



Automating Emergency Information System (EmIS), Force Majeure cases and Circulars Handling

Business Requirements

Title	Automating EmIS, Force Majeure and Circulars Handling
Area	Physical services

Universal Postal Union
International Bureau
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1 Overview of business requirements

In accordance with article 17-004 of the Regulations to the UPU Convention, the International Bureau shall publish, from information supplied by member countries and/or designated operators, emergency information of an operational nature (EmIS).

This emergency information is also based on invoked force majeure cases that prevents a designated operator (DO), in part or in full, countrywide or only in affected areas, to fulfil its obligations arising from adherence to the Acts of the Union. The force majeure cases are owing to reasons external to the DO that are unforeseeable, unavoidable and due to an impediment beyond its reasonable control, and which are not attributable to any act or failure to take preventive action by the DO concerned.

Amendments to the various publications of the International Bureau shall be notified to member countries and designated operators by circular with the minimum of delay and in the most appropriate form.

It is worth to mention that with the exception of invoked force majeure cases, these publications are often requested by e-mail or paper-based letter leading to additional exchanges, revised versions and (re) validations. Human error, time-consuming tasks, limited scalability, lack of accuracy, inefficient data storage, difficulty in data analysis, high risk of data loss, lack of automation, limited accessibility, and difficulty in collaboration are all challenges that the UPU International Bureau face when relying on current manual processes.

The aim of the UPU is to develop an integrated system for the electronic handling and treatment of emergency information of an operational nature (EmIS), force majeure open and close cases as well as circulars through an internet-based system accessible by authorised users from UPU member countries and their designated operators worldwide.

The system should connect globally more than 200 designated operators of UPU member countries, which annually handle nearly three hundred EmIS messages, two hundred circulars and several requests of force majeure requests to open and close cases. Two thousand users from nearly 192 member countries require access to this system.

The system should be developed with the option to add other UPU publications in the future.

2 Requirements details

The use of a standardized system for the electronic handling and treatment of EmIS, force majeure cases as well as circulars, is needed to enable DOs to be informed immediately of significant events liable to disrupt the operation of the world postal network or/and any notification to member countries and designated operators.

Below is a description of system general functionalities and request interaction process:

- The system should be available worldwide, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to the users. Local times must be displayed.
- The official working languages of the UPU International Bureau is French and English, and therefore, the system must be in both French and English with an option for local language configuration.

- Users without a UPU account are asked to register at hand2hand.upu.int, following the instructions set out in section 3.1 "User registration" of the authentication user guide available at www.upu.int/getmedia/f119c564-b1d1-4f6d-95c5-879d174ed18f/UPU-Authentication-and-Registration-User-Guide.pdf.
- Once users have registered, they can request access to the system by logging into accounts.upu.int with their UPU account credentials and selecting role for this system.
- The system must allow the configuration of users for specific type(s) of request(s). Possibility to use multi factor authentication (e.g., using google authenticator mobile app) mainly for sensitive user profile such as administrators.
- The system should allow accredited users to submit one or several requests for approval and publication by the International Bureau with publication to one or several operators and/or countries. Types of requests and associated approval standards are found under 2 below.
- The DO user should see only own information and IB user can see information for all Dos
- The user should be able to filter the list of requests by various attributes (i.e., country, status, date).
- If users work with EmIS messages, force majeure cases and circulars simultaneously, they can organize a dashboard as they choose because the system should be able to deal with all of them for ease of use.
- The system serves to allow communication between the International Bureau and different users to:
 - handle a request to publish an EmIS message and circulars as well as to submit the application forms related to force majeure open/close cases; these requests are regulated as "type of request" according to a predefined list for electronic handling;
 - Notify to users the status of handling requests from the creation of the request to its publication.
 - Query and search by key word and or type and status (for example, lists by subject, by date of publication, by date of occurrence, by country, by region, worldwide, etc.)
- Approved messages can be sent to all accredited users from member countries and their designated operators to inform them of a particular situation (national holidays, strikes, system and service disruption, force majeure, other announcements) occurring in the concerned country.
- E-mail notification is sent to each designated e-mail address each time a publication is made available on-line to member countries and designated operators.
- The system should provide support to users in processing requests electronically for publication of information to member countries and designated operators.
- Based on the information, event or occurrence, the designated operator creates a request based on the type of request and sends to the International Bureau for publication. A confirmation should be sent back to the requesting designated operator
- The general request workflow concept is as follows:
 - The user should choose the appropriate type of broadcast (EmIS message, Force majeure case, circular) to be published.
 - Menus can be either drop-down boxes or free text (comments/remarks section). Each menu has pre-defined categories from which the appropriate option can be selected. The purpose of these pre-defined categories is to reduce language barriers.
 - The standards for the approval and publication of broadcasts are defined based on the process flows as described below under 2.1.2, 2.2.2 and 2.3.2. It is important for the users

to focus on choosing the appropriate category and provide the related justification as required.

