CEF eDelivery Specification Change Management Process

Final Version 1.0. 2017-10-16

Introduction

This document addresses three types of CEF eDelivery specification documents and provides a simple change management process for CEF eDelivery and a related support policy. It also defines a metadata scheme for CEF eDelivery Specifications and explains how it relates to the support policy.

This version is effective since 18-10-2017.

Specification Types

For CEF eDelivery, three types of specifications and related documents are to be addressed.

CEF eDelivery Internal Documents

A CEF eDelivery Internal Document is a specification or any other document that is developed within the CEF team. It may be an in-progress draft which later evolves into an eDelivery Community Draft, a document requesting OMB approval or providing justification for a new specification or for a major change, or an internal document that only serves a purpose in the CEF team. It may also be a copy of an e-SENS specification or other specification that is in the process being cleaned up editorially for further subsequent updates as a Community Draft.

Internal Documents are shared within the CEF team and may (depending on nature, purpose and background of the document) be shared with a broader audience.

CEF Internal Document drafts that are intended to evolve into eDelivery Community Drafts use the same metadata as eDelivery Specifications (see below), with their Status set to "eDelivery Internal Document".

eDelivery Community Drafts

An eDelivery Community Draft is a draft specification that is published in the eDelivery Community for review by, and to solicit input from, members of the e-Delivery community. It may be a potential future update of an existing specification or a draft of a new specification.

Community Drafts are published in the eDelivery Community section of the CEF eDelivery site and shared with members of the e-Delivery Community, which anyone can join, and publicly visible. https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/EDELCOMMUNITY/eDelivery+User+Community.

Updated versions of Community Drafts may be published, commented on and reviewed, and updated, iteratively.

Comments and change requests on Drafts will use the comments functionality of Confluence. Emails may also be sent to to the CEF-EDELIVERY-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu email address. Feedback from reviews will be analyzed by the CEF eDelivery team and may lead to updated versions of the Community Draft.

eDelivery Community Drafts are not supported by CEF. They may be subject to modification and there is no guarantee that the draft, or an update of it, will become an approved CEF eDelivery Specification.

Community drafts use the same metadata as eDelivery Specifications (see below), with their Status set to "eDelivery Community Draft".

CEF eDelivery Specifications

A CEF eDelivery Specification is an approved technical specification that is published at and publicly available from the CEF DIGITAL site, https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/.

Comments on eDelivery specification may be sent to the CEF-EDELIVERY-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu email address. For change requests on existing specifications, the CEF DIGITAL JIRA will be used, with the workflow already in place for the governance, https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/EDELGOV/eDelivery+Governance.

eDelivery Specification Versions and Metadata

Published eDelivery Specifications are versioned and have metadata. The metadata element values relate to whether or not a published version is supported by CEF Digital.

Specification Metadata Scheme

The following metadata elements apply to versions of CEF eDelivery specifications.

- Publication Date: This mandatory element indicates the date at which the version of the specification was published.
- Status: This mandatory element indicates that the document is an eDelivery Specification.
- Obsoleted by: This optional element is a cross-reference to (a) newer specification version(s) that explicitly obsolete(s) this version, and is added to a published specification when such (a) newer version(s) that obsolete(s) this version is/are published.
- Obsoletes: This optional element indicates any (versions of) specifications that this version obsoletes explicitly. Newer specification versions obsolete earlier versions of that specification and a new specification may obsolete (all versions of) an existing specification.
- Expires at: This optional element indicates an explicit end date at which the specification is no longer valid. Typically this date is only known well after the publication date.

Versions and Support

The CEF eDelivery team supports users of eDelivery Specifications. The services provided as part of **eDelivery support are described in the section** "Support" below. Since newer versions improve on older versions, users are encouraged to implement newer versions, as and when they become available. CEF eDelivery will provide a minimum support interval of 12 calendar months after publication for any eDelivery Specification version. This recognizes that, except for urgent security fixes, for most users there may be no business case to immediately upgrade to each new version and therefore many users will not be using the very latest specification version.

- A version of an eDelivery specification is current if it is (a) not obsoleted by a newer (version of a) specification, and (b) it is not expired. For any specification, there is at most one current version.
- A version of an eDelivery specification is expired **if it has an "Expires at" set to a date in the past.**
- A version of an eDelivery specification is supported if either (a) it is current and (b) it has not expired and **its "Publication Date" is** within the CEF eDelivery minimum support interval.
- INEA calls for grants for implementations of CEF eDelivery may require projects to deliver, at the end of the project, a (minimum) specific version of the eDelivery specification and/or may require projects to implement newer versions within particular intervals. CEF eDelivery will at a minimum support the versions referenced in INEA grant project contracts for the duration of those projects.
- EU Implementing Decisions may reference specific versions of an e-SENS specification or of an eDelivery specification. For example, EU 2017/759 on PNR data exchange references the e-SENS version 1.10 of e-SENS AS4. CEF eDelivery supports all versions referenced in applicable EU Implementing Decisions.

