



**BUSINESS PROCESS DIGITALIZATION**

# **Vendor Invoice Submission & Accounts Payable Collaboration Portal Blueprint**

A proposed digital workflow for managing supplier invoice submission, document validation, receipt notes, and payment visibility

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Business Process Digitalization

Workflow Design · Governance · Documentation · Reporting

# Executive Summary

Supplier invoice processing is one of the most visible touchpoints between procurement, finance, logistics, and external vendors. The process looks simple from the outside: a vendor submits an invoice, the accounts payable team checks the documents, and payment is processed according to agreed terms. In practice, the workflow is more complex. A valid invoice submission may require a purchase order, goods receipt note, delivery order, tax invoice, supporting documents, correct invoice value, correct currency, correct payment type, and proof that goods or services have been received.

Many organizations still manage invoice exchange through email attachments, physical documents, shared folders, spreadsheet trackers, and manual confirmation. This creates repeated follow-up work for vendors and internal teams. Vendors ask whether their invoice was received, whether documents were complete, whether a correction is required, and when payment will be processed. Accounts payable teams must verify document completeness, match invoice information against PO and GR records, check tax documents, reject incomplete submissions, issue receipt notes, and answer status questions.

As transaction volume increases, manual invoice submission becomes a governance problem. The risk is not only slower payment. The organization may lose visibility of which invoices are pending, which submissions were rejected, which documents are missing, which payment type applies, which receipt date is valid, and which hardcopy evidence is still required. Payment disputes may arise because vendors and internal teams do not share the same status information.

The Vendor Invoice Submission & Accounts Payable Collaboration Portal Blueprint describes a structured workflow for supplier invoice submission, document validation, PO validation, GR validation, tax invoice validation, receipt note issuance, notification, and payment status visibility. The objective is to create a controlled collaboration channel between vendors and accounts payable teams.

This white paper is written for finance leaders, procurement managers, accounts payable teams, vendor management teams, operations managers, and IT managers who need stronger control over invoice intake and payment communication. The proposed approach treats invoice submission as a business process, not merely as a file upload activity. The value comes from standardizing requirements, improving document completeness, reducing manual follow-up, clarifying receipt rules, and giving vendors a clear view of submission outcomes.

The blueprint is intended as a discussion framework and implementation starting point rather than a fixed software specification.

## Business Context

Vendor invoice submission sits at the intersection of procurement, receiving, tax, finance, and supplier relationship management. A vendor wants to submit a bill and receive payment on time. The accounts payable team wants to ensure that the invoice is valid, supported, compliant with document requirements, and aligned with purchasing and goods receipt records. Procurement wants invoice claims to match agreed purchase orders. Logistics or receiving teams need goods receipt records to support payment. Tax or finance teams need correct tax invoice information and supporting evidence.

The process usually begins when a vendor logs into a portal or submits an invoice package. The vendor selects the destination entity or business unit, identifies the relevant purchase order, selects the goods receipt number where applicable, enters invoice information, enters tax invoice information when required, uploads

supporting documents, reviews the submission, and confirms it. The internal team then verifies whether the submission is complete and valid. If accepted, a receipt note can be issued. If rejected, the vendor must correct the issue and submit again.

The invoice submission process may vary depending on payment type. Some invoices are billed after goods receipt. Some are advance payments. Some are milestone-based. Some include retention. Some are related to services, planned delivery costs, commissioning, or internal purchase orders. Each scenario may require different document combinations and validation rules.

Common stakeholders include:

- Vendors who submit invoices, tax invoices, PO references, GR references, delivery orders, and supporting documents.
- Accounts payable teams who verify document completeness and process payment according to valid receipt dates and payment terms.
- Procurement teams who own purchasing rules, PO references, vendor communication, and commercial terms.
- Receiving or logistics teams who confirm whether goods or services have been received.
- Tax or finance teams who review tax invoice details and supporting fiscal evidence.
- Vendor management teams who monitor vendor compliance and recurring submission issues.
- Management teams who need visibility of invoice volume, rejection reasons, processing backlog, and payment-related bottlenecks.

