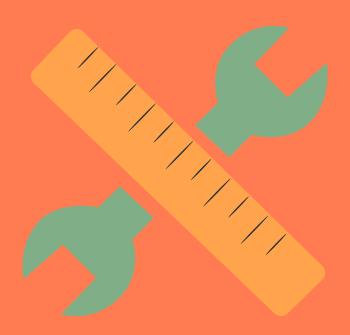
OCT - DEC Y2021 ISSUE #04

A QUARTERLY E-INVOICING NEWSLETTER

engage.

SPECIAL EDITION



InvoiceNow 101 Guide Inside

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



editor's note.

GEOK SEONG WAH
DIRECTOR OF E-INVOICE PROJECT OFFICE



Dear readers,

By the time you read this issue, we will be pressing ahead towards the start of 2022.

With 2021 in the rearview mirror, we saw the birth of ENGAGE, this InvoiceNow newsletter where we share what's happening in the e-invoicing realm. To our loyal readers, we hope you have enjoyed reading them and have gained much insights from this.

We covered articles featuring change makers and their use of InvoiceNow in Singapore (Issue 1: Our First Hello), on best practices shared via our online Peppol Technical playbook, growth and opportunity, trends on global e-invoicing market (Issue 2: Connect once, connect all) and how you can do your part in climate change by going green with InvoiceNow (Issue 3: Green is the better way).

In 2021, we continue to see the momentum of network growth. Thanks to the promotion by service providers and encouragement by early adopters. I am happy to share that we have now crossed 50,000 businesses on the network!

At this juncture, we felt it is important to share what went on behind the scene that led us to this significant milestone.

In this issue, we shed light on Singapore's e-invoicing journey, the building blocks "Under the Hood" that makes our network robust and secure, and the work IMDA does as the Peppol Authority to ensure our business community is well served.

We also welcomed Japan as one of the newest OpenPeppol member and invited them to join our regional virtual conference on E-invoicing.

The year 2022 calls for a renewed focus on organisations' needs. Other than e-invoices as the document being transacted on the network, we have also commenced work on new e-documents such as purchase orders which will soon be supported on InvoiceNow.

I believe, this will not only boost the efficiency of the organizations but also bring great value to their processes and help them respond better to the quick pace of change around them.

With this, I would like to wish all readers a Happy New Year and we look forward to more innovation with InvoiceNow.

LET'S CELEBRATE!

We have crossed

50,000

BUSINESSES

on the network!

CHECK

singapore's e-invoicing journey.

Since IMDA implemented the nationwide E-invoicing network in 2019 – more than 50,000 local businesses have joined this network. Let's take a look at our milestones!

AT A GLANCE:
MILESTONE CHEC

FEB 2018

Former Minister for Communications and Information Yaacob Ibrahim announced plans to launch the nationwide e-invoicing framework during his ministry's budget.

JUL 2018

Preparation to recruit Access Point providers (APs) underway as companies or e-invoice service providers will need to connect to the Peppol network through APs.

JAN 2019

The nationwide E-invoicing network was launched with 11 APs ready to serve the market. These APs include both local and overseas service providers which offer a wide range of services to meet various business requirements.

JAN 2020

In-bound e-invoicing for the Singapore Accountant-General's Department (AGD) went live on Peppol and they added a new channel for suppliers to submit e-invoices via the nationwide E-invoicing network. AGD considers e-invoicing as the preferred channel for invoice submissions. At this point, there were more than 50 Peppol-ready Solution Providers (SPs).

SEP 2020

The nationwide E-invoicing network was renamed as InvoiceNow.

MAY 2018

IMDA became the first National Authority outside of Europe to join OpenPeppol as a Peppol Authority.

NOV 2018

To support the exchange of invoices within Singapore, IMDA developed an extension on the Peppol BIS Billing 3.0 also known as "SG Peppol BIS Billing 3.0". The extension takes into consideration Singapore's GST tax requirements, and helps companies comply with Singapore tax laws through Peppol easily.

