

Procurement Newsletter

February 2022

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We are the Post Office and there is no-one like us. From our travel and financial services, passports to postage, the Post Office network is serving communities across the UK. We have a network of more than 11,500 branches across the UK and every one of our branches is at the heart of its community.

We have introduced a series of quarterly newsletters to our Supplier partners to:

- Raise awareness of our values and the subjects that matter to us.
- Provide news, information and training that will help you to do business with us.
- Help you find opportunities to work with us as we grow and change for the future.

How to Invoice us

We want our suppliers to be paid in a timely manner. To achieve this, we are seeking your co-operation and assistance to ensure that we have a more efficient and controlled payment process.

We are enforcing a “No purchase order, no payment” Policy, where any Post Office employee placing an order with any of our suppliers must provide you with a valid purchase order (PO) number which must be quoted on all supplier invoices. We will be unable to pay supplier invoices unless they display this valid PO number as any such request for goods or services may have been requested without company authorisation. Unless a specific alternative arrangement has been put in place (for bulk consolidated invoicing) this policy will apply.

Suppliers should therefore feel able to push back on us as a business if they do not receive a valid order number before being asked to start work. Any invoice that is sent to us without a valid PO number could be rejected or returned, which could delay processing and payment to you. Our Supplier Code of Conduct (available on our website) makes clear that we support and encourage Suppliers to raise any concerns with us and to “speak up” about any requests or activities that are a concern.

Practical Steps

We use a S2S Source to Settle system called Web3 to process our orders and invoices. Suppliers are able to login to a portal in Web3 where they are able to see Purchase Orders and the progress of Invoices. They are also able to maintain their own account record information including payment details and contact addresses. Please read the Terms of Use (available on our website) and ensure that all changes made to Supplier accounts are accurate and intended.

When sending invoices to us:

- All invoices should be sent to invoices.acc.pay@postoffice.co.uk addressed in the TO” field of the email
- Any emails addressed to the box using the “CC” field will not be processed and will assume no action is required.
- Invoices should be PDF attachments to the email and multiple attachments are allowed.
- There must only be one invoice per PDF attachment (NOT multiple invoices on a single PDF file)

When you have enquiries:

- Any general Accounts Payable enquiries should be sent to enquiries.acc.pay@postoffice.co.uk in the TO” field of the email
- Any emails addressed to the box using the “CC” field will not be processed and will assume no action is required.
- For invoice enquiries please use the invoice number as the “Subject” reference on the email
- Invoices will NOT be picked up from this email box

Tips for Suppliers

- Invoices must be addressed to Post Office Limited or Post Office Managed Services
- Invoices must quote a valid Purchase Order which matches the description of the goods/services being invoiced and with sufficient funds remaining.
- Where possible Purchase Order line number should be quoted on the invoice. Quoting the line number will facilitate the matching of the invoice if the order has multiple lines.
- Invoices must show the correct VAT number for your company
- Invoices must display the correct company name that matches the Purchase Order.
- The correct Supplier bank account details should be shown on the invoice. Any changes to bank account should be updated in the supplier portal of our system.
- Any invoices that do not meet the above criteria will be rejected and payment could be delayed.
- Payment terms take effect from date of receipt of invoice.
- Remittance advice will be sent to the email address maintained in the Supplier account record – any changes should be updated in the supplier portal.

When sending invoices to us, we ask that they should be in PDF format. To achieve the most accurate PDF processing results we recommend that a **text-based PDF** is used versus an image-based PDF.

It is easy to check which PDF is text-based and which one is image-based.

- If in the PDF document you are able to highlight a row of text, copy it and paste it into a notepad or word document for example, this is a text-based PDF.
- If in the PDF document when you are trying to highlight a row of text, the whole document is highlighted, that means the PDF is image-based.

A **text-based PDF** offers the highest level of accuracy as it presents the document image alongside a text layer that is machine-readable, and if compiled correctly, will contain an exact representation of the document image in the included text data. A typical way of compiling a text-based PDF is to save a word document into a PDF format.

An image-based PDF (often created by scanning) is prone to errors when it is read by machines. Though they can look like a normal PDF file, when you scan a paper using a scanner, the whole content will be captured as an image. There is no text content but only an image embedded in the PDF file. When they are being read by OCR technology the lack of text content can cause confusion between characters such as the letters S and 5 or number 0 and letter O. Also, if the scanned image is of an original paper document the quality will be further reduced if the document was:

- wrinkled, torn, or otherwise damaged,
- faded or otherwise aged,
- discoloured,
- smudged (or the text is otherwise obfuscated or distorted),
- printed with low-contrast or coloured ink (purple, blue, and red provide low contrast; black ink provides the highest contrast),
- rendered with nonstandard fonts or in human handwriting,
- or printed on specific types of paper that decrease crispness and contrast between the background and foreground in the resulting scan,

Any scanned image of such a document (regardless of the quality of the scan) might provide challenges to the machine in recognizing text from the scan.

There are also many good articles available online on the difference between text and image-based PDFs, and on understanding OCR (Optical Character Recognition).

Useful Resources

Training guides for Web3 and other information is available is available on our website (link below)

- More details on the format of the orders you will receive, and on the format of the PDF invoices we recommend are in the Archived Procurement Team Communications folder.
- Terms of Use, Supplier Code of Conduct and our standard Terms & Conditions for supply of Goods and/or Services can be found under the Useful Documents section on the right-hand side of the page.

Who do I contact for help?

Please read the guidance on our website <http://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/our-suppliers>

If you require any further advice, please contact procurement@postoffice.co.uk

