

ESLSC Report

Manhattan

January 2008

## **Introduction**

During the year 2007 the UBL ESLSC has carried out several actions. The work of localization and the effort of its members have achieved that UBL is today one of the main options in Spain when someone intends to set up a system for electronic data interchange between applications.

The Spanish Public Administration has a basic role when defining the foundation and the models for those interchanges to be possible, as it has happened in other countries such as Denmark.

The lack of other standards mature enough – and we are not talking just about the document models, but about the assembly mechanisms, architecture, versioning, customization and code list management – has lead the UBL Library to be the first option when defining new information models, customizing it by extension to fulfill other business requirements, but using the core UBL library and the rules and mechanisms defined inside the UBL TC.

This has been the case for CODICE documents, a set of documents that cover the eTendering and eAwarding business processes. There were no documents to cover those initial phases in the electronic procurement in UBL, so when creating them, the Dirección General de Patrimonio del Estado (from the Ministry of Finance) took the UBL model and extend it to create the new required assemblies instead of defining its own set of proprietary documents. Today, CODICE has been taken as the basis – together with the NES profiles for UBL 2.0 – for the CEN WS BII project.

However, a big country like Spain, where there are different ministries with fragmented responsibilities in IT systems and interoperability issues, it is difficult to achieve a common vision on the interoperability challenge. Standarization processes in the EU context like the ones established in CEN will help those different ministries to go together and build a consensus.

## **Localization work**

The main work for the ESLSC during 2007 has been the UBL 2.0 information model and documents translation. This effort has been leaded by the own members of the SC but we also have received inputs and help from other external people that have contributed with their knowledge on specific contexts. This is the case for the Transport documents, that have an specific semantic. They have been translated with the help of experts from the Barcelona Port Authority.

Working with the new italian localization SC (ITLSC) the ESLSC has refined the spanish translation, aligning concepts between both translations to reach a unique semantic for every component and document.

Finally, thanks to the HISC and Ken Holman's support, the stylesheet to generate UN Layout Keys Invoices has been created with translated literals, in English and Spanish, to ease the understanding of those documents for Spanish speaking people.

## **UBL International Conference**

Talking about UBL diffusion, the first week of October the II International UBL Conference was held in Madrid.

In the conference several national and international projects around UBL were presented. There were presentations about UBL, the present and the future of the standard, presentations about real and successful deployment projects and other presentations about products and services around

UBL.

The training sessions had few audience, however the Symposium has around a hundred attendees with a good representation of Spanish public authorities and companies.

The conference was sponsored by different companies that present their products and services, and in general, the event was useful in terms of dissemination of UBL in Spain.

## **Legislation**

During 2007 there has been a legal change in Spain to promote the adoption of the electronic invoice between companies and public administrations. Specifically, on October the 5<sup>th</sup> a Presidency Order that regulates the submission of electronic invoices when the receiver belongs to the Spanish Administration was published.

That order establishes the electronic invoice data format. This format is the one defined by the Tax Office and the banks, called now FACTURAE. You can find this specification in the website [www.facturae.es](http://www.facturae.es). However, is particularly important the second final resolution of the Order that dictates the rules for the evolution of the format, specifying that in two years, the format will converge to UBL or to the format defined by the standarization bodies of the European Union, CEN or CENELEC, to allow cross-border interoperability with other Member States of the European Union.

Another basic legal initiative in Spain has been the Law about Contracts for the Public Sector issued on October 30<sup>th</sup> that establishes the rules and procedures for the public authorities to procure services, works and goods. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for defining the formats of the documents and elements to interchange preawarding information and that's why CODICE was developed.

Together with the above mentioned Presidency Order, the provision of this Law mandates that begining april 2008 electronic invoice issuing will be mandatory for big public sector providers (and consequently electronic invoice receiving will be mandatory for public bodies).

Considering that CEN WS BII is working based on UBL (NES and CODICE) and that CODICE will be adopted in Spain – the Spanish national contracting portal, unique publicity system for every contract has been developed based on CODICE – we assume that Spain will be a country with a high degree of UBL acceptance in the next years.

## **CEN Workshops**

As we have already expressed above, we think that the CEN WS BII will help sharing experiences in Europe. The experience deploying national electronic document exchange systems in the northern european countries and the WS deliverables will surely help other european countries in that effort.

As stated on their business plan, the starting point for the Workshop is the NES and CODICE customizations of OASIS UBL. Both customizations cover the whole public procurement cycle and the profiles mechanism defined in NES allows the gradual adoption of electronic document interchanges.

But the scope of the WS goes further and they are working not only in processes and documents definition but in other items such as security, transport and addressing, key factors in real life deployments.

## **Conclusions**

UBL is taking higher relevance in Spain, both in Public Administrations as well as in private organizations, however we have realized that in national standards adoption, it is very difficult to change tendencies. When a country defines its own document model by law, it is hard to change it in order to adopt a new international standard. The main barrier for that change are the actual investments in systems development for the own document model.

The issue of the Support Package with the definition of mechanisms to handle code lists, rules for customization and versioning and other related artifacts will help organizations and public administrations deploying UBL projects.