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# Introduction

## Purpose

This Interface Control Document (ICD) presents the requirements necessary for the interchange of data that occurs between the Enterprise Veteran Self Service (EVSS) system and two partner systems – the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) eFolder and the Benefits Enterprise Platform (BEP) in relation to the eFolder feature. Specifically, this ICD specifies interface requirements of the participating systems, describes the concept of operations for the interface, defines the message structure and protocols that govern the interchange of data, and identifies the communication paths along which the data is expected to flow.

## Scope

This ICD specifies the interface between the EVSS and both VBMS eFolder and BEP systems in relation to the eFolder feature. Upon formal approval for each participating system, this ICD shall be incorporated into the requirements baseline for each system. The scope of this document includes the VBMS Development team, the BEP Development team, EVSS Development team, and any other relevant Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) stakeholders. Scope is limited to the interaction that occurs between the EVSS system and BEP and VBMS eFolder.

**Notes:**

* In the near term VDC will be unbundled into discrete EVSS Services for submission of various form types (Ex: Form526 Service). For now usage of the term VDC in this document represents all service tier artifacts for submissions of all form types.
* eBenefits (EBN) may be supplanted by Vets.gov and the future of Stakeholder Enterprise Portal (SEP) is yet to be determined. For now, references to EBN and SEP in this document represent any existing or future front-end applications.
* Doc Listing (and uploads) dependency on BEP may be eliminated in the future

## System Identification

### eFolder Partner System Overview

BEP is the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) Enterprise Java platform, hosting all web based service-oriented applications. Table 1 shows specific information regarding BEP.

Table 1: BEP System Information

| System | Details |
| --- | --- |
| Identification Number | N/A |
| Title | Benefits Enterprise Platform |
| Abbreviation | BEP |
| Version Number | N/A |
| Release Number | N/A |
| Point of Contact | John Dell |
| Vendor (optional) | Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) |

VBMS is a multi-year technology solutions project to transition VBA from a paper-intensive claims processing environment to a paperless-based environment. VBMS eFolder is the authoritative System of Records for claim related documents. Table 2 shows specific information regarding VBMS.

Table 2: VBMS System Information

| System | Details |
| --- | --- |
| Identification Number | N/A |
| Title | Veteran Benefits Management System |
| Abbreviation | VBMS |
| Version Number | N/A |
| Release Number | 12.1 |
| Point of Contact | Troy Hamilton |

### EVSS System Overview

The EVSS system is a suite of portals and web applications that integrates with partner systems to provide users with self-service capabilities, such as submission and tracking of compensation claims. Key sub-systems within the EVSS suite are the EBN Portal, SEP and Veterans Online Application (VONAPP) Direct Connect (VDC).

Table 3: EVSS System Information

| System | Details |
| --- | --- |
| Identification Number | N/A |
| Title | Enterprise Veteran Self Service |
| Abbreviation | EVSS |
| Version Number | NA |
| Release Number | 14.25 |
| Point of Contact | Angela Gant-Curtis |
| Vendor (optional) | VRM |

## Data Definition

### EVSS and Interface Data

Data local to EVSS is as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: EVSS data - Security and Audit

| Data Element | Attribute | Values |
| --- | --- | --- |
| User Name | Username | VAEBENEFITS (for EBN and VDC) |
| Password | Password | IP Address for EVSS Application or Service tier node making the web service request |
| Station ID | STN\_ID | “281” |
| Application Name | applicationName | “eBenefits” |
| ExternalUserID | ExternUid | User name as stored in the EVSS USERPREFERENCEENTITY table, in the format [AUTH\_MECHANISM].[VAAFI\_USER\_ID].  For example, dslogon.12345 for Veteran and piv.xx for Veteran Service (VSO) Representative.  For more information reference EVSS-VAAFI ICD.  Note: Where the computer user name is larger than 39 characters, an MD5 hash will be sent. |
| External Key | ExternalKey | Same as External UID |

### Document Metadata

EVSS obtains document data from both VBMS and BEP and merges it for display to its consumers. Tables 5 and 6 show the document meta information from VBMS and CORP respectively.

**VBMS:**

Table 5 identifies the interface data corresponding to eFolder ReadService/findDocumentSeriesReference operation. These operations retrieve a corresponding list of documents(each containing a stack of DocumentVersionReference objects), corresponding to the Veteran. Each series data element contains the list of document Version References.

