



OpenPEPPOL Guidance on the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

2016 CEF Telecom Call for Proposals for eInvoicing



This document was prepared by OpenPEPPOL AISBL to guide its members in the preparation of proposals for the 2016 CEF Telecom Call for eInvoicing.

Any references contained herein should be taken 'as is' and should be cross-checked against the official Call documents published by the EC before being used in an actual proposal. OpenPEPPOL recommends that in case of any doubt, applicants should contact INEA.

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1. Introduction – The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Programme

The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is an EU funding programme supporting the establishment of European network infrastructure in the fields of energy, telecommunications and transport. The total budget available for the period between 2014 and 2020 is 33 billion euros.

For Telecommunications, CEF links to the Europe 2020 Strategy and contributes to achieving the targets of the ‘Digital Agenda for Europe’ initiative, with a 1.04 billion euro budget.

The CEF Telecom guidelines define telecommunication infrastructures as both broadband networks and Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs). The latter are composed of ‘core service platforms’ – central hubs, which enable trans-European connectivity – and ‘generic services’ which link national infrastructures to the core service platforms.

While many Member States have already introduced digital service infrastructures, a lack of interoperability still exists amongst these systems at both a European level and in some cases at a national level, reducing opportunities to integrate systems, share data and identify inefficiencies.

CEF is aimed at supporting ‘projects of common interest’ - as defined in the Telecom Guidelines¹ - that address such challenges, contributing to the development of the Single Market, European competitiveness, social inclusion and economic growth. Projects will focus on deploying trans-European infrastructures, based upon mature technical and organisational solutions, and will aim to support exchanges and collaboration with and within the public sector, across the EU.

CEF Telecom encourages the re-use of technical components implementing the Digital Service Infrastructures to increase interoperability and reduce technical risks. These components are considered as ‘Building Blocks’ of the Digital Single Market and can be used by any public and private entity to establish cross-border digital services.

2. The 2016 CEF Telecom Work Programme

CEF Telecom is implemented through an annual Work Programme, which identifies the priorities and actions to be launched during the year. The CEF Telecom Work Programme for 2016 has identified twelve (12) priorities for developing DSIs including domains such as electronic delivery of documents (eDelivery), eInvoicing, eProcurement, eIdentification and eAuthentication. The priorities and content of the Work Programme are different from those identified in 2015 (please refer to the revised 2016 version from July 2016²).

Under the CEF Telecom Work Programme 2016, the eInvoicing DSI provides grants to put in place solutions for the exchange of eInvoices **together with eDelivery, in the same proposal.**

¹ Regulation (EU) No 283/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1336/97/EC.

² The 2016 version of the CEF Telecom Work Programme to be found at https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/inea/files/c_2016_5768_1_annex_en_v1_p1_861116.pdf

3. The 2016 CEF Telecom Call for Proposals for eInvoicing - Summary

The table below provides an overview of the key elements of the 2016 CEF Telecom call for Generic Services for the eInvoicing DSI.

	Electronic Invoicing
Total Budget	EUR 7 million total for the entire call – no limit on individual grants
Funding	Up to 75 % of eligible costs
Beneficiaries	Consortium of at least four (4) legal entities, from one or more EU/EEA countries – can be public or private (no minimum requirement for public entities)
Objective(s)	The objective is to increase uptake and use of the CEF eInvoicing DSI by supporting public authorities, especially regional and local authorities, in meeting the requirements of the new eInvoicing Directive 2014/55/EU. An additional objective is to support service providers to implement the European Norm (EN) into their solutions. This will help in return to finalize the EN and to provide practical experience.
Action(s) supported	<p>From the call document (OpenPEPPOL highlighting):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Uptake of eInvoicing solutions by public authorities: The appropriate technical solutions and organisational set up must be put in place to ensure that in particular, regional and local authorities can receive and process eInvoices from economic operators. To foster interoperability between Member States, preference will be given under this call to solutions that are already on the market and which allow cross-border exchanges of eInvoices. The technical solution proposed for the implementation should foresee compliance with the future European standard (EN) on electronic invoicing by the end of the completion of the proposed Action. In accordance with the eInvoicing Directive, the reference to the future EN will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union. It is expected to be published in the second half of 2017. 2.) Support the implementation of the EN in existing eInvoicing solutions: Funding under this call will support existing eInvoicing solutions to prepare for the implementation of the future EN on electronic invoicing. These activities should also contribute to achieving the objective of the eInvoicing Directive. Priority will be given to applications submitted by solution providers for integrating the EN in their existing eInvoicing solutions and procuring authorities which are already using eInvoicing solutions for integrating the EN. <p>For the purpose of document delivery, the deployment of the eDelivery Building Block (see section 3.4 of the work programme), or use of eDelivery through a service provider is promoted under this call. Support for the integration of eDelivery services will only be awarded if carried out in conjunction with activity 1 or 2, as listed above.</p>



