Ecology
Building Society

The Hellios Financial Supplier Qualification System

A Guide for Ecology Building Society Suppliers

Introduction

Ecology Building Society is committed to working with suppliers that share our values and are committed to responsible business practices.

To achieve this, we need to collect certain information from those we work with. To make this process as simple as possible, we use the Hellios Financial Supplier Qualification System (FSQS). This helps to easily manage our requests for compliance and assurance data and demonstrates to our stakeholders that we're minimising risk and protecting our customers.

It also means that our Supplier Managers can use this system to quickly identify pre-qualified suppliers for new business opportunities. Therefore, by achieving qualifying supplier status, you will be at the forefront of potential new business opportunities with Ecology.

Benefits for you

A single online process to submit assurance and compliance data – reducing duplicate requests from Ecology Building Society and other financial services customers who you provide goods and services to.

Ensuring you need only adhere to compliance requirements that are proportionate to the products and services being provided.

The creation of an online supplier profile, which can be updated throughout the year to demonstrate your ongoing compliance with our policies.

Qualification means you won't have to provide assurance information each time you bid for business 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 Ecology's customer data, then they'll need to demonstrate how they comply with relevant regulatory requirements, which would necessitate a Stage 2 Qualification.

Undertaking Stage 1 Qualification

You'll receive an email invitation to complete an online questionnaire. The invitation will come from Hellios. The questionnaire should take around one hour to complete. This information will allow us to either provide qualified status or to determine if we need more details by undertaking Stage 2 Qualification.

Undertaking Stage 2 Qualification

For Stage 2, you'll need to provide more details through an additional questionnaire. You may also need to provide additional supporting evidence. To make the process as efficient as possible, all the questions have selectable answer options rather than requiring lengthy written responses. No proprietary, contractual or pricing information will be asked. This stage typically covers your policies and practice in areas such as:

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

Timeline and Fees

Timelines for qualification

Existing suppliers to Ecology Building Society have up to eight weeks to complete qualification for the first time, which allows familiarisation with the new questionnaires and process. Suppliers bidding for new business with Ecology Building Society may need to complete the qualification much more quickly in accordance with procurement timescales. Hellios will advise the deadline dates for Stage 1 and, if required, Stage 2 completion in the FSQS email communications issued.

Fees

For all organisations taking part in the FSQS Stage 1 questionnaire there is no fee. Funding of FSQS is shared by Ecology Building Society and the other Financial Services organisations that use the system, together with the larger and medium suppliers who pay an annual fee.

For large organisations where Stage 2 of the process is required an annual fee is payable directly to our external partner, Hellios.
If your organisation is an autonomous small, or micro-sized enterprise, then registration on FSQS is 100% subsidised (i.e. there is no charge), medium sized organisations pay around 60% subsidised. Please click here for more information.

Following Stage 2 qualification, Ecology Building Society may wish to conduct further assurance activities including an on-site audit. This will be conducted by Ecology Building Society and may incur further fees.

FAQs

1. Why has Ecology Building Society 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 Ecology for qualification data. It is also important that Ecology Building Society and your organisation 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 Management Ltd is a UK based company. The team has extensive experience in collecting and maintaining supplier data on behalf of a number of global and UK companies.

3. What is the role of Hellios?

Ecology Building Society has appointed Hellios to collect and administer Supplier Assurance related data on behalf of the Society. Hellios will collect and check the data provided by suppliers and ensure the data is maintained on the Financial Supplier Qualification System. Hellios is an approved supplier of Ecology Building Society. Hellios does not assess a supplier's suitability for qualification. That decision rests with Ecology Building Society.

FAQs

4. How does Hellios protect the data we provide?

The FSQS application, infrastructure and data storage is hosted exclusively in the UK in data centres that are SSAE18 SOC2 and ISO27001 certified. Encryption to the latest industry standards is employed, along with cyber security measures such as weekly scans and penetration testing. 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 Ecology Building Society.

6. Can any supplier apply for qualification?

No, qualification is by invitation only.

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 Ecology Building Society?

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

FAQs

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 for immediate access to the Stage 2 assessment.

11. How long is qualification valid for?

The renewal date is set at one year after Stage 1 Qualification has been granted. For suppliers that are required to also complete Stage 2 Qualification, the renewal date is set one year after your Stage 2 questionnaire has been issued. 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're 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.

FAQs

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. Why have I been asked to complete Service Specific Questions (SSQs)?

Some suppliers might be asked to complete SSQs, depending on the business service they offer to their customer. The nomination of a supplier to complete SSQs is entirely at the buyer community's discretion regarding which suppliers are nominated to respond to these questions.

15. Who can I contact for further information?

Please contact Hellios Supplier email: fsqs@hellios.com or telephone 01865 959120 8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday