

# Request for Information

Companies House – Searchable Accounts Data Extraction

[CH-1231]

Publication date: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Response deadline: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023



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## Version History

File Reference	Date	Author/Amend	Description	Status
RFI – Searchable Accounts Data Extraction	2/03/2023		Initial Draft	Draft
RFI – Searchable Accounts Data Extraction	10/3/2023	Robert McNeil	Amended following discussions	Final Version



# 1. Invitation

THE SECRETARY OF STATE for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy acting through the Registrar of Companies for England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland (“the Authority”) would like to engage with the market, to inform and shape the requirements of the Authority’.

This Request for Information (RFI) seeks information to inform the potential procurement of a Searchable Accounts Data Extraction service by Companies House.

Please note the following general conditions:

- This RFI will help us to refine the requirements.
- Information contained within this document is confidential and must not be revealed to any third party without prior written consent from us.
- No down-selection of potential providers will take place as a consequence of any responses or interactions relating to this RFI.
- We expect that all responses to this RFI will be provided by potential providers in good faith to the best of their ability in the light of information available at the time of their response.
- No information provided by a potential provider in response to this RFI will be carried forward, used or acknowledged in any way for the purpose of evaluating the potential provider, in any subsequent formal procurement process.
- Any and all costs associated with the production of such a response to a RFI must be borne by the Supplier. We will not contribute in any way to meeting production costs of any response.



## 2. Background to the Requirement

### Requirements

Companies House would like to request potential providers with the relevant knowledge, experience and capability of providing Searchable Accounts Data Extraction products/services to respond to a Request for Information as set out in Section 3 of this document.

On 28 February 2022, the Department for Business and Trade published a White Paper on “Corporate transparency and register reform”, in which Companies House undertook to:

- make ‘key financial, and related information from accounts filings more easily accessible on the register’
- enable ‘at a glance’ viewing of the data, facilitate the tracking of changes over time
- allow searching and filtering of company data based on that financial information

In order to achieve this, Companies House needs to be able to extract key financial and related information, from accounts filed with us, in a way that supports onward publication as a discrete data set on our Find and Update Company Information service and the use of such information in our search indexes to expand the criteria available in our Advanced Company Search service.

We are therefore considering procurement of a commercial solution / service that we can easily configure to extract the required information from accounts filed with us for onward propagation to the JSON collections within MongoDB and Elastic Search indexes that underpin our service.

This Request for Information (RFI) is aimed at potential providers with existing tools / services that can satisfy, or be easily adapted to satisfy, our requirement to extract data from accounts filed digitally with us – as detailed below.

Publication of the data and expansion of our search services is not in the scope of this RFI. Information about the ultimate destination and format of the data has been included for context and to enable potential providers to highlight where their tools / services may facilitate that onward propagation.

The following sections set out our anticipated requirements for a tool / service that will allow us to extract key information from accounts filed digitally with Companies House (in XBRL / iXBRL format) for onward publication as a discrete (JSON) data set on our [Find and Update Company Information](#) service and expansion of the elastic search indexes that underpin our [Advanced Company Search](#) service.

These requirements have been provided to support potential providers in their response to this RFI document and for those responses to help inform future stages of the project.



Please note that these requirements remain in draft and are subject to change as the project progresses and any subsequent formal procurement process will be a separate activity, independent of this RFI and any responses.

## Functional Requirements

1. The service must be able to extract discrete financial and non-financial information from XBRL and iXBRL accounts filed with Companies House, including complex package filings such as UKSEF zip files as well as single submission types.

The specific information to be extracted may change over time so the service needs to be flexible and allow configuration by Companies House. As an indicator, likely starting elements include (but should not be limited to): number of employees; closing balance, turnover, tangible and intangible assets.

2. The service must take account of the context of the data ie the data extracted should not be treated in isolation but take account of associated information such as currency, scaling factors etc.

NB This should not be used to infer information that has not been supplied. It is essential that we accurately reflect the information filed.

3. The service must be able to be integrated with, but be independent of, our filing service in order to extract the information in near real time as new accounts are filed and processed. We currently use CoreFiling's True North Data Platform (TNDP) to validate the filings.
4. The service must facilitate transfer of the extracted data to Companies House data stores by storing it in a suitable format and making it accessible in near real time - either by specific APIs or other access to the tooling / service's own data store.

For information, the intended destination of that transferred data includes, but is not limited to, collections of JSON data in a Mongo Atlas data store and elastic search indexes.

5. The service should be capable of processing historic filings of XBRL and iXBRL accounts via e.g. bulk inputs of data for the process of back capture from eg our [Free Accounts Data Product](#).
6. The service should provide additional analysis tools for pattern matching, identifying discrepancies within and between filings (such as mismatch in closing and opening balances) etc.



