



Electronic invoicing and the Dutch central government

Compulsory for new contracts from 1 January 2017

This brochure informs suppliers about the how and why of sending electronic invoices to the Dutch central government.

Introduction

Each year companies send millions of invoices either by post or email (PDF) to the (central) government of the Netherlands. The manual handling of invoices is time consuming and costly for companies and central government alike. Electronic invoicing (e-billing) is a solution that offers benefits for both the sending and receiving parties.

Therefore, the central government in the Netherlands has, after consultation with the business community, made electronic invoicing compulsory for new contracts, starting 1 January 2017.

While suppliers with contracts earlier than 1 January 2017 are exempt from this requirement, they can voluntarily adopt e-billing in consultation with the relevant department. Suppliers who acquire their orders through the central government procurement system will continue to send their invoices in the customary manner.

What is an electronic invoice?

An electronic invoice is an electronic computer file (not being a PDF) containing structured data. The use of specific codes enables automated generation and processing of electronic invoices between various systems, making manual generation and processing a thing of the past.

The importance of electronic invoicing

Electronic invoicing streamlines the flow of invoices not only between trade partners, but also between suppliers and governments. The Netherlands cannot lag behind the surge in electronic invoicing currently experienced throughout Europe. Indeed, European guidelines determine that by November 2018 all government bodies in the European Union must be able to receive and process electronic invoices. This also applies to lower authorities such as municipalities, provinces and water boards, which must in their agreement state that electronic invoicing is compulsory.

Benefits of electronic invoicing:

- Easier: automated processing of invoice data
- Faster: no paper flow
- More accurate: no errors caused by manual processing
- Cheaper: no printing or postage costs
- Sustainable: reduced paper use and lower CO₂ emissions

Support by business organisations

To further reduce the regulatory and administrative burden, the private sector backs the decision to implement compulsory electronic invoicing by all suppliers to the central government. It has been agreed with umbrella organisations like VNO-NCW/MKB NL,

Bouwend Nederland, Nederland ICT, TLN, ZZP Nederland, SRA, ABU/SETU that the Dutch central government will play a leading role in advancing electronic invoicing in the Netherlands, both among government bodies and the private sector.

When to prepare for electronic invoicing?

Suppliers that have concluded a new contract with the Dutch central government from 1 January 2017 are required to adopt electronic invoicing.

Which electronic invoicing option should I use?

The central government can by contract lay down requirements for electronic invoicing, possibly including the use of a purchasing system. Also, requirements will be made of the content of the invoice. If you fail to meet these requirements, you run the risk of your invoice not being accepted for handling. If you do not have a contract or no electronic invoicing requirements have been laid down in your contract, you can choose from the following options.

Electronic invoicing helpdesk:

You can approach helpdesk-efactureren.nl with all your questions about electronic invoicing to the central government.

How to send an electronic invoice to the central government?

1. The invoicing portal of the central government

Here, you first log into a web portal to manually enter and send your invoice. The portal subsequently generates an electronic invoice and send it via Digipoort to the central government. Electronic invoicing via the invoicing portal is suitable for suppliers:

- with small invoice volumes
- that do not object to manual input in a portal

More information about access to the electronic invoicing portal

2. Link with Digipoort

Electronic invoicing via direct link with Digipoort is suitable for suppliers:

- sending large invoice volumes to the central government
- pursuing fully automated electronic invoice processes

More information about connecting to Digipoort

3. Submitting electronic invoices from your (accounting) software package via Simpler Invoicing

Most accounting and invoicing programs in the Netherlands support electronic invoicing. If your software supplier is a member of the Simpler-Invoicing community, you will be able to send electronic invoices to the central government. Simpler Invoicing

is connected to Digipoort. Verify whether your software is suitable and whether your supplier currently uses **Simplerinvoicing**.

The Simpler Invoicing foundation is a network of billing service providers and software companies that offer electronic invoicing solutions. This option is suitable for suppliers:

- that also want to send electronic invoices to other parties
- that want to send small and large invoice volumes
- seeking fully automated support of the electronic invoicing process


Go to Simpler Invoicing for more information about electronic invoicing

4. Electronic invoicing via a billing service provider

Suppliers can also make use of the electronic invoicing solutions provided by billing service providers with their own link to Digipoort. This way of sending electronic invoices is suitable for suppliers:

- sending medium-sized to large invoice volumes
- seeking fully automated support of the electronic invoicing process
- that cannot establish a direct Digipoort connection

More information about electronic invoicing is available from a billing service provider



When you start electronic invoicing to the central government via a direct link to Digipoort or through the SimplerInvoicing network please contact the appropriate department to verify that the invoices have been received and meet the applicable requirements for processing.

Existing agreements

A select number of suppliers has already been sending electronic invoices to the central government. Nothing will change for these suppliers, also not after 1 January 2017.

Contact the relevant government department to discuss a transition to the electronic invoicing options discussed in this brochure.

For further information on electronic invoicing:

Government.nl
Simplerinvoicing.org
Logius.nl

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