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# Introduction to Ariba Network

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# Introduction to Ariba Network

Ariba Network is a hosted service that connects suppliers to buying organizations, allowing them to conduct transactions over the internet.

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## About Ariba Network

Ariba Network is a hosted service that enables suppliers and buyers to form relationships and conduct transactions over the internet.

As a supplier, you might already have an existing relationship with a customer who invites you to form a relationship on Ariba Network. As a buying organization (buyer), you use Ariba Network to enable electronic processing of orders and invoices with your existing suppliers. You might also search for new suppliers on SAP Ariba Discovery.

After a supplier accepts an invitation, the buyer can see the supplier's catalogs and place orders. Suppliers receive the orders and can then create and send order confirmations, advance ship notices, and invoices if the buyer accepts these documents. The buyer can then send payment documents (remittance advices) to the supplier to document the payment transfer.

## Buying organization view

Buying organizations can use SAP Ariba Procurement solutions such as SAP Ariba Buying and Invoicing to create purchase orders and send them through Ariba Network to their suppliers.

Buying organizations can also use SAP Ariba Commerce Automation to transmit cXML documents between their external ERP system and Ariba Network.

Each buying organization has access to a buyer account on [buyer.ariba.com](https://buyer.ariba.com). Buying organizations can use Ariba Network to do the following:

- Search for suppliers with products and services they need

- Invite suppliers to form a trading partnership
- Send purchase orders and receive invoices
- Receive order confirmations and ship notices
- Send payment documents
- Run reports on their suppliers

Using SAP Ariba Discovery, buying organizations can search for suppliers, publish postings for goods and services, receive bids, and then award and rate suppliers.

## Supplier view

A supplier is an organization that sells any type of product or service.

Suppliers can have more than one account on [supplier.ariba.com](https://supplier.ariba.com), each one possibly connecting to different buying organizations. Suppliers use Ariba Network to:

- Access a network of high-volume buying organizations.
- Connect with specific buying organizations that are interested in the supplier's products or services.
- Publish catalogs containing information and pricing that is customized for specific customers.
- Categorize products and services so that customers can find them when searching by category.
- Select a routing method for the documents that best fit the supplier's business needs—suppliers can receive documents through email, fax, online (using your Ariba Network inbox and outbox), cXML, or EDI, and send documents from their online outbox or through cXML or EDI.
- Conduct transactions electronically by sending purchase order confirmations, invoices, and other documents. Ariba Network provides fast transmission, tracking, and processing of transactions.

When suppliers set up their Ariba Network account, they provide extensive information about their company—from the company address to the specific business policies. To communicate product and service offerings to buying organizations, suppliers can store catalogs on Ariba Network using one of several different formats. Alternatively, suppliers can specify a link that enables customers to punch out from their procurement systems to their website and shop for products and services there.

