ATHORA

Supplier Qualification Guide

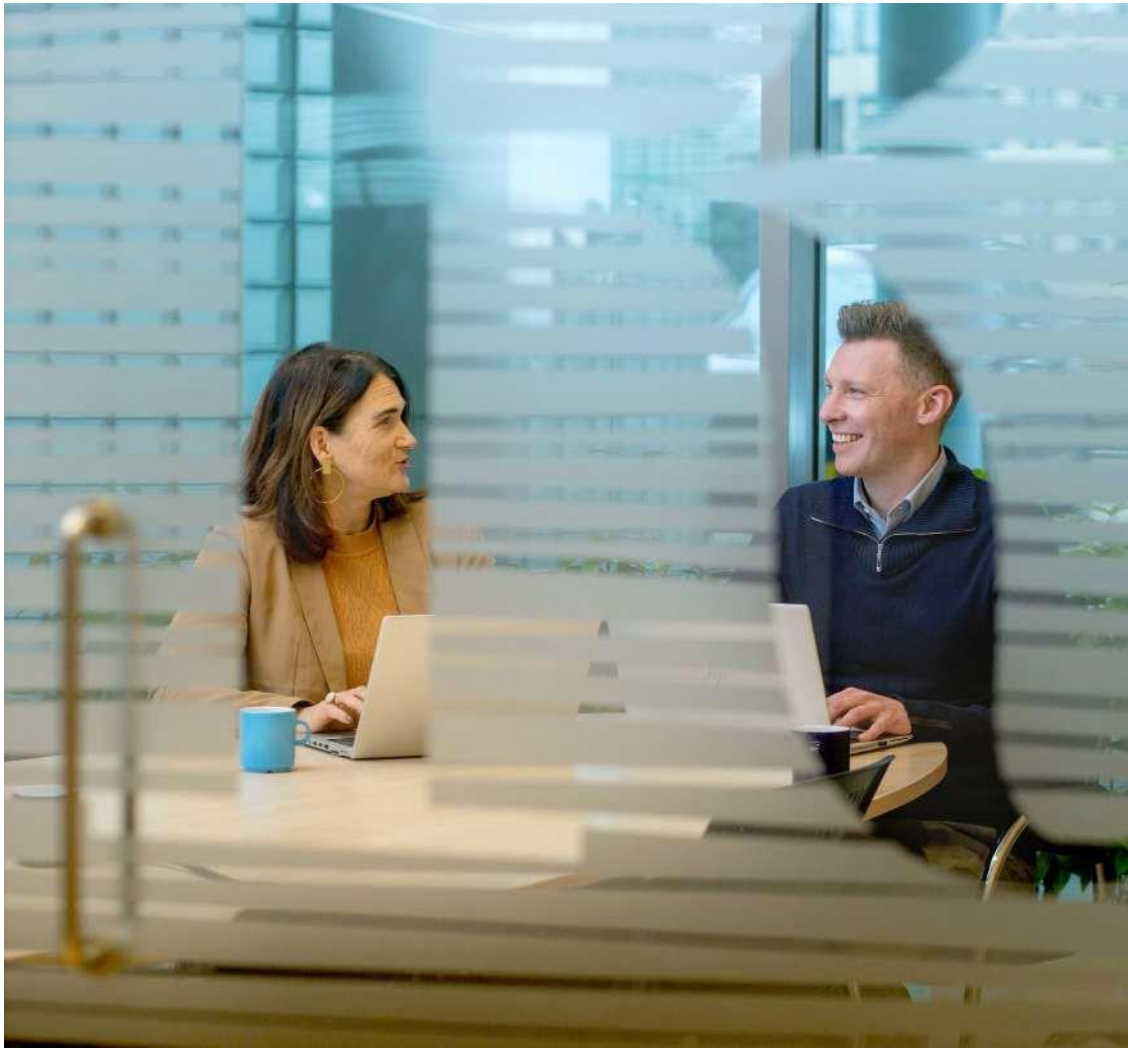
A Better Way of Working with Suppliers

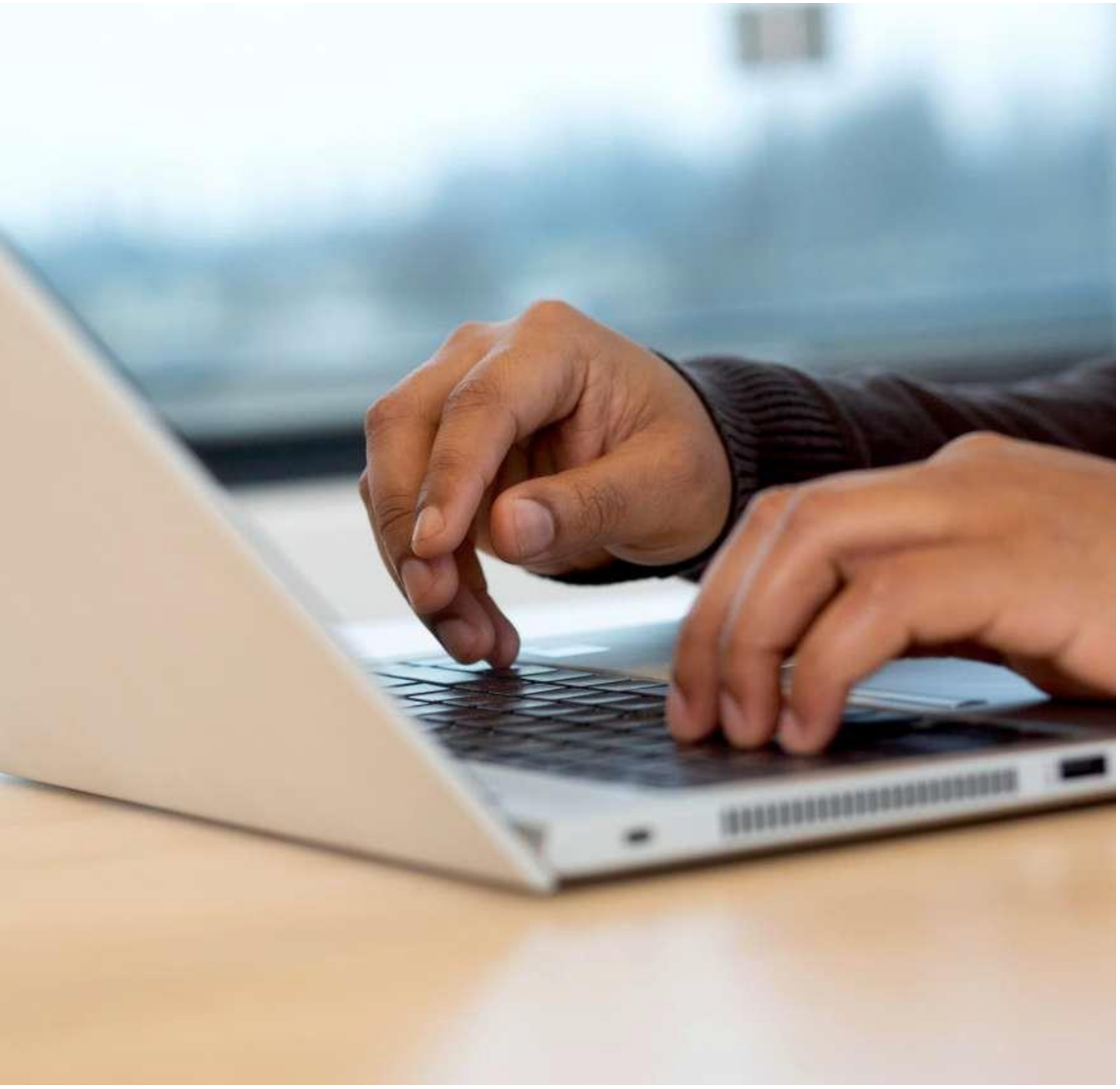
Athora introduces a new way of collaborating that will make it easier for our suppliers to do business with us.

Athora has implemented the Hellios Financial Supplier Qualification System (FSQS-UK&I) to standardise and manage compliance and assurance data. In doing so, we join other major financial services companies that have already implemented FSQS-UK&I.

As regulations become more complex, we want to be able to work responsibly with our suppliers to minimise risk and protect customers. FSQS-UK&I makes that possible by providing a standard and simple mechanism for collecting and managing supplier assurance information within Athora. FSQS-UK&I is also an integral part of our sourcing process.

Our Suppliers managers use the system to find pre-qualified suppliers for new orders. A qualified supplier status provides insight into our sourcing process, creating potential new business opportunities.





Benefits for our Suppliers

- Our suppliers can use a single online process for submitting assurance and compliance data. As a result, you will receive fewer duplicate requests from Athora and other financial services parties to whom you provide goods and services.

- The compliance requirements are proportionate to the products and services you provide.

- You have access to an online vendor profile that can be updated throughout the year to demonstrate continued compliance with our policies.

- As a qualified vendor, you do not have to provide assurance information every time you bid with us.

How to Gain Qualification?

There are two levels of qualification. Stage 1 Qualification collects basic information about your organisation and is used to determine whether Stage 2 Qualification is necessary, based on the nature of the goods or services being supplied. For example, if a supplier deals directly with our customer data, then they will be asked to demonstrate how they comply with relevant regulatory requirements.

A Simple Two-stage Process to Qualify

Stage 1 Qualification

Suppliers will receive an email invitation to complete an online questionnaire. The invitation will come from Hellios, an external partner who has been appointed to collect and administer the data on behalf of Athora. The questionnaire should take around one hour to complete. This information will allow us to determine whether your organisation only requires Stage 1 Qualification or is required to also complete Stage 2 qualification.

