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Unlocking Digital Trade: eBL Interoperability for Container Shipping

FIT Alliance webinar | November 27, 2025

13:00 / 13:30	**State of eBL adoption & barriers**
	Why interoperability matters
	DCSA eBL interoperability pilot
	Practical takeaways & 90-day roadmap
13:30 / 13:45	**Q&A**

DCSA exists to make container shipping simple, efficient, and sustainable through open standards

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01 Non-profit, neutral association founded 2019 by major carriers.

02 Created to enable seamless and secure data sharing at scale.

03 All standards are free and open source.

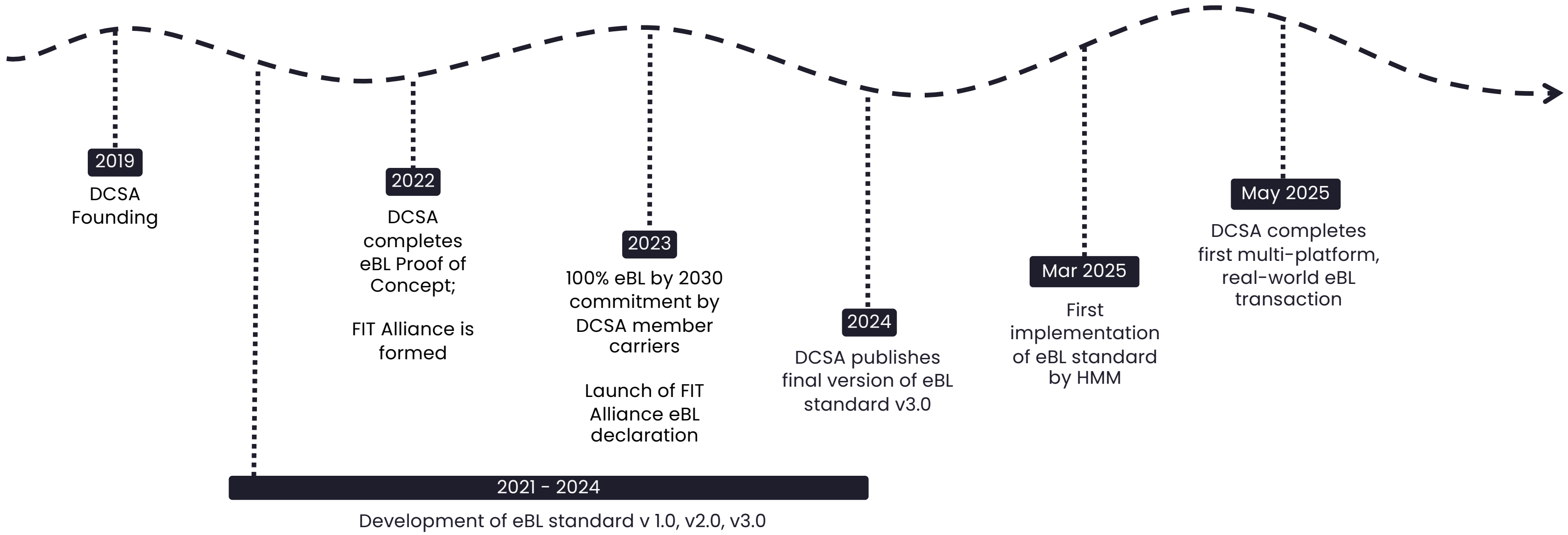
Members represent **75%** of global container trade

MSC, MAERSK, CMA CGM, EVERGREEN, ONE (Ocean Network Express), YANG MING, ZIM, Hapag-Lloyd, HMM, PIL

