

# CEF TELECOM – 2020-2 CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### eProcurement – 31 July 2020 version

*All information in blue has been added or updated since the previous version.*

Commonly used abbreviations in this FAQ:

<b>eForms</b>	Standard forms for the publication of notices in the field of public procurement
<b>ESPD</b>	European Single Procurement Document
<b>EDM</b>	Exchange Data Model
<b>eCertis</b>	Information system to identify different certificates requested in procurement procedures across the EU
<b>OCDS</b>	Open Contracting Data Standard
<b>TED</b>	Tenders Electronic Daily

#### **1. What is the difference between this call and the previous eProcurement calls?**

One additional item extends the offer for 2020: the implementation of eForms for the publication of procurement notices on Tenders Electronic Daily (TED). See section 2.1.1 of the call text for more information.

#### **2. We are already receiving funding from a previous eProcurement call. Can we apply to this call in order to "upgrade" our version?**

As indicated in the call text, with the exception of proposals addressing ESPD generic services (see section 2.1.4 of the call text), applicants who already benefit from CEF funding for generic services covered in the previous CEF Telecom calls may not submit applications under the 2020-2 call for the same generic services.

#### **3. Are there restrictions on the composition of consortia that can apply to the eProcurement call?**

Yes. As indicated in section 6.1 of the call text, proposed actions for this call must comply with eligibility criteria regarding consortium composition. Consortia must consist of at least two entities from one or more Member States and/or European Economic Area (EEA) countries.

#### **4. Is it possible for a public undertaking, with agreement of a Member State, to apply alone (with the possibility of using a subcontractor)?**

Please see the answer to Q.3 above: the minimum requirement is to have at least two entities that build a consortium. Only one entity and a subcontractor is not sufficient. The difference is that all consortium members share liability to implement the project successfully. If you apply without having a second entity as a consortium member, you will not meet the eligibility criteria and your application will be automatically excluded.

**5. Could you please define a specified timeline for requirements for the public sector from eProcurement Directives, i.e. which changes must be implemented by which date?**

The legal background for the eProcurement actions can be found in the Public Procurement Directives 2014/24/EU, 2014/23/EU, 2014/25/EU (see call webpage<sup>1</sup> for links to the Directives). These Directives include the following requirements:

- Three requirements that needed to be implemented already:
  - eNotification and eAccess must have been implemented in 2016
  - The electronic version of the ESPD must be used by April 2018
  - eSubmission must be implemented by 18 October 2018
- eForms can be voluntarily submitted to TED after November 2022 and as of October 2023 their submission to TED will be mandatory.
- eCertis must be updated by Member States on a regular basis.

**6. Is the use of eDelivery necessary for this call?**

Under this call, eDelivery implementation is only necessary for the eTendering interface and will **only** be funded for this purpose. If the deployment of eDelivery is included in the proposal, support will be given to activities aiming to:

- a. Deploy Access Point(s) (AP). The operation of these Access Point(s) may also be supported for up to one year. An AP is an implementation of the CEF eDelivery AS4 Profile.<sup>20</sup>
- b. Deploy Service Metadata Publisher(s) (SMP). The operation of these Service Metadata Publisher(s) may also be supported for up to one year. The SMP is an implementation of the CEF eDelivery SMP profile<sup>21</sup> on top of the OASIS SMP technical specifications.<sup>22</sup>
- c. Upgrade data exchange solutions (such as Commercial Off-the-Shelf - COTS, Open-Source Software - OSS, and other) to support and duly comply with the CEF eDelivery standards, e.g. adding or configuring functionality to the data exchange solution to support the CEF eDelivery standards (encryption algorithm, four-corner model support, support of dynamic discovery, etc.). This activity may include interoperability testing with other vendors.

If the deployment of eDelivery is included in the proposal, the level of funding requested for eDelivery should be proportionate to the scope of the eProcurement objectives. As stated in section 2.1 of the call text, the use of Building Blocks such as eID, eSignature and Automated Translation, is strongly encouraged in this call. Public and private service providers making use of eID and eSignature must ensure that their solutions are compliant with the eIDAS Regulation. eID through EU-Login and Automated Translation are already integrated in eCertis.

See section 2.1 of the call text for more information.

