



## UNSPSC Guidelines – Tips on how to use UNSPSC Codes

The United Nations Standard Products and Services Codes (UNSPSC)

Product coding is used to classify your company's goods and services when registering with the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM), the common UN supplier database. **The UNSPSC coding system replaces the UNCCS coding system from 5 November 2012 onwards.** All business opportunities posted on [www.ungm.org](http://www.ungm.org) after this date will be displayed according to UNSPSC codes.

UN Procurement Officers select one or more UNSPSC codes to indicate the product or service their agency needs to procure. In the same manner, **UN Procurement Officers use the UNSPSC codes as search criteria for finding potential suppliers** registered and accepted by one or more UN agency from the UNGM database. Therefore, it is vitally important that you select the most accurate UNSPSC codes to describe your goods/services.

Furthermore, the selection of UNSPSC codes is crucial if you decide to subscribe to the Tender Alert Service. You will receive tenders alerts corresponding to the UNSPSC codes you have selected during your UNGM registration.

This guide will:

- explain how the UNSPSC codes are structured,
- provide guidance on how to search for the most relevant UNSPSC codes,
- and the procedure for updating codes for new products and services.

### The UNSPSC code structure

UNSPSC provides an eight-digit numerical code representing a four-level hierarchy with each level represented by two digits. The structure is hierarchical and the coding purely numeric. The hierarchy consists of Segments (2 significant digits followed by 6 zeros), Families (4 significant digits followed by 4 zeros), Classes (6 significant digits followed by 2 zeros), Commodities (8 significant digits). The codes take the following format:

**XX000000** the first pair of digits identifies the relevant **Segment**  
**XXXX0000** the first and second pair of digits, combined, indicate the **Family**  
**XXXXXX00** the first three pairs of digits identify the **Class**  
**XXXXXXXX** combined the four pairs of digits indicate the **Commodity**

The full code set includes over 50,000 codes to categorise goods and services. In order to represent the specific needs of UN agencies, as well as to simplify the selection process for potential suppliers a subset of 3 345 codes has been selected.

UNSPSC covers both goods and services:

UNSPSC Segments from: **10000000-69000000 and 95000000 are for GOODS**

And from: **70000000-94000000 are for SERVICES**

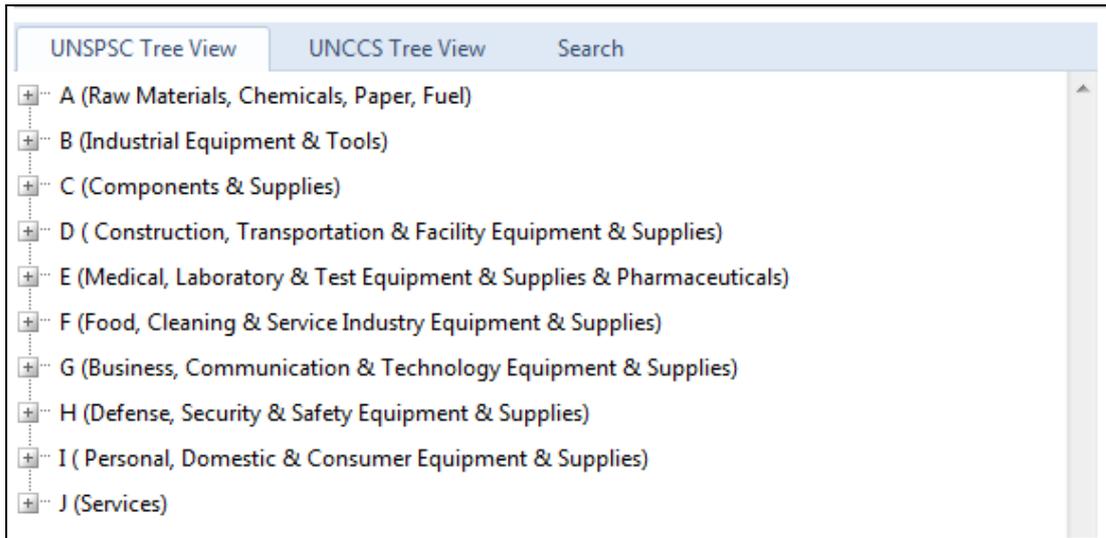
Please visit <https://www.ungm.org/Info/UNSPSC.aspx> and get familiar with the UNSPSC codes. To look at UNSPSC codes in UNGM you **don't have to log in**, just go to:

<https://www.ungm.org/Info/UNSPSC.aspx>

Under the main menu, click on the hyperlink "UNSPSC Codes".

## Search for UNSPSC Codes

Go to [www.ungm.org](http://www.ungm.org) and choose "UNSPSC Codes". The following will be displayed:



In the tree structure shown above, note that UNGM has created 10 high-level Sections (from A. Raw Materials, Chemicals, Paper, Fuel to J. Services) above the UNSPSC Segments to simplify navigation of the UNSPSC hierarchy. These high-level Sections are indicative only, and cannot be selected.

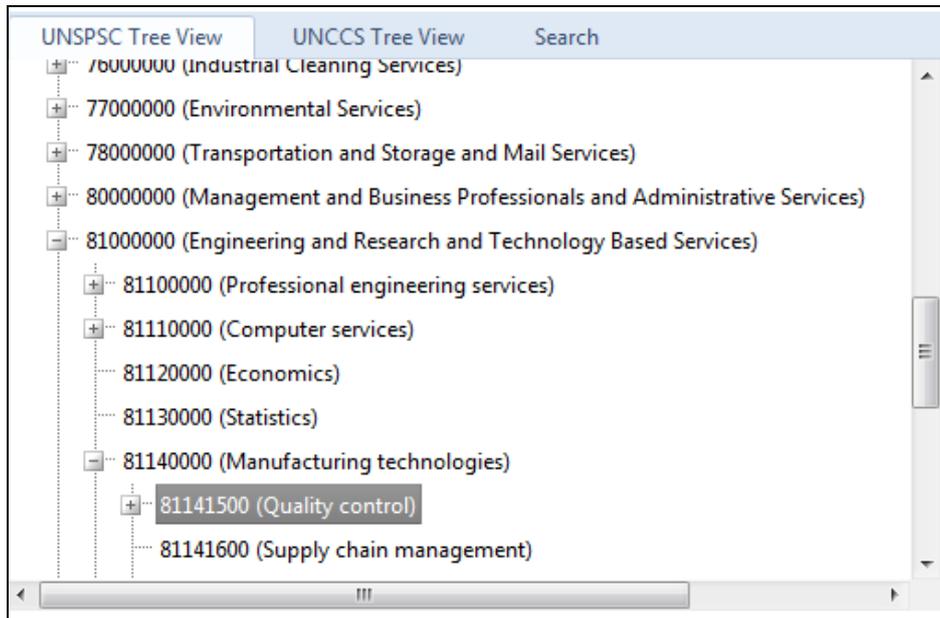
You can search for codes either by:

- 1) Entering one or several search words in the "Search" box. A list of UNSPSC codes containing the keyword(s) will appear. To view each of the codes listed in the tree structure, click on **the magnifying glass** . **In the tree, you will be able to see the structure of the Segment and sub-codes related to the description to help you to select the most accurate code.** An additional section provides you with a list of suggested related UNSPSC codes containing matching keyword(s). *For example, when typing the keyword "quality control" the following is displayed:*



- 2) Clicking your way down the hierarchical structure. Expand to the “branches” and “leaves” by clicking on the expansion  sign.