## Non-Functional Requirements

7. The service must be performant – capable of processing a peak day's filing in near real time. Companies House receives around 10k accounts per day on average and over 50k on peak days.
8. The service must be scalable – capable of maintaining real time performance under increasing workloads.

The company register tends to increase in size each year, leading to an increase in the number of accounts filed. As an example the effective register size increased by [8.4% between March 2020 and March 2021](#) and by [3.8% between March 2021 and March 2022](#).

9. The service must operate 24x7x365.
10. The service must achieve 99.9% availability over the operating times (24x7x365)  
  
NB Any requirement for maintenance windows should be detailed in the response.
11. The service must be continually updated to be compliant with the latest accounting taxonomies.
12. The service must be backwards compatible with previous taxonomies for processing and analysing historic data (see requirements 5 and 6 above).
13. The service must be secure, with data encrypted in transit and at rest.
14. The service must comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR).
15. There will be an audit of activity on the system and the ability to report on the service.
16. The service will be able to apply data retention in line with Companies House policy.
17. All data will be owned by Companies House and must be hosted / processed / stored within the UK.



## Glossary of Terms

For the avoidance of doubt, key terms and acronyms used by Companies House and contained within this specification are detailed below.

Term	Definition
Register	Means the register of companies for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
RFI	Means Request for Information
GDPR	Means the General Data Protection Regulation (The Data Protection Act 2018)
XBRL / iXBRL	Means eXtensible Business Reporting Language and Inline eXtensible Business Reporting Language, being the global framework for exchanging business information
JSON	Means an open standard file format and data interchange format
UKSEF	Means an extension taxonomy designed for use with the ESEF 2020 accounts taxonomy





### 3. Information Requested

Companies House have prepared a table of questions that potential providers are requested to respond to. Please provide your response via email to Kate Turner at [kturner@companieshouse.gov.uk](mailto:kturner@companieshouse.gov.uk) on or before 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

Questions and requests for clarification about the requirements, or the RFI process itself, should be submitted by email to Kate Turner at [kturner@companieshouse.gov.uk](mailto:kturner@companieshouse.gov.uk) and Robert McNeil at [rmcneil@companieshouse.gov.uk](mailto:rmcneil@companieshouse.gov.uk) no later than 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023 to ensure a reply before the RFI response deadline.

**Supplier Name:**

Ref.	Heading	Request
		<i>Please limit your responses to 750 words per request</i>
1.0	About Your Organisation	A summary of your organisation and your experience with accounting taxonomies and XBRL / iXBRL data.
2.0	Proposed Solution	An overview of the tool / service you would propose to satisfy our requirements, including a brief history of its development and examples of existing deployments.
3.0	Requirements Response	A response to each of the functional requirements and confirmation of capability to deliver the non-functional requirements listed in section 2 of this RFI including whether and how your tool / service would satisfy each requirement
4.0	Requirements Feedback	Any additional information you feel would be beneficial to support a formal response, in the event Companies House were to issue a tender.  Include any general feedback or concerns regarding the requirements.
5.0	Onboarding - Approach	Detail how you typically work with customers to onboard them, including any setup, training or configuration.  Clearly state any requirements you have of the customer.
6.0	Onboarding - Timescales	Detail how long from point of contract award does it typically take for your service to be fully deployed and live for a customer?  You should include here any setup, training and configuration work as well as consideration of any areas you



		believe would require bespoke work or customisation to satisfy our requirements.
7.0	Ongoing Support & Operation	A description of the ongoing support arrangements available for the tool / service, such as process for dealing with issues arising from use of the service, including response times, escalation procedures etc. If different levels of support are available these should be detailed, and costs listed separately in the Commercial Arrangements – Costs section (see below).
8.0	Operational Performance	Detail the key performance indicators and service levels for the service and describe the typical market approach to service credits.
9.0	Commercial Arrangements - Costs	<p>Detail the charging model(s) associated with your service. These should be based on an expected contract duration of 2+1+1 years and may include (but not be limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Licence costs</li><li>• Hosting costs</li><li>• Details of any volume related charges</li><li>• Expected implementation costs including any training required to operate the service (including accessing / exporting the extracted data) and any bespoke work required to integrate the service / satisfy the requirements</li><li>• Support costs</li><li>• Day rates for further consultancy on service operation, integration with other services</li><li>• Detail on any optional functionality and associated costs.</li></ul>
10.0	Commercial Arrangements – Route to Market	Detail the frameworks, which are in scope of the requirement, that you are registered on.
11.0	Risk	<p>Based on your experience, detail the top risks you would identify and what mitigations would need to put in place? Particularly referencing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• working within UK government departments or agencies</li></ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• speed of mobilisation</li><li>• ways of working</li><li>• knowledge transfer</li></ul>
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Please provide your responses in Microsoft Word or Excel



## 4. Responses and Timescales

In Section 3, Companies House have prepared a series of questions which suppliers are invited to respond to via email. At this stage, Companies House do not intend to hold meetings with suppliers though may correspond with suppliers to clarify any points within the response.

