HM Revenue & Customs

Supplier Guide:
Responding to a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)

A PQQ is also known as a Request for Information (RFI), and throughout this document these words will be used interchangeably.

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Withdrawn - do not use

1. How to respond to a Request for Information (RFI) – Overview

To successfully participate in an RFI there are a series of steps that need to be performed. Responding to an RFI begins with the same procedure that is used to participate in any RFx (RFI, RFQ, RFP, Standard Auction, and Advanced Auction).

a) Locating and reviewing the RFI
   – Finding the RFI and reviewing its details, which will help you to decide whether or not to accept the invitation to participate

b) Accepting and Declining an invitation
   – Once the RFI details have been reviewed, Accept or Decline the invitation to participate.

c) Viewing, Downloading and Uploading attachments
   – There may be attachments or documents sent by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) that you will need to review. These may be Tender Instructions or terms and conditions of the events.
   – In response to a question(s) there may be documents that you want to attach and send to HMRC.

d) Place a response
   – It is during this step that you will review and respond to a series of questions.

e) Revise a response
   – After reviewing your responses you or someone in your group may decide that you would like to make a change.

f) Submit a response
   – Once your response is complete you need to submit your response to HMRC. The information that you provide will be evaluated by HMRC.
   –

g) Send and Receive Messages
   – If you need to communicate with members of HMRC, the system provides a built in messaging email.

h) Reporting
   – After completing the questionnaire(s), a variety of reports can be run, summarising the information, which you can download and save..

2. Log in to Sourcing@HMRC

HMRC will provide you with log in details generally as a result of your expression of interest in an OJEU advertisement.

You will receive two eSourcing application generated emails containing the following information:

- A unique Username and Password providing access to the application (only applicable if you are a new user to the eSourcing application).

- An invitation to the specific event containing a link to the application and access to the particular event you have been invited to.

Log in to the application using the Username and Password provided by HMRC. Note that these are both case sensitive.

Steps

1. Access the Sourcing@HMRC website (https://sourcing.hmrc.gov.uk).

2. Type in your login ID and password - note these are case sensitive.

3. If this is the first time you log in, you will be prompted to do the following:

a. change your password

b. accept the HMRC eSourcing site access Terms & Conditions

Tips

- Your email invitation to participate in any event ((RFI, RFQ, RFP, Standard Auction, and Advanced Auction), will come from Sourcing@HMRC.com. Please ensure if you have any email filters enabled, that these allow you to receive emails from this particular email address.

- Pop up blockers for this internet site will also need to be disabled. If using Microsoft Internet Explorer, go into Tools, Internet options, click the Privacy tab, select Pop-up Blocker Setting and then add https://sourcing.hmrc.gov.uk to the list of site exceptions. Alternatively, go to Tools → Pop-Up Blocker → Pop-up Blocker Settings and add https://sourcing.hmrc.gov.uk to the list of Allowed Sites.

- The HMRC eSourcing front screen has links at the top for the Sourcing Home Page (Supplier's Guide for selling to HMRC), Training material, Terms & Conditions and HMRC Privacy Policy. There are also options to reset your password, login name and also to Register other users within your organisation.

3. Locate the RFI

Once you have logged into the system, you will arrive at the **View RFx(s)** page. This page will display any RFI (Request for Information) that you may want to respond to. The **Status** column of this page will display **New** for any event that you have not yet accepted to participate in.

Steps

1. From the **View RFx** screen, locate the ITT from **the RFx Name** column.

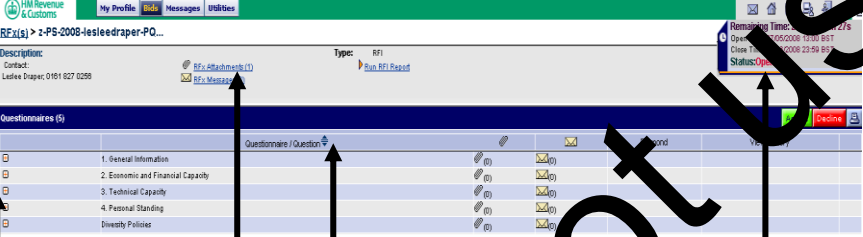2. Click the **View/Respond to RFx** button from the **Select** column

Tips

- Can't locate the RFI? You can filter your view by selecting the appropriate status in the drop down list next to the Binocular Icon: All, Open, Close, Pending, Awarded or Paused.