If the deployment of eDelivery is included in the proposal, support will be given to activities aiming to:

- a. deploy access points and/or operating access points for one year;
- b. deploy service metadata publishers and/or operate service metadata publishers for one year;
- c. upgrade data exchange solutions (Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS), Open-Source Software (OSS) and other) to support, and therefore fully comply with, the CEF eDelivery standards. A typical upgrade involves adding or configuring functionality to the data exchange solution to support the CEF eDelivery standards (e.g. encryption algorithm, four-corner model support, support of dynamic discovery, etc.).

For the purposes of this call, an Access Point is an implementation of the e-SENS AS4 Profile (developed by e-SENS) or the PEPPOL AS2 Profile (developed by OpenPEPPOL), or both. The Service Metadata Publisher (SMP) is an implementation of the SMP Specification originally developed by PEPPOL or the SMP profile developed by e-SENS on top of the OASIS SMP Specification. The specifications of CEF eDelivery are profiles, meaning that several options of the original technical specifications were narrowed down in order to increase consistency and interoperability, as well as simplify deployment.

If eDelivery is not deployed, call applicants must prove the use of eDelivery services through a service provider for cross-border communication as the minimal accepted scope.

It is clear that the PEPPOL model and specifications in eInvoicing and eDelivery are not only within the scope that the Call wants to support, but they are in many areas, the **preferred options**.

OpenPEPPOL will update the current v2 of PEPPOL BIS for eInvoicing to a v3 of PEPPOL BIS as a **Core Invoice Usage Specification** of the EN. OpenPEPPOL invites our members to take part in this process starting in Q1 2017. Applicants may request funding for taking part in this process as part of activities to ensure compliance with the EN on electronic invoicing upon completion of the proposed Action.

Under the organizational set-up and related activities, applicants may request funding for those activities that are typically foreseen as necessary for the operation of **PEPPOL Authorities**, but always within the frame of what the Call and the Work Programme foresee.

There have been previous indications, through explanations provided prior to the Call of 2015, that **PEPPOL membership fees** may also qualify as eligible costs, if presented as part of the necessary organizational context to implement interoperable cross-border eInvoicing with transactions running in production over the eDelivery network.

<p>What to watch for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consortium is needed of at least 4 legal entities. In 2016 there is no requirement that a majority (or any proportion) of the consortium must be public entities, so a consortium entirely composed of private entities should also be eligible. • Each entity must have permission from the CEF Authority in their country (only central government bodies are exempt from this rule) so it is important to check with your national CEF Authority beforehand • International consortia may have a competitive advantage but they are more complicated to set up, as permissions have to be coordinated from more than one national authority.
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Call opened 20.09.2016</p> <p>Call closing 15.12.2016</p> <p>Signature of Grant Agreements: As of May 2017</p> <p>Duration of project: 12 months</p> <p>INEA have through their FAQ list (Q/A 11.2), clarified that costs incurred between the date of submission of the application and the completion date of the proposed Action may be considered as eligible.</p> <p>During the implementation of the action, an extension of its duration may be considered in reasonable and duly justified cases, subject to the assessment by the Agency/the Commission and in line with the provisions of the grant agreement.</p> <p>For proposed Actions that have already started by the time the application is submitted, costs incurred before the date of submission will not be considered as eligible.</p>
<p>Links and essential documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call web page: https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/apply-funding/2016-cef-telecom-call-einvoicing-cef-tc-2016-3 • Call description: https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/inea/files/2016-3_ceftelecom_calltext_einvoicing_200916_final.pdf • CEF Telecom Work Programme 2016: https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/inea/files/c_2016_5768_1_annex_en_v1_p1_8611_16.pdf (eInvoicing DSI description in section 3.5) • Frequently Asked Questions for the eInvoicing Call https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/inea/files/2016-3_einvoicing_faq_1st_batch_200916_superfinal.pdf • General Frequently Asked Questions related to eligibility, co-funding, submission and compliance issues https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/inea/files/2016-3-4_cef_telecom_faq_general_final_081116_0.pdf

