

BC Bid Commodity Code Guide: Supplier Guidance & Training

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About The Commodity Code Guide

This learning guide will help suppliers identify the best practices for choosing the UNSPSC commodity code(s) that matches the goods/services they offer. Using the right commodity codes in searching and/or in your e-Notification subscription is key to identifying opportunities that you can respond to. This guide will also provide some FAQ information for commodity code use within BC Bid, as well as the opportunity to test knowledge about commodity codes and how to subscribe to them in BC Bid.

What is a Commodity Code?

A commodity code is a standard system of numbers that are used to identify the goods and services that are being purchased. An [Excel list of all commodity codes](#) can be downloaded from the Resources page on the BC Procurement Resources website.

What is the UNSPSC?

The [United Nations Standard Products and Services Code](#) is a hierarchical convention that is used to classify products and services. It is an eight-digit numeric code that identifies products or services and is used as a global standard.

How Are Commodity Codes Used in BC Bid?

The UNSPSC commodity codes are built into the BC Bid application, and when creating a solicitation, buyers categorize their solicitation with the appropriate commodity code based on the good or service that the government is looking to procure.

On the supplier side of BC Bid, suppliers can subscribe to certain commodity codes to be notified of opportunities that are posted in BC Bid, categorized with the commodity codes that match their subscriptions. Commodity codes trigger the notification emails to subscribers and are the main way notification emails are populated within the BC Bid system. More information and steps on how to subscribe to commodity codes within BC Bid can be found in the following [commodity code video](#).

Why Subscribe to Commodity Codes in BC Bid?

Commodity codes are a globally recognized means of identifying products and services and serve a two-fold purpose. They help suppliers identify the types of opportunities that they can respond to, as well they help buyers to categorize the solicitations they are posting, based on the good/services they are looking to purchase.

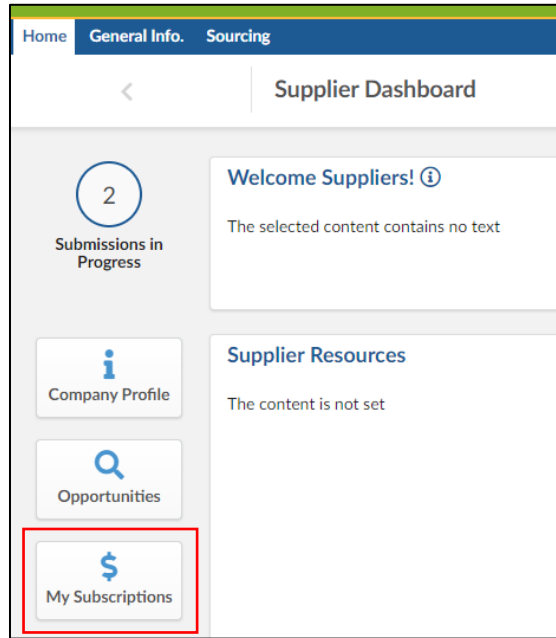
Subscribing to commodity codes within BC Bid allows suppliers to be notified anytime an opportunity that is categorized with a code that they are subscribed to, is posted within BC Bid by a government buyer. By subscribing to commodity codes as a supplier, you ensure that you are notified anytime an opportunity that is relevant to your business and the goods/services you offer, is posted.

Steps for Subscribing to Commodity Codes in BC Bid

Step 1

Log in to your BC Bid account using a Business BCeID, then select the 'My Subscriptions' button on the left-hand side of the page (it has a dollar sign symbol on the button).

Please note: to receive notifications emails, you'll need to have an active e-notifications subscription on your account. Check the [subscriptions section of the Supplier Guide](#) for more information.



Step 2

You will be taken to a page titled 'Manage Subscriptions for a Contact'. Here you will be able to customize which commodities you would like to receive notifications for. You will see a notifications section on the page, and within the notifications box, you will see a dropdown menu titled 'Subscribed Commodities'. Within the subscribed commodities dropdown menu, you can add commodity codes to your profile, and there are 2 methods to do so.

Notifications:

Subscribe to "notifications" and BC Bid will send you an email when an opportunity is posted that matches the commodity codes you have selected. Use the dropdown below to choose codes related to your business. You can update them at any time.

Cost /year + tax

Your Subscription expires on

Subscribed Commodities

Note: After selecting commodity codes, click on 'Save' to save your selections.

