

Technical Services Guide

Introduction

This guide summarises the process of becoming a new supplier and our requirements on data, quality, safety and legality. It provides a general view of what we expect our suppliers to adhere to and is not intended to be exhaustive. Any limitations identified by the supplier should be highlighted early in the approval process.

Full details of our policies are available in the password-protected area of the Bidfood supplier website. Log ins are activated following receipt and approval of our pre supply screening documents. Should you have any questions relating to the content of this summary please do not hesitate to contact us, details can be found at the end of this document.

Technical Services Department

Responsible for all product information and technical matters. This includes supplier and product screening, verifying certifications, food and product information, quarantines, recalls, complaints and general food and policy advice. We do request a high level of data from our suppliers but this ensures we can supply all products to products to all customers.

Technical Services work with Group Commercial and Supply Chain to bring new products to our business.

Supplier Approval – ALL Suppliers

Definitions:

- Branded – Any supplier or product produced under the suppliers chosen name and packaging
- Own brand - Any supplier or product produced for Bidfood in Bidfood packaging

All suppliers will be required to complete and submit the **pre-supply screening checklist**. Once commercial approval is received, the supplier should download and complete the **Supplier Approval Questionnaire (SAQ)**. Suppliers are encouraged to read the covering letter tab of the questionnaire carefully; it explains all the relevant documents required for submission alongside the return of the questionnaire. It also details the sections that need to be completed dependent on the products being supplied.

All suppliers are required to be fully compliant with all necessary and appropriate **UK and EU regulations** for the products being supplied.

We require all suppliers to have a fully integrated quality management system in place. It shall demonstrate that products are produced safely, legally and consistently. Copies of policies from the suppliers' Quality Management systems shall be made available to Bidfood on request.

Alcohol suppliers are required to be registered under the **Alcohol Wholesale Registration Scheme (AWRS)** and hold an AWRS number.

Ethical trading is an integral part of Bidfood's approach. All suppliers are expected to be fully compliant with the **UK Modern Slavery Act 2015** where appropriate. All suppliers should have, as a minimum, an ethical policy aligned with the ETI Base code, but membership to **SEDEX, BSCI or SA8000** is preferred.

Third Party Accreditation Requirements – ALL Suppliers

We require all suppliers to be approved to an internationally recognised standard such as **BRC, IFS or equivalent**, via an accredited independent auditing body. The certification **MUST** be given for the production site and the certification scope **MUST** include the relevant product categories. If you are an Agent or Broker and have 3rd party certification, please submit this too.

We are aware that some suppliers and businesses may not work towards the above standards due to cost or necessity. Therefore we may accept alternative accredited certifications, such as SALSA, for suppliers of **branded, low risk products**, where the supplier has <50 staff and an annual turnover of <£8.2 million. Only after a full review and risk assessment has been undertaken

If you are unsure if you meet these requirements, please let your Bidfood contact know as soon as possible so we can confirm if what you hold is acceptable.

Approval Document Submission – ALL Suppliers

During the approval process, all suppliers must complete the Bidfood supplier approval questionnaire. The questions you answer will depend if you are going to be a branded or own brand supplier. As a minimum, all suppliers must submit the following documents with their completed questionnaire:

- 3rd Party Food Safety Accreditation Certificate
- Ethical Policies

Full details of the required documents are detailed on the supplier approval questionnaire.

Product Labelling Requirements – ALL Suppliers

We require all suppliers to **adhere to our outer case and product labelling requirements**. These are detailed fully in the document **Suppliers Charter** available in the password-protected area, but should include:

- Name of food
- List of ingredients (and QUID where necessary)
- Allergens correctly emphasised
- Nutritional information
- Storage and usage instructions
- Durability and traceability information (such as batch code and best before date)
- Net weight
- Name and address of manufacturer/packer/seller
- Country of origin/provenance
- Appropriate barcoding

Specific labelling requirements for own brand products are detailed in the **Supplier Technical Manual** found in the secure area of the supplier portal.