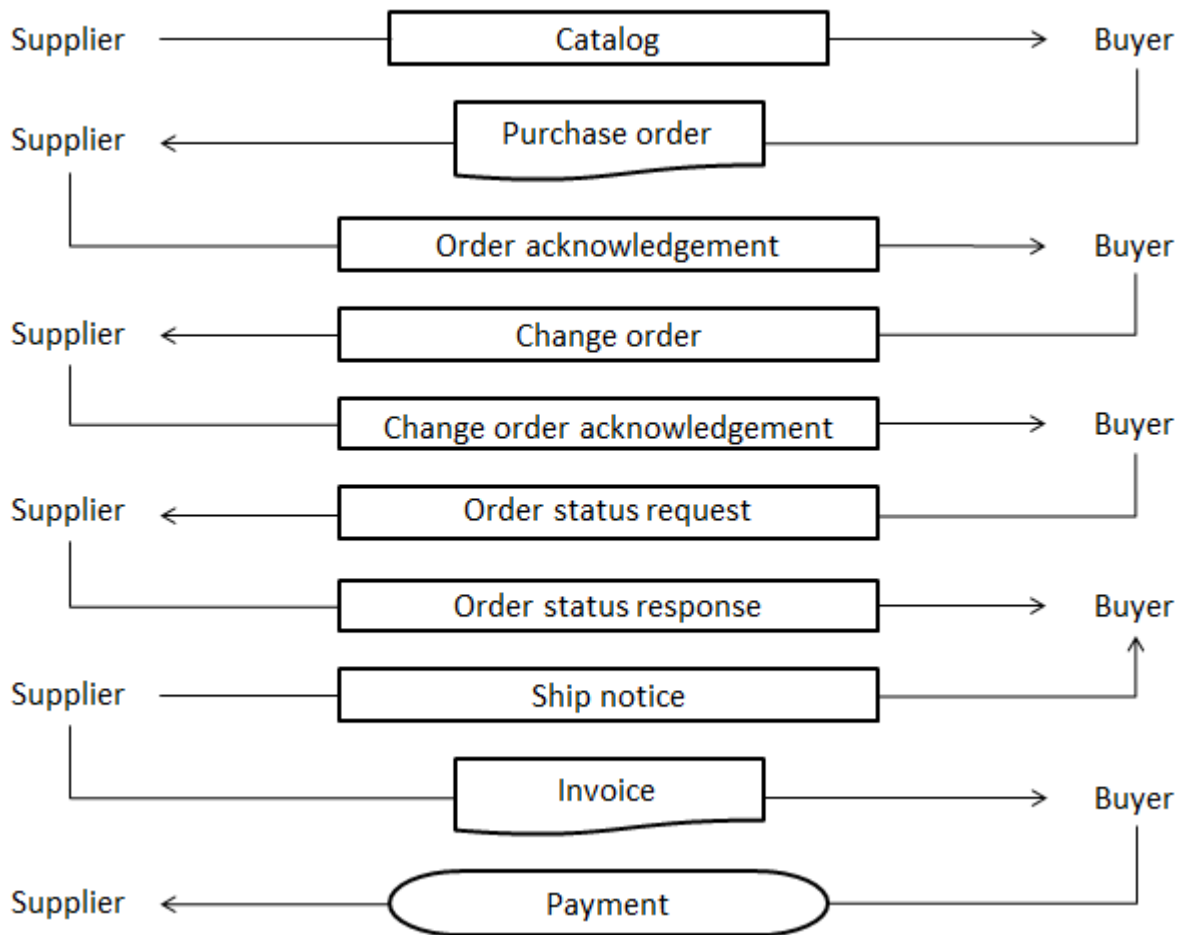
## The purchase order life cycle

After a supplier creates catalog files that describe the products and services and upload them to Ariba Network for validation, they can publish the catalogs to specific customers. Ariba Network then notifies those customers by email that new catalogs are available. The customer downloads and approves the catalogs for use with their procurement solution.

Once a supplier has made a catalog available:

1. Their customer uses their procurement application to browse catalogs for products and services and initiate purchase requisitions, which are routed through their organizations for approval.
2. Upon approval, the customer's procurement application automatically converts the requisitions to purchase orders and sends them in cXML format to Ariba Network.
3. Ariba Network sends the purchase orders to the supplier's account where they can view them in their online inbox.

4. If the customer's business rules allow suppliers to send order confirmations, ship notices, and invoices through Ariba Network, suppliers can then send order fulfillment information and invoices electronically to their customer.



## Benefits of using Ariba Network

Registering on Ariba Network provides suppliers with access to a network of high-volume buying organizations that can download the supplier's product and service catalogs and decide which products to purchase.

Suppliers and buyers can use Ariba Network no matter what they sell or buy.

## Publish and control access to electronic catalogs

Catalogs describe the products and services that a supplier offers.

Buying organizations search by company type, industry type, and product type to find catalogs that offer the product or service they need. They then download and import catalogs into their procurement application to allow their staff to search for products and services, or they configure their procurement application to punch out to a supplier's website.

