

UNEX™



Monitoring service quality for international mail networks

Why?

To measure untracked international letter service performance worldwide and support members in meeting their customers' needs and their delivery commitments to regulators and postal partners.

36 posts
worldwide

5,000
volunteer panellists

540,000
test letters sent and
received per year

How does it work?

Through its dedicated test mail and panellists network, UNEX™ provides independent cross-border data to participating postal operators and calculates transit times between specific points in the mail pipeline, allowing postal operators to identify where bottlenecks may occur from the origin country at sending point, to the destination country at the final addressee delivery point and where corrective actions are necessary (collection, delivery, sorting centers and international transport).

IPC's UNEX™ test mail measurement started in 1994, today, UNEX™ covers packets as well, typical to the growing e-commerce area, focusing on all untracked or non-barcoded mail products. UNEX™ is also used for performance-based payments between posts.

Benefits

- Based on real mail data collected by participating postal operators, IPC UNEX™ provides test measurement results that are representative for the postal performance, in terms of geographical coverage, mail characteristics (franking, posting and delivery methods) and day of week spread.
 - Integrity of the measurement is ensured by test items being produced with the same look and feel of real mail items and by panellists' locations of sending and receiving remaining unrevealed to the postal staff and by postal representatives adhering to a set of guidelines and code of conduct.
 - The UNEX™ measurement is independent from the postal operators being measured; market research companies, contracted after due procurement and awarding process, recruit and manage a panel of anonymous volunteers.
- Thanks to all the above and thorough quality processes and checks, UNEX™ provides reliable and unbiased performance results and data.
 - The measurement is continuous, i.e. all weeks of the year and all working days (i.e. uninterrupted during major bank holiday seasons such as Christmas, Easter or summer holidays).
 - By adding semi-active or passive Radio-Frequency Identifier (RFID) tags to UNEX™ test letters, the measurement results also allow for a diagnostic and detailed analysis of the postal pipeline so that quality experts from the post can study the specific steps in the mail stream. RFID tags or transponders have been used in UNEX™ for 20 years. They are included in the test letters, by default or upon request depending on the module, so that they can send info to the global RFID network run by IPC via RFID radio antennas while travelling anonymously throughout in the international postal pipeline and postal facilities. Data from the panellists is then combined with the registrations from the transponders to be able to split the end-to-end quality transit time into sub-stretches of the postal pipeline, helping to identify where delays may occur.

Specific modules aiming at specific objectives

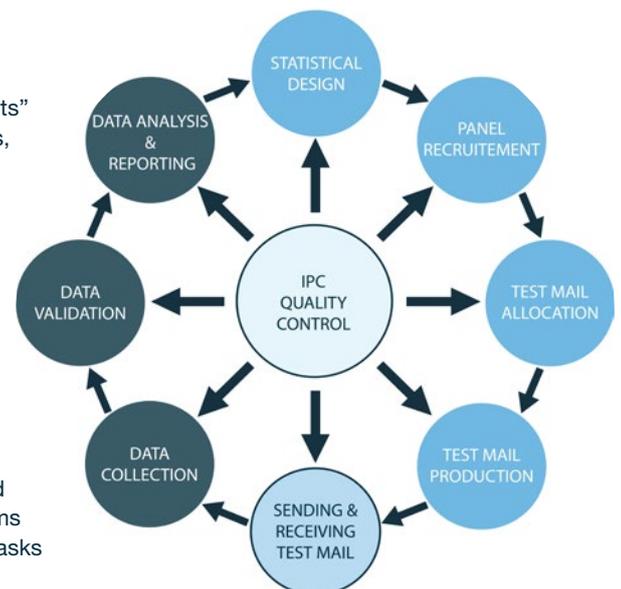
The different UNEX™ measurement modules currently provide monitoring and analysis information via online data and reports for different objectives and audiences. To cater for these different goals, the UNEX™ measurement consists of several customised modules, each with its specific requirements defined by the relevant user group, managing and governing their own module and all aspects of the measurement methodology. This is further detailed in the table below:

UNEX™ Module	Objectives
UNEX™ CEN module (envelopes)	Regulatory end-to-end performance measurement Regulatory view in Europe, in line with the EU Postal Directive 97/67/EC, supported later by CEN standard EN13850 defining a common methodology, leading to an annual publication of end-to-end results
UNEX™ TD module (envelopes and packets); UNEX™ GMS module (envelopes)	Performance-based payments Exchange of terminal dues amounts linked to the quality provided by the postal partner in bi-lateral or multi-lateral agreements such as the UPU QoS link to Terminal Dues (TD), IPC REIMS or INTERCONNECT Remuneration Agreement in Europe
UNEX™ Operations envelopes module; UNEX™ Operations/ INTERCONNECT untracked packets module	Operational end-to-end quality assurance Operational analyses and follow-up of the entire postal process or specific points in the mail pipeline; measures performance between countries and cities
Tailor-made UNEX™ module	Ad-hoc measurements Implementing ad hoc measurement needs or specific requests for posts

UNEX™

The IPC UNEX™ measurement is based on a network of volunteer “panellists” sending and receiving the produced test letter envelopes and small packets, equipped with a semi-active or passive RFID chip, according to a weekly plan resulting from a statistical design. The statistical design merges requirements in terms of geographical spread for posting and receiving locations and test mail types defined by size/weight, posting method (mailbox, post office, pick-up), payment method (stamp, meter, PP), addressing (hand-written, machine typed). Once their task has been carried out, the panellists enter the posting or delivery date and time as well as locations on a central online tool, called NU-MMS (New UNEX™ Mail Measurement System).

The data collected from the panel is validated online and checked against pre-defined quality checks and standards – some items can be considered invalid following that process. In all cases, both panellists and mail items remain anonymous to the posts. The chart illustrates the chain of events/tasks of the various parties.



More information

To find out more about this service, please contact info@ipc.be.



More info