JUL 2019

Marketing and outreach efforts were made to drive market awareness such as physical on-site information sessions, events and online digital campaigns.

MAR 2020

The E-Invoicing Registration Grant (ERG) was announced to incentivise businesses to join the network before 31 December 2020.

NOV 2021

The Housing Development Board (HDB), JTC and Maritime Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) announced that they are connected to the InvoiceNow network and businesses can start receiving e-invoices from them.

leading the charge and making waves.

How AGD, HDB, JTC, MPA are paving the way in a nationwide move towards greater success for a digital nation.



The journey towards Singapore's Smart Nation is one that must be collectively undertaken by every industry, business, and government agency for it to be a success. Since the launch of the nationwide e-invoicing initiative in 2019, we established a community of service providers that helped businesses get connected to the network, rebranded e-invoicing to InvoiceNow and featured InvoiceNow champions across industries who embarked on their digitalisation journey by adopting e-invoicing.

Invoicing is an integral part of every business. If every business starts to send and receive invoices to and from their own finance and accounting systems, the nation will experience an immense efficiency.

The Singapore Government has played an active role in leading the upsurge in adoption of InvoiceNow, so that businesses transacting with the Government can realise and experience the benefits as early adopters. At the start of 2020, the Accountant-General's Department (AGD) provided government vendors with an additional channel to send e-invoices to the Government over the InvoiceNow network. In October the same year, AGD sent a clear message to its vendors that InvoiceNow is the preferred channel for invoicing the Government. The strong support from AGD spurred significant interest among government vendors resulting in thousands of participants attending our monthly online sessions to find out more about InvoiceNow.

To date, we have a third of the government vendors registered on the network and we continue to see a steady growth in e-invoicing transaction volume with the Government. This resulted in more government agencies coming onboard the network to lead the charge in digitalisation.

Recently, three of the government's biggest billers: Housing Development Board (HDB), JTC and Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) took a major step towards issuing invoices to their customers through InvoiceNow.



DO YOU KNOW?

HDB, JTC and MPA represents around 70% of public sector invoicing and sends out more than 49,000 invoices to over 25,000 business customers every month.

Businesses that switch to InvoiceNow can reduce the amount of time, effort and cost of printing physical invoices and re-keying in the invoice data into their own systems, while reducing the incidence of data entry errors. This will also reduce their carbon footprint, minimising their impact on the environment.

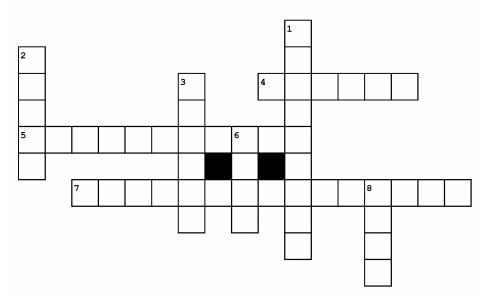
With this change, customers can receive e-invoices directly into their accounting systems to enjoy these benefits. They can also send e-invoices to their customers on the same network saving them more time.

We are convinced that when more partners of the Government start transacting through InvoiceNow and experience the benefits from this digital leap – it will create a network effect where more business partners start making the switch to InvoiceNow and experience the benefits of faster payments, smoother processes and sustainable business practices for themselves.

GETTING STARTED: E-INVOICING

at a crossroad.

Want to know more about e-invoicing but not sure where to start? Solve the crossword puzzle to find out.



Across

4. Get Paid _____
5. Connects solutions into the InvoiceNow network.
7. www._____
sg will help you check if your business partner is on the network

Down

- 1. How frequent is this newsletter published?
- 2. Name one other country in Asia who also adopted Peppol.
- 3. Name of the standard InvoiceNow is based on.
- 6. Singapore Peppol Authority
- 8. Make _____ for what truly matters.

