



Association of Consulting Engineering Companies – British Columbia

User Guide to Implementing Qualifications Based Selection

Best Practices for Selecting your Design Professional



ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING
ENGINEERING COMPANIES
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	1
2.0	The Procurement Challenge.....	2
3.0	What is Qualifications Based Selection?.....	3
3.1	Selection of the Most Qualified Team	3
3.2	Mutually Developed Scope of Work	3
3.3	Benefits of QBS to the Municipality	3
3.4	Benefits to the Consulting Engineering Firm	4
4.0	The Process	5
4.1	Small Projects Under \$75,000 in Fees	5
4.2	Medium and Large-sized Projects	5
5.0	Guidelines for Developing the RFQ (Request for Qualifications)	8
5.1	Request for Qualifications Invitation	8
5.2	Instructions to Proponents	8
5.3	RFQ Submission Requirements and Proponent Qualifications	9
6.0	RFQ Evaluation.....	10
6.1	Stage One: Mandatory Requirements	10
6.2	Stage Two: Technical Evaluation	10
6.3	Proposed RFQ Evaluation Criteria	10
7.0	Request for Proposal (RFP) Guidelines.....	11
7.1	Request for Proposal Invitation	11
7.2	Instructions to Proponents	11
8.0	Evaluation of the RFP	13
8.1	Stage One: Mandatory Requirements	13
8.2	Stage Two: Technical Evaluation	13
8.3	Stage Three: Identification of Successful Proponent	13
9.0	Fee Negotiation.....	15
9.1	Developing the Detailed Scope of Work	15
9.2	Determining Fees	15
9.3	Rejecting Fee or Cancellation	15
9.4	Confidentiality	15
10.0	Qualifications Based Selection Management Tips for Municipalities	16
10.1	Create an Evaluation Team	16
10.2	Minimize Duplication	16
11.0	Further Reference Information	17



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Templates

Template #1.....	<i>Project Description Form</i>
Template #2.....	<i>Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Form</i>
Template #3.....	<i>Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Evaluation Form</i>
Template #4.....	<i>Memorandum to Short-Listed Consulting Engineers</i>
Template #5.....	<i>Memorandum to Consulting Engineers – Not Short-Listed</i>
Template #6.....	<i>Request for Proposal (RFP)</i>
Template #7.....	<i>Request for Proposal (RFP) Evaluation Form</i>
Template #8.....	<i>Request for Proposal (RFP) Interview Evaluation Form</i>
Template #9.....	<i>Request for Proposal (RFP) Summary Evaluation Form</i>
Template #10.....	<i>Memo to Consulting Engineers Short-Listed but not Selected</i>

TABLES

Table 6.1: Proposed RFQ Evaluation Criteria.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table 8.1: Proposed RFP Evaluation Criteria.....	14

FIGURES

Figure 1: Suggested Process for Selecting a Consulting Engineering Firm.....	7
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1.0 Introduction

Selecting the most suitable and qualified engineering consultant is essential to the ultimate success of a municipal project. This decision by a municipality must be made with both a complete understanding and knowledge of the project process and requirements. An engineering assignment that is on time, within budget, and meets a municipality's expectations requires a well-qualified and experienced professional team.

Since the early-to-mid 1970s, Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) has been utilized in the United States. At that time, the American federal government mandated the procurement process of consulting engineering and architectural services for federally funded projects through The Brooks Act. Since then, 46 state governments have adopted their own versions of The Brooks Act. In Canada, the City of Calgary, City of Nanaimo, and City of Coquitlam are some of the municipalities which regularly use QBS. It is also a common procurement method for the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. All of these institutions share the belief that significant benefits are realized with QBS: better project outcomes, more innovation, improved cost control and fewer cost overruns, and higher levels of satisfaction during the entire project process.

QBS was originally developed as a standard for procuring consulting engineering services, and to strengthen an otherwise sole reliance on price as a primary criterion.

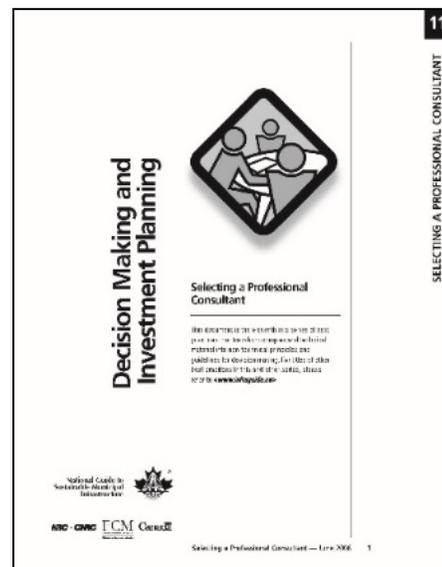
Although an important component of procurement, price is not recommended to be one of the first factors considered when selecting knowledge-based services.

Primary considerations should instead include qualifications, such as personnel and team or corporate experience, local knowledge, innovation, past performance, schedule, availability, and additional criteria that is valuable to both the municipality and project.

The challenge of procuring an engineering firm for a project is a familiar issue, recognized by the Canadian federal government, the National Research Council of Canada, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Together, these institutions have developed a national guide on sustainable municipal infrastructure best practice. This guide, *InfraGuide, Decision Making & Investment Planning: Selecting a Professional Consultant – June 2006*, provides critical and constructive information that may resolve uncertainties or questions municipalities may have, while outlining the QBS system.

The Association of Consulting Engineering Companies – British Columbia (ACEC-BC) believes that the application of QBS to engineering projects ensures the best possible value to municipalities and taxpayers. This sentiment has also been adopted nationally by the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies Canada (ACEC) and each of their constituent organizations.

The New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) is an accord between the Governments of British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan that creates a barrier-free interprovincial market. A February 2014 review by Bishop & McKenzie LLP confirmed that QBS is compliant with the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA), providing that all procurement opportunities are open to consulting engineering firms in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia.





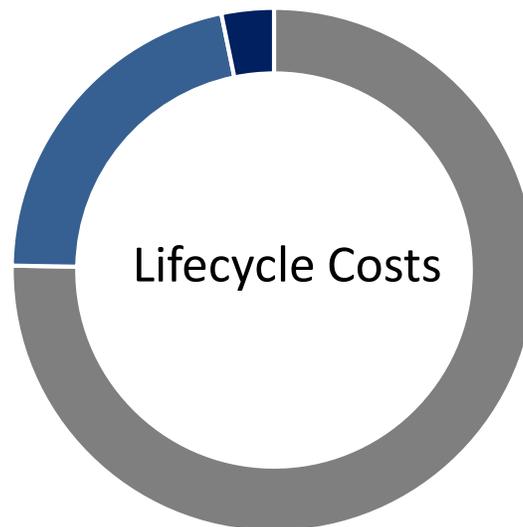
2.0 The Procurement Challenge

Many municipalities wrestle with the process of procuring professional consulting engineering services. It is often a challenge for municipalities to select the best firm for a job and prepare an adequate Request for Proposal (RFP). Evaluating RFP responses with limited staff or suitable expertise can also further complicate the process.

