

Call for Participation
IJIS Institute Springboard Program
LegalXML Electronic Court Filing (ECF) Initiative
[Final Response due 4-22-13]

This Call for Participation (CFP) is an invitation for your organization to participate in an IJIS Institute Springboard Initiative as defined herein. The Institute will be undertaking this initiative with support from the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment (PM-ISE / <http://ise.gov/>) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA / www.bja.gov).

The Authoritative Source Organization (ASO) for the specification is the OASIS Electronic Court Filing (ECF) Technical Committee (TC / www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc_home.php?wg_abbrev=legalxml-courtfiling).

ECF 4.01 is a National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) conformant specification that also incorporates fundamental concepts of the Global Reference Architecture (GRA) when combined with the ECF Web Services Service Interaction Profile (WS-SIP v2.01). In tandem, they form what will be referred to during the Initiative as the *LegalXML ECF Specification* or just the *Specification*. The component specifications are available for download from:

- *ECF 4.01 Core Specification* (folder): <http://docs.oasis-open.org/legalxml-courtfiling/specs/ecf/v4.01/ecf-v4.01-spec/cos01/>
- *ECF 4.0 Web Services SIP 2.01* (zip file): <http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/download.php/43733/ecf-v4.0-webservices-v2.01-csprd02.zip>

Non-binding letters of intent (LOI) to participate and preliminary questions about the initiative are due by email to scott.serich@ijis.org no later than midnight Eastern Time the evening of **Friday, April 12, 2013**. Answers to these questions will be published to those who have submitted LOIs in a frequently-asked-questions (FAQ) document as soon as possible afterward.

All organizations with any interest in participating should respond to this call. Final responses are due by midnight the evening of **Monday, April 22**.

Please do not hesitate to contact Scott Serich (scott.serich@ijis.org or 703-726-1913) if there are any questions about the initiative. Answers to individual inquiries that may also be of interest to all potential participants will be included in the FAQ.

Additional details regarding this initiative are provided below.

Background

The Springboard program mission is to provide a setting where industry can advance national information sharing and interoperability standards for Justice and related domains. The program promotes information sharing via the inspection and testing of standards-based interoperability specifications. It endeavors to work with a variety of stakeholder organizations, including authoritative

source organizations (ASOs) as the source of interoperability specifications and standards development organizations (SDOs) as the providers of foundational standards and standardized interoperability specifications.

In addition to advancing the adoption of standards and interoperability specifications themselves, the program seeks to promote underlying standards-based interoperability tools such as the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) and the Global Reference Architecture (GRA). These tools provide foundational components for the building of more strongly constrained, implementation-ready specifications.

In particular, the ECF specifications have already been adopted as a recommended standard for the courts community by the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) and the National Association for Court Management (NACM). The Joint Technology Committee (JTC) of COSCA and NACM, along with staffing and support of NCSC and technical guidance of the Court Information Technology Officers Consortium (CITOC), have actively participated in development and vetting of ECF.

This industry support and active participation of practitioners, combined with encouragement to leverage technology more effectively, has resulted in current initiatives by courts nationwide to implement electronic filing based on the ECF 4.01 specification. OASIS is now also considering ECF 4.01 as a Candidate OASIS Standard.

Overview of the Specification

The ECF 4.01 Specification consists of a set of non-proprietary XML and Web services specifications, along with clarifying explanations and amendments, which have been added for the purpose of promoting interoperability among electronic court filing vendors and systems. The specification defines a technical architecture and a set of components, operations and message structures for an electronic court filing system, and sets forth rules governing its implementation. In particular, it describes the technical architecture and the functional features needed to accomplish a successful electronic court filing system.

The ECF 4.0 Web Services Service Interaction Profile (SIP) 2.01 meets the requirements called for in section 5 of the ECF 4.01 Specification. It may be used to transmit ECF messages between Internet-connected systems. The purpose of the SIP is to provide a web service-based system in conformance with the WS-I Basic Profile 1.1 and Basic Security Profile 1.0 for use with the ECF 4.01 Specification. The specification requires an active network connection between the sending and receiving major design elements (MDEs).

The ECF specifications support the following automated information exchanges:

- Transmission of documents in electronic form from law firms and from other persons and organizations to a court for entry (“official filing”) into the court’s official case records
- Recording of documents in electronic form from members of the court and court administrators into the court’s official case records
- Transmission of data needed to complete (or demonstrate the previous completion of) financial transactions involving filing fees or the payment of any other court fees, fines and financial obligations

- Transmission of the metadata needed to initiate a new case record in a court's automated case management system (CMS) when the document being transmitted is one that commences a new case in that court
- Transmission of the metadata needed to create an entry that records (indexes) a filed document in a court's electronic listing of cases and their contents (variously called a "docket" or "register of actions")
- Transmission of the metadata needed to update the information recorded about a case that is maintained in a court's CMS
- Messages returned to the sender that confirm a court's receipt of the sender's filing message
- Messages notifying the sender of events such as the entry of the document(s) submitted by the sender into the court record (or an error message stating that the document[s] could not be accepted for filing and stating the reason[s] why)
- Queries to the court seeking information about data and documents held within the court's official electronic records and the return of information in response to those queries
- Queries from filers for the court rules and requirements for electronic filing
- Queries by filers seeking from the court record system the names and addresses of parties in a case who must be served and whether by traditional or electronic means
- Transmission of copies of documents submitted for filing to the other parties in a case who are registered to receive service electronically

Deliverables and Participant Roles

The expected deliverables and participant roles are described below.

