



**Good Practices for**

**Central Authorities and  
other designated Authorities  
under the**

**1965 Service  
Convention**

Recalling the framework of the 1965 Service Convention and the practical importance and impact of effective cross-border judicial and administrative cooperation, and reiterating that the spirit and letter of the Convention do not constitute an obstacle to the use of information technology (IT), the Working Group on the Good Practices has endorsed the following compilation of good practices.

These good practices are applicable to those engaged in the preparation, transmission, and execution of requests for service of judicial and extrajudicial documents.

These good practices are aimed at enhancing the effective operation of the Convention, including by promoting the appropriate use of IT and supporting timely and efficient communication between all parties involved. By facilitating more streamlined procedures, these practices contribute to improving the overall efficiency and responsiveness of cross-border service of documents.

This document is non-binding, and Contracting Parties retain discretion in the implementation of the practices set out below, in accordance with the respective applicable laws, including regulations relating to privacy and data protection.

\* Click [here](#) for a glossary of key terms used in this document.

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## I. Good practices relating to the general operation of Central Authorities and other designated Authorities

Good practices include:

- 1 Ensuring that the [e-Country Profile<sup>GL,1</sup>](#), relevant national websites, any guidelines prepared by the requested State<sup>GL</sup>, and the internal mailing list of Central Authorities<sup>GL</sup> are complete, remain up to date, and contain the contact details for the Central Authority(ies) and other Authorities<sup>GL</sup> designated under the Convention<sup>GL</sup>.

*(C&R No 9 of the 2024 SC)*

- 2 Communicating effectively with relevant authorities by electronic means, while taking into account data security and privacy considerations, as appropriate. To safeguard personal data and sensitive information, authorities may consider, where possible, the use of digital signatures<sup>GL</sup>, secure platforms with end-to-end encryption, encrypted e-mails, and password-protected documents. Care should be taken to ensure that only the data strictly necessary for processing the request<sup>GL</sup> is included. Further information, including available communication methods and other relevant considerations, can be found in the [e-Country Profile<sup>GL</sup>](#) of the requested State<sup>GL</sup> (see item numbers 6, 7 and 25).<sup>2</sup>

*(C&R No 10 of the 2024 SC)*

- 3 Promptly responding, preferably within 15 to 20 calendar days of receipt, to enquiries from forwarding Authorities<sup>GL</sup> and interested parties about the presentation, transmission, receipt, and execution of requests<sup>GL</sup>.

*(C&R No 96 of the 2024 SC)*

- 4 Promoting the [e-Country Profile<sup>GL</sup>](#) and publicising the [Service Section<sup>GL</sup>](#) of the HCCH website, in addition to promoting the Conclusions & Recommendations<sup>GL</sup> of Special Commission<sup>GL</sup> meetings,<sup>3</sup> the [Practical Handbook<sup>GL,4</sup>](#) [Guidelines for completing the](#)

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<sup>1</sup> The e-Country Profiles pertaining to the 1965 Service Convention are available on the HCCH website ([www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net)) under "Service" => "e-Country Profiles".

<sup>2</sup> Some Contracting Parties may not have access to certain platforms or may be unable to open documents with specific protections. Accordingly, before using such methods, authorities are encouraged to consult the relevant e-Country Profile.

<sup>3</sup> The Conclusions & Recommendations (C&R) of Special Commissions (SC) are available on the HCCH website ([www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net)) under "Service" => "Special Commissions".

<sup>4</sup> The Practical Handbook on the Operation of the 1965 Service Convention is available for purchase in both paper and e-Book format. Further information, including the table of contents and order forms, can be found on the HCCH website ([www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net)) under "Service" => "Practical Handbook".

Model Form,<sup>5</sup> and other supporting documents among users of the Convention<sup>GL</sup>, including judicial authorities and officers, practitioners, and other designated Authorities<sup>GL</sup>.