The metadata identified in Table 5 may be constrained to a given Veteran’s claim for display in Claim Status Details, if Claim Id is passed in as input. If ClaimId is not passed in, the metadata would be appropriate for display in My Documents.

Table 5: Response Interface Data - eFolder Metadata Information – ReadSvc/findDocumentSeriesReference

| Data Element | Attribute | EVSS Handling |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Series Identifier | id | Identifier for the document series (stack). EVSS does not process this element |
| Series name | seriesName | Typically the name of the associated Veteran concatenated with the document name. EVSS does not process this element |
| Veteran Reference | veteranReference | Veteran File Number for the associated Veteran. |
| Mime Type | mimeType | MediaType of the documents in this series |
| Series identifier | DocumentVersionReference/documentSeriesRefId | Identifier for the document series (stack) in each of the DocumentVersionReferences contained herein. EVSS does not process this element |
| Document UUID | DocumentVersionReference/documentVersionRefId | UUID of the DocumentVersionReference. If this DocumentVersionReference corresponds to the linearized version EVSS uses it as the basis of correlation with meta information (to be) stored in CORP |
| Previous Version ID Reference | DocumentVersionReference/previousVersionID | UUID Reference to the previous document version in the stack. Typically when a document is uploaded VBMS eFolder creates 2 versions – Original and Linearized. For the Original Version, this attribute would not exist. For the Linearized Version, this attribute would refer back to the Original Version. |
| MimeType | DocumentVersionReference/mimeType | MediaType of this document version reference (or document) |
| Source | DocumentVersionReference/source | Identifies the source of the uploading system. Only the following systems mediated through EVSS upload documents – EBN, SEP, VDC (and VETS.GOV, soon).  However, legacy uploads have happened using various other sources such as eBenefits, ebn and sep, and also a few instances of vets.gov.  Furthermore EVSS has a business need to display documents uploaded by D2D.  Therefore, EVSS evaluates this field for all the sources mentioned in this cell and treats them as appropriate for EVSS consumption. i.e. – EBN, ebn, SEP, sep, VDC, vdc, eBenefits, VETS.GOV, vets.gov, D2D . |
| Document Type | DocumentVersionReference/typeCategory/typeId | This identifies the document type corresponding to the document version reference. This is a business value and has nothing to do with MimeType. |
| VA Receive Date | DocumentVersionReference/vaReceiveDate | Date VA (EVSS) received the document. Same as the Date construct that was passed in via initializeDocument during document upload. |
| VBMS Upload Date | DocumentVersionReference/vbmsUploadDate | Date VBMS received the document. |
| Document’s version | DocumentVersionReference/version | This element has an attribute named “major” that identifies the actual version of the document. A lower number indicates an older version (e.g.: during a document upload, the original version = 1 and the linearized version = 2. EVSS uses this attribute to determine the linearized version |
| MetaData | DocumentVersionReference/metadata | Metadata is a name value pair construct. Numerous metadata elements can exist, some provided during doc uploads and some generated by VBMS eFolder. VBMS provides veteranFirstName, veteranMiddleName and veteranLastName as metadata elements that are of interest to EVSS |

**CORP:**

Table 6 shows interface data corresponding to BEP/UploadDocumentService/ *findUpldedDcmntByBnftClaimId* and *findUpldedDcmntByPtcpntId* operations . The former operation is used from within the confines of Claim Status Details and the latter from My Documents. These operations retrieves a list of UpldedDcmtDTO elements. EVSS merges this dataset with what was returned from VBMS eFolder prior to displaying it to the user. Details of the BEP service response is shown in Table 6:

