Transition to XML

Codification data exchanges take place every day, interconnecting some 50 National Codification Bureaux (NCB) around the World. Nearly 120 million codification transactions are transmitted annually in support of materiel cataloguing by the nations of AC/135. This can only be achieved thanks to a uniform system of exchange named NATO Data Exchange (NADEX) that was first defined in the 1960’s. Alongside adding new data elements and the challenges of NCS expansion, the adoption of a new, flexible, and widely used standard for data exchange is about to be implemented. eXtensible Markup Language XML is gradually being introduced to the NCS, starting with supplier (NCAGE) data of NCS as the first phase. NCBs supplying data for the NMCRL will have the choice of sending supplier information in NADEX or XML format: The concept has already been successfully tested by NSPA and pilot nations. Transformation of NADEX to XML will enable the NCS nations to use a modern data format, which in turn will enable better orientation of data and a smoother interface with all of AC/135’s partners. Along with the transition to XML, AC/135 has an opportunity to fundamentally change concepts for data exchange, and the next meeting of NCS Transformation Steering WG (NCSTSWG) will include brainstorming about simplification of transactions. Also, beginners training on the concepts of XML will be organised at NSPA on 9 March 2015—a day before the Panel A meeting—for NMBS and database operators and other interested NCB staff.

NMCRL Web Services Now Available

Web services to NMCRL data become available for subscription starting from 1 January 2015. Web services are a method of obtaining data from the NMCRL database using query and reply transactions. It fits the definition of cloud computing in the sense that the user only queries the database when the data is needed, and gets the latest version of the data, instead of storing all the data on their own system. Use of Web services for NMCRL data requires programming on the user’s side—further information can be obtained from the NMCRL helpdesk.

U.S. SAM System

Both contractors and the NCBs have been experiencing issues with registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) of the United States. The issues include the mismatch of company data the U.S. and AC/135 NCAGE databases and the Dun & Bradstreet database. In addition to the current SAM requirements, a new the Unites States regulation became effective November 1, 2014, that requires SAM registrants to confirm the data of their intermediate and high level ownership. In some cases, it has taken several months for organizations to complete SAM registration because of data synchronisation issues and the complexity of the process. A number of corrective and preventive actions are being undertaken to address the problems.

The lower group photo was taken in The Hague during the NCSTSWG meeting in September 2014, and the one at the upper level is dated nearly 54 years before at the same site during an AC/135 meeting.

Applicability Data

The NCSTSWG continues developing concept of the adding applicability data to NSNs, which would provide logisticians with information about where particular parts are mounted and on what type of weapon systems they are to be used. Although the concept is still being shaped, it has become evident that the nature of applicability data fundamentally differs from other data exchanged in the NCS. Consequently, A central repository of applicability data is being considered. Also, the issue of release ability of these data needs to be addressed, and the levels of data granularity need to be defined.
Turkey Completes System Testing

As part of the NCS quality assurance programme, NCB Turkey’s new codification system WITEKS has passed all tests and has been certified for conformity with ACodP-1.

Partner Nations News

System compliance testing for Tier 2 of the Israeli codification system was successful, and Israel will commence as a Tier 2 nation from 1 January 2015.

Trinidad and Tobago was approved for sponsorship with agreement pending signature. Regrettably, sponsorship in AC/135 was suspended with the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

A formal, renovated assistance programme to Sponsored countries will be established on the principles of the BASELOG programme. The requirements of the sponsored countries are being consolidated by NSPA. Jordan developed an active training program in the year 2014 under which some 80 students trained from Jordan Armed Forces and Arabic speaking countries, in addition to preparing NCS training manuals in the Arabic language.

Regional cooperation groups like the Pacific Area Codification Seminar (PACS) and the South America Codification Seminar (SACS) continue to support the NCS with multinational cooperation outside the immediate framework of AC/135. SACS focuses on enhancing NCS practices and education, with plans to establish a permanent organisation within the framework of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). PACS operates under the umbrella of the Pacific Area Senior Officers Logistics Symposium (PASOL) as a forum for education and promotion of the NCS in that region. Future PACS meeting are foreseen in China in 2015, Malaysia in 2016, Japan in 2017, and Papua New Guinea in 2018.

NSC College 2014

The University of Defence of the Czech Republic and NATO AC/135 organised the 2nd NATO Codification System College in Brno, Czech Republic, from August 25 to September 19, 2014. The College is tailored for students from nations participating in the NATO Codification System (currently 63 nations) as well as for those whose respective countries are preparing to join this community. The Course for Managers & Logisticians (August 25 to 29) was attended by fourteen civilian and military students from the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Slovakia, and NSPA. The tuition quality was guaranteed by the lecturers: AC/135 Chairman Col. Marek Dalkowski and representatives from NSPA, DLA LIS (USA), the Czech University of Defence, and the codification software providers AURA and ESG. The Course for Codifiers (September 1 to 19) was attended by 12 students from the Czech Republic, Croatia, Ireland, Latvia, Malaysia, Norway and Austria, who were trained especially in technical codification activities. NCBs USA and AUT provided the primary lecturers. The students also visited military material depots of the Czech armed forces. The CZE NCB Director gave lectures when the students visited his authority in Prague. The students of both NCS College courses felt very positive about the theoretical and practical portions of the College, as was apparent from their evaluations: They would definitely recommend participation to their colleagues.