*(C&R Nos 7, 8 and 134 of the 2024 SC)*

- 5 Supporting regular training and the exchange of experience among relevant officials, as well as participation in meetings of and for Central Authorities<sup>GL</sup> operating under the Convention<sup>GL</sup>, to ensure familiarity with applicable methods and procedures, evolving practices, and the effective use of IT.
- 6 Ensuring, as far as practicable, that the Central Authority<sup>GL</sup> and other designated Authorities<sup>GL</sup> are appropriately resourced to perform their functions under the Convention<sup>GL</sup>.

## II. Good practices relating to the preparation and transmission of Requests for service

Good practices include:

- 1 Consulting the e-Country Profile<sup>GL,6</sup> other relevant national websites, and any guidelines prepared by the requested State<sup>GL</sup>, and reviewing the information provided therein before making a request<sup>GL</sup>. Relevant information to review includes translation requirements, methods for transmitting the requests, and applicable declarations / reservations / notifications made by the requested State.  
*(C&R Nos 89, 93 and 134 of the 2024 SC)*
- 2 Using and completing all parts of the Model Form<sup>GL,7</sup> including the "Summary" and, where possible, the "Warning", when transmitting a Request for service<sup>GL</sup>.  
*(C&R No 78 of the 2024 SC)*

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<sup>5</sup> The Guidelines for completing the Model Form are available on the HCCH website ([www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net)) under "Service" => "Mandatory Form" => "Fillable version".

<sup>6</sup> The e-Country Profiles pertaining to the 1965 Service Convention are available on the HCCH website ([www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net)) under "Service" => "e-Country Profiles".

<sup>7</sup> Fillable versions of the Model Form are available on the HCCH website ([www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net)) in multiple languages under "Service" => "Mandatory Form" => "Fillable version".

- 3 Completing the [Model Form<sup>GL</sup>](#) electronically and using the multilingual versions available on the HCCH website; consulting the [Guidelines for completing the Model Form<sup>GL</sup>](#),<sup>8</sup> and any additional instructions when preparing a request<sup>GL</sup> under the Convention<sup>GL</sup>.

*(C&R Nos 79 and 84 of the 2024 SC)*

- 4 Providing sufficient contact information, including e-mail addresses, in the requests<sup>GL</sup> to facilitate communication with Central Authorities<sup>GL</sup> and other designated Authorities<sup>GL</sup>.

*(C&R No 12 of the 2024 SC)*

- 5 Where possible or appropriate, transmitting the Request for service<sup>GL</sup> and related documents by electronic means, while taking into account data security and privacy considerations. To safeguard personal data and sensitive information, forwarding Authorities<sup>GL</sup> may consider, where possible, the use of digital signatures<sup>GL</sup>, secure platforms with end-to-end encryption, encrypted e-mails, and password-protected documents. Care should be taken to ensure that only the data strictly necessary for processing the request<sup>GL</sup> is included. Further information, including available communication methods and other relevant considerations, can be found in the [e-Country Profile<sup>GL</sup>](#) of the requested State<sup>GL</sup> (item numbers 6, 7 and 25).<sup>9</sup>

*(C&R Nos 13 and 71 of the 2024 SC)*

- 6 Presenting the Request for service<sup>GL</sup> to the Central Authority<sup>GL</sup> or other designated Authority<sup>GL</sup> of the requested State<sup>GL</sup> as soon as practicable, to allow sufficient time for its execution.

- 7 Where service is to be effected on multiple persons, even when they share the same address, sending a separate request<sup>GL</sup> for each person.

- 8 Contacting the Central Authority<sup>GL</sup> or other designated Authority<sup>GL</sup> of the requested State<sup>GL</sup>, preferably by electronic means, to enquire about the status of the request<sup>GL</sup> if no acknowledgement of receipt is received within 30 calendar days of sending the request.

*(C&R No 95(b) of the 2024 SC)*

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<sup>8</sup> The Guidelines for completing the Model Form are available on the HCCH website ([www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net)) under "Service" => "Mandatory Form" => "Fillable version".

