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PROJECT DESIGN GUIDE D06 'RFI PROCEDURES'

Project Name: <i>Name</i>	Project No.: <i>Number</i>	Date: <i>Date</i>
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1.0 Introduction

Requests for information (RFI) is, as the title suggest, a formalised process for tracking requests for information and answers given. It is important that all parties understand the benefits of using an auditable system (other than making requests by phone or email), and rigorously stick to it. Contractual Early Warning Notices (EWN) and Delay Notices (DN) can arise from missing or late information that has been requested and so time lines need to be formally recorded.

There are two ways to go about an RFI system, i) using the Design Manager (DM) as a filter or ii) enabling a system with open communication channels. There are pros and cons to both which deserves a quick discussion.

- Using the DM **Pros**– Filters out requests that need not be asked because the information is available, filters out requests that are not clearly expressed or are ambiguous, demonstrates professionalism to the client, DM may be able to directly answer a % of questions.
- Using the DM **Cons**– Time consuming, requires appropriate resource allocation and cover, DM becomes a blocker.

2.0 Communication Channels:

Consideration is to be given as to which channels need filtering. At very least it is the authors' recommendation to filter all RFI's to the client. This will ensure the clients time is not wasted on unnecessary requests, causing embarrassment to the Contractor. Filtering does add a time lag to the process. People, when under pressure to get answers, may seek the quickest option, of email, phone or text. If all channels are to be filtered it will need the corresponding level of resources put in place to ensure the process is, policed and enforced rigorously.

Table 1 – Communication Channel Matrix

Ref:	From - To	Filter Y/N	Channel 1 or 2	Copy in DM	Copy in LD
A	DT to client	YES	1	YES	YES
B	Contractor to client	YES	1	YES	NO
C	SDP to contractor	NO	2	YES	DEPENDS
D	SDP to DT	NO	2	YES	YES
E	DT to SDP	NO	2	YES	YES

KEY:

DM – Design Manager

LD – Lead Designer

DT – Design Team

SDP – Sub-contract Design Portion

Consideration needs to be given to the number of systems being used and ensure the access rights given to each system are controlled. Again it is the opinion of the author that the client's RFI's be controlled on a separate system that is only accessible by the client and Contractor. The client should not have access to other 'internal' contractor systems.

Refer to Design Review & Authority Plan (PDG A04), to ensure only authorised personnel are signing off RFI answers.

3.0 RFI Procedures

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These procedures are best managed on an information exchange portal (i.e. BIW). They can easily be set up once the above strategies have been decided.

For RFI’s to be generated in the early stages, perhaps before an information exchange portal (IEP) is used or by subcontractors who do not have access to the project IEP, the following procedure is to be followed, using the proforma in appendix A.

It should be noted that queries which are raised and are not in line with this document, are at the originators risk and the Contractor will not accept any claims for the delays this causes.

- 3.1 Any party may raise an RFI.
- 3.2 Strictly one question is to be asked on each proforma, to enable them to be closed out in good time and to provide a clear auditable route.
- 3.3 The originator will ensure RFI’s are distributed to the appropriate parties and will in all cases copy in the Contractors Document Controller (DC), DM and Lead Designer. Refer to table in section 2.0 and/or check distribution with the DC.
- 3.4 For a filtered process the DM will check the validity of the RFI.
- 3.5 The RFI no. Log’ box is to be left empty for the DC to fill in. It will be a sequential number for all RFI’s sent by all parties.
- 3.6 10 working days in total will generally be provided for the answer of an RFI. The Contractor retains the option of reducing this to 1 working day for urgent items.
- 3.7 For a filtered process the DM will check validity of all answers and direct the DC, as to which ones are to be return to the originator.

The 10 day period may be extended at the Contractors discretion where a review meeting is deemed necessary.

4.0 Feed-Back and Reports

It will be the DC’s responsibility to manage the project RFI tracker, and keep the project team apprised of RFI status statistics on a weekly/monthly basis against the Return Status on the proforma.

Table 2 – Return Status Matrix

RETURN STATUS at <i>date</i>					
Unanswered (i)	Part answered (ii)	Fully answered (iii)	Rejected (iv)	Cancelled (v)	Superseded (vi)
No. of:	No. of:	No. of:	No. of:	No. of:	No. of:

A status report of RFI’s will be issued by the Contractor on a regular basis (at design progress meetings), highlighting which ones have not been answered or not answered adequately. At these meeting it will be decided if it is appropriate to issue and EWN to the Contractor.

Client related RFI matters are to be included in the monthly reports to the client.