- Control access to published catalogs. Suppliers control which customers have access to each of their catalogs. This enables suppliers to create catalogs that contain special items or contract prices for specific customers.
- Describe any type of product or service. Catalogs support commodities, services, and complex or simple products.
- Produce catalogs in a standard format. Because Ariba Network supports a standardized catalog format, catalogs are universally accessible by all customers. Suppliers can produce catalogs in-house or contract with third-party content providers.
- Offer catalogs with additional content. Suppliers can also create PunchOut catalogs, which reside on the supplier's website and interact with the buyer's procurement applications to provide rich, descriptive data and configurability.
- Create and publish catalogs with ease. Any company, regardless of its technical sophistication, can create catalogs.
- Ensure published catalogs are error-free. Ariba Network automatically validates the format and syntax of all catalog files when supplier's upload them. If it detects errors, it tells the user where they are so they can fix them.

## Respond to business opportunities

SAP Ariba Discovery enables suppliers to search for and participate in online sourcing opportunities created by buying organizations.

A business opportunity might be a request for information (RFI), a request for quote (RFQ), a request for proposal (RFP), or a negotiation.

By clicking **Leads** in the Ariba Network for Suppliers dashboard, suppliers can search for and participate in business opportunities. As a best practice, as a supplier, make sure your organization's company profile has been configured with specific product and service categories that represent the goods and services you sell. SAP Ariba uses product and service categories based on the UNSPSC (United Nations Standard Products and Services Code) commodity codes to classify postings and supplier organizations. If a supplier account is configured to receive business opportunity notifications, SAP Ariba will send a daily digest email notification of postings published by a buying organization that match the product and service categories specified in the supplier's company profile.

## Automate business processes

Ariba Network enables the automation of certain aspects of the business relationship, providing improved business practices and reducing business costs.

- Track order status. Ariba Network enables buyers and suppliers to track the status of purchase orders in real time. Real-time tracking increases customer confidence.
- Generate electronic invoices. Suppliers can generate invoices electronically and send them to their customers. Suppliers can also see invoice status updates as their customer receives, approves, and pays them.
- Eliminate manual processing. By automating the process of sending and receiving purchase orders, Ariba Network eliminates unnecessary steps and manual processing of routine transactions, speeds order execution, and increases accuracy.
- Route documents using your preferred protocol. Ariba Network automatically routes purchase orders and payment documents to suppliers through cXML, email, fax, or EDI. It can send them directly to the automated

order receiving system, or it can store them for online viewing. As a supplier, you specify how you want to receive them, and Ariba Network takes care of format, protocol, and delivery details.

## Conduct business in a secure and reliable environment

Ariba Network is a secure e-commerce service and offers security and reliability features.

Security and reliability features offered include:

- **Catalog security.** Because catalogs contain sensitive data, suppliers can keep them secure by controlling which buyers can see which catalogs.
- **Transaction security.** Ariba Network communicates using HTTPS, which is HTTP over SSL (Secure Sockets Layer). SSL is the industry-standard method for protecting web communications. The SSL security protocol provides RSA data encryption, server authentication, message integrity, and optional client authentication for TCP/IP connections.  
Ariba Network servers use a Verisign Class 3 server digital certificate to enable SSL connections. Ariba Network is secured by using 128-bit encryption as a minimum and 256-bit encryption if the client browser supports it.
- **Transaction reliability.** Ariba Network has built-in reliability and error-detection features to ensure that all orders are available the instant they are sent from the buyers. Ariba Network runs redundant copies of all critical software subsystems related to transaction routing. This redundancy enables automatic fail-over in the event of an error so that there is no disruption of service. Even if automatic fail-over for order routing does not work, suppliers can view orders online on Ariba Network.

## Registering on Ariba Network

Companies must be registered on Ariba Network before they can send and receive documents.

## How suppliers connect with customers

To create an account and connect with buying organizations, suppliers must register their company on Ariba Network.

Registration on Ariba Network takes only a few minutes—all that's needed is basic company information such as the company name, address, and a business contact.

Any supplier can register with Ariba Network. However, a supplier cannot obtain a fully transactional account until at least one customer (a "sponsor") approves a relationship with the supplier organization.