The references made in this chapter include extracts from the 2016 CEF eInvoicing Call text and the 2016 CEF Telecom Work Programme, but also contain subjective opinions based on previous experience and are meant solely to help OpenPEPPOL members understand the process and priorities. They are in no way intended to provide an authoritative interpretation or forecast pertaining to particular proposals.

OpenPEPPOL recommends that its Members always cross-check with the Call documents (links contained above) and contact the CEF Helpdesk with any questions that they have related to eligibility, co-funding, submission and compliance issues, by contacting INEA-CEF-TELECOM-CALLS@ec.europa.eu.

4. How to prepare a proposal

Applicants wishing to apply for funding under CEF Telecom calls must submit an application for an **Action**, which is defined as any set of activities which has been identified as financially and technically independent, has a set timeframe, and is necessary for the implementation of a project of common interest and which may be granted financial assistance following a call for proposals and evaluation process.

All proposals must clearly describe the:

- planned activities of the proposed Action, related milestones and deliverables
- information on who will carry them out
- costs
- reason(s) why they should be supported financially by the EU

All information relevant for the evaluation of the proposal must be included within the application. Applicants must complete and submit the application forms electronically, using the [TENTec eSubmission module](#)

Application form

The application form is composed of four parts, including its respective annexes, as follows:

1. Part A identifies the main characteristics of the proposal (e.g. summary of the proposed Action and description of its activities, contact details and characteristics of the applicants, as well as information related to the funding requested etc.).

The indicative duration of the proposed Action to be included in this section should be 12 months. Consortium members must designate a *coordinating applicant* to lead and represent all of the applicants and act as the point of contact with the Commission and/or INEA during the application phase.

Part A3.1 includes 'Activities and Milestones'.

An activity is a part of the proposed Action that is distinct technically, financially or over time and may be composed of one or more tasks. Milestones indicate how the activity and its associated expected result(s) are progressing. Each milestone should relate to at least one activity, have an expected date, and preferably any corresponding intermediate steps, including deliverables as relevant.

2. Part B provides administrative information about the applicants, their designated affiliated entities and/or implementing bodies and their operational and financial capacity.

3. Part C provides information on the compliance of the proposed Action with EU law and other sources of EU funding.

4. Part D provides technical and financial information on the proposed Action submitted for funding.

All parts of the application form are provided on each of the individual Call webpages.

Selection criteria

The operational and financial capacity of applicants and designated affiliated entities will be assessed based on specific requirements and supporting documents to be submitted with the application. The requirement to demonstrate financial and operation capacity does not apply to Member States, public bodies established in the EU/EEA countries (Norway and Iceland), third countries, international organisations, European Economic Interest Groupings (EEIG) which are 50% owned by one or more public bodies, and affiliated entities unless the applicant relies fully on them for implementing the Action.

Award criteria

The proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the criteria 'Relevance', 'Quality and efficiency of the implementation' and 'Impact', further described below:

Relevance

- Alignment with the objectives and activities required for the deployment of the Digital Service Infrastructure described in Chapter 3 of the work programme.
- Alignment and synergies with relevant policies, strategies and activities at a European and national level.