*For example, when looking for “quality control” in the tree, the following is displayed:*



## Selecting the proper UNSPSC codes

Here are a few basic principles and considerations to keep in mind when selecting codes:

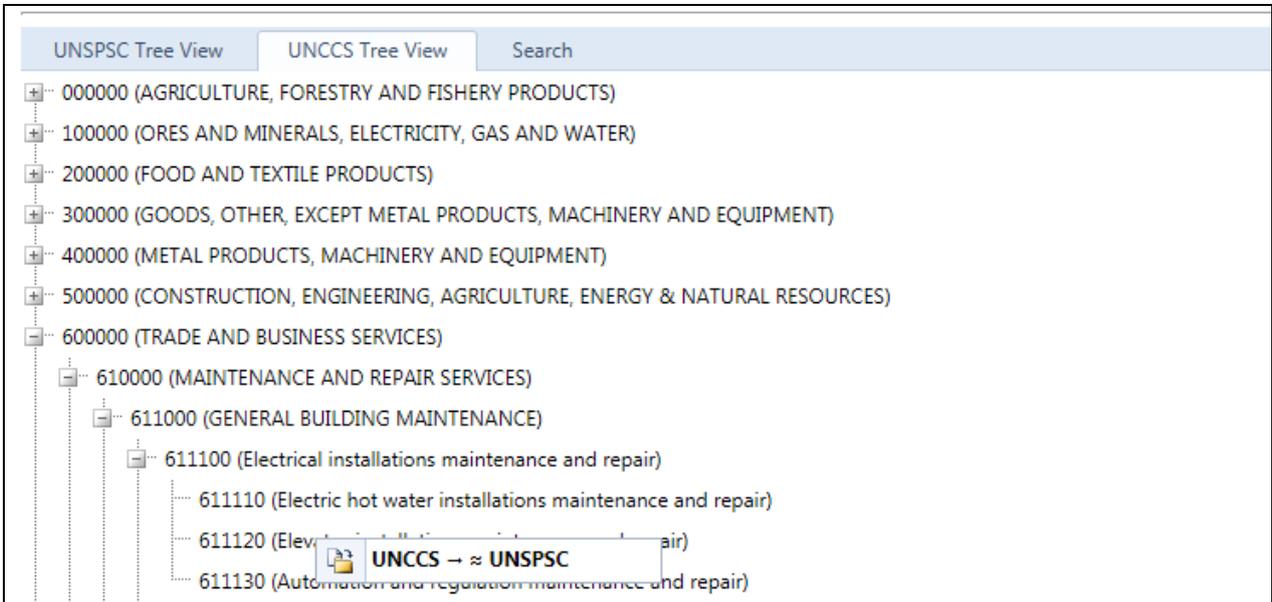
- Is the **predominant characteristic** that of a good/product or of a service?
- Does the selected code make sense **when viewed in context of the overall code**? That is, if a code to the Class or Commodity level is selected, does the item naturally fit within the encompassing Family and Segment?
- The items procured should be considered by nature of the product.** Items are classified based on what they are, so a battery for a laptop is located in the same branch of the tree as a container load of batteries for storing output from photovoltaic generating system. If you consider yourself as a provider of batteries, you would enter a code specifically for batteries. If you provide equipment-specific batteries for maintenance and support of your primary product, you likely will not specifically use the code for batteries.
- Services can be more difficult to classify than goods. It can be useful **to focus on the type of your company**. For example, if your company would be contracted primarily on account of your expertise in a certain subject matter or sector (e.g., consulting, training, management or study with respect to a governance project), then you should use the code related to that particular subject matter (in this case: 93150000, Public administration and finance services). If, on the other hand, you are contracted for a certain professional expertise without respect to any particular expertise in the specific project sector (e.g., auditing services which only coincidentally relate to a governance project), then you should use the code related to that particular professional expertise (in this case: 84111600, Audit services).
- We do encourage you to **select more than one UNSPSC code** to ensure that your core business is covered.

