QBS

Qualifications-Based Selection
Of Design Professionals

A Guide
for Project Owners

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Understanding QBS

What Is QBS?

Qualifications-Based Selection is a fair, objective and legal process for selecting the services of design professionals who are most qualified for a particular project, based on competence and experience. You are to be congratulated for pursuing a process that will provide you with the best qualified people at a fair and reasonable cost.

Why Use QBS?

It is in the project owner's best interest to understand that the ***quality*** of a professional service is more important than its ***cost*** (e.g. you don't price shop for a brain surgeon.) While fees for professional services typically represent only a fraction of the construction budget, the quality of those services is the single most important factor in the overall construction and life cycle costs of a project. (See References section behind Chapter 8 for detailed discussions of this point.)

At the beginning of the selection procedure, the owner often is not aware of which professional services are required. With the QBS process, the owner and the design professional define the scope of those services together as part of their negotiation to ensure that the services provided fully meet the owner's needs.

QBS fosters communication and compatibility between the owner and the selected firm. That relationship is not adversarial in nature because the roles are not those of buyer and seller. In fact, competent professional firms will always look out for the owner's best interests because they serve as the owner's agents.

A well conducted selection and negotiation process sets the tone for an efficiently managed project - with scope and responsibilities clearly defined, both owner and design professional can join in a common goal towards successful project completion.

Who Uses QBS?

All Federal agencies have required using QBS since 1972 ["Brooks Act" PL 92-582.]

Many state agencies, municipalities, other public owners, and non-profits employ QBS. In Connecticut, statutes require the Departments of Transportation and Public Works use the QBS process.

The American Bar Association recommends QBS as stated in their 1979 *Model Procurement Code for State & Local Governments*.

The American Public Works Association recommends QBS in their *Selection and Use of Engineering and Architectural Consultants*.

The Department of Defense validated QBS in a January 1993 report [*Streamlining Defense Acquisition Law*.]

Understanding QBS

The State of Maryland adopted QBS following a 1985 study which showed QBS to be less costly than competitive bidding.

Why Use a Facilitator?

The Connecticut QBS Council offers the services of a facilitator to public and non-profit project owners ***at no cost***. As a person who is knowledgeable about the QBS process, the facilitator's role is frequently to educate and to be an impartial guide. Owners may often use QBS successfully after an introductory session with a facilitator, yet a facilitator can also advise the owner in formulating the scope of work and the RFQ, and can help customize the process to each project's needs. However, the facilitator will not participate in the actual selection of design professionals or recommend firms for consideration. The facilitator's role is to offer aid, advice and comfort with a rational and fair, qualifications-based selection program.

What is the Connecticut QBS Council?

The Council is an independent, unbiased, not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to improve the quality of construction by promoting and supporting the QBS process. Although the Council receives financial assistance from the state's professional organizations of architects, engineers, land surveyors, landscape architects and contractors, its work treats equally all professional design firms licensed to do business in the state. In addition to supporting the facilitator's services, the Council plans educational seminars and workshops and publishes an informative, quarterly newsletter on local, state and national activities related to procurement of design professionals. The only lists we will provide are the same as those available from the Office of the Secretary of State.

Understanding QBS

The Process of Competitive Negotiation?

The QBS process generally includes these steps to be taken in sequence:

1. Read this guide and consider using the Connecticut QBS Council's facilitator;
2. Clarify project needs and goals, develop a project summary
3. Prepare and announce a Request for Qualifications (RFQ);
4. Evaluate all responses to the RFQ and rank the top firms;
5. Conduct interviews with a 'short list' of firms;
6. Select the most qualified firm;
7. Develop a Scope of Services jointly with the selected firm;
8. Agree on contract terms, and then negotiate a fee. If unable to reach agreement with the top-ranked firm, terminate negotiations and begin negotiations with the next ranked firm.

For some projects or owners, this process may be modified. Where agencies are already familiar with QBS, for example, a facilitator may not be needed. Some agencies request qualifications annually, then pre-qualify and select from that list without interviews, especially for smaller projects.

How to Use this Guide

This guide is meant to serve as a manual to which project owners may refer before and while using the QBS process. Each chapter of the guide describes a corresponding step in the QBS process (as illustrated in the Diagram.) A typical chapter consists of one or more pages of Guides and Checklists related to that phase of the process:

GUIDE	addresses fundamental concerns that frequently arise
CHECKLIST	provides step-by-step assistance by listing items necessary for a successful selection process.
SUPPLEMENT	gives additional information that may help explain the QBS process in more detail or assist you with implementing QBS for your project.
J	a symbol denoting an area or issue where the services of the Council's facilitator may be particularly helpful

Understanding QBS

Note:

It is recommended that first-time users of this guide read through the entire guide before initiating the process. Some areas described may tend to overlap and it is important to use each section (or chapter) with some understanding of both the work that precedes and follows that section.

