Crown Commercial Service

Navigating Management Information (MI) Templates - CCS Supplier Guidance

Standardising the MI Template Structure

CCS collects data from suppliers on each of its commercial agreements using MI templates; each agreement has a unique MI template.

Each commercial agreement has unique characteristics, such as its lot structure, and/or industry specific information. That is to say, for example, that an agreement for the provision of tyres would naturally require a different data structure to one for the provision of legal advice.

When putting a template in place, we must balance:

- The requirements of our database and data collection tool that must collect, store, and report on data across a wide range of industries.
- The supplier base in each industry and the data/structure of data that it is possible for suppliers to provide.
- The reporting/information needs of internal CCS teams and the wider government.

We strive to make templates as consistent and easy to use as possible within these constraints. To this end we aim to ensure that common fields have common names across all templates, and we work to simplify or remove redundant requirements when we refresh/replace expired agreements.

CCS MI templates are excel spreadsheets, made up of a number of colour coded tabs.

- Orange: indicates a tab where data is to be populated for submission.
- Red: indicates general guidance and product or service tables specific to this agreement
- Black: provides additional lookup tables outside of the product or service table. This also powers any dropdown functionality within the orange tabs of the template

Contracts	InvoicesRaised	URN Guidance Notes	Service Table	Lookups

Once populated, template files are submitted to the Report MI system (RMI). Once MI collection begins, submissions are required monthly, in arrears, for the lifetime of the agreement. If a supplier has not done any business on an agreement in any given month then it is not necessary to complete and submit a template file. Instead, the MI contact should log in to RMI and declare “No business”. Tasks are generated in RMI on the first of each month, with submissions to be completed by the fifth working day.

The Orange tabs:

Most commonly, there are one or two orange tabs. Contracts (in older templates referred to as OrdersReceived), and InvoicesRaised.

Contracts:

- This tab is not always present, it is only used when the tracking of long term pipeline information is relevant/useful for the agreement.
- The data on this tab typically includes identifying the customer, a brief contract/project/service/product description, a contract start and end date, an order channel (such as further competition or direct award) and a total value for the full duration of the contract.
- This information is used to capture a long term pipeline of work on the agreement. This allows CCS to forecast and track business through an agreement and improve our opportunity planning.
- Data should only be provided once for each piece of work, when the contract is awarded. If there is an amendment to a contract then the contract may be reported again, but it should only reflect the change in duration/value of the contract, not repeat the total value again.
- One of the fields will be a supplier reference number. This can be any reference that the supplier prefers (such as a PO number or an account number), but this same reference should then be used and reported against subsequent invoices, so that we can link invoices back to the original order, and so track the fulfillment of the contract.

An example structure:

Contract Reference Number	Customer Unique Reference Number (URN)	Customer Organisation Name	Lot Number	Contract Name	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date	Expected Total Order Value

InvoicesRaised:

- This tab is always present, it is used to record the invoiced spend charged to public sector customers using CCS agreements.
- The data typically includes identifying the customer, references to identify the contract, invoice, lot and product/service, and financial/billing information.
- This information is used to capture the live evidenced spend through commercial agreements, allowing us to track our progress against forecast, monitor supplier and customer compliance, and to invoice for the CCS management charge.
- Invoices reported should be with regard to the month of the submission only (i.e. May 2020 dated invoices should be submitted in the task labelled May 2020, which is to be completed in the first 5 working days of June 2020). Invoices should not be repeated, nor reported cumulatively. Credit notes should also be reported; expressed with a negative total value and quantity.

An example structure:

Supplier Reference Number	Customer Organisation Name	Customer Unique Reference Number (URN)	Customer Invoice/Credit Note Date	Customer Invoice/Credit Note Number	Lot Number	Product/Service Description	Unit of Measure	Quantity	Price per Unit	Total Cost (ex VAT)

Occasionally there are additional Orange tabs. These are only used rarely and are situational to the agreement. If you require further advice on completing any additional tabs please contact us for support (contact information is provided below).