The difficulties and struggles of the procurement process often result in municipalities choosing engineering services simply because they are the most cost-effective and bear the lowest price. Low price is more straightforward and easy to justify for the selection of an engineering firm to management, councils, and funding authorities.

However, evaluating consulting engineering services only on price excludes many other important considerations. Price alone should not determine a municipality's chosen engineering firm. At times, selecting consulting engineering services based upon lowest price can lead to scope changes, increased costs related to scope changes, time delays, reductions in quality, lack of innovation, and general cost overruns. These issues can be mitigated by spending time at the beginning of the procurement process assessing alternatives and measuring engineering consulting firms based on a combination of standards and qualifications.

Careful and cautious consideration of consulting engineering firms can lead to a significant reduction in construction, and operating and maintenance costs in the future. The actual cost of consulting engineering services is very small compared to construction, and operational and maintenance costs – often less than 2%.



■ Operations and Maintenance (O & M) ■ Construction ■ Engineering



3.0 What is Qualifications Based Selection?

Qualifications Based Selection is an objective, flexible, and competitive procedure for obtaining professional engineering services. It is a step-by-step process that facilitates the selection of the best qualified and most compatible firm for a specific project. QBS is helpful to both those who regularly procure consulting engineering services, and first-time users with little or no practical experience working with consulting professionals.

QBS is straightforward and easy to implement, is objective and fair, can be well documented, and is open to audit.

The key components of QBS are:

- Selection of the most qualified team for the selected project
- Jointly defined scope of work
- Mutually agreed fee after selection of the preferred proponent

Additional information about QBS is available at Yes2QBS.com.

3.1 Selection of the Most Qualified Team

The selection of a professional consulting engineering firm is based on the qualifications and competence of the firm in relation to the scope and needs of a particular project. Candidates must compete on the basis of their:

- Technical Competence
- Prior Performance
- Technical Skills
- Available Project Personnel
- Methodology

Firms are reviewed based on the personnel that will actually work on the project so that municipalities can test the compatibility of the working team with their objectives.

3.2 Mutually Developed Scope of Work

After selection of the preferred proponent, the municipality and the consulting engineering team work collaboratively to determine the project's scope. The QBS process encourages the municipality to express intentions for the project so that the design professional can gain a more specific understanding of the project. Mutual development of the scope of work fosters in-depth communication and eliminates unnecessary assumptions and misunderstandings.

3.3 Benefits of QBS to the Municipality

QBS provides advantageous benefits to municipalities who procure consulting engineering services. QBS is a process whereby the first consideration of the procuring agency are the qualifications of the potential consulting engineering firm chosen for the project. Benefits can include:

- Lifecycle cost savings, such as reduced construction, and operation and maintenance costs, when scope is negotiated and a more holistic view of the project is applied.
- Hiring process cost savings, during the process of selecting a consulting firm and determining a proper project scope. This can be achieved by prequalifying companies, and then negotiating scope and fees for each project with one company while rotating between the preapproved firms.



- The availability of a defined scope before price is discussed.
- Improved project budget and schedule performance due to reduced scope changes, which result from a stronger initial scope definition.
- A competitive process.
- A collaborative, professional relationship between the municipality and the consultant, who work together to define the project scope in order to achieve the best project outcome.
- A good team effort for the project; constructive communications are generated from the onset of the project.
- New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) compliance.

3.4 Benefits to the Consulting Engineering Firm

- QBS emphasizes value for money. More opportunities are created to explore innovative approaches and alternative methods with regards to the project.
- A mutually-developed scope of work eliminates the engineering company's reliance on assumptions otherwise made under a price-based method. This results in cost clarity and reduces potential miscommunications.



4.0 The Process

In the following sections, examples of QBS processes are provided. While there are variations to these suggested processes, they share the same selection principles.

Project size usually influences the number of steps in the selection process. Projects are classified as small, medium, or large, depending on their expected fee value. Typically, small-sized projects in the municipal sector may be defined as having professional fees of less than \$75,000, medium-sized projects having fees between \$75,000-\$200,000, and large-sized projects having fees over \$200,000.

Figure 1 provides a flow chart exhibiting the suggested process for selecting a consulting engineering firm based on the size of the project.

4.1 Small Projects Under \$75,000 in Fees

For smaller projects under \$75,000 in fees, the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) permits contracts to be awarded on a sole sourced basis. It is generally not efficient to follow a full procurement process for small projects, and it is recommended that engineering firms either be sole sourced, or that a maximum of three firms be selected to compete in a simplified version of the process (see Figure 1). To find the best qualified consulting engineering firm, ACEC-BC recommends seeking referrals from comparable clients and obtaining references, or relying on a previously established prequalification list of generally qualified firms.

4.2 Medium and Large-sized Projects

For medium to large-sized projects, a multi-stage QBS process will yield valuable benefits for municipalities. The process, described below, can be simplified where appropriate for medium-sized projects.

- 1. MUNICIPALITY ISSUES RFQ:** The municipality issues a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The RFQ includes a brief outline of the general scope of work for the project, and the expectations of the municipality. The RFQ is posted in accordance with the NWPTA requirements. The municipality indicates that the three best qualified firms selected will be asked to respond to a more detailed RFP to determine the ultimate selection of the consultant for the work.
- 2. CONSULTANTS RESPOND TO RFQ:** Interested consulting engineering firms submit a response to the RFQ. In general, the RFQ process involves municipalities evaluating qualifications and experience of the engineering consulting firm candidates on comparable projects. This stage is an opportunity for municipalities to review each consultant's list of proposed key staff and staff qualifications. This can provide an enhanced account of the engineering team's structure, available resources, project experience, and client references. These items are evaluated by the municipality and a short-list of three of the best qualified firms is created.
- 3. SELECTION OF PREFERRED PROPONENT:** The three short-listed firms are invited to respond to a Request for Proposal (RFP). In the RFP, the municipality will broadly define the scope of services and terms of reference, and the pre-qualified consultants will submit a project-specific proposal. Proposals are evaluated against criteria outlined in the RFP and are ranked by score. The consulting assignment is then awarded on the basis of the highest score. The municipality's needs are best met when the "*most qualified*" consultant is selected on the basis of its qualifications, skills, experience, understanding of the project assignment, and proposed methodology. A municipality may choose to interview all three of the project proponents during this phase if it will help with their decision making process.