The timetable for the RFI process is laid out below:

Timetable	
Publication of RFI	Friday 10th March 2023
Deadline for suppliers Clarification Requests	12 noon Friday 17th March 2023
Deadline for Supplier Responses	12 noon Friday 24th March 2023
Supplier Feedback Issued by CH	21st April 2023
Projected ITT Issue Date	June 2023



## 5. About Companies House

Companies House employ around 1,100 staff in our UK offices. Company registrations for England and Wales are carried out in Cardiff. Registrations for Scotland and Northern Ireland are carried out in Edinburgh and Belfast. The London office (which is currently closed) provides search services, and documents can be delivered here.

***"We drive confidence in the economy and make the UK a great place to start and run a business. The data on our registers informs business decisions, supports growth and combats economic crime."***

Companies House is the register of companies in the UK. We incorporate and dissolve limited companies. We register company information and make it available to the public.

More than 4.8 million limited companies are registered in the UK. Over 600,000 new companies are incorporated each year.

Our purpose is to drive confidence in the UK economy. We do this by primarily collecting and presenting data on UK companies that benefits the public good and the wider economy. The information on the register is searched billions of times a year to support the making of millions of business decisions and is also used every day by UK and overseas law enforcement, by civil society, and by citizens.

We are committed to carrying out our statutory and commercial business with fairness, openness, and honesty. We have policies and procedures to prevent bribery.

### Our Responsibilities

Our main responsibilities are to:

- incorporate and dissolve limited companies
- examine and store company information
- make information available to the public

### Our Priorities

Our priorities are to:

- provide excellence in company registration and search
- make the register as complete and accurate as possible
- build a high-performance culture

Companies House has a target to increase the number of underrepresented (Ethnic minority, disabled and LGBTQ+) appointments made year on year by 10% and exceeds that target every year.



## Transformation

In 2020, Companies House embarked on a 5-year transformation programme setting out the future direction of the organisation to meet 6 strategic goals, with the aim to become the most innovative, open, and trusted register in the world. Our Transformation programme began with an engagement strategy that took a critical view of long-standing culture. Over 600 colleagues participated in workshops to provide feedback, whilst bringing a clear perspective for shaping future aspirations and taking ownership to create an employee led change movement who are trusted to deliver. We refreshed our values by discussing and agreeing how it feels to be part of the organisation, embedding the concepts of 'Working as One, Excellent Behaviours and Standards and Every Achievement Counts.' We shaped our behaviours, pledging to develop our skills for the future by being adaptable, bold, and curious (ABC).

Companies House has heavily invested in development for performance and wellbeing with diversity and inclusion becoming a central aim in all areas of the organisation as the strategy, with Executive Board sponsorship, ensures everyone feels comfortable and confident being themselves at work. Recognising and establishing an identity has been key for us to evidence that our people are the unique force that binds us together and sets us apart from other organisations. We cherish the very best of our long-standing culture balanced with new ways of working and expect our people not to just embrace the change, but to be the change. A colleague led change movement has established its position as the true experts who take accountability, challenge with confidence, have the freedom to try new things and be supported through some inevitable failures along the way.

Acting on ideas and supporting the delivery of passion projects has been the basis on which our 23 colleague led networks evolved. These networks support, educate and drive change. With over 40% colleague participation this inclusive trusting environment enables people voice, engagement, connection, and influence in the things that matter. 10 networks are dedicated to diversity, with FACE (Faith, Allyship, Culture & Ethnicity) and Working Families Network created in the last 12 months. This outlook is supported by our People Survey results, with 86% of colleagues feeling that Companies House is inclusive and fair, and 91% understanding our objectives and purpose.

As part of our transformation, one of our goals is to deliver value through efficient use of resources, we have aligned ourselves with the Government Property Agencies (GPA) Smarter Working Programme; empowering all colleagues to make the right decisions about where, when, and how we work; with outputs as the focus, technology as the driver and work life balance as the enabling ethos.



## Equality and Diversity

Within Companies House Corporate Strategy, we state our commitment of, *'Inclusion being the golden thread that runs through all Companies House activity'*.

