

# FAQs... for eTendersNI...

## Registration and log-in

**Q1. On the 'Supplier Administrator' screen during registration, there is a drop-down menu for CA's of interest - what does this mean and what happens depending on what you choose?**

**Answer:** CA refers to 'Contracting Authority' - this is the organisation that is publishing the tenders. There is an opportunity during registration to associate yourself with particular contracting authorities. This is particularly relevant to suppliers who focus on a particular target market – for example health supplies, or educational materials.

If you select a contracting authority at this stage then you will receive an email alert when they publish a tender. You can edit your choices later, once your registration is complete. Please note that if the contracting authority approaches Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) to publish the opportunity on their behalf, then you will not receive the alert unless you have also selected CPD from the list.

In general most suppliers prefer to skip this step in registration altogether – as once your registration is complete you can save certain procurement categories to your profile, to receive email alerts just for tenders relevant to your organisation.

**Q2. I am trying to log-in to eTendersNI using the username and password I set up during registration. The system is not letting me log-in, what can I do?**

**Answer:** If you have just registered, you may need to wait a short time for the eTendersNI system to issue a verification email. Use the link in the email to log-in. Alternatively, if you have previously logged in, and are sure your log-in details are accurate (e.g. you are not using your email address as username, etc.), look for the 'Contact Us' section to the top right of the screen and

contact the helpdesk for further assistance. All supplier registrations are usually approved on the eTendersNI system within a day.

**Q3. I have registered but we have not received any emails yet about tenders – I thought eTendersNI was going to send email alerts?**

**Answer:** eTendersNI has recently been launched and it will take time for contracting authorities to begin publishing large volumes of tenders. In order to receive email alerts about tender opportunities, you should select the procurement categories you are interested in (CPV codes) and save these to your profile. Use the 'EO administration' section to the left of the screen and select 'EO management', then 'Edit CPV codes'. Search for the relevant categories and select and save your details. eTendersNI will now send you email alerts for tender opportunities published in these categories.

**Q4. I have reached a prompt to download the required Java Runtime Environment for eTendersNI, but it isn't working for some reason. What should I do?**

**Answer:** The Java Runtime Environment (JRE)<sup>1</sup> is necessary for using the eTendersNI platform and needs to be installed in your machine. In case the JRE isn't working for some reason, please request the assistance of your IT department in order to verify that the latest version of Java Runtime Environment is installed on your machine and that there are no security restrictions in place within your organisation which may prevent you from using JRE (high security level in web browser that prevent/ block the use of JRE/ Java, etc.)

In case your IT department confirms that latest JRE is installed and that there are no restrictions in place, please contact the eTendersNI helpline. The details are found in the 'Contact Us' section to the top of the home page.

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<sup>1</sup> The Java Runtime Environment can be downloaded from <http://www.java.com/getjava>

**Q5. I have registered my organisation on eTendersNI, however I cannot remember my password to access my email account and reach the verification email. What should I do?**

**Answer:** Please use the “Forgot your password” functionality available from the left panel of theTendersNI homepage, just below the ‘Log In’ option. In the ‘Forgot your password’ page, provide your username and click on “Send”. Instructions will be sent in order to allow you to set a new password.

**Q6. Our Administrator cannot remember their username or password for eTendersNI. What should we do?**

**Answer:** Please send an email to the eTendersNI helpline with queries of this nature. The email address is found in the ‘Contact Us’ section to the top of the home page.

## **Supplier Administrator and Users**

**Q7. What is the difference in responsibilities between the Economic Operator Administrator and Users? Can we have more than one Administrator for my organisation?**

**Answer:** Each supplier organisation selects one Economic Operator Administrator upon registration. The Administrator can use the ‘User Management’ link within the ‘EO Administration’ section in order to add a new Admin account for another staff member in the organisation.

The Administrator is able to edit the organisation details, add and delete other users, complete supplier profile certificates, and publish subcontracting opportunities. The Economic Operator Users are able to browse for tender opportunities, express an interest, prepare and submit tender returns, and accept or reject contract awards.

