New Edifact Message Type
VERMAS – Verification of Gross Mass

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new Edifact Message
VERMAS – Verification of Mass

SMDG
USER GROUP FOR SHIPPING LINES AND CONTAINER TERMINALS

In this presentation

- Review on VERMAS development

- Lessons Learned

- Outlook – Next steps

Requirements on the VERMAS – only from the legal text

o The IMO Guidelines on VGM (Verified Gross Mass) were published in **November 2014**. They prescribe the Shipper's responsibility to provide a VGM as part of the shipping documents, with effect from **1st July 2016**.

o The VGM reporting requirements are described as a simple flow: **Shipper ➔ Carrier ➔ Terminal ➔ Vessel** Carrier and Terminal have a joint responsibility to ensure that a container without VGM is not loaded.

Challenge

o The reporting requirements could only be derived from the IMO legal text. No party had real-life experience. The role of portals, forwarders, NVOs, weighing stations etc. was not defined. Many parties began only in 2nd quarter 2016 to realize the impact of VGM on their processes.

o The impact of the VGM requirements were dramatically underestimated by literally all stakeholders initially.

VERMAS Timeline
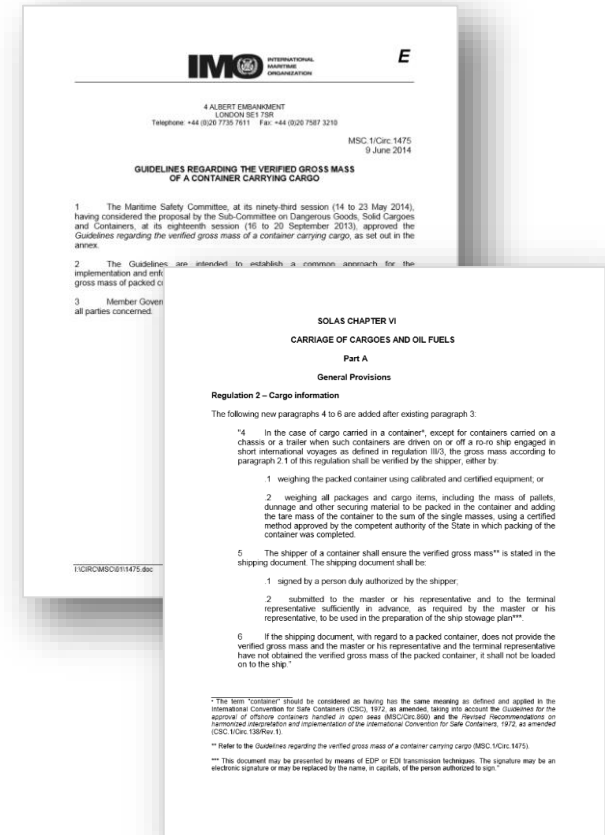
Feb.2016 UN/CEFACT project for new message

Dec.2014
SMDG first discussion about SOLAS VGM regulation

March 2015
Carriers find that a new message would be needed

April 2015
SMDG meeting in Malmoe agrees to pursue the development of a new message

July 2015
T&L Group agrees and supports the development of a new message

6. Nov. 2015
SMDG publishes first VERMAS MIG version 0.4

4. Nov. 2015
UN/CEFACT Forum in Marseille: General approval for VERMAS message structure

Sept. 2015
SMDG meeting in Malta approves the proposal for the new VERMAS message

27.4.2016
VERMAS officially approved by UN/CEFACT

13.6.2016
VERMAS officially published in D.16A directory

23.6.2016
SMDG publishes final MIG version VERMAS 1.0

Sept.2016
UN/CEFACT project for the VERMAS successfully closed .

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Lessons learned

○ **Speedy progress**
SMDG has reacted quickly on the new requirements, long before most stakeholders even realized the regulation.

○ **Good cooperation**
SMDG and UN/CEFACT have jointly developed and published a completely new Edifact message structure and the implementation guide in a very short timeframe.

○ **Successful development**
Since the start of VGM requirement on 1st July 2016 the VERMAS has been implemented and used by innumerable parties from all sectors of the maritime industry. The VERMAS satisfies the needs of all stakeholders and it has become the world standard for VGM reporting. Only odd critical voices were heard.

○ **Public awareness of SMDG**
The SMDG expertise for VGM was taken for granted and not doubted. SMDG became a focal point for information around VGM transmission requirements. The public awareness of SMDG as standardization organization grew considerably.

○ **Edifact still going strong**
EDI in the maritime industry is still centered on Edifact messages. There was no doubt that the VERMAS should be developed in the Edifact framework and not in other formats such as for example XML, JSON or Webservice. All stakeholders are operating Edifact environment and could therefore implement the VERMAS easily.

Why a completely new message?

1. New processes

There are new process steps that are not covered by existing message types. For example reporting from a weighing station to the shipper, or the weight from the terminal to the carrier or from the carrier to the shipper.