## Registering with assistance from your customer

Typically, your company is already in contact with a customer that transacts with their suppliers through Ariba Network. The customer logs in to Ariba Network and invites your company to join. Ariba Network sends an email

message to you that contains a link for starting the registration process. Ariba Network notifies you through email when the account is active and ready to transact with your customer.

## Registering without assistance from your customer

If you are not already in contact with a buying organization on Ariba Network, you can create a free, light account at [supplier.ariba.com](https://supplier.ariba.com). You can use this account to learn how to conduct e-commerce through Ariba Network, create a company profile, and find new business through SAP Ariba Discovery.

Completing a company profile allows buying organizations to locate your company when searching for suppliers by product and service category, industry, ship-to or service location, or other criteria. After reviewing basic company information, a buying organization can then request a relationship with your company. After you accept a relationship request, your account is ready to transact with the buying organization.

## How to register as a supplier on Ariba Network

You register an Ariba Network account in order to transact with your customers and potentially find new business opportunities.

### Procedure

1. You can use one of the following methods to register a new or existing seller account on Ariba Network:
  - If you received an email invitation from a buying organization, click the link in the email message. When Ariba Network shows the welcome page, do one of the following:
    - If you already have an account, click **Log in**.
    - If you don't already have an account, click **Sign up**.
  - If you received a purchase order welcome letter that contains a temporary ID and secure code, you can use a web browser to go to the web address contained in the welcome letter. Enter your temporary ID and secure code to activate the account. After you activate your account, the temporary ID becomes your username.
  - If you received a purchase order or other first-time document from your customer, click the action button in the email, such as **Process order**. From the landing page, choose **Sign up** to register a free, light account, or choose **Log in** to add the document to your existing Ariba Network account.

#### i Note

You must be the account administrator to move the document to an existing account.

- If you didn't receive an invitation, you can use a web browser to go to [supplier.ariba.com](https://supplier.ariba.com). Click **Register Now** to register a free, light account on Ariba Network.
2. Follow the steps in the registration wizard.

Ariba Network asks for basic information about your business, such as your company name, address, telephone number, and email address. You also create a username and password.



### i Note

The person whose name is entered in the user account information section becomes the account administrator automatically. Account administrators can transfer the administrator role to another user later.

3. Read the terms of use, and choose the check box if you agree to the terms.
4. (Optional) Print the **Summary** page for your records. You can also print the terms of use.
5. Click **Continue**.

Ariba shows the **Activate Your Account Now** page.

Ariba Network sends you an email confirming registration of your account. You must click the link in the email to activate your account and start transacting with your customer.

If you change your email address, Ariba Network sends an email to the newly updated email address requesting you to confirm the email address. You must use the link in the email to activate and log in to the account.

You can also resend the email containing the link to activate your Ariba Network account in case the previous email did not reach you. If for any reason, you are unable to launch a browser using this link, you can copy the link and paste it into the address bar of any of the supported Web browsers to form a single-line URL.

6. To activate your account, click the link in the email sent to you.

Ariba Network shows the **Welcome to Ariba** page, where you can view your company profile completeness meter.

7. Choose one of the following options:
  - o Click **Go to Company Profile** to enter additional information about your company.

### i Note

To increase your visibility to buying organizations, be sure your company profile is completed accurately, and consider subscribing to the SAP Ariba Discovery Advantage Program to further distinguish your organization in SAP Ariba's publicly-accessible supplier directory.

When registering on Ariba Network following an invitation initiated from SAP Ariba Supplier Lifecycle and Performance or SAP Ariba Sourcing, the **Product and Service Categories** and **Ship-to or Service Location** fields listed under **Tell us more about your business** are mandatory.

- o Click **Complete my Company Profile later**, to access the **Home** dashboard.

## How suppliers connect to Ariba Network

Suppliers can connect to Ariba Network by fax, email, online, through EDI or using cXML.

Ariba Network supports suppliers at any level of technical sophistication. How a supplier connects to Ariba Network depends on the order volume and the amount of automation they want. For example, suppliers with minimal technical resources can easily connect to Ariba Network using only a fax machine, email, or by logging in to their account directly.