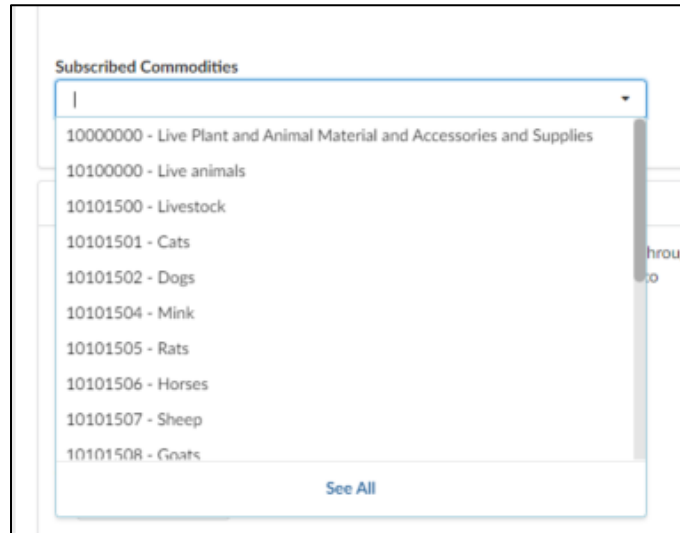
Method 1: The first method is to click inside the 'Subscribed Commodities' dropdown menu and then search based on keywords. For example, if you were offering a variety of live plant and animal materials, you could type in Live plant and animal material into the field and then click on live plant and animal material to add this to your subscribed commodity codes. You can subscribe to multiple commodity codes within your active subscription, and there is no limit to the number of codes you can subscribe to (for example, here you could search and add cats, dogs, and horses, and add all three).

Subscribed Commodities

- 10000000 - Live Plant and Animal Material and Accessories and Supplies
- 10100000 - Live animals
- 10101500 - Livestock
- 10101501 - Cats
- 10101502 - Dogs
- 10101504 - Mink
- 10101505 - Rats
- 10101506 - Horses
- 10101507 - Sheep
- 10101508 - Goats

[See All](#)

Method 2: The second method would be to add commodity codes to your subscription using the tiered dropdown list in the commodity selector. To do this, click inside the 'Subscribed Commodities' dropdown menu and then at the bottom of the shortlist, click 'See All' to open the commodity selector window.



In the commodity selector window, you will see a tiered list of commodity codes available to subscribe to in BC Bid.

Commodity selector

Search by keyword To confirm your selection(s), close this window using the X in the top right corner

Limit to my scope

Check all

- 10000000 - Live Plant and Animal Material and Accessories and Supplies
- 11000000 - Mineral and Textile and Inedible Plant and Animal Materials
- 12000000 - Chemicals including Bio Chemicals and Gas Materials
- 13000000 - Resin and Rosin and Rubber and Foam and Film and Elastomeric Materials
- 14000000 - Paper Materials and Products
- 15000000 - Fuels and Fuel Additives and Lubricants and Anti corrosive Materials
- 20000000 - Mining and Well Drilling Machinery and Accessories
- 21000000 - Farming and Fishing and Forestry and Wildlife Machinery and Accessories
- 22000000 - Building and Construction Machinery and Accessories
- 23000000 - Industrial Manufacturing and Processing Machinery and Accessories
- 24000000 - Material Handling and Conditioning and Storage Machinery and their Accessories and Supplies
- 25000000 - Vehicles and their Accessories and Components
- 26000000 - Power Generation and Distribution Machinery and Accessories

From within the commodity code selector window, you can click the plus buttons on the left-hand side of the window, to expand any goods or services dropdown category and reveal more specific sub-codes in tiered lists.

There are 4 tiers of specificity within the commodity selector window. For example, tier1 would be "Live Plant and Animal Material and Accessories and Supplies", tier 2 would be "Live Animals", tier 3 would be "Livestock" and then tier 4 would be a specific livestock choice like "Cats" for example.

Check all

- 10000000 - Live Plant and Animal Material and Accessories and Supplies
 - 10100000 - Live animals
 - 10101500 - Livestock
 - 10101501 - Cats
 - 10101502 - Dogs
 - 10101504 - Mink
 - 10101505 - Rats

Checking the box for the code you wish to use subscribes you to notifications for that code, and as seen in the previous image, if selecting a more specific code, in this case a level 4 code "cats", then the previous 3 category headings become bolded to indicate that a code within that dropdown menu is selected.

Please note: Goods related codes are listed in the first half of the list (up to musical instruments) and then services codes begin after that, in the second half of the list.