**Q8. Only the Administrator for my organisation receives email alerts for relevant tenders. How do I ensure that all the Economic Operator Users receive these emails?**

**Answer:** If you have selected procurement categories (CPV codes) and saved these to your profile, then the organisation Administrator will receive an email alert whenever a tender in any of these categories is published. The other registered Users will not receive these emails; however within most email software packages it is possible to set up your own email rule, so that these emails are automatically forwarded when they are received by the Administrator.

**Q9. Is there a limit to how many Economic Operator Users can be added for one organisation?**

**Answer:** There is no limit to the number of Users an organisation can register on eTendersNI.

**Q10. How do I add another staff member as a User?**

**Answer:** If you are an Administrator for your organisation, then select 'User Management' within the 'EO administration' menu on the left panel of the homepage; then 'Add User'. Only Administrators will be able to add or delete other users.

**Q11. A member of staff has left my organisation – how do I set them as an inactive Economic Operator User?**

**Answer:** If you are an Administrator for your organisation, then select 'User Management' within the 'EO administration' menu on the left panel of the homepage. You will now be able to view a list of current users and their status (active / inactive / de-activated). Select 'Edit Account' to make changes.

**Q12. How do I add a new Administrator to my organisation? The only staff member registered as Administrator has left unexpectedly.**

**Answer:** In the unlikely event that your Administrator leaves unexpectedly, please send an email to the eTendersNI helpline to set a new email address to the Administrator account and reset the password. The email address of the Helpdesk can be found in the 'Contact Us' section to the top of the home page.

**Q13. Can any member of staff add another user on eTendersNI, or does it have to be the Administrator?**

**Answer:** Only Administrators can add or delete other users on the eTendersNI system.

## **Email alerts for relevant tenders**

**Q14. How do I set up my profile so that I receive email alerts about tender opportunities which are relevant to my organisation?**

**Answer:** In order to receive email alerts about tender opportunities, you should select the procurement categories you are interested in (CPV codes) and save these to your profile. Use the 'EO administration' section to the left of the screen and select 'EO management', then 'Edit CPV codes'. Search for the relevant categories and select and save your details. eTendersNI will now send you email alerts for tender opportunities published in these categories

**Q15. I would prefer to receive all tenders for the buyer I am interested in, to see what subcontracting opportunities may be available. How do I set this up on my profile?**

**Answer:** During registration there is an opportunity to register interest in particular contracting authorities, in order to receive email alerts whenever they publish a tender. If you have already completed registration you can change these settings at any time using the 'Edit Profile' link to the left of the home page.

**Q16. I am not sure which CPV category to select. We might fall into several categories. What should I do?**

**Answer:** Be very specific about the procurement categories you select. If you are using the category tree structure to search for categories, then use the + and – symbols to expand the menu options as far as possible and select the sub-category rather than a main heading. Select as many categories as you consider relevant, and save these to your profile. You can return to edit your CPV codes at any time.

**Q17. I am receiving hundreds of emails a day from eTendersNI – it seems to be every tender published by every contracting authority. How do I turn this off?**

**Answer:** During registration there was an opportunity to register interest in particular contracting authorities, in order to receive email alerts whenever they publish a tender. If you selected a number of contracting authorities, then you will be receiving email alerts whenever they publish a tender. As Administrator you change these settings at any time using the 'Edit Profile' link to the left of the home page.

## **Clarification Queries**

**Q18. How do I know when the deadline is for submitting a clarification about this tender?**

**Answer:** If you have expressed an interest in a tender opportunity, then you can also set up rules for notifications. For example you can ask eTendersNI to send you a reminder about the deadline for submitting clarification questions. To do this, use 'My CfTs' to select the relevant tender, and open the CfT Menu. The 'Specify Alerts' option will let you set the timing of the reminder. The 'Automated Notifications' option will let you select which colleagues receive the reminder.

**Q19. I've tried to submit a clarification question but the system will not let me. Why?**

**Answer:** It is only possible to submit clarification queries within a certain timeframe. For example, some contracting authorities will cease to respond to clarification questions submitted within six days of the tender deadline. When you first express an interest in a tender, you can ask eTendersNI to send you a reminder about the deadline for submitting clarification questions. (see Q16)

**Q20 – If I submit a clarification request, will all the other supplier organizations interested in the tender be informed of the question I’ve asked? Is there a way to keep the request and response private?**

**Answer:** The clarification questions and answers are published online for all interested suppliers to read, in order to ensure the tender competition is fair.