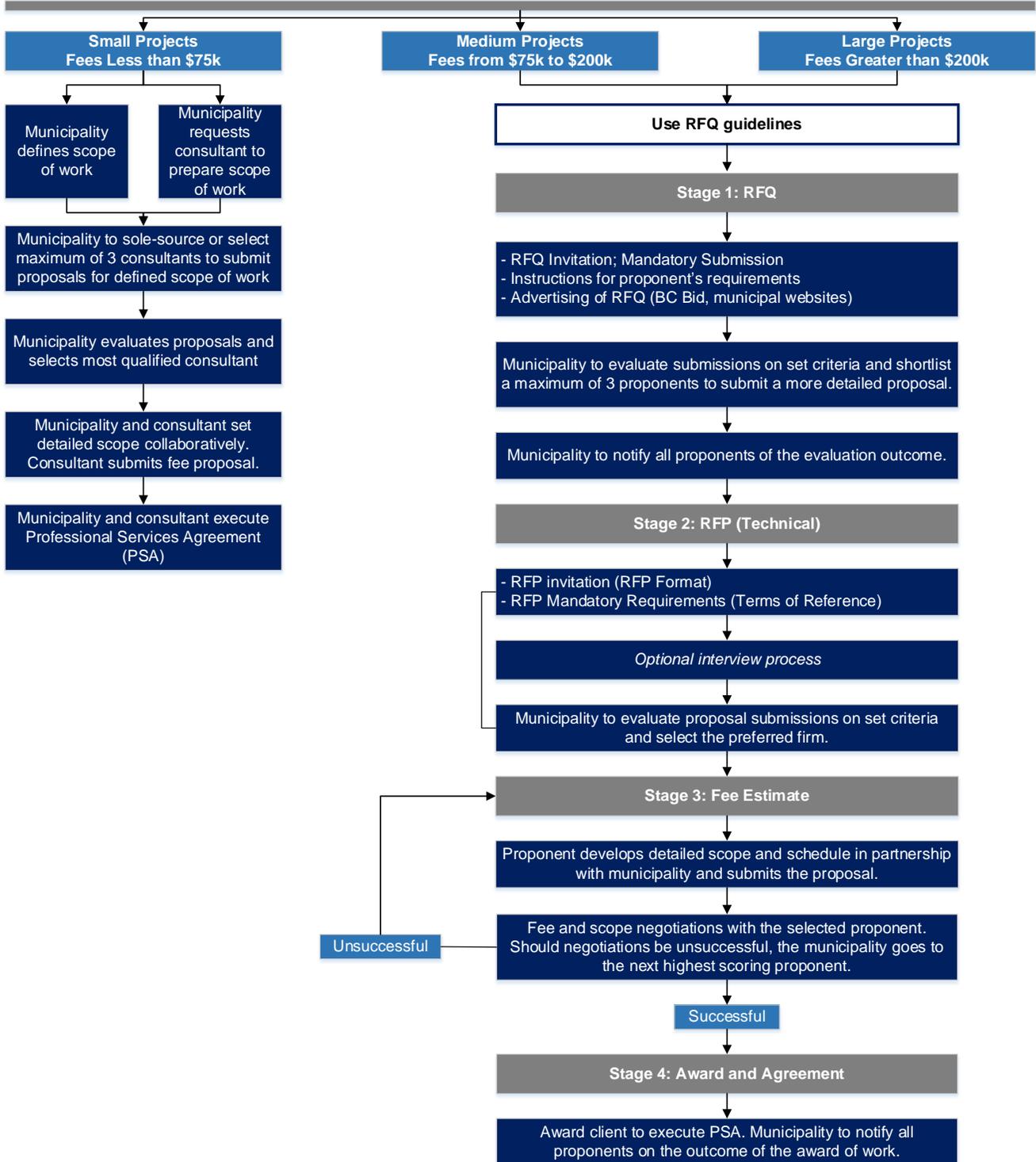
4. **DEVELOPMENT OF SCOPE AND FEE SUBMISSION:** Once the most qualified consulting engineering firm is selected, the municipality and the selected firm meet to thoroughly develop the scope of work for the project. This stage is critical because it provides an opportunity to discuss options and lifecycle costs, innovation, integration with related infrastructure, and other factors which may affect the scope of work. Once the scope of work is clearly defined and understood by both parties, the consulting engineering firm will submit a fee proposal based upon the mutually agreed scope of work.
5. **FEE NEGOTIATION AND AWARD:** Based on the submitted fee proposal, the municipality and the selected consulting engineering firm may need to negotiate a modified scope of work to reach a satisfactory cost. If an agreement on fees cannot be reached, the municipality terminates the discussion and repeats the scope of work and fee discussion with the next most qualified firm. Experience has shown that this step is seldom required. This stage ends with the award of the project to the selected firm.

Summary of Selection Process:

1. Municipality issues RFQ
2. Consultant responds to RFQ
3. Selection of preferred proponent
4. Development of scope and fee submission
5. Fee negotiation and award



Figure 1: Suggested Process for Selecting a Consulting Engineering Firm



[MW1]



5.0 Guidelines for Developing the RFQ (Request for Qualifications)

RFQ documents should include standard information as outlined below. The RFQ should clearly state that it is a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and not a Request for Proposals (RFP). The project title should be included and a unique RFQ number should be assigned. Templates for developing the RFQ are provided in Appendix A, consisting of:

- Template #1 – Project Description Form
- Template #2 – RFQ Form

5.1 Request for Qualifications Invitation

The invitation section, at minimum should include, but is not limited to, the following items:

- *Closing Date* – The date, time, and location at which the RFQ is due for submission must be clearly stated, including the full mailing address and contact person where applicable.
- *Delivery Method* – The acceptable methods of delivery should be outlined, including hard copies and PDFs by e-mail. Disclaimers should be included relating to the late delivery of RFQ documents stating that under no circumstances will late submission of qualifications be accepted.
- *Questions or Inquiries* – A contact person(s) should be provided, including phone number, fax number and e-mail address where proponent inquiries can be directed. A deadline for inquiries should also be outlined.
- *Schedule* – A list of dates should be provided, where applicable, including the Issue Date, Close of Questions, Qualifications Closing Date, and Notification of Selection Date.
- *Project Background* – Provide a general or detailed description of the required services for the proposed project.