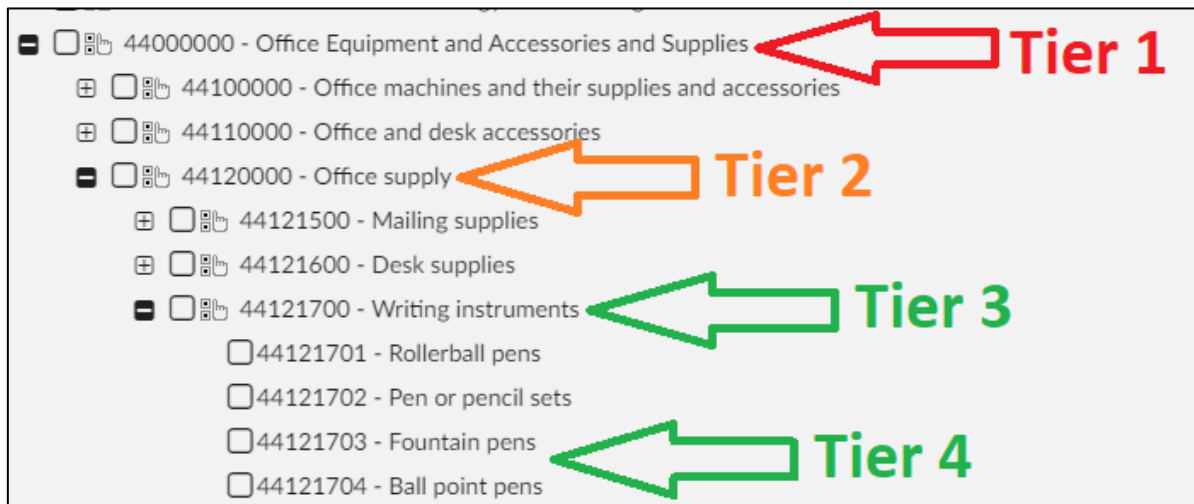


Buyer Experience: Buyers will categorize their opportunity with a commodity code, and once posted in BC Bid, eNotification subscribers that are subscribed to that code will be notified. Buyers will attempt to select the most accurate code that represents the solicitation they are posting, to ensure that those subscribers who can offer that good/service are notified, without spamming other vendors.

Step 3

Once you have selected the appropriate commodity code(s) you wish to subscribe to, please ensure that you hit the blue 'save' button that is located on the top, middle of the page to ensure your subscription choices are retained on your account. You can find these steps on the BC Procurement Resources Website in the [BC Bid Supplier Guide section](#).

Buyer vs. Supplier – Commodity Code Selection



Tier 1: Categorizing or subscribing at a tier 1 level should generally be avoided as it is too broad.

Tier 2: Categorizing or subscribing at a tier 2 level is still very broad and should be used cautiously.

Tier 3: This is generally the best tier to use as it balances specificity while still leaving room for capturing interested parties.

Tier 4: Choosing at the tier 4 level allows you to be specific enough to avoid unnecessary notifications.

Tier 1 Commodity Codes

This is the highest-level commodity code, and the broadest. These are the main categories that one can see when looking at the overall list, before drilling down into more specific goods and services. These are arranged into overarching categories based on the good or service type being procured. Subscribing to codes at this level means you get notifications for anything categorized with this code, as well as any of the codes beneath it.

An example of a broad, tier 1 code would be: **Office Equipment and Accessories and Supplies.**

Tier 2 Commodity Codes

After drilling down one layer into the commodity code list, Tier 2 commodity codes are slightly more specific and refined, and expand upon the broader, over-arching categories of the Tier 1 codes. Most Tier 1 codes have multiple Tier 2 options when drilling down, and the Tier 2 level allows for suppliers to get more specific with their subscriptions, weeding out categories that concern goods/services that the supplier does not offer, but keeps options broad for related goods/services they may provide. Subscribing to codes at this level means you get notifications for anything categorized with this code, as well as any of the codes beneath it. You will also get a notification for anything marked with the Tier 1 parent code above it.

An example of a Tier 2 code would be: **Office Supply**

Tier 3 Commodity Codes

Expanding a Tier 2 category may yield one or more Tier 3 options within the commodity code tree. Tier 3 commodity codes are getting into more specific goods and services and are more refined and narrow in scope but are not quite the most specific of codes. Suppliers will often pick a Tier 3 code as it balances receiving the target notifications without being so specific as to exclude potential opportunities. Subscribing to codes at this level means you get notifications for anything categorized with this code, as well as any of the tier 4 codes beneath it. You will also get a notification for anything marked with the Tier 1, or Tier 2 parent codes above it.

An example of a Tier 3 commodity code would be: **Writing Instruments**

Tier 4 Commodity Codes

Tier 4 codes are the most specific codes and represent a specific and highly focused good or service. Suppliers might choose to subscribe to a Tier 4 code when they have a very clear idea of a unique or specific good/service they sell, and only want to see those opportunities looking for exactly what they provide. Subscribing to codes at this level means you get notifications for anything categorized with these specific codes. You will also get a notification for anything marked with the Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 parent codes above it.

