

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Vendor Communication and Query Handling

This SOP details the processes for **vendor communication and query handling**, including establishing clear communication channels, timely response protocols, documentation of all interactions, issue resolution procedures, and regular follow-ups. The aim is to maintain effective and professional communication with vendors, ensuring that queries are addressed efficiently to support smooth business operations and foster strong vendor relationships.

1. Purpose

To outline the standard procedures for managing vendor communications and handling queries to ensure professionalism, transparency, and efficiency in all vendor-related interactions.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees and departments interacting with vendors as part of procurement, supply chain, finance, or project-related activities.

3. Responsibilities

- **Procurement/Responsible Department:** Manage all vendor communications and resolve queries promptly.
- **Employees:** Follow the SOP when interacting with vendors and escalate issues as required.
- **Management:** Oversee adherence to this SOP and address escalated matters.

4. Procedure

1. Establishing Communication Channels

- Designate official points of contact (email, phone, platform) for vendor communications.
- Notify vendors of official communication channels and provide contact details at the start of the business relationship.

2. Receiving Vendor Queries

- Acknowledge receipt of the vendor's query within one business day.
- Log all queries in a centralized system or communication tracking sheet with date, vendor details, and nature of the query.

3. Timely Response Protocol

- Respond to standard queries within 2 business days.
- For complex queries, provide an estimated response time and regular status updates.

4. Documentation of Communication

- Record all communications, decisions, and actions taken in the vendor management system.
- Save copies of email correspondence and maintain call logs.

5. Issue Resolution

- Identify the root cause of vendor issues through investigation and consultation.
- Coordinate with internal stakeholders as necessary for resolution.
- Communicate the resolution steps and expected timelines to the vendor.

6. Escalation Process

- If an issue cannot be resolved within the stipulated timeframe, escalate it to management according to the escalation matrix.

7. Follow-Up and Closure

- Confirm with the vendor that the query/issue has been satisfactorily resolved.

- Document closure and update the status in the tracking system.

8. Regular Review

- Schedule periodic reviews of vendor communications to identify recurring issues and areas for process improvement.

5. Documentation & Records

- Maintain records of all communications (emails, call logs, notes) for at least two years or as per company policy.
- Ensure records are accessible for audit and reference purposes.

6. Review & Updates

This SOP should be reviewed annually or upon significant process changes. Update procedures as necessary to reflect best practices and business needs.