Contractor Start-up Kit

The Contractor Start-up Kit provides guidance on how to upload your products and services to GSA Advantage using the Schedule Input Program (SIP) or Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), as well as instructions on how to maintain your information.

_____

We are excited about our new partnership as we bring your Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) products and services to our federal customers worldwide via the GSA Advantage online shopping service, the most widely used shopping site in the government. We invite you to join the thousands of Schedule contractors already using GSA Advantage.

This Start-up Kit explains how to get your products and services online as well as how to maintain your information. Your participation is extremely important to us as we work to simplify the acquisition process for the federal government.

General Instructions

Quick Start

- **Step 1: Read**
    - Become familiar with Schedule [clause 552.238-88 GSA Advantage](#), which requires participation in GSA Advantage.
    - Review clause [I-FSS-600 Contract Price List](#) of your MAS contract, which addresses the submission of electronic catalogs.
    - Contractor's electronic catalog file must be received no later than 30 days after award, in accordance with clause I-FSS-600.
    - Catalogs must be submitted electronically via EDI or SIP.

- **Step 2: Register**
    - All contractors must register with the GSA Vendor Support Center (VSC) or by calling toll free at 877-495-4849 (M-F 7:30-5:30 PM EST). If you use SIP, it will prompt you for registration information. The VSC will provide you with a password that is required on all catalog submissions. This password is used to protect your data. VSC personnel can also provide assistance with your SIP catalog submission.
    - Please note that a DUNS is required at registration. If you do not have a DUNS assigned for your company, go to www.dnb.com where you may obtain one without charge from Dun & Bradstreet, Inc.

- **Step 3: Decide**

- Determine which of the two method you will use to submit catalog information - SIP or EDI:
  1. **Schedule Input Program (SIP)** - download the *free* SIP software.
  2. **Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)** - GSA utilizes the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) X12 family of transaction sets to electronically communicate both "inbound" and "outbound" transaction sets. EDI will require you to use commercial software or use the services of a 3rd party to send EDI files to GSA Advantage, which may have costs associated with the services.

- **Step 4: Submit**
  - Submit your catalog. You may submit your catalog anytime, including updates and changes. Customers will see the data you submit (part numbers, description, prices, etc.). You are responsible for submitting complete and accurate data. Please ensure that your products and services are adequately described and remain current.

Questions?
- If you have questions concerning your Schedule contract terms and conditions, please contact your GSA or VA Contracting Officer.
- If you have questions concerning the preparation and submission of your electronic catalog using SIP, contact the Vendor Support Center (VSC) at 877-495-4849 (M-F 8:30-5:30 PM EST) or e-mail vendor.support@gsa.gov.
- If you have questions concerning the preparation and submission of your electronic catalog using EDI, contact our EDI Help Desk at 703-605-9444 or email edistat@gsa.gov.
- If you have general questions regarding the GSA Advantage shopping system, call 877-472-3777 (select option 2) or e-mail gsa.advantage@gsa.gov.

How GSA identifies a product

GSA uniquely identifies each product using a combination of your contract number plus the manufacturer part number and manufacturer name. Each product you submit must have a unique manufacturer part number - even if two or more manufacturers carry the exact same part number. Note: include Universal Product Codes (UPC) if required and when available (see section above).

Should I submit photos with my products?

Yes. Photos provide the best shopping experience for customers and give you an edge when it comes down to the customer's final purchase decision. Customers using GSA Advantage can also limit their search results to only those products with photos. Photos may be submitted via SIP or EDI. File size, resolution, and format requirements for upload can be found in the SIP Photo Guidelines and EDI Photo Guidelines

Please note:
- *Photos must be product-specific.*
- *Company logos or generic images may not be submitted as a photo.*

How are purchase orders issued by GSA Advantage?
GSA sends all purchase orders to MAS contractors via the GSA Purchase Order (PO) Portal web site, EDI, or XML depending upon the vendor preference and capabilities. The PO Portal web site allows you to easily view or print your GSA Advantage purchase orders, or you may download your orders in a number of formats including XLS, TXT, XML, or PDF.

The PO Portal also allows you to send the order status to customers via GSA Advantage. The PO Portal web site can be accessed only by the individual you designate using SIP or EDI.

If you wish to receive EDI or XML purchase orders, please call 703-605-9444 or email edistat@gsa.gov.

How do I provide order status to my customers?

Please note - providing order status for GSA Advantage orders is mandatory.

Providing order status to your customer must be done through GSA platforms to ensure complete transparency. You can submit GSA Advantage order status via EDI/cXML or the Purchase Order Portal, which updates both GSA and your customers. Customers are sent an email each time their order status changes, reducing the number of phone calls you may receive.