- Click the Home icon from any page in the event to return to this page. This is located in the top right hand corner of the page.

- Click the Log Out icon from any page in the event to exit the application.

- Contract the HMRC procurement representative that is managing the event to ensure the event invitations have been issued. If you do not know the contact details please email OperationsSupportteam@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk

4. View the RFI

Once you have clicked on the **View/ Respond** button, the details of the RFI are displayed. These details consist of a sequence of questions contained within individual questionnaires as well as item information for each line item. The **Questionnaires** are used to identify and group questions related to specific subject matter.

Steps

1. View the **Questionnaire/ Questions** from the RFI page.

Expand/Collapse Questionnaire

Attachments

Expand/Collapse Question

Time Remaining

Tips

- The system will display the time remaining in the RFI (top right hand corner of the page), it's important to make sure that you complete and submit the RFI in the allotted time. Once the RFI has closed, you will no longer be able to respond.
- To view all of the questions within each questionnaire, click on the double arrow beside Questionnaire/Question in the centre of the page. Clicking on the arrow again will collapse the questions.
- To view questions within a specific questionnaire, click on the Red + sign to the left of the questionnaire. Click on the Red – sign to collapse the questions.
- Click on RFx attachments to view/download all attachments associated with the PQQ. See Section 6 – View/Download Attachments for further details on viewing and downloading attachments.

5. Accept the Invitation

Before you acknowledge your participation, you can review the details contained in the RFI, as outlined in Section 4. Here is where you must decide whether you will accept or decline to participate. You must accept the invitation before you can place responses.

Steps

1. To participate in the RFI, click the green **Accept** button on the top right side of the page.

2. From the **Accept Invitation** window, provide an optional comment and click **OK.** The RFI page will refresh to display red **Place Response** buttons in the Respond column. This will enable you to respond.

3. To decline your participation, click the red **Decline** button. If you Decline the invitation, you will not be able to respond.
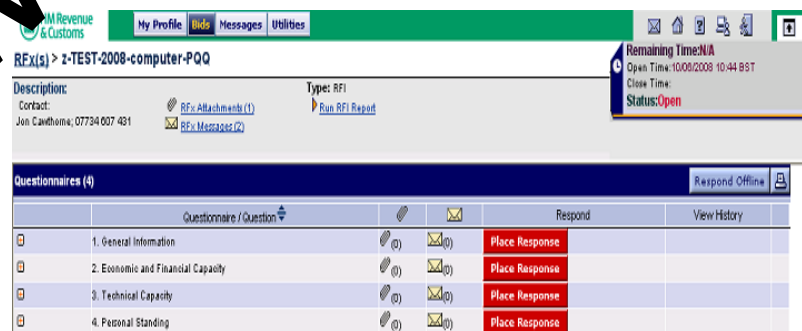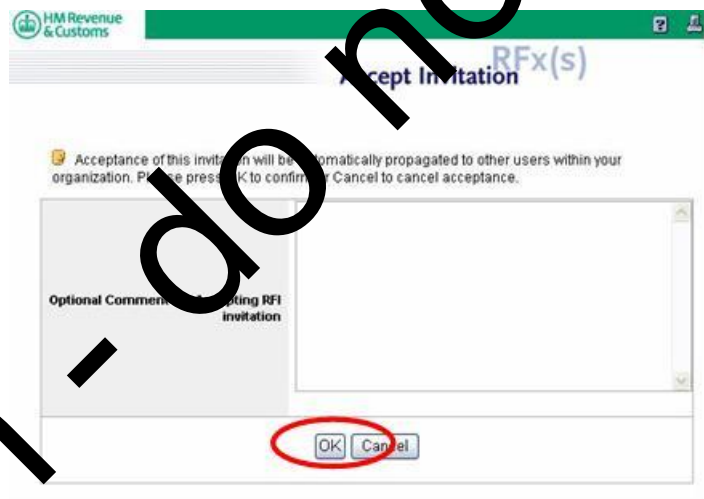
Tips

- Acceptance of this invitation is an acknowledgment of your participation; this acknowledgment will automatically propagate to other invited users within your organisation. It is not necessary for them to accept this invitation.

