

Minutes of TED eSenders Seminar
Organised by the Publications Office of the European Union
9-10 October 2018, Luxembourg

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1. Welcome and Introduction

Mr António Carneiro, Director of Dissemination and Reuse Directorate at the Publications Office, welcomed the participants and thanked in particular the two eSenders (Jonas Aberg, from Primona, and Timo Rantanen, from Hansel Oy) who accepted the Publications Office's invitation to share their experiences and challenges. Mr Carneiro highlighted the fact that the seminar will last one and a half day to accommodate all the necessary and relevant subjects, namely TED schema, eForms and ESPD (European Single Procurement Document).

2. Adoption of the agenda and approval of last years' meeting minutes

The minutes of TED eSenders Seminar 2017 were approved without comments.

The agenda for the 2018 seminar was also accepted without changes. All presentations are available on TED eSenders [Workspace](#). The complete TED eSenders Seminar 2018 presentations are also available, in PDF format, on this event's website under this [link](#).

3. TED schema – governance and latest updates

Carmelo Greco (Service manager, TED), Maria Font Sanchez (Everis)

[*PowerPoint presentation*](#)

Post meeting note: following eSenders' feedback the Publications Office (OP) decided not to implement this schema version.

The main purpose of the new version of the schema is to merge the two versions currently available (2.0.8 – still used for defence forms - and 2.0.9) and to externalise all code lists and rules in order to make further updates easier. There is no legal obligation behind the proposed change, just a will to improve and simplify. This updated version of the schema should require no major changes and could be kept stable for the next few years while waiting for the implementation of eForms.

OP expects the transition period to last about three months. Some eSenders highlighted that this may not be enough, whereas others requested that the transition period does not occur during the summer months. OP will consider these requests and asks eSenders which may need longer periods for their technical updates to ask for these extensions before the start of the transition period in order for the OP to take their needs into account.

OP recommends that eSenders start planning for 3.0 version as soon as the specifications are published in January 2019. If any eSender volunteered for an early testing of this new schema this would be much appreciated.

Requalification will not be needed for the new schema 3.0; however, since many changes will be introduced it is very important for eSenders to perform several self-tests.

4. New publication approach

Annalisa Vacca (Production coordinator, TED), Enrico Campanella (Production agent, TED)

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

- New Publication timetable

Following a consultation of the relevant stakeholders, including eSenders, OP envisages to modify as of 1/01/2019 the OJS publication timetable (from Monday to Friday, instead of present Tuesday to Saturday). The change of the publication time at 9:00 a.m. is not foreseen.

eSenders agree with the change but asked that the yearly production plan be made available through the TED eSenders Workspace in order to prepare better for the change and to have a provisional timetable of the holiday periods when the OJ S is not published.

- Publication on the 5th day and postponed publication date by the Contracting Authority (CA)

Most eSenders approve the fact that OP as of Q3 2019 will publish by default on the last day of the legal deadline, instead of as soon as notices become available. The participants stressed that this relieves their clients from repeatedly checking the eSenders platform (eSentool) and/or TED website for the publication of their notices. Giving them a more reliable publication date also makes it easier to align the publication at the national level.

As regards the possibility to postpone the publication date, OP confirmed that the CA will notify their request to postpone the date by using the contact form of TED helpdesk. Some eSenders expressed the opinion that their clients do not wish to go on their interface for the notice and then on TED interface for requesting a change of publication date. They stressed that this functionality must not be implemented through a UI (User interface) on TED website but rather through the use of an API (Application programming interface) in REST (Representational state transfer).

- Urgent notices

eSenders also welcomed the possibility of ensuring urgent publications. To the question what are the requirements for a notice to be considered urgent OP answered that it is only the case when the deadline for submission of tenders is being postponed and if the current deadline for submission of tenders is soon to be expired.

The overall reaction to the New Publication Approach seems to be of a positive nature, with some mixed reactions especially concerning the implementation of the postponed publication date request and Urgent notice. There was no comment to the expected timetable for implementation of the changes.

5. Buyer ID project

Claude Schmit (Deputy head of unit, TED), Mindaugas Paulavicius (Service manager, TED)

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

The benefits of a unified Buyer ID would be to have more transparency, keep track of records and even identify fake notices.