5.2 Instructions to Proponents

At minimum, the instructions to the proponents should include, but is not limited to, the following items:

- *Documents* – The required number of hardcopy qualifications documents to be submitted should be stated, including number of unbound originals (if required), bound copies, and/or electronic versions.
- *Conflict of Interest* – The proponents must represent and warrant that there is no actual or perceived conflict of interest. The municipality should outline specific terms of what constitutes a conflict of interest.
- *Addenda* – The outline of how any addenda will be distributed and instructions as to whether the addenda or acknowledgements of the addenda should be included in the final submission.
- *Discretion, Rejection and Cancellation* - The RFQ should also state that the municipality is not bound to accept any submission, and may decide to cancel the RFQ process at their discretion for any reason. A municipality is not obligated to accept submissions that are unsigned, incomplete, conditional, illegal, unbalanced, and obscure or contain irregularities.
- *Submission Costs* – The RFQ should state that the municipality is not responsible for any costs, expenses, losses, damages or liability incurred by the Proponents in responding to the RFQ.
- *Page Limit* – Municipalities should set a submission page limit for proponents to adhere to.



5.3 RFQ Submission Requirements and Proponent Qualifications

5.3.1 Mandatory Submission Requirements

The RFQ should clearly define the mandatory requirements that must be satisfied by each proponent submission (including sub-consultants), such that the proponent will qualify for technical evaluation.

Mandatory requirements should include, but are not limited to, details such as:

- *Organization Background* – Minimum years of corporate experience and office location.
- *Professional Accreditation* – Proponent must be registered with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia (APEGBC) and licensed to practice engineering in British Columbia. Alberta and Saskatchewan firms are eligible for registration with APEGBC.
- *Health & Safety* – Proponent may be required to outline safety processes they have in place that are relevant to the scope of work.
- *Project/Quality Management Systems* – Proponent should have systems to control schedule, costs, and quality of work.
- *Organization Composition and Qualifications* – Engineering services provided, qualifications, local knowledge, and relevant past projects.
- *Project Team Composition and Qualifications* – Names, qualifications, and project experience of key project staff, including relevant past performance as a team.
- *References* – Project information and contact information from past projects.

5.3.2 Format

The submission format, sequencing, and expected content should be described in sufficient detail so that proponents are clear on a municipality's expectations. This may include, but is not limited to, items such as a title page, executive summary, table of contents, proponent profile, project understanding, project plan and schedule, project team, equipment & resources, experience & qualifications.

The format may also include, but is not limited to, allowable paper size(s), minimum font size, minimum margins, a preference for double-sided printing, page limits, and whether an electronic (PDF) submission is required. The proposal page limit should be in proportion to the complexity of the project.



6.0 RFQ Evaluation

6.1 Stage One: Mandatory Requirements

The municipality should examine all submissions to ensure they are complete and have met all mandatory requirements. The municipality should consider disqualifying any submission that does not meet 100% of the mandatory requirements. Templates for evaluating and responding to the RFQ submissions are provided in Appendix A, consisting of:

- Template #3 – RFQ Evaluation Form
- Template #4 – Memorandum to Short-Listed Consulting Engineers
- Template #5 – Memorandum to Consulting Engineers – Not Short-Listed

6.2 Stage Two: Technical Evaluation

Submissions that have successfully met the mandatory requirements should be evaluated using a weighted evaluation scoring method. This process should proceed, even if there is only one received proposal. The proponents' responses to the various technical requirements, as outlined in Table 6.1 below, will be evaluated by the technical evaluation team and assigned a value for each criterion. The sum of the scores for all the criteria represents the technical score. To be considered further, proponents must achieve a minimum agreed technical score. It is recommended the municipality disqualify any submissions scoring below the technical score threshold.

6.3 Proposed RFQ Evaluation Criteria

Table 6.1: Proposed RFQ Evaluation Criteria

Item	Criteria	Recommended Score
1	Firm Qualifications Assessment factors may include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management • Quality control • Safety • Cost control • Sub-consultant experience and working relationship • Firm's projects of similar nature • Current relevant experience of firm • Environmental Policies 	20-40
2	Proposed Consulting Team Members and their Qualifications Assessment factors may include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key staff identified (assured for the project) • Resumes • Years of experience • Professional accreditation/awards • Necessary experts (civil, landscape, hazmat, costing, etc.) • Relevant experience as individuals and/or a consulting team • All required disciplines included 	30-50
3	References Assessment factors may include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Service • Ability and Effectiveness of project leadership/management • Communication • Adherence to schedule • Cost control • Would reference person work with this consultant again? 	10-30
Maximum Total Weight		100



7.0 Request for Proposal (RFP) Guidelines

Once a short-list of three qualified proponents has been created, a detailed proposal should be requested. This is the Request for Proposal (RFP) stage. RFP documents should include standard information, as outlined below. The document should clearly state that it is a Request for Proposal (RFP). The project title should be included and a unique RFP number should be assigned. Templates for developing an RFP are provided in Appendix A, consisting of:

- Template #1 – Project Description Form
- Template #6 – RFP Form

7.1 Request for Proposal Invitation

The invitation section to include, at minimum, but not limited to, the following items:

- *Closing Date* – The date and time at which Proposals are due for submission needs to be clearly stated, including a full mailing address and contact person, where applicable. Typically, proponents should be given three to four weeks to respond to an RFP, depending on the complexity of the project.
- *Delivery Method* – The acceptable methods of delivery should be outlined, including hard copies and PDFs by e-mail. Disclaimers should be included relating to the late delivery of the RFP document stating that under no circumstances will late proposals be accepted.
- *Questions or Inquiries* – A contact person(s) should be provided, including phone number and e-mail address where proponent inquiries can be directed. A deadline for inquiries should also be outlined.
- *Request for Proposal Documents* – A detailed list of the documents available for the proponents to review should be provided, including the RFP document and any other reports and/or drawings.
- *Request for Proposal Schedule* – A list of dates should be provided, where applicable, including the Issue Date, Site Visit, Close of Questions, Proposal Closing Date, Interview Date (if required), and Award Date.

7.2 Instructions to Proponents

At minimum, the instructions to the proponents should include, but is not limited to, the following items:

- *Documents* – The number of printed proposal documents required should be stated, including the number of unbound originals (if required), bound copies, and/or electronic versions.
- *Validity Period* – The validity period represents the duration over which the proposals remain valid and irrevocable, usually 60 days. In effect, the proponents are warranting that the municipality has the right to accept their proposal and require the proponent to enter into a Professional Services Agreement, recommended by ACEC [Document 31](#) (Engineering Agreement between client and engineer), or MMCD's [Client Consultant Agreement](#). This is provided that written notice is given by the municipality to the successful proponent prior to expiry of the validity period.
- *Conflict of Interest* – The proponents must represent and warrant that an actual or perceived conflict of interest does not exist. The municipality should outline specific terms of what constitutes a conflict of interest.
- *Addenda* – The municipality should outline how addenda will be distributed and instructions as to whether the addenda or acknowledgements of the addenda must be included in the final proposal.
- *Discretion, Rejection and Cancellation* – The RFP should also state that the municipality is not bound to accept any proposal, and may cancel the RFP at their discretion, including on the basis of



insufficient response. The municipality is not obligated to accept proposals that are unsigned, incomplete, conditional, illegal, unbalanced, obscure, or those that contain irregularities.