- f) **Provide the most detailed coding possible** by selecting from the “leaves” in the hierarchy tree. **This is particularly important when subscribing to the Tender Alert Service in order to target as accurately as possible the tender notices for the goods or services that you intend to supply to the UN organisations.**
- g) The most effective coding should be **at the lowest level (leaf) provided in the trimmed tree**. Only select higher level codes when the good or service is not properly represented in any of the “leaves” on the appropriate branch of the tree.

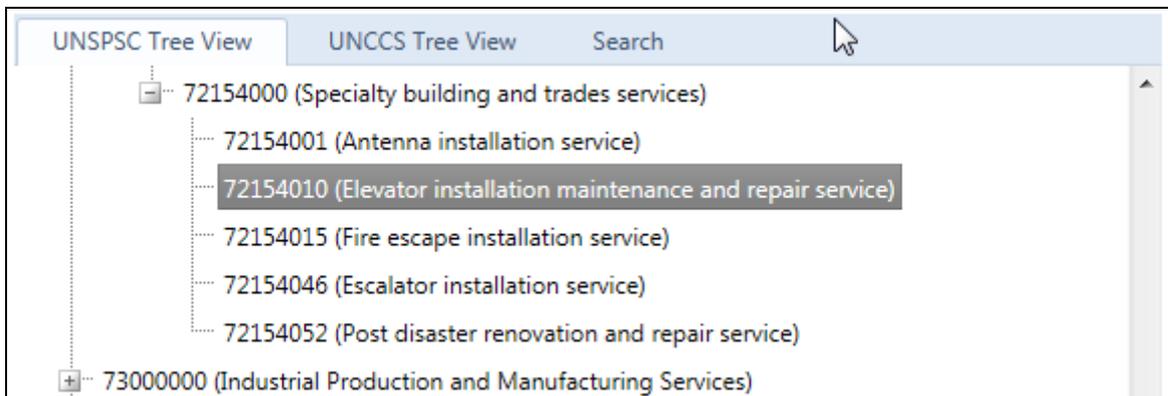
*Example: 83000000 = Public Utilities and Public Sector Related Services is not an appropriate code. 83101500 = Water and sewer utilities is an appropriate code. However, if you provide steam utility service, UNSPSC does not have a branch for steam utility so you would use 83100000 = Utilities.*

### Converting UNCCS to UNSPSC Codes

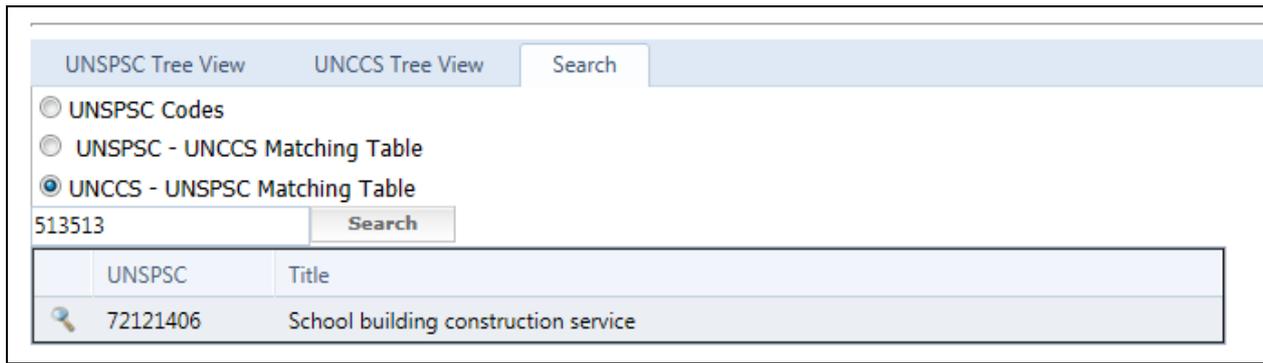
During the transition period, you can use the “UNCCS Tree View” enabling you to browse codes from the former UNCCS coding system used in UNGM. When you right click on the earlier UNCCS code, you will be able to find the corresponding UNSPSC code.