No over-labelling of product will be accepted by Bidfood, unless agreed by category management, with the exception of Signature products.

Bidfood Supplier Performance Monitoring – ALL suppliers

Our Technical Services department value working with compliant suppliers and the benefit of those that maintain approval status include reduced audit frequency (own brand sites) and reduced requests for supporting technical information. However, in the event of a non-conformance your supplier status will be reviewed. In addition to this, the Buyer and Category Teams will be formally notified of the issue.

Product Information Requirements – ALL suppliers

To facilitate customer choice Bidfood provides product information to its customers through a variety of sources. These include the Bidfood Direct ordering website, via our Advice Centre, brochures and marketing collateral.

Some customers are compelled by legislation, publicly supported guidelines, NHS and/or Local Authorities to request detailed product information. They require information such as vitamin and mineral content, information relating to Government Buying Standards (GBS) and the Catering Mark's Food for Life program.

Providing this data to our customers enables Bidfood to sell all our products, to all of our customers.

We therefore require all suppliers to provide extensive product information on all products.

Supplier must provide these details (circa 200 attributes) on the **Bidfood New Line Form**, which is only available to authorised suppliers on the secure area of the Bidfood supplier website. The accuracy of the information is critical to Bidfood and our customers. Discrepancies in information between what is given on the new line form and what is declared on the product label are chargeable and may result in a quarantine or recall depending on the issue.

Our New Line Form should be downloaded from the supplier website every time a new listing is required to ensure the correct version is used. Completed forms should be returned to the Bidfood Group Commercial team.

All information provided will be uploaded onto the Bidfood product database used to generate information for our customers. Partially completed sheets will be rejected back for completion and slow the approval process.

Should product information ever change, the same forms needs to be downloaded, completed and resubmitted to ensure we always holds accurate data.

Customers may sometimes request detailed information not usually captured by Bidfood and therefore our Advice Centre team may contact you for clarification.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SUPPLIER TO ENSURE BIDFOOD TECHNICAL SERVICES IS UPDATED WITH ANY CHANGES TO EITHER PRODUCT INFORMATION OR SUPPLYING SITES AHEAD OF ANY CHANGES COMING INTO EFFECT

Failure to update Bidfood with changes, particularly in regards to allergens, may result in a quarantine and/or recall of product including invoices for associated costs of such actions.
Discrepancies in allergen information is chargeable at £1400 per product.***

In addition, if misleading claims relating to certifications for example MSC, RSPO, Red Tractor are made in error on the New Line Form which are later identified by Bidfood these products will be managed via our Quarantine and Recall procedures.

***£1500 If more than 3 errors associated with incorrect allergen information per supplier in a Bidfood financial year

N.B. Bidfood financial year – start date 1st July to end date 30th June

Data Validation – ALL Suppliers

Submitted product information goes through some validation rules to remove any errors prior to submission.

Should we have a query regarding the submitted information, you will be alerted by a member of our Technical team who will ask you to confirm a particular piece of information.

Typical queries include:

- 'Does Not Contain' chosen against Gluten Status attribute, yet ingredients list contains 'Wheat'
- Confirmation that sodium has been provided as mg/100g; normally we challenge any value submitted of less than 1 as it is likely that this is a measurement in g/100g

Ethics and Sustainability

Our suppliers are expected to apply the principles of the ETI (Ethical Trading Initiative) and relevant ILO (International Labour Organisation) standards and conventions. Companies applying these standards are expected to comply with national law and to apply best level of protection. In order to demonstrate adherence to these principles suppliers will be expected to supply details prior to approval (contained within SAQ). We require all suppliers to provide ethical details on their products and their supply chains on request. **Compliance to the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015 is essential for those suppliers who are within scope of the Act.**

By supplying Bidfood, you warrant that you will not create, use, sell or distribute 'blocklists' (or blacklists) of anyone with a history of trade union or whistleblowing activity for either employees, agency staff or contractors.