Quality and efficiency of the implementation

- Maturity of the proposed solution (e.g. in terms of contribution towards interoperability, connectivity, sustainable deployment, operation, upgrading of trans-European Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs), use of common Building Blocks, coordination at a European level) and/or integration with existing components of the DSI.
- Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources.
- Quality and relevant experience of the individual participants and, if more than one beneficiary, of the consortium as a whole (including complementarity, balance).
- Extent to which the proposal demonstrates support from national authorities, industry and NGOs (when relevant).
- Appropriate attention to security, privacy, inclusiveness and accessibility (when relevant).

Impact and sustainability

- Quality of the approach to facilitate wider deployment and take-up of the proposed Actions.

- Capability to survive, develop and scale up without European Union funding after the end of the project with a view to achieving long-term sustainability, where appropriate through funding sources other than CEF.

The references made in this chapter are extracts from the Call documentation provided by the EC.

5. How to implement the CEF invoicing and eDelivery DSIs with PEPPOL

The references made in this chapter contain subjective opinions based on previous experience and are meant solely to help OpenPEPPOL members understand the process and priorities. They are in no way intended to provide an authoritative interpretation or forecast pertaining to particular proposals.

OpenPEPPOL recommends that its Members always cross-check with the Call documents (links contained above) and contact the CEF Helpdesk with any questions they may have related to eligibility, co-funding, submission and compliance issues by contacting INEA-CEF-TELECOM-CALLS@ec.europa.eu.

5.1 Relevance of PEPPOL to the Call objectives and terms of reference

OpenPEPPOL invites European stakeholders from the public and private sector to submit proposals for the CEF Telecom call for generic services for the invoicing DSI, utilising the PEPPOL specifications, services and governance framework.

Use of **PEPPOL meets the requirements and priorities** for Actions supported under this Call, through the following features:

- The PEPPOL BIS v2 for eInvoicing is based on CEN BII (CWA 16562), one of the starting points for the work in TC434 and the European Norm (EN).
- The PEPPOL BIS v3 will be compliant with the EN on eInvoicing as a **Core Invoice Usage Specification** of the EN, thus meeting the requirements of the eInvoicing Directive.
- PEPPOL BIS are based on UBL, which is one of the syntaxes listed under the EN.
- PEPPOL-compliant eInvoicing solutions are proven and tested in the market, whereas other emerging solutions might not qualify.
- The PEPPOL model of using the PEPPOL BIS as a common denominator for cross-border interoperability with different countries, where capable.
- The PEPPOL model of 4-corner eDelivery is probably the least intrusive means of joining national infrastructures for cross-border interoperability.
- PEPPOL Access Points (eDelivery network) implement the AS2 data exchange protocol and can leverage on the open source implementations available.
- PEPPOL BIS and PEPPOL eDelivery can be used for regional, national and cross-border exchange of invoices, supporting EU-wide interoperability.
- PEPPOL BIS and the PEPPOL eDelivery network are the results of the European large-scale pilot (LSP) project PEPPOL, and the PEPPOL BIS are also used in the ongoing LSP e-SENS.

- OpenPEPPOL provides well-recognised testing tools for ensuring conformance to the technical specifications.

EU governments and public authorities should take advantage of the CEF funds available to set up consortia with private entities, implementing eInvoicing based on the PEPPOL Business Interoperability Specifications (BIS), and using the PEPPOL eDelivery network as the exchange mechanism, by setting up PEPPOL Access Points.

PEPPOL represents the biggest user community of the eDelivery DSI, with 125 Access Points already deployed in the EU, USA and Canada. PEPPOL-based solutions have been implemented in 18 countries.

Private entity service providers can work with public authorities to introduce PEPPOL in countries where it has not yet taken roots; alternatively, service providers can also set up their own consortia in countries where the public sector has already implemented PEPPOL.

PEPPOL Authorities

When setting up consortia, Member States should also consider the establishment of PEPPOL Authorities, ensuring the widest uptake (and market impact) of compliant eInvoicing and eDelivery services in their domains. PEPPOL Authorities (PAs) are mostly government or at least public entities responsible for the governance, standardisation and implementation of eProcurement and/or eGovernment, at a national, sectoral or regional level within Europe (EEA).