More technically savvy suppliers can choose to obtain orders through EDI (Electronic Data Interchange), which allows direct order entry into an order processing system. This method requires an account with an EDI provider,

such as IBM, and an order processing system. The most sophisticated suppliers can implement a web commerce site that receives orders as cXML documents and routes them directly into an order processing system. This process requires a cXML-enabled website and an order processing system. The website can be used to support PunchOut, which enables users to view content and configure products through direct interaction with the supplier's site.

Regardless of the routing method a supplier chooses, Ariba Network stores all transactions (including purchase orders) in the supplier's online inbox.

## Connecting to Ariba Network by fax

The Ariba Network can send purchase orders to fax machines. The fax is similar to the purchase order sent to the online inbox.

## Connecting to Ariba Network by email

The Ariba Network can send purchase orders as email messages. The message is similar to the purchase order sent to the online inbox.

## Connecting to Ariba Network online

This is the default routing method. The online inbox displays all incoming documents, such as purchase orders, payments, and notifications. Suppliers access the online inbox by clicking the **Inbox** tab on the Home dashboard.

## Connecting to Ariba Network through EDI

The EDI routing method enables suppliers to automate order processing and connect their order management, shipping, and invoicing systems with their customers through Ariba Network. To successfully integrate an EDI order receiving system with Ariba Network, suppliers need to know how documents flow through Ariba Network.

Buying organizations generate electronic purchase orders in an SAP Ariba Procurement solution such as SAP Ariba Buying and Invoicing, which transmits them to Ariba Network as commerce eXtensible Markup Language (cXML) documents. Ariba Network receives the cXML documents and authenticates and validates them. It then looks up the document routing settings of the supplier. If a supplier configured their account for EDI routing, Ariba Network converts the cXML documents to either ASC X12 or UN EDIFACT documents, depending on the preference, and sends them to the supplier's backend system.

Document flow is bidirectional (incoming and outgoing). Suppliers can send documents such as acknowledgments, order confirmations, and invoices back to their customers. Ariba Network converts those EDI documents to cXML as it routes them.

Ariba Network supports multiple transports and transforms for EDI documents: the cloud integration gateway, which supports OAGIS in addition to ASC X12 and UN EDIFACT, VAN (Value Added Network) and EDIINT (EDI over the Internet). Suppliers decide which method to use when they configure their Ariba Network account.

## Connecting to Ariba Network using cXML

Commerce eXtensible Markup Language (cXML) is a well-defined, robust language designed specifically for B2B e-commerce. It allows buying organizations, suppliers, service providers, and intermediaries to communicate using a single standard, open language. cXML transactions consist of documents: simple text files containing values enclosed in predefined tags.

To use the cXML order-routing method, suppliers must implement a website that can initiate and accept XML posts. When a supplier chooses cXML as an order routing method, Ariba Network sends purchase orders as cXML posts to their website. Ariba Network connects in secure mode so all communication is encrypted.

## SAP Ariba subscriptions

SAP Ariba subscriptions help you to maximize the benefits of Ariba Network for your business by providing functionality and services tailored to the financial volume you transact on Ariba Network.

Your [Ariba subscription](#) is determined by the volume of documents you transact on Ariba Network and by the extent of the automation technologies and support that your business requires.

## Ariba Network information sources

The help center is the central resource for all Ariba Network product documentation, tutorials, and support content. Access the help center by clicking **Help > Help Center** in the top right corner of each page.

As a supplier, if you access the help center from the logon page (<http://supplier.ariba.com>), the available content is limited to information about logging in and registering, as well as topics of general interest.

Buyer and supplier users have full access to the respective Ariba Network product documentation after they have logged in.