<sup>9</sup> Some Contracting Parties may not have access to certain platforms or may be unable to open documents with specific protections. Accordingly, before using such methods, authorities are encouraged to consult the relevant e-Country Profile.

- 9 Indicating to the Central Authority<sup>GL</sup> or other designated Authority<sup>GL</sup> of the requested State<sup>GL</sup> the time after which service is no longer required, and, where applicable, providing alternative court hearing dates, or informing the relevant authority in the requested State<sup>GL</sup> at any time that service is no longer required.

*(C&R No 95(h) of the 2024 SC)*

- 10 Contacting the relevant Central Authority<sup>GL</sup> or other designated Authority<sup>GL</sup> of the requested State<sup>GL</sup> to whom the request<sup>GL</sup> was addressed, preferably by electronic means, to enquire about the status of execution if no Certificate<sup>GL</sup> confirming service or non-service has been received from the relevant authority within a reasonable time, preferably within 90 calendar days of sending the request.

*(C&R No 95(f) of the 2024 SC)*

### III. Good practices relating to the receipt and execution of Requests for service

Good practices include:

- 1 Where possible, implementing procedures and structures to facilitate the acceptance of Requests for service<sup>GL</sup> transmitted by electronic means and ensuring that methods of acceptance are reflected in the relevant [e-Country Profile<sup>GL</sup>](#).<sup>10</sup>

*(C&R Nos 13 and 71 of the 2024 SC)*

- 2 Promptly acknowledging receipt of the Request for service<sup>GL</sup>, preferably within 30 calendar days of receiving it from the forwarding Authority<sup>GL</sup>.

*(C&R No 95(b) of the 2024 SC)*

- 3 Tracking or recording incoming Requests for service<sup>GL</sup> through electronic case registers or management systems.

*(C&R No 14 of the 2024 SC)*

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<sup>10</sup> The e-Country Profiles pertaining to the 1965 Service Convention are available on the HCCH website ([www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net)) under "Service" => "e-Country Profiles".

- 4 Promptly contacting the forwarding Authority<sup>GL</sup>, preferably by electronic means, when the Request for service<sup>GL</sup> cannot be executed due to inadequate information or document(s) forwarded, in order to secure the missing information or document(s).  
*(C&R No 95(c) of the 2024 SC)*
- 5 Consulting the [e-Country Profile<sup>GL</sup>](#) when there are doubts as to the competence of the forwarding Authority<sup>GL</sup>.  
*(C&R No 88 of the 2024 SC)*
- 6 Communicating with the relevant authorities, including the forwarding Authority<sup>GL</sup> and / or the Central Authority<sup>GL</sup> in the requesting State<sup>GL</sup>, preferably by electronic means, when issues of interpretation arise regarding the characterisation of an extrajudicial document<sup>GL</sup> or the nature of the cause of action.  
*(C&R Nos 68 and 123 of the 2024 SC)*
- 7 Providing assistance to the forwarding Authority<sup>GL</sup>, where possible and consistent with legal and structural capabilities, when the address of the person to be served is incomplete or incorrect. Additional information on available assistance should be included in the [e-Country Profile<sup>GL</sup>](#). When such assistance can be provided, taking into account data security and privacy considerations, as well as necessary precautions in sensitive cases involving potential risks to the health, safety, or liberty of the addressee<sup>GL</sup>.  
*(C&R Nos 76 and 77 of the 2024 SC)*
- 8 Deciding whether the request<sup>GL</sup> complies with the provisions of the Convention<sup>GL</sup> within 30 calendar days of its receipt.  
*(C&R No 95(d) of the 2024 SC)*
- 9 Where possible and appropriate, in cases of refusal to comply with a Request for service, providing the reason(s) underlying the refusal to the forwarding Authority<sup>GL</sup>.
- 10 Executing the Request for service<sup>GL</sup> as soon as practicable, preferably within 90 calendar days of its receipt.  
*(C&R No 94 of the 2024 SC)*
- 11 Promptly communicating with the forwarding Authority<sup>GL</sup>, preferably by electronic means, if, at any time during the execution of the Request for service<sup>GL</sup>, an obstacle arises which may significantly delay or even prevent its execution.  
*(C&R No 95(e) of the 2024 SC)*