Because the process affects both internal control and vendor experience, it must be clear, predictable, and traceable.

## Typical Business Challenges

Organizations often experience the following problems when invoice submission is handled through informal channels:

- Invoice documents arrive through different email threads, shared drives, physical envelopes, or department contacts.
- Vendors do not have reliable visibility of whether a submission was received, accepted, rejected, or still under review.
- Accounts payable teams spend significant time answering status questions and requesting missing documents.
- Invoice claims may not match purchase order, goods receipt, payment type, currency, or outstanding amount rules.
- Required documents vary by tax status, payment type, service type, and receiving condition.
- Tax invoice information may be missing, incorrectly formatted, or inconsistent with invoice records.
- Hardcopy document requirements are unclear or not linked to the digital receipt process.
- Receipt dates may be disputed when submissions occur outside working hours, near month-end, or on holidays.
- Rejected submissions require rework, but rejection reasons may not be structured enough for analysis.
- Management lacks reliable reporting on invoice intake volume, document rejection patterns, and AP workload.

These problems affect cash flow communication, vendor trust, AP productivity, and internal control. The organization may pay late because documents are incomplete, while the vendor may believe the invoice was already submitted correctly. Without a shared process, both sides spend time reconciling status rather than resolving the actual issue.

# Regulatory & Governance Drivers

Invoice submission is a finance governance process. It requires evidence that the billed amount is supported by a valid purchase obligation, that goods or services have been received when required, that tax documents are complete where applicable, and that payment is processed based on accepted documents and agreed terms.

The governance drivers may include:

- Invoice documents must be supported by purchase order references where applicable.
- Goods receipt records must support invoices that are billed after goods or services are received.
- Tax invoice information must be captured and validated when VAT or similar tax treatment applies.
- Supporting documents such as delivery orders, service completion evidence, quotations, exemption letters, or other proof may be required.
- A valid receipt date must be defined so payment terms can be calculated consistently.
- Rejected submissions must be traceable with clear reasons and resubmission expectations.
- Hardcopy document requirements may still apply for audit, tax, or internal policy reasons.
- Vendors need evidence that a submission has been accepted for AP processing.
- Management needs visibility of pending, rejected, accepted, and paid invoice submissions.

The objective is not to provide tax or legal advice. The objective is to explain why invoice submission must be controlled as a workflow. A well-designed portal reduces ambiguity by defining required documents, validating references, capturing receipt evidence, issuing receipt notes, and giving both vendors and internal teams a consistent view of status.

## Proposed Process Workflow

The Vendor Invoice Submission & Accounts Payable Collaboration Portal Blueprint follows the invoice intake lifecycle from vendor login to AP processing and payment visibility.

### Step 1: Vendor Access and Profile Validation

The vendor accesses a secure portal using registered credentials. The portal should ensure that the vendor can only view relevant purchase orders, goods receipt records, invoice submissions, receipt notes, and payment status information.

The output of this step is controlled access and vendor-specific visibility.

### Step 2: Select Destination Entity or Business Unit

If an organization has multiple entities, branches, or business units, the vendor selects the appropriate destination for invoice submission. This selection helps filter purchase order references, tax information, document rules, and AP routing.

The output of this step is a submission context that supports validation and routing.

### Step 3: Select Invoice Type and Payment Type

The vendor selects the invoice type and confirms the payment type or billing scenario. Examples include open account, advance payment, milestone billing, retention, service billing, planned delivery costs, or final invoice. Different scenarios may require different document combinations.

The output of this step is a document requirement profile for the submission.

#### **Step 4: Enter Invoice Information**

The vendor enters invoice number, invoice date, amount, currency, and related billing details. The amount should be checked against allowed limits, outstanding PO values, or applicable business rules.

The output of this step is a structured invoice record ready for validation.