Only the authorised users of the designated operator can create and submit requests for approval

The user selects any of the types of requests from a drop-down list as follows:

- EmIS message
- Open / Close force majeure case
- Circular

2.1 Emergency Information System (EmIS)

2.1.1 Detailed description

Once the section of the type of broadcast is completed, all possible reasons are displayed, with appropriate commands for the user to select:

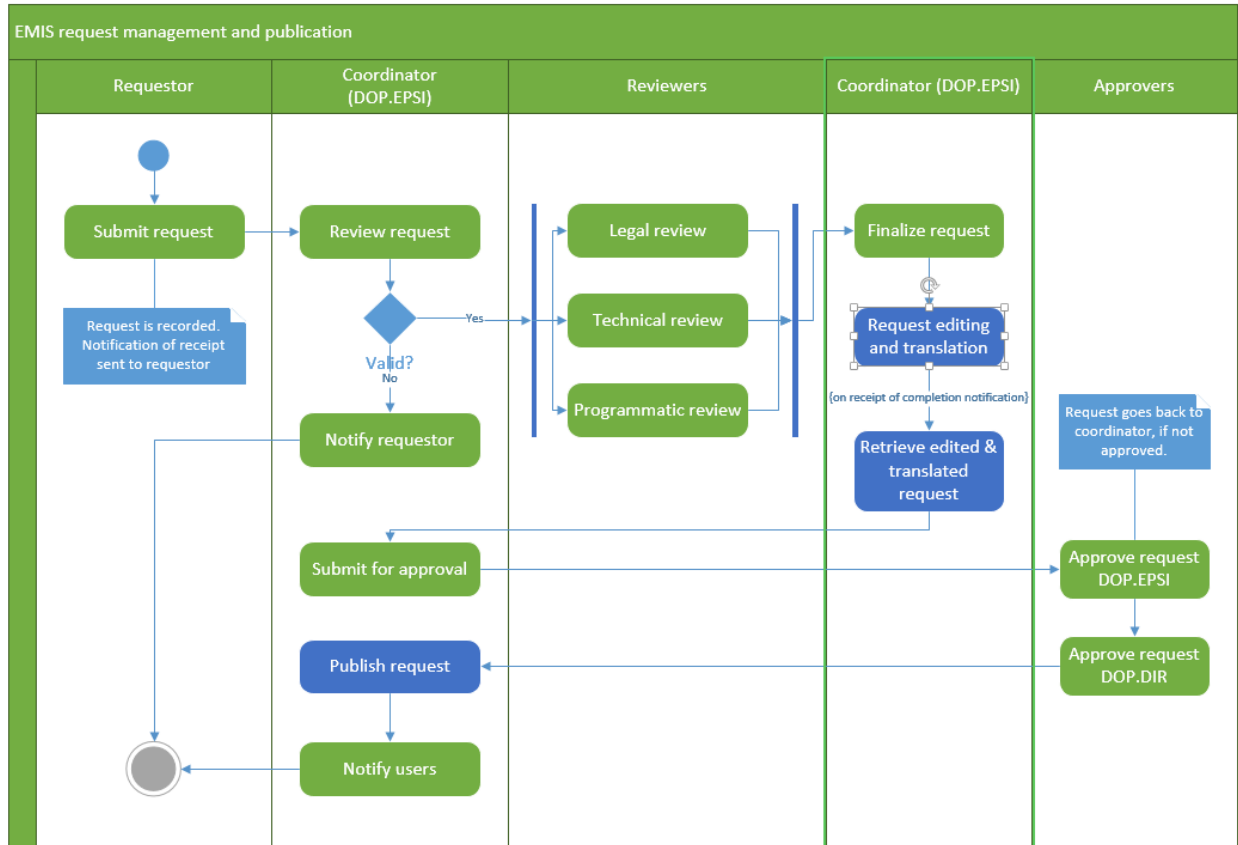
- Subject
 - Disruption
 - Suspension
 - Other (specify)
- Product impacted:
 - Letter-post (Letters, tracked items, registered items, insured items, small packets)
 - Parcel-post (parcels, ECOMPRO parcels)
 - EMS (documents, goods)
- Area impacted
 - Collection/Posting
 - Forwarding from outbound IMPC
 - Acceptance at inbound IMPC
 - International transport capacity
 - Cancellation of transit
 - Delivery
 - Collection of signatures
 - Customer care service
 - Work force capacity
 - Interruption of data transmission