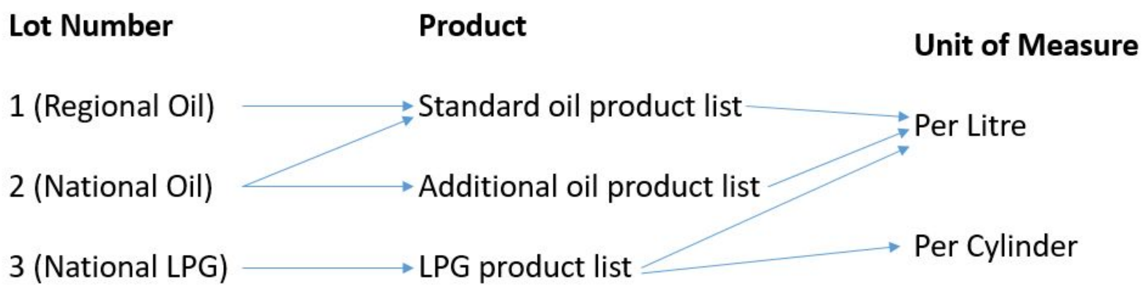
Field headers:

- The Column Name indicates what should be submitted in that field.
- The colour of the column indicates whether that field is mandatory (orange) - it must be completed for each row of data submitted, or optional/desirable (blue) - it can be left blank if it is not relevant, or no data is available.
- Mousing over a field header will result in a popup comment box appearing. This *tooltip* provides further detail on how that field should be populated. It details a description of the field, any formatting requirements/restrictions (such as character limit, decimal, date, etc.), and indicates if the content of that field is dependent on any preceding fields.

Dropdowns:

When completing a template by hand, the fields are arranged in a cascading progression from left to right on each row.

In some fields, there are dropdown boxes restricting the content of that field. The content of a field may depend on the preceding field, for example:



The content of these fields is sometimes restricted to specific wording so that it is possible to compare like for like items across many different suppliers. A vlookup, or similar, can be employed to convert any bespoke terms in your billing system into the terminology required in the template. Ensure that in the final file that you wish to upload, you have replaced any formulae with values only.

Automating template population:

For medium to large submissions, it is recommended that a report or more automated procedure is put in place to produce MI submissions without needing large amounts of manual effort. In order to do this effectively, it is useful to understand what RMI needs in order to read and understand a file submitted to it.

RMI checks the following progression for a submitted file:

Accept excel file type > Find orange tab(s) > Find valid fields headers > Check that the data in each row/field matches validated criteria.

If you are producing any partly or fully automated report, ensure the final file meets these criteria:

- It is a valid file type (.xls or .xlsx)
- It contains all the Orange tabs, with tab names unchanged (it can have extra tabs, these will be ignored)
- It contains all the fields expected within those tabs, with names unchanged (it can have extra fields, these will be ignored)
- The data under each heading matches the formatting restrictions of that field (date, decimal, integer, boolean, string, character limit)
- All mandatory fields are populated on any row that contains data.
- The data is raw absolute values only; ensure no formulae are present in place of the raw data in the file to be uploaded.
- Where values in a field are prescribed by a product or lookup table, the submitted data matches the table
- Cascaded or dependent fields line up with available options across a row.

Customer Unique Reference Numbers (URN's)

It is essential for CCS to be able to report on the activity of individual public sector bodies. In order to do this, we must be able to extract data from the MI at the customer level.

Because customer names are a free text string (subject typos, truncations, abbreviations and name changes) it is impossible to do this with a name alone. CCS provides a database of Unique Reference Numbers which map customer names for all public sector bodies to a set of integers. When completing an MI template it is necessary to align customer names with the CCS customer URN field using this list.

The complete list is available both within the RMI system, and on the CCS supplier guidance webpage.

Some guidance in using the list:

- In general, the list does not use abbreviations, so to find a customer on the list look for their full name.
- This is a CCS held list, Customers themselves are not normally aware of their reference and are not able to provide it.
- The list is kept updated with new bodies and closures/mergers. However, for the majority of customers the reference is static once a URN is assigned and you will not need to constantly update your references.
- If you have a customer who does not appear on the URN list, contact us for support.

Further Guidance and Contact Information:

Further guidance on the MI process and RMI system FAQ's are available on the CCS supplier guidance webpage and within your commercial agreement.

The CCS Tech support and the CCS MI Collection teams are available during office hours to support Suppliers in the completion of their MI submissions. We cover queries including but not limited to:

- Access permissions / technical inquiries for the RMI system
- URN inquiries/requests
- Template functionality/use requests and corrections/amendments to MI templates
- On or Off-boarding of supplier MI submissions for new and expired agreements respectively.

If you require assistance, please contact report-mi@crowncommercial.gov.uk and a member of the team will be happy to assist you.