In order to be compliant, you must provide order status through one of the following methods on Advantage:

1. **EDI:** For those doing EDI, the 855 and 856 transaction sets documentation can be found on the VSC website. If you want to start providing order status via EDI, or validate whether you're providing EDI transmission sets accurately to GSA, please email edistat@gsa.gov or call 703-605-9444.
2. **Purchase Order (PO) Portal**: The GSA Advantage PO Portal website allows you to conveniently send a status update email to your customer(s) on every order sent to you via GSA Advantage. For more details,, please see this short video on how to use PO Portal.
3. **cXML**: Contractors may also provide status back through cXML. For more information, please call our helpdesk number at 703-605-9444 or email edistat@gsa.gov.

For more information on order status, please review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Interact.

What will my data look like in GSA Advantage?
Take a look at GSA Advantage to get a better understanding of how the system operates, and more specifically, how your products and services will appear to federal customers. Once your own catalog data is online, you should check it frequently to make sure it appears as you had intended.

SIP Submission Instructions for Contractors

The [Schedules Input Program (SIP) software](#) can be downloaded from the GSA Vendor Support Center. SIP is a client-side application that allows you to import/input your contract and product data for inclusion on GSA Advantage.

SIP system requirements: SIP is a Microsoft Windows-based program which can be installed on a stand-alone PC or multi-user LAN environment. Note for Mac users - you will need to use an emulator that runs Windows to be able to use SIP on a Mac.
.

SIP online and context sensitive help: SIP includes an online help function that can be used to assist you in the preparation of your electronic catalogs. Online help is available for each input field by simply pressing the "F1" key.

Can I import my catalog data into SIP?
Yes. When you install the SIP program, an Import Program is also installed which allows you to import either standard ASCII text, DBF files (versions 3.0 or greater), or MS Excel files (MS office 97 version or greater) into the SIP. Call the VSC for further information and assistance. Online help is also available within SIP including instructions and templates.

Submitting your SIP file
After all the products, service and price information are saved into SIP, and you are connected to the internet, it is time to upload your electronic catalog.
1. From the top menu, select Communications | Create Catalog Files. SIP will back up your data and begin generating the catalog files for submission, including the mandated FSS Terms and Conditions Price List.
2. Once the create catalog process is complete, click the "Click here to start upload" to automatically begin uploading the files to GSA.

Once your files are successfully uploaded, it will be forwarded to the appropriate GSA/VA CO for review. The CO will review the catalog, then contact you via email or phone stating whether the file was *approved* or *rejected* (and the reasons for rejection, if applicable).

Response File processing
A SIP response file will also be generated after the CO has reviewed your file. The purpose of the response file is to inform you whether your file was approved or rejected, and to update your SIP software to ensure that both SIP and GSA Advantage databases remain in sync.

SIP will prompt you when a response file needs to be processed and will automatically retrieve and process the file.

Important - You must "process" your response file using SIP before you can send the next catalog update (you can prepare the next submission in SIP but you cannot send it until the response file has been received and processed). Once your response file is processed, you are free to submit new updates.

Rejected files

If your catalog file is "*rejected*" and your GSA/VA CO has not contacted you by the time you have received your response file, please contact your CO for details as to why the file was rejected.

Important - Rejected catalogs must be resubmitted within 30 calendar days.

Temporary price reductions: Files containing temporary price reductions may be immediately loaded into GSA Advantage via EDI or SIP after the completion of a modification request via eMod. Your CO will be notified when an updated file is submitted. Note that modification requests for temporary price reductions are effective immediately upon submission and the effective date of the price reduction will reflect the date that the contractor submitted the modification via eMod.

Can I submit my MAS products or services in my Terms and Conditions Price List?

Certain MAS SINs have been designated as either allowing or requiring a Terms and Conditions Price List instead of an electronic catalog. The SIP program will prompt you when this option is allowed. Please note that products or services submitted in a Terms and Conditions Price List cannot be ordered online, they can only be viewed. *Products should be submitted in a data format wherever possible*.

Terms and Conditions Price List file formats
- You may send text files in .pdf, .doc, .xls, or .htm formats.
- Please note that the filename must *not* contain spaces and must reside in SIP text file subdirectory. See SIP online help for further instructions including what should be included in your text file.

Questions?

Contact the Vendor Support Center (VSC) help desk at 877-495-4849 (M-F 8:30-5:30 PM EST) or email vendor.support@gsa.gov.

EDI Submission Instructions for Contractors

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is the computer-to-computer exchange of business information using a public standard. You have several different options when it comes to using EDI to submit your catalog file. In addition to commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) packages, there are also third parties and Value Added Networks (VANs) who can assist you. If you are

interested in learning more about EDI, call our EDI help desk at 703-605-9444 or email edistat@gsa.gov.

