

The Application Configuration Tool (ACT)

The Application Configuration Tool may be accessed by all CCN sites from the following url: <http://act.ccntc.ccncsi.int:7003/act/> as from 10 May 2011.

User profiles must be requested in order to access the ACT. Forms signed by the requesting User and the Local Security Officer should be faxed or scanned and emailed to the CCN/TC Helpdesk. This new [User Nominative Account Registration form \(UNA form\)](#) is available for download from the CCN/TC Portal under the section Downloads- Templates.

Fourteen training webcasts are available for download from the CCN/TC Portal (see links below).

A lifecycle document ([flow diagram](#)) details the email interactions which occur once a Configuration Request has been submitted.

The [Application Configuration Guide](#) remains valid and may be downloaded from the CCN/TC Portal under the following section: [Downloads- Documentation- Development](#).

I. Introduction

High demand

It is important for the CCN user community to be able to connect new applications to the CCN backbone quickly and seamlessly. The Application Configuration Tool, or ACT, is a web-based tool providing assistance to users introducing configuration requests. The ACT has been developed in order to increase the quality of requests, and to ensure a speedier implementation for sites. Each new application deployed on the CCN network results in dozens of new configuration requests.

Between 2008 and 2010, some 1470 Configuration Requests were submitted by CCN sites. Over 80% of these requests were incorrectly or incompletely configured and did not follow the standard verification and approval process. The extra interactions required resulted in longer implementation times for the NAs (average of 3 additional interactions per request resulting in median of 8.5 days in 2009 and of 5.5 additional interactions resulting in median of nearly 13 days in 2010).

Evolving towards more automation

In September 2010, the CCN/TC introduced a simplified Application Configuration Form (ACF) for use by all National Administrations, Support Centres, Development Centres and the CCN/TC. The ACF represented the first step in improving the procedures for introducing application configuration requests.

After the simplified ACF, the ACT represents the next step of the process of streamlining configuration requests for the National Administrations.

The ACT allows NAs to submit configuration requests for business applications in a guided manner. This web-based tool allows NAs to manage all of their configuration requests in a centralized manner. The application will identify omissions or mistakes related to CCN communication protocols and definition consistency in NAs' configurations and automatically help to fix them. In this way, implementation will be faster and NAs will be able to track the status of all their requests.

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II. Key improvements for the NAs introduced by the ACT:

1. Users will benefit from automated feedback on their requests in real time. The “**checking function**” is fully automated, whereas final acceptance requires approval by a member of the CCN/TC staff.
2. It is now possible to link an **unlimited number of applications to a single request** (per application domain), whereas in the past a separate ACF was required for each application (e.g. VIES).
3. The ‘**status**’ field will be updated in real time; it can be consulted by all members of a site with the appropriate access, who will have access to the history of modifications and be able to **track versions, changes and correspondence**. Having a single repository also means that it will not be necessary for NAs to maintain different file versions.
4. Users will be able to **directly delete** queues, services and web services.
5. Certainty regarding implementation dates. From the moment a request has been accepted by the CCN/TC, implementation will be carried out within five working days or less. The ACT makes it **easier to calculate implementation times**.
6. Connection requirements are identical to those of the CCN/TC Portal. Besides defining user profiles, **no additional configurations**, logins or software are required.
7. Pre-defined **templates** will **save time** when introducing configuration requests, as only information relating to the local site infrastructure (e.g., operating systems) needs to be filled in. In the event a template is rendered obsolete, it will continue to function for existing applications which are based on it.

III. Improvements for the CCN network:

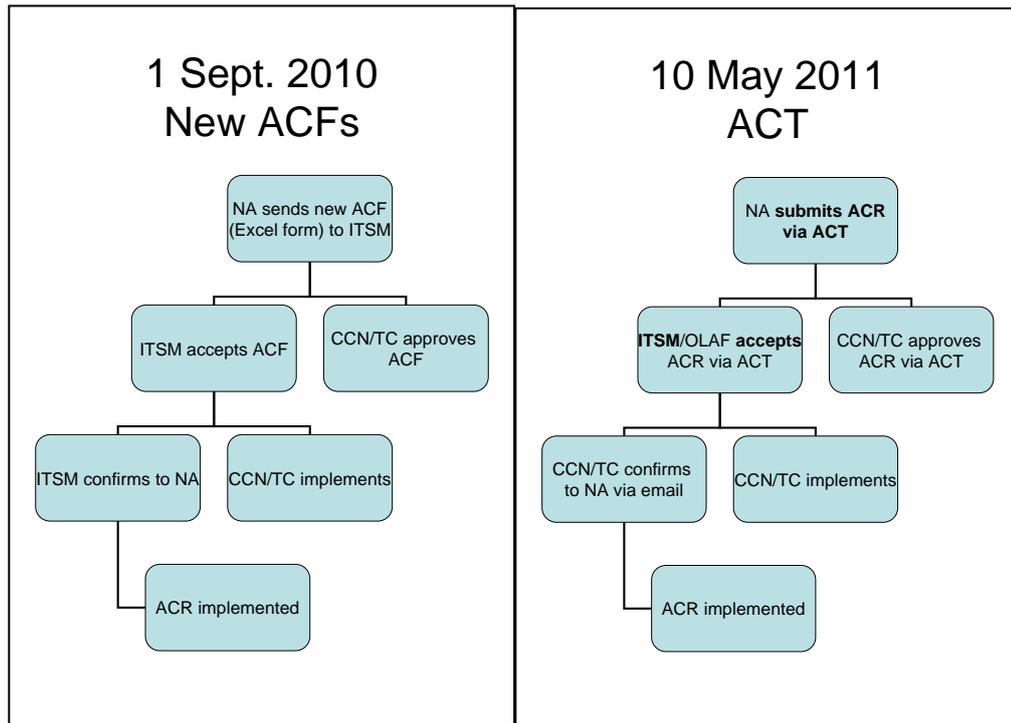
1. Real-time **statistics** (via a **Monitoring Tool**) will provide the number of days to implementation and counts of all new Configuration Requests. ITSM/OLAF have an overview of the status of the implementation by the sites of the new configurations, whether this is per site, per environment, or any other combination of search criteria.
2. The use of **templates** (which will be prepared for applications, but not for web hosts) will result in **homogeneous configurations** with identical configuration names across CCN sites. The scripts which they generate are automated and provide **ready-to-execute commands** to be executed on the Gateways. DG TAXUD will gain in flexibility, as “review” roles can be attributed as desired. The **flexibility** of adding sites with differently configured infrastructures (e.g. third countries or candidate countries) is maintained.