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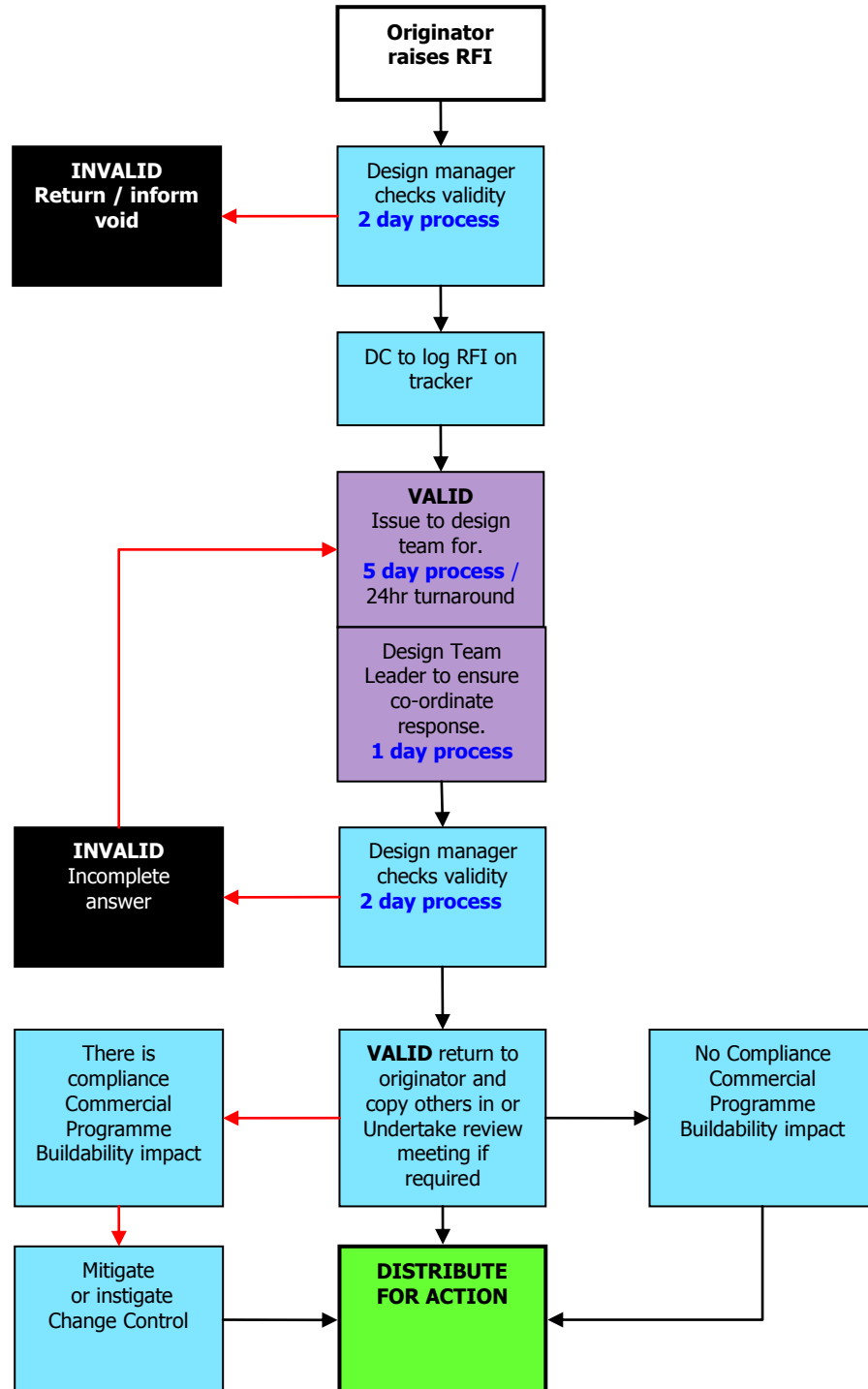
Any answers that are a deviation from the brief shall be brought to the attention of the Contractors Commercial Manager, for a project team decision about instigating the Change Control process.

5.0 Managing this Document

This guide should not need amending once set up. The DC's Tracker will require regular updates as RFI items are answered.