#### **Step 5: Validate Purchase Order and Goods Receipt**

The portal validates the purchase order selected by the vendor. Where goods receipt is required, the vendor selects the correct GR reference. The workflow should prevent inappropriate combinations, such as duplicate PO and GR claims where a new submission is required.

The output of this step is a controlled link between invoice, PO, and receiving evidence.

#### **Step 6: Capture Tax Invoice Information**

When tax information is required, the vendor enters tax invoice number, tax invoice date, and related tax evidence. The workflow should define which tax fields are mandatory based on PO tax treatment or vendor tax status.

The output of this step is tax invoice evidence connected to the invoice submission.

#### **Step 7: Upload Required Documents**

The vendor uploads required documents such as invoice, tax invoice, PO, goods receipt note, delivery order, and other supporting documents. File format, file size, document sequence, and completeness rules should be communicated clearly.

The output of this step is a complete digital invoice package for review.

#### **Step 8: Review and Submit**

Before final submission, the vendor reviews invoice data, PO and GR references, tax details, and uploaded documents. This reduces avoidable rejection caused by incorrect input or missing files.

The output of this step is a confirmed invoice submission.

#### **Step 9: AP Verification and Receipt Note**

The accounts payable team verifies the submission. If the documents meet requirements, the system issues a receipt note with a receipt note number and valid receipt date. If the submission is rejected, the vendor receives a structured reason and must submit a corrected package.

The output of this step is either an accepted invoice package or a controlled rejection record.

#### **Step 10: Payment Tracking and Notification**

The vendor receives notification of submission status and can monitor receipt notes and payment status. Internal teams can monitor accepted invoices, rejected submissions, pending reviews, and aging.

The output of this step is shared visibility between vendors and internal AP teams.

# Proposed System Modules

## Vendor Portal

The Vendor Portal provides secure access for suppliers to submit invoices, view submission status, download receipt notes, review notifications, and access FAQ guidance.

Expected controls include vendor-specific data access, credential management, submission history, and role-based visibility.

## Invoice Submission

Invoice Submission captures invoice number, invoice date, amount, currency, invoice type, payment type, PO reference, GR reference, tax information, uploaded documents, and submission status.

Expected controls include mandatory fields, amount validation, date validation, currency rules, duplicate prevention, and submission confirmation.

## Document Completeness Validation

Document Completeness Validation defines which documents are required for each invoice scenario.

Requirements may vary by vendor tax status, payment type, goods receipt condition, service completion, or special supporting evidence.

Expected controls include required document checklist, allowed file formats, file size limits, missing document alerts, and rejection reason capture.

## PO Validation

PO Validation confirms that the selected purchase order belongs to the vendor, destination entity, and eligible billing context. It helps prevent claims against invalid, closed, unrelated, or fully billed purchase orders.

Expected controls include PO filtering, outstanding amount checking, payment type visibility, and PO revision handling.

## GR Validation

GR Validation confirms whether goods or services have been received and whether the selected GR reference supports the invoice claim. It is especially important for open account and receipt-based billing.

Expected controls include GR selection, multiple GR handling, PO-GR matching, and duplicate claim prevention.

## Tax Invoice Validation

Tax Invoice Validation captures tax invoice number, tax invoice date, and required tax evidence where applicable. It helps ensure that tax documentation is present before AP processing begins.

Expected controls include mandatory tax fields, format guidance, tax document upload, and consistency checks.

## Receipt Note

Receipt Note provides evidence that the invoice package has been accepted for AP processing. It should include receipt note number, receipt date, submission reference, vendor information, invoice reference, and status.

Expected controls include automatic numbering, download access, receipt date rule, and linkage to hardcopy document procedures where applicable.

## Notification Center

Notification Center informs vendors and internal teams about submission success, acceptance, rejection, required correction, receipt note availability, and payment status updates.

Expected controls include email notification, portal notification, status history, and recipient management.

