



Weinstein International Foundation
MEDIATING A BETTER FUTURE™

2023 MEDIATION WRITING COMPETITION IN MEXICO



Santamarina
+ Steta



THE WEINSTEIN INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION in collaboration with Senior Fellows, Nuria González Martín and Fernando Navarro Sánchez, is proud to announce the Mediation Writing Competition in Mexico, co-sponsored by Santamarina + Steta with the Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas de la UNAM as a supporting organization. Law students currently enrolled in any law school in the country are invited to write a mediation memorandum on behalf of a client who is preparing to participate in the mediation of a litigated dispute.

The winning mediation brief in Mexico will be awarded a cash prize of **\$1000 (USD)**.

The deadline for submissions in Mexico is **November 30, 2023**. The announcement of the winner will be made on **December 9, 2023** directly to the participants via email, followed by a global award ceremony on **December 14, 2023**.

To register, please visit:

<https://forms.monday.com/forms/407c03e83d4973c2debaa171872764fb?r=use1>

For more information, please email:
mediation.wif.mexico@gmail.com



International Mediation Writing Competition

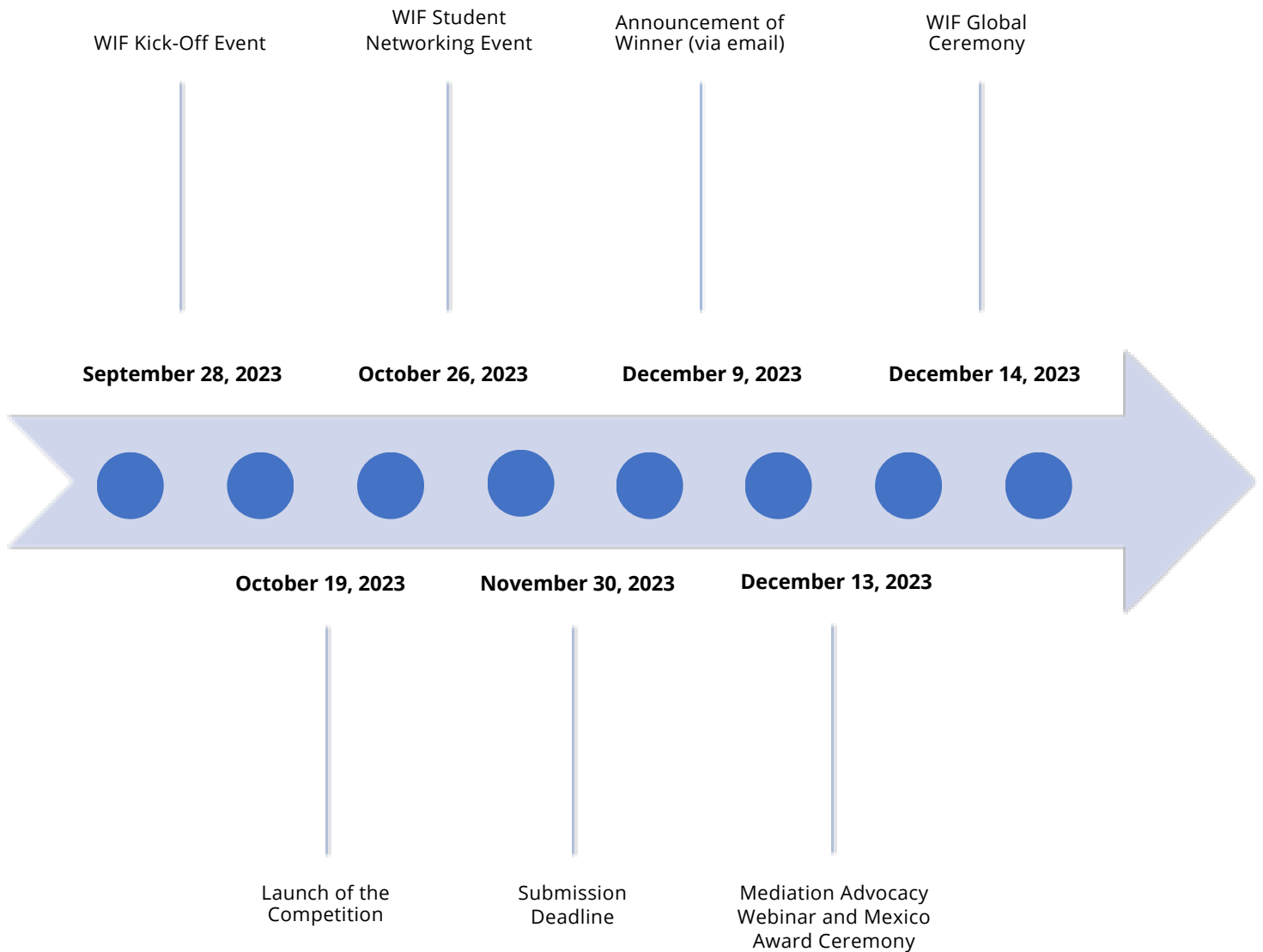
Contents

Project Timeline In Mexico	2
Instructions For Student Participants	3
Instructions For Judges	4
Grading Sheet For Judges	5
Criteria For Grading	6
Facts And Instructions	9



International Mediation Writing Competition

PROJECT TIMELINE IN MEXICO





International Mediation Writing Competition

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

The Weinstein International Foundation invites you to enter this year's International Mediation Writing Competition in Mexico. Undergraduate and Master level students of any Law School in Mexico, public or private, who are not law practitioners are eligible to participate in the competition and can **register their interest here**.

The competition is intended to increase student interest in mediation, enhance the skill level of advocates in the mediation process and raise the quality of the written memoranda submitted before mediation.

The top paper in Mexico will be awarded a cash prize of **\$1000 (USD)** from Weinstein International Foundation and the sponsoring law firm, Santamarina + Steta.

The deadline for Submissions in Mexico is November 30th, 2023.

The memorandum shall be sent to the following email: **mediation.wif.mexico@gmail.com**
The filename should have the full name of the participating student, and **no references** to the name of the student or any other personal information should be included in the paper (i.e., references to the competition and the name of the student in the footnotes, cover page with personal information). This is to ensure the anonymized approach for objectively evaluating the papers.

Your memoranda must not exceed 2500 words, with one part (at least 60%) to be shared with the other party and the mediator and the other part to be kept confidential between you and the mediator. You may be creative in your writing style but you are not allowed to add facts that are not included in the case.