Table 6: Corporate Uploaded Document Response Metadata Information

| Data Element | BEP Attribute | EVSS Handling |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Benefit Claim ID | UplodedDcmntDTO:bnftClaimId | 15 chars. Claim Id against which the document was uploaded |
| Document ID | UplodedDcmntDTO:upldedDcmntId | DB Sequence Number |
| Document Item Number | UplodedDcmntDTO:dcmntItemNm | EVSS allows users to specify /upload filenames in a lax format – 256 chars, upper and lower case alphanumeric, whitespaces, underscores as well as dashes. This original filename is tracked in Uploaded Document Table within CorpDB. EVSS transforms it to a VBMS compliant filename prior to upload. |
| Document Type text | UplodedDcmntDTO: dcmntTypeTxt | Description corresponding the uploaded document’s type. 256 characters |
| Tracked Item ID | UplodedDcmntDTO: intnddDvlpmtItemId | 15 chars. Id corresponding to the tracked item against which the document was uploaded |
| Uploaded Date | UplodedDcmntDTO: upldedDt | Date time stamp of when document was uploaded |
| Message | UplodedDcmntDTO: message | Status disposition of upload |
| Submitter Application Type Code | UplodedDcmntDTO: submtrApplcnTypeCd | Code representing the uploading app – EBN, ebn, SEP,sep, VDC , vdc, VETS.GOV and vets.gov |
| Submitter Application Type Name | UplodedDcmntDTO: submtrApplcnTypeNm | Description of the uploading app Document |
| Submitter First Name | UplodedDcmntDTO: submtrFirstNm | Document uploader/submitter’s first name |
| Submitter Last Name | UplodedDcmntDTO: submtrLastNm | uploader/submitter’s last name |
| Submitter Middle Name | UplodedDcmntDTO: submtrMiddleNm | Document uploader/submitter’s middle name |
| Submitter Participant ID | UplodedDcmntDTO: submtrPtcpntId | Document uploader/submitter’s CORP issued unique Participant Id |
| UUID | UplodedDcmntDTO: uuidTxt | Linearized Document version’s UUID from VBMS |

**Fetching of a Document**

Documents are stored in eFolder and are fetched using the VBMS eFolder 1.0 API. The fetch workflow is more involved because the API does not return meta-information for the document, notably Veterans VA File Number. This previously was returned with eDocumentServiceV4). EVSS uses the VA Veterans File Number to ensure that the user logged in is restricted to only download documents associated with that veteran. Tables 7, 8, and 9 correspond to the operations now invoked to fetch a document.

Table 7: Request Interface Data - eFolder Metadata Information – ReadSvc/getDocumentVersionReference

| Data Element | Attribute | EVSS Handling |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Document ID | id | This is the identifier of the document that is selected for download and for which we need to obtain a document Series UUID . |

Table 8: Request Interface Data - eFolder Metadata Information – ReadSvc/getDocumentSeriesReference

| Data Element | Attribute | EVSS Handling |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Series Identifier | id | The identifier of the document series that is in the response for the getDocumentVersionReference call. The response to this call would contain a VeteranReference |

Table 9: Request Interface Data - eFolder Metadata Information – ReadSvc/getDocumentContent

| Data Element | Attribute | EVSS Handling |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Document ID | id | Document Id of the selected document.  After evaluating the response for getDocumentSeriesReference and existence of the Veteran File Number therein, the returned Veteran File Number is compared with what is in the user’s login context. If it is the same, the getDocumentContent is invoked by passing the Document Id of the selected Document |

**Fetching of Document Types:**

Document Types are now exposed to EVSS consumers. This enables them to provide accurate document Type ids for uploads for each instance.

Table 10: Response Interface Data - eFolder Metadata Information – ReadSvc/listTypeCategory

| Data Element | Attribute | EVSS Handling |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Category Id | categoryId | EVSS could choose to look this category up to determine category based processing of document uploads, e.g. Uploaded Application forms might need different stamping. |
| Category Description Text | categoryDescriptionText | Will be returned to EVSS’s consumer for display to users |
| Doc Type Id | typeId | Document Type Id. Will be passed by EVSS consumers during doc Upload . |
| Doc Type Description | typeDescriptionText | Used by EVSS and consumers to display the category type associated with uploaded documents, to users |
| Type Label | typeLabelText | This used to be the unique identifier to identify a doc type. This is the same as “LCode”. Given that VBMS intends to deprecate this, EVSS will stop using this reference. EVSS will not return this value to its consumers |

# Interface Definition

As a part of this integration, certain EVSS data components related to EVSS features shall be exchanged between EVSS, BEP, and VBMS using the Web Service interfaces described in Table 11. This section is intended to be viewed in conjuction with the interface data defintions from Section 1.4.

Table 11: Interface Definition

| Data Component | Web Service | Web Service Version | Operation |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| List documents in Claim Status Details and My Documents | VBMS efolder Service | 1.0 | * ReadSvc/findDocumentSeriesReference with claimId constraint for Claims Status * ReadSvc/findDocumentSeriesReference without claimId constraint for My Documents |
| List documents in Claim Status Details and My Documents | BEP Uploaded Document Service | NA | * findUpldedDcmntByBnftClaimId for Claims Status * findUpldedDcmntByPtcpntId for My Documents |
| Fetch Documents from Claim Status Details and My Documents | VBMS efolder Service | 1.0 | Fetch Document Workflow   * ReadSvc/getDocumentVersionReference * ReadSvc/getDocumentSeriesReference * ReadSvc/getDocumentContent |
| Get Document Types | VBMS efolder Service | 1.0 | ReadSvc/listTypeCategory |

## System Interfaces

Figure 1 displays the topology diagram for the EVSS-eFolder/BEP interface.