6. Download Attachments

Attachments are specific documents, such as Word document files or Excel spreadsheets. These could be for example, Tender instructions, Specifications and Terms & Conditions, which may be attached to the Request for Information. Please read these before responding to the RFI.

Steps

Download (to transfer from the system)

1. To download attachments, click on the **RFx Attachments (x)** link.

2. Right mouse click on the Attachment **Name** and click "**Save Target As**…"

3. Save the attachment on your local system

If there are multiple attachments, then

a) Select the attachments you want by clicking in the small box or select all the attachments by clicking on the attachment icon.

b) Click on the Export button

c) Click on Export Button

d) Save the attachments on your local system
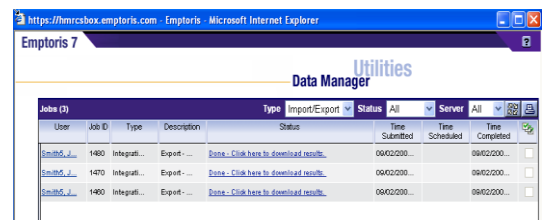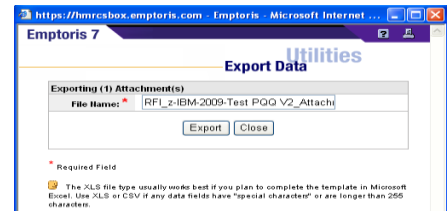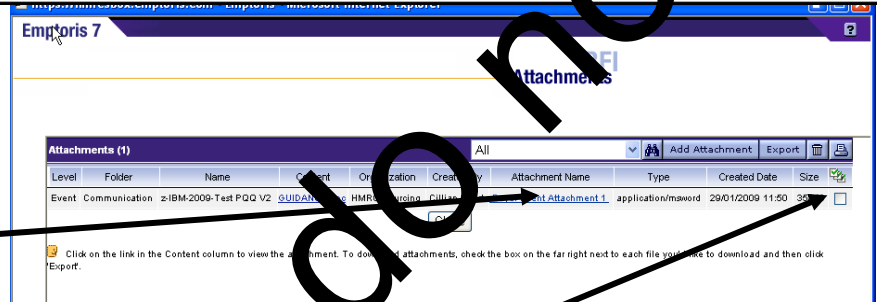
Tips

- If there are attachments available for download, the RFI Attachments link from the top of the page will display a number of 1 or greater in brackets
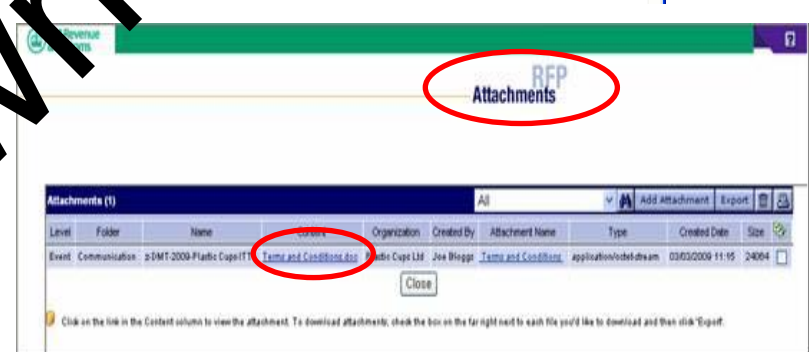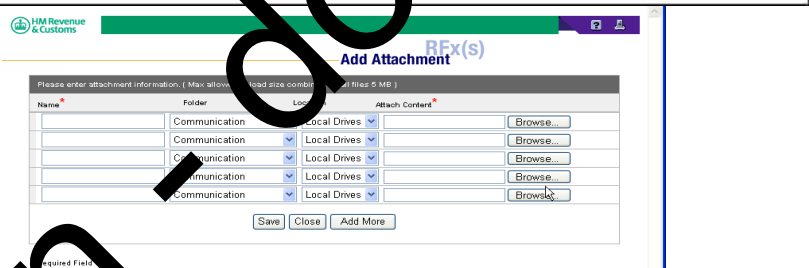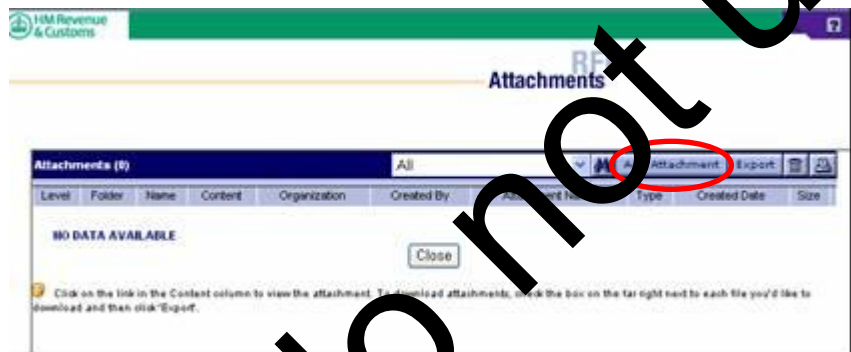
7. Upload Attachments