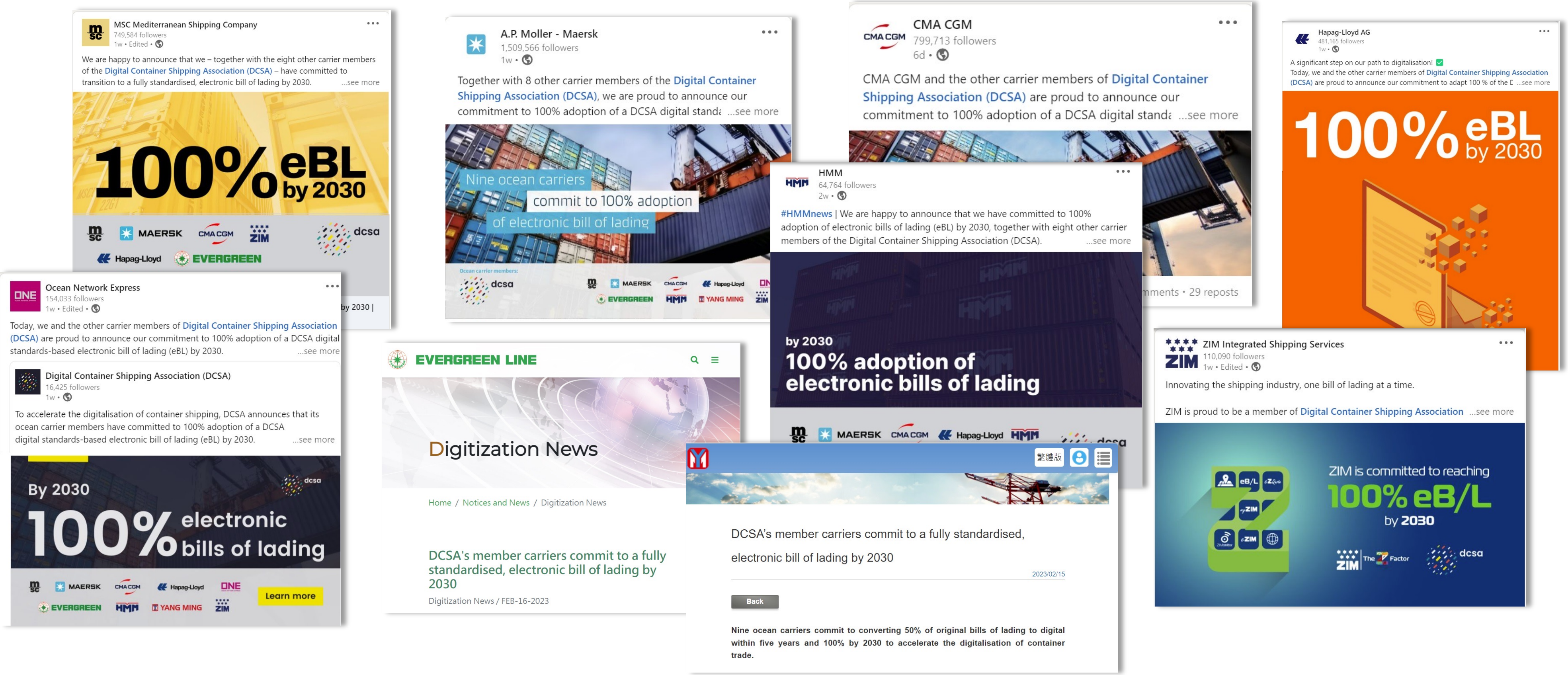
Non-profit | Open-source | Vendor neutral

The eBL journey so far

Since its founding in 2019, DCSA has taken eBLs from proof of concept to a mature standard, tested, validated and ready to scale.



100% eBL by 2030 commitment



100% eBL by 2030: What does it mean?


Commitment to accelerating digitalisation of container trade – the electronic bill of lading

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MSC MAERSK CMA CGM Hapag-Lloyd ONE EVERGREEN HMM YANG MING ZIM

The digitalisation of trade documents holds great potential to remove friction in international trade, to the benefit of our customers' experience and the environment

The digitalisation of documents has fundamentally transformed industries such as banking, aviation, and telecommunications. These industries have implemented digital standards to enable automated ticketing and paperless transactions to the benefit of their ecosystems. International trade has improved its digital capabilities, but has yet to scale standardised automation.

The original bill of lading is one of the most important trade documents. For centuries, it has functioned as a document of title, receipt for the shipped goods, and a record of agreed terms and conditions. However, the bill of lading is often still reliant on the physical transfer of paper records and manual work. Customers are often required to send and receive paper, obtain stamps and signatures to execute the physical transportation from origin to destination. This represents a time-consuming and environmentally expensive process for customers.

An electronic bill of lading could save customers $6.5 billion in direct costs and enable $30-40 billion in annual global trade growth. Likewise, digitizing these processes would substantially benefit the environment by removing the need for physical documents and associated transportation.

We are committed to convert in our respective carrier organizations 50% of original bill of lading activities to digital within five years, and 100% by 2030. This represents a significant change for our industry, and we do not take this commitment lightly. We are convinced that the benefits it will bring to customers and global trade are too important to ignore. We ask that all parties involved – shippers, forwarders, governments, financial institutions, and insurance agencies – work together to make this commitment a reality.