- Geographic locations affected
 - Whole country
 - Localities (list of postcodes, cities) / changes to Post offices codes and manual input can be challenging. If Automated, regular updates can be also challenging. Export and Import excel files from the Letter-Post and/or Parcel-Post Compendium should be an option for users to upload the related list of postcodes and cities for the affected localities.

- Incident duration
 - From (date/time)
 - To (date/time)

- Affected countries
- Measures to be taken by other member countries and designated operators
- Update on the incident if required
- Comments
- Create a request and create a notification
- Create a Force majeure case (possibility to use already completed fields)
 - Force majeure open case
 - Force majeure close case

2.1.2 Process flows



The activities in blue color interface with an existing custom developed system hosted on premise (i.e., PEGASE) that provides an API interfaces.

2.2 Force Majeure cases

2.2.1 Detailed description

Once the section of the type of broadcast is completed, all possible reasons are displayed, with appropriate commands for the user to select from a reference list:

- Event or occurrence
 - War, whether declared or not, civil war, riots and revolutions, acts of piracy, acts of sabotage, acts of terrorism;
 - natural disasters, such as violent storms, cyclones, volcanic activity, earthquakes, tidal waves, floods, destruction by lightning;
 - explosions, fires, or destruction of machines, of factories, or of any kind of installation;
 - acts of authority, whether lawful or unlawful;
 - pandemic and epidemic diseases that affect the postal service;
 - disruption of information technology networks owing to events (such as cyber-attacks) beyond the control of the DO concerned.

- Submission to open a case
 - Date the problem began

 - Product impacted:
 - Letter-post (Letters, tracked items, registered items, insured items, small packets)
 - Parcel-post (parcels, ECOMPRO parcels)
 - EMS (documents, goods): when users select EMS they need to fill in 2 documents when opening and closing FM case for EMS item, which can be found with full instructions here: <https://www.ems.post/en/service-guidelines/force-majeure>

 - Geographic locations affected
 - Whole country affected
 - list the postcodes/cities/areas affected by the problem

 - Supporting documents (Supporting document will be provided with closure form)
 - Official declarations issued by governmental bodies
 - Police reports
 - Media coverage (e.g., newspaper articles, television news reports)
 - Weather reports (e.g., Internet, meteorological service)
 - Other (please specify)

 - Date/time of submission

- Submission to close a case
 - Edit the open case form (date of closure, comments, upload supporting document)
 - Date the problem ended