Answers: 1. Quarterly 2. Japan 3. Peppol 4. Faster 5. Access Point 6. IMDA 7. peppoldirectory 8. Time

If you can complete the crossword puzzle with ease, consider yourself an expert in e-invoicing. For readers that find the puzzle a challenge, fret not!

Access useful resources below to be directed to the information for your book marking.



I only have 5 minutes to know what is InvoiceNow and the value proposition. The best way to start learning the ins and outs of InvoiceNow is a visit to the InvoiceNow website where you can **watch an animation** that provides an overview of what InvoiceNow is, how it works and the benefits that it brings in less than 2 minutes. You will also be able to find an easy-to-understand illustration of how seamless it is for businesses to transact with one another on the network.

If you have an hour to spare, monthly business briefings are conducted virtually for businesses that are keen to go deeper into how it will add value to business and to have their questions answered during a live session. To register for the next briefing and learn more about how different businesses benefited from transacting with their partners, bookmark this page: **Business Briefings**.

From the website and the briefings, you will appreciate that there are cost benefits when you join InvoiceNow but how do you quantify them in your business scenario? We have developed a template that can be found here: **a cost calculator** that helps businesses estimate the amount of cost savings when they transact with InvoiceNow.



Joining the InvoiceNow is a good idea to start digitalising, where and how do I start?

As an enterprise already using an accounting solution, below are some useful information in getting yourself connected:

We regularly update <u>a list of Peppol-ready solution providers</u> so you can contact the provider on the list to activate the InvoiceNow feature. You will be given your Peppol ID and will then be ready to send and receive invoices directly through your finance or accounting system to and from your business partners that are also on the network.

For SMEs that are currently not using any existing accounting may wish to start off with the **free solution**.

For large enterprises using in-house or complex ERP systems for their invoicing process, consider engaging one of the **Access Point providers** to provide a more tailored or turnkey solution.

For more details on how to start sending and receiving e-invoices, read the next article "Operationalising E-Invoicing"!



I have started to use InvoiceNow. Where can look for more technical information to enhance my knowledge? Now that you are on the network, sending invoices directly from your accounting solution saves you the steps of exporting it in PDF and sending it via an email.

Finding your buyers' Peppol ID is as simple as going to the **Singapore Peppol Directory** and typing the name or UEN of the businesses and it will display their Peppol ID to signify that they are on the network and ready to receive your invoices. You can also **watch the video on how to effectively use the directory for bulk searches**.

Receiving invoices from your suppliers can be just as simple by informing them of your Peppol ID so they could include it when they create invoices in their system. You now save the steps of retrieving the PDF invoices from your mailbox and keying them in manually.

The **Peppol Technical Playbook** is a good resource for you to enhance your knowledge about the network such as the SG BIS 3.0 Specifications, best practices and invoice XML document requirements.



I am a service provider and would like to offer InvoiceNow connection service for businesses. We have built a vibrant and exciting service provider community where we work hand-in-hand to encourage businesses to adopt InvoiceNow and start transacting with their partners. To be part of this community, you can read more about the **process and criteria** for Peppol-ready Solution Providers or Access Point providers.

As we progress, we will develop more useful content and information to support both businesses and service providers in the understanding of InvoiceNow.

Stay tune for the next issue of ENGAGE or read the past issues here!



perationalisinge-invoicing.

COUPE

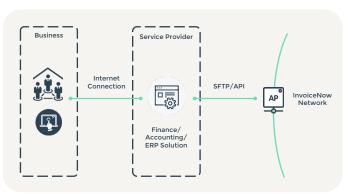
OPERATIONALISING E-INVOICING

Moving into the new world of e-invoicing is easy but it will require change. You will need to get a finance/accounting/ERP solution that is connected to the network, obtain a Peppol ID and learn how to transact.

