



ARAB REGIONAL PAYMENTS CLEARING  
AND SETTLEMENT ORGANIZATION

# BUNA NEWSLETTER

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### Message from the CEO

Dear Community and Friends,

It's the end of the year!

We concluded the year with a major achievement that facilitates the payment of pensions cross-border. As I have previously said, Buna is not just about payments. It touches the lives of citizens and the integration between economies at a regional level. This initiative set Buna as a dual mandate organization, illustrating these two well and marking yet another important milestone in Buna's strategic goals.

Reflecting on this achievement, at Buna we are facilitating retirees' lives, allowing them to receive their pension in the place where they are living rather than in the country where they had been working. By attaining that, being in one country rather than another does not affect anymore the way people receive or spend their money and only being part of a region matters, which positions Buna as a key instrument in supporting economic integration and strong collaboration between the Arab countries. At Buna, we are proud of this achievement!

It doesn't stop here. This initiative leverages a major corridor to promote financial inclusion, one of our main drivers. In the upcoming future, it will unlock new opportunities and improve cross-border payments further in various use cases such as payments related to healthcare, students' scholarship payments and other types of allowances and government payments.

As Buna's capabilities aim to provide tangible value to participants and end users and with its focus on building bridges between countries and enhancing its cross-border payment, Buna increases opportunities for economic integration and financial inclusion. This initiative would not have been possible without some support. We are working hand in hand with different central banks to concentrate and combine a wide geographical coverage.



### Message from the CEO

Simultaneously, and with less than a week left before the new year, we are so close to reaching our target of 100 participants in Buna for this year, pondering on the added value that Buna brings and the trust the central banks have in us to encourage banks to onboard and use the service.

At this occasion, I would like to thank you, our stakeholders, and the Central banks of Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt for the ongoing support to Buna. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank each one of the Buna colleagues for their remarkable efforts and dedication.

Our strong set foundation and the high increase in number of participants in the recent year makes it that Buna is well-positioned for the future. It is a payment system that empowers integration using the latest technologies and facilitating some aspects of our community's lives and making them more effective. We will continue to focus on delivering and innovating our systems to support the evolving needs.

Wishing you all a very happy new year 2023!