**For any other eDelivery related questions, you may also wish to refer to the eDelivery specific FAQ:**

**[https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/inea/files/cefpub/2020-1\\_edelivery\\_faqs\\_batch1\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/inea/files/cefpub/2020-1_edelivery_faqs_batch1_final.pdf)**

**7. Are there any requirements that the projects will have to ensure the compliance with the eProcurement DSI?**

Yes. Each Action will be subject to validation by the CEF eProcurement Core Service Platform:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/apply-funding/2018-cef-telecom-call-eprocurement>

eForms: eForms validation by the eProcurement core service platform. The beneficiaries must demonstrate via a remote meeting with the European Commission DG GROW and the Publications Office the implementation of eForms.

eCertis: eCertis validation by the eProcurement Core Service Platform. The beneficiaries must demonstrate via a remote meeting with the European Commission DG GROW system integration with eCertis. Any problems detected will be fixed before the end of the action in order to be fully compliant with the eCertis.

ESPD: ESPD validation by the eProcurement Core Service Platform: The beneficiaries will demonstrate via a remote meeting with the European Commission DG GROW that the ESPD implementation is compliant with the ESPD data model by checking XML requests and responses with the ITB test platform provided by DG DIGIT. Any problems detected must be fixed before the end of the action, in order to be fully compliant with the eESPD model.

eTendering interface: eTendering interface validation by the eProcurement Core Service Platform: The beneficiaries will demonstrate via a remote meeting with the European Commission DG GROW that the eTendering interface is compliant with the eTendering profiles by checking XML requests and responses with the ITB test platform provided by DG DIGIT. Any problems detected must be fixed before the end of the action in order to be fully compliant with the eTendering interface. By the time of the validation phase, the beneficiaries must be PEPPOL members for the eTendering interface. The PEPPOL membership fee can be funded from the CEF Telecom grant until the end of the project.

Contract Register: The core service platform will verify the implementation of the Contract Register in various ways. For verifying if the standard forms are implemented correctly, the beneficiary must be either listed in the list of eSenders <http://simap.ted.europa.eu/web/simap/list-of-ted-esenders> or the files generated must be parsed correctly by the parser tool from the Publications Office (<https://esentool.ted.europa.eu/tool/parserViewer>).

For implementations using OCDS format, the validation tool of OCDS will be used for validation <http://standard.open-contracting.org/review/>

For the simplified notices, the beneficiaries must demonstrate its application via remote meeting with the European Commission DG GROW.

National notice publisher interconnection: The validation will be done by the eProcurement Core Service Platform. The beneficiaries must demonstrate, via a remote meeting with the European Commission DG GROW that their notification service can retrieve data from TED to provide to their suppliers or that they can exchange notices with a platform from another service provider. Any problems detected will have to be fixed before the end of the action.

Actions deploying eDelivery will also need to pass the conformance and/or connectivity tests that are provided by the eDelivery Core Service Platform. More information on these tests can be found as follows:

Conformance testing:

<https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/eDelivery+Conformance+testing>

Connectivity testing:

<https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/eDelivery+Connectivity+testing>

## **8. Can this call support the implementation of eCatalogues?**

It is possible for Actions addressing Objective 2.1.3 *Implementation of contract registers* of the call to implement the connection of a Contract Register to an eCatalogue solution. However, the implementation of an eCatalogue service as such is not foreseen under this call.

## **9. Are dissemination activities supported by the eProcurement Digital Service Infrastructure (DSI)?**

Where necessary for the implementation of the action, dissemination activities are supported by the eProcurement DSI, provided they are related to one or more of the call objectives (e.g. eForms, eCertis, ESPD, contract register, eTendering interface). Such activities must be pertinent and

appropriately planned, in order to facilitate wider deployment and take-up of services deployed. Examples of dissemination activities could be: workshops, training, awareness-raising, communication campaigns, production of e-material, etc. The proposals must clearly describe **activities to promote and monitor the take-up of their generic services by specific target groups, in particular SMEs, including** the target audience of such activities, the expected outreach and the breakdown of the budget.

**10. Could a proposal be accepted if it were offering interoperable extension services to existing eProcurement solutions, such as:**

**a.) an independent service module for European Single Procurement Documents (ESPD)?**

**b.) a contract register service module?**

Yes, an independent ESPD service module and/or a contract register module extension to an existing eProcurement solution may be funded, provided that it would reuse data from other sources (e.g. from an eProcurement solution or from national databases). Compliance with the requirements of the call text must be ensured, in particular as regards sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.4.