Here are 3 common scenarios to get you started on your InvoiceNow journey:



You are a business with an existing Accounting/Finance Solution



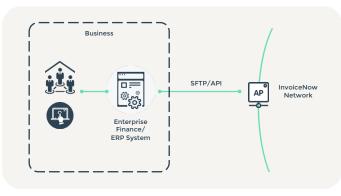
Check if the solution is Peppol-ready and listed in IMDA's **Peppol-ready solution providers list**. The solutions are already connected to the InvoiceNow network, with work done by your service provider earlier.

Activate the InvoiceNow feature. You may be able to do this directly within your solution or you may have to follow specific instructions provided by your service provider. If unclear, check in with your service provider who will be able to help you.

If you cannot find your solution listed in the IMDA's list, you may wish to liaise with your solution provider regarding their roadmap to connect into InvoiceNow network and plan your adoption accordingly. Detailed instructions available on IMDA's website.



You are a business with own Enterprise Finance/ERP system



Many businesses have their own finance/ERP systems where they digitalise their accounts payable and accounts receivable activities. They may also be ERP or SCM type systems where invoices are created or captured. To connect to the InvoiceNow network for delivery of e-invoices, these systems will need to be connected to the network via an Access Point provider.

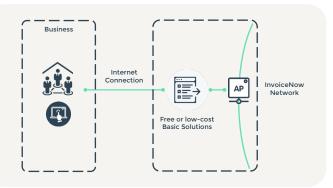
Steps to take:

- 1. Engage an Access Point provider who can help you connect your solution and register your business on the network. It might be appropriate to involve your existing ERP solution provider as well.
- 2. Map the Enterprise System dataset with the Singapore Peppol BIS 3.0 dataset to establish the run-time mapping capability. You may also refer to our **Peppol Technical Playbook** for the Singapore Peppol BIS 3.0 specifications to help you with the implementation. Your Access Point provider will be able to advise the mandatory and common usage for each field to meet Singapore's tax invoice requirements.
- 3. Determine your ideal integration method; this can be determined based on your billing cycle requirements.
 - If your business predominantly sends e-invoices and has a fixed billing cycle with bulk invoices, file transfer method is recommended
 - Otherwise, the API method may be used for near real-time transactions based on your needs
 - ii. Additional security features such as adding communication security like SSL/TLS for the API and SFTP for the file transfer or adding file encryption for SFTP transfers may be considered

These steps are also applicable to solution providers who are interested in making their solutions Peppol-ready.



You are a business without any Accounting/ Finance Solution



If your business does not make use of a complete Accounting/ Finance solution, but still has the need to send or receive invoices - you may consider one of the Peppol-ready solutions in IMDA's list that offer basic solutions that are low cost or free.

Some banks are offering complimentary InvoiceNow feature to their existing corporate banking customers as well.

View more <u>free e-invoicing solutions</u> on IMDA's website.

InvoiceNow works based on the use of UEN-based Peppol ID and most solutions allow you to maintain the UENs of your customers and suppliers.

You can start collating these information by looking up the <u>Singapore Peppol Directory</u> for your customer's or supplier's Peppol ID and find out which of them are already on InvoiceNow.

Start sending your first e-invoice to customers who are already on the network. If they are not already on the network, help them get onboard by sharing this article with them and any useful tips you have discovered in your own journey.

The InvoiceNow network would benefit you and everyone else when more businesses come onboard and start transacting, so start today!

If you require InvoiceNow onboarding support, leave your contact details in the form below!





INVOICENOW NETWORK

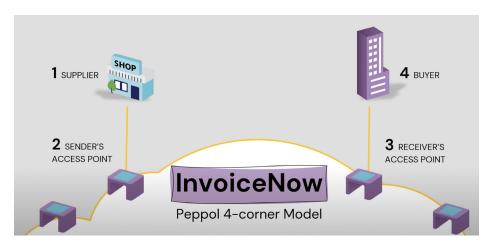
how well do you know the network?

All you need to know about the tech supporting this ecosystem.



4-Corner Model aka '4C' Model

The exchange of documents on the Peppol network is based on a 4-Corner model, which consists of a sender (supplier), a receiver (customer), and their Access Point providers. This model allows for scalability and expansion of the Peppol network to accommodate local and global network expansion.