An example of a highly specific, Tier 4 code would be: **Ball Point Pens**

Buyer vs. Supplier Commodity Code Tier Comparison Chart

In this side-by-side comparison (Fig. 1), each tier of commodity code is listed and the behaviour of selecting that tier of code as a buyer or supplier is explored. Furthermore, the pros and cons of selecting or subscribing to that tier of code are listed.

Fig 1. Buyer vs. Supplier Tier Codes Comparison Table:

Commodity Code	Supplier Selection	Buyer Selection
<p>Tier 1 Commodity Code</p> <p>Example: Live Plant and Animal Material and Accessories and Supplies</p> <p>Notifies anyone subscribed to any Tier 2, 3 and 4 level code within this broad category (ex: livestock, silkworms, fish food flakes, pest control devices, fresh cut cream rose, dried cut vanda orchids etc. all get notified).</p>	<p>Best practice is to avoid subscribing to a Tier 1 code. It is very rare that a supplier would subscribe to a Tier 1 code.</p> <p>Pro: You will get every notification related to this broad category.</p> <p>Con: You will likely be spammed with notifications that don't relate to what you're offering as you will get notifications for everything that falls under this broad category.</p>	<p>Best practice is to avoid selecting a commodity code this broad. It is very rare that a buyer would need to label their solicitation with a Tier 1 code.</p> <p>Pro: Reaching the broadest audience possible (everyone).</p> <p>Con: Might not be the right audience and notification will potentially go to everyone subscribed to any code beneath this Tier 1 code (could be thousands).</p>
<p>Tier 2 Commodity Code</p> <p>Example: Live animals</p> <p>Notifies anyone subscribed to any Tier 3,</p>	<p>Subscribing to tier 2 codes gets more specific but still encompasses a variety of goods/services. You may subscribe to a Tier 2 code if you offer a</p>	<p>The Tier 2 codes get more specific, but still encompass a variety of different goods/services. These codes should be cautiously selected.</p>

<p>and 4 level codes within Live Animals (ex: livestock, birds and fowl, live fish, shellfish, insects, wild animals, etc. and all their subcodes all get notified).</p> <p>As well, anyone subscribed to the Tier 1 header code Live Plant and Animal Material and Accessories and Supplies gets notified.</p>	<p>broad range of goods/services.</p> <p>Pro: If you offer a broad range of goods and services, you will get all the notifications for all the different items within this subcategory.</p> <p>Con: You will likely get more notifications than match what you offer. This is still a broad level code, so if you offer more specific goods/services, you will potentially get 100s of unrelated notifications.</p>	<p>Pro: Ability to get more specific and eliminate items that don't concern your solicitation but still reach a broad audience.</p> <p>Con: You are still likely capturing people who are not the right audience due to the code being broad.</p>
<p>Tier 3 Commodity Code</p> <p>Example: Birds and fowl</p> <p>Notifies anyone subscribed to any Tier 4 level codes within Birds and Fowl (ex: Live chickens, live ducks, live turkeys, live geese, live pheasants etc. all get notified).</p> <p>As well, anyone subscribed to the Tier 2 header code live animals, or the Tier 1 header code Live Plant</p>	<p>This is the sweet spot for subscribing. Subscribing to a tier 3 code allows you to see notifications for a more nuanced subset of goods/services but still lets you see everything in that category.</p> <p>Pro: Allows you to see all notifications for the specific tier 3 category, in case you offer those goods/services, or want to do market research.</p> <p>Con: You may still get notifications that don't</p>	<p>This is the sweet spot. Selecting a tier 3 code allows you to reach the audience that will most likely be able to sell you what you're looking for, whilst still not being too specific.</p> <p>Pro: You reach the most likely audience whilst not getting so specific to exclude target suppliers.</p> <p>Con: You may still send notifications to some</p>

<p>and Animal Material and Accessories and Supplies gets notified.</p>	<p>pertain to your good/service as you will get notifications for all the tier 4 codes beneath this tier 3 code.</p>	<p>suppliers that cannot provide what you're looking for.</p>
<p>Tier 4 Commodity Code</p> <p>Example: Live chickens</p> <p>Notifies anyone with that specific tier 4 code subscribed to (ex: notifies everyone who subscribes to live chickens, but won't notify live ducks, live turkeys etc.)</p> <p>Also notifies anyone who has the tier 3 header birds and fowl, the tier 2 header live animals and the tier 1 header Live Plant and Animal Material and Accessories and Supplies, but not other tier 1, 2 or 3 codes that aren't in this chain.</p>	<p>This allows you to be notified about very specific solicitations labelled with the same tier 4 code. You would subscribe to this if you offer a very specific good or service and don't want any other notifications that don't match what you offer.</p> <p>Pro: You would get only notifications that match exactly what it is you offer and this specific tier 4 code you've subscribed to, as well as the notifications for the parent tier 3, 2 and 1 codes as well.</p> <p>Con: If you offer one or two goods, you will likely miss notifications for anything other than this one tier 4 code, unless you are also subscribed to those other tier 4 codes individually.</p>	<p>This allows you to be very specific in what your solicitation is looking for. If you know exactly what it is you need, you would select a tier 4 code.</p> <p>Pro: You will reach the exact audience you intend, if you only have one thing you're looking for and avoid spamming other suppliers.</p> <p>Con: You may miss some suppliers who can provide what you need, due to being so specific. This is a low risk.</p>