Figure 1: Communications Flow EVSS to eFolder/BEP

Figure 2 displays the Fetch Document Workflow interactions between EVSS and VBMS



Figure 2: Fetch Document Workflow interactions between EVSS and VBMS

## Data Transfer

Transmission of the aforementioned data types occurring between EVSS and BEP/VBMS services will utilize a protected mutual Transport Security Layer (TLS) done over Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS) port.

In compliance with Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) Publication 199, the following confidentiality, integrity, and availability categorizations have been laid out with regard to the transfer and handling of data:

* Confidentiality of data: High
* Integrity of data: High
* Availability of data: High

These categories also mirror similar National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication 800-60 standards to which the eBenefits Portal and SEP Portals adhere.

## Transaction Types

Table 12 lists the types of transactions performed in EVSS – BEP/VBMS integration.

Table 12: Transaction Types

| Web Service | Operation | Transaction Type |
| --- | --- | --- |
| VBMS efolder Service | ReadSvc/findDocumentSeriesReference | Read |
| BEP Uploaded Document Service | * findUpldedDcmntByBnftClaimId for Claims Status * findUpldedDcmntByPtcpntId for My Documents | Read |
| VBMS efolder Service | Fetch Document Workflow   * ReadSvc/getDocumentVersionReference * ReadSvc/getDocumentSeriesReference * ReadSvc/getDocumentContent | Read |
| VBMS efolder Service | ReadSvc/listTypeCategory | Read |

Any errors on a given operation will be reported by BEP and/or VBMS web services, back to EVSS as Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) faults. Appropriate error messages will be logged in EVSS logs for auditing and reoconciliation.

# Data Exchanges/Operations

This section describes the different service operations called when accessing documents in EVSS.

## Document Retrieval Scenarios

### View My Documents

* When this page is requested by the user, asynchronous calls to get all permitted documents is made to the eFolder Service and UploadedDocumentService to retrieve all metadata.
  + If there are errors, then the eBenefits/SEP UI will display standard EVSS error messages for the user to proceed.
* When a user chooses to download a document, a synchronous call to get the byte information is made to the eFolder Service to download the byte data.
  + If there are errors, then the eBenefits/SEP UI will display standard EVSS error messages for the user to proceed.

### View Claims Tracked Items Documents

* When this page is requested by the user, asynchronous calls to get all permitted documents is made to the eFolder Service and UploadedDocumentService to retrieve all metadata.
  + If there are errors, then the eBenefits/SEP UI will display standard EVSS error messages for the user to proceed.
* When a user chooses to download a document, a synchronous call to get the byte information is made to the eFolder Service to download the byte data.
  + If there are errors, then the eBenefits/SEP UI will display standard EVSS error messages for the user to proceed.

### View Claims Documents

* When this page is requested by the user, asynchronous calls to get all permitted documents is made to the eFolder Service and UploadedDocumentService to retrieve all metadata.
  + If there are errors, then the eBenefits/SEP UI will display standard EVSS error messages for the user to proceed.
* When a user chooses to download a document, a synchronous call to get the byte information is made to the eFolder Service to download the byte data.
  + If there are errors, then the eBenefits/SEP UI will display standard EVSS error messages for the user to proceed.

### Get Document Types

* Typically during an upload, document types are listed for the user to select and then associate with the document being uploaded. For this purpose the Get Document Types workflow can be triggered where EVSS retrieves document types from VBMS by invoking ReadSvc/listTypeCategory. EVSS intends to cache the response and update the cache every 24 hours (?)
  + If there are errors, the presentation tier will resolve them.

## Precedence and Criticality

This interface is used in a real time fashion from EVSS. Performance problems or failure to meet response times will impact end-user authentication process times and will hinder access to features for users. EVSS implements caching strategies to alleviate any performance issues. Page performance will be measured historically and be used to tune these strategies.

## Communications Methods

The following subsections outline the interface initiation and flow control for the interface between EVSS and both VBMS and BEP.

## Interface Initiation

### Web User Initiated

User accesses the host portal (EBN or SEP) and gets directed to login through a Credential Service Provider (CSP).

User successfully logs in to the CSP and is authenticated through the VA Authentication Federation Infrastructure (VAAFI).

