

## NATIONAL PRODUCT CATALOGUE

### Frequently Asked Questions

December 2006

**Australia's Federal, State and Territory health departments have now signed up to purchase their public health supplies through the National Product Catalogue. This FAQ answers some common questions regarding the NPC.**

#### Who is NEHTA?

NEHTA is a not-for-profit company established by the Australian, State and Territory governments to develop better ways of electronically collecting and securely exchanging information.

One area of potentially significant efficiency gains lies in the public health supply chain. The healthcare sector is under considerable cost pressure to meet current and future demands for services, and reforming the supply chain offers the potential for substantial savings.

For more information please refer to [www.nehta.gov.au](http://www.nehta.gov.au).

#### What is the National Product Catalogue?

The National Product Catalogue (NPC) will become *the* source and main repository of data for public health institutions seeking to purchase medicines, medical devices and other healthcare items. The NPC is a data repository - that is, a single source of product and pricing information, which has been established to improve product visibility. It does not contain information relating to suppliers' stock control levels nor can it be used as a tool to purchase directly from the NPC.

The data stored in the NPC is hosted by EANnet, a standards-based and multi-industry data synchronisation solution which has been developed by GS1 Australia. To date GS1 have successfully used EANnet in many other industry sectors for supply chain purposes e.g. grocery, liquor and motor trade sectors.

#### Who is GS1 Australia?

GS1 Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that locally administers the NPC and EANnet, a global multi-industry system of identification and communication for products, services, assets and locations.

The GS1 System is a universal global standard where all users follow the same coding rules. As a result, GS1 numbers and bar codes can be recognised by trading partners anywhere in the world.

All EAN member countries and the Uniform Code Council (UCC) in the United States undertake to operate their national numbering systems within the EAN-UCC System Guidelines. Consequently any item numbered and barcoded in any one country shall be uniquely identified in all other countries and scannable on the same type of equipment. Users of the EAN-UCC System therefore benefit from this mutual compatibility.

#### What is a Global Trade Item Number?

A Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) is the unique item identifier for every record in the NPC. Every GTIN will have supply chain data associated it, and some GTIN's will also have medicines data associated with them as part of the Australian Catalogue of Medicines (ACOM) component of the NPC. The GTIN is technically known as EAN/UCC-13, the global standard selected for the NPC.

#### What is a Global Location Number?

A Global Location Number (GLN) is used to identify companies participating in the supply chain process. The GLN is used to relate vendors to trading partners to control access to commercially sensitive data such as pricing. GLN's can also be used in conjunction with GTIN's to identify data ownership. The GLN is also technically known as EAN/UCC-13, the global standard selected for the NPC.

### **What is the deadline for populating the NPC?**

**30th June 2007** is the date suppliers are asked to have their product information uploaded to the NPC. Jurisdictions are relying on the data from the NPC to progress to e-Procurement. Some jurisdictions are already accessing and using the NPC data. Others are expected to be using the data within the next few months.

### **Who can access the NPC?**

To access the NPC you are required to be a member of GS1 Australia and registered with GS1 for the National Product Catalogue.

The National Product Catalogue is not accessible for general public viewing.

### **How many datasets are required for the NPC?**

There are 69 data fields required to populate supply chain information on the NPC, of which 7 of these fields are automatically generated and approximately 10 fields only require information in specific circumstances or for specific products. However, if you are a medicines supplier there will be additional fields to be entered for ACOM requirements.

### **Will existing tender agreements and contracts expire on 30th June 2007?**

No, all existing contracts and tenders will continue until the cessation date noted on the contract. After this date when tenders and contracts are due for renewal the State/Territory procurement bodies may reissue agreements and contracts with clauses requiring the supplier to have their products listed on the NPC.

If a supplier is listed on the NPC this will assist the State/Territory procurement body to populate a majority of the information into a tender document with minimal assistance from the supplier.

### **What does this mean in relationship to pricing agreements?**

All pricing agreements between supplier and purchaser will remain confidential between the two parties concerned. When the supplier inputs the GLN for the State/Territory purchasing body, the price will be exclusive between the supplier and the purchasing body identified by the GLN.

There is provision for all suppliers to load a list price in the NPC for customers or potential customers who have access to the catalogue. Suppliers and purchasers still may, however, negotiate specific price arrangements.

There is no single government agency who will have access to the pricing data held on the NPC.

### **What is the ACOM?**

The Australian Catalogue of Medicines (ACOM) is the medicines component of the National Product Catalogue. The National Product Catalogue uniquely identifies each medicine and records information such as active ingredients and pack size.

### **When will State/Territory procurement bodies be ready to access the NPC?**

The procurement divisions of State, Territory and Federal health departments are working towards connecting to the NPC as soon as their systems are ready. Representatives from these departments meet regularly with NEHTA and GS1 representatives to discuss progress and to share information on developments. Each health department is investing a considerable amount of time, money and resources into supporting the NPC, and are committed to using the NPC to gain efficient procurement practices. Some jurisdictions are already accessing and using the NPC data. Others are expected to be using the data within the next few months.

### **Will companies be required to renumber or relabel their products?**

There is currently no requirement for the relabelling or over-labelling of those products labelled using a different standard to the one used by the NPC (the GTIN standard). A GTIN must be assigned to all products (at all levels of packaging) supplied to the public health sector via the NPC, however this does not require the physical labelling of the product with a bar code containing the GTIN.

The NPC has fields for more than one identifier and, therefore, the capacity to cross reference secondary product identifiers to integrate with existing systems. For example, companies who are currently using the HIBCC product identifier can also load this into the NPC as an additional product identifier. The GTIN is the primary product identifier for the NPC.

**Why should I populate the NPC with product data?**

State, Territory and Federal health departments are committed to using the NPC as their single source of product data. The data in the NPC will also provide the clean, reliable and consistent data required for purchasers and suppliers to undertake e-procurement. An e-procurement hub to facilitate relevant data transfer between public health buying agencies and suppliers is being developed by NEHTA.

In addition the NPC will provide greater visibility of products available for sale to the purchasers.

**How will the NPC be updated?**

When suppliers update the NPC, electronic messages will be sent to each of their trading partners advising them of changes. This will replace the lengthy process of manually sending mailouts and emails of changes to products, prices etc.

**Why do suppliers need to cleanse data before uploading to the NPC?**

Clean, reliable and consistent data will ensure the success of the NPC. Substantial savings in time and efficiency will be made from access to consistent data.

This will reduce the errors in ordering the incorrect products, illegible purchase orders and delivery errors. This will not eliminate these problems totally but will significantly reduce these errors resulting in cost effectiveness and the delivery of significant benefits to governments and suppliers alike.

**What do I do to become NPC ready?**

The NPC Supplier Guidelines provides all the details for a company to become NPC ready. The NPC Ready Checklist provides suppliers with a step by step guide to become NPC ready.

A copy of the NPC Supplier Guidelines and Checklist may be obtained at: [www.gs1au.org/services/eannet/npc](http://www.gs1au.org/services/eannet/npc).

For further information go to [www.nehta.gov.au](http://www.nehta.gov.au) or contact:

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