Commodity Code Case Studies and Activities

Below we have provided 4 different case studies to assist you in practicing the skills and best practices related to commodity code subscriptions in BC Bid. Each scenario takes you through a real-life approximation of how notifications are sent based on the codes you are subscribed to. You will be given details about the scenario and then asked questions about what you've just read.

Try your best to work through and answer the questions as best you see fit based on the information and guidance provided to you in this guide. There will be answers provided to each of the 4 case studies at the end of this section. You can then compare the answers you came up with against the answers for the case studies to see if you came up with the same course of action or learn about what the best possible action would be in each case.

Case Study 1

Onisha works for a company that offers janitorial supplies, and more specifically, physical cleaning products such as mops and buckets and dusters etc. Her company has wanted to try and work with the BC Government for some time, however, is finding it hard to locate solicitations for goods that match what her company can offer. She has heard from other companies in the area that there are postings, and that the government offers a subscription service via the BC Bid application, where vendors can subscribe to various commodity codes and then be notified of opportunities that are labelled with those codes. Onisha suggests this to her boss and gets the go ahead to subscribe to commodity code notifications in BC Bid. She reaches the point in the process where she needs to select which codes she wishes to subscribe to and notices that there is a tier 2 code called "janitorial equipment". She believes subscribing to this code should allow her to be notified of any opportunities for janitorial equipment that the government posts and is satisfied as her company offers janitorial equipment.

- 47000000 - Cleaning Equipment and Supplies
 - 47100000 - Water and wastewater treatment supply and disposal
 - 47110000 - Industrial laundry and dry cleaning equipment
 - 47120000 - Janitorial equipment
 - 47121500 - Cleaning and janitorial carts and accessories
 - 47121600 - Floor machines and accessories
 - 47121700 - Waste containers and accessories
 - 47121800 - Cleaning equipment
 - 47121801 - Cleaning dusters
 - 47121802 - Lint removers
 - 47121803 - Squeegees or washers
 - 47121804 - Cleaning pails or buckets
 - 47121805 - Pressure or steam cleaners
 - 47121806 - Mop wringer
 - 47121807 - Drain or toilet plunger
 - 47121808 - Drain or pipe cleaning equipment
 - 47121809 - Degreasing pans

Case Study 1 Discussion Points

Answers provided on page 20

Question 1 – Is the tier 2 code janitorial equipment (47120000) the best commodity code for Onisha to subscribe to, so she is notified of opportunities that may interest her company? Why or why not?

Question 2 – Subscribing to janitorial equipment (47120000), which potential opportunities will Onisha be notified of (based on the commodity codes that a buyer may choose to categorize their opportunities with)?

Question 3 – Is there a better code that Onisha might have picked to subscribe to such that her company only receives notifications for opportunities that they can respond to (which code and why)?

Case Study 2

João works for a company that provides generalized gardening tools to suit a variety of gardening needs. He has heard about commodity code subscriptions that are offered by the BC Government in the BC Bid application and is interested in a subscription to maximize his company's chances of responding to solicitations requesting gardening tools. After purchasing a subscription service, he is looking at the commodity code selector, trying to decide which commodity codes would be

the best to subscribe to, to ensure that they get notifications for the most relevant postings. His first thought is to just subscribe to the tier 1 code tools and general machinery (27000000). This way he would be notified of every opportunity and wouldn't miss any. He then wonders if he may be bombarded with many notifications, and considers the tier 2 code hand tools (27110000) instead? This seems like it could fit as much of what his company sells are hand tools. He then notices the tier 3 code agriculture, forestry and garden hand tools (27112000) and feels that this might categorize what he sells more accurately. He then notices the specific tier 4 codes for spades (27112002), shovels (27112004), axes (27112005), and hoes (27112008). He starts to wonder if he should just subscribe to codes that match the very specific gardening goods they offer as a company? He decides to reach out to the BC Bid team within the government for guidance on best practice.