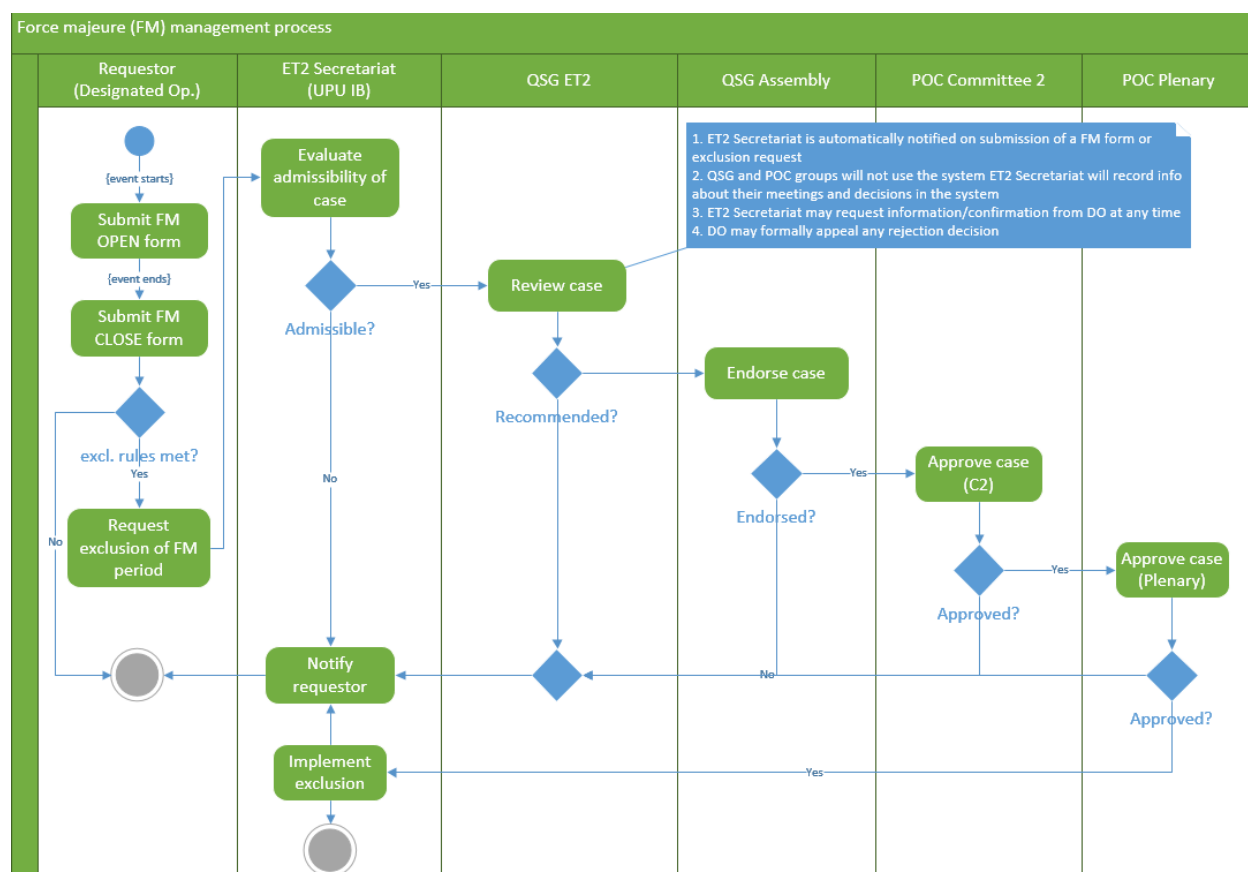
- Date/time of submission

The International Bureau shall assess through the system if the requests submitted by DOs meet the required criteria:

- Submitted through the system;
- Compliance with deadlines;
- Duration of events; and
- Completion of relevant forms.

Only DO requests of force majeure cases that meet the relevant criteria and requirements, as assessed by the system, shall be submitted to the POC relevant body. No other process shall be admitted for the submission of requests to the International Bureau.