Attachments are specific documents, such as Word document files or Excel spreadsheets, and these can be added to your response.

Your attachments may be for example, your company accounts, if these are requested by the buyer. Please ensure you fully read any Instructions to Tenderers which are attached to the event in regard to when attachments should be uploaded. Generally attachments should not be uploaded unless specifically requested by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

Steps

Upload (to transfer to the system)

1. To upload attachments, click on the **RFx Attachments (x)** link.

2. Click the **Add Attachment** button.

3. Provide the necessary information within the **Add Attachments** window.

4. Click **Browse** and locate the file from your hard drive.

5. Click **Save** when you are finished. Your attachment has been successfully uploaded when displayed in the **Attachments** window.

Tips

- Attachments uploaded to the system cannot exceed the maximum allowed file Size (5MB). This size is per attachment.

- Please avoid any specialist file types which are not generally compatible. i.e. not compatible with the standard Microsoft Office suite or Adobe PDFs. Seek pre-approval before adding other files types.

- Consider breaking the file into 2 if greater than 5MB.

- Unless specifically requested, add attachments at the question or item level rather than at the overall event level.

8. Respond to a Questionnaire

This RFI screen displays the questionnaires/questions that you have been asked to respond to. Questions may have different answer types. Make sure your answer corresponds with the question being asked.


Steps

1. To respond to questions contained in the first questionnaire, click the **Place Response** button.

2. Answer the first question based on the answer type defined (e.g., text, selection, integer, decimal, etc.)

3. Click the **paperclip** icon to attach a file to this question (if applicable). The process of uploading an attachment is defined in the previous section.

4. Click **Save** to save this response. This only saves the responses, it does not submit them.

5. Repeat steps 1-4 for the remaining questionnaires.

Tips

- If there are required fields (*), you must answer them before clicking the **Save** button. Note however, unless specifically requested in the Instructions to Tenders **all questions should be completed** regardless as to whether they have the required field (*) marker against them. This has been done to make it easier for you to save you draft work when completing large questionnaires.

- Frequent saving is recommended, as although the system does warn you, it will automatically log you off after 30 minutes of inactivity.
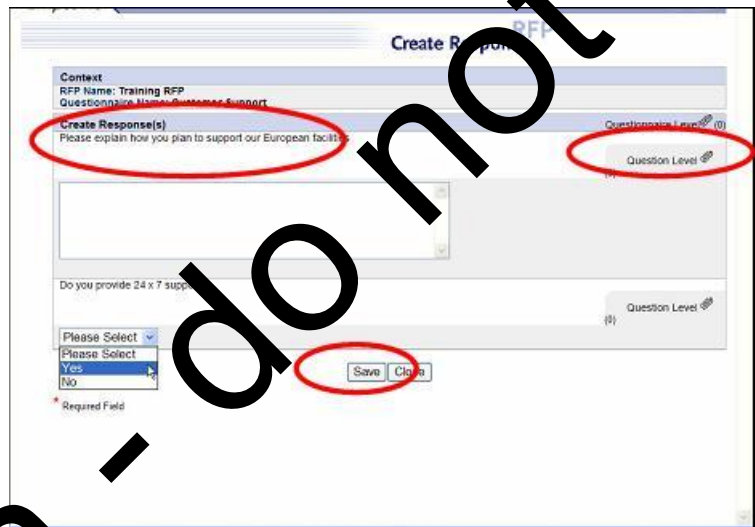
9. Edit a Response

Once a response has been saved, a "DB" icon appears next to the questionnaire/questions. This indicates that a Draft Bid (response) has been created. You or someone else in your organisation can edit responses prior to the closing time of the event.