- 27000000 - Tools and General Machinery
 - 27110000 - Hand tools
 - 27111500 - Cutting and crimping and punching tools
 - 27111600 - Forming tools
 - 27111700 - Wrenches and drivers
 - 27111800 - Measuring and layout tools
 - 27111900 - Rough and finishing tools
 - 27112000 - Agriculture, forestry and garden handtools
 - 27112001 - Machetes
 - 27112002 - Spades
 - 27112003 - Rakes
 - 27112004 - Shovels
 - 27112005 - Axes
 - 27112006 - Scythes
 - 27112007 - Secateurs or pruning shears
 - 27112008 - Hoes
 - 27112009 - Scrapers
 - 27112010 - Garden forks
 - 27112011 - Tool handles

Case Study 2 Discussion Points

Answers provided on page 22

Question 1 – Which notifications would João receive if he chooses to subscribe to the tier 1 commodity code tools and general machinery (27000000)?

Question 2 – Which notifications would João receive if he chooses to subscribe to the tier 2 commodity code hand tools (27110000)?

Question 3 – Which notifications would João receive if he chooses to subscribe to the tier 3 commodity code agriculture, forestry and garden hand tools (27112000)?

Question 4 - Which notifications would João receive if he chooses to subscribe to the tier 4 commodity codes spades (27112002), shovels (27112004), axes (27112005), and hoes (27112008)?

Question 5 – Which would be the best code(s) for João to subscribe to?

Case Study 3

Gianna manages a company that offers food related health services and consultations to interested parties. She knows that sometimes the government will engage these services on behalf of 3rd party clients, and she would like to be notified of these types of contracts so she can attempt to bid on them. She has learned about subscription services and has set herself up with an account and is currently trying to decide on the best commodity codes to subscribe to. Gianna's company offers food hygiene control, food contamination control, food preparation counselling, food research services, food analysis services and food legislation assistance. She also has some experience with studies on foods, or food habits, and quality standards services. She wants to be notified of solicitations that match the main services she offers, but she would not be upset to be notified about solicitations that match those services she has a smaller amount of experience with but can still offer.

- 85000000 - Healthcare Services
 - 85100000 - Comprehensive health services
 - 85110000 - Disease prevention and control
 - 85120000 - Medical practice
 - 85130000 - Medical science research and experimentation
 - 85140000 - Alternative and holistic medicine
 - 85150000 - Food and nutrition services
 - 85151500 - Food technology
 - 85151501 - Food hygiene control services
 - 85151502 - Food contamination control services
 - 85151503 - Food preservation management or control services
 - 85151504 - Food preparation counseling or control services
 - 85151505 - Food research services
 - 85151506 - Studies on foods or food habits
 - 85151507 - Food additive or quality standards services
 - 85151508 - Food analysis services
 - 85151509 - Food legislation services
 - 85151600 - Nutrition issues
 - 85151700 - Food policy planning and aid

Case Study 3 Discussion Points

Answers provided on page 23

Question 1 – Which would be the best commodity code for Gianna to subscribe to and why?

Question 2 – What would be the result of Gianna subscribing to a more generalized commodity code such as the tier 2 food and nutrition services (85150000)?

Question 3 – What would happen if Gianna subscribed to the tier 3 code food technology (85151500), but then also subscribed to the specific tier 4 codes that match the specific services that her company offers?

Case Study 4

Henry-Walter is the owner of a company that provides consultative and advisory services to management professionals to help develop and strengthen professional skills. He has specifically cultivated a unique set of topics that he offers training on, including training on project administration, project monitoring, and evaluation, project impact assessments, and economic and financial evaluation. He does not currently offer training on feasibility studies, regional

studies or temporary drafting services. Henry-Walter has just signed up for subscription services within the BC Bid application and is trying to decide which commodity codes to select for his subscription that best match the training services he offers? He is torn between subscribing to the tier 3 code project management or subscribing to the specific tier 4 codes that match the exact services that his company offers. He decides to reach out to you for some advice.



A screenshot of a dropdown menu from a software application. The menu is open, showing a list of commodity codes. The top-level code is 80000000 - Management and Business Professionals and Administrative Services. Underneath it, there are several sub-codes, with 80101600 - Project management being the selected one. Below 80101600, there are seven more specific codes, each with an unchecked checkbox.

- 80000000 - Management and Business Professionals and Administrative Services
 - 80100000 - Management advisory services
 - 80101500 - Business and corporate management consultation services
 - 80101600 - Project management
 - 80101601 - Feasibility studies or screening of project ideas
 - 80101602 - Regional or location studies for projects
 - 80101603 - Economic or financial evaluation of projects
 - 80101604 - Project administration or planning
 - 80101605 - Temporary drafting service
 - 80101606 - Project monitoring and evaluation
 - 80101607 - Project impact assessment

Case Study 4 Discussion Points

Answers provided on page 24

Question 1 – What are the pros and cons of subscribing to the tier 3 commodity code project management (80101600) for Henry-Walter?

