

# Policy for using Business Identifiers

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**Digital  
Business  
Council**

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## Introduction

Business Identifiers are information elements that establish the unique identity of Parties (organisations, businesses, locations, branches or offices, etc.) within the Digital Business Council's (the Council) Interoperability Framework.

This document outlines the policy for using the correct Business Identifiers. Implementers failing to adhere to these policies will jeopardise the interoperability of the information being exchanged. This policy should form a requirement of any implementation agreement.

## Summary

The Council Framework uses Business Identifiers in both its eDelivery infrastructure and within the business documents exchanged across that infrastructure.

Parties in the eDelivery infrastructure play the role of Participants. There are sender and receiver Participants in any exchange. These are the Parties that send and receive business documents. A business that is a legal entity may operate as more than one Participant within the eDelivery infrastructure. However each of those Participants requires its own Business Identifier.

Within the content of each business document there are also Parties taking on business roles such as Buyer and Supplier, etc. There may be relationships between these business roles and the Participants in the Delivery infrastructure. For example, sometimes the Buyer is also the receiver of the eInvoice. Sometimes an eInvoice document may specify the identifier for the receiving Party in the eDelivery infrastructure. But these are not reliable business rules. Business document specifications do not (sometimes deliberately) include any information binding the document content to the eDelivery infrastructure. The relationship between Business Identifiers within documents and Business Identifiers used in the eDelivery infrastructure is irregular.

So whilst there is generally a relationship between these various Party roles, the Council has no policy on how this should be done.

This policy relates to the common use of business identification schemes to identify the appropriate Party within the context required. In other words, Business Identifiers may have different values depending on where they are used, but the method by which they are identified should be consistent.

Many schemes already exist for identifying Parties. Some of these are:

- Australian Business Number (ABN) governed by the Australian Business Register Program
- Global Location Number (GLN) governed by GS1
- Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) governed by Dun and Bradstreet

There are also many technological, industrial, chambers of commerce and regional schemes that depend on the context of use.

None of these schemes in isolation can address the universal identification of all businesses required for the Council's interoperability Framework.

The Council has no intention of developing another identification scheme. The Council's strategy is to recognise a range of different business identification schemes and provide an approved list of those recognised schemes based on international standards.

## Policy for using Business Identifiers

The Council will not implement its own scheme for identifying businesses. Instead the Council will promote a federated system for uniquely identifying parties following the ISO 15459 format scheme (ISO/IEC, 2014b) for unique identifiers. This requires defining a controlled set of Issuing Agency Codes (IACs) (ISO/IEC, 2014a) for identification schemes (also known as party identifier types or Identification code qualifier (ISO, 1988) or International Code Designators (ISO/IEC, 1998) or Party ID Type (OASIS, 2010)) required by digital business implementations.

Each Business Identifier to be used in the Framework is a combination of the Issuing Agency Code and the value given by the Issuing Agency.

- For the eDelivery infrastructure, the Business Identifier will:
  - Form part of the agreement that Service Providers have suitable governance of their identification schemes when they enter, update and delete information on their platform, and
  - Be used as part of the primary key to identify entries in the Digital Capability Locator (DCL).
- Within the content of business documents, each trading party will be responsible for using the appropriate business Identifiers.

While it is technically possible following this approach to use various types of business identification scheme the policy recommends the Australian Business Register's Australian Business Number (ABN) be used where possible.

### POLICY 1 (Use of ISO 15459 encoding)

Business Identifiers should adhere to ISO 15459 constraints:

- MUST be at least 1 character long (excluding the identifier scheme);
- MUST NOT be more than 50 characters long (excluding the identifier scheme); and
- MUST only contain characters and numeric digits from the invariant character set of ISO/IEC 646 (ISO 7-bit coded character set) (ISO/IEC, 1991).

## POLICY 2 (Use of ISO 15459 structure)

A Business Identifier will comprise of:

- An Issuing Agency Code; and
- The Value provided by the Issuing Agency.