- 12 Taking all reasonable and appropriate steps, as determined by the Central Authority<sup>GL</sup>, to execute the request<sup>GL</sup> until such time as the forwarding Authority<sup>GL</sup> advises that service is no longer required. Reasonable and appropriate steps may include multiple attempts to effect service at different times and using available resources to confirm an addressee's<sup>GL</sup> address.

*(C&R No 95(g) of the 2024 SC)*

- 13 Implementing mechanisms to facilitate, where necessary, the payment or reimbursement by electronic means of costs permitted by Article 12(2) of the Convention<sup>GL</sup>, and providing any relevant information in this regard in the e-Country Profile<sup>GL</sup>.

*(C&R Nos 41 and 100 of the 2024 SC)*

#### IV. Good practices relating to the completion and return of the Certificate of service

Good practices include:

1. Completing the Model Form<sup>GL</sup> electronically and consulting the Guidelines for completing the Model Form when preparing the Certificate<sup>GL</sup>.<sup>11</sup>

*(C&R Nos 79 and 84 of the 2024 SC)*

2. Returning the Certificate<sup>GL</sup> directly to the forwarding Authority<sup>GL</sup> in the requesting State<sup>GL</sup>.

*(C&R No 83 of the 2024 SC)*

3. Where possible, transmitting the Certificate<sup>GL</sup> and related documents by electronic means, while taking into account data security and privacy considerations. To safeguard personal data and sensitive information, authorities may consider, where possible, the use of digital signatures<sup>GL</sup>, secure platforms with end-to-end encryption, encrypted e-mails, and password-protected documents. Further

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<sup>11</sup> Fillable versions of the Model Form and the Guidelines are available on the HCCH website (www.hcch.net) in multiple languages under "Service" => "Mandatory Form" => "Fillable version".

information, including available communication methods and other relevant considerations, can be found in the [e-Country Profile<sup>GL</sup>](#) of the requesting State<sup>GL</sup> (item number 25).<sup>12</sup>

*(C&R Nos 13 and 71 of the 2024 SC)*

4. Ensuring that the Certificate<sup>GL</sup> or the attachments include sufficient information to identify the matter to which the Certificate relates. It may be of assistance if a copy of the original request<sup>GL</sup> and / or the documents to be served are returned together with the Certificate for this purpose.

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<sup>12</sup> Some Contracting Parties may not have access to certain platforms or may be unable to open documents with specific protections. Accordingly, before using such methods, authorities are encouraged to consult the relevant e-Country Profile. The e-Country Profiles pertaining to the 1965 Service Convention are available on the HCCH website ([www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net)) under "Service" => "e-Country Profiles".

## Glossary

The following key terms are used in this Good Practices document (for the 1965 Service Convention):

### 1965 Service Convention (or the Convention)

An international treaty developed and adopted under the auspices of the HCCH, the full title of which is the *Convention of 15 November 1965 on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters*. The full text of the Convention is available on the [Service Section](#) of the HCCH website.

### Addressee

The person upon whom the document is served. This should not be confused with the terms “receiving authority” or “Central Authority”.

### Central Authority

The authority designated by a Contracting Party pursuant to Article 2(1) of the 1965 Service Convention. Information about Central Authorities designated by Contracting Parties is available on the [Service Section](#) of the HCCH website and in the relevant [e-Country Profile](#).

### Certificate

A part of the [Model Form](#) used to certify whether or not the document has been served in the requested State. This Certificate must be completed when using the main channel of transmission. The Certificate may also be completed when using the alternative channels of transmission. The Certificate is referred to as Part 2 of the Model Form ([Guidelines for completing the Model Form](#)).