Senders and receivers, called participants, are first registered on the network and are issued a unique Peppol ID (similar to an email address) which identifies them and allows for seamless sending and receiving of documents via the network. The Peppol network in the simplest form consists of two core groups: (1) Participants (senders and receivers) and (2) Access Point providers. The participants sit in Corner 1 and Corner 4, while the Access Points providers sit in Corner 2 and Corner 3.

To view the flow in action, a short animation that provides a clearer understanding of the 4 corner model can be viewed here.

All documents sent via the Peppol network between the 2 APs need to be converted to a Peppol BIS formatted document. By complying with the Peppol BIS standards, the participants on Corner 1 and Corner 4 can exchange information directly and seamlessly to and from their individual ERP systems through the Peppol network.

Below is a short description on how a Peppol BIS Invoice is sent through the Peppol network from a supplier to the buyer:

- Starting at Corner 1, a supplier initiates the flow by sending out an invoice to the buyer addressing the invoice to the buyer's Peppol ID
- Corner 2, Access Point for Corner 1, receives the invoice and converts it into a structured digital format. This is in accordance with Peppol BIS standards and validated before the invoice is sent to the receiver's Access Point provider at Corner 3.
- **Corner 3** receives the invoice and converts the structured digital formatted e-invoice into the agreed format that the accounting system at Corner 4 will be able to receive.
- **Corner 4,** the buyer, receives the invoice from Corner 3 and imports the e-invoice details into its ERP system for the accounts receivable team to process.

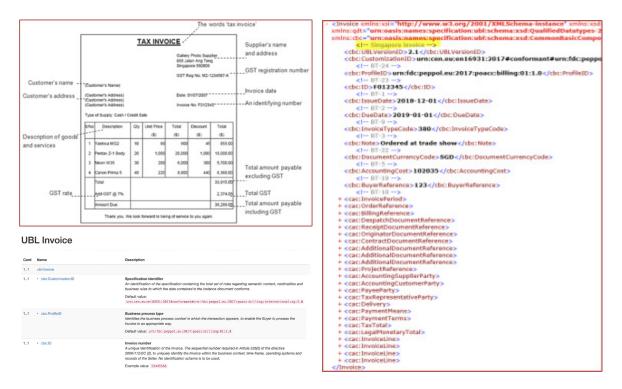


How documents are converted into Peppol BIS format



The Peppol BIS format comprises fields, captured in XML format according to UBL (Universal Business Language) rules that defines how the fields should be populated.

Below is a sample of an invoice and an extract of the XML equivalent:



By adhering to the agreed published Peppol BIS format, any two Peppol participants will be able to exchange electronic documents confidently over the Peppol network and be assured that the information required for transmission are available and formatted correctly based on XML and UBL requirements before being exchanged over the Peppol network.

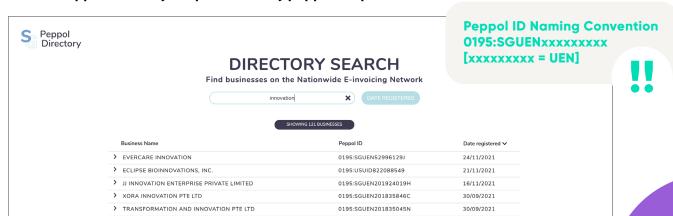


Peppol Network's discovery feature

All businesses registered on the Peppol network will be issued with a Peppol ID. The Peppol ID is an identifier that allows the participant to be located on the Peppol network to enable the exchange of Peppol BIS document between business partners.

To locate businesses on the Peppol network companies and thier Peppol ID, you can use the following:

- · Singapore Peppol Directory (https://www.peppoldirectory.sg) or the
- Global Peppol Directory (https://directory.peppol.eu/public)



service provider community.





Sharing my reflections on building a vibrant and ever-growing community with opportunities for both providers and users.