Two examples illustrate these concepts. The assumption is that today is 2017-08-22 and a 12 month support interval applies:

- There are three versions of an eDelivery specification: a version 1.9 published at 2016-04-15, which is replaced by a version 1.10 at 2016-11-05, which in turn is updated by a version 1.11 at 2016-12-26, which has no expiration date set. In this case, the 1.11 version is the current version. Both the 1.11 and the 1.10 version are supported. The 1.9 version is no longer supported.
- Assume there are two versions of another eDelivery specification, a 1.1 that is expired and that replaces a 1.0. In this case there is no current version and no supported version.

Comparison to e-SENS Scheme

The e-SENS Wiki publishes (the predecessors of) some CEF eDelivery Specifications, which use different specification metadata. There are similarities with, and differences to, the CEF metadata scheme. This section compares the two schemes.

In e-SENS, a specification version can have **"work in progress" status. In CEF, Community Drafts are not** considered eDelivery Specifications. The Status metadata element is used to indicate whether a document is a Community Draft or an eDelivery Specification. This prevents potential confusion.

The e-SENS metadata schema classifies versions in terms of use (being used, being phased in or out, having been abandoned). The CEF scheme classifies versions in obsoletion relations, which are related to support and grant eligibility policies, but are not necessarily directly related to use. The reason for the change is that whether or not, and when, users upgrade to later versions, and the duration of any implementation transition intervals are not determined by CEF but rather by users and their communities. Exceptions to this are projects funded by INEA grants, as the grant agreements can specify specific versions. However, those projects are only a subset of all users of CEF eDelivery.

Specification Lifecycle and Review

The process of creating or updating a CEF specification involves a number of steps. There are three situations:

- Incremental, minor updates to existing specifications.
- New specifications and major updates to existing specifications.
- A specification or specification version becomes end-of-life.

To minimize the impact on users, a CEF eDelivery Specification is updated in principle at most twice a year, except for security issues which must be addressed without delay. An update addresses one or multiple change requests. Typically approved change requests are addressed in the next update, but some may be postponed to later updates.

In the case of updates to existing eDelivery Specifications, a process is followed that involves a structured series of steps. In essence, the process intends to:

- Involve the eDelivery Community transparently in the assessment of change requests and in the creation of Community Drafts.
- Offer the OMB three approval points for major changes: when starting work on a new draft version, when the new draft is ready for public review, and when the reviewed draft is ready for publication. For minor changes, for practical purposes to reduce overhead, the OMB is informed. (If the OMB explicitly wants to approve even minor changes, this is of course possible).

The process follows the following steps:

- Comments may be made by anyone against any supported version of an eDelivery specification. This includes but is not limited to the CEF eDelivery team and the eDelivery Community.
- Potential changes may also be identified in ongoing efforts to align the eDelivery specifications within the standards bodies maintaining the underlying standards and technical specifications

and with other user communities (e.g. users of different but similar profiles of those standards and specifications).

- The CEF eDelivery team evaluates raised comments and improvement suggestions and assesses whether a change is needed on the specification and, if so, whether the impact is minor or major. Minor changes include clarifications and editorial corrections. Major changes include changes that have significant impact on users or significantly affect products implementing the specification. Only change requests that apply to the current version are taken into account, even though the request may be raised to an earlier supported version. For major proposed changes, the assessment includes a proposal in which future version the change is to be made, if not the next one.

- These assessments are shared transparently with the eDelivery Community for their review. Community members can comment on any aspect of the assessment.

- Periodically, sets of open change requests and assessments for the next future release are bundled and presented to the eDelivery OMB. If the impact for one or more change requests is deemed major, the change request is submitted as an OMB decision item. If the impact is minor, the OMB is informed.

- To start preparing the upcoming version, a task is assigned to a CEF eDelivery editor. The task references the change requests that this first new version is to address and a reference to a CEF eDelivery internal copy of the current published eDelivery Specification version. The editor resolves the change requests by applying changes to the copy and produces a consolidated updated version.

- If the CEF team approves the update, CEF will publish an eDelivery Community Draft in the eDelivery community area and invite community members to comment on this draft. CEF eDelivery will also assess the impact of the proposed change on its sample implementation, and invite other suppliers to make similar assessments for their eDelivery software and services. This step may involve a few iterations. The CEF eDelivery team produces a final draft version.

- The OMB may request a public review of the final draft version. If a review is requested, it will be announced and will run for a minimum of 30 days. For updates to existing specifications, the public review is explicitly limited to the applied changes.