EDI catalog submission process
Catalog data submitted to GSA via EDI transaction set 832 is first checked for EDI syntactical accuracy and then checked for data content. It is then provided to your GSA/VA CO for review and approval. Once approved, contractors are notified via e-mail and the catalog data is placed on GSA Advantage.

GSA will use the 824 transaction set to specify data content errors in your catalog file should your file be rejected. The 824 is sent to contractors electronically. Rejected catalogs must be resubmitted within 30 calendar days.

EDI 832 samples
Sample 832 Price/Sales Catalog transaction sets can be downloaded from the Vendor Support Center that are compliant with the Federal Implementation Convention (IC), using version 3050. The 832 samples should be given to your software provider and/or Value Added Network (VAN) so that they will be able to furnish a transaction in accordance with the Federal Implementation Conventions (FIC). Also included with the 832 samples is a table of expected data elements that will be edited prior to GSA/VA CO review of your catalog.

Other EDI samples
You may download samples of the 850 Purchase Order, the 855 Purchase Order Acknowledgment, the 856 Ship Notice, 860 Purchase Order Change/Cancellation and 824 Application Advice. Additionally, the 997 Functional Acknowledgment should be used in all appropriate cases.

How to submit your 832 Electronic Catalog
There are three ways in which a contractor may send in their EDI data:
1. Contractors may use their Value Added Network/Value Added Service (VAN/VAS) provider and transmit their data through the Federal Infrastructure via the GEX (Government Electronic Exchange) at Ogden, Utah. The receiver IDs are as follows: the ISA07 is ZZ and the ISA08 is DMCOGDEN. The GS03 is 012966339 (the GSA/FAS identifier).
2. Contractors can also SFTP (Secure File Transfer Protocol) their data directly to GSA/FAS. Contact the EDI help desk (below) for the appropriate IP address, log-on ID, and password. .
3. A mailbox on the Sterling/IBM VAN system is also available for those contractors whose service providers have interconnects with Sterling/IBM. Please contact the EDI help desk at edistat@gsa.gov or 703-605-9444 for more information. The receiver ID is ZZ:GSAADV.

Contract modifications

All contract modifications and/or changes must be approved by your GSA/VA CO before submitting for inclusion in GSA Advantage. Please include your modification number with your submission.

Submitting changes
Changes can be sent by line item or as an entire catalog replacement. Files containing temporary price reductions will be immediately loaded without CO approval.

Terms and Conditions Price Lists
A FSS Terms and Conditions Price List is *mandatory* for every contract, and must be kept up-to-date in accordance with clause I-FSS-600. Terms and Conditions Price Lists submitted by contractors using EDI must be created in .pdf, .doc, .xls, or .htm format. Upload the document via SFTP (see above) to your established SFTP website. Your file name must include your contract number.

Text documents (T&C files) submitted by EDI contractors must be created in .pdf, .doc, .xls, or .htm format and uploaded to GSA via sftp to their established sftp mailbox or by using the VSC web site. Use the Text File Upload Tool if uploading via the VSC web site. The text filename must include your contract number and the name of the file. The filename may not contain spaces. Format the filename as follows: "GS-07F-1234A_filename.xxx", where xxx is one of the formats allowed above.

The document filename must also be placed in the REF segment using the "TN" qualifier in the REF01 and the actual filename in the REF03. The filenames must match between the reference in the 832 and the actual Terms and Conditions document.

Submitting photos
For EDI contractors, the photo filename must be included in the 832 catalog file submission using the REF segment (2/040) with the "51" qualifier in the REF01. In order to accommodate up to an 80 character filename, use REF02 (up to 30) and then the remaining in REF03 or preferably put all of it in REF03 (80). You may repeat the REF segment up to 4 times if you wish to submit more than one photo for an item.

In order to delete a photo from Advantage, simply exclude the REF segment from the 832 catalog submission. Using Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP), EDI contractors will send their zipped photo files to their established SFTP mailbox using the naming structure 'contractnumber_photos.zip'. The .zip file will also contain an 'email.txt' file containing ONLY the email address of the person submitting the photo file. Any validation errors will be emailed back to the email address provided in the .txt file.

More information can be found in our EDI Photo Guidelines.

Common EDI problems to avoid:

- Please ensure that if the following symbols are used as delimiters in your EDI submissions, that you not include them within your data: *, ~, @
- Make sure to include at a minimum the following line item (LIN) detail information:
  - MG: Manufacturer's part number
  - ZZ: Manufacturer's name
  - PD: Part number short description/Commodity name
  - CH: Country of origin
  - PI: Special Item Number (SIN)
- When stating the Federal Supply Schedule price (CTP segment with the D01 qualifier), please be sure to include a unit of issue (i.e. unit packaging).
- A name must be included with the PER that uses the AC qualifier (Administrator POC).

EDI help desk
For more information or for any questions regarding EDI, please call 703-605-9444 or via email at edistat@gsa.gov

_____