2.2.2 Process flows



2.3 Circulars

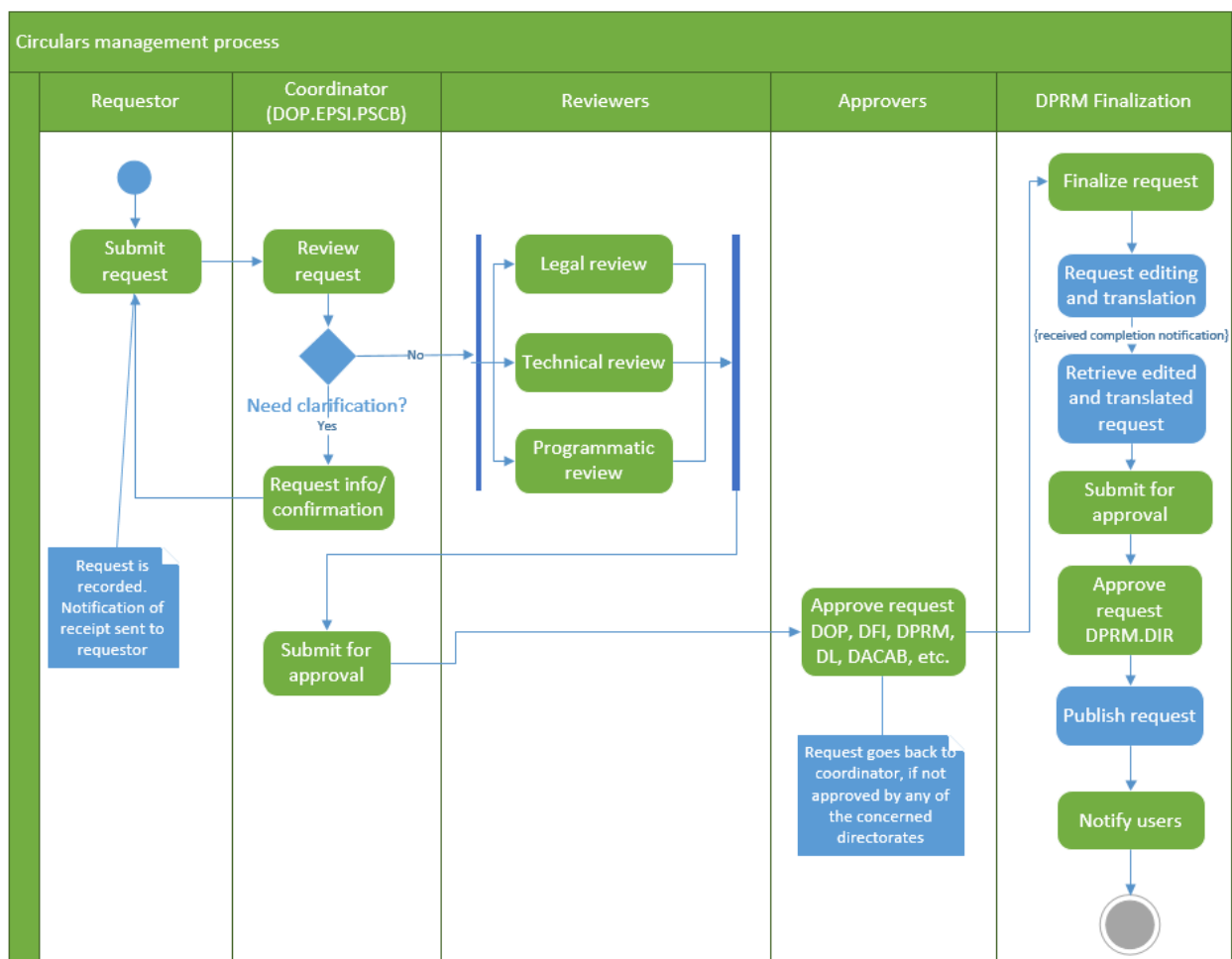
2.3.1 Detailed description

Amendments to the various publications shall be notified by circular, bulletin, supplement or other appropriate means as provided in article 17-004 of the Regulations to the Convention regarding International Bureau publications. However, any amendments to the publications and the date on which the

amendments take effect shall be notified to member countries and designated operators by the quickest means (air or surface), with the minimum of delay and in the most appropriate form.

- Date/time
- Area to be selected from predefined drill-down list
- Subject
- Mail category (A – Airmail or priority mail; B – S.A.L. mail/non-priority mail; C – Surface mail/non-priority mail; D – Priority mail sent by surface transportation (optional code))
- Mail class (U – Letters (LC/AO); C – Parcels (CP); E – EMS; T – Empty receptacles)
- Reference to the UPU Acts (Constitution, General Regulations, Convention, Regulations, Agreement, Forms, Rules of Procedure, Circular, etc.)
- Reference to the national legislation
- Text to be published
- Comments
- Create a request and create a notification

2.3.2 Process flows



2.4 Measurable requirements applicable to 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 above

2.4.1 Work flows

2.4.1.1 Create and submit a request

An identification number is automatically generated when the request is created and submitted.

Automated information should be displayed (i.e., Country, designated operator, date, time, etc.), compulsory fields should be highlighted. A function to attach documents is required. A send command is displayed and clicking on it forwards request to the International Bureau, allowing a request to be cancelled before being sent.

The system automatically calculates the processing due date and time, which are displayed and shown in local time.

Users can open a request sent and:

- redirect it to a different entity;
- recall it if a reply has not yet been received by the due date/time.

2.4.1.2 Reply to a request

A new request received but not yet opened (new request) is highlighted and visible as such requests are counted in the respective dashboard/menu of "requests received".

Once the request is opened, all available information is displayed and required commands are made available.

When replying, the screen should have mandatory fields of information according to type of request and corresponding respective reply, and an open free screen for final message remarks.

All requests must receive a reply.

2.4.1.3 Translation of requests

A new request that meets the relevant criteria and requirements is redirected systematically to the relevant services for translation into the applicable languages through the existing computerized process for translation (i.e. PEGASE).

All translated texts should be made available through the system for review and validation process by the relevant program(s).

2.4.1.4 Approval of requests

Once the relevant criteria and requirements are met and the translation into the applicable languages finalised, the request is submitted through the system using drill-down list of entities for approval by the relevant directorate(s).

2.4.1.5 Publication of requests

As soon as the relevant director electronically signs the request, it is made available through the system and published through PEGASE in the online documentation center.