Soren Toft, MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company
Vincent Clerc, Maersk
Rodolphe Saade, CMA CGM
Rolf Habben-Jansen, Hapag-Lloyd
Jeremy Nixon, Ocean Network Express
Eric Hsieh, Evergreen Marine
Kim, Kyung Bae, HMM
Cheng-Mount Cheng, Yang Ming
Eli Glickman, ZIM

DCSA.org

Public commitment by DCSA members' CEOs:

Reach **paperless** international trade by issuing 100% of original Bills of Lading digitally by 2030.

100% eBL by 2030: What does it mean?

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DCSA.org

The end goal is to transition to a fully

standardized, data-based eBL

using DCSA API standards.

eBL Standard adoption is advancing progressively

12,8%

eBL usage on track towards 100% by 2030

4

member carriers implemented DCSA eBL standard (check the latest adoption status here)

6

eBL solution providers implemented DCSA eBL standard

Solution providers actively involved with DCSA for eBL adoption

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Bolero
WISETECH GLOBAL GROUP

IQAX

ICE

eTEU

Credore

KTNET

SECRO
FRICTIONLESS GLOBAL TRADE

wave BL

trace:original
by enigio

CargoX

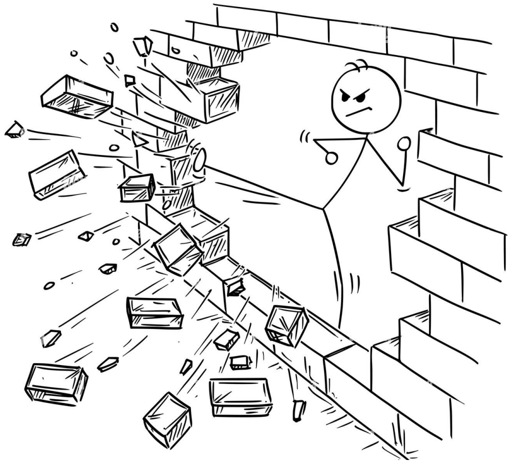
edox online

TradeGo | TradeDocs

eBL interoperability enabled through DCSA standards (PINT API).

eBL: The challenges along the way

eBL: Key barriers are breaking down

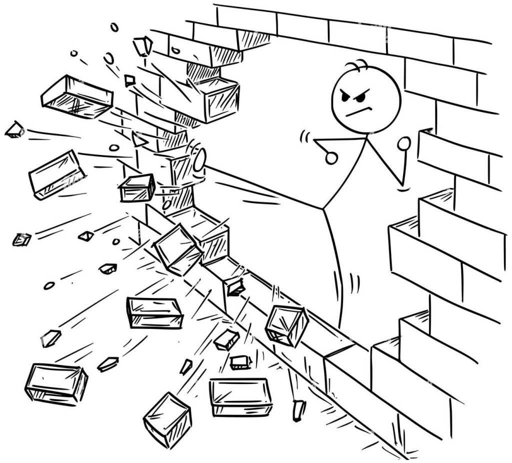


Legal recognition of electronic documents

- In 2023, the **UK's Electronic Trade Documents Act (ETDA)** made digital trade documents legally equivalent to paper.
- In 2025, **India** approved the **Bills of Lading Act**, extending digital recognition in a key emerging market.
- Countries like **France**, **Singapore** and **UAE** have already aligned with MLETR(*) frameworks. See the full list of countries here.

(*) UNCITRAL's MLETR (Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records) sets the global standard for recognizing electronic negotiable instruments.

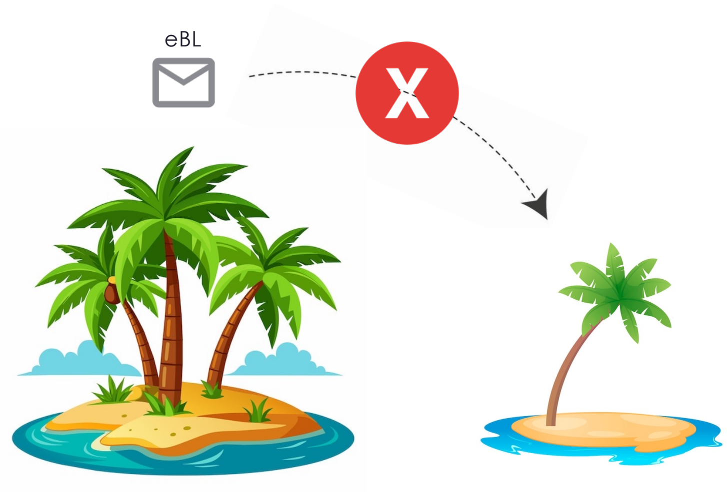
eBL: Key barriers are breaking down



Platform interoperability

- In May 2025 DCSA completed the first successful transfer of an eBL across different eBL platforms, using open API standards and a shared legal framework. Not a theoretical demo, but a **real eBL transaction**, conducted between real companies, and ready to scale.