Packaging Material Requirements

Bidfood requires all suppliers to adhere to the Packaging Producer Responsibility Regulations and the essential requirements. Information is regularly requested and must be made available to Bidfood or our appointed 'Third Party' on behalf of Bidfood.

All packaging items that have contact with food (including disposable packaging) must have been tested to ensure compliance with EC Regulation No 1935/2004 and any specific derivatives such as those for:

- Plastics – EU Regulation No 10/2011 to update 2020/1245
- Recycled Plastics and materials intended to come into contact with food – EC Regulation No 282/2008, and also in accordance with EU Regulation No. No 10/2011
- Regenerated cellulose

Suppliers must be able to provide evidence of compliance on request (e.g. test certificate from an independent UKAS approved laboratory)

In line with Extended Producer Responsibilities and Bidfood's sustainability pledges, we will no longer accept products which contain the following packaging materials.

- Poly Vinyl Chloride (PVC)
- Polystyrene (PS) including Expanded (EPS) and High Impact (HIPS)
- All Oxo Biodegradable Plastics

To aid with packaging end-of-life sorting and to promote a Circular Economy the following should be observed:

- All Plastics must be NIR (Near Infra-Red) Detectable.
- 'Black' Plastics will only be accepted if it is certified NIR Detectable by a third-party testing facility.
- Where it is possible only Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), Polyethylene (PE) or Polypropylene (PP) should be used for plastic packaging.
- Where it is possible use single polymer solutions for plastic packaging (e.g. HDPE Container with PE Label or band).
- Where single polymer solutions are not achievable, ensure that labels or bands are kept to a minimum size and do not cover more than 60% of plastic packaging surface.
- Board should be only laminated to one face. The lamination shall not be more than 15% of total weight of material.
- All packaging should have end of life considerations in the design; and should be recyclable to OPRL guidelines wherever possible.
- Coatings applied to aid material performance (e.g. EVOH, Lacquers etc), shall not be more than 10% of total weight of material.

Bidfood's sustainability pledges are aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Specifically aligned to UN Goal No 12 Responsible Consumption & Production, the following must be observed:

- All Plastic Packaging is to contain a minimum 30% post-consumer recycled content, where it is food-safe and product-safe to do so.
- Primary paper, card and board packaging shall be supplied in Virgin material and sourced from sustainable certified sources. FSC, PEFC or similar certification will be acceptable.
- Secondary and Tertiary paper, card and board packaging can contain recycled material.
- All Corrugated cases should contain a minimum 60% recycled paper content.

Complaints

We pride ourselves on giving great customer service and therefore take all complaints seriously and support this with a comprehensive and dedicated complaint handling department. All complaints are taken by the customers' delivering depot and then sent through to the Technical Services **Customer Care** team.

Complaints are categorised into two main types.

- **Standard** – Complaints where there is no immediate risk to health e.g. mould, quality, incorrect date coding, and damaged packaging
- **Injurious to Health** – Complaints relating to foreign body contamination, injury, food poisoning or pest infestation

Bidfood expects every supplier who receives a complaint to:

- Investigate and respond in writing within 7 days
- Where appropriate, implement timely corrective actions to prevent reoccurrence
- Accept the charges associated with the complaint (details below)
- If necessary, provide financial compensation to the customer or third party

Admin Charge	Branded £60 Own Brand £40
Customer Credit Charge	Variable: dependent on quantity and value of goods complained about
Product Collection Charge (if requested)	£50 (only when collection is requested by the supplier)
Late Response Charge	£120 (applied after the period for response has passed and no response has been sent. Warnings of time frames will be repeatedly communicated before this charge is applied)
Penalty Charge for no response after initial late charge	£500 per working day, until a full response is received

The above charges will be applied to all customer product complaints.

The late response and penalty charges will only be applied if the complaints are not responded to within the clear timeframes as set out in the notification letters.