Stage 2 Qualification

Stage 2 requires the completion of a more detailed online questionnaire and, in some areas, may require the provision of supporting evidence. To make the process as efficient as possible, most of the questions have selectable answer options rather than requiring lengthy written responses, and no proprietary, contractual or pricing information will be asked. This stage typically covers your policies and practice in areas such as:

- Anti-Bribery
- Sanction
- Remuneration
- Customer Treatment
- Products & Sales
- Anti-money Laundering & CFT
- Health & Safety
- Whistleblowing
- Business Continuity
- Information Security
- Cyber Security
- Records Management
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Environmental
- Data Management
- GDPR
- Physical Security
- Operational Resiliency
- IT Asset Management
- Conduct Risk

Funding

Funding of FSQS-UK&I is shared by Athora and the other Financial Services organisations that will use the system, and larger suppliers. If your organisation is an autonomous small, or micro-sized enterprise (SME*), then registration on FSQS-UK&I is subsidised 100%, i.e. there is no charge.

For those organisations where Stage 2 of the process is required an annual fee is payable directly to our external partner Hellios. Micro and small organisations are fully subsidised by the community with no fee payable. Medium sized organisatons are partially subsidised and are required to pay an annual fee. Click here to find out more.

Following Stage 2 qualification, Athora may wish to conduct further assurance activities including an on-site audit. This will be conducted by Athora and will incur no further fees.

Timelines for Qualification

Existing suppliers to Athora are given up to eight weeks to complete qualification for the first time, to allow sufficient time for familiarisation with the new questionnaires and process. However, we expect most suppliers will be capable of completing qualification in significantly less time. Suppliers bidding for new business with Athora may need to complete the qualification much more quickly in accordance with procurement timescales. Hellios will advise the deadline dates for completion in the FSQS-UK&I email communications that will be issued.

* An SME is defined as an enterprise which has less than 250 employees and/or a turnover of less than €50m (including any consolidated figures should the enterprise belong to a group of companies).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why has Athora introduced a Financial Supplier Qualification System?

Suppliers told us that our process for collecting compliance and assurance information was complex and time consuming. The introduction of an online system simplifies the process for suppliers to submit information and prevents suppliers receiving multiple requests from Athora for qualification data. It is also important that we (your organisation and Athora) can demonstrate to our stakeholders that we are working together responsibly to minimise risk across our supply chain to protect our customers. As the regulatory environment we operate in becomes more complex, it is vital that we have a robust system in place to support the collection and maintenance of Supplier Assurance data and respond to regulatory change.

2. Who is Hellios?

Hellios Information B.V is based in the Netherlands. The team has extensive experience in collecting and maintaining supplier information on behalf of a number of global blue-chip companies.

3. What is the role of Hellios?

Athora has appointed Hellios to collect and administer Supplier Assurance related data on behalf of the Athora. Hellios will collect and check the data provided by suppliers and ensure the data is maintained on the Financial Services Supplier Qualification System (FSQS-UK&I). Hellios is an approved supplier of Athora Hellios does not assess a supplier's suitability for qualification. That decision rests with Athora.

4. How does Hellios protect the data we provide?

The FSQS-UK&I application, infrastructure and data storage is hosted in the EU in data centres that are SSAE18 SOC2 and ISO27001 certified. Encryption to the latest industry standards is employed. Hellios ensures the limited amount of personal data collected is fully compliant with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Hellios is certified to ISO27001 and Cyber Essentials Plus, the National Cyber Security Centre standard backed by the UK Government.

5. Do we have to register each of our legal entities separately?

Yes, your organisation is required to register any legal entity that submits an invoice to Athora.

6. Can any supplier apply for qualification?

No, qualification is by invitation only.

Frequently Asked Questions

7. **Will other suppliers have access to the information we provide?**
No, other suppliers will not have access to the information you provide.

8. **Will assurance information be available across Athora?** Yes, one of the benefits of the new system is that suppliers' assurance information will be available to other areas in Athora. This will reduce requests for duplicate information from us.

9. **Will I be asked to provide pricing information on my company's products and services?**
No, your organisation will not be asked to provide any commercial information of this nature.

10. **If I'm required to apply for Stage 2 Qualification, how do I pay the fee to Hellios?**
Hellios will provide full details of the payment options available however we recommend suppliers make an online payment to Hellios so that you can submit the questionnaire as soon as possible.

11. **How long is qualification valid for?**
The qualification must be renewed annually, all the answers will be pre-populated to facilitate the process. Hellios will issue reminders to suppliers several weeks in advance of their qualification expiry deadline.

12. **How long does it take to complete qualification?**
Typically, we find it takes less than one business day to enter the information in the system (if you are asked to complete both stages). However, the time required to collate the information varies dependent on the size of an organisation. Larger organisations often have to source the data from a number of internal departments and therefore we're giving existing suppliers approximately eight weeks to complete qualification.

13. **As an existing supplier, what happens if I fail to apply for qualification within the assigned timelines?**
Suppliers will be fully supported by Hellios throughout the qualification process. However, failure to complete qualification will result in a supplier being classified as non-compliant in our internal systems.

14. **Who can I contact for further information?**
Please contact Hellios Supplier email: fsqs@hellios.com or telephone +44 (0) 1865 959120 8h30 - 17h30 GMT, Monday to Friday.