

NATO CODIFICATION SYSTEM

AC/135

The Group of National Directors on Codification

Newsletter

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50th Anniversary of NATO Codification

The NATO Codification System (NCS) was established in May 1958, during the first decade of the NATO Alliance. Since that time, it has constantly improved and embraced new technologies, and has now become the DNA of Modern Logistics. To mark the 50th anniversary of the NATO Codification System, a special conference was held on 10th June 2008 at the Royal Military Academy in Brussels. The event was attended by over 200 participants from 48 countries.

The need for a universal language in logistics to foster interoperability between the nations was recognized early on by the Alliance. The NATO Codification System has developed to meet that challenge and is still highly relevant to its users, i.e.

NATO organizations, the nations, and industry. In the NATO nations – and increasingly outside the Alliance – all military personnel are now familiar with NATO Stock Numbers (NSNs) and the concept of NATO Codification. NATO Codification has also been key to NATO initiatives with new countries. AC/135's flexible approach has proved successful in helping partner countries achieve compliance with NATO Codification standards. NCS is now becoming the most widely used standard worldwide. There are currently 56 user countries, with recent additions including Georgia (NCS country code VG) and India (NCS country code ZI), and applications are being considered from Afghanistan and Pakistan.



1st NATO Codification Symposium in November 1960



Georgia signing sponsorship agreement

between the commercial and defence supply chains through recognition of NCS as an international standard per se and through convergence with other international standards. NATO Codification is a vital component of Supply Chain Management.

AC/135 is committed to ensuring, through expansion and integration, that the NATO Codification System remains state-of-the-art, serving – both in defence and in industry – to support interoperability and the ability of logistic systems to interface with each other.



India signing sponsorship agreement



93rd AC/135 Directors meeting

The Group of National Directors on Codification gathered on 11-12 June 2008 in Brussels, Belgium for their 93rd meeting.



In response to a need felt in the procurement environment, AC/135 is investigating the possibility of cataloguing services. This reflects the increasing proportion of defence budgets that is currently spent on the provision of services. Ambiguities are likely to be resolved through standardized naming of services.

Tier 2 compliance testing has been progressing for Malaysia, and several other sponsored nations have expressed their intention to apply for Tier 2

sponsorship. Israel is in the process of developing its codification capabilities and AC/135 has conducted a codification workshop for a core team of logisticians and representatives of the Israeli defence industry early this year.

One of the basic challenges for all information solutions is ensuring that accurate and complete information is captured only once. The international community has recognized this challenge and is developing ISO 8000 as a basis for data quality. The Codification System will benefit from the availability of the 'data quality' equivalent of ISO 9000. Industry will have a common approach meeting customer requirements through data quality assurance. AC/135 remains proactively involved in the development of ISO 22745 - 'Open Technical Dictionaries' and ISO 8000 - 'Master Data Quality'. ISO 8000 on data quality covers not only electronic exchange of data between suppliers and customers – providing an ability to obtain the source data needed for codification – but also optimizes the description of data provenance and data accuracy. Companies and NCBs have already applied for ISO 8000 certification.

In parallel, AC/135 has developed quality metrics for the purpose of improving both the quality of existing data and compliance with common NATO codification processes and methods. NAMSA has developed a quality tool which will facilitate NCS members' quality assessments and will help entities align their efforts on AC/135 strategy and objectives. Planned enhancements will introduce a more standardized approach to the training of codifiers, the idea being to establish a recommended curriculum to guarantee a common understanding of codification methodology.

The next Main Group meeting will be held in Piestany near Bratislava, Slovakia from 4 to 6 November this year.

The largest Materiel Information Database in the World

The NATO Master Catalogue of References for Logistics (NMCRL) is soon to have a new user interface designed to be more user-friendly and to facilitate navigation. Customers are increasingly changing their subscription to move from DVD-ROM releases to on-line access. Following the inclusion of coded and decoded characteristics data, future enhancements will include a link between NSNs and World Customs Organisation 'Harmonized System' codes. Registration for supplier/mmanufacturer NCAGE codes will be available on-line from the NMCRLplus website. The multilingual catalogue of groups and classes and item name directory will be included in an enriched NMCRLplus that will be available from a single point of entry: www.natolog.com



NCS Modernisation & Transformation

Smart STEP Codification (SSC) pilot project on codification of spares for the Polish AMV Rosomak, has successfully converted eOTD catalogue data into codification segment format with characteristics data which can be used for NSN assignment. In view of the success of SSC2, AC/135 intends to review NCS taxonomy and ontology with a view to simplification. This forms part of AC/135's ongoing effort to automate the provision of documentation for codification by industry. This will involve demystifying the NCS and showing the added value of codification for other activities.