- *Proposal Costs* – The RFP should state that the municipality is not responsible for any costs, expenses, losses, damages, or liability incurred by the proponents in responding to the RFP.

7.3 Proposal Requirements and Proponent Qualifications

7.3.1 Mandatory Proposal Requirements

The RFP should define the mandatory requirements that must be satisfied by each proposal (including sub-consultants) such that it will qualify for technical evaluation. Mandatory requirements may include, but are not limited to, such details as:

- *Experience* – Minimum years of individual or corporate experience in a specific project category.
- *Health & Safety* – Proponent may be required to outline safety processes they have in place that are relevant to the scope of work.
- *Project Team Composition and Qualifications* – Names, qualifications, and project experience of key project staff, including relevant past performance as a firm/team.
- *Project Comprehension and Methodology* – A description of the proponent's proposed work program, including schedule, milestones, and billing dates.
- *Relevant Project Experience and Past Performance* – Some of this information might have been included in the RFQ submission and is not needed except to highlight specific proposal issues.

7.3.2 Proposal Format

The proposal format, sequencing, and expected content should be described. This may include, but is not limited to, items such as a title page, executive summary, table of contents, proponent profile, project understanding, project-related innovation, project plan and schedule, project team, assumptions, equipment and resources, and experience and qualifications.

The format may also include, but is not limited to, allowable paper size(s), minimum font size, minimum margins, preference for double siding, and page limits if an electronic (PDF) submission is required. The proposal page limit should be in proportion to the complexity of the project.

7.3.3 Optional Interview Process

The technical evaluation team, on behalf of the municipality, may elect to interview some or all of the proponents to address any questions or clarifications that are required. Interviews should be conducted within the shortest possible timeframe (days, not weeks of each other), as not give an advantage to any proponent. Upon completion of the interviews, the evaluation team may elect to adjust proponent scores.

7.3.4 Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference typically describes what is expected of the proponent and may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Project background
- Overall project description
- Project objectives
- Information to be provided by municipality
- General scope of work
- Responsibilities
- Completion date and deliverables
- Standards and guidelines
- Billing procedures
- Progress reports
- Frequency and location of meetings
- Consultant evaluation procedures and criteria



8.0 Evaluation of the RFP

The QBS process will enable the municipality to retain the most qualified engineering firm for the job. A technical evaluation team, consisting of two or more municipal employees, familiar with the proposed project, should undertake the proposal evaluation. The evaluation criteria in proposals should be based on information the proponent provides on its project team, project comprehension and methodology, and relevant project experience. If the proponent is proposing to use a sub-consultant(s) on the project, information relating to the sub-consultant(s) should be incorporated within the evaluation criteria. Templates for evaluating and responding to RFP submissions are provided in Appendix A, consisting of:

- Template #7 – RFP Evaluation Form
- Template #8 – RFP Interview Evaluation Form
- Template #9 – Summary Evaluation Form
- Template #10 – Memo to Consulting Engineers Short-Listed but not Selected

8.1 Stage One: Mandatory Requirements

The municipality should examine all proposals to ensure they are complete and have met all of the mandatory requirements.

8.2 Stage Two: Technical Evaluation

Proposals that have successfully met the mandatory requirements should be evaluated using a weighted evaluation scoring method. This process should proceed, even if there is only one proposal received. The proponents' responses to the various technical requirements, as outlined in Table 8.1, will be evaluated by the technical evaluation team and assigned a value for each criterion. The sum of the scores for all the criteria should represent the technical score. The technical evaluation team may elect to conduct proponent interviews prior to establishing the final technical score.

8.3 Stage Three: Identification of Successful Proponent

The scores are added together to arrive at a total score. The successful proponent should bear the highest total score.

The municipality should advise the successful proponent in writing of acceptance of their proposal. The successful proponent will then meet with the municipality to review, discuss and confirm final scope, and then negotiate a fee satisfactory to both parties which is appropriate for the defined scope of work. The unsuccessful proponents should also be notified. Debriefing with unsuccessful parties is also recommended.



Table 8.1: Proposed RFP Evaluation Criteria

Item	Evaluation Criteria	Recommended Score
1	Project Team Composition and Qualifications Assessment factors may include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key personnel and roles & responsibility identified• Key personnel years of experience• Professional accreditation• Assignment of resources• Past relevant performance as a firm/team• Necessary disciplines and experts included• Project organization chart, including responsibility and lines of communication	20-40
2	Project Comprehension and Methodology Assessment factors may include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarity and organization of submission• Understanding of desired project outcomes• Project properly described and pertinent issues addressed• Clear indication of included & excluded services, optional services and services performed by others• Breakdown of project tasks by discipline and appropriate discussion• Deliverables identified for each task or phase• Schedule• Integration of sub-consultants or specialists services• Approach to schedule, budget and quality control• Innovation	30-50
3	Relevant Project Experience and Past Performance Assessment factors may include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scope of services rendered, project objectives, constraints, deliverables• Strength of client references (may be checked at municipality's discretion), three specific and relevant projects provided	10-30
	TOTAL:	100

- Inclusion of the evaluation criteria with the RFP documents is recommended.



9.0 Fee Negotiation

9.1 Developing the Detailed Scope of Work

This stage is where the partnership begins. The goal is to have the successful consulting engineering firm collaborate with the municipality to achieve the maximum benefit for the municipality and value to the taxpayer. Once the proponent is selected, it is important to have the municipality and proponent sit down together and thoroughly review the scope of work, work plan, scheduling, and other project related issues. This process also allows for the discussion of innovative ideas, alternative approaches, and new technologies which may reduce initial cost or long-term maintenance. Other factors that can affect the project may also be identified. Defining the actual scope of practice in this way may result in significant cost savings and a reduction in scope changes. Once the well-defined scope of work is fully understood and accepted by both the municipality and the consulting engineer, an appropriate fee can be established.

