

TOP TIPS
FOR MAKING
CLARIFICATION
QUESTIONS WORK

Public Procurement



TOP TIPS FOR MAKING CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS WORK

Clarification questions are an integral part of any procurement process. Do not be afraid of submitting them – it is better to raise a question (even if it then means that your competitors get the benefit of the responses provided) than to make an incorrect assumption about what the contracting authority wants.

Follow our top tips set to get the best out of the process and help you submit a winning bid.

Clarification questions

01. REVIEW TENDER DOCUMENTS

Read the tender documents carefully and do not assume that you understand what the contracting authority is asking for. If the documents are ambiguous and could impact your submission submit a clarification question at the earliest opportunity.

Contracting authorities do not select or reject bidders based on the content of clarification questions.

02. UNDERSTAND TIMESCALES

Make sure that you understand the process and timescales for submitting clarification questions. If the process does not give you the chance to submit questions, then ask the contracting authority if questions can be raised.

03. FOLLOW THE PROCESS

Follow the process, if there is one, in the tender documents. Failing to comply with that process might detrimentally impact your submission.

04. GENERIC OR SPECIFIC

Work out whether your clarification question will reveal anything about your submission (a Specific Clarification) or if it is generic to all bidders (a Generic Clarification).

If it is a Specific Clarification, then check out the process to work out the circumstances in which your question will be revealed to all bidders and when it will be kept confidential.

05. CLEAR ON CATEGORY

If the process deals with Generic or Specific Clarifications in a different way, then make sure when you frame your question you are clear to the contracting authority which category it should fall in.

If the process is silent then your first clarification question to a contracting authority is if you submit a clarification question that will not be disclosed to the other bidders.

06. ONE ISSUE PER QUESTION

Frame your questions to one issue per question, keeping them clear, and concise. Do not ask one question with several component parts unless they are linked and set out in bullet points. That way you encourage the contracting authority to cover all issues that you have raised, and you can easily check off that the contracting authority has answered all of your questions.

07. ASK FOR FURTHER CLARIFICATION

If the response received to a clarification question does not properly address the issue, ask another clarification question.

08. KNOW THE DEADLINE

Submit at the earliest opportunity. Missing a deadline could mean you cannot raise any clarification questions prior to submitting your bid.

If the question has a significant impact on the way you will structure your bid make sure that you submit it early so that you can get the response in sufficient time to then prepare your proposal.



Emma Butcher

PARTNER

 [View profile](#)

 emma.butcher@clarkslegal.com

 0118 958 5321



For more information on how we can help your business: clarkslegal.com
email: contact@clarkslegal.com · Reading: 0118 958 5321 · London: 020 7539 8000

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