All entries will be anonymised. Entries will be judged based on criteria that test your ability to marshal facts, law and procedural history effectively, your ability to be persuasive without alienating the other side, to suggest ways that the mediator might be able to maximize the likelihood of a successful mediation and, of course, your writing ability.

For more information, please email:
mediation.wif.mexico@gmail.com



International Mediation Writing Competition

INSTRUCTIONS FOR JUDGES

On behalf of the Weinstein International Foundation (hereinafter "WIF"), we would like to thank you for agreeing to act as a judge in the third annual WIF International Mediation Writing Competition. This short memo is meant to help guide you through the process of judging entries to the competition.

As a judge, you will be reading a number of short memoranda written by law students who are acting as advocates in a mediation scenario. The memorandum should not exceed 2500 words, with a division of the memo into an open part (intended to be shared with the other party) and a closed part (intended to be kept confidential between the mediator and the author). You will be judging the memos according to nine criteria. These criteria (spelled out in more detail in the attached "Criteria for Judges") are:

- Summarizes facts effectively, accurately and completely
- Uses law appropriately (The applicable law is the law that students are taught at their law school)
- Persuades the other side about the strength of the author's claim
- Invites the other party to negotiate in good faith
- Offers a helpful description of negotiation history
- Offers a realistic assessment of the obstacles to settlement
- Proposes useful and workable strategies to help guide the mediator in determining his approach
- Effectively breaks down information between the open part and the closed part
- Is generally well-written

Each criterion will be awarded equal weight along a four-point scale, as follows:

POOR (OR MISSING) = 0

FAIR = 1

GOOD = 2

EXCELLENT = 3

The highest score an author may obtain is 27 points.

Your role involves four discrete tasks:

1. Read these instructions in their entirety. Please raise any questions you may have about the instructions before taking any additional steps.
2. Read this year's problem (attached) a few times to get a sense of the scenario and the role of the advocate.
3. Read each entry/memorandum and grade each of the criteria on a copy of the attached "Grading Sheet for Judges". You need merely to place an "X" or a check in the appropriate box to the right of each criterion.
4. Return the completed sheets to mediation.wif.mexico@gmail.com, via email attachment by **December 7, 2023**.

Thank you very much for agreeing to judge this competition. We hope that this event helps raise awareness of the importance of mediation in the world of dispute resolution, and also of the importance of good advocacy in mediation. Your contribution in this competition will turn that hope into reality.