9.2 Determining Fees

The proponent now prepares and submits a fee proposal for the scope of work that will be undertaken. The municipality may request the information be provided in a specific format. Some considerations may include:

- *Scheduling* -- How the work will be scheduled throughout the project, including who will be involved in each phase of the project
- *Progress billing* -- Information about how the budget will be managed
- *Budgeting controls related to the project*

When the proponent presents the fee information to the municipality, the municipality may either accept the fee as quoted or continue discussions to revise the scope or fee. A different fee may involve a reduction of fees or a change in scope of work with a resulting change in fees. As previously stated, it is important to note that design represents only a fraction of lifecycle costs of an asset or investment. Therefore, in order to fully appreciate a “fee”, one must differentiate between the short term “expense” of the necessary service and the “value” brought by the proposed solution and its proponent. This can be measured in a number of ways: reduced maintenance, enhanced lifecycle, greater effectiveness, and fewer future upgrades.

9.3 Rejecting Fee or Cancellation

A municipality is not obligated to accept any proposal or fee. In the unlikely event that agreement cannot be reached on a suitable budget for the scope of work, the municipality can indicate to the proponent that negotiations are concluded and discussions with another proponent will be undertaken. The municipality will then discuss the scope of work with the new proponent (the second most qualified firm as identified by the RFP evaluations), and subsequently negotiate a satisfactory fee arrangement. At all times, the municipality has the option of cancelling the project or issuing a new RFP.

9.4 Confidentiality

Information provided by proponents on a proposal, or through the determination of the scope of work, should be considered commercially sensitive intellectual property and should be treated as such. The municipality should keep all information provided in the proposals confidential and should not take the liberty of mixing ideas from one proponent with those of another without the prior agreement of both parties.

At the same time, the consulting engineer will treat all information about the municipality and the project as proprietary to the municipality unless otherwise agreed between both parties.



10.0 Qualifications Based Selection Management Tips for Municipalities

10.1 Create an Evaluation Team

If a municipality has appropriate personnel resources, a technical evaluation team should be created to oversee the QBS process. This team should be fully aware of the nature of the project, the desired outcomes, and the technical issues that may be considered.

As an alternative option, an external technical expert can be added to the evaluation team. This process adds objectivity and knowledge to the selection process.

In British Columbia, the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies - BC (ACEC-BC) is available to provide names of suitable individuals to serve on evaluation teams. These individuals are usually retired consulting or municipal engineers with a great deal of experience in the same area as the project being undertaken. Municipalities can call ACEC-BC for a current list of recommended individuals to supplement evaluation teams.

10.2 Minimize Duplication

A municipality may wish to maintain a list of consulting engineering firms who have submitted on previous RFQs. To do so, municipalities can invite consulting engineering firms to submit a list of qualifications that are to be maintained on file. In this case, when RFQs are issued, the firms on the list can then provide supplementary information and indicate whether they wish to be considered for future projects. It is the responsibility of the engineering firm to ensure their information is current. An RFQ still has to be issued throughout the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) region and submissions from short-listed firms still have to be considered.



11.0 Further Reference Information

Association of Consulting Engineering Companies - BC:

<http://www.ACEC-BC.ca/>

American Council of Engineering Companies:

<http://www.acec.org/advocacy/qbs/>

The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia:

<https://www.apeg.bc.ca/Home>

Consulting Engineers of Alberta

<http://www.cea.ca/publications-a-resources/municipal-toolkit>

Consulting Engineers of Ontario:

http://www.ceo.on.ca/files/Advocacy/Qualifications_Based%20Selection%20February,%202015.pdf

Architecture Canada:

<https://www.raic.org/raic/qualifications-based-selection-qbs>

Canadian Consulting Engineer:

<http://www.canadianconsultingengineer.com/news/engineering-canada-s-future/1000199344/>

YES2QBS Website

<http://yes2qbs.com/>

Appendix A

Forms

Project Description Form

Template #1
(For Internal Use Only)

Municipality			
Name of Municipality:			
Contact Person:			
Contact's Mailing Address (Street):			
City:		Province:	Postal Code:
Telephone Number / Ext:		Fax Number:	
Email Address:			
Project Description			
Project Name:			
Project Location:		Municipality's Project No.:	
<i>Provide a short project description so the consultant can understand the scope and extent of the project.</i>			
Consultant Selection Process			
RFP Process:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Sole Source			
<input type="checkbox"/> RFP Process Inviting 3 Firms, or			
<input type="checkbox"/> RFQ Process Short Listing to 3 Firms for RFP Process			
Pre-Engineering Work			
<i>Provide any information regarding any previously completed studies, surveys, feasibility and/or pre-design work relative to the project.</i>			
Timeline of Project			
<i>Indicate engineering start date, construction start and completion dates or any other pertinent dates required.</i>			
Approval Requirements			
<i>Outline internal/external approvals (i.e. funding approvals, environmental approvals, legislature approvals, council approvals etc.) that will be necessary.</i>			
Additional Requirements and / or Conditions			
<i>List any additional or unique requirements or considerations that will affect the project.</i>			

Project Description Form

Template #1
(For Internal Use Only)

Time Frame for Consultant Selection			
Name of Project:		Municipality's Project No.	
Target Date	Task #	Description of Task	Completed
	1	Identify needs and develop scope of work and timeframe for consultant selection	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	Issue to invited consultants a memorandum or place advertisement requesting "Request for Qualifications" (RFQ) from consultant <small>(Complete Template #2)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	Deadline for receipt of "Request for Qualifications" (RFQ)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4	Review and evaluate "Request for Qualifications" submissions <small>(Complete Template #3)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5	Develop evaluation criteria of "Project Proposals" and interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6	Issue memorandum requesting short-listed consultants to submit a "Project Proposal" and attend an interview <small>(Complete Template #4)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7	Set deadline for receipt of "Project Proposal"	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8	Issue memorandum to all consultants who submitted a "Request for Qualifications" who were not short-listed. <small>(Complete Template #5)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9	Issue "Request for Proposal" (RFP) document to short listed consultants <small>(Complete Template #6)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10	Review and evaluate RFP submissions <small>(Complete Template #7)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11	Hold interviews with short-listed firms, at times and locations previously communicated. <small>(Complete Template #8)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12	Complete the Summary Evaluation Sheet <small>(Complete Template #9)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	13	Enter into agreement. Contract is reviewed, negotiated as required and signed <small>(Complete Document 31, Standard Client/Consultant Agreement)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	14	Send memorandum to all consultants short listed but not selected <small>(Complete Template #10)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	15	Project proceeds	<input type="checkbox"/>