**Mehdi Manaa**  
CEO



Buna Insight

By Erol Kaya, Chief Technology Officer

### **BUNA'S API TRANSFORMING CROSS-BORDER PAYMENTS**

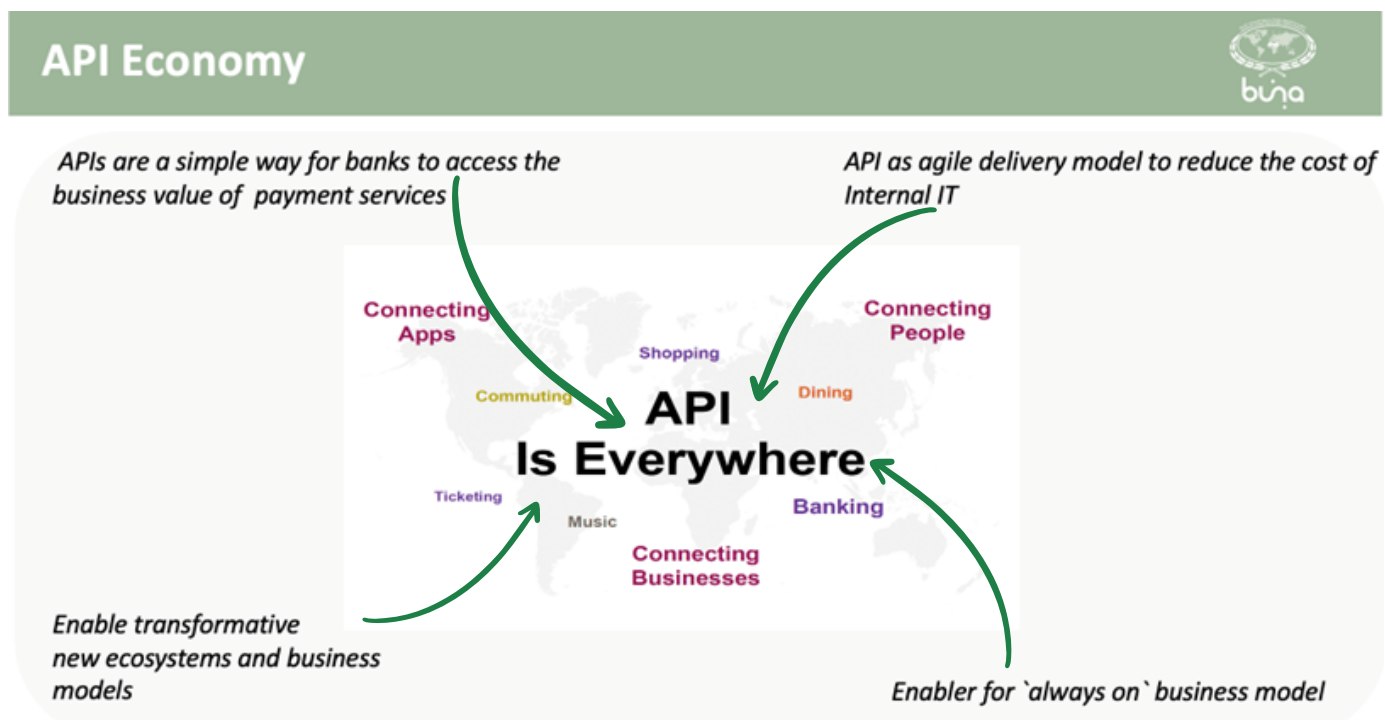
Application Programming Interfaces – APIs – are all around us. As a piece of innovative technology, APIs are used to get access to data so that multiple apps or services can work together. They can hide complexity for developers, extend functionalities for different systems, and act as gatekeepers to protect our personal data. In this regard, APIs are the new norm of the agile delivery model of business services to develop an "always on" and "transformative" ecosystem. Today, the financial sector is one of the largest adopters of API-related technology.

As APIs become the new norm of the delivery model in the financial sector, they transform the cross-border payment landscape. The G20 roadmap's focus on harmonizing API protocols for data exchange is one of the critical initiatives to follow up.

In turn, and via Buna APIs, cross-border payments can now be automated much more quickly, producing greater efficiency and transparency than ever. Through a set of APIs, Buna's Instant Payment System (IPS) links disparate user interfaces, provides seamless authentication and authorization, and ultimately ensures an effortless communication among participants. The APIs provided connect participants to Buna to execute a payment transaction by exchanging a standard amount of information in a few seconds only, achieving end-to-end real-time processing. As such, Buna's API becomes a single point of connectivity to reach all other participants on the platform.