**11. If the application is reusing a National eTendering Platform, should the existing eTendering solution go for conformance testing or it is accepted as it is?**

Only the new services to be implemented in the eTendering platform would be validated through conformance testing. If for example you wished to upgrade (from version 1 to version 2) your ESPD service that would be part of the eTendering solution, the ESPD functionality would undergo conformance testing. The eTendering solution itself would not be validated through conformance testing. Compliance with the requirements of the call text must be ensured, in particular as regards sections 2.1.4.-2.1.5.

**12. Will proof of concept activities be supported?**

No, the call will not fund proof of concept activities, because the solutions proposed must be in production.

**13. If our proposal is successful under this call, will we receive direct financing?**

As specified in section 11.3 of the call text, if your proposal is successful, it will be eligible to receive a pre-financing of up to 60% of the maximum CEF contribution of the action. For further details, please refer to section 11 of the General FAQs.

#### **Questions and answers regarding implementation of a "customised" European Single Procurement Document (ESPD)**

**14. Does the call cover the provision of an ESPD service for contracting authorities to use below the EU public procurement thresholds (i.e. with flexible selection of criteria)?**

Yes, if the ESPD service is used for national procedures the service would be eligible under this call (for procedures below the EU thresholds – see [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement/rules-implementation/thresholds/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement/rules-implementation/thresholds/index_en.htm)).

#### **Questions and answers regarding implementation of contract registers**

**15. Is the connectivity with Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) necessary when implementing contract registers?**

Connectivity with TED is not mandatory, but strongly recommended. A significant part of the information in a contract register comes from the TED public procurement standard forms. From this perspective, connectivity with TED would help decrease the administrative burden caused by manual data entry duplication, while at the same time it would help increase data quality.

More information on the TED standard forms may be found here:  
<http://simap.ted.europa.eu/en/web/simap/standard-forms-for-public-procurement>;  
<http://publications.europa.eu/mdr/eprocurement/ted/index.html>

Compliance with the requirements of the call text must be ensured, in particular as regards sections 2.1.3.

**16. We intend to integrate several below-threshold data sources on public procurement containing also information implementations. The call would require us to publish the pieces of data in several distinct formats - simplified TED, OCDS and eInvoicing. An open-data user might however prefer not to receive the data in multiple formats. Is it plausible to publish all the data in OCDS, which contains all the necessary information?**

Yes, provided that the obligations of the call text related to publishing (section 2.1.2.b) are respected:

- below-threshold data is published in a (simplified) TED format, to enable the data to be combined with TED open data
- eInvoicing information is published using the eInvoicing standard
- other information is published in the OCDS format

To help users, you could additionally provide all of the data in the OCDS format. Mapping between OCDS and TED forms is available in <http://standard.open-contracting.org/profiles/eu/master/en/>.

**17. The call text states that data needs to be "processed using the eInvoicing standard". Our source data does not use the standard yet, but we can convert it to meet the standard. Would that be sufficient to comply with the standard?**

Yes, if data is in a different format than the eInvoicing standard, it would need to be converted to be compliant with the eInvoicing standard. For further details, please refer to the dedicated CEF Digital page on the eInvoicing standard:

<https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/2017/10/16/Publication+of+the+European+Standard+on+eInvoicing>

**18. Does the call support the creation of new contract registers, or only the update of existing contract registers?**

Both the creation of new and the update of existing contract registers may be eligible for funding under this call. However, proposals that aim to implement new or existing contract registers must address one or both of the activities mentioned under section 2.1.2 of the call text.

**19. Are actions that build or develop algorithms to filter and/or analyse public procurement data from existing databases eligible under this eProcurement call?**

Yes, actions that develop or analyse data on public procurement procedures may be eligible under this eProcurement call. However, please be aware that the action must not be dedicated only to developing algorithms, and that the final results of the action must be deployed within a service that uses any algorithms that the action has developed.