By Siraj Iqbal, Assistant Director of E-Invoice Project Office, IMDA

When we launched the InvoiceNow network in Singapore, it was quite clear that we needed a community of believers and changemakers who would help the final end-user businesses in the adoption and usage of the InvoiceNow product. This is a two-sided network which implies that business partners are required to have adopted the same network to experience its benefits.

Service providers are the gateway for organisations to get connected to the network. We spearheaded the formation of this e-Invoicing community by organising a series of events inviting interested service provider partners and stakeholders and also overseas partners who had gone through a similar journey to share adoption experiences, this resulted in a number of interested "Early Adoptors" who were either looking for new business opportunities or were experiencing certain pain points which could be alleviated through InvoiceNow.

With this pioneer batch of providers who had a strong sense of interest and purpose in using InvoiceNow to solve some of their business challenges, we then set up the very first E-Invoicing Community Meetup in October 2018. Even prior to the rollout of the network we had coalesced a number of early believers who were keen to make their inputs available in driving the adoption of InvoiceNow and we have since worked extensively with them over the years, to establish the vibrant ecosystem that we see today.



To ease selection and decision making for the end-user businesses we started a "Peppol-Ready" accreditation process for all solution providers (SP) to be granted Peppol-ready status and created a guided process for SPs' to operate as a certified provider in Singapore. Solution providers who pass the accreditation are then listed on the IMDA website and are invited to exclusive events and opportunities.

By this time, many of the Peppol-ready Service Providers (PRSP) shared a joint sense of purpose in growing the userbase, many of them worked together with us to share and resolve issues. It was a really exciting time where our PRSP partners and E-Invoicing stakeholders understood that they will need other partners to successfully deliver value to their own users. Moreover, the PRSP started to create interesting content and videos to drive up market awareness and the ability to use the service expanded quickly.

Today, if you google for InvoiceNow content, you are likely to get hundreds if not thousands of locally created content which speaks volume of the vibrancy and activity in this space.





Recognising that different companies will have different needs to their invoicing requirements and systems complexities, there is huge variety in the type and sophistication of service providers ready to serve user's needs, there are now over 150 Peppol-ready solution providers who are part of the E-Invoicing community and can help businesses get connected to the network each of them adding value to their respective audiences by creating content/training and solutions for the users.

When we started the E-Invoicing Community Meetings (ECMs), they were fully hosted out of IMDA's offices and we were able to cope with over fifty attendees in the room. Since the pandemic, all ECMs has been conducted virtually and the number of attendees has rarely dropped below a hundred. Along with the regular ECMs we have also embarked on our quarterly newsletter (including this one), with various contributions coming in from the more active and prominent service providers who have contributed insights and articles of interest to the community.

While there is a certain level of competition, most if not all providers have demonstrated great support in advancing the greater good of the network.



ALWAYS OPTIMISING TO SERVE NEEDS

Navigating through different solution's websites to get connected can be time consuming. As a result, videos and quick sign-up links developed by the providers are published in IMDA's webpage to save businesses the time and effort in trying to search and navigate through multiple SP's websites, making it more convenient and smoother to engage with their preferred solution and get connected to InvoiceNow.

To further enhance the user experience, a set of tutorial guides through infographics or short tutorial videos on educating organizations in getting connected with their respective solutions has been developed. This not only helps organizations understand the process but also enables the providers to better support their needs.

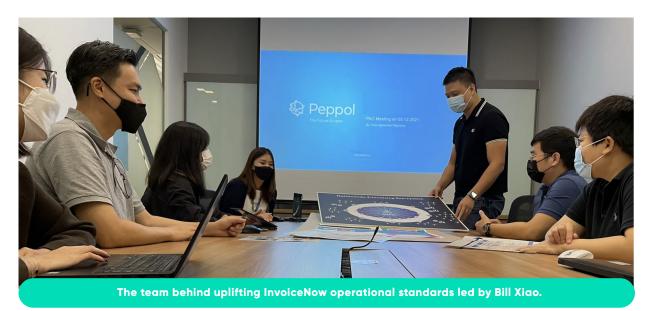
Many if not all in the community including big buyers and solution partners have created clear value propositions and instructions on the use of InvoiceNow, part of which is being reflected in all our service providers' website and collaterals with even training on how to use their solution to send and receive e-invoices are available upon request.