2.4.1.6 Operational notification

Notifications are messages designed to convey proactive information and therefore are mainly used by the Central administration user, the translation services and the authorised users from member countries and designated operators to report a problem and/or seek additional information or clarification.

Notifications are always based on the request identification number that was generated by the system following its creation.

The system should have specific sections for notification separated from the request menus. Unread notification are highlighted and visible by the respective users.

The system shall comply with the International Bureau messaging system under control the Directorate of Postal Technology (Operations team).

2.4.2 Functionalities

2.4.2.1 Common functionalities

The functionalities below should be provided:

- Deactivation and reactivations: can be performed within an entire request handling process. A workflow can be deactivated or reactivated.
- Re-direction: a workflow can be re-directed by the central administration user to a different program (for example a request requiring a legal and/or technical review, Force majeure cases to be redirected to the measurement program for assessment and implementation).
- Mark unread: requests not yet opened are highlighted in bold which disappear once opened; the central administration user may decide to mark them as unread by clicking on the appropriate command "mark unread".
- User responsible for a message: each request has user name associated but a new user can request to become the handler of that request.
- The system should be able to send pre-configured alerts (i.e., an EmIS request has not been processed within 24 hours, Force majeure case open for too long,).
- Attachments: can upload up to five different documents per message, in the formats PDF, Excel, Word, JPG, PNG.
- Send an email to a user: users can be contacted by email or by phone. Clicking on "contact a user" available on each country's section, opens a new window allowing to elaborate an email and send it.
- Request handling status/update: each request listed displays the last/most recent handling status on the corresponding folder list as part of the related request details. Clicking on the request shows the entire details of the request.

- Search requests: clicking on the "search" command found on the dashboard and keying in the related request type displays its request history including the possibility of selecting pre-defined criteria as well as open text.
- Tables and dashboards: all types of request should be made available online through dashboards that can be customized according the user's need
- Downloads: the system should allow export and import files functions for specific needs on individual member countries and designated operators as well as aggregated reports at regional and global levels according to the selected criteria.
- Log activities: the system should provide log activities mainly on administration activities (creation of new user, changing sensitive information, etc.). These logs should be accessible by a Super administrator of the system. The logs should not be removed from the system during the retention period and without accreditation.

2.4.2.2 Schedule and generate reminders

Irregular requests such as incomplete fields or missing supporting documents must be prevented from being sent; the system shows the restriction, stops the process and suggests subsequent submission when certain conditions are met. A notification must be sent automatically to the requesting user.

Clicking on submit request later shows a table with a calendar to select the date/time (manual input), and remarks to be submitted later. Clicking on save command will store the message to be sent as a reminder. On the date/time programmed, a pop-up window will automatically appear and display the reminder.

2.4.2.3 Reporting

The workflows stored in a database are used to generate periodic reports on EmIS messages, force majeure cases and circulars of each designated operator. A dashboard must allow daily monitoring to the central administration user to ensure that requests are handled according to the applicable procedure and timelines are met.

It should be possible to aggregate results by: designated operator, region, global, day, week, month, year, type of request, reasons, etc.

2.4.2.4 Static reports

The system should be able to produce tabular reports that consist of an ordered set of fields in columns, with each row representing a request.

Request Type: Description of the type (EmIS, Circular, Force majeure)

Subject: The subject of the request

Request ID: The unique ID assigned to the request

Request Owner: The current owner of the request

Request starting date: The date when the request started

Request closing date: The date of publication

Monthly reports should be provided the first week of the following month respectively. Half-yearly reports should be provided the first week of July the same year. Annual reports should be provided on the first week of January.

2.4.3 Export of force majeure cases for implementation in the measurement and/or reporting

This tool may at a later stage in the future include integration with measurement systems to take into consideration force majeure cases for eventual re-calculations of quality related key performance indicators to be considered by the relevant POC body/IB programme(s).

2.4.4 Databases and reference data

In addition to the possibility to update content with appropriate documentation, the database should enable creation of settings to exchange requests with different stakeholders:

- Member countries and designated operators,
- International Bureau programs in charge of EmIS messages, Force majeure cases and circulars,
- Translation services,
- Validation by the relevant programs/Directorates of the International Bureau
- Publication by the relevant programs/Directorates of the International Bureau

2.4.5 Database storage

Requests database storage duration is agreed with the International Bureau, compliant with legal provisions and UPU requirements as well as the recommendations of ISO27002 Control 5.13 “Labelling of information” but not less than 13 months after which data can be archived but retrievable within three more years.