Why interoperability matters



Historically, eBL systems functioned as **closed digital islands**, meaning a document issued on one platform could not be transferred to another.

Why interoperability matters

Enables broad and **scalable adoption** of eBLs.

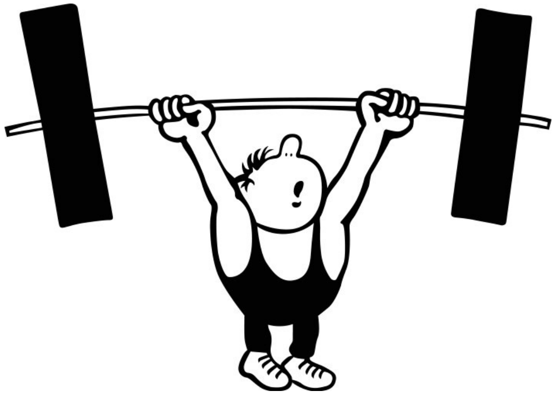
Faster **end-to-end digital BL** workflows.

Improves security and traceability; **no paper fallbacks**.

Value of interoperability standard

Benefit	eBL Solution Provider	Carrier	Bank	Shipper & Consignee
No platform lock-in		✓	✓	✓
Scalable, network-wide eBL adoption	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lower fraud and compliance risk		✓	✓	✓
Improved security and traceability		✓	✓	✓
Bigger addressable market	✓			
Lower integration & operational cost	✓	✓	✓	✓
Faster cargo release & fewer delays				✓

eBL interop pilot: The hard part is behind us



- In 2021 DCSA brought together eBL solution providers with the aim of discussing interoperability among platforms. → "**skepticism**"
- In 2022 we managed to **demonstrate feasibility** via a PoC between CargoX and edoxOnline.
- For over 4 years, we worked with the group to develop the technical standards and legal framework that enable a contractually binding agreement between users on different platforms.
- Received approval of the **legal framework** by the IG of P&I Clubs to ensure that carriers issuing interoperable eBLs are insured by their Clubs.
- The live interoperability pilot was **the natural next step**.

eBL interop pilot: The setup

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HMM

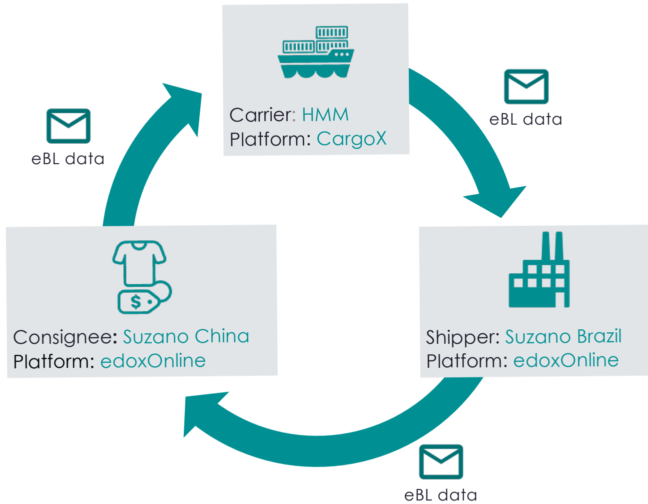
CargoX

online edox

suzano

BR → CN

Straight eBL, live shipment
from Brazil to China



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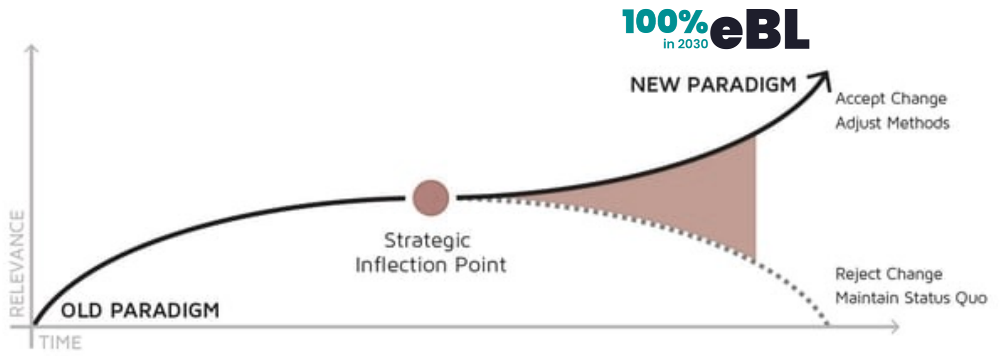
participating organizations,
using 2 different eBL
solution providers