1. *Kickoff and Inspection of Conformance Targets*

- a. **Call for Participation** – interested parties will be expected to submit the following responses:
 - i. A Letter of Interest in participating (entitles the respondent to receive follow-up correspondence such as answers to questions)
 - ii. A non-binding offer to participate, indicating a willingness to provide qualified personnel on a volunteer basis to work cooperatively and assiduously with the IJIS Institute and other participants
- b. **Execute Participation Agreements**, as needed
 - i. Any participant who wishes to make additional monetary or in-kind contributions toward the initiative (beyond volunteer time) will be required to execute a separate participation agreement with the IJIS Institute
- c. **Develop Springboard Conformance Package**
 - i. The ASO, with assistance from the IJIS Institute project team, will develop a Springboard Conformance Package (SCP) containing conformance targets and other information from which abstract (non-platform-specific) conformance test suites can be developed
 - ii. The format of the SCP from the 1st (PMIX) Springboard Initiative is recommended, but the ASO will be permitted to propose an alternative format so long as it enables development of the required conformance test suites
- d. **Review Springboard Conformance Package**
 - i. Participants will be expected to review and provide feedback for modification of the conformance package.

- ii. Responses will be provided for any feedback provided in the form of a constructive suggestion. Otherwise, responses will be provided at the discretion of the ASO, IJIS Institute project team, or initiative sponsor.
 - e. **Participant Meeting: Review Conformance Criteria**
 - i. A meeting open to all participants will be held to review the disposition of feedback in real time and determine whether the specification and conformance package are ready to support the commencement of Level 1 testing
 - f. **Rework Conformance Package**
 - i. Final modifications will be made to the specification and conformance package, which will then be distributed to participants for future reference
- 2. Level 1 Testing**
- a. **Customize Test Harness**
 - i. The IJIS Institute project team will implement a test harness using selected web services test and orchestration tools (e.g., soapUI, which was used for the 1st / PMIX Initiative).
 - ii. The initiative will entertain offers by participants to contribute resources or in-kind contributions toward this effort
 - b. **Implement Test Cases**
 - i. The project team will customize the test harness to include a mock service, a mock client, and suite of test cases reflecting the criteria contained in the conformance package
 - ii. Participants will review the suite of test cases for coverage, accuracy, parsimony, and any other criteria that might enhance the suite's value
 - c. **Commence Ad Hoc Testing**
 - i. Participants will be permitted to schedule and execute test scenarios against the mock service and client to help identify and diagnose defects in their implementation(s) of the specification
- 3. Level 2 Testing**
- a. **Observed Testing**
 - i. Participants will be permitted to schedule and execute an observed test to demonstrate conformance of an identified version of an implementation to the specification.
 - ii. This test will be observed by representatives of the IJIS Institute project team and may also be observed by representatives of the initiative sponsor and the ASO.
 - iii. The observation vantage point will be the test harness user interface.
 - b. **Publish Results**
 - i. Results will be published and made available to the public free of charge

Tentative Schedule

The expected deliverables and a tentative schedule appear below. The dates are subject to modification.

1. Kickoff and Inspection of Conformance Targets

- a. Call for Participation Deadline 4/22/13

-
- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------|
| b. | Execute Participation Agreements as needed | starting 4/22/13 |
| c. | Develop Springboard Conformance Package | 4/22/13 – 6/1/13 |
| d. | Review Springboard Conformance Package | 6/8/13 – 6/21/13 |
| e. | Participant Meeting: Review Conformance Criteria | 6/22/13 |
| f. | Rework Conformance Package | 7/30/13 |
|
 | | |
| 2. Level 1 Testing | | |
| a. | Customize Test Harness | 5/15/13 – 6/30/13 |
| b. | Implement Test Cases | 7/1/13 – 7/31/13 |
| c. | Commence Ad Hoc Testing | 8/1/13 |
|
 | | |
| 3. Level 2 Testing | | |
| a. | Observed Testing | starting 9/1/13 |
| b. | Publish Results | starting 10/31/13 |

Compensation

All work performed for this effort will be considered time volunteered in support of the IJIS Institute's nonprofit mission.