**Survey on designated operators’ preferences in relation to postal item identifiers**

The designated operators (DOs) of Union member countries are invited to complete the following survey regarding Standards Board work item P65 on the examination of the limitations of the S10 item identifier and consideration of possibilities to overcome these limitations.

This survey is to be returned **no later than 2 November 2020** to the following contact person at the International Bureau:

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|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Member country/Designated operator | | |
| Full name (responsible contact person) | | Ms  Mr |
| Position/title | | |
| Tel. | Fax | |
| E-mail | | |
| Date | Signature | |

**Introduction**

At its 2018.2 session, the Postal Operations Council approved the creation of a Standards Board work item to examine the limitations of the S10 standard in defining 13-character identifiers for postal items, and to deter­mine whether there is a need to implement a new item identifier or to adapt the existing S10 item identifier. This survey aims to gather information on DOs’ preferences in relation to postal item identifiers, and to identify any issues that they may have encountered in this regard.

**Background information**

S10 defines the 13-character item identifier as follows:

* positions 1 and 2: service indicator code;
* positions 3–10: eight-digit serial number;
* position 11: check digit;
* positions 12 and 13: two-character ISO 3166–1 code of the UPU member country under whose authority the S10 identifier was issued.

Code 128 symbology is used for the barcode representation of the item identifier. An S10 identifier must remain unique, i.e. not be reused, for 12 months.

The following issues and advantages of S10 have tentatively been identified:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Issues with S10* | *Advantages of S10* |
| Several DOs are facing problems in their export process owing to the limited capacity of the S10 identifier, which leads to the generation of dupli­cate identifiers within a year (according to the standard, identifiers must remain unique for a pe­riod of one year);  S10 identifies the country, but not the operator. This poses problems relating to outbound mail for countries with more than one DO. | The identifier includes some useful information: type of postal product or service, origin country;  Universal adoption by DOs;  Flexibility: new service indicators have been added over the years to reflect the evolution of the UPU product portfolio. |

In view of the issues listed above, combined with the obligation to assign S10 identifiers to all items containing goods, the limited capacity of S10 is becoming a serious issue for several DOs. Adjustments or alternatives must therefore be envisaged. As S10 is still proving to be an adequate solution for many DOs for their outbound mail, it is proposed that these DOs continue to use S10 and adapt only their inbound processes to accept a new or modified identifier received from certain partners. The questionnaire below has been devised based on this approach.

**N.B. –** UPU standard S26, also pertaining to item identification, defines an item identifier for parcels. This is currently a draft standard, mentioned in the UPU Regulations as an alternative to the S10 identifier for parcels subject to bilateral agreement. Currently, S26 guarantees uniqueness and provides flexibility for each postal operator to build its identifiers but, on the receiving side, no information other than the origin postal operator can be safely extracted from the identifier. S26 is based on ISO 15459, which can facilitate interfacing with logistics partners throughout the processing chain.

