

# UNIT 40: COMMUNICATIONS

*October 2003*

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<b>Duty</b>	Conduct communications to enhance Government understanding of proposals; allow reasonable interpretation of a proposal; or facilitate the Government's evaluation process.
<b>Conditions</b>	Given acquisition planning, a solicitation, an offer, a technical evaluation, a price/cost analysis, and an analysis of other terms and conditions.
<b>Overall Standard</b>	Identify and request all information available from the offeror that is necessary to complete analysis of the proposal and determine the competitive range. Allow no bargaining or proposal revisions as a result of communications.

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## Policies

<i>FAR</i>	<i>Agency Suppl.</i>	<i>Subject</i>
15.306(b)		Communications with offerors before establishment of the competitive range.
15.406-1(a)		Base prenegotiation objectives on fact-finding results and other information.

## Other KSAs

1. Knowledge of the requirement and available alternatives.
2. Knowledge of communications pitfalls and their impact on future negotiations.
3. Skill in preparing for and conducting meetings.
4. Ability to communicate with offerors and Government personnel during a communications session.
5. Ability to demonstrate the attention to detail required to identify offerors for communications.
6. Ability to gather, organize, and retain information for communications.
7. Ability to conduct communications orally or in writing.
8. Ability to relate to both Government and offeror concerns about risk and other factors affecting communications.
9. Ability to effectively encourage and facilitate teamwork among members of the Government team during communications.
10. Ability to read and understand technical reports, audit reports, and related information.
11. Ability to use reasoning skills to identify significant relationships between various elements of each offer.
12. Ability to appropriately consider available information in making effective business decisions.
13. Ability to maintain the honesty and integrity of the acquisition process.

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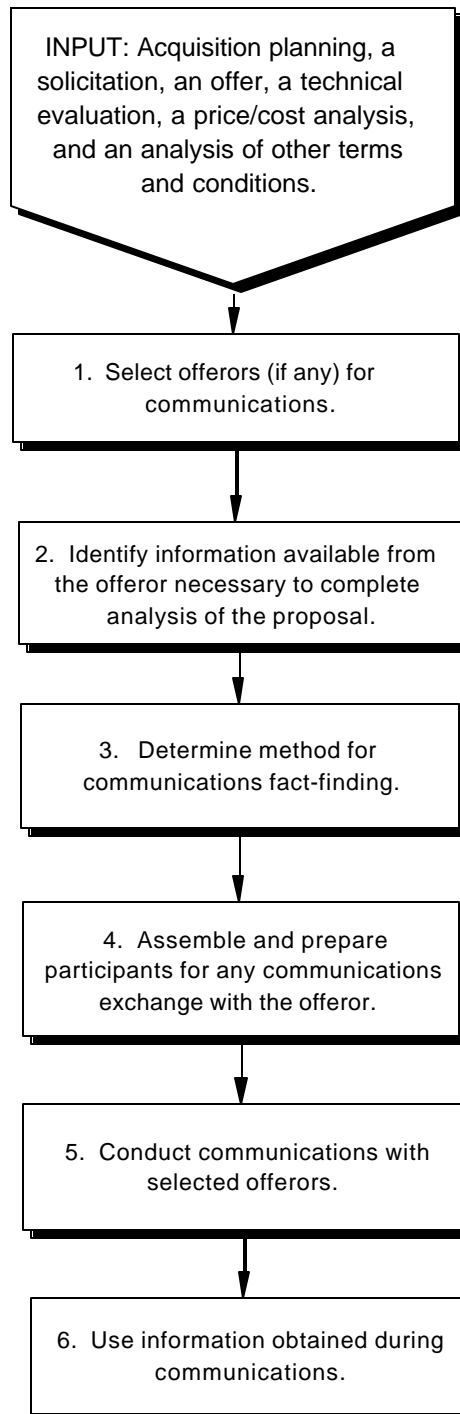
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**Other Policies and References (Annotate As Necessary):**

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Tasks	Related Standards
1. Select offerors (if any) for communications.	Limit exchanges to offerors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whose past performance information is the determining factor preventing them from being placed within the competitive range; or</li> <li>• Whose exclusion from, or inclusion in, the competitive range is uncertain.</li> </ul>
2. Identify information available from the offeror necessary to complete analysis of the proposal.	Identify information needed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance Government understanding of the proposal;</li> <li>• Allow reasonable interpretation of the proposal; or</li> <li>• Facilitate the Government's evaluation process.</li> </ul> Never use communications to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cure proposal deficiencies or material omissions;</li> <li>• Materially alter the technical or cost elements of the proposal; and/or</li> <li>• Otherwise revise the proposal.</li> </ul>
3. Determine method for communications fact-finding.	Tailor the method of fact-finding to the particulars of each offer. Consider such methods as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone conference;</li> <li>• Letter;</li> <li>• E-mail;</li> <li>• Videoconference;</li> <li>• Conference at the Government facility; and</li> <li>• Visit to the offeror's facility.</li> </ul>

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## Tasks

## Related Standards

<p>4. Assemble and prepare participants for any communications exchange with the offeror.</p>	<p>Preparation typically includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning for the exchange session, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Location of the exchange session;</li><li>- Timing of the exchange session;</li><li>- Exchange session agenda;</li><li>- Exchange methodology (e.g., group meeting, small team interviews, or individual interviews);</li><li>- Exchange logistics (e.g., team member availability, travel funding when applicable, or meeting room arrangements).</li></ul></li><li>• Emphasizing that communications must not provide an opportunity for the offeror to revise its proposal, but:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- May address ambiguities in the proposal or other concerns (<i>e.g.</i>, perceived deficiencies, weaknesses, errors, omissions, or mistakes).</li><li>- May address information relating to relevant past performance; and</li><li>- Must address adverse past performance information to which the offeror has not previously had an opportunity to comment.</li></ul></li><li>• Assigning roles to team members based on member qualifications.</li><li>• Assuring that team members are generally and individually prepared for the exchange session.</li><li>• Reviewing initial team questions.</li><li>• Sending initial questions to the offeror in writing when complex oral communications are anticipated.</li></ul>
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## Tasks

## Related Standards

<p>5. Conduct communications with selected offerors.</p>	<p>Address issues identified in planning and related issues identified during communications that may affect the decision to place the proposal in the competitive range.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage team members to DO the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Use questions as a way to begin the exchange.</li><li>- Start with simple questions.</li><li>- Break complex issues into simple questions.</li><li>- Continue questioning until each answer is clearly understood.</li><li>- Identify and rank discussion subjects and levels of concern.</li><li>- Be thorough and systematic rather than unstructured.</li><li>- Caucus with team members to review answers and, if needed, formulate another round of questions.</li><li>- Assign action items related to unanswered questions for any projected future exchanges.</li></ul></li></ul> <p>Emphasize that team members <b>MUST NOT DO</b> the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Negotiate contract price or requirements.</li><li>• Make Government technical or pricing recommendations.</li><li>• Answer questions that other team members ask the contractor.</li><li>• Allow the contractor to avoid direct answers.</li><li>• Discuss source selection information, including any other offeror's proposal.</li></ul>
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## Tasks

## Related Standards

<p>6. Use information obtained during communications.</p>	<p>The purpose of communications is to obtain information needed to make a decision on whether or not to include an offeror in the competitive range.</p> <p>Information gained during communications may also be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amend the solicitation;</li><li>• Prepare or revise negotiation objectives; or</li><li>• Support documentation of prenegotiation objectives.</li></ul>
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