## Payment Status Tracking

Payment Status Tracking gives vendors visibility of invoice progress after receipt note issuance. It should communicate status without exposing internal information that is not relevant to the vendor.

Expected controls include invoice status, due date visibility, payment term reference, and inquiry support.

## AP Dashboard

The AP Dashboard gives internal teams visibility of submission volume, pending verification, rejected submissions, accepted receipt notes, aging, document issues, vendor behavior, and workload.

Expected controls include filters by vendor, entity, payment type, status, date, rejection reason, and AP owner.

## Vendor FAQ and Guidance

Vendor FAQ and Guidance explains document requirements, receipt date rules, hardcopy requirements, payment type scenarios, rejected submission handling, and support channels.

Expected controls include maintained content, clear examples, searchable topics, and version ownership.

# Example User Journey

## Invoice Submission for Received Goods

A supplier has delivered goods against a purchase order. The goods have been received, and the supplier is ready to submit an invoice. Previously, the supplier sent the invoice package by email and waited for confirmation. If one document was missing, the AP team replied manually. If the supplier asked about payment status, the AP team had to search the submission history and confirm whether the invoice had been accepted.

Using the proposed portal, the supplier logs in and selects the correct destination entity. The portal displays eligible purchase orders for that supplier. The supplier selects the PO, chooses the relevant goods receipt number, enters invoice number, invoice date, amount, and currency, then enters tax invoice details because tax information is required for that PO.

The portal shows the required document checklist: invoice, tax invoice, PO, goods receipt note, delivery order, and supporting documents if applicable. The supplier uploads a combined file in the accepted format and reviews the submission before confirmation.

The AP team receives the submission in a dashboard. The reviewer verifies that the PO and GR match, the billed amount is within the eligible limit, tax information is present, and the required documents are attached. Because the package is complete, the submission is accepted and a receipt note is issued. The supplier receives a notification and can download the receipt note from the portal.

If the document package had been incomplete, the AP reviewer would reject the submission with a structured reason. The supplier would then create a corrected submission rather than continuing the same unclear email thread.

After acceptance, the supplier monitors payment status through the portal. The AP team receives fewer manual inquiries because the supplier can see whether the invoice was submitted, accepted, rejected, or waiting for payment processing.

This journey shows the core value of the portal: it creates a shared, controlled process for invoice intake. Vendors understand what is required, AP teams receive cleaner submissions, and management gets better visibility of invoice processing performance.

## Expected Benefits

### Operational Benefits

- Reduced email-based invoice follow-up and manual status confirmation.
- More complete invoice submissions because vendors see required document rules before submitting.
- Faster AP verification through structured PO, GR, tax, and document information.
- Fewer duplicate or invalid submissions through validation rules.
- Clearer handling of rejected submissions and required corrections.
- Easier access to receipt notes and submission history.

### Compliance Benefits

- Stronger evidence that invoices are supported by required documents.
- Better traceability between invoice, PO, GR, tax invoice, delivery evidence, and supporting documents.
- More consistent receipt date handling for payment term calculation.
- Clearer records of accepted, rejected, corrected, and resubmitted invoices.
- Better control of hardcopy requirements where physical documents remain necessary.
- Improved audit readiness through centralized invoice submission evidence.

### Management Benefits

- Better visibility of AP workload, pending reviews, and rejected submissions.
- More practical reporting on document issues, vendor behavior, and processing bottlenecks.
- Reduced payment dispute risk because vendors and AP teams share the same status record.
- Better vendor experience through predictable submission rules and receipt note visibility.
- Stronger foundation for AP process improvement and vendor collaboration.

## Customization Considerations

Every organization manages invoice submission differently. The blueprint should be adapted to internal procurement policies, finance controls, tax requirements, vendor groups, payment terms, document standards, and operating calendar.