International Mediation Writing Competition

GRADING SHEET FOR JUDGES

NAME (OR NUMBER) OF PARTICIPANT _____

TOTAL POINTS AWARDED _____

JUDGE'S NAME _____

DATE ENTRY WAS JUDGED _____

	0 points (POOR or MISSING)	1 point (FAIR)	2 points (GOOD)	3 points (EXCELLENT)
Criterion 1: Summary of Facts				
Criterion 2: Use of Law				
Criterion 3: Persuasiveness				
Criterion 4: Invitation to Negotiate				
Criterion 5: Negotiation History				
Criterion 6: Assessment of Obstacles				
Criterion 7: Proposes Mediator Strategies				
Criterion 8: Breakdown between Open and Closed Parts				
Criterion 9: Quality of Writing				

If you have any other comments or feedback for the author, please include it with this form. That feedback will be forwarded to the author but unless you specify otherwise, your name will be omitted from the score sheet and feedback.



International Mediation Writing Competition

CRITERIA FOR GRADING

CRITERION ONE: AN EXCELLENT MEMO SUMMARIZES FACTS EFFECTIVELY, ACCURATELY AND COMPLETELY

This memo must not exceed 2500 words. Any memo that exceeds the limit should be graded down. An excellent memorandum distills all the important facts down into an easily digested summary, and it does not lose accuracy in the distillation.

CRITERION TWO: AN EXCELLENT MEMO USES LAW APPROPRIATELY

The simulation contains no applicable law. The applicable law is the law that students are taught at their law school. Participants in this competition are invited to do whatever legal research they want and to include relevant law in their memoranda. However, the most effective mediation memos are much lighter on the law than the memos written for a judge or magistrate called upon to render a decision. The memo should alert the mediator to any relevant rules or laws that the mediator should be aware of, but stops short of being a legalistic argument.

CRITERION THREE: AN EXCELLENT MEMO PERSUADES THE OTHER SIDE ABOUT THE STRENGTH OF THE AUTHOR'S CLAIM

After reading an excellent mediation memo, the reader is left with the impression that the author is "right" - that is, that she has a strong claim. However, given that mediation is a process in which the author will need to persuade the other negotiator of that "rightness," the argument ought not to be strident or worded in such strong language that the other negotiator will react negatively or feel the need to argue back. An excellent memo is assertive without inviting argument.

CRITERION FOUR: AN EXCELLENT MEMO INVITES THE OTHER PARTY TO NEGOTIATE IN GOOD FAITH

Excellent advocates are keenly aware that they must persuade the other negotiator to say "yes" to a proposal that will come during the mediation. Such an advocate judiciously chooses language that signals a willingness to make concessions in return for compromises of concessions from the other side. Some memos even contain an explicit offer to make a concession if the other side is willing to reciprocate. But even in the absence of such an explicit offer, an excellent memo is framed in such a way that the

opposing negotiator feels more inclined to come to the negotiation as a problem-solving ally, not a legal opponent.

CRITERION FIVE: AN EXCELLENT MEMO OFFERS A HELPFUL DESCRIPTION OF THE NEGOTIATION HISTORY

It is always useful for a mediator to know what attempts at settlement have preceded the mediation. No mediator wants to repeat a failed past tactic or approach. Thus, it is incumbent on the advocates to let the mediator know what the negotiation or settlement history has been in the dispute. If that negotiation history is too self-serving, the mediator is likely to discount or dismiss it. And if the self-serving description is in the Open Part of the memo, it is likely to alienate the other side. An excellent memo summarizes the negotiating history accurately, and portrays prior failures to settle as "no one's fault."

CRITERION SIX: AN EXCELLENT MEMO OFFERS A REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF THE OBSTACLES TO SETTLEMENT

A mediator needs to determine how he or she can help move the parties toward settlement. A critical piece of background information the mediator needs is an understanding of what stands in the way of an agreement. Sometimes the obstacle is obvious - for example, where one side denies liability and the other side insists that the defendant is liable. Or where one side values the claim in the tens of millions of Euros and the other values it in the hundreds. However, it is often the case that there are obstacles to settlement that are not immediately apparent to a mediator from the facts or negotiation history - for example, when the advocate has lost trust with her client and the client no longer believes the information the advocate brings to him. There are many such examples of hidden obstacles. An excellent mediation memo helps the mediator diagnose the roadblocks that will have to be surmounted before a settlement can be attained.