Embarking on an InvoiceNow journey shouldn't be a daunting notion and with the ever growing and enterprising community of service providers and users, we believe that organizations in Singapore are well on their way to a greener and more digital future with InvoiceNow.

peppol authority.

Insights of IMDA's role as a Peppol Authority

IMDA works with Service Providers and Peppol Authorities in the region to build a robust operational system to ensure that the network and providers work well to serve the businesses.



It has been more than 3 years since IMDA became the first Peppol Authority outside of Europe to adopt the Peppol framework in Singapore in May 2018. The nationwide E-Invoicing network was launched in January 2019 to help businesses improve efficiency, reduce cost, enjoy faster payment and stay green at the same time.

As the Peppol Authority in Singapore, IMDA's functions include the following:

- Approving and certifying Peppol Access Point providers in Singapore;
- · Accrediting Peppol-ready Solution Providers in Singapore;
- Specifying country specific rules and technical standards under the Peppol framework in Singapore, in particular, the SG Peppol BIS specifications;
- · Governing the compliance of the Peppol framework in Singapore; and
- · Promoting the adoption of Peppol framework in Singapore.

From the network launch with 11 Access Point providers, we have grown to more than 35 Access Point providers today. We have also accredited more than 120 Peppol-ready Solution Providers, giving businesses more options to choose the right solution that meets their requirements. We conduct regular meetings with the service providers to provide updates and discuss operational issues.

In consultation with Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS), IMDA also sets country-specific requirement in the form of SG Peppol BIS 3.0 technical specifications to ensure the Peppol invoices meet the tax requirement.

Besides governing the compliance of Peppol framework in Singapore, IMDA also works closely with the industry to drive the business adoption of Peppol. The initiative was rebranded as InvoiceNow in September 2020 to leverage on businesses' familiarity to PayNow.

DO YOU KNOW?



IMDA holds regular meetings with Australia and New Zealand Peppol Authorities to discuss Peppol developments in the region. Ongoing discussions are happening with the Digital Agency – the newly appointed Peppol Authority in Japan on the preparation and operationalisation of Peppol Authority functions.

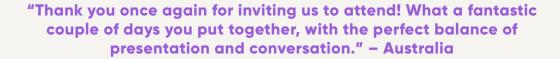
VENTS &

event spotlight.

Community highlights - just in case you missed out



Look out for more of these events over at: https://go.gov.sg/invoicenow-upcomingevents



"This conference is very valuable to us as we are still in the very first stage of implementing e-invoicing." – Vietnam

"The rich information shared will help us alot in our current E-Invoicing journey." – Philippines

4

-INVOICING ESOURCES

event spotlight.

Stories of InvoiceNow transforming businesses around us

Make Time For What Truly Matters.

Watch the success story of SimplifyNext's Director Isac James who embraced InvoiceNow to make his work smoother, quicker and simpler.





Scan QR code to watch SimplifyNext's feature video.

Or visit:

https://go.gov.sg/sn-video

free resources.

Access all e-invoicing related resources here



A curated list of digital resources related to the Peppol E-Delivery Network:

- SG BIS 3.0 Specifications
- SG Peppol Directory
- Important Notes on SG BIS 3.0
- · How to send a test e-Invoice
- Transacting with Partners
- Sending e-Invoices to Government
- Validex Tool

Access it here: https://go.gov.sg/peppolplaybook



About InvoiceNow

https://www.imda.gov.sg/invoicenow



SG BIS 3.0 Specifications https://www.peppolguide.sg