## POLICY 3 (Coding of Issuing Agencies)

To ensure sustainability and proper governance it is recommended to use only Issuing Agency Codes (IACs) in the following order of availability:

- 1 ISO 6523 International Code Designator (if known), or
- 2 An unregistered scheme

The following values for Issuing Agency Codes (Table 1) are examples taken from the current ISO 6523 code list.

*Table 1: Examples of Issuing Agency Codes*

| Code | schemeAgencyName             | International Code Designator |
|------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| GLN  | GS1                          | 0088                          |
| DUNS | Dun & Bradstreet             | 0060                          |
| ABN  | Australian Business Register | 0151                          |

## POLICY 4 (Use of URNs)

A requirement in many digital business communities is to have a mechanism for identification of businesses in XML or other structured formats, document headers and message headers using Universal Resource Names (URNs).

The OASIS ebCore Party Id Type Technical Specification (OASIS, 2010) specifies a formal mechanism using a URN notation that supports existing identification schemes. This allows these existing schemes to be reused using an alternative URN-based syntax, without duplication of Registration Authorities. The specification also provides a formal URN prefix for unregistered (mutually agreed) party identification schemes.

Examples:

1. URN for a party identified by its ABN.  
urn:oasis:names:tc:ebcore:partyid-type:iso6523:0151
2. URN for a party identified by a GLN.  
urn:oasis:names:tc:ebcore:partyid-type:iso6523:0088
3. URN for a party identified by its DUNS Number.  
urn:oasis:names:tc:ebcore:partyid-type:iso6523:0060
4. URN for a party identified by an informal, mutually agreed scheme.  
urn:oasis:names:tc:ebcore:partyid-type:unregistered:*myscheme*

## POLICY 5 (Recommended Business Identifier for the eDelivery Infrastructure)

All Business Identifiers (PartyId) in the eDelivery infrastructure should be identified using an ABN where possible. Where an ABN is not suitable, a Business Identifier may be chosen from an issuing agency in accordance with POLICY 3.

## POLICY 6 (Specifying Business Identifiers within the eDelivery Infrastructure)

An attribute must be populated with appropriate URN values (see POLICY 4) in all instances of elements used to identify Parties exchanging business documents.

Example:

Business Identifier for a party identified by its ABN within an ebMS message:

```
<eb3:PartyId type="urn:oasis:names:tc:ebcore:partyid-type:iso6523:0151">  
51083392303  
</eb3:PartyId>
```

## POLICY 7 (Specifying Business Identifiers within Business Documents)

In business documents an attribute must be populated with appropriate URN values (see POLICY 4) in all instances of elements used to identify businesses in a business document.

### Examples:

The following examples denote how to specify that the identifier is an ABN (51083392303) within a UBL document (OASIS, 2013):

```
<cac:PartyIdentification>  
  <cbc:ID schemeID="urn:oasis:names:tc:ebcore:partyid-type:iso6523:0151">  
    51083392303  
  </cbc:ID>  
</cac:PartyIdentification>
```

or

```
<cac:PartyLegalEntity>  
  <cbc:CompanyID schemeID="urn:oasis:names:tc:ebcore:partyid-type:iso6523:0151">  
    51083392303  
  </cbc:CompanyID>  
</cac:PartyLegalEntity>
```

The following example denotes how to specify that the identifier is a GLN (4035811611014) within a UBL document (OASIS, 2013):

```
<cac:PartyIdentification>  
  <cbc:ID schemeID="urn:oasis:names:tc:ebcore:partyid-type:iso6523:0088">  
    4035811611014  
  </cbc:ID>  
</cac:PartyIdentification>
```

The Council makes no recommendation for the specific schemes to be used for Business Identifiers within business documents except as covered by POLICY 3.



## Governance of this Policy

This policy needs maintenance to ensure it supports new versions of the standards, extensions to other identification schemes, new services, etc.

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