We launched our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in 2021 and see the strategy as providing an opportunity for us to celebrate our successes but also focus on the key levers for change to help us deliver our strategic goal of, *'our culture enabling our brilliant people to flourish and drive high performance'*

Companies House is required to meet the statutory requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This duty also applies to organisations carrying out a public function. It therefore includes private companies or voluntary sector organisations that have been contracted to carry out public functions on behalf of a public authority. The duty only applies in respect of the public function being carried out and not the wider business of the contracted body.







## 6. Terms and Conditions of the Request

The Authority will not reimburse any costs incurred in connection with the preparation and / or submission of the supplier RFI response.

### Notice to Suppliers

This RFI and any related documents referred to have been prepared by the Authority for the pre-market test to gather information.

Whilst prepared in good faith, the RFI documents are intended only as a preliminary background explanation of the Authority's activities and plans. Therefore, it isn't intended to form the basis of any decision on whether to enter into any contractual relationship with the Authority.

The RFI documents do not purport to be all inclusive or to contain all of the information that a supplier may require.

Nothing in the RFI documents is, or should be, relied upon as a promise or a representation as to the Authority's ultimate decisions in relation to the RFI.

The publication of the RFI documents in no way commits the Authority to award any contract.

### Confidentiality

Subject to specific exceptions detailed within this RFI, the contents of the RFI are being made available by the authority on the conditions that the supplier:

- Treats the RFI as confidential at all times, unless the information is already in the public domain;
- Does not disclose, copy, reproduce, distribute, or pass any of the Information to any other person at any time or allow any of these things to happen, except where, and to the extent that, the Information has been publicised in accordance with paragraph 9 Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA);
- Only uses the Information for the purposes of preparing a response (or deciding whether to respond); and
- Does not undertake any promotional or similar activity related to this RFI within any section of the media.

The supplier may disclose, distribute or pass any of the Information to its members of its Group of Economic Operators (if acting as a Lead Contact), Sub-Contractors, advisers or to any other person provided that:

- This is done for the sole purpose of enabling the supplier to submit its response and the person receiving the information undertakes in writing (such written undertaking to be made available to the Authority on the Authority's request) to keep the information confidential.



- It obtains the Authority's prior written consent in relation to such disclosure, distribution or passing of Information; or
- The disclosure is made for the sole purpose of obtaining legal advice from external lawyers in relation to this RFI;
- The supplier is legally required to make such a disclosure; or
- The information has been published in accordance with paragraph 9 Freedom of Information (FoIA).
- The Authority may disclose information submitted by suppliers during this RFI to its officers, employees, agents or advisers or other government departments who are stakeholders in this RFI.

## Freedom Of Information

In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FoIA'), the Authority may, acting in accordance with the Secretary of State's Code of Practice on the Discharge of the Functions of Public Authorities under Part 1 of the said Act, be required to disclose information submitted by the supplier to the Authority.

In respect of any information submitted by a supplier that it considers to be commercially sensitive and therefore confidential; the supplier should:

- clearly identify such information as commercially sensitive and confidential; and
- explain the potential implications of disclosure of such information and why it considers exemption under FoIA or Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) would apply; and
- provide an estimate of the period of time during which the supplier believes that such information will remain commercially sensitive.

Where a supplier identifies information as commercially sensitive and confidential, the Authority will use reasonable endeavours to maintain confidentiality. Suppliers should note, however, that, even where information is identified as commercially sensitive or confidential, the Authority may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FoIA or the EIR. In particular, the Authority is required to form an independent judgment concerning whether the information is exempt from disclosure under the FoIA or the EIR and whether the public interest favours disclosure or not. Accordingly, the Authority cannot guarantee that any information marked "commercially sensitive" or "confidential" will not be disclosed.

Where a supplier receives a request for information under the FoIA or the EIR during the RFI process, this must be passed on to the Authority immediately and without any delay and the supplier shall not attempt to answer the request without first consulting with the Authority.



Suppliers should note that the information disclosed pursuant to a FOI or EIR request may include, but is not limited to, the disclosure of its RFI response (including any attachments or embedded documents).



## 7. Contact Information

**Procurement Lead:**

Kate Turner

**Contact Email:**

kturner@companieshouse.gov.uk

**Service Owner:**

Robert McNeil

**Contact Email:**

rmcneil@companieshouse.gov.uk



Companies House

**gov.uk/companieshouse**

Registrar of Companies  
(Northern Ireland)

**Companies House**  
Second Floor, The Linehall,  
32-38 Linehall Street,  
**Belfast**  
BT2 8BG

Registrar of Companies  
(England and Wales)

**Companies House**  
Crown Way,  
**Cardiff**  
CF14 3UZ

Registrar of Companies  
(Scotland)

**Companies House**  
Fourth Floor, Edinburgh Quay 2  
139 Fountainbridge,  
**Edinburgh**  
EH3 9FF

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