and trade logistics experts
- Trade facilitation capacity building and training experts
- Institutional and Public-Private Sector Partnership experts



UNNExT National Focal Points (NFPs)

The NFPs identify local experts and institutions that play a key role in trade facilitation; provide national updates on progress made towards paperless trade and trade facilitation and disseminate UNNExT tools and information to relevant national stakeholders.

UNNExT Members

Individuals from the national governments, private sector and academia can become members of UNNExT. Benefits from UNNExT membership include:

- Opportunities for capacity building and networking
- Easy access to updated information and knowledge on trade facilitation in Asia and the Pacific

Members are selected based on following criteria:

- Evidence that the applicant is actively involved in trade facilitation and e-trade related projects, or that he/she can contribute to the mission and objectives of the network.
- Individuals who completed a UNNExT training-of-trainers programme and subsequently conducted national-level training.

UNNExT Collaborators

Relevant organizations with which ESCAP and UNECE collaborate include: the World Customs Organization (WCO), the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), etc.

UNNExT Work Programme

The work programme of UNNExT initially focused on 4 priority areas essential to moving forward on trade facilitation and paperless trade: (1) Trade Process Analysis; (2) Document Simplification and Data Harmonization; (3) Legal Framework Development; and (4) Single Window Planning and Implementation. Building on work done in these core areas, UNNExT has taken a more sectoral approach and is now focusing on (5) Agricultural Trade Facilitation, (6) SME Trade Facilitation; and (7) Transit Facilitation. Importantly, UNNExT is also supporting the implementation of ESCAP Resolution 68/3, which sets the stage for the development of regional arrangement(s) for cross-border paperless trade facilitation.

Activities in each area are supported by an Advisory Group (AG) of core UNNExT experts. The AGs assist in the development and review of the specialized guides and training materials in their focus area; in delivering training and workshops; and advisory services. Additional advisory groups are expected to be established as new priority issues are identified, in line with capacity building needs of the region.



UNNExT Achievements

Some of the achievements of this network include:

- Business Process Analysis (BPA) Guide for Simplification of Trade Procedures: Applied for trade facilitation in over 15 countries of the region since 2010.
- Advisory services in Mongolia: Resulted in the development of a Mongolia Single Window Master Plan endorsed by the Government with donor funding secured for implementation.
- A Single Window Implementation Toolkit for Trade Facilitation: Prepared and used for regionwide capacity building trainings in collaboration with the World Customs Organization and others, including an annual 2-week UNNExT Masterclass on Single Window Implementation.
- A regional (and now global) Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation, as well as a Trade Process Analysis Database, making it easier for countries to benchmark their progress and identify good practices.
- The development of a national trade and transport facilitation monitoring mechanism concept, pilot tested with ADB in the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) countries and under consideration as a possible UN/CEFACT standard.
- Over 1200 officials and other stakeholders from the region trained between 2012 and 2015, including in support of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement implementation.
- ESCAP Resolution 68/3 (May 2012) and 70/6 (Aug. 2014): Provided a strong mandate for Member States to move towards *Enabling paperless trade and the cross-border recognition of electronic data and documents* for trade facilitation and the development of an intergovernmental agreement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade - supported by the UNNExT community.

How to Contribute to the Network?

- Experts can register and contribute to the knowledge base, e.g. by preparing case studies or briefs on relevant paperless trade initiative or experience; or by volunteering to act as a resource person in UNNExT activities.
- Donors and Development Organizations can provide financial support to help carry out the network's activities and/or enter into partnerships with the UNNExT Secretariat to organize joint activities.

For more information, please visit <http://unnex.unescap.org/>