#### **Questions and answers regarding implementation of the eTendering interface**

**20. Do we need to implement all use cases of the four eTendering interfaces?**

For proposals which address eTendering generic services, all use cases are optional. A logical business sequence for the four use cases would be as follows:

1. BIS 46 - Subscribe to Procedure
2. BIS 60a - Tender Status Inquiry
3. BIS 47x - Call For Tender with ESPD
4. BIS 54 - Submit Tender

As noted above, proposals may implement them all or combine for example, BIS 46, BIS 60a, and BIS 47x. Please note that in accordance with section 2.1.5 of the call text, the applicants implementing eTendering interface are encouraged to make use of the eDelivery building block. The use of other Building Blocks such as eID, eSignature and eTranslation, is strongly encouraged in the eProcurement call. See also Q.6 above.

***19. As regards the PEPPOL network, will each national eTendering solution be registered in a Service Metadata Publisher (SMP) and will there be a Service Metadata Locator (SML)? How will the digital certificates be managed in this case?***

Each Party that is capable of receiving documents in the PEPPOL network needs to be registered in a SMP. Amongst other information, the URL of the Access Point (AP) that is used to receive messages on behalf of that Party is registered in the SMP. This means that if multiple Parties are served by a specific eTendering solution, then each Party needs to be registered separately in an SMP (even if the URL of the AP of the eTendering solution is identical).

As regards the SML, there can be one single SML serving the PEPPOL network. More specifically, there is 1 instance for production use and 1 instance for acceptance/testing use. Digital certificates for both the APs and SMPs in the PEPPOL network are managed by OpenPEPPOL. More information is available via <https://peppol.eu/support/>.

**Questions and answers regarding implementation of eForms**

***21. When will eForms need to be validated?***

As stated above, the optional use is possible as of November 2022 and must be used as of October 2023. The validation should therefore take place before October 2023.

***22. When will the final version of the specification be available on eForms?***

The final version is expected to be ready end of Q3/beginning Q4 2020. Information is already available here: <https://simap.ted.europa.eu/web/simap/eforms>

**Questions and answers regarding the implementation of the proposed actions**

***23. We would like to complete the work for the implementation of our solution and integration of services before the grant agreement could be signed. Would such an application be eligible for funding?***

The principle of non-retroactivity is defined in section 11.4 of each individual call text: "No grant may be awarded retrospectively for Actions already completed. A grant may be awarded for an Action which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate in the grant application the need to start the Action before the grant agreement is signed."

***24. Is it mandatory to integrate our platform with the TED platform for activity 2.1.2 a) of the call?***

Yes, if you wish to address activity 2.1.2 a) of the call, then integration with TED is mandatory.

**25. Is it mandatory to integrate the ESPD service with national databases for activity 2.1.4 of the call?**

As regards activity 2.1.4 a) of the call, applicants must update to the latest ESPD EDM either by using the EDM itself or by using the open source code that is available here: <http://stash.ds.unipi.gr/projects/VCD/repos/espd-vcd-system/browse>. Applicants are strongly encouraged to link the ESPD service with national databases if available. As regards activity 2.1.4 b) of the call, the applicants must either link the ESPD service with national databases and/or must give public authorities from other countries access to those databases. The access for authorities must be direct and free of charge. Usually this may be achieved if the ESPD response that a supplier submits includes links to those national databases.

**26. Do we need to address all expected outcomes listed under section 2.2 of the call text, or only those corresponding to the services to be implemented?**

Not necessarily all the expected outcomes listed in section 2.2. have to be addressed: the expected outcomes need to be aligned with the services that the applicant plans to implement. For example, if only the contract register is to be implemented, then the expected outcome of the proposed action would be "The existing contract register of (country X) will be updated to provide more structured information about procurement procedures to achieve more transparency (in country X)."

**27. Will TED have an integration possibility with eDelivery or only the TED API that is available today?**

For the purpose of this call, only integration with the TED API is possible.

**28. Section 2.1.5 a) of the call text it states that "The operation of these Access Points may also be supported for up to one year". If we already have an Access Point from an earlier grant, can we get grants for operating an Access Point for up to one year?**

No. For the purpose of this call, funds cannot be awarded for the operational existing Access Points. The call supports the deployment of new Access Points and their operation for up to one year. However, as it is stated in Q6, the PEPPOL membership fee can be funded from the CEF Telecom grant until the end of the project (if applicable).