PEPPOL Authorities have already been successfully established in Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, England, Belgium³, and currently being set up in Italy, with other interested countries including Austria, Ireland, Greece and Poland.

5.2 Implementation Scenarios

Possible combinations of the different types of organization may be considered for creating consortia. Some examples are given below.

- a. Contracting Authorities (CAs) that enable their ERP/accounting/financial system for standards based eInvoicing, establishing system support and routines for electronic receipt and processing of invoices
 - Grant Applicant is the owner of the system
 - Grant Applicant can pay a software vendor to upgrade their ERP/accounting/financial system, using the PEPPOL BIS.
 - Grant Applicant can pay an eInvoicing service provider to connect the system.
 - The solution/service provider (SP) must use CEN eInvoicing standards and may connect to the CEF eDelivery infrastructure. Alternatively, the eDelivery Access Point can be set up by the same or another applicant.

³ http://www.peppol.eu/peppol_elements/-transport-infrastructure/governance/peppol-authorities

- b. ERP/accounting/financial system deployed at accountancy firm/financial management authority is enabled for standards based eInvoicing
- Grant Applicant is the owner of the system
 - o Primary focus on financial management authorities representing a high number of CAs
 - There is a multiplier effect on establishing eInvoice receipt capability
 - o Secondary focus on accountancy firms representing the Economic Operator (EO) side of the transaction, since the priority at the current stage is to establish CA eInvoicing receipt capability.
 - Grant Applicant can pay a software vendor to upgrade their ERP/accounting/financial system, using the PEPPOL BIS.
 - Grant Applicant can pay an eInvoicing service provider (SP) to connect the system.
 - o The SP must use the PEPPOL BIS and the PEPPOL eDelivery infrastructure.
 - o The solution/service provider (SP) must use CEN eInvoicing standards and may connect to the CEF eDelivery infrastructure or the eDelivery Access Point can be set up by the same or another applicant.
- c. An ERP/accounting/financial solution provided by a software vendor is enabled for eInvoicing:
- Grant Applicant: an ICT vendor
 - Grant Applicant must support the PEPPOL BIS.
 - Grant Applicant can pay an eInvoicing service provider to connect the system.
 - o The SP must use the PEPPOL BIS and the PEPPOL eDelivery infrastructure
 - o The solution/service provider (SP) must use CEN eInvoicing standards and may connect to CEF eDelivery infrastructure or the eDelivery Access Point can be set up by the same or another applicant.
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- d. An eInvoicing service provider's platform/service is upgraded to support enhanced eInvoicing:
- Grant Applicant: an eInvoicing service provider.
 - Grant Applicant must support the PEPPOL BIS.
 - Grant Applicant should be connected to the PEPPOL eDelivery infrastructure or the eDelivery Access Point can be set up by the same or another applicant..

5.3 CEF eInvoicing proposals to implement PEPPOL BIS v3

The 2016 CEF eInvoicing Call supports the implementation of v3 of the PEPPOL BIS. OpenPEPPOL will update the current v2 of the PEPPOL BIS for eInvoicing to a v3 of PEPPOL BIS as a **Core Invoice Usage Specification** of the European Norm (EN). OpenPEPPOL invites our members to take part in this process starting in Q1 2017. Applicants may request funding for taking part in this process as part of their activities to ensure compliance with the EN on electronic invoicing, upon completion of the proposed Action. If you plan to include a request for such funding, please contact OpenPEPPOL at info@peppol.eu for further information.

Applicants may request funding to **upgrade from the PEPPOL BIS v2 to v3, or to integrate the PEPPOL BIS v3** in existing eInvoicing solutions and services.