**S10 survey: preferences of designated operators in relation to postal item identifiers**

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|  | |  | | Yes | | No | | Not sure/ No opinion | |
|  | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Do you agree with the above-mentioned list of tentatively identified issues and advantages? |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | If not, or if you have any other remarks, please explain below: |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  |  |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | With regard to outbound mail, is your postal organization currently facing issues, or expecting to face issues in the future, with the S10 identifier, primarily owing to the increase in e-commerce items? |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 | If so, are you already facing issues or when do you expect to face issues with the S10 identifier? |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | Now |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | Within two years |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | Within five years |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | Later |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | Remarks (if any): |  | |  | |  | |  | |
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| 3 | If you answered yes to question 2, please provide more details of the issues that you are facing with the S10 identifier for outbound mail. Otherwise, please proceed directly to question 4. |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Is it a capacity problem? |  | |  | |  | | | | |
| 3.1.1 | For identified letters: |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | * Untracked small packets |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | * Registered |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | * Tracked |  | |  | |  | | | | |
| 3.1.2 | For parcels (including ECOMPRO) |  | |  | |  | | | | |
| 3.1.3 | For EMS items |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.2 | If it is a capacity problem, how much more capacity would you like to have? |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | 20% |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | 50% |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | 100% |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | Over 100%, please specify capacity increase \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_% |  | |  | |  | | | | |
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|  | |  | | Yes | | No | | Not sure/ No opinion | |
|  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 3.3 | If it is not a capacity problem, please explain the issue(s) below, in terms of cost/benefit and cost of implementation. |  | |  | |  | | | | |
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|  |  |  | |  | |  | | | | |
|  | Remarks (if any): |  | |  | |  | | | | |
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| 4 | Several adjustments to S10 could be envisaged to address the capacity issue as a short-/medium-term solution. | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 | One approach could be to increase the capacity of S10 identifiers by replacing the check digit (position 11 of the identifier) with a normal digit. This would multiply capacity by 10. If you were to receive inbound items with this change, would it create problems in dealing with these items in your inbound and/or domestic processes and systems, including customer service and/or claims and inquiry processes? | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 4.1.1 | For identified letters: | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | * Untracked small packets | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | * Registered | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | * Tracked | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 4.1.2 | For parcels (including ECOMPRO) | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 4.1.3 | For EMS items | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | Remarks (if any): | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 4.2 | Another approach would be to add more service indicator ranges (posi­tions 1 and 2 of the identifier) for certain products. A new range, e.g. FA–FZ for small packets, would double capacity. If you were to receive inbound items with a service indicator in a new range, would it create problems in dealing with these items in your inbound and/or domestic processes and systems? | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.1 | For identified letters: | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | * Untracked small packets | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | * Registered | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | * Tracked | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.2 | For parcels (including ECOMPRO) | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 4.2.3 | For EMS items | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | Remarks (if any): | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | | |  | | Yes | | No | | Not sure/ No opinion | |
|  | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.3 | Another way of addressing capacity issues would be to allow an identifier to be reused after six or nine months, instead of 12 months as at present. It should be noted that a reduction to six months would double capacity, but could have an impact on IT solutions and other processes, such as inquiries. | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 4.3.1 | Would you be in favour of this approach? | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | If you answered yes, please indicate for which type of identified mail this should apply: | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
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| 5 | A potential longer-term approach (perhaps between two and five years) would be to develop a new item identifier. All DOs would be able to con­tinue to send items with S10 identifiers and would continue to receive S10 identifiers from many postal operators, but they would have to accept a new item identifier from those postal operators wishing to use the new identifier for their outbound mail. The exact composition and length of a new identifier would need to be given further consideration and deter­mined in partnership with the UPU product groups. It could be devised in such a way as to include more information than S10, to help support cur­rent and future business needs. | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 5.1 | Would you be in favour of this approach? | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 5.2 | Do you have any comments on this potential approach? | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 5.3 | Do you think your postal organization would implement a new item identi­fier for outbound items? | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | Please outline the reasons for your answer: | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.4 | It is thought that the impact of handling a new identifier for inbound items would be limited to the over-labelling process. Do you over-label inbound items? (If you do not over-label inbound items, please proceed to ques­tion 5.6). | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| 5.4.1 | For identified letters: | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | * Untracked small packets | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | * Registered | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | * Tracked | |  | |  | |  | |
| 5.4.2 | For parcels (including ECOMPRO) | |  | |  | |  | |
| 5.4.3 | For EMS items | |  | |  | |  | |
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|  | | |  | | Yes | | No | Not sure/ No opinion |
|  | | | | | | | | |
|  | Please describe the reason(s) why items may be overlabelled: | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| 5.5 | If you over-label inbound items, do you agree that any problem relating to a new item identifier would be limited to the over-labelling process and, therefore, would not affect domestic processes? | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  | Remarks (if any): | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  | If you answered question 5.5, please proceed to question 5.9 | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| 5.6 | If you do not over-label inbound items, how would you rate the impact of a new item identifier on inbound and domestic processes and systems (considering all aspects, such as IT-related costs and processes)? | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  | Minimal |  | |  | |  | | |
|  | Minor |  | |  | |  | | |
|  | Intermediate |  | |  | |  | | |
|  | Major |  | |  | |  | | |
|  | Highly problematic |  | |  | |  | | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| 5.7 | Please explain in detail the anticipated impacts, both internal (e.g. IT sys­tems, operations, invoicing, sorting machines) and external (e.g. custom­ers, providers, subcontractors). | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| 5.8 | Do you think a new item identifier could have an impact on your business customers in terms of their inbound mail? | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  | If you answered yes, please explain why: | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| 5.9 | Taking into account all aspects (e.g. IT, mail process, customers) and with a view to facilitating the transition, how far in advance would you like to be informed of the entry into force of a new identifier? | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  | One year | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | Two years | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | More than two years | |  | |  | |  | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  | Please explain your reasons: | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | | Yes | | No | Not sure/ No opinion |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| 6 | Instead of developing a new item identifier, an alternative long-term approach is already being examined. This entails expanding the S26 item identifier, which is currently permitted on a bilateral basis for parcels only. S26 identifiers are covered in the UPU EDI messaging standards (EMSEVT, PREDES). This approach could lead to a new identifier struc­ture, not limited to parcels, that would cover all requirements while benefit­ing from the interoperability provided by S26. In other words, this approach would result in a new item identifier, as proposed under question 5, with an additional prefix for compliance with S26 and to ensure interoperability with other supply chain actors. Would you be in favour of this approach? | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  | Remarks (if any) | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| 7 | Please share any other remarks you may have concerning the limitations of S10 item identifiers and any possible solutions. | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |

Thank you.