IV. Practical Aspects of Deployment:

Until 10 May 2011, NAs should continue to address the new Excel ACFs (for all but VIES and VATREFUND configuration requests) to ITSM. The forms have been updated on 12 April 2011 to include the new NJCSI stack. As from 10 May 2011, use of the ACF Excel forms should be discontinued. They will only be accepted in the event the ACT is unavailable.

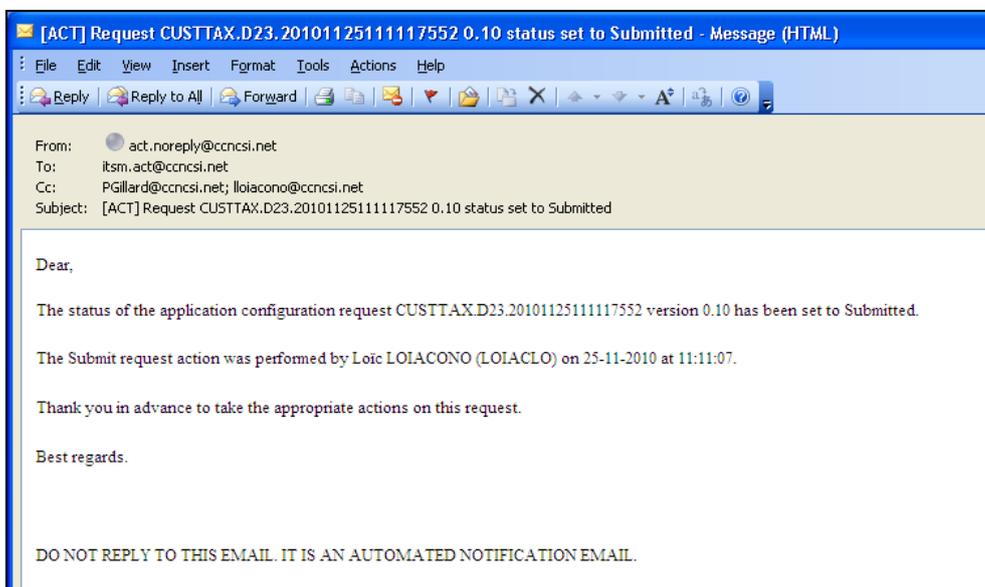
In the ACT, OLAF will be automatically designated as the reviewer for all AFIS configurations. For all other [business] configuration requests, ITSM will be assigned the reviewer role by default. Users from National Administrations will have rights as standard users.

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The integration of the ACT application with the CCN/TC's Service Call procedures means that ITSM or OLAF (the reviewer) will be directly informed via email of every change to a NA configuration request, from the moment a request is submitted up to and including the closing of the call.

Example of an email signalling the submission of a Configuration Request:



The CCN Directory already contains all active configurations for a given site. From the first day, it will be possible for a user to search for and load all of these **existing configurations**. Care should be taken before deleting any queues or services within existing CSI applications, or webservices within existing webhosts. User rights should therefore be attributed with great care.

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V. Training and support:

ACT Training webcasts

A series of 14 audiovisual training webcasts, or short demonstration videos, is available for download from the CCN/TC Portal. NAs are encouraged to consult these self-training modules before accessing the ACT for the first time.

Presentation of the ACT

[Scenario 1](#) - How to access the ACT & technical prerequisites (4'31")

Management of the requests

[Scenario 2](#) - How to create a generic request (3'02")

[Scenario 3](#) - How to create a request from a template (1'51")

[Scenario 4](#) - How to search a request (2'38")

[Scenario 5](#) - How to submit a request (1'22")

Management of the configurations within the requests

[Scenario 6](#) - How to create an asynchronous triggered receiver application (2'57")

[Scenario 7](#) - How to create an asynchronous sender or not triggered receiver application (2'33")

[Scenario 8](#) - How to create a synchronous server application (2'30")

[Scenario 9](#) - How to create a synchronous client application (1'43")

[Scenario 10](#) - How to modify an existing application (2'20")

[Scenario 11](#) - How to create a new webhost (1'38")

[Scenario 12](#) - How to modify an existing webhost (1'54")

[Scenario 13](#) - How to create a new message (0'56")

[Scenario 14](#) - How to create a new platform (0'53")

On-line help

A complete on-line help functionality has been included in the ACT application itself. This provides detailed information on all aspects of the ACT tool.

Application Configuration Guide

The [CCN Application Configuration Guide](#) remains valid and may be downloaded from the CCN/TC Portal.

Training courses

A short introduction to the ACT will be included in the ADM3G training course for NAs starting with the CCN Spring Training Session 2011.