**Let's explore further how Buna's APIs compare to traditional cross-border flows.**

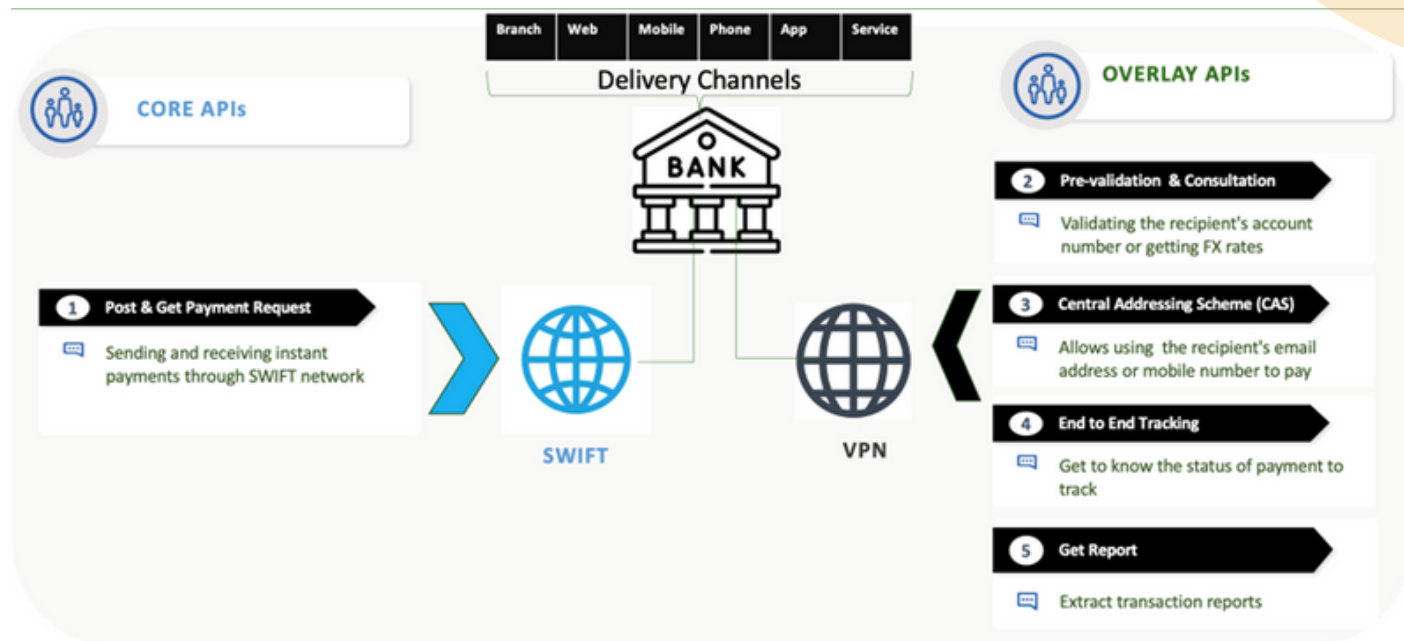
Traditional cross-border payment flows lack transparency and efficiency in many aspects such as the end-to-end tracking of a transaction, the confirmation of payment information, e.g., beneficiary's name or account number, the handling of FX transactions and related rate, and the understanding of the fees associated to process the payment.



Picture 1: API Economy

Buna APIs focus on delivering tangible business value by delivering payment processing functionality and overlay services such as Central Addressing Scheme, Pre-Validation and End to End tracking for greater efficiency and transparency (Picture 2).

With its set of APIs, Buna contributes to removing frictions in cross-border payment. Buna's participants can verify the payee's name and account details with Buna APIs before initiating the payment to ensure that payment will flow seamlessly.



Picture 2: Buna APIs Overview

Through these APIs, Buna participants get the exchange rate applied to the payment transaction before initiating the payment and know the exact pay out amount for the beneficiary. The same APIs also provide participants with end-to-end fees enabling the overseeing of the total cost of the transaction. In addition, Buna APIs provide banks the ability to track the status of payment transaction to create better visibility for consumers or corporate treasurers. Once the payment is received, APIs acknowledges receipt to both parties.

Buna APIs are modernizing the cross-border landscape to allow greater automation to remove manual tasks from account verification, reconciliation, and real-time data point of view. This automation is also reducing human errors and the risk of fraud by allowing participants and their customers to manage the cash flow efficiently. Thanks to the underlying technology of the Buna APIs, it is now easier than ever to implement instant payment integration at a cross-border level without undergoing expensive and complex technology implementation.



### Buna Insight

By Erol Kaya, Chief Technology Officer

To achieve this, the key technical features of Buna APIs can be summarized as follows:

- Participants can build richer customer payment experiences using Buna's APIs as they're based on the most recent advanced technology.
- Buna APIs use worldwide accepted standard ISO20022 for greater interoperability.
- Buna APIs utilize the SWIFT network as a formal communication channel and receive payment messages securely through their SWIFTNet Instant service, which is available around the clock.
- Using Buna APIs allows banks to achieve straight-through processing with no manual intervention required.