2.4.6 Interfaces

The system must be able to interface with other software such as QCS Mail, PEGASE and domestic systems.

2.4.7 Reference data

The majority of the data reference will be extracted from the UPU standards Code lists as well as the letter-post and parcels compendia. The system should allow the management and storage of:

- member countries and designated operators' details
- user contacts (e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, etc.) via manual input or automated download (i.e., List of Addresses, Head of Senior Officials of postal entities, Outlook contacts database);
- member countries and designated operators authorized to receive email notifications;
- Assigned staff of the International bureau.

The data should be encrypted and the supplier should provide the cryptography mechanism that will be implemented.

2.4.8 Single sign-on

- Integrate the system with UPU identity and authorization management system that can comprise approximately 2000 users from 192 member-countries.
- Allow the management and storage of users' access accounts including the automatic log out after a few minutes as determined by the International Bureau.
- This system is to be used by central administrators and users from member countries and designated operators with different profiles (Legal, operations, technical and quality service).
- Creation of users and related access credentials with associate rights and access to specific functionalities.
- A country may have more than one designated operator configured.
- Different level of users: editor, central administrator, validator, viewer, International Bureau (global analysis and monitor with read only access).
- Ensure secure coding practices are integrated into the system development lifecycle in compliance with secure coding methodology such as the Open Web Security Project (OWASP).

2.4.9 Ad hoc developments/future work/maintenance

Revision of the system

- The system should be flexible enough to allow the International Bureau to change simple configurations relating to requests types, standards, timeframes, development of new features, development of new reports, etc., without the need to solicit software development. These changes should be implemented as agreed with the International Bureau.

Regular meetings

- Periodic meetings may be held during development as needed or required by the provider; meetings may be held after the system launch at the request of the International Bureau, in order to evaluate the functioning and performance of the system, discuss technical issues, discuss the need for new developments.

Maintenance

- The supplier should communicate to the UPU the yearly maintenance plan for all planned maintenance action.
- System downtime for maintenance or implementation of any changes is agreed with the International Bureau with advance lead-time so that sufficient notification can be provided to the users.
- Three environments will be made available to end users: Test, Pre-Prod and Prod; the Test platform is used to test new features before applying the change, while the Pre-prod is used to ensure that the change will not introduce any issues before implementing in Prod. Pre-prod and Prod environments should be at the same level of versions to be able to debug problem raised by end users. Migration to production requires official authorization from the International Bureau.
- The system is required to operate at 99.4% availability.

- In case of a disaster, the system is required to be recovered within four hours.
- The online system is required to respond within two seconds from a request from an end-user.
- The hosting system is required to protect data, reference data and data in the download centre, from unauthorized access.

3 Proposed timeframe for implementation and training

- 2024 Q3 : Project Identification and Scoping
- 2024 Q4 (09.2024): Requirements Gathering
- 2024 Q4 (10.2024): Request for Proposal (RFP)
- 2024 Q4 (11.2024): Evaluation and Selection of proposals
- 2024 Q4 (11.2024): Contract Negotiation
- 2024 Q4 (12.2024) – 2025 Q2 (04.2025): development and implementation
- 2025 Q2 (05.2025): Testing and Quality Assurance
- 2025 Q3 (08.2025): Deployment and Training
- 2025 Q3 (09.2025) onward: Maintenance and Support
- 2026 Q4 (12.2025): Post-Project Review

The potential providers are required to provide proposals for one or more dedicated support staff for the implementation phase, as well as for a support/training period of at least three and up to six months following implementation of the system, with the provision of both remote and in-person support at the premises of the International Bureau of the UPU in Berne, Switzerland.

4 Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation/ Terminology	Interpretation/Description
EmIS	centralized system emergency information of an operational nature
Letter-post item	item described in and conveyed under the conditions of the Universal Postal Convention and Regulations
Parcel-post item	item described in and conveyed under the conditions of the Universal Postal Convention and Regulations
EMS item	EMS item: item described in and conveyed under the conditions of the Universal Postal Convention, Regulations and associated EMS instruments
Documents	a letter-post, parcel-post or EMS item consisting of any piece of written, drawn, printed or digital information, excluding objects of merchandise, whose physical specifications lie within the limits specified in the Regulations
Goods	a letter-post, parcel-post or EMS item consisting of any tangible and movable object other than money, including objects of merchandise, which does not fall under the definition of “documents” as provided above and whose physical specifications lie within the limits specified in the Regulations
Closed mail	labelled receptacle(s) sealed with or without lead, containing postal items
Misrouted mails	receptacles received at an office of exchange other than the one mentioned on the (receptacle) label
Personal data	information needed to identify a postal service user

