The UK e-Invoicing Advocacy Group was set up in 2010 as a self-funded initiative of industry associations, public sector bodies and solution providers to promote e-Invoicing in the UK public and private sectors. **Our mission is to help UK public bodies and commercial enterprises of all sizes save money** and understand the benefits of replacing paper invoices with wholly electronic transactions.

It is our intention to champion and advocate widespread adoption of electronic invoicing between buyers and sellers of goods and services. The UKeAG promotes the benefits of e-Invoicing to the UK Public Sector and the wider UK economy, meeting regularly at the Houses of Parliament and the Department for Business. As the official UK forum on e-Invoicing, sponsored by the Department for Business, we delegate the UK participants that provide expert input to the current EU Commission Multi-Stakeholder Forum. Our UK delegates lead the working group on best practice within EU Commission Forum and our participation ensures that emerging EU policy and regulation supports UK public and private interests.

We are committed to help commercial enterprises and public bodies of all shapes and sizes to understand the business case and benefits for electronic invoice adoption, in particular reducing the administrative burden on small and medium-sized enterprises and to promote a lively and innovative UK market for the provision of relevant solutions and services. The benefits of electronic invoicing are clear;

- *Substantial cost savings through reduction in manual work, material and transport costs.*

- *Additional cost savings from fraud and loss prevention, and lower auditing costs for trading parties and tax authorities.*

- *Enabling of accelerated payments, improved cash flow and reduced credit losses for both large and small enterprises. E-Invoicing could unlock the potential for new collateralised lending services at a time of subdued growth in traditional credit products, especially for SMEs.*

- *Raising productivity and customer satisfaction in both the public and the private sector, and improving UK competitiveness overall.*

- *Enabling workforce transition to more productive activities and a learning vehicle to increased use of electronic practices throughout the public and private sectors.*

- *A direct contribution to carbon savings and resultant environmental gains*

Through this series of case studies the UK e-Invoicing Advocacy Group aim to show that electronic invoice automation is not a new concept, and that best-in-class organisations are gaining competitive advantage.

London Borough of Camden: Supporting RBS e-Invoicing in the Public Sector

As part of a project to streamline purchase to pay operations, the London Borough of Camden is using RBS's Accounts Payable e-Invoicing service, which is fully integrated with their Cedar Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

Camden's Head of Purchase to Pay, Andrew Coulson, says the move is a win-win both for the Council and its suppliers. "Ending manual handling of paper invoices has reduced our costs by over £250k per annum. It speeds up processing of invoices, so suppliers get paid promptly and ensures their invoices are compliant with our requirements."

The importance of supplier on-boarding

Approximately 90 per cent of the suppliers Camden initially identified for e-Invoicing are now submitting their invoices electronically. With RBS e-Invoicing, critical mass is important to achieve maximum benefits, but on-boarding suppliers can sometimes be a challenge for organisations. RBS's service eases the path by offering connection options to suit suppliers with varying IT capabilities.

> Summary…
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> Cost control: staff and processing costs reduced by £250k per annum.
>
> Efficiency: paper handling eliminated; faster processes, fewer queries.
>
> Compliance: contractual and VAT compliance is built into the process.

"Our service is ERP and data format agnostic," says Saeed Rezavi, Head of e-Invoicing at RBS. "Suppliers can upload invoices from their existing system or EDI provider, use the ebPrinter application to 'print' from their accounting system to the hub, or use the Webscreen/Document Flip feature to create their e-Invoices." RBS provides comprehensive on-boarding support and, unlike some other e-Invoicing solutions, does not charge suppliers to use the service. Users can view documents on the RBS e-Invoicing hub at any time, via the internet.

Removing paper, reducing waste

To assist buying organisations in maximising their paper reduction and process efficiencies, RBS also offers a complete invoice scan and capture service. Suppliers send their invoice to a PO Box address, where the paper invoice is scanned, validated and enriched, and if necessary, referred to a manual acceptance desk to resolve queries. Camden has recently implemented this service with 4,300 suppliers as it also helps to migrate many of them to full electronic invoicing.

Compliance matters

RBS e-Invoicing is helping Camden to embed contractual compliance into its accounts payable process. Invoices received through the service are secure, digitally signed and compliant with HMRC VAT requirements. To be accepted, the invoices must also meet Camden's purchase order requirements. The unique Inbox/Outbox Workflow feature of RBS's e-Invoicing service strengthens the control over document content and quality for both sides to the transaction.

> "RBS's on-boarding team has been exceptional in the way it works – a recent survey showed suppliers to be very positive about the on-boarding process and the transition from paper to electronic and confirmed that they are achieving immediate savings."

Andrew Coulson, Head of Purchase to Pay, London Borough of Camden

Suppliers may view pro forma invoices in the system before submitting and buyers are able to approve, reject or query invoices after receipt in their Inbox. Colin Lowen, Director, Local Government, Corporate & Institutional Banking, RBS, states: "Camden has been extremely proactive in promoting e-Invoicing to their supply chain. Invoices are now delivered electronically, directly into Camden's ERP system, enabling greater visibility and faster payment processing".

Payback achieved

The average implementation time for the e-Invoicing solution is three months and Camden achieved return on its investment in well under a year. Now all incremental savings go straight to the bottom line, supporting the provision of public services in the borough.

The UK e-Invoicing advocacy group meets on a regular basis and operates in an entirely non-competitive, cooperative space. Our meetings are inclusive of both public and private sector stakeholder interests. We operate in an open, transparent and informal manner.

Whilst addressing an area requiring strategic transformation, the group adopts scoped and realistic objectives. Initiatives undertaken are agreed among the group to be concrete, feasible and effective and their execution always closely monitored.