

PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure Agreements

Annex 7 – The PEPPOL-VS Governance Model and model agreements

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure requires that a number of actors, notably the Validation Services (VS), work together in a trusted environment based on common specifications and standards. The development and maintenance, as well as the implementation and use, of these common specifications and standards needs to be governed across the full infrastructure. In order to clearly regulate the roles and responsibilities of each actor in the PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure, it has been identified that a set of agreements should be established. The aim of this document is to describe the key principles of the PEPPOL-VS Governance Model and to identify the agreements required, including their purpose and scope.

2. The PEPPOL-VS Governance Model

- 2.1. The PEPPOL project was established in order to ensure that public or private economic actors using electronic signature in an online public procurement process (or other electronic processes) in the EU can collect appropriate information related to the certificates and devices used to create theses. The basis of the initiative is thus a recognition that diversity exists amongst national electronic signatures tools and schemes, and will continue to exist in the foreseeable future. The long term governance model for the PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure needs to respect this fact.
- 2.2. The current proposal for a long term governance model for the e-Signature Validation Infrastructure is thus built around two levels of authority:
- (1) the European wide coordination which is achieved through centralized governance of the PEPPOL PPRS (PEPPOL Public Registry Service) and the common technical standards and specifications, and
 - (2) the national and/or regional coordination, which is achieved by delegating governance over the implementation and use PEPPOL Validation Services (VS) to an appointed PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority (if applicable).

3. European wide coordination

- 3.1. The European wide coordination will be achieved by establishing the PEPPOL-VS Coordinating Authority who will have authority over all central components of the PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure. Key aspects of this responsibility include:
- Manage updates and releases of new versions of PEPPOL-VS technical standards and service specifications accordingly to the published policy.

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- Providing the PEPPOL PPRS service.
- 3.2. Through these measures a set of minimum requirements and criteria will be established and consistently applied throughout the full PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure.
- 3.3. Making the PEPPOL-VS Coordinating Authority the instrument for managing areas of use (through the recognition of identification schemes) and using the PEPPOL PPRS as a tool to enforce this policy, consistency and interoperability will support not only at technical level, but also on semantic and organizational level.
- 3.4. Furthermore the PEPPOL-VS Coordinating Authority will be responsible for:
- Providing a website to promote and provide support for the operation of the PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure, including tools to facilitate efficient sharing of information and contact between all actors involved in the infrastructure.
 - Providing an arbitration body for eventual conflicts related to any part of the PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure.
 - Appointing and signing the community agreement with relevant PEPPOL-VS Regional Authorities (if applicable).
 - Enter in to agreements with and provide support for PEPPOL VS Providers in domains where no PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority has been delegated.

4. National and/or regional coordination

- 4.1. The PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority (as soon as implemented) will have authority over the actual implementation and use of the PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure within a defined domain. The domain will typically be defined by national borders or by regions within a country. It is not foreseen that domains will overlap or cross national borders.
- 4.2. Such an approach will allow a PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority to decide and describe any additional qualification criteria to be used for the establishment of PEPPOL VSs with whom they contract, while still respecting the minimum requirements applicable for the full PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure.
- 4.3. Key aspects of the responsibility of the PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority include:

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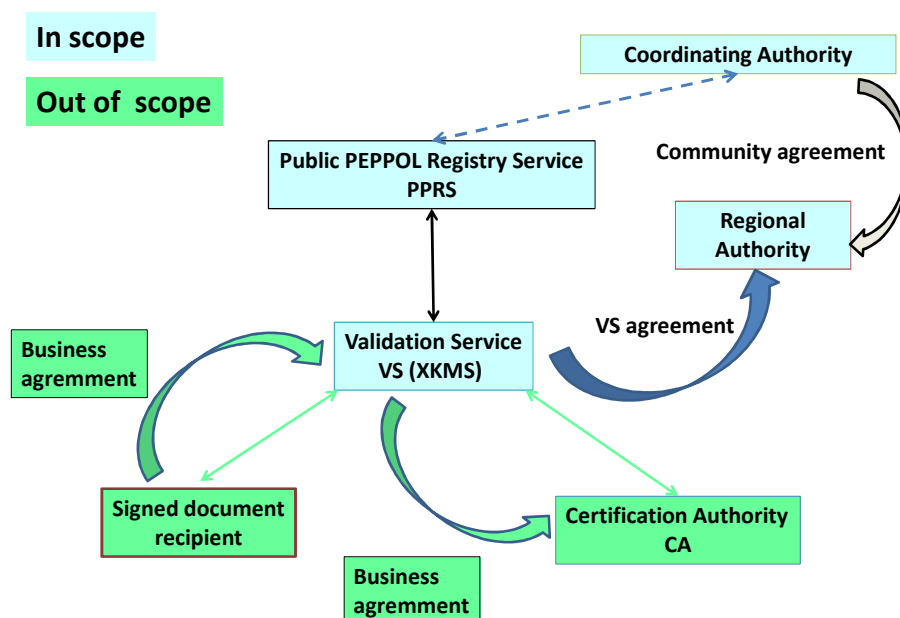
- To describe and make publically know any additional qualification criteria applicable to PEPPOL VS Providers with whom they will contract. Such additional qualification criteria are expected to typically include service requirements over and above what is defined by the PEPPOL-VS Coordinating Authority.
 - To sign agreements with the qualifying PEPPOL-VS Providers.
 - Participate in the governance of the PEPPOL Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) by participating in the processes required to issue digital certificate, as well as suspend and revoke the digital certificate if a PEPPOL VS Provider fails to fulfil his obligations.
 - Ensure that PEPPOL VSs established within its domain comply with the minimum requirements defined by the PEPPOL-VS Coordinating Authority as well as with any additional qualification criteria applicable within the domain.
 - Provide support for PEPPOL VS Providers contracting with the PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority, including the escalation of support issues the PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority cannot resolve to the PEPPOL-VS Coordinating Authority.
- 4.4. For European countries or regions that have not nominated a PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority or do not wish to establish any specific national governance including qualification requirements for PEPPOL VS Providers, the governance model and qualification requirements established by the PEPPOL-VS Coordinating Authority will apply.