2. Different timing for weight transmission in current messages

In many cases the existing messages are sent at a different time than the VGM is known or is required. The existing messages are sent too early or too late for transmission of the VGM.
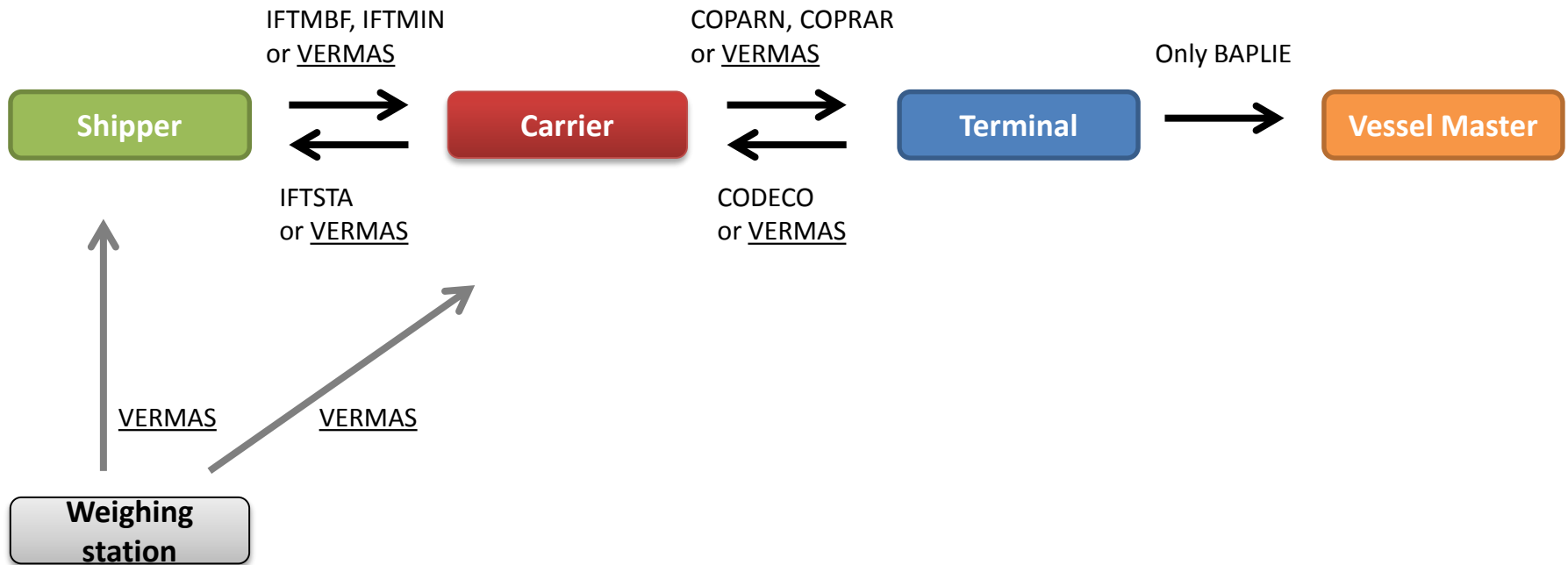
3. One new message easier than changing many existing messages

Shippers, carriers and terminals need to change a large number of message versions on a fixed deadline. Many of them find it easier to implement one new message for this special purpose of VGM reporting than upgrading many existing message versions and test simultaneously with many EDI partners.

4. Message identification determines the purpose

The receiver can detect the purpose (VGM update) from the message identification VERMAS. He does not have to go into the message to detect the function.