### Conclusions & Recommendations (C&R)

The form in which outcomes of meetings of the Special Commission (SC) are developed, reflected and adopted. Under the [HCCH Rules of Procedure](#), Special Commission meetings adopt Conclusions & Recommendations. References to the Conclusions & Recommendations are made throughout this document together with the year of the relevant meeting (e.g., C&R of the 2024 SC refers to the Conclusions & Recommendations adopted by the 2024 meeting of the Special Commission). Conclusions & Recommendations are submitted to the governing body of the HCCH, the Council on General Affairs and Policy, for approval.

## Digital signature

A name, initial, mark, or symbol that is affixed to, or logically associated with, a document in electronic form and authenticated using a digital certificate.

## e-Country Profile

The online profile containing practical and country-specific information about a Contracting Party to the Convention, which is available on the [Service Section](#) of the HCCH website.

## Extrajudicial document

For the purposes of the 1965 Service Convention, a document that is not directly related to a trial but that requires the involvement of an authority or judicial officer.

## Forwarding Authority

The authority or judicial officer competent under the law of the requesting State to forward requests for service to the Central Authority of the requested State. While the term "forwarding Authority" is not contained in the 1965 Service Convention or the [Model Form](#), it was created on the basis of the English version of Article 3 of the Convention, which makes reference to an authority or judicial officer that must forward a request to the Central Authority of the requested State. The forwarding Authority is referred to in the Convention and the [Model Form](#) as the Applicant and also as the requesting Authority. However, the term forwarding Authority encapsulates the terms Applicant and requesting Authority.

## Model Form

The [Model Form](#) is annexed to the 1965 Service Convention and is comprised of three Parts: (1) the Request for service; (2) the Certificate; and (3) the Summary, preceded by a Warning.

The Summary provides the addressee with essential information about the parties and the document to be served (*e.g.*, nature and purpose of the document, date and place for entering appearance and any relevant time limits).

The Warning explains the nature of the document to be served and informs the availability of legal aid or advice in the requesting State. Together, the Summary and the Warning are referred to as Part 3 of the Model Form ([Guidelines for completing the Model Form](#)).

Completion of the Model Form is mandatory if and when the main channel of transmission is used, and completion of Parts 2 and 3 of the Model Form is also recommended for the alternative channels of transmission.

### Other (designated) Authorities

In general, the organisation of Central Authorities is centralised. However, Article 18(1) permits Contracting Parties to designate other authorities in addition to the Central Authority and to determine the extent of their competence. However, forwarding Authorities shall always retain the right to address a request directly to the Central Authority under Article 18(2).

### Practical Handbook on the Operation of 1965 Service Convention (or Practical Handbook)

The Practical Handbook, intended to assist all users of the 1965 Service Convention, offers detailed explanations and practical guidance on the general operation of the 1965 Service Convention, as well as authoritative commentaries on the major issues that have arisen in practice.

### Request for service (or request)

A document which forms part of the [Model Form](#). This document is used by the forwarding Authority to request the Central Authority of the requested State to effect service of a judicial or extrajudicial document on the addressee. The Request for service is referred to as Part 1 of the Model Form (see [Guidelines for completing the Model Form](#)).

### Requested State

For the purposes of the 1965 Service Convention, the State to which a Request for service is, or will be, addressed.

### Requesting State

For the purposes of the 1965 Service Convention, the State from which a Request for service is, or will be, issued.

### Service Section

A section of the website of the HCCH dedicated to the 1965 Service Convention. The Service Section can be accessed via a link on the home page of the HCCH website ([www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net)).

### Special Commission

A Special Commission is a body established under Article 8 of the [HCCH Statute](#) and convened by announcement of the Secretary General to develop and negotiate new HCCH Conventions (or other Instruments) or to review the practical operation of existing HCCH Conventions. In this document, Special Commission refers to the Special Commission that meets periodically to review the practical operation of the 1965 Service Convention.

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