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Form

Template #2

Project Background		
Project Title:	RFQ Number:	
Project Description:		
Client Information		
Name of Client/Organization:		Contact Person:
Mailing Address (Street):		
City:	Province:	Postal Code:
Telephone Number / Ext:		Fax Number:
Email Address:		
Invitation		
You are invited to submit your qualifications to provide engineering services for the above noted project.		
Closing Date		
RFQ Due Date:	Time:	Location:
Contact Person (if different from the above)		
Name:		
Contact Person Mailing Address (If Applicable)		
Street:		
City:	Province:	Postal Code:
Telephone Number / Ext:		Fax Number:
Email Address:		
Delivery Method		
The following indicates the acceptable methods of delivery:		
_____ Hard Copies Required		
Fax Copies Allowed?		
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
PDF Copies Allowed?		
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
E-mail Address:		
Disclaimer: Under no circumstances will late Proposals be accepted.		
Schedule		
Issue Date:	Close of Questions Date:	
Qualifications Closing Date:	Award Date:	

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Evaluation Form

Template #3

General Information		
Project Name:	Date:	
Consultant Name:	Time:	
Reviewer Name:		
Project Evaluation		
Evaluation Criteria	Maximum	Score
1 Firm Experience		
1. Management Systems (Quality Control/Safety)		
2. Cost Control		
3. Subconsultant Experience and Working Relationship		
4. Firms' Projects of a Similar Nature		
5. Current Relevant Experience of Firm		
6. Environmental Policies		
7. Social Policies		
8.		
9.		
Total	20 - 40	
2 Proposed Consulting Team Members and their Qualifications (Based on resumes for assigned staff and consultants.)		
1. Availability / Current Workload		
2. Key Staff Identified (assured for the project)		
3. Professional Accreditation / Awards		
4. Necessary Experts		
5. Relevant Experience		
6. All Required Disciplines Included		
7.		
8.		
Total	30 - 50	
3 References and Experience (Based on the list of similar projects or relevant experience provided with the submission.)		
1. Quality of Service		
2. Ability and Effectiveness of Project Leadership/Management		
3. Communication		
4. Willingness to Assign New Work to Consultant Team		
Total	10 - 30	
Grand Total	100	

Memorandum to Short-Listed Consulting Engineers

Template #4

General Information	
Project Title:	RFQ Number:
Short-List of Consulting Engineers	
For your information the following consultants have been short-listed and have been asked to submit "Project Proposals" and attend an interview.	
Consulting Firm Name	Interview Date and Time
Final Consultant Selection Procedure	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be provided to the above list of consultants detailing the project further.2. An interview with each consultant will be conducted and included in the ranking of each proponent.3. At the conclusion of the interviews, consultants will be ranked in accordance with the scores attained from their Project Proposal and Interview.4. If contract terms cannot be reached, negotiations with the first-ranked consultant will be abandoned and the consultant ranked second will be invited for contract negotiations.	

Memorandum to Consulting Engineers – Not Short-Listed

Template #5

To:	Name of Consultant
	Name of Consulting Engineering Firm
From:	Name of Client/Owner
	Title
Re:	Status of Consultant Selection Process
	Project Name, Project Number
Acknowledgement of your Submission	
<p><i>Client/Name of Company</i> wishes to thank you for submitting your qualifications for the above noted project. Unfortunately your firm has not been short-listed.</p> <p>Although you were not selected, we appreciate your interest in our project and the resources spent on the preparation of your response to the "Request for Qualifications"</p>	
List of Consulting Engineers Short-Listed	
For your information, the following practices have been selected to submit "Proposals" and attend an interview:	

Request for Proposal (RFP) Form

Template #6

To:		
From:		
Re: Request for Proposal and Interview Process		
Project Name:		
Project Number:		
Request for Proposal Invitation		
We are pleased to advise that your firm has been short-listed for the above mentioned project. To satisfy the requirements of the next stage in the Consultant selection process, you are now invited to prepare and submit a detailed Proposal and to attend an interview (if required).		
Closing Date		
RFP Due Date:	Time:	Location:
Contact Person		
Name:		
Mailing Address (Street):		
City:	Province:	Postal Code:
Telephone Number / Ext:		Fax Number:
Email Address:		
Delivery Method		
The following indicates the acceptable methods of delivery:		
_____ Hard Copies Required		
Fax Copies Allowed?		
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
PDF Copies Allowed/Required?		
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	E-mail Address:
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Disclaimer: Under no circumstances will late Proposals be accepted.		
Questions or Inquiries		
Contact Name For Inquiries (If Different from the above):		
Telephone Number / Ext:		Fax Number:
Email Address:		

Request for Proposal (RFP) Form

Template #6

Request for Proposal Documents

The RFP documents shall be the basis upon which Proposals shall be submitted and shall consist of the following:

1. List documents available for proponent review.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

RFP Schedule

Activity	Date
Issue Date	
Close of Questions	
Closing Date	
Interview Date	
Award Date	

Instructions to Proponents

Documents:

Submit mandatory requirements together with request for proposal submission materials.

Proposal Validity:

Proposals shall be valid for a period of _____ days from the Closing Date.

Conflict of Interest:

Proponents must represent and warrant that a conflict of interest does not occur.

The following terms constitutes a conflict of interest:

Addenda:

Where necessary, questions and inquiries shall be responded to by way of Addenda to report any changes to the RFP Documents. Any Addenda issued prior to the closing date will form part of the RFP Documents.

Discretion, Rejection and Cancellation:

Name of Client/Company is not bound to accept the lowest cost Proposal, and may decide to cancel the RFP at their discretion, including if there is insufficient response. *Name of Client/Company* shall not be obligated to accept Proposals that are unsigned, incomplete, conditional, illegal, unbalanced, and obscure or contain irregularities of any kind.

Proposal Costs:

Name of Client/Company is not responsible for any costs, expenses, losses, damages or liability incurred by the Proponents in responding to the RFP.

Negotiations and Fees:

1. Meet with the number one ranked submission to jointly define and review scope
2. Based on agreed scope of work, submit fee proposal
3. If necessary, negotiate fees and any scope modifications
4. Submit final fee together with the defined scope of work
5. Sign Contract
6. If you cannot agree, repeat with number two ranked submission

Request for Proposal (RFP) Form

Template #6

Proposal Requirements and Proponent Qualifications

Mandatory Requirements:

Proposals must comply with the following requirements in order to be considered by *Name of Client/Company*:

1. Edit, Add or Delete as Necessary: Key personnel are registered with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia (APEGBC) to practice engineering in British Columbia.
2. The Proponent has a safety program.

Project Team Composition and Qualifications:

The Proposal should include the following at minimum:

1. Key personnel and roles & responsibility identified
2. Key personnel years of experience
3. Professional accreditation
4. Assignment of resources
5. Past relevant performance as a firm/team
6. Necessary disciplines and experts included
7. Breakdown of project tasks by discipline and appropriate discussion
8. Project organization chart, including responsibility and lines of communication.