Steps

1. To make edits to a questionnaire, click the **Revise Responses** button next to the questionnaire.

2. Make your changes.

3. Click the **Save** button. Changes made will replacing the existing response.
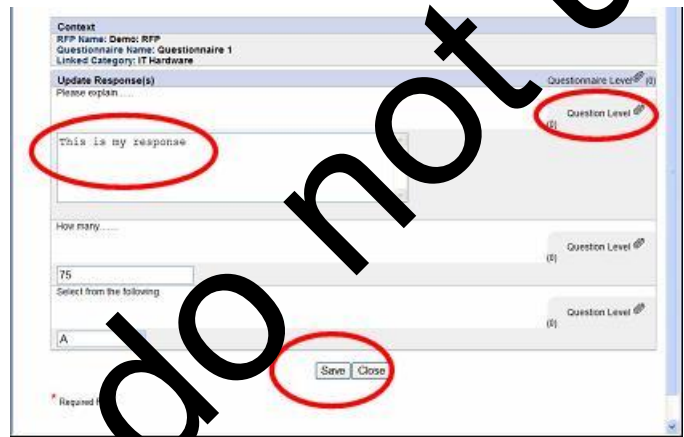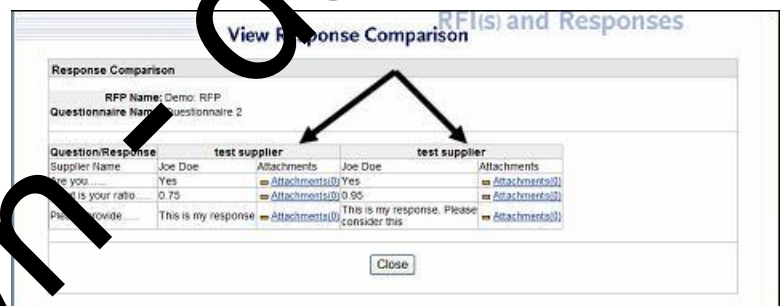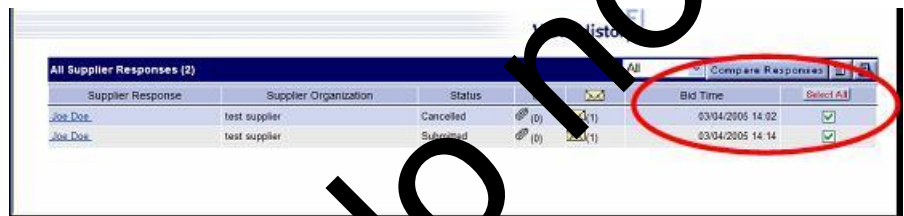

Tips

- The RFI must be **Open** in order to make changes.

- Edits can be made to attachments or attachments added by clicking the **paperclip** icon. Old attachments should be deleted by clicking the tick box on the far right hand side and selecting the Bin icon. New attachments can then be added.

10. Review and Compare Responses

The **View History** window displays the status of your responses as well as a history of submitted responses. Submitted responses can be compared to any previously submitted responses.

Steps

1. To display a history of your responses, click the **View History** button.

2. To compare responses, select the responses that you want to compare by clicking in the checkboxes.

3. Click the **Compare Responses** button.

4. The **View Response Comparison** window will display, allowing you to compare the selected responses, side by side.

Tips
- The **View Response Comparison** window also allows you to compare a history of attachments that you have uploaded into the system.

11. Submit response

You need to submit your response before the closing time of the event by selecting the red Submit All Draft Responses button. Once selected the Submit all Draft Responses button will not be visible.

You can still revise your response prior to the closing time of the event and any additional amendments will be submitted automatically by the system.

The purpose of the functionality is to prevent HMRC from seeing your response until you are happy it is complete. Once selected, if the event is not locked, HMRC can see all amendments as they occur.