User accesses authenticated area of the host portal and accesses one of the features requiring access to data from VBA Corporate, Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystem (BIRLS), Benefits Delivery Network (BDN) or another system.

## Performance Requirements

EVSS is largely a web platform that is accessed by the user in real-time. Table 10 shows the performance level to be guaranteed by the BEP and VBMS system.

**Note:** Table 13 is intended to capture performance requirements as an ongoing activity with BGS. Currently, there have been no agreed upon metrics for these service operations and the expected response time values may be changed at a later time.

Table 13: Performance Levels

| Web Service | Operation | Avg Response Time (sec.) | Max. Response Time (sec.) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| VBMS efolder Service | * ReadSvc/findDocumentSeriesReference with claimId constraint for Claims Status * ReadSvc/findDocumentSeriesReference without claimId constraint for My Documents | 1 | 2 |
| BEP Uploaded Document Service | * findUpldedDcmntByBnftClaimId for Claims Status * findUpldedDcmntByPtcpntId for My Documents | 1 | 2 |
| VBMS efolder Service | Fetch Document Workflow   * ReadSvc/getDocumentVersionReference * ReadSvc/getDocumentSeriesReference * ReadSvc/getDocumentContent |  |  |
| VBMS efolder Service | ReadSvc/listTypeCategory | 1 | 2 |

## Security

Both parties agree to work together to ensure the joint security of the connected systems and the data they store, process, and transmit as specified in this ICD. Each party certifies that its respective system is designed, managed, and operated in compliance with all relevant federal laws, regulations, and policies.

## Availability

BEP interfaces are expected to be available to the EVSS system 24 x 7 x 365. The BGS team is required to notify the EVSS Operations team of any maintenance or outages immediately.

VBMS interfaces are expected to be available to the EVSS system 24 x 7 x 365. The team is required to notify the EVSS Operations team of any maintenance or outages immediately.

# Interface Requirements

The following table describes the output attributes from the Identity Access Management (IAM) to VA via Security Assertions Markup Language (SAML) 1.1 using the browser artifact method. The Identity Authentication Service (iAS) will be able to extract the information sent from Identity and Access Management (IAM).

## User Roles

Table 14: User Roles

| Role | Credential Assurance Level | Description |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Veteran  Service Member | 2 | This is the minimum level for Veterans and Service members to be able to access the EBN Portal. |
| VSO Representative  Claims Agent  Attorney | 3+ | This is the minimum level for Veteran Service Organization (VSO) Representatives, Attorneys, and Claims Agents to be able to access SEP. |

## Communication Methods

The following subsections outline the interface initiation and flow control for the interface between EVSS, BEP, and VBMS.

## Interface Initiation

### Veteran/Service Member

User accesses EBN and is directed to login through a CSP. User successfully logs in to the CSP and is authenticated by VAAFI. User accesses authenticated area of the host portal to view EBN features.

### Representative

User accesses SEP and is then directed to login through a CSP. User successfully logs in to the CSP and is authenticated by VAAFI. User accesses authenticated area of the host portal to view SEP features.

## Flow Control

The following failure scenario is currently identified:

1. BEP and/or VBMS Web Service Not Available (HTTP 404)
2. BEP and/or VBMS Web Service Returns a SOAP Fault

For web service operations invoked synchronously, based on actions from the EVSS graphical user interface (GUI), an error results in the user being presented with a generic error web page in EVSS. For web service operations invoked asynchronously, an error results in the system logging the event. EVSS logs all outbound web service calls to the EVSS Audit Event Log. This includes successful as well as failed service invocations.

## Security Requirements

The interfaces from EVSS to BEP utilize HTTPS with bi-directional certificate validation to provide TLS. This security layer is used in Pre-Production and Production regions. For other Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) regions, no TLS is configured.

Message level security is provided for these interfaces using a SOAP Web Service User Name token authentication scheme that uses system credentials provisioned by BGS for EVSS systems to authenticate on the BEP system.

The interfaces from EVSS to VBMS utilize HTTPS with bi-directional certificate validation to provide TLS. This security layer is used in Pre-Production and Production regions. For other Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) regions, no TLS is configured.

Message level signature/encryption is set using the security tokens provided by the VBMS system.

## Interface Verification

The following qualification methods are used to verify that requirements have been met:

* Demonstration
* Test
* Analysis
* Inspection

Test cases need to be created to test out the provided scenarios of this interface for EVSS R14.25, not including regression testing for existing features.