Typical customization areas include:

- Destination entity, branch, or business unit selection.
- Vendor access rules and vendor-specific PO visibility.
- Invoice type and payment type scenarios.
- PO and GR validation logic.
- Required document checklist by tax status, payment type, or transaction type.
- Tax invoice format, tax evidence, and mandatory field requirements.
- Receipt date rules for working hours, holidays, weekends, and month-end cutoffs.
- Hardcopy document rules and receipt note envelope procedures where applicable.
- Rejection reason categories and resubmission rules.
- Notification templates for submission, acceptance, rejection, and payment updates.
- AP dashboard filters, reports, and management performance indicators.

The implementation should begin with process mapping. The organization should define which documents are mandatory, who verifies each document type, how receipt dates are calculated, which payment scenarios exist, how rejected submissions are corrected, and what information vendors should be allowed to see.

## Integration Considerations

Vendor invoice submission usually depends on existing procurement and finance data. Integration should be driven by control requirements and operational value.

Common integration areas include:

- ERP or procurement systems for purchase orders, outstanding amounts, payment type, vendor code, and destination entity.
- Receiving systems for goods receipt notes, service acceptance, delivery confirmation, and receipt status.
- Finance or AP systems for invoice processing status, payment terms, due dates, and payment updates.
- Tax systems or fiscal repositories for tax invoice information and supporting evidence.
- Document repositories for invoice packages, hardcopy tracking, receipt notes, and audit files.
- Email or notification services for supplier and AP communication.
- Master data repositories for vendor, entity, currency, tax status, and bank account references.
- Reporting platforms for AP performance dashboards and management review.

An organization can start with controlled portal submission and document validation, then add deeper integrations after the data ownership model and AP workflow are stable.

## Related Blueprint Opportunities

The Vendor Invoice Submission & Accounts Payable Collaboration Portal Blueprint can connect with several related workflow opportunities:

- Vendor Qualification System for onboarding, evaluating, and approving suppliers before transactional collaboration begins.
- Purchase Order Collaboration System for managing supplier communication around PO confirmation and fulfillment.
- Goods Receipt & Service Acceptance Workflow for connecting receiving evidence to invoice eligibility.
- Vendor Payment Tracking Portal for supplier-facing visibility after invoice acceptance.
- Document Control System for managing AP policies, invoice requirements, and vendor guidance documents.
- Approval Governance System for controlling invoice exceptions, payment holds, and policy deviations.

Together, these workflows create a broader finance and vendor collaboration roadmap.

## Conclusion

Vendor invoice submission is not only an administrative upload process. It is a controlled collaboration workflow involving vendors, procurement, receiving, tax, finance, and accounts payable. When invoice submission is managed through email and manual trackers, organizations face missing documents, unclear status, repeated inquiries, rejected submissions, and payment disputes.

The Vendor Invoice Submission & Accounts Payable Collaboration Portal Blueprint provides a structured approach for improving invoice intake and AP collaboration. It standardizes submission requirements, connects invoices to PO and GR records, validates tax and supporting documents, issues receipt notes, notifies vendors, and gives internal teams management visibility.

The blueprint is intended as a discussion framework and implementation starting point rather than a fixed software specification.

## Implementation Approach

### About The Implementation Approach

The implementation approach helps organizations transform business rules, compliance requirements, approvals, documents, and reporting processes into digital systems.

Areas of focus:

- Regulatory Workflow
- Compliance Documentation
- Approval Governance
- Enterprise Reporting

The implementation team works with organizations that need practical systems for real business processes. For vendor invoice submission, the work starts by understanding invoice intake rules, procurement references, AP validation responsibilities, tax evidence, vendor communication needs, and payment visibility requirements before defining the digital workflow.

### Call To Action

Need a vendor invoice submission workflow adapted to your organization?

A process digitalization team can help:

- review the current invoice submission process
- identify document and governance requirements
- define AP and vendor workflow ownership
- prepare implementation scope
- customize the blueprint

Contact the implementation team to discuss process review, workflow design, and AP collaboration requirements.

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