Nederlandse Peppolautoriteit
Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties

Enduser migration Process

Versio 1.0

Netherlands Peppol Authority
in collaboration with OpenPeppol Operating Office

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1   Introduction

In July 2019, all European contracting authorities were required to be able to process an invoice that complies with the European Standard. A large proportion of contracting authorities opted for a Peppol connection by issuing a tender. The contract period of the first tenders from that period is coming to an end. This means that these contracting authorities may start changing service providers.

In addition, widely used software packages now have a Peppol access point built in by default. This means that in many cases, when an end user chooses a different software package, there will also be a change of service provider.

For an end user, migrating from one service provider to another can be a critical decision for the company. Especially if the new service provider uses a different Service Metadata Publisher (SMP), extra attention must be paid to correct end-user registration during the migration.

After all, the Service Metadata Locator (SML) can only point to a single SMP per recipient. In the event of a migration, this would mean that the end-user data would have to be removed from the SML by the letting SMP before it could be re-added by the new SMP. During this period, the end user would be unreachable on the network. However, this is avoided using the "Participant migration" function, which allows the SML to switch directly from the old SMP to the new SMP, without having to remove the end user from the SML first.

The figure below schematically shows the migration process explained at the functional level in Chapter 2.
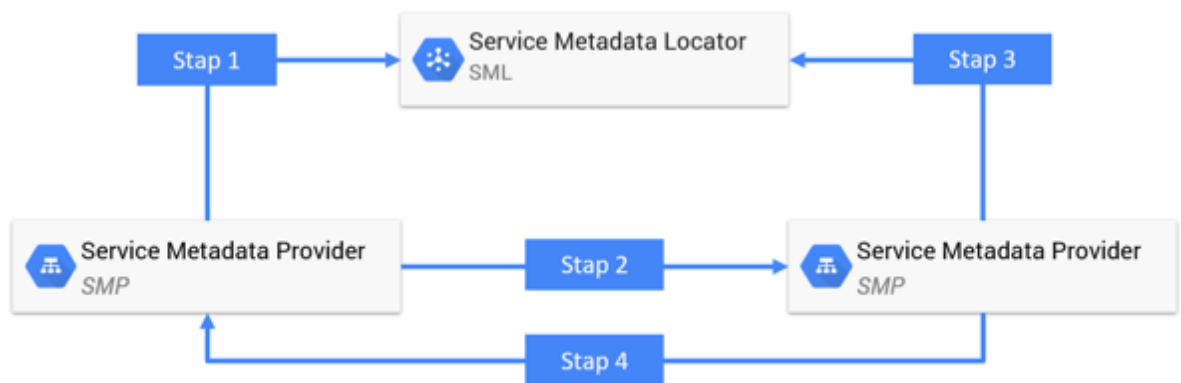
2   Migration process

2.1   Step 1 – Preparing information current service provider

To start the "Participant Migration" process, the first step is the preparation of the required information by the current service provider. The required information can be retrieved from the SMP, with the EnduserId and migration code being essential. In general, the following actions are applicable for retrieving this information:

1. The end user notifies the service provider that the end user is going to switch to another service provider.
2. The service provider looks up all EnduserId's of the end user.
3. For each EnduserId, the service provider starts a migration process at the SMP.
4. The SMP creates one or more migration codes and registers these migration codes with the SML via an API call.
5. The SMP provides the migration codes to the service provider.

Depending on the functionality provided by the SMP, a migration code may be created for all EnduserIds of an end user, or a separate migration code may be used for each EnduserId. In case of the latter, it is important to maintain the link between EnduserId and migration code.

The migration codes serve as proof of the migration request, and will be used by the new service provider to point registrations in the SML to the new access point. With a migration code, basically any SMP can take over the SML registration, so it is important that the migration code is securely stored and forwarded.

After this step, apart from registering the migration code, nothing has changed. The SMP still publishes the same end-user data, and the SML still refers to the old SMP.

2.2   Step 2 - Exchange of information with new service provider

The next step is to exchange the relevant information with the new service provider, providing at least the EnduserId's, the migration codes and the desired migration date.

The method used may depend on the capabilities of the (systems of the) two service providers, the SMPs, the participant's preferences, and the security protocols set up to protect participant information during the migration process. In general, there are two ways to exchange this information:

1. Manual method: The service provider provides EnduserId's and migration codes to the end user. The end user then provides these manually to the new service provider, using for example an online form or an e-mail.

2. Automated method: Here, the two service providers use a Web service or API to automatically exchange end user information. In this case, the end user does not need to manually provide their migration codes and EnduserId's, as the two service providers can communicate directly to complete the migration process. This method does require that agreements be made between the service providers on how to complete this process. No standard has been defined by OpenPeppol to automatically exchange migration codes between service providers.

2.3 Step 3 - Registration of information by new service provider

Once the exchange of information is complete, the new service provider will enter the EnduserId and migration code into the new service provider's SMP on the desired migration date.

In general, the following actions are applicable for registering this information:

1. The service provider registers with the new SMP all end user information for the new situation. (Note: If the publication to the SML is omitted then this step can already be performed in advance.)
2. The service provider passes the relevant migration code per EnduserId to the SMP.
3. The SMP registers the EnduserIds with the migration codes in the SML via an API call.
4. As the migration codes are sent along, the SML will switch the existing registrations to the new SMP.

From this point on, the new service provider is the active service provider, and the SML no longer refers to the SMP of the old service provider.

2.4 Step 4 - Confirm or cancel

When the process is completed successfully, the end user's data can be deleted from the old SMP. The service provider or SMP itself can verify that this has been done by requesting from the SML whether the EnduserId's are still registered with them. If not, the migration has been successfully completed. However, it is common for the new service provider to notify the end user of the completion of the process, and for the end user to notify the old service provider as well.

It may also happen that the migration still needs to be cancelled. In that case, step 3 must not have been completed yet, and the end user should notify the old service provider to stop the process, and the migration codes should be removed. The situation then remains unchanged compared to the situation before the migration process was started. If step 3 has already been completed, the migration process cannot be cancelled. To return to the original state from that situation, a new migration will have to be started.