Over the last decade, we observed how digital technologies transformed the means in which financial services are delivered. The world of APIs is growing and becoming an economy where organizations are contributing highly to that growth. As API-driven financial services expand, we see more public APIs opening the bank's services, products, and data. The consumers' need to access financial services quickly, conveniently, and securely is driving payment innovation by creating a global scale of API economy where Buna is very well positioned at a cross-border level, offering an enhanced service to end users.

**Erol Kaya**  
CTO



## News and Announcements



## Buna & Egyptian Banks Company sign MOU

Buna and Egypt Banks Company held a ceremony on Thursday, October 27, 2022 where they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) where Buna and EBC target to interlink their payment services, Buna and IPN, in order to achieve reachability across multiple instant payments services and provide innovative solutions that allow sending and receiving cross-border payments instantly, 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, in accordance with the highest international compliance standards. The envisioned solution will spread the benefits of cross-border instant payments to citizens and corporates unlock opportunities for greater economic integration and strengthen economic ties within the Arab world.

**Mehdi Manaa, Chief Executive Officer of Buna:**

"This MoU marks another milestone in Buna's progress to create a strategic hub that interlinks national instant payment solutions and creates incremental value to a large community of participants for better serving their retail and corporate clients." Mehdi added "We are happy to take this step with EBC and I thank them for sharing the objectives of enhancing cross-border payments and offering better experiences to the users. At this occasion, I would like to thank the Central Bank of Egypt for its continuous support to Buna, In Particular H.E. the Governor Hassan Abdalla".

**Tarek Raouf, Chief Executive Officer of EBC:**

"The strategic cooperation between Buna and EBC marks a new threshold for the realization of EBC's vision at a regional level. For years, EBC has been modernizing national payment networks and schemes in compliance with international standards and has supported interoperability of payment services domestically. Raouf added "Joining Buna as a hub for regional payment comes in this special juncture to connect our payments infrastructure with the regional payments ecosystem, ushering in a great potential for delivering an unmatched instant and cross-border payment experience to users across the Arab world. We are witnessing today a new level of regional synergy within the payments ecosystem, unlocking tremendous opportunities for economic development and cooperation between Egypt and Arab nations."

## News and Announcements



### Buna & BENEFIT sign MOU

Buna and BENEFIT held a ceremony on Thursday, December 8, 2022 where they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a framework of cooperation. This joint venture aims to simplify the flow of cross-border payments between Kingdom of Bahrain and Arab world and reinforce various use cases such as consumer remittances and digital commerce. The intended solution will spread the benefits of cross-border instant payments to citizens and corporates, strengthening economic ties within the Arab world, and unlocking opportunities for greater economic integration.

#### Mehdi Manaa, Chief Executive Officer of Buna:

"This key collaboration with BENEFIT reinforces Buna's adherence to progress further in the creation of a strategic hub that connects the different national instant payment systems from the Arab region and beyond.

"We are pleased to be working alongside Benefit as we are aligned on the same vision of developing innovative cross-border payment solutions that enhance the user's experience. At this occasion, we would like to thank H.E the Governor of Central Bank of Bahrain and his colleagues for their continuous support to Buna."

#### Abdul Wahed Al-Janahi, CE of BENEFIT Company:

"We are very pleased to sign this important MOU, which will open broad horizons for instant cross-border transfers and financial payments by establishing a linking gateway between the national electronic fund transfer system and the "Buna" network, which is expected to link Arab countries and then the rest of the world.

This innovative initiative will definitely contribute to enhancing and accelerating trade exchange and individual remittances between the countries of the Arab region, and we look forward to completing all technical and administrative requirements to operate this service in the near future."

## News and Announcements



## Joint Arab initiative to launch cross-border payment service for pensioners in the Arab world via Buna

The Central Bank of Iraq, the Central Bank of Jordan, the Central Bank of Egypt, and Buna announced a joint Arab initiative to launch cross-border payment service for pensioners in the Arab world utilizing the Buna system.

The initial phase includes the Republic of Iraq, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the Arab Republic of Egypt, where the new service will enable Iraqi pensioners residing in Jordan and Egypt to receive their monthly salaries faster and more efficiently. Iraqi pensioners who wish to benefit from this service can open accounts in any of the banks that participated in the initiative and completed the onboarding in Buna.

The pension payments will take place at the end of each month in collaboration with the banks that are actively operating in the markets of Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt and have completed the activation of the Jordanian dinar and the Egyptian pound on the Buna system.

**H.E Dr. Abdulrahman Bin Abdullah Al Hamidy, Chairman of the Board of The Arab Regional Payments Clearing and Settlement Organization (ARPCSO):**

"Financial inclusion is one of the strategic goals of Buna, and we are pleased to contribute in enhancing the experience of a large segment of Arab citizens, strengthening the Arab economic ties, and providing more efficient experiences for cross-border payments, thus enabling the Arab banking sector to better serve their customers in various areas of governmental, commercial and personal payments, in compliance with the highest international standards. H.E added, "On this occasion, we also thank their Excellencies the Governors of the Central Bank of Iraq, the Central Bank of Jordan, and the Central Bank of Egypt for their confidence in Buna to implement this important initiative, and for their continuous support and sponsorship of the system, and for the efforts of their colleagues in supporting the progress of its work."



## Events

Buna Participated in Sibos Event in October 2022 and highlighted how Buna strengthens regional integration through cross-border payments.

Watch the full interview with Buna's CEO, Mr. Mehdi Manaa [here](#).



Buna's Chief Strategy and Development Officer, Mr. Faisal Al Hijawi participated as a keynote speaker at the Operations Annual Event on November 26th, 2022 where he spoke about Buna's role in building payment rails of the future. He also joined Swift in a roundtable event on November 16th, 2022 where he discussed how financial market infrastructures are key to transform cross-border payments.





Events

Buna Joins SAMA in Riyadh on December 5, 2022 for an in-person Workshop shedding the light on Buna and the role it plays in cross-border payments and how it's delivering on its promise.



Let's connect. Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) to stay up to date on our latest news and events, or visit our website at [buna.co](#).

## Q4 Workshops

In fall 2022, Buna held its 37th and 38th workshops announcing key strategic partnership, sharing updates and next steps. In addition, 2 dedicated workshops also took place discussing, in detail, the topics of Euro-go-live and Buna's Instant Payment System (IPS),

Our guest speakers during the workshops included:

- Mr. Tarek Raouf, Chairman and CEO (EBC)
- Mr. Abdulwahed AlJanahi, Chief Executive (Benefit)
- Mr. Yousif Alnefaiei, Deputy Chief Executive – Business Development and Services (Benefit)
- Mrs. Shafaq Alkooheji, Head-Payment Services (Benefit)
- Mr. Thomas Lammer, Deputy Head of Secretariat, Committee of Payments and Markets Infrastructure (CPMI)
- Mr. Kris Natoli, Member of Secretariat, Financial Stability Board (FSB)
- Mr. Andrew Haskell, Head of Immediate Payments Product Management | Treasury Services (BNY Mellon)
- Mr. Rajgopal Suryanarayanan, Executive Director, Transaction Banking, Europe (Standard Chartered)
- Mr. Rajinder Bhojwani, Executive Director & Head of Correspondent Banking, Southern Gulf (Standard Chartered)
- Mr. Carlo Palmers, Head of IP Strategy (SWIFT)
- Mr. Alaa Al Rousan, Senior Account Director (SWIFT)

Access all our workshop material [here](#).



Don't miss our 39th workshop on January 19th, 2023, at 12P.M. UAE time.

More details on the agenda to follow.



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