Defining the Project

GUIDE

Getting Started

Before initiating the selection process, the project's parameters must be clarified:

- Describe the project's purpose and objective
- Identify the various project components
- Set a desired timetable for the QBS effort
- Define any special issues
- Determine budget limitations

Project Summary

A brief description of the project will form the core of the Request For Qualifications, as discussed in Chapter 3. A well-defined project summary will allow responding firms to tailor their statements of qualifications to the project requirements and will provide a more uniform basis for evaluating the responses. [see Project Summary checklist below]

Developing a detailed list of the work required is the responsibility of the design professional and is not recommended at this point in time. That information will be included in the agreement negotiated at the end of the QBS process, when its accuracy will be much improved by the inputs of experienced professionals.

Any special issues associated with the project should be identified. Such issues may involve physical or site constraints, regulatory restrictions, operational conflicts, community concerns, schedule constraints, or other difficulties.

Budget Requirements

To avoid unrealistic expectations, a preliminary determination of anticipated funding should be made to compare the project's needs with its financial resources. To aid in this comparison, a list of sources of information on typical project costs is included at the end of this guide, many of which are available from the Council's facilitator.

Selection Time Frame

A timetable for the selection of the project team should be produced at this point. However, timetables for design, construction and occupancy should be developed later, in consultation with the selected professionals. What is a reasonable schedule for implementing QBS of the design professionals for a project will depend on a variety of circumstances. Complex projects, for example, may benefit from pre-proposal conferences, site visits or additional interviews.

J The complexities inherent in scheduling make a very good argument for involving the Council's facilitator.

Defining the Project

CHECKLIST

A Typical Project Summary Includes:

q Description of the project’s intended size, function and occupancy

q General requirements, e.g. renovation, demolition, additions, new construction, energy, land use, site selection considerations, and off-site improvements

q Special requirements, e.g. referenda, funding requirements and safety considerations

q Descriptions of any other projects in process or planned for the same site or time frame which might affect the project scope

q Descriptions of completed studies, surveys and any other work relevant to the project and available to responding firms

q Requirements for feasibility studies or program planning prior to design and construction, if appropriate

q Any available project budget information

J The Council’s facilitator can provide valuable assistance in the preparation of the project summary.

[A generic project summary form is shown in the Appendix, page A.3]

Defining the Project

SUPPLEMENT

There is a commentary on page 2.1 regarding schedules and time frames. Some projects are unique in terms of their scheduling requirements. Whenever possible, it is desirable to make the selection of the design professional first, and develop the timetable for design and construction with the selected firm. If the funding organization or some other authority is mandating a specific timetable, it is important that this be part of the project description. Eventually it will be carried into the information packet accompanying the RFQ.

If the timetable is unrealistic or even impossible, the responders to the RFQ will tell you so. Further to that, they will probably tell you what adjustments must be made in order to make the project practicable.

If there are time restraints which will increase the cost of the project substantially or make it impossible to do the project, it is more important that you know about them early so that you can approach the appropriate authority to have adjustments made.

The comments made here about timetables are also applicable to budgets. Basic information on funding and budget limitations should be part of the definition of the project. If the design firm will be required to explore alternative solutions in order to stay within a budget which can not be changed, it is important that they know it in the beginning. Similarly, if they will have to be involved to help you secure additional funding, they should know that, too.

This project summary is for the benefit of the Selection Committee (SC). It is to provide ***you*** with a list of all the elements which must be addressed; whether or not the design professional will be directly involved.

There may be some important elements which are not within the direct control of the SC, but which are necessary for the completion of the project. For instance, the DPW (Department of Public Works) may be required to extend sewers. The SC may not control the DPW, but the project can not be used until the sewers are in place. Therefore, sewer extension is an element of work which should be on the overall task list for the project.

With each task, there should be identification of the department or person responsible for the accomplishment of the task together with the source of funding and the projected schedule, if it is known.

J The QBS Facilitator is available to help you make the list of tasks as complete as possible.

Preparing the RFQ

GUIDE

ANNOUNCING THE RFQ

Public Notice

Many public owners are required by state or local regulations to place public notice of projects in newspapers and trade journals. While public advertisements may result in a large number of responses that take time to evaluate, they reach a wide sector of the professional community and provide the broadest possible field of talent from which the owner may then narrow down the list to a workable number of firms.

Referrals

For some projects, the field can be narrowed earlier by pre-qualifying or identifying firms on a selective basis, through referrals from other owners who have used similar services recently for their own projects, through discussions with colleagues, or other means. Nevertheless, some talented and qualified firms are inevitably excluded by this method. Agencies that have a continuing need for services may pre-qualify firms on an annual basis by review of non project-specific materials.

