Interface Implementation Plan (v1.3)

Introduction

This article describes how to approach an interface implementation.

Parties Involved

Each interface implementation has a number of parties that are possibly involved:

Party	Description
Client	The company that wishes to connect to its partner(s) using an interface.
Client Software Supplier	The software supplier of the Client.
Client VAN (if any)	Third party companies that provide transfer and/or conversion services. This is common in secured data transfers. This party is usually known as a Value Added Network (VAN).
Client IT-party	The Client IT-Party manages all IT-infrastructure for the Client. For direct interfaces FTP or SMTP transfers may need to be set up.
Partner	The partner with whom the connection should be established.
Partner Software Supplier	The software supplier of the Partner. This might be an internal or external IT party.
Partner VAN (if any)	Third party companies that provide transfer and/or conversion services. This is common in secured data transfers. This party is usually known as a Value Added Network (VAN).
Partner IT-party	The Partner IT-Party manages all IT-infrastructure for the Partner. For direct interfaces FTP or SMTP transfers may need to be set up.

Message Implementation Guide (MIG)

An successful data exchange requires a Message Implementation Guide (MIG) which describes the following:

- Information about who maintains the standard
- Version number
- Last modification date
- Data transfer protocol
- Definitions of localized formats used in the file (date formats currency formats, temperatures, etc.)
- File type (fixed length, comma separated, XML, …)
- Message definitions
  - Short summary the place of a message in the business process
  - Syntax definition, including a description of each segment and element of the message, value type and whether a field is required
  - Up-to-date sample file of the message

Implementation Plan

The following steps need to be taken when setting up a new interface:

Task#	Description	Responsible

1.	**Exchange Message Implementation Guide (MIG)** • Supply Message Implementation Guide (MIG) to proper Software Supplier party • Agree upon how the MIG supplier will inform all involved of changes to the MIG	Software Supplier that defines the MIG
2.	**Gap Analysis & Development (if any)** • Determine gaps in the MIG • Optional: Development to fill in gaps and update MIG (if any)	Possibly both Software Suppliers
3.	**Acceptance testing** • Exchange unique identifier codes and file transport credentials for acceptance testing • Configure unique identifier codes and file transport credentials for acceptance testing • Import all sample files provided in the MIG • Generate all test files to be greenlit by the proper Software Supplier	Both Software Suppliers
4.	**Production go-live** • Agree on a go-live date with all parties involved • Inform all parties and end-users involved of planned go-live date • Configure unique identifier codes and file transport credentials for production go-live • Inform all parties and end-users involved that go-live is finished	Project leads