- If a review was requested, after it ends, the CEF eDelivery team will review any received comments and assess if the Community Draft needs to be updated and, if so, if those updates are minor or major and if a new public review would be needed. This assessment is shared with the eDelivery Community. Any review comments that do not relate to the applied changes are dismissed for this draft and re-classified as regular specification change requests, to possibly be taken into account for another future update.

- If a review was requested, if no major change requests were addressed in the update and no major comments were raised in the public review, or if there was no review, the Community Draft is published as a CEF eDelivery Specification. In other cases, the OMB is requested to approve publication of the specification.

- If the draft is an update to an existing specification version, its metadata references that version as a version it obsoletes. The metadata of the existing version is similarly updated to state that it is obsoleted by the new specification version.

For new specifications, the process is essentially the same as for major changes to existing specifications, with the following exceptions:

- For the potential new specification, the CEF eDelivery team prepares a proposal document similar to the document for a major change and may first share it with the OMB, prior to it being reviewed within the eDelivery Community.
- The OMB may request a review of the proposal document by the eDelivery Community and/or the general public before deciding on it.
- The OMB may request that an internal draft document of the specification is to be created prior to creation of a Community Draft and prior to community review. This internal draft then becomes an input to the change request.
- The process from that point on is the same as for a major change to an existing specification.

It may be the case that an eDelivery Specification is not used by CEF stakeholders, or is no longer used, or that a different specification is deemed to better serve the needs of CEF stakeholders or should otherwise be used instead. In this case, the following process can be followed to withdraw the specification.

- The CEF eDelivery team prepares a proposal document that explains the rationale for withdrawing the specification and an indication when support for the specification could be ended, taking into account the CEF eDelivery minimum support interval. If the suggestion to withdraw the specification is made by stakeholders, this document may be written in collaboration with those stakeholders. The proposal document may also be shared with the eDelivery Community for comments and feedback.
- The proposal document is submitted to the OMB for approval. The OMB may reject or accept the proposal and/or the proposed expiration date. The OMB may indicate that the proposal is to be reviewed publicly first before it is decided on.
- If the OMB agrees to withdraw the specification, the current version of the specification metadata is updated and an "Expires at" date is added set to the set expiration date.
- In exceptional situations, including but not necessarily limited to situations involving security issues, an alternative fast track may be followed in which only OMB approval is sought, but no public review is held, and/or in which the expiration date does not observe the support interval.

Support

CEF eDelivery specifications are supported by CEF Digital. This section explains some of the support services.

Specification Support

CEF eDelivery supports stakeholders that use CEF eDelivery Specifications to implement eDelivery. Apart from publication of the specification on the CEF eDelivery site, this support includes answering questions about the specifications and how they are to be used and processing any comments or issues raised on them. If the resolution of an issue requires a change to the specification, the above described change management process is used.

For supported versions of specifications other than the current version, CEF will accept change requests. However, changes are only applied if they (also) relate to the current version. This means that, to benefit from changes to the specifications, users are expected to upgrade to newer versions.

If a security issue is confirmed in one or multiple published versions of an eDelivery Specification, the affected published versions will be edited to include an appropriate warning. Depending on the severity of the issue, an expiration date may be set or adjusted. If the current version of the specification is among the affected versions, a fixed updated version will be created that addresses the issue.

Conformance Testing

CEF eDelivery provides the CEF eDelivery Conformance Testing Service for some eDelivery Specifications, https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/eDelivery+Conformance+testing. It can be used by to verify that implementations conform to the specifications.

The CEF eDelivery team will make sure that, as specifications get updated and support requests are processed, the test suites used in the service remain aligned with the current version of these specifications. If a new version of the test suite is deployed at the Conformance Testing Service, implementers that previously passed the conformance test may request CEF eDelivery to re-test their implementation against this newer version.

A conformance test report published at a particular date always relates to the version of the related specification that was current at that particular date. The conformance testing service is not provided for obsoleted specifications.

Sample Implementation

To support implementations of eDelivery, CEF eDelivery maintains and supports sample implementations of eDelivery Specifications, which users may deploy to implement eDelivery. The CEF eDelivery team will update the sample implementation to keep it current with new (versions of) eDelivery specifications. The release schedule and plan of the sample implementation is set by the eDelivery development team, and has its separate change management process. CEF eDelivery strives to synchronize publication of CEF Specifications and releases of sample software as much as is practically possible. Users should be aware that releases of the sample software may lag some time behind the publication of eDelivery Specifications.

Revision History

Date	Editor	Changes
2017-08-23	PvdE	First version 0.1 for review
2017-09-04	PvdE	Comments MD v0.2
2017-10-09	PvdE	Version 0.3. Clarified that this process only applies to specifications of eDelivery, sample software has its own process. OMB to decide on public review.
2017-10-16	PvdE	Version 1.0 incorporating final comments from review meeting with MD, GP.