Missent items	items received at an office of exchange meant for an office of exchange in another member country
Transit charges	remuneration for services rendered by a carrier in the country crossed (designated operator, other service or combination of the two) in respect of the land, sea and/or air transit of letter-post items
Terminal dues	remuneration owed to the designated operator of the country of destination by the designated operator of the dispatching country in compensation for the costs incurred in the country of destination for letter-post items received
Designated operator (DO)	any governmental or non-governmental entity officially designated by the member country to operate postal services and to fulfil the related obligations arising out of the Acts of the Union on its territory
Small packet	item conveyed under the conditions of the Convention and the Regulations
Inquiry	a complaint or query relating to the use of a postal service submitted in accordance with the conditions of the Convention and its Regulations
Universal postal service	the permanent provision of quality basic postal services at all points in a member country's territory, for all customers, at affordable prices
Transit à découvert	open transit through an intermediate country, of items whose number or weight does not justify the make-up of closed mails for the destination country
Air parcel	any parcel as defined in the UPU Convention which is conveyed by air with priority
IBIS	any UPU-certified common Internet-based inquiry system compliant with the UPU operational and technical procedures defined or referred to herein and used for the preparation, submission, transmission, receipt and processing of inquiries relating to parcels between designated operators
Name	in the context of sender or addressee, comprises the name of the legal person, or the family name, given name and patronymic (if any, as provided)
Operational information	pursuant to Convention article 2, a newly designated operator shall provide all the necessary operational information for the services provided under the Acts of the Union. The operational information shall be provided through the Letter Post Compendium Online and Parcel Post Compendium Online (see article 17-003.5 of the Regulations) as quickly as possible, but not later than two months prior to the commencement of mail operations
UPU Customs Compendium	contains country-specific information on customs clearance processes such as import processing of customs duties and postal charges, delivery of taxable/dutiable items, other agencies responsible for customs clearance of postal items, questions relating to customs declarations, miscellaneous information
Transit Compendium	contains information provided by designated operators on transit charges and groups of countries of destination for items received in transit à découvert
LAHSO	list of names and addresses of heads and senior officials in member countries
Settlement	Financial information shall be provided pursuant to article 34-115 of the Regulations including rules for payment of accounts not settled through the International Bureau clearing system
UPU*Clearing	the settlement of accounts through the clearing system of the International Bureau allowing DOs to strictly respect the prescribed payment deadline through a payment of a contribution to participate in the system
Inward land rates	The inward land rates are the system of payment between parcel post operators for the delivery of incoming parcels. In a move to ensure that the payment for the delivery of parcels is linked to the quality of the service provided, a system of bonus payments for the provision of parcels service features is added to a base rate for delivery
Transit charges	Where a sending designated operator requires the services of one or more intermediate designated operators to forward postal items to the destination country, either in closed mails or as open (à découvert) transit mail, the

	sending operator pays transit charges to the intermediate (third-party) operator(s)
Sea rate	remuneration owed for services rendered by a carrier (designated operator, other service or a combination of the two) participating in the sea conveyance of parcels
Supplementary remuneration for registered, insured and tracked items (SRP)	DOs exchange scanning data to improve the quality of registered, insured and tracked services and receive greater remuneration for processing these items when they achieve quality targets
Quality of Service Fund	a funding platform for developing countries to implement projects that aim at improving quality of service of the global postal network in general and focusing on strengthening the domestic postal network and infrastructure of beneficiary countries
Postal security	the safety and security of the postal sector as part of the global supply chain is critical to supporting worldwide commerce and communication. To facilitate the development and implementation of security standards and best practices among Posts, the UPU has established the Postal Security Group (PSG)
Standards	any UPU-defined set of specifications established for technological, operational and other processes where uniformity of practice is essential
Procedure	step-by-step sequence of activities or course of action (with defined start and end points) that must be followed in the same order to correctly perform a task
DPTC	Directorate of Postal Technology Center
DOP	Directorate of Postal Operations
DPRM	Directorate of Policy, Regulations and Markets
DAJ	Legal Affairs Directorate
Editor	Edit the data to create, view, change, submit and close requests
Central administrator	Global management of the system including configuration, editing, viewing, validation, publishing analysis and monitoring
Validator	Validate the requests according to the computerized process flows
Viewer	View the published requests
International Bureau	Users from relevant programs