eBL interop pilot: Lessons learned

- **Market readiness lagged behind standards:** Despite having the standards available, most of the Carriers were not ready (only HMM).
- **Identification and onboarding of pilot participants must start early:** Securing committed shippers/consignees is a critical path item, not a last-minute task.
- **Interop depends on ecosystem alignment:** Slow adoption by platforms and banks limited scope. Scale requires synchronized adoption across all actors.
- **A shared legal framework is essential:** Differences in platform bylaws/jurisdictions create friction. A shared multilateral legal framework is key to provide clarity for users & providers.
- **Multi-party pilots need strong governance:** Time zones and shifting priorities demand clear decision rights, cadence, and escalation paths between pilot participants.

Sustaining momentum toward the inflection point



We are closer than ever to an **inflection point**, the time for coordinated action is now. All trade participants must pull their weight to achieve full digitalization.

Takeaway: Your steps to move eBL adoption forward

Step 1

Select and **onboard your preferred eBL solution provider** to enable digital and secure eBL transfers, reduce processing times, mitigate fraud risks, and support greater efficiency in international trade workflows.

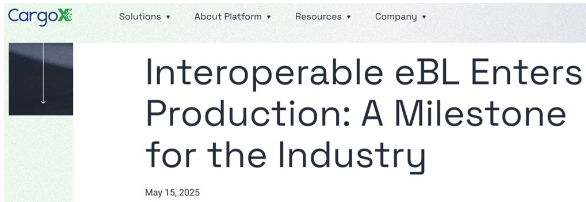
The full list of eBL systems approved by the IG P&I Group is available here.

Takeaway: Your steps to move eBL adoption forward

Step 2

Participate in a **case study or pilot** with your eBL solution provider and share success stories on your public communication channels.

Recognize the wins, celebrate progress and **inspire others** across your network to join the journey.



Read the article: https://www.usbank.com/about-us-bank/company-blog/article-library/us-bank-completes-first-fully-digital-trade-finance-transaction.html

Read the article: https://www.fit-alliance.org/post/commerzbank-siemens-fr-meyer-s-sohn-complete-ebl-proof-of-concept

Takeaway: Your steps to move eBL adoption forward

Step 3

Sign the FIT Alliance eBL declaration to signal to the industry your readiness and support for eBLs. Currently, over 350 signatories have endorsed the declaration to propel digitalization in international trade.

Takeaway: Your steps to move eBL adoption forward

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Step 4

Follow DCSA on LinkedIn to stay connected with the future of digital trade and gain industry insights.

Follow us on

LinkedIn

A 90-day path to eBL adoption

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eBL adoption can be rolled out quickly and safely through a phased approach:

Day 0-30 — Get ready

- ✓ Map your current BL workflow end-to-end.
- ✓ Pick 1–2 routes and a small set of willing partners for a pilot.
- ✓ Confirm legal basis with compliance team.
- ✓ Align with banks/carriers/platform providers on readiness and roles.

Day 31-60 — Run the pilot

- ✓ Launch the pilot on the chosen lanes with selected partners.
- ✓ Train ops, documentation, and compliance teams on the eBL workflow.
- ✓ Connect eBL processes with trade finance and internal systems where needed.
- ✓ Run weekly reviews with partners to fix friction points fast.

Day 61-90 — Scale

- ✓ Update the process to reflect the lessons learned from the pilot.
- ✓ Expand to additional lanes and counterparties.
- ✓ Convert pilot workflow into SOPs and compliance controls.
- ✓ Incorporate eBLs into BAU processes.

Risks to watch + quick fixes

- **Legal uncertainty** → Start with corridors supported by MLETR-aligned legislation or clear legal recognition.
- **Partner hesitation** → Offer practical onboarding and incentives to use eBLs.
- **Platform lock-in** → Favor providers that support DCSA standards and interoperability.

The FIT Alliance is here to support your transition to eBL

Contact us for any questions

Thank you