CRITERION SEVEN: AN EXCELLENT MEMO PROPOSES USEFUL AND WORKABLE STRATEGIES TO HELP GUIDE THE MEDIATOR IN DETERMINING HIS OR HER APPROACH

Mediators are greatly helped when participants facilitate the structuring of an effective mediation process. While it is useful for a party to identify obstacles to settlement (see Criterion Six), it is even more useful when the parties then offer their perspective on how to structure the mediation in a way that overcomes the obstacles, exploits common interests and creates a settlement that both parties prefer over further conflict. An excellent mediation memo will contain at least one suggestion about how the mediator might proceed, and sometimes more than one. These strategies ought to arise organically out of the situation, and should not be monolithically biased in favor of the author's position.

CRITERION EIGHT: AN EXCELLENT MEMO EFFECTIVELY BREAKS DOWN INFORMATION BETWEEN THE OPEN (SHARED WITH THE OTHER SIDE) PART OF THE MEMO AND THE CLOSED (CONFIDENTIAL) PART

One of the most important skills in mediation is knowing what to share with one's negotiation counterpart and the mediator, and what to keep between the mediator

and one's self. This skill is important during a mediation, but also in the writing of a pre-mediation memo. Many mediators prefer that the parties write something private in addition to something shared. The private memos often contain information about strategy, about the other side, about aspects of the negotiation history, and perhaps even about settlement targets and obstacles. To the extent that the memo ought to inform the mediator without inflaming the other side, this can be accomplished by keeping the information confidential.

However, advocates who keep too much information confidential fail to serve their clients' interests. It is the other side who must be persuaded. This means that as much information as possible ought to be in the Open Part of the memo and that the Closed Part is kept to a minimum.

Moreover, the information in the Closed Part still needs to be accurate and believable. If the author is too one-sided in the Closed Part, the mediator will naturally discount the strength of the author's statements.

A fine balance needs to be struck, but an excellent memo manages to expertly walk the line between shared and confidential information.

CRITERION NINE: AN EXCELLENT MEMO IS WELL-WRITTEN

This point ought to be obvious. When an advocate takes the time and exercises the skills required to produce a well-written work, he or she makes the job of the reader much easier. Well-written works are more persuasive and show the author in the best possible light. When spelling and grammar are perfect, when word choice is creative and appropriate, when sentence and paragraph structure evince care and skill, the product and the argument contained therein are all more likely to do the intended job.



LETTER OF APOINTMENT TO DRAFT A MEDIATION BRIEF

TO: OUR NEW ASSOCIATE

FROM: SENIOR PARTNER

RE: Antifreeze Supplies Ltd vs City Council of Summeria¹

DATE: February 13th 2023

Our firm is very pleased to have hired you. You seem like a lawyer with a terrific career ahead of you. The leadership of the firm has great faith in your abilities, and as a result, we have decided to give you a very important and urgent task. Your job is to write a mediation brief in support of our client Antifreeze Supplies Ltd. The mediation will take place tomorrow morning.

This case file contains:

- A) A summary of the case (as presented by the CEO)
- B) A transcript from a confidential interview with the CEO
- C) An article on the current situation

We are confident that you will be able to prepare this brief as soon as possible.

Do your best work. We have placed our trust in you.

¹ Disclaimer: This is a work of fiction. Any similarity to actual persons, or actual events, is purely coincidental. The original case and transcript were drafted by Senior Fellow Eleni Charalambidou. The reproduction, translation, editing or use for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without the written consent of the author.



DOCUMENT NO 1: FROZEN SALT - CASE SUMMARY

CLIENT: ANTIFREEZE SUPPLIES LTD

Summeria is the beautiful capital of Warmland. Summeria has a dry summer climate. Its ten million citizens, have been enjoying for thousands of years 4 separate seasons with warm summers, mild winters and pleasant springs and autumns. However, in the past few years summers have become hotter and winters colder. The climate change has started disturbing the lives of the citizens and the economy of the country in various ways.

For this winter, there were forecasts for an unusually prolonged period of snowfall and temperatures around -10 °C (14 °F). The snow could freeze on the streets and severely disturb the traffic. This would be an extreme situation for the city which hasn't experienced snow for a decade, hence the City Council of Summeria entered into agreements with suppliers for the provision of the necessary equipment and consumables, such as road salt (sodium chloride) and de-icing fluids.