Question 2 – What are the pros and cons of subscribing to the specific tier 4 commodity codes that match the exact services Henry-Walter’s company offers (ex: project administration or planning (80101604) etc.)?

Question 3 – Given what you’ve learned about commodity codes and their use, would you advise Henry-Walter to subscribe to the specific tier 4 codes or the tier 3 code for his subscription service?

Case Study Answer Key

Answers to Case Study 1

Question 1

The tier 2 commodity code janitorial equipment (47120000) is not the best commodity code for Onisha to add to her subscriptions. Choosing to subscribe to a

code at the tier 2 level is likely too broad in this instance and will provide Onisha with the potential for many 100s of notifications that are not relevant to the goods that her company offers.

Question 2

In choosing to subscribe to the tier 2 code janitorial equipment (47120000) on her subscriptions account, Onisha will potentially receive a large pool of notifications. Onisha will be notified of any opportunities posted to BC Bid that are categorized with any tier 3 codes that fall under the tier 2 code janitorial equipment. As well, she will be notified of any opportunities posted that are categorized with any tier 4 codes under each of the tier 3 codes as well.

As an example, subscribing to the tier 2 code janitorial equipment, she would receive notifications for opportunities categorized with the following tier 3 codes: cleaning and janitorial carts and accessories, floor machines and accessories, waste containers and accessories, cleaning equipment, and cleaning equipment accessories. She would also receive any notifications for opportunities categorized with any of the tier 4 codes under the ones just listed of which there are 50+. For example, she would be notified of any postings categorized with vacuum cleaners, drain and toilet plungers, pool cleaners, and degreasing pans, to name a few.

Question 3

Yes, in this instance it would be better for Onisha to subscribe to the tier 3 code cleaning equipment (47121800) on her subscription service. This will ensure that she receives notifications for opportunities that are looking for cleaning pails or buckets, a mop wringer and cleaning dusters, but also allows her company to see notifications for opportunities that are seeking other tier 4 code products like lint removers, squeegees, and degreasing pans which her company can also offer. In choosing to subscribe to the tier 3 code cleaning equipment, Onisha eliminates the potential to get notifications for other tier 3 codes seeking cleaning and janitorial carts and accessories, floor machines and accessories, waste containers and accessories, and cleaning equipment accessories which are not relevant to the goods that Onisha's company offers.

Answers to Case Study 2

Question 1

If João subscribes to the tier 1 code tools and general machinery (27000000) on his subscription account, he will potentially be notified of opportunities categorized with 1000+ codes that fall at the tiers 2, 3 and 4 level below this tier 1 code. This is so broad that he would be notified of any opportunity containing any code in the tools and general machinery code tree.

Question 2

If João subscribes to the tier 2 code hand tools (27110000) on his subscription account, he will still be notified of opportunities categorized with 500+ codes that fall within that tier 2 code. The tier 2 level is still very broad, with the hand tool code comprising many tiers 3 and 4 codes beneath it and he would be notified of any opportunities containing these codes as well.

Question 3

If João subscribes to the tier 3 code agriculture, forestry and garden hand tools (27112000) on his subscription account, he has now narrowed the field significantly. In this case he will now receive notifications for opportunities categorized with the 47 tier 4 codes that sit beneath that tier 3 code but has eliminated the potential to be notified of any opportunities that are categorized with all other tier 2 and 3 codes in this tree.

Question 4

If João subscribes to any of the tier 4 codes such as spades (27112002), shovels (27112004), axes (27112005), or hoes (27112008) on his subscription account, he will only receive notifications of opportunities that are categorized with these specific codes. João will also be notified if a buyer posts a sourcing project using the Tier 1, 2, & 3 codes in the direct chain above his selected codes

Question 5

João's company provides some of the tools he sees in the list of tier 4 codes. Ultimately however, he wants to narrow the scope of notifications he receives but does not want to miss out on notifications for some of the other tools his company

can also provide, so the tier 3 code of agriculture, forestry and garden handtools would be the best choice for him to subscribe to. Subscribing to the code at this level, he casts a wide enough net as not to miss any opportunities he could potentially respond to, however avoids receiving notifications for 500+ codes by subscribing at the tier 2 level, or 1000+ codes by subscribing at the tier 1 level.

Answers to Case Study 3

Question 1

The best commodity code for Gianna to subscribe to on her subscription account in this case is the tier 3 commodity code food technology (85151500). This way, she receives notifications for any opportunities categorized with any of the tier 4 codes that match the main services her company offers but would also receive notifications for opportunities that match the services she has less experience with but can still offer. This way she gets the best pool of notifications that match her services but avoids notifications for opportunities that are unrelated to the services her company offers.