As a supplier, if you are new to Ariba Network, familiarize yourself with the following information sources and product documentation:

If you want to know...	See...	Where...
about new features and enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the release guides</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; What's New</li></ul>

If you want to know...	See...	Where...
more about the Supplier Membership program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the <i>Managing Service Subscription</i> topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Administration and Configuration &gt; Managing Subscription Services</li> </ul>
how to administer and configure an account	<p>the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Seller Account Settings and Profile Configuration</i></li> <li>Configuring Document Routing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; Administration and Configuration</li> </ul>
how to create and publish catalogs for customer use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Creating and Managing Catalogs</i></li> <li><i>Ariba Catalog Format Reference Guide</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; Catalogs</li> </ul>
how to manage your user account and notification settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the <i>Managing Your User Account</i> topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; Managing your user account</li> </ul>
how to work with purchase orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the <i>Receiving and Fulfilling Purchase Orders</i> topics</li> <li>the <i>Orders and Invoices</i> tutorial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; Orders and releases</li> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Tutorials</li> </ul>
about the invoicing process in Ariba Network and how to create and manage invoices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the <i>Ariba Network Guide to Invoicing</i></li> <li>the <i>Creating and Managing Invoices</i> topics</li> <li>the <i>Order and Invoices</i> tutorials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; Administration and Configuration</li> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; Creating and managing invoices</li> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Tutorials</li> </ul>
how to collaborate with your customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the <i>Collaborating with Customers</i> topics</li> <li>the <i>Collaborating with Customers</i> tutorial</li> <li>the <i>Creating Contract-Based Invoices</i> topic in <i>About Invoicing in Ariba Network</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; Collaborating with customers</li> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Tutorials</li> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; Creating and managing invoices</li> </ul>
about opportunities to optimize your cash flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the <i>Managing discounts</i> topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; Payments and discounting</li> </ul>
how to create and interpret cXML documents for use with SAP Ariba applications, or integrate your application with Ariba Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the <i>Ariba Network cXML solutions guide</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; Administration and Configuration &gt; cXML and ERP integration</li> </ul>
how to implement a PunchOut site, and send and receive cXML documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the <i>cXML User's Guide</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at <a href="http://www.cxml.org">http://www.cxml.org</a></li> </ul>

If you want to know...	See...	Where...
how to transact with customers using EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) documents, and add support for specific EDI documents	<p><i>Cloud integration gateway administration guide</i></p> <p><i>Getting started with EDI</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANSI X12 Implementation Documentation</li> <li>• EDIFACT Implementation Documentation</li> <li>• EDI troubleshooting information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; Administration and Configuration</li> <li>• in the Learning Center &gt; Product Documentation &gt; Cloud integration</li> <li>• access EDI troubleshooting information by searching for "EDI" in the Support Center</li> </ul>
where to find frequently asked questions and answers, tech notes, and articles		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search for the information you need in the help center</li> </ul>
how to contact SAP Ariba Customer Support		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Support Center</li> </ul>

As a buyer, all product documentation is available in the Learning Center.

## Revision history

The following table provides a brief history of the updates to this guide. SAP Ariba updates the technical documentation for its cloud solutions when:

- Software changes delivered in service packs or hot fixes require a documentation update to correctly reflect the new or changed functionality;
- The existing content is incorrect or user feedback indicated that important content is missing.

SAP Ariba reserves the right to update its technical documentation without prior notification. Most documentation updates will be made available in the same week as the software service packs are released, but critical documentation updates may be released at any time. .



Month/Year of Update	Updated Chapter/Section	Short Description of Change
August 2019	How to register as a supplier on Ariba Network	Added note about Product and Service Categories and Ship-to or Service Location fields being mandatory.
May 2017	Registering on Ariba Network	Updated information related to registration.
March 2016	All	Updated throughout to reflect changes made for the Ariba Network New Visual Design release.
February 2016	Respond to Business Opportunities	Updated user interface labels for the new Ariba Network visual design.

# Important Disclaimers and Legal Information

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Some links are classified by an icon and/or a mouseover text. These links provide additional information.

About the icons:

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## Gender-Related Language

We try not to use gender-specific word forms and formulations. As appropriate for context and readability, SAP may use masculine word forms to refer to all genders.



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