National registration number is not structured (string field) in the current forms. The idea is to move to a controlled field structure and validation. Most countries have a national ID, Germany and United Kingdom (now apparently working on central national repository) are commented as not having any registration numbers at all and some possible solution could be the reuse of eSenders' internal identifiers, although this would be only a partial solution since not every buyer will have an eSender (or maybe they will or have changed eSenders).

eSenders also proposed that OP should do some marketing towards the Member States in order to find real benefits for them which could be possibly related with transparency improvements. OP could consider the creation of an automation mechanism allowing trusted and well identified notices to be published faster.

Finally, it was commented that Buyer IDs should be introduced as mandatory in eForms and that this should appear in the next Regulation, so all countries not having yet the national registration numbers would have to propose a solution destined to implement this.

Thus in the meantime OP encourages all eSenders of countries which have a national ID to send this information for publication in TED also in the current forms.

6. Challenges of a national eSender

Jonas Aberg (Primona, Sweden)

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

Understanding how to become eSender and how to implement the required system a new company can take about two weeks after reading all available information on 'TED eSenders workspace'. OP welcomed the suggestion to reconsider the information structure and that the schema location and the technical rules should be more highlighted.

Besides expressing their experience and challenges, Mr Aberg also focused on the consequences of the technical issues that kept eSentool website down and/or facing problems for particular uncommon periods between 21st and the 25th September. Mr Aberg suggested that the Publications Office would have an endpoint check to test whether eSentool is working properly, since fixing these technical issue's consequences may have taken the eSenders three times more time than all the period during which eSentool was down and unavailable.

OP confirmed however that all notices concerned during this unavailability period were duly published on time.

To the question if at least some of the optional fields could just be disregarded in order to make the publication process easier, DG GROW answered that optional fields are also legally mandatory.

Timo Rantanen (Hansel Oy, Finland)

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

Hilma is the only eSender from Finland sending notices to TED. As the system is old, it needs to be renewed. For this 20-30 interviews with stakeholders (CAs, buyers, etc.) were performed during the alignment and discovery phases and a long term plan up to 2025 has been established to implement the new system but the minimum viable product should be ready for 2020.

For the future eForms solution the specifications will have to be redone before the 2020 target date, so it would be helpful to have information on the eForms as soon as possible.

On eForms implementation DG GROW replied that it should start from beginning 2019 and that it would take around a year, but the Regulation is not ready yet and that's why the information is not yet available.

7. eForms: consultation summary and next steps

Jáchym Hercher (Policy Officer, DG GROW)

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

Following the first consultation in 2017 the main idea was kept that the eForms are being designed to be easier, more flexible and less costly in maintenance (*versus* 36 legal annexes and 22 standard forms today). The new data model should also eliminate some of the existent redundancies.

The new Forms Regulation would be only a carrier and the essence would represent the Annex with the Excel table containing all the fields to make the Act extensible so new fields can be added without modifying the Act itself.

eSenders asked whether the optional fields will have to be implemented by all eSenders' solutions and whether eSenders may choose to make some of the optional fields mandatory in order to accommodate for specific national requirements. And, yes, this in general will be allowed and will be up to eSenders to implement as they need.

This would impose ambitious targets on OP in terms of schema, business rules and validation.

8. Single point of access for EU public procurement

Claude Schmit (Deputy head of unit, TED)

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

The main idea is to have better quality data at source. Of course, this will be a challenge in all different phases of the publication process from notice reception to the publication itself. Smooth interoperability between systems was also mentioned along with the underlying principle that costumers are first and that all costumers are important.

Questions on the general cost of this new single point of access tool regarding eSenders were raised during the discussion. It was stated that UBL (Universal Business Language) is promoted for the eForms and TED schema version 3.0 also can be a significant contribution to the implementation of these new tools by creating reusing experiences.

9. eProcurement ontology – data model, glossary, code lists

Claude Schmit (Deputy head of unit, TED), Natalie Muric (Service manager, TED)

PowerPoint presentation

As update since the last year's meeting, 25% of the terms regarding the ontology project have been reviewed and the conceptual data model is to be reviewed by the end of 2018. The EU Vocabularies website shall become the reference place for procurement codes lists and the code lists should be available by the end of 2019. This version will be made available in English only and translated into the other official languages only once the 220 terms being analysed are stable. Ultimately, these translations must be made by business specialists.

