



STANDARDS BOARD

PHYSICAL ENCODING GROUP (PEG)

Berne, 4 December 2008

EPPML Status 0 Proposal

Agenda item 8

Document by CEN

1 Subject	References/Paragraphs
UPU P28 Extensible Postal Product Model and Language (EPPML) – Application for Status 0	§§ 1–15
2 Decisions expected	
The PEG is requested to endorse the attached UPU P28 status 0 specification for forwarding to the 2009.1 Standard Board meeting.	§ 16

I. An overview of the activities that have been carried out following the status P approval of the standard.

1 After the UPU SB approved at UPU SB 2007.2 a joint UPU-CEN working group was formed under CEN leadership. The membership included La Poste (France), Itella, Siemens, Canada Post Corporation, Pitney Bowes, Solystic.

2 The working group had several meetings in conjunction with UPU PEG meetings where scope, content and use of the standard were discussed, agreed upon and approved.

3 The standard document has been drafted by the editorial committee and distributed for detailed comments to the working group on 30 October 2008 and to UPU PEG, EXG, CDG and CEN TC331 WG3 working groups on 14 November 2008. Several comments has been received and incorporated into the draft document.

II. Adjustments to information provided in the Status P request

4 The EPPML standard defines a uniform structure and meaning for the information that fully represents a postal product. The postal product definition is viewed as an interface between posts and their customers. Such representation of postal products allows automated systems to adapt and use new postal products as they are introduced by postal operators.

5 A postal product definition file (PPDF) is an XML document which fully describes a postal product, containing all necessary and sufficient information for customers to acquire and use the product. The structure, types and constraints of XML elements in an XML document are defined by an XML schema. The EPPML schema is the XML schema that governs Postal Product Definition Files.

6 The standard contains complete description of the EPPML schema, its hierarchical structure, information types and semantics of its elements.

7 The EPPML schema provides structured information for postal operators sufficient for generation of postal product definition files for almost unlimited variety of postal products, both existing and new. The EPPML schema also provides information necessary and sufficient for mailing equipment providers to create automated mailing systems enabled to make use of postal product definition files, particularly for the purpose of producing mail units compatible with new postal products.

8 The standard does not define how new postal products are created and marketed by postal operators but rather provides powerful and flexible tool enabling efficient product definition process and distribution channel.

9 The standard also does not define communication protocols that can be used by posts to distribute postal product definition files to their customers. Suitable communication protocols are typically well known and already standardized (for example: Web Services, File Transport Protocol, email).

III. Relationship of the proposed standard to other existing standards, to other standards related projects, or to the activities of other international bodies

10 The EPPML standard refers to the following UPU, ISO, W3C and CEN standards:

- S19 Encoding on envelopes – Placement area definitions - Part A: General concepts and definition of the coordinate system
- S19 Encoding on envelopes – Placement area definitions - Part B: Areas used for postal encoding
- S19 Encoding on envelopes – Placement area definitions - Part C: Areas used for postmarks, indicia and service endorsements
- UPU Standards Glossary

ISO Standards

- ISO/IEC 15459-3:2008 Information technology – Unique identifiers – Part 3: Common rules for unique identifiers
- ISO/IEC 15459-4:2008 Information technology – Unique identifiers – Part 4: Individual items

European (CEN) Standards

- CEN TS 15523
- CEN TR 15524

W3C Standards

- XML schema - <http://www.w3.org/TR/xmlschema-1/>

IV. Purpose and justification of the standard, including the assessment of the technical advantages which would result from the adoption of the proposed standard.

11 The EPPML standard is intended to greatly expedite definition, implementation and distribution of a very broad variety of innovative postal products using modern information technology. It takes full advantage of already well developed and widely popular among mail senders and recipients information exchange tools such as XML, Internet and World Wide Web. As a result postal administration will have free access to a very efficient product distribution channel.

12 The implementation of the standard is expected not only to significantly reduce time for development of new products, but also to allow for quick penetration of new products to all customer segments of postal market. In addition implementation of the standard is expected to result in significant mail processing and delivery cost reductions resulting from reduction or elimination of postal process-unfriendly mail items and units.

13 The adoption of the EPPML standard will result in harmonization of critical information exchange interfaces between postal administrations themselves and between postal administrations and their customers, both senders and recipients. The harmonization is based on a solid foundation of XML technology and it will be consistent with and will take advantage of future developments in state of the art computer communication technologies.

V. Assessment of the benefits and potential costs of the proposed standard covering the interests of all member administrations of the UPU.

14 The benefits of the proposed standard include:

- a Establishment of standardized exchanges of postal product information between postal administrations and their customers. This information will be used for definition and testing of a broad variety of new products by postal marketing organizations
- b Effective determination of new product operational feasibility
- c Effective cost assessment of new products
- d Instant distribution channel for new products
- e Significant operational cost reductions
- f Instant access to new postal products by customers (due to automated meeting of product access requirements)
- g Simplification of contractual and legal arrangements between postal operators and their customers

15 The EPPML standard is flexible and extensible and as such allows for phased implementation beginning with basic steps and simple incremental improvements to the existing postal products and services. The cost of implementation is minimal due to the fact that majority of required changes can be accomplished via development of an automated software tool. The standard provides examples of EPPML product descriptions from two postal administrations that were created in conjunction with the standard development. The cost of implementation by mailers and mailing industry is also controllable and can be made commensurate with the multiple and significant benefits outlined above.

VI. Project plan for the completion of the next phase

Responsibility for the following phase

<i>Participants:</i>	Several postal administrations and mailing industry expressed interest in testing the EPPML standard in operational environment. The list include members of the EPPML working group
<i>Deliverables:</i>	Modifications to EPPML Schema and report of operational feasibility and development cost assessments
<i>Milestones:</i>	<p>definition of test plan;</p> <p>definition of candidates new postal products;</p> <p>development of web-based access to the candidate product definition files structured in accordance with EPPML Schema;</p> <p>implementation of mail unit production system driven by EPPML product definition files;</p> <p>development and implementation of operational activities required for delivery of new candidate products;</p> <p>operational feasibility and development cost assessments</p>
<i>Tests to be performed:</i>	TBD
<i>Critical success factors:</i>	<p>measurements of new postal product development cost and time to market (must be significantly better than those associated with existing processes);</p> <p>measurements of operational cost reductions;</p> <p>attractiveness of new products and cost of access by customers</p>
<i>Evaluation procedures to be used:</i>	<p>market research with selected customers (to be performed by test participants);</p> <p>measurements of new postal product development cost and time to market (to be performed by test participants);</p> <p>measurements of operational cost reductions (to be performed by test participants)</p>

VII. Decision expected

16 The PEG is requested to endorse the attached UPU P28 status 0 specification for forwarding to the 2009.1 Standard Board meeting.