Project Comprehension and Methodology:

Proponents should provide a clear, well organized and comprehensive narrative that includes at minimum:

1. Understanding of desired project outcomes
2. Proper project description and addresses pertinent issues
3. Clear indication of included and excluded services, optional services and services provided by others
4. Deliverables identified for each task or phase
5. Schedule
6. Integration of sub-consultants or specialist services
7. Approach to schedule, budget and quality control
8. Approach to conflict resolution
9. Innovation.

Relevant Project Experience and Past Performance:

The Proposal should include the following at minimum:

1. Firm/team design projects of similar nature and scope, including senior and project personnel in the past five years
2. Demonstration of local knowledge
3. Scope of services rendered, project objectives, constraints and deliverables
4. Strength of client references from three specific and relevant projects
5. Relevant project awards
6. Explanation of relevant project budget and schedule variations and how they were managed.

NOTE: Requirements in this category should be more specific than the RFQ, and not duplicate information provided in the RFQ.

Proposal Information:

Proposals should contain the following information in order to be considered by *Name of Client/Company*:

1. Cover Page
2. Executive Summary
3. Table of Contents
4. Section on Project Team Composition and Qualifications
5. Project Comprehension and Methodology
6. Relevant Project Experience and Past Performance
7. Other

Proposal Format:

Allowable paper size(s), minimum font size, minimum margins, preference for double siding and page limits.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Form

Template #6

Project Proposal and Interview Scoring Criteria

1. Final selection will be based on a combination of the scores attained from both the Project Proposal Evaluation and the Interview (if necessary).
2. Attached is a copy of the Evaluation Criteria that will be used to assess each Proposal.
3. Attached is a copy of the Interview score sheet.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Evaluation Form

Template #7

General Information		
Project Name:		Date:
Consulting Engineer Name:		Time:
Reviewer Name:		
Project Evaluation		
1 Mandatory Requirements		
1. Consulting engineer meets the mandatory requirements associated with the project	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Proceed with Scoring the Proposal</i>	<i>Disqualify the Proposal</i>
Evaluation Criteria	Maximum	Score
2 Project Team Composition and Qualifications		
1. Key personnel and roles & responsibility identified		
2. Key personnel years of experience		
3. Professional accreditation		
4. Assignment of resources		
5. Past relevant performance as a team		
6. Necessary disciplines and experts included		
7. Breakdown of project tasks by discipline and appropriate discussion		
8. Project organization chart, including responsibility and lines of communication		
Total	20 - 40	
3 Project Comprehension and Methodology		
1. Clarity and organization of submission		
2. Understanding of desired project outcomes		
3. Proper project description and addresses pertinent issues		
4. Clear indication of included and excluded services, optional services and services provided by others		
5. Deliverables identified for each task or phase		
6. Schedule		
7. Integration of sub-consultants or specialist services		
8. Approach to schedule, budget and quality control		
9. Approach to conflict resolution		
10. Innovation		
Total	30 - 50	
4 Relevant Project Experience and Past Performance		
1. Firm/team design projects of similar nature and scope, including senior and project personnel in the past five years		
2. Demonstration of local knowledge		
3. Scope of services rendered, project objectives, constraints and deliverables		
4. Strength of client references from three specific and relevant projects		
5. Relevant project awards		
6. Explanation of relevant project budget and schedule variations and how they were managed		
Total	10 - 30	
Grand Total	100	

Request for Proposal (RFP) Interview Evaluation Form

Template #8

General Information		
<i>The purpose of the interview is to determine whether the client and the consulting engineer have compatible objectives, perspectives and attitudes. Questions should explore those concerns and the overall "chemistry" of the client/consultant relationship.</i>		
Project Name:		Date:
Consulting Engineer Name:		Time:
Reviewer Name:		
Interview procedures		
<i>Consulting Engineers invited to attend and interview should be prepared to address the following issues. Questions from the Consulting Engineer will be accepted after the panel has completed their questions and if time is available.</i>		
Evaluation Criteria	Maximum	Score
1 Understanding of the Project		
1. Consulting Engineer understands the scope of the project brief and the needs of the client.		
2. Consulting Engineer understands the project constraints/opportunities		
3. Consulting Engineer's understanding of other client related issues		
Total	30	
2 Project Team and Consultants		
1. Related project experience, ability and capacity of proposed key personnel assigned to this project.		
2. Related project experience, ability and capacity of the "Lead Liaison" to the client.		
3. Related project experience, ability and capacity of proposed consultants.		
Total	30	
3 Overall Impression		
1. Ability to express ideas		
2. Ability to manage the project team		
3. Ability/past experience working with the client		
4. Communication/listening skills		
5. Ability to be flexible/adaptable		
6. Consulting Engineer's response to the question: "Why should we select your practice for this project?"		
Total	40	
Grand Total	100	

Request for Proposal (RFP) Summary Evaluation Form

Template #9
For Internal Use Only

General Information						
Project Name:		Name of Compiler:			Date:	
<i>This form is intended to be used to compile scores of all proponents that submitted to the "Request for Qualifications", "Request for Proposal" and attended the "Interview".</i>						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Qualifications Summary			Date of Review		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Proposal Summary			Date of Review		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interview Summary			Date of Review		
Total Combined Score						
	<i>Engineering Firm A</i>		<i>Engineering Firm B</i>		<i>Engineering Firm C</i>	
	Technical Score	Interview Score	Technical Score	Interview Score	Technical Score	Interview Score
<i>Name of Reviewer #1</i>						
<i>Name of Reviewer #2</i>						
<i>Name of Reviewer #3</i>						
<i>Name of Reviewer #4</i>						
<i>Name of Reviewer #5</i>						
Total Score						
Ranking						
Comments						

Memo to Consulting Engineers Short-Listed but not Selected

Template #10

To:	Name of Consulting Engineer
	Name of Contact Person
From:	Name of Client/Owner
	Name of Contact Person
	Title
Re:	Completion of Consulting Engineer Selection Process; Project Name, Project Number

Ranking of Consulting Engineers Responding to RFP

Name of Client/Company has completed the process for professional services for the above mentioned project.

Although your firm was not selected, *Client / Name of Organization* express our sincere appreciation for your time, effort and interest on our behalf.

It has been our objective to select the firm whose qualifications and experience best suits our needs for this project. The evaluation results of the selection committee ranks the firms interviewed in the following order:

Rank	Engineering Firm Name
1	
2	
3	

Ranking of Consulting Engineers Responding to RFP

We have now entered into contract discussion and negotiations with *Highest Ranked Consulting Engineer*