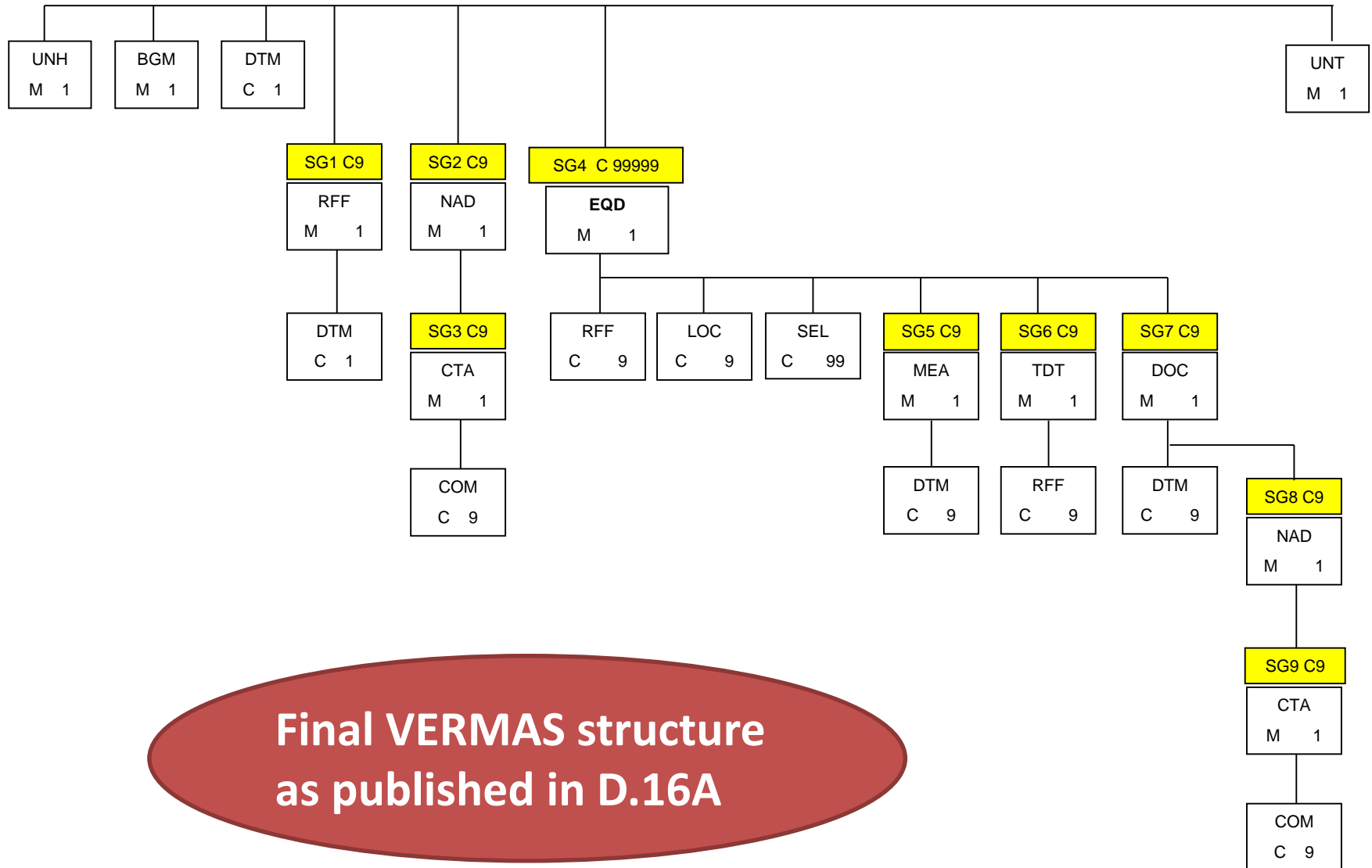## VERMAS in the Process Chain

IFTMBF, IFTMIN
or VERMAS

COPARN, COPRAR
or VERMAS

Only BAPLIE

Shipper →← **Carrier** →← **Terminal** → **Vessel Master**

IFTSTA
or VERMAS

CODECO
or VERMAS

VERMAS   VERMAS

Weighing station

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Final VERMAS structure as published in D.16A

0	UNH M 1 · BGM M 1 · DTM C 1 · ... · UNT M 1
1	SG1 C9 — RFF M 1 · SG2 C9 — NAD M 1 · SG4 C 99999 — EQD M 1
2	DTM C 1 · SG3 C9 — CTA M 1 · RFF C 9 · LOC C 9 · SEL C 99 · SG5 C9 — MEA M 1 · SG6 C9 — TDT M 1 · SG7 C9 — DOC M 1
3	COM C 9 · DTM C 9 · RFF C 9 · DTM C 9 · SG8 C9 — NAD M 1
4	SG9 C9 — CTA M 1
5	COM C 9

Simple Message Structure / Possible enhancements

The VERMAS structure follows the **KISS principle**:
Keep it short and simple

The VERMAS is made for a dedicated purpose and contains
only data elements that are clearly needed,
based on the best assessment of the business requirements
Resulting from the IMO guidelines (as per Q1.2016).

Additional requirements on the VERMAS content could well
arise after some time of real-life usage. The main reason is
expected to be country-specific legal reporting
requirements.

**SMDG members: Are you aware
of new reporting requirements?**

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VERMAS new requirements

VERMAS to be used as a weighing order
This request was **rejected**. It would make the message structure too complicated. It could entail more and more data elements related to the ordering process, payment details etc.

New qualifier to describe the sequence of a container within a booking
This request will be **approved**. The qualifier SQ will be added to the RFF under the EQD segment in the next MIG version.

Additional data for country specific requirements.
There might be additional requests for example from China, Malaysia, India due to legal requirement. However there is **no clear advice yet** on the exact data to be transmitted.

What's new?

SMDG Activities

The structure of following messages was enhanced by the SMDG in order to enable VGM reporting.
New versions were published on www.smdg.org

Message	Activity	Purpose	Sender-Receiver
BAPLIE	Enhanced	Stowage Plan	Carrier <> Terminal > Vessel
MOVINS	No change	Move Instructions	Carrier > Terminal
COPARN	Enhanced	Pre-arrival notice	Carrier > Terminal
COPRAR	Enhanced	Load List	Carrier > Terminal Carrier <> Carrier
CODECO	Enhanced	Gate-In confirmation	Terminal > Carrier
COARRI	Enhanced	Load/Discharge	Terminal > Carrier
VERMAS	New development	VGM Reporting	Between various parties in the transport chain

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VERMAS working group in the SMDG

- Michael Schröder   Hapag-Lloyd (chair)

- Jost Müller   Müller&Blanck Software

- Paul Wauters   PSA Antwerp

- Stefano Ottonello   MSC Le Navi

- Yoshi Kito   EDI Expert