The relevant department and the City Council calculated the supplies needed for at least 20 consecutive days of extreme weather. For all the consumables, it entered into a contract with "Antifreeze Supplies Ltd", the biggest importer of such products, which is established in Summeria, but operates in many areas in Warmland and abroad.

The main contract terms were the following:

A) 1 million tonnes of sodium chloride (road salt) and 500 tonnes of de-icing fluids will be delivered to the City Council by Antifreeze Supplies Ltd, by November 15. The agreed price is 5 million Warmland Dinars for the road salt (5 Dinars for every tonne of salt) and 1 million Warmland Dinars for the de-icing fluids. The price will be paid in full on the day of the delivery.

B) Any additional order of up to 1 million tonnes of salt and 500 tonnes of de-icing fluids requested until next November (end of contract) should be delivered within 5 days from the request and paid upon delivery. The negotiated price will apply to additional requests up to the above-mentioned quantities.

C) Failure to comply with the contractual terms by either party would result in penalties of up to 30% of the value of each order, depending on the circumstances.

D) If a dispute arises from the present contract that cannot be resolved through negotiations, no party may commence any court proceedings or arbitration until an attempt has been made to resolve the case in mediation. The parties agree to refer their case to the Warmland

National Mediation Center and conduct the mediation in accordance with its Rules. ²

All initially agreed quantities were indeed delivered and paid before November 15. At the beginning of December the snow started and the low temperatures lasted for 15 consecutive days in Summeria and all neighboring cities and countries. The City Council did their best to keep the streets clean and indeed very few problems emerged.

On February 5 the weather forecasters announced a second cold wave for Warmland and its neighboring countries which would start on February 8 and last for another two to three weeks. This was completely unexpected. The stocked supplies would last for only 5 days. The City Council immediately called Antifreeze Supplies and ordered another 1 million tonnes of road salt and 500 tonnes of de-icing fluids to be delivered as soon as possible.

On February 10, 5 days after the order, Antifreeze Supplies Ltd delivered the 500 tonnes of de-icing fluids but only 200.000 tonnes of salt. The load was accompanied by a letter, claiming that the maximum additional quantity provided in the contract was never meant to be placed in a single order and in such a short notice. Furthermore, the fact that the danger was only announced by meteorologists a few days ago and it threatens the whole region, constitutes “force majeure”, therefore it would not be possible to cover such a big quantity in such a short period. Antifreeze Supplies had to cover the unexpected demand in many neighboring cities and countries with which it had similar contracts, therefore, it distributed its resources equally to cover all needs. It would be able supply the remaining 800.000 tonnes within the next 5 days.

The City Council received the said quantities but sent an extrajudicial complaint stating that it considered unacceptable the fact that the company could not cover the demand, which was clearly within the limits of the contract. The contract did not include any limitation in placing the quantities in a single order. It also stated that it would pay the total amount only when the rest of the salt is delivered and demanded the immediate delivery of the remaining quantity.

In the evening of February 12, after all the old batches were used, the employees of the relevant department loaded the trucks with the new packages of salt (delivered on February 10) which would be distributed throughout the city. However the trucks did not leave the warehouse that night due to some confusion with the shift schedule. In the morning of February 13, the morning drivers took out the trucks, only to return an hour later after realizing that the salt was...frozen, therefore useless!! The media went crazy about the

² This is a “mediation clause” that is often inserted in business contracts. It contains the agreement of the parties to mediate the case in case negotiations fail and also provides whether or not judicial proceedings or arbitration can commence at the same time or after mediation. A complete mediation clause also provides for the mediator or the mediation center that will undertake the case and the rules under which mediation will be conducted.

frozen salt and the situation in Summeria became a joke in the whole region.

The City Council lawyers contacted immediately Antifreeze Supplies in writing, accusing the company of providing old salt which was already frozen and requesting immediately the delivery of 1 million tonnes of new salt. They also threatened that if their request was not fulfilled immediately, they would file a lawsuit claiming the penalties that were mentioned in the contract, as well as compensation for damages throughout the city due to the lack of salt.

Antifreeze Supplies lawyers replied also in writing that the quantity of the order in such a short notice was not reasonable and the salt was fine when delivered. It got frozen because it was loaded in the trucks the night before and it remained in the local warehouse parking lot which had high levels of humidity and a temperature below -15°C (5°F). The lawyers also threatened that they would file a lawsuit if payment for the quantities already delivered was not made promptly. That would amount to 1 million Dinars for the de-icing fluids and 1 million Dinars for the 200 thousand tonnes of salt, plus penalties.