Steps

1. To submit your response to HMRC, select the Submit All Draft Responses button.

2. Once submitted the Submit all Draft Responses button will be removed. You can still amend your response, if the event is still open the response will be submitted automatically**.**
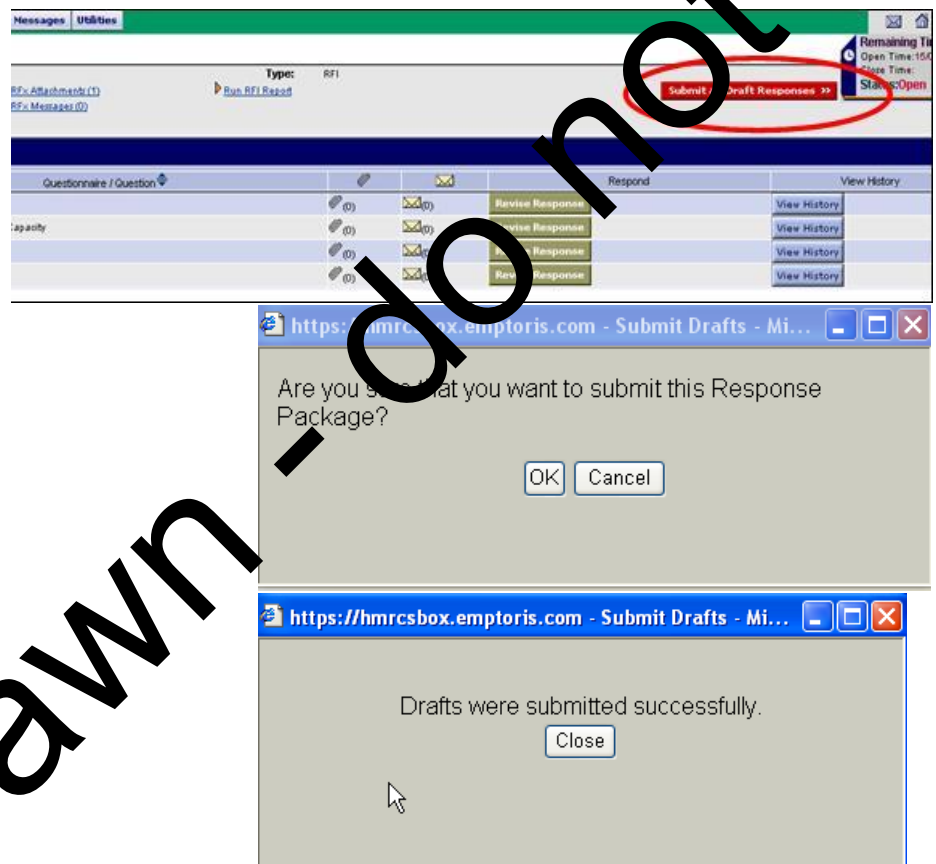
Tips

- The status of your response is visible on the far right for each Questionnaire/Question. DB denotes, Draft Bid, whilst R denote Response. For the Questionnaires/Questions you have responded to, a DB will be visible, however once you have clicked the Submit all Draft Responses button this will change to an R.

- When you have fully completed your response ensure the Submit all Draft Responses button is not visible. This is confirmation that your response has been submitted.

12. Send and Receive Messages

Messaging allows messages to be sent between the buyer and the supplier affiliated with this event.

Steps

1. To send a message, **first ensure you are within the event** and then click the **RFI Messages** link.

2. The **View by RFx** window will display all messages received. Click the **Create** button to create a message.

3. The **Create Message** window sends this message in the context of this RFI. Select the recipient that you are sending this message to. Unless told otherwise this should be to **'All Hosts'. This message is not visible to other suppliers.**

4. Type in the **Subject**, the **Message** and click the **Send** button.

Tips
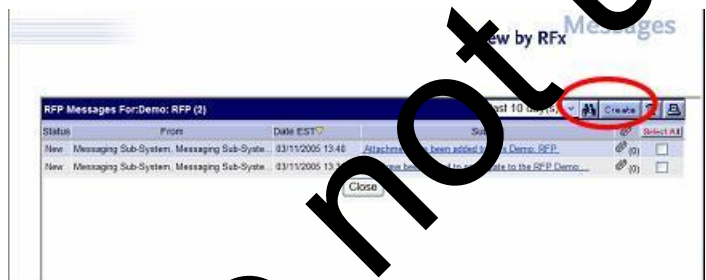
The body of the message should not exceed 5000 characters.