Directories

Some professional organizations publish or make available mailing lists of member firms and may further identify firms with interest and expertise in particular project types. Local telephone yellow pages and various community business directories are additional sources often found in public library reference sections.

Preparing the RFQ

GUIDE

PREPARING THE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Format

In developing the RFQ, it may be appropriate to keep the initial Request concise and to make a packet with detailed information available to interested firms.

Scope of the Work

A well-defined Project Summary (described in Chapter 2) forms the core of the RFQ. It allows firms to respond directly to the project's requirements in their statements of qualifications, affording the owner a more uniform basis for evaluating responses, and reducing the chances for future misunderstanding and conflict.

Materials to Request

Keeping in mind the basic project goals established in Chapter 2, review the suggested Submission Requirements and Checklist below (pages 3.3 and 3.4) and select accordingly those items to request of submitting firms. It is especially important to permit opportunities for firms to respond in ways that demonstrate the depth of their experience and talent, e.g. answers to project-specific questions or formats that allow more detailed information about experience, particularly if standard forms are to be included in the RFQ.

Project-Specific Issues

Questions requiring a response in a Statement of Qualifications should be designed to demonstrate a firm's capability and understanding of the project type or issues particular to the project. Those issues might include physical or regulatory constraints, functional conflicts, scheduling problems, community concerns or any other areas central to the project.

Sample RFQs

Examples of RFQs are available from the QBS facilitator, for use primarily as a reference for questions of style and format. Their contents, however, are not substitutes for the process described in Chapter 2 above.

J The QBS facilitator can provide valuable assistance in developing an RFQ.

Preparing the RFQ

GUIDE

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Letter of Interest

Because it provides the best opportunity to introduce a firm in a direct, comprehensive and personal way, the Letter of Interest is the single most important item to evaluate. Although accompanying forms may give some indication of a firm's capabilities and experience, the letter allows responding firms to discuss their particular understanding of and their approach to the project and to address any project-specific issues raised in the RFQ. It provides insights into the "personalities" of responding firms and opens a meaningful dialogue.

Project-Specific Issues

Inviting responding firms to address one or more issues relevant to the project serves to provide the owner with valuable professional insights into important aspects of their project. The depth of understanding, creative ideas and technical approach demonstrated in the letters are among the most important factors for comparing firms.

Standard Forms

Requiring firms to submit information in standardized formats permits comparisons between firms within the range of information requested. For example, while lists of past projects can be useful, that data may not accurately reflect a firm's current capabilities. A firm with a few similar completed projects may be more capable than another firm with a long list of comparable work. A more complete picture of a firm's qualifications is achieved when other submitted materials are considered, as well.

About Qualifications

A firm may be qualified through the quantity of past experience, or by the quality of that experience, by the capabilities of its current staff and by their understanding of project issues. A firm may also be qualified by compatibility between its staff and the owner, by the firm's track records in service, budget and schedule, by its particular methodology or by other criteria suitable to the project. Which set of qualifications is most relevant should be determined by the particular project's needs and circumstances.

CHECKLIST

A TYPICAL REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS INCLUDES:

- ❑ Owner's name
- ❑ Description of function and short history of the owner organization, including the goals or events that prompt the project (optional)
- ❑ Project name or identification
- ❑ Project location
- ❑ Contact person (identify this person clearly as the only one to contact)
- ❑ A general Scope of the Work (as described in Chapter 2 and Checklist 2)
- ❑ Description of design professional selection process
- ❑ A list of all requested information to be included with the firms' statements and letters of qualifications (see below)
- ❑ A description and schedule of the selection process, including the submission deadline

TYPICAL MATERIALS REQUESTED INCLUDE:

- ❑ A letter explaining the firm's interest in the project and its point of view on any project-specific issues raised in the RFQ (Letter of Interest)
- ❑ Profiles of the firm, its principals, key personnel, equipment and facilities, and financial condition
- ❑ Evidence of a firm's ability to perform the work, including lists of complete and current projects of a similar nature, outside consultants and associates usually retained
- ❑ Description of the experience of a firm's current staff as it applies to the project requirements (Staff Resumes)
- ❑ Demonstration of understanding of the project, including staff available and proposed for assignment to the project, data gathering methods, and evaluation techniques
- ❑ References, including names and addresses of previous clients with similar projects
- ❑ Standardized forms, including Federal GSA Form 330 (see GUIDE - 3 for advice concerning the use of standard forms)

Preparing the RFQ

SUPPLEMENT

ANATOMY OF AN RFQ

Generally, the shorter a Public Notice can be kept, the more effective it is. Certain basic information is always