At any stage during a complaint being investigated, the supplier or customer can contact the Customer Care team on 01494 555919 or via email: customercare@bidfood.co.uk

Product Quarantines and Recalls

Full details of our quarantine and recall processes are available in the Bidfood Supplier Technical Manual.

A quarantine is the process of isolating the affected product within our depot network to prevent it reaching customers.

A recall is always preceded by a quarantine. Recalls will mean all affected customers who have purchased the product are directly contacted and asked to dispose of any affected stock.

We reserve the right to quarantine and/or recall any own brand product. We will quarantine and/or recall any branded product at the request/agreement of the supplier. We will quarantine and/or recall signature products (those 'owned by the customer') at the request of the specific customer.

All costs associated with a quarantine and/or recall are payable by the supplier concerned, full details of which can be obtained from your commercial contact.

Process	General charge	Additional charges
Quarantine	£1400 per product*	Disposal costs if product is requested to be destroyed by Bidfood
Recall	£2000 per product**	Various depending on scale of recall including costs associated with customer communications

*£1500 If more than 3 quarantines per supplier in a Bidfood financial year

**£2500 If more than 3 recalls per supplier in a Bidfood financial year

N.B. Bidfood financial year – start date 1st July to end date 30th June.

NON FOOD

Materials and Articles in Contact with Food

All items that have contact with food (this includes packaging, catering equipment, disposable cups, etc.) must have been tested to ensure compliance with EC Regulation No 1935/2004 and any specific derivatives such as those for:

- Ceramics
- Plastics – EU Regulation No 10/2011 to update 2020/1245
- Recycled Plastics and materials intended to come into contact with food – EC Regulation No 282/2008, and also in accordance with EU Regulation No. No 10/2011
- Regenerated cellulose

Suppliers must be able to provide evidence of compliance on request (e.g. test certificate from an independent UKAS approved laboratory).

Contact Information

For more details on the above or for additional support please see below contact details

Area	Contact Information
Issues completing approval documents or information relating to codes or practice and policies	datacollection@bidfood.co.uk
Commercial queries	buyingcentral@bidfood.co.uk
Issues or queries with New Line form completion	datacollection@bidfood.co.uk
Complaints	customercare@bidfood.co.uk
Emergency contact details (quarantines/ recalls)	
Office Hours	01494 555941
Out of Hours	0844 879 1038

Do you want to be a Bidfood own brand supplier?

Standards summary

We are proud of our own brand credentials and invest significant resource to ensure that own brand products meet the best possible quality standards. Our new food development process includes an approval visit from a Bidfood Category Technologist, the requirement to complete detailed product specifications and provide detailed policy information relating to the site of manufacture. It is mandatory that all suppliers have a suitable due diligence program in place to support safety, legality, quality and integrity. We expect to work with our supply partners and have regular meetings and carry out routine monitoring including site visits.

Bidfood Own Brand Specific Requirements

All own brand products must meet the **Bidfood Codes of Practice and Policies**.
The details of all the Codes of Practice and Policies can be found in the Supplier Technical Manual

Bidfood Own Brand Specification Requirements

Own brand product specifications are held on our in house system **OPRI**. Authorised suppliers will be issued a log in and need to complete all the mandatory fields including a quality attribute section that includes imagery. Once submitted, all information will be verified by the relevant Category Technologist.

Bidfood Own Brand Labelling and Artwork Requirements

Own brand products are labelled in detail and artwork agreed with the Category Technologist during the NPD process. All artwork and labelling for own brand products is checked by a nominated independent legal advisory team.

There are supplier charges associated with legal verification circa £300 per new product.

Bidfood Own Brand Packaging Requirements

Suppliers are required to disclose the packaging material types and weights for all components of the products' packaging. These will be submitted via the product specification system OPRI.

We actively support packaging and general waste reduction in the end-to-end supply chain and regularly engage with suppliers as part of our wider supply chain for continual review and improvement.