Based on the requirements described in previous chapters and the PEPPOL implementation scenarios outlined within this document, some examples of PEPPOL-based activities and related tasks that could be considered are provided below, respectively for:

Capacity Building:

- Build PEPPOL competence within the member organisations involved on the legal, business and technical aspects of the proposed Action around eInvoicing and eDelivery

Implementation Strategy:

- Carry out information analysis such as semantic mapping of the PEPPOL BIS to the relevant internal format or database
- Identify or design validation mechanisms, and archiving mechanisms
- Revise the service provisioning architecture to include and integrate eDelivery

Implementation:

- Create the syntax transformation to the relevant internal format or database - based on the semantic data mapping
- Implement XML validation mechanisms
- Deploy or connect to an Access Point and a Service Metadata Publisher

Testing:

- Test validation/transformation/archiving capability (for each syntax)
- Test the sending and receiving of electronic invoices over a 4-corner model using the eDelivery network

Production and Maintenance:

- Establish routines and implement eInvoicing transactions over the 4-corner eDelivery network

5.4 CEF eInvoicing proposals to implement PEPPOL Access Points

The 2016 CEF eInvoicing call supports the implementation of PEPPOL Access Points implementing the mandatory specifications⁴ to upgrade or integrate them in existing eInvoicing solutions and services or to establish new ones. OpenPEPPOL enables trading partners to exchange standards-based electronic documents over the PEPPOL eDelivery network, which can be accessed through Access Points⁵.

It is important to note that there isn't a single PEPPOL Access Point per Member State. The PEPPOL eDelivery network is based on a distributed (four-corner) model, allowing direct communication between Access Points without the need to set up bilateral channels or agreements.

⁴ <http://www.peppol.eu/ressource-library/technical-specifications/infrastructure-resources>

⁵ http://www.peppol.eu/peppol_elements/-transport-infrastructure/peppol-access-points

The PEPPOL Transport Infrastructure Agreements (TIAs) represent the **legal interoperability** framework of the PEPPOL eDelivery network, allowing Access Point (AP) providers to interoperate and exchange documents in a secure and reliable way. Accredited PEPPOL Access Point providers must sign the PEPPOL TIA (for Access Point providers) with one of the existing PEPPOL Authorities and become OpenPEPPOL members⁶.

Based on the requirements described in section 3 and the PEPPOL implementation scenarios outlined in this document, some examples of PEPPOL-based activities and related tasks that could be considered, are provided below, respectively for:

Capacity Building:

- Build competence related to the technical specifications of the PEPPOL Transport Infrastructure, legal framework (PEPPOL Transport Infrastructure Agreements), service levels and planning
- Establish support management and security issue management routines/structure

Implementation Strategy:

- Evaluate alternatives: gap analysis of existing components; assess which components and functionalities must be added and how to implement them (such as application framework, OS, hosting, load balancing, protocol support, addressing look-up, transformation, logging, tracing signing, searching and archiving)
- Establish solution architecture

Implementation:

- Development/integration of new components
- Integration of new and existing logging and traceability solutions
- Maintenance tool support for PKI
- Test

Deployment and Governance:

- PEPPOL Coordinating Community enrolment
- Legal interoperability / compliance with the PEPPOL Transport Infrastructure Agreement (TIA) for Access Point providers
- Routines for monitoring, reporting and support (ensuring compliance with PEPPOL TIA)

Note: It is important to clarify that a key objective of the 2016 CEF Telecom eInvoicing Call is the implementation of technical specifications in existing IT systems, therefore proposals focusing exclusively on capacity building activities are not likely to be funded.

⁶ <http://www.peppol.eu/adoption/how-to-get-started/how-to-get-started-for-service-providers>

6. OpenPEPPOL Support

The OpenPEPPOL AISBL will provide guidance to national authorities on how to establish a PEPPOL Authority and help them to provide support for consortia who wish to prepare PEPPOL-based proposals for the 2016 CEF Telecom Call for Proposals for generic services for the eInvoicing DSI.

For more information about OpenPEPPOL and how the Association can provide support for public or private entities that would like to prepare PEPPOL-based proposals in the current CEF Telecom Call for Proposals for generic services for eInvoicing and eDelivery DSIs, please contact info@peppol.eu

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About OpenPEPPOL

OpenPEPPOL AISBL is an international non-profit association established under Belgian law. The association became operational in September 2012, following the successful completion of the PEPPOL project. The PEPPOL project was a large-scale pilot project under the ICT Policy Support Programme (ICTPSP) part of the EU Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP).