The Federal Government's invoice submission platforms

Information for suppliers and service providers of contracting authorities

Because of new regulations on invoice processing in the federal administration, it is **now possible** to send your contracting authority in the federal administration an electronic invoice. Until 27 November 2020, it is up to you whether to submit your invoices in digital or paper form;

however, starting 27 November 2020, you will be required to send your invoices to the federal administration electronically.

This requirement does not apply in case of certain exceptions: for example, it will still be possible to submit invoices in paper form for a direct contract valued at up to €1,000 net. Further exceptions are given in Section 3 of the federal E-Invoicing Ordinance (*E-Rechnungsverordnung*, ERechV).[1]

What is an electronic invoice?

As defined in the E-Invoicing Ordinance and in Directive 2014/55/EU on electronic invoicing in public procurement, an electronic invoice is an invoice that has been issued, transmitted and received in a structured electronic format which allows for its automated and electronic processing. So an **electronic invoice cannot be** an image file or a simple **PDF document**.

The requirements are based on the European standard EN 16931 and the German specifications implemented in the **XRechnung standard** for invoicing in public procurement in German public administration.

XRechnung can also be used for submitting invoices to state and local contracting authorities. The latest version of the standard is available free of charge.[2]

An electronic invoice compliant with the XRechnung standard is a structured, standardized XML data record. Data from such invoices can be processed digitally in an accounting system, and all related documents can be embedded in the invoice.

Where can I submit an electronic invoice to the federal administration?

Electronic invoices using the XRechnung standard for contracts with the **direct federal administration** can be transmitted free of charge using the federal Central Invoice Submission Portal (ZRE). Electronic invoices for contracts with the **indirect federal administration** (such as foundations and authorities under public law) can be transmitted using the federal Invoice Submission Portal which complies with the Online Access Act (OZG-RE). **The contracting authority will inform you which platform to use.**

Electronic invoices created using other standards will also be accepted as long as they comply with the European standard, the conditions of use for the invoice submission platform in question and the requirements of the federal E-Invoicing Ordinance.

The platforms can be accessed at beta.bund.de or directly at **xrechnung.bund.de** (**ZRE**) and **xrechnung-bdr.de** (**OZG-RE**), where you can register as a user. The registration process is very similar to that of other Internet platforms.

After entering all the necessary data and accepting the conditions of use and the privacy statement, a link to activate your registration will be sent to the e-mail address you provided. Clicking on the link completes the registration process and activates your user account.

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[1] https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/gesetztestexte/e-rechnungsverordnung.html

[2] https://www.xoev.de/die_standards/xrechnung-16828

How do I submit an electronic invoice using the platform?

You can submit your invoice using one of the following three options:

- *Web-based data entry:* You can create and send electronic invoices directly and manually using a web form, then download them to save.

- *Upload:* You can upload and send electronic invoices you have created yourself.

- *E-mail:* You can also submit electronic invoices you have created yourself to the ZRE by sending them via e-mail to **xrechnung@portal.bund.de**. **If you are using the OZG-RE, after registering you will receive an individual e-mail address to use for submitting invoices.** For the ZRE, you will have to select this option when managing your user data and supply your e-mail address.

To offer the greatest possible flexibility in submitting electronic invoices via the ZRE, two additional transmission channels are being developed and will be available in future.

- *PEPPOL:* You will be able to submit electronic invoices from within your own software via automated information exchange (machine-to-machine communication). To do so, you will have to select this option when managing your user data in the ZRE.

- *De-Mail:* It will also be possible to submit electronic invoices using De-Mail. The same requirements will apply as for submission via e-mail.

It is up to you to choose which option is best for you. You can select your preferred transmission channel based on your technical environment when managing your user data in the ZRE.

What must I pay attention to when creating my own electronic invoices?

If you can create your own electronic invoices, you may submit them via upload or e-mail (or in future via PEPPOL or De-Mail). When creating electronic invoices compliant with the XRechnung standard or the European standard EN 16931, you must provide the following information required by Section 5 of the E-Invoicing Ordinance:

Information required by Section 5 of the federal E-Invoicing Ordinance	To be entered in the following fields of an XRechnung (see XRechnung version 1.1)
Routing ID	BT-10 (BT = Business Term or information element)**
Bank details	For bank transfer: BG-17 (BT-84 to BT-86) For direct debit: BG-19 (BT-89 to BT-91) BG = Business Group or group of information elements
Terms of payment	BT-20 and/or BT-9
E-mail or De-Mail	BT-43
Supplier number*	BT-29
Order number*	BT-13

*If provided by the contracting authority.
**BT fields and BG groups are used to identify and categorize information elements in an invoice.

How does my invoice reach the correct recipient?

To make sure that your electronic invoice can be forwarded from the platform to the intended recipient, you must provide the **routing ID**, which is the recipient's unique identifier. Your contracting authority will provide you with its routing ID. If not, ask your contracting authority.

How can I check the status of electronic invoices I've submitted?

After you submit your electronic invoice, the platform immediately checks whether the invoice data are complete and meet the formal requirements so they can be processed.

No matter which transmission channel you use to submit invoices, you can check the status of your invoices in your user account. If you use PEPPOL, you will also receive an automated reply indicating the status of your invoice after you open the interface.

Where can I enter information about discounts?

Information about discounts can be entered in the field "terms of payment" (BT-20). In the web-based data entry form, this information can be entered in the field "discounts and other terms of payment".

Can I add attachments to an electronic invoice?

You can add up to 200 attachments to your electronic invoice by embedding them in the XML file. Electronic attachments can be up to 10 MB for transmission via e-mail or De-Mail, up to 11 MB for web-based data entry, and up to 15 MB for uploads. The following types of attachments are possible:

- PDF files
- Image files (PNG, JPEG)
- Text files (CSV)
- Excel sheets (XLSX)
- OpenDocument tables (ODS)

How can I help make sure I am paid on time?

To ensure optimal automated processing of your invoice, it helps to avoid using symbols that are not permitted in financial transactions, such as /, § and %.

Note on existing and new contracts

We recommend concluding new contracts in a form compliant with the federal E-Invoicing Ordinance and checking whether existing contracts comply with the formal requirements of the Ordinance.

Where can I find more information?

You can find more information on the XRechnung standard on the website of the Coordination Office for IT Standards (KoSIT).
The website of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community also has helpful information for invoice senders.

Where can I find help if I have more questions or problems?

Help is available to answer your questions about electronic invoicing and the federal invoice submission portals.

Questions about the ZRE:
Telephone: +49 228 99 681 1 01 01
The telephone helpline is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 16:00.

Questions about the OZG-RE:
E-mail: sendersupport-xrechnung@bdr.de

If you have questions about the routing ID number, whether to use the ZRE or OZG-RE and the like, please contact your contracting authority.

Information about this document

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