

HMRC e-Trading System Overview

Ordering systems and e-ordering

The e-trading system is an online, browser-based application that provides access to electronic catalogue and non-catalogue ordering systems for the purchase of goods and/or services. The system configuration is workflow-based in order to control access to content and approval of requisitions and orders in line with HMRC's financial approval limits.

Suppliers should have the capacity to accept purchase orders via HMRC's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. The preferred method for the receipt of orders is currently email with a PDF attachment. Suppliers will need Adobe Acrobat to read the attachment. We can forward purchase orders to a single email account and payment remittance notes to a second email address.

The supplier must ensure these email accounts are monitored at all times. We prefer a group email address, which is accessed regularly.

Email is the means by which orders are currently routed, but within the life of the contract there may be a requirement for suppliers to accept orders via XML.

Catalogue and non-catalogue items

Where appropriate, HMRC has set up online catalogues for the procurement of certain goods. Where this is our intention, we will say so in the tender specification.

The e-trading system provides HMRC staff with a central repository for the creation and maintenance of supplier catalogues, from which purchases may be made. It also supports the use of non-catalogue ('free text') ordering where the particular goods or services do not lend themselves to catalogue processing.

The suitability of particular goods and/or services for inclusion in an electronic catalogue is established by the HMRC at the procurement planning stage and indicated within the tender and contract documentation.

Electronic catalogues

Where appropriate, suppliers will be expected to co-operate fully with the HMRC's commercial directorate in the production and maintenance of an electronic catalogue.

Catalogue production has 4 main phases:

1. creation, where we send suppliers a template for compiling the catalogue
2. validation, where we validate the content, checking mandatory fields are completed and that the format is correct
3. approval, where we review the content from both a technical and a commercial perspective and, if the catalogue meets our needs, approve the catalogue electronically
4. publication, when the approved catalogue is published and made available to our staff

The system also includes a 'toolset' that enables suppliers to create and maintain catalogue content so that the end-to-end process for catalogue creation, validation, approval and publication is streamlined.

Full details of the data required from suppliers to populate the e-trading system is set out in the catalogue template and the associated guidance notes and will be provided to suppliers prior to the start of the contract.

Changes to catalogue content

Any proposed changes to supplier catalogues held on the system must be agreed in advance between the supplier and the contract manager in HMRC. Once the changes are agreed, the supplier must provide an electronic copy of the revised catalogue to HMRC at least 5 working days before the agreed date for the changes to come into effect. This will allow sufficient time for the changes to be successfully accepted by HMRC's e-trading system.

Purchase order mandatory policy

HMRC operates a mandatory policy whereby official purchase orders will be issued in respect of all purchases made by the department. This ensures that every invoice received can be matched to a purchase order and to the corresponding goods or services received. Purchase orders will normally be issued from HMRC's ERP system or, exceptionally, by any other procedure that has been specifically agreed in writing with HMRC's commercial directorate.

Any orders that are received by means other than those described above are not authorised or sanctioned by HMRC and should not be processed by suppliers.

The purchase order mandatory policy applies to HMRC only. Other organisations making use of a contract let by us will make their own ordering arrangements.

Purchase order references

Suppliers should ensure that the relevant purchase order reference number is shown on all invoices and other ancillary documentation, such as delivery notes or order acknowledgements. Invoices must include the HMRC purchase order number for them to be processed efficiently.

Failure to comply with the above requirement may result in invoices being returned to suppliers or goods not being accepted on delivery.

Payment of invoices

The financial systems used by suppliers must be able to accept payment by the Bankers Automated Clearing Service (BACS).

Costs

HMRC will not make any charges for trading electronically with the department. However, suppliers may incur set-up, transaction and other costs in so doing. HMRC will not be liable for any such expenses; they will be the responsibility of the supplier.

The above applies to current requirements and also to any additional costs that may be incurred as a result of any changes to the required means of communication (for example a move to XML).