Dealing with 38 code lists for eForms is not an easy task: code definitions and 24 official languages are among the issues which have to be taken care of. Ontology will be useful to send this information from one system to another and most companies should be using it. For additional code lists (e.g. environmental and social code list) DG GROW should be contacted.

All contributions and suggestions are welcomed on github (<https://github.com/eprocurementontology/eprocurementontology/wiki>) and on join-up: (<https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/solution/eprocurement-ontology/about>) with the log in guest / guest. Terminology is agreed by consensus with github (written) and during meetings (oral), but all decisions are recorded in github.

All agreed that the ontology will be the basis for eForms and that this will be very useful to have in different countries and for different languages.

10. Public procurement and personal data protection – case studies

Aija Bilzena (Head of sector, TED), Wolfgang Bauchhenss (TED webmaster)

PowerPoint presentation

This was a reminder about the fields where personal data may appear in procurement notices and the importance of using job titles instead of person's names or functional mailboxes instead of personal ones to avoid a too high number of anonymisation requests at later stages. Anonymisation requests to TED are re-addressed to the contracting bodies, authors of the procurement notices, for the decision.

Most national eSenders had not received similar anonymisation requests so far, but they all agreed on the basic principles: anonymisation decisions are to be taken by the contracting bodies and the notices fill-in interfaces may display tooltips for users to avoid inputting personal data.

11. eESPD governance and technical maintenance

Mindaugas Paulavicius (Service manager, TED)

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

As from April 2019 DG GROW plans to stop providing the ESPD (European Single Procurement Document) service. There are currently various versions of EDM (Exchange Data Model – the technical representation of legal ESPD used to support interoperability between ESPD services provided all over Europe). Although any version is applicable, it is suggested to use version 2.0.2 as it has additional features. The versions shall remain available on GitHub (every version is there) until there are no users using it anymore.

Although there is no legal obligation to use any of the EDM versions (either version 1.x.x or 2.x.x at national level), issues may arise in interoperability if country 1 uses one version (e.g. 1.0.0) and country 2 uses another version (e.g. 2.0.0). Then, if country 1 wants to apply in country 2, it would use country's 2 ESPD. Sometimes, country 1 cannot provide certain documents because they are not used in that country.

12. Brainstorming sessions: how should TED evolve?

Cécilia Charlier (TED webmaster)

The set of questions answered by participants during the 'TED Event 2018 – Superpowers of Procurement Data' organised by the Publications Office last 30-31 May in Brussels was the basis for eSenders' brainstorming on TED improvement proposals.

[Mentimeter results TED Event 2018 30-31 May Brussels](#)

Main conclusions:

- a. Implement indexing of the output of machine translation, allowing fast search to be carried out in all languages?
- b. UBL for procurement notices (though not unanimous)?
- c. Provide as much of the data automatically as possible - how many free text fields can be replaced with dropdowns etc.?
- d. It might be useful for eSenders to have access to the validation rules at a more technical level (e.g. code or XML vs Excel).
- e. User community for more user friendly solutions and for TED not to work as an "isolated island"?
- f. Multilingual automatic search for concepts?

- g. Why wait two or more days for notices to be published? Ways to reduce input errors in future?
- h. Carry out new customers' satisfaction survey (e.g. on missing functionalities)?
- i. Introduce notice anonymisation requests as a standard form in TED website?
- j. TED website to host ESPD after April 2019 (as the service is for Member States not able to implement their own service)?
- k. AI and API for TED to provide targeted search result?

13. Conclusions of the meeting

Maria Manuela Cruz (Head of unit, TED)

The availability and the contribution of eSenders over the two days and after the event will be important to meet the ambitious targets for 2019, like the new OJ S publication schedule, adoption of eForms Regulation, finalisation of the Ontology etc.

OP counts on eSenders to include the buyer ID in their notices always when it is available, as well as to propose subjects for presentation in 2019 seminar.

Participants' [Feedback Questionnaire](#) is available online. All the presentations are available on [TED eSenders Workspace](#) and on [TED eSenders Seminar 2018](#) website.