Now, on the evening of February 13, it has been 12 hours since Summeria ran out of salt. In the morning it snowed and at night the temperature dropped below -10°C (14°F). The city, which does not have the infrastructure for such a weather, started paralyzing. The roads in the north of the city will soon be closed and supplies, ambulances and rescue vehicles may not be able reach certain areas tomorrow. The City teams will be able to help the situation for a few more hours by utilizing the fluids but this will not be enough. The legal teams of both companies have been exchanging e-mails all day, arguing about the terms of the contract and the incident with no result. Weather forecasters expect the bad weather to last for at least 7-10 more days.

The City Council contacted the Warmland National Mediation Center to appoint a mediator tonight and handle the case as an emergency and invited Antifreeze Supplies to a mediation early tomorrow morning to resolve the situation. The City Council will be represented by its Secretary and Antifreeze Supplies by its CEO. Both parties will have full and unqualified authority to settle.

Antifreeze Supplies had contacted our law firm two days ago, when it received the extrajudicial complaint and asked us to start preparing for all scenarios. A few hours ago they contacted us to prepare a mediation brief in the next few hours and be ready for a mediation early tomorrow morning.

DOCUMENT No 2: TRANSCRIPT OF PRIVATE DISCUSSION BETWEEN ADVOCATE AND CLIENT ON THE CASE

Advocate: I need to know everything about this case to be able to help you. I have been following the events on the news and social media, but I need to hear your side of the story. Let's start with the incident this morning. What happened?

CEO: I really don't know! This is the first time we've seen something like that in the 20 years that our company has operated. Our experts believe strongly that the salt froze after it was delivered.

Advocate: Will you be able to prove that? Do you have any evidence that the salt was in perfect condition when it was delivered?

CEO: The truth is that when additional quantities of salt were requested urgently by different city councils in the region, we first dispatched our stock to save time until we could import more product. We cannot be 100% sure that the salt we delivered to Summeria was not frozen, because it was not brand new, but no other country that received salt from the same stock complained and the conditions in our warehouses are always monitored. In any case, when they received it, they did not report any issue! Once they accept it, we do not bear any responsibility any more, am I right?

Advocate: I am going to be honest with you, that might be controversial... They may even claim that the salt was not of the proper quality, or that such a problem could not have been detected at first sight. Do you have any reports that we could use to back up your theory and avoid any penalties?

CEO: Not much, really. But I have a print from our system that shows the perfect temperature and humidity in our warehouse and our trucks at any time. I guess if it goes to the court we would have to hire experts. However we really don't want to litigate this case.

Advocate: Why is that?

CEO: What would have been good for business has turned into a nightmare. At the beginning of November we were happy that the company entered into contracts with 9 city councils in 4 countries for the supply of rock salt and other materials. However, when the second cold wave was announced, it was impossible to secure the quantities requested in such short notice for all our clients. We are struggling to find salt as quickly as possible. If this is not resolved, it will affect our reputation and we are afraid that next winter we will not get any contracts as local authorities will think that we are not reliable. Our name was published in the news this morning.

Advocate: Does the City Council know that you have 9 different contracts?



CEO: They know we supply many cities but I don't think they know the exact number. I am not sure whether or not we should talk about it. On the one hand they may understand that we are in a difficult position because we offer products to many areas, on the other hand they may think that we prioritized our other clients and turn this argument against us.

Advocate: I see. We will decide how to use this information during mediation. In order for me to design a strategy, I need to know what you need from this mediation. Are you flexible in terms of offers?

CEO: Well, not really. We need them to pay us immediately the 1 million for the de-icing fluids that were delivered in perfect condition, plus, at least a part of what they owe us for the salt delivered. I would say at least 500.000 Dinars out of the 1 million requested but preferably more. This amount will cover our costs and give us some cash flow to place orders for more products.

Advocate: We will do our best to make them accept that the freezing was their mistake and get the whole amount; but since we don't have concrete evidence, they may push back. How can we convince them to pay any amount? What are the strengths of our position?

CEO: Pffff, I think that they want it to be resolved tomorrow as much as we do. This whole situation has affected their popularity with the citizens and it is also a matter of safety now. If they do not pay us we will not be able to import more products. It is as simple as that.