**Q21 – When I specify alerts for a particular tender, I have the option to set the timing of the alerts for ‘requests for clarifications from’ and ‘requests for clarifications to’... what is the difference and what does this mean?**

**Answer:** It is only possible to submit clarification queries within a certain timeframe. Thus, the “request for clarifications from” sets the timing for the alert informing when the clarification queries can be submitted and the “request for clarifications to” when the deadline for submitting clarification queries expires.

## **Correspondence**

**Q22. How many messages will the Inbox in the ‘Correspondence’ section keep, and for how long?**

**Answer:** There is no current time limit on the messages kept in the Inbox.

## **Supplier Profile Certificates**

**Q23. What does the e-Attestations option do? I found this in the EO management section.**

**Answer:** One of the key features of eTendersNI is that suppliers are able to complete Supplier Profile Certificates, and then attach these to various bids; rather than complete the same details over and over again. To start completing one of the certificates, select the 'EO Management' link in the 'EO administration' panel on the home page; then select 'e-Attestations'.

**Q24. How do I complete certificates and save them to my supplier profile?**

**Answer:** To start completing one of the Supplier Profile certificates, select the 'EO Management' link in the 'EO administration' panel on the home page; then select 'e-Attestations'.

## **Subcontracting opportunities**

**Q25. How do I publish sub-contracting opportunities?**

**Answer:** If you are an Administrator, and you have been successfully awarded a contract, then you may wish to advertise sub-contracting opportunities. Select 'Create SCO workspace' from the 'EO administration' panel on the left of the home page. Complete the form with the details.

**Q26: In the 'EO administration' section there are two options, 'My subcontracting opportunities' and 'Create SCO workspace'. I don't know how to use these two options.**

**Answer:** See Q24 above. Once you have completed the SCO Workspace form, the details will appear in the 'My subcontracting opportunities' section.

## **Tender Preparation Tool**

**Q27. Why can I not open the offline Tender Preparation Tool after I have downloaded it?**

**Answer:** The tool must be stored in local workstation directory or in a network drive that will function as a local directory. After the zip file is saved, the user must un-compress the zip file and save it to the desired place on the PC. There are two Tender Preparation Tool files – one is for Windows Operating systems and the other for Mac Operating Systems. In addition a certain version of Java Runtime Environment is required to run the tool. Please request the assistance of your IT department in order to verify that the latest version of Java Runtime Environment is installed on your machine and that there are no security restrictions in place within your organisation which may prevent you from using JRE (high security level in web browser that prevent/block the use of JRE/ Java, etc.).

**Q28. My organisation requires permission from our IT department to install software, so I can't download the offline Tender Preparation Tool yet. How can I make a start on preparing the tender?**

**Answer:** Using eTendersNI suppliers have the option to either use the online tender preparation tool, or prepare your tender offline using the Tender Preparation Tool. The online tool is easy to use – simply select 'Tender' from the CfT Menu to access the tool.

**Q29. I have prepared my tender offline – will the manual upload take a long time?**

**Answer:** Speed of upload will depend on your broadband speed and the size of the tender package. Always allow a reasonable amount of time to proof-read your tender and upload it onto eTendersNI.

## **eTendersNI**

### **Q30. Which buyers are intending to use the system?**

The first procurement organisation to use the new portal is CPD, which carries out procurements on behalf of central government departments, agencies and arms-length bodies.

The other Centres of Procurement Expertise for Northern Ireland (BSO PaLS, Education Authority, NI Housing Executive, NI Water, Translink, and Transport NI) will then begin using eTendersNI in a phased approach. A number of other public sector bodies are currently finalising plans to begin using eTendersNI after this.

### **Q31. How do I know when to stop checking eSourcing NI?**

**Answer:** Suppliers registered on eSourcing NI will receive an email to notify them when the system is no longer being used.