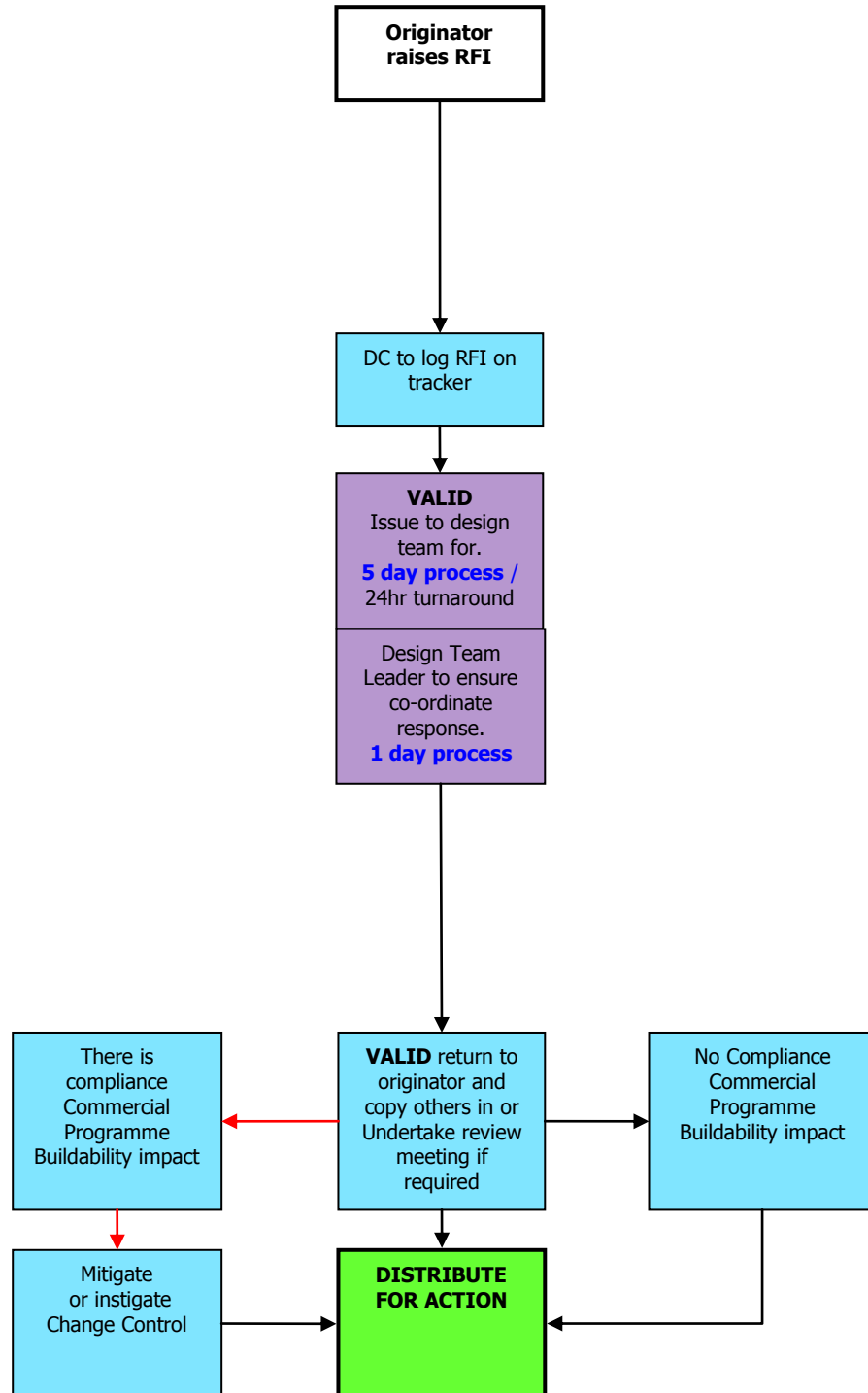
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6.0 FLOW CHART FOR RFI's
(typical flow chart for a filtered channel)



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7.0 FLOW CHART FOR RFI's
(typical flow chart for an unfiltered channel)



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Appendix A – RFI proforma



Project Name:	RFI log no. (by Contractor):	
Project No.:	Received date (by Contractor):	
Subject:	Originator ref no.:	
Submitted by:	Date:	
	Response required by date:	
Submitted to:	Received date:	
Item description:	Photo (if appropriate):	
Location/Package:	No. of sheets including this sheet	
QUERY:		
ANSWER:		
Name:	Company:	
Signed:	Date:	

For Contractor use only

RETURN STATUS: (by Contractor)	Unanswered (i)		Fully answered (iii)		Cancelled (v)	
	Part Answered (ii)		Rejected (iv)		Superseded(vi)	

DISTRIBUTION: (by Contractor)	Client:		Structural Eng.:	✓	Landscape:	
	Architect:	✓	Building Services:	✓	Other:	
	SDP:		SDP:		SDP:	