Advocate: I am going to play the devil's advocate here. Can't they just refuse to pay and drag you to the courts and find another provider to bring them more salt to cover the emergency now?

CEO: I understand what you are saying. I think they could, but it would be extremely difficult for them. We have already contacted all other providers in the region to see if we can buy sodium chloride from them or have some sort of cooperation to cover the demand for all our contracts, but there is a shortage in the region. Nobody expected such extreme weather conditions to occur twice in the same winter. The local providers have really small quantities, so the City Council would have to enter into many different contracts with all of them just to cover the need for a couple of days; then it would have to import the product from abroad and since it does not have established connections this would take too much time.

Advocate: If there is such a shortage, how are you currently handling the demand?

CEO: At the moment our warehouses are empty. We placed orders for more product on February 6th, but due to the weather it was delayed. We expect the containers to arrive in 3 or 4 days. We thought that the 200.000 tonnes would cover the needs of Summeria, until the containers arrive, as they did in all other cities.

Advocate: If your warehouses are empty, you understand that this will not help much to convince the other side to pay. If you cannot find the product, what incentive you can give them to agree to pay you tomorrow?

CEO: In order to cover the need for these 3-4 days, until the containers arrive, we can import big quantities of a different type of salt, calcium chloride from a neighboring country. This type is better than sodium chloride because it melts snow in even lower temperatures. It can also be in Summeria in just a few hours, but we are not sure that Summeria would be willing to buy it as it is more expensive, it would cost 7 Dinars for every 1 tonne of salt, instead of 5.

Advocate: Ok, so, if you receive the money they owe you, you will be able to order that calcium chloride and save the day?

CEO: Not exactly. The money they owe us will cover the payment of the containers we expect in 3-4 days. This other product will come from a new factory that requires payment in full in advance. We do not have the cash flow to cover the full order, so we will need the City Council to pay upfront. We will not even make a profit from it, we will just facilitate the process. To be honest we are worried whether the council will be able to pay, so we will need to explore whether or not they have the cash flow.

Advocate: There is one more thing we need to prepare for. They have threatened to file for damages.

CEO: In our contract there was no mention to damages!

Advocate: We checked the contract and we agree, but it is not 100% sure if a judge will see it the same way. It will depend on many different factors, especially if the issue is not resolved soon and the damages to the city are extended.

CEO: Oh, but we want it to be resolved immediately anyway! It is also personal to me for many different reasons. My in-laws live in the suburbs and I would not like them to be isolated. They are old people. Even if we are not found liable legally, the press will crucify us for not helping the situation. So, our goal is to get the money they owe us and convince them to buy calcium chloride for 3-4 days until the next container of sodium chloride arrives.

Advocate: Thanks for sharing all that. So we will build a strategy to avoid penalties, help you get the money they owe you and convince them to buy calcium chloride for 3-4 days until the next container of sodium chloride arrives.

This article was published in one of the most popular news websites. It already has thousands of views and hundreds of comments.

SUMMERIAN TIMES ONLINE

FEBRUARY 13th 2023, last updated 19.00

OPINIONS

I was not able to believe it myself when the headlines appeared in my RSS feed this morning. The salt supplies of the City Council were frozen! I am no chemist, but I always thought that if there was one unfreezable compound, this should be salt!

Frozen salt: if it wasn't so terrifying, it would be funny. Social media are full with memes and jokes. The news reached many of our neighboring countries, affecting the image of both the City Council and the Mayor personally.

We all spent the day trying to clean at least parts of the roads in front of our houses. We do the best we can but the reality is that the night has arrived and more and more neighborhoods will be inaccessible. Soon people will be isolated. The extreme weather conditions will last for another week and the city council seems to be unprepared.

The citizens of Summeria demand answers. Whose fault is it? How can it be resolved?



By columnist Georgina Adams

Unofficial sources from the City Council stated that the supplier may have delivered faulty products. They name the company "Antifreeze Supplies Ltd".

We asked our sources whether the City Council could ask the government or other city councils to send some of the salt they have in their own warehouses, but we were told that this is not an option. At the moment, each city only has the quantities necessary for survival.

Our reporters called the company which stated that this is the City Council's fault, as they loaded the trucks with the product last night and they left the trucks in improper conditions all night long.

The City Council announced that schools, courts and public administration buildings will remain closed tomorrow. It advises citizens to go out of their homes only for emergencies.

We will be monitoring the progress and update you with any news. We hope that the situation will be resolved soon.

Stay safe!