The “UNCCS – UNSPSC matching table” will automatically open and show the corresponding UNSPCS code. Using the magnifying glass you will be able to scroll and find the code within the tree. It is advisable to review suggested codes to ensure your goods and services are classified as accurately as possible.



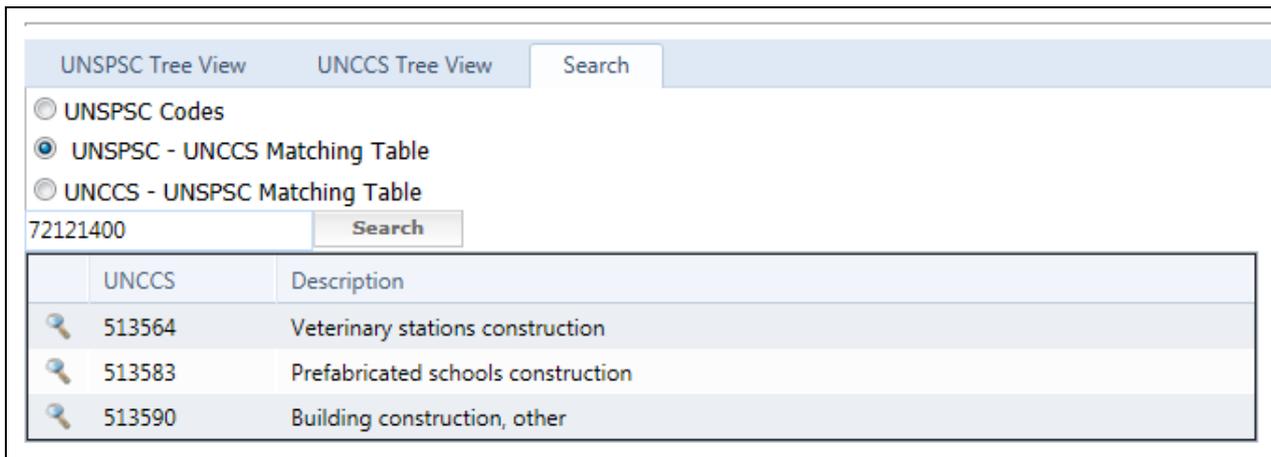
From the "Search" tab, you can also enter a UNCCS Code to obtain the corresponding UNSPSC Code. To proceed, select the option "UNCCS - UNSPSC Matching Table" and enter a UNCCS Code as per the screenshot below:



### Reviewing UNSPSC codes using UNCCS codes

During the transition period, you may also want to review the new UNSPCS codes by comparing them to the earlier UNCCS codes. You can access the "UNSPSC - UNCCS Matching Table" under the "Search" functionality enabling you to browse codes from the former UNCCS coding system.

From the "Search" tab, you can also enter the UNSPSC Code to obtain the corresponding UNCCS Code. To proceed, select the option "UNSPSC - UNCCS Matching Table" and enter a UNSPSC Code as per the screenshot below:



### Cannot find a code which describes your goods or services?

If you are unable to locate a code that classifies the goods or service needed, it is a simple process to request a change by submitting your request in writing via email to the UNGM registry at [registry@ungm.org](mailto:registry@ungm.org).

On a quarterly basis, UNGM will submit requests for changes on behalf of UN agency users and potential suppliers to UNSPSC to add or edit the classifications in the UNSPSC code.

A change to the code can include an addition, deletion, moving, or editing of a code. Requests will be reviewed and voted upon by UNSPSC Segment Technical Advisers (voting members who have been elected to become actively involved in the update of the UNSPSC by contributing their specific expertise). We will revert with the outcome to the respective requestors.

**Need more information or assistance? Please do not hesitate to contact us at [registry@ungm.org](mailto:registry@ungm.org).**

*Please include your UNGM number and username in all correspondence.*