Ensure you are within the event before sending a message and you can see the names of the HMRC staff in the "To" list. This will ensure the message is sent to HMRC and not your own organisation.

13. Create a Report

When each questionnaire has been completed, you can run a report that will summarise this information. This report can be exported out of the system and retained for your records.

Steps

1. To create a report, click the **Run RFI Report** link.

2. Click **OK** from the **Edit Report Parameters** window.

Note: The Edit Report Parameters allows for customised reporting.

Type of Responses: Report can include Valid, Invalid or Cancelled responses.

RFI/RFP Selection: Search on all events that you have participated in.

Question/ Questionnaire: Search and report on specific question/ questionnaires.

Report View Type: View as an Excel spreadsheet, CSV, or PDF file.

3. In **Data Manager, with the mouse over** 'Done- Click here to download results', **Right mouse click on the Attachment Content and click "Save Target As…"**

4. Save the attachment on your local system

5. The user can then choose to open the saved attachment from your local drive
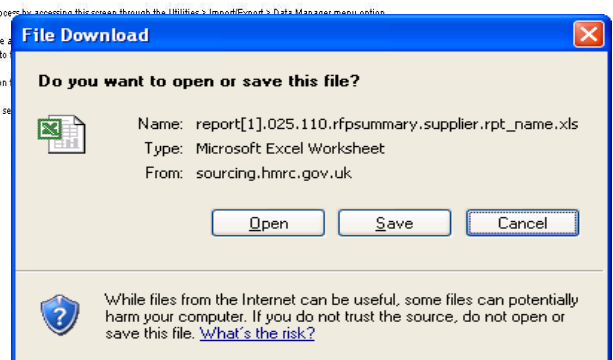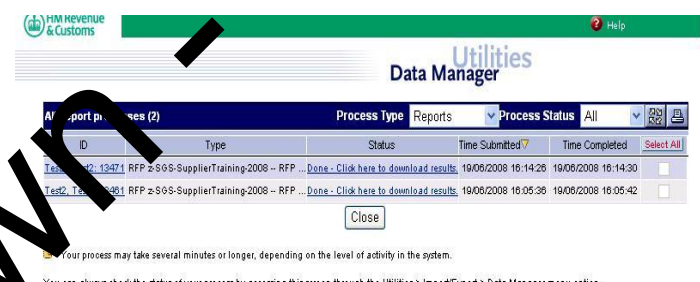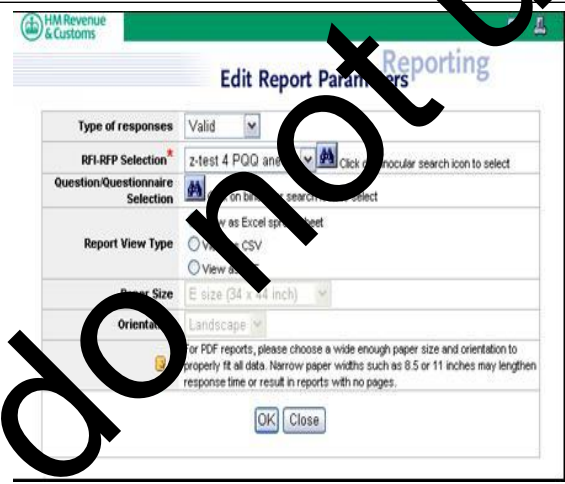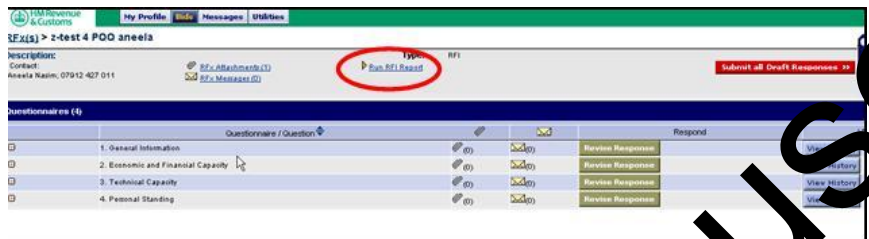
Tips

• When you export this information out of the system, it is recommended that you export into Excel or CSV format. These formats will allow you to customise the look and feel of the spreadsheet.

• You can also use the reporting capability to create an electronic copy of the event prior to creating a response