Question 2

The services that Gianna's company offers could be categorized generally as food and nutrition services and therefore she may be tempted to subscribe to the tier 2 code that is called exactly that. However, in doing so, she would receive notifications for opportunities categorized with any of the tier 3 and tier 4 codes that fall below that tier 2 code. This would include notifications for opportunities seeking nutrition issues, diet control, breast feeding policy, food policy planning and aid, national food intervention policy, and assessment of emergency food requirements (to name a few), none of which are services that Gianna's company offers.

Question 3

If Gianna subscribed to the tier 3 code food technology (85151500), then she would receive notifications for opportunities categorized with this tier 3 code, and notifications for opportunities categorized with any of the tier 4 codes that fall beneath this tier 3 code as well. If she then went on to subscribe to the specific tier 4 codes that match the services that her company offers, it would not change any

of the notifications that she receives, as she was already receiving notifications for any of the tier 4 codes, simply by subscribing at the tier 3 level with the code food technology (85151500).

Answers to Case Study 4

Question 1

If Henry-Walter subscribes to the tier 3 commodity code project management (80101600) for his subscription service, then he will receive notifications for any opportunities categorized with this tier 3 code, as well as notifications for any opportunities categorized with any of the tier 4 codes that fall below this tier 3 code as well. This means that he will receive a notification for opportunities seeking any of the services at that tier 4 level, many of which his company offers, and he can then potentially respond. The con is that he may be notified of opportunities that are seeking services such as feasibility studies, regional studies or temporary drafting services that his company does not offer.

Question 2

If Henry-Walter chooses to subscribe to the specific tier 4 commodity codes that match the exact services that his company offers, then he will only be notified of opportunities that are categorized with those exact tier 4 codes. The con in this instance is that if any opportunities in BC Bid are categorized with broader tier 3 codes, or other tier 4 codes that Henry-Walter has not subscribed to, he may not be notified, and may miss an opportunity to respond to a RFP that his company could actually meet.

Question 3

In this instance, given the specific nature of the services that Henry-Walter's company offers, choosing to subscribe to only those tier 4 codes that match the services he offers is the best course of action. If he were to choose to subscribe to the tier 3 code project management, he may receive more notifications, but many of them would be for services that his company does not offer, and therefore would be clutter his inbox. Subscribing to the specific tier 4 codes that match Henry-Walter's services, gets him the most tailored and relevant notifications, and

the risk of missing an opportunity that is labelled with a code for a service he doesn't offer, but that he could respond to is very low.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What happened to the GSIN commodity codes?

The Government of Canada recently adopted the [UNSPSC coding structure](#), and no longer maintains the GSIN classification system. Other Canadian jurisdictions, e.g., Province of Ontario, already use the UNSPSC structure. It is one of the more widely used product and service categorization systems.

Using a standardized and modern procurement taxonomy will:

- Allow for consistent recording and reporting of procurement information
- Help to meet reporting obligations established through policy and trade agreements
- Provide a navigation method for both buyers and suppliers and improve search functions

Is there a list of UNSPSC commodity codes?

We have an [Excel list of the 100,000+ UNSPSC commodity codes](#) in the Resources section on our BC Procurement Resources website.

What if a suitable commodity code cannot be found? Can one be added to the system?

BC Bid uses UNSPSC commodity codes, which are governed by Trade Agreements under the UN Development Programme (UNDP). These codes are periodically updated and loaded in bulk into BC Bid. The BC Bid team coordinates these updates with the Corporate Financial System (CFS) to ensure our systems match. Unfortunately, BC Bid cannot create commodity codes independently.

We recommend checking historical similar opportunities to see what commodity codes were used for those, which could help you find a suitable code.

If the UNSPSC codeset does not contain the good or service that you supply, please email [BC Bid Support](#) with the following information.

- Segment: <The Segment the code should fall under>
- Family: <The Family the code should fall under>
- Class: <The Class the code should fall under>
- Commodity: <Name of the commodity you would like to add>
- Definition: <Definition of the commodity>
- Business Case: <Describe why a new code is required/why an existing code can't be used>

The support team will submit your request to UNSPSC for review (the UNSPSC codeset is updated annually).

Are there any wildcard keys in the commodity code search within BC Bid? BC Bid's commodity code search does not support wildcard keys like "?" or "#." The system, however, is designed to accommodate minor spelling errors and still bring up related commodity codes.

Resources

- [Commodity Code Selection Video for Buyers](#)
- [Commodity Code Subscription Video for Suppliers](#)
- [UNSPSC Commodity Code Information](#)
- [UNSPSC Commodity Code List](#)
- [Online UNSPCS Commodity Code Search Tool](#)
- [Mapping GSIN Commodity Codes to UNSPSC Commodity Codes](#)