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Problem or Dispute? Allow OPO to Facilitate!

Considering the number of federal government contracts awarded every year, occasional misunderstandings and disputes between suppliers and federal organizations seem almost inevitable. A breakdown in communication is often the reason disputes arise between federal organizations and suppliers, and the Office of the Procurement Ombudsman (OPO) can help re-establish lines of communication.

The Office's informal and formal facilitation services are an important part of OPO's efforts to resolve disputes between suppliers and federal organizations. In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, OPO addressed more than 25% of all contacts from Canadian suppliers through informal facilitation. In many instances, this was done by an OPO representative calling a federal organization to clarify a point of miscommunication or playing a "go between" role and relaying information between the supplier and federal organization. In most cases we are able to re-establish communication, enabling the supplier and the federal organization to resolve the dispute. Here are two examples from 2015-2016 that show how OPO helped resolve a miscommunication:

- A supplier called us stating they had not received payment despite having submitted invoices. An OPO representative called the federal organization and determined the cheque had been mailed but not received. A new cheque was issued by the organization and the supplier received it the following week.
- A supplier was having difficulty contacting a federal official to ask questions about a solicitation. The supplier contacted OPO and raised the issue with an OPO representative. The OPO representative called the organization and was able to ensure the supplier received answers prior to the solicitation closing.

In instances where a contract exists between a supplier and federal organization and a dispute emerges, OPO's formal alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services can help. Our no-fee ADR services, offered by trained and certified OPO staff, can help resolve miscommunication and disputes, re-establish the business relationship, and allow the supplier and federal organization to move forward and complete the contract. OPO's tried and tested ADR services work. To learn more, check out this short video on OPO's ADR services: <https://youtu.be/Ut0KiMJgBfU>.

Whether through informal or formal facilitation, OPO can help re-establish communication, resolve procurement related disputes, and find solutions to problems. If you— a supplier or federal official—are experiencing a breakdown in communication or a dispute related to a federal contract, call OPO at 1-866-734-5169.

OPO – We are Here to Help!