Intern

Expert Group Profile

Description of the Expert Group

Related Committee	*Supply Chain & Quality*
Name of the Expert Group	*Digital Purchase Order*
Association Contact	*Thibault Grandemenge*

Description / Challenge / Initial Situation:

The exchange of operational data related to framework agreements is currently predominantly handled via paper-based documents or unstructured PDF files. These documents may comprise 100 pages or more and are typically distributed to suppliers via batch e-mails, requiring manual download from OEM portals.

On the supplier side, data is captured manually or semi-automatically (e.g. via OCR or handwriting recognition). This process is time-consuming, error-prone, and inefficient—especially as framework agreement data (e.g. prices, conditions) is updated at least annually, and often several times per year.

The complexity is further increased by the lack of standardization: documents are customer-specific, layouts vary significantly, and even minor form changes require renewed manual effort. As a result, millions of price and condition updates per OEM–supplier relationship are processed annually, leading to high administrative overhead, inconsistent data structures, limited automation, and reduced data transparency.

Challenge:

Building on the already finalized VDA recommendation—including a syntax-neutral data model and an XML-based technical specification—the next step is to establish a Catena-X expert group to take over and further standardize this approach.

The challenge is to:

- transfer the VDA standard into the Catena-X ecosystem,
- define it as an optional, standardized data transmission path within Catena-X,
- and develop a Catena-X compliant use case and technical implementation concept for the digital exchange of framework agreement data.

The substantive and data-model-related discussions have already been concluded within the VDA; the focus within Catena-X is therefore on integration, governance, and technical enablement.

Goals:

- Increase efficiency and scalability through digitization and automation of framework agreement data exchange
- Improve data quality and consistency while significantly reducing manual effort and error susceptibility
- Establish a Catena-X standard for the transmission of structured framework agreement data
- Enable automated downstream processing of operational purchasing data (e.g. P-material purchase orders) between OEMs and suppliers
- Provide procurement (as data owner) with a standardized, interoperable, and future-proof data exchange option within the Catena-X ecosystem

Non-Goals:

- **No redesign or redefinition of the VDA standard**
  The recommendation for the standard—including the syntax-neutral data model and the XML-based technical specification—has already been fully developed, aligned, and finalized within the VDA. Reopening or fundamentally redesigning this content is explicitly out of scope.
- **No duplicate standardization effort**
  The Catena-X expert group will not replicate or renegotiate the substantive work already concluded in the VDA. The focus is on adoption, integration, and enablement within the Catena-X ecosystem.
- **No definition of commercial or contractual terms**
  Commercial conditions, legal contract content, and bilateral agreement specifics remain outside the scope of this initiative. The standard addresses only the structured digital transmission of operational data.
- **No OEM- or supplier-specific customization**
  The Catena-X standard will remain generic and interoperable. Company-specific extensions, layouts, or proprietary formats are not in scope.

Deliverables

- Catena-X Standard
- Tractus-X KIT

Why should I participate?

We are looking for participants who are already familiar with the relevant VDA recommendation and/or have experience in implementing use cases in Catena-X.
Participation is open to all interested parties. Prior knowledge is not a requirement for participation, but it helps to ensure efficient, implementation-oriented discussions.

For more information on the responsibilities of an Expert Group, have a look at the Working Model.