5. PEPPOL-VS Agreements

- 5.1. The figure below illustrates the operational components of the PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure, the actors involved in their operation and the agreements required.

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5.2. The ambition of this regime of agreements, and the governance structure, is to ensure that:

- the role and responsibilities of each actor are clearly described and openly available and thus making PEPPOL an open and transparent community
- sufficient information is made available through the PPRS/VSs allowing a participant to make this its main source of information for e-signature validation when interacting with its trading partners.

5.3. It should be noted that the business agreements shown in the above figure is not part of the PEPPOL-VS Governance Model. It is however expected that such agreements may include provisions related to the use of the PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure.

6. The PEPPOL-VS Community Agreement

6.1. The PEPPOL-VS Community Agreement is entered into between the PEPPOL-VS Coordinating Authority and The PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority for the purpose of defining the terms and conditions under which the Parties shall provide governance for the PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure.

6.2. The main aspects regulated in this agreement include:

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- Giving the PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority the authority to represent PEPPOL within its domain of responsibility;
- That the PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority is responsible for ensuring adequate performance by the PEPPOL VSs established within its domain, including their compliance to the PEPPOL-VS specifications.

6.3. The PEPPOL-VS Community Agreement is required in order to ensure consistency of the technical standards, specifications and procedures across the entire PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure.

7. VS Provider Agreement

7.1. The PEPPOL VS Provider Agreement is entered into between the PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority and The PEPPOL VS Provider for the purpose of defining the terms and conditions under which the PEPPOL VS Provider shall provide the required PEPPOL VS services. In case no regional Authority is established, the agreement is signed between the PEPPOL-VS Coordinating Authority and the Validation Service Provider directly.

7.2. The main aspects regulated in this agreement include:

- That the PEPPOL VS Provider is guaranteed open access to the PEPPOL PPRS according to specification in a timely manner;
- That all other PEPPOL VSs are guaranteed open access to the PEPPOL VS's XKMS responder;
- That the PEPPOL VS Provider guarantees the validity of the eID quality parameters associated to the certificates registered in its XKMS;

7.3. The PEPPOL VS Provider Agreement is required in order to ensure that the PEPPOL VS Provider adequately provides the required services, and that the PEPPOL VS has the required access to the PEPPOL PPRS.

8. Structure of the PEPPOL-VS Agreements

8.1. The content and text of the PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure Agreements was developed to respect of their nature and the parties involved.

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- 8.2. The PEPPOL-VS Community Agreement is provided as a set agreement with identical provisions applicable to all PEPPOL-VS Regional Authorities to ensure common governance for the full PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure.
- 8.3. The PEPPOL-VS Provider Agreement is provided as a “template document” allowing each PEPPOL-VS Regional or Coordinating Authority to adjust the text and language of the agreements according to local terms and conditions, including alignment to local legislation. To ensure interoperability and consistency across domains, the “template document” identifies provisions that must be present in any PEPPOL-VS Provider Agreement.
- 8.4. The two types of agreements share a common set of annexes defining technical aspects related to the services. By making these annexes commonly applicable for all agreements a set of minimum requirements and criteria are established and consistently applied throughout the full PEPPOL e-Signature Validation Infrastructure. These annexes are:

Annex no	Content
Annex 1	Contact points
Annex 2	Definitions
Annex 3	Service and Service Levels
Annex 4	Technical Standards
Annex 5	Regional domain and its specific services and service levels
Annex 6	Change procedure
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- 8.5. The PEPPOL-VS Regional Authority is responsible for ensuring that the actually signed PEPPOL-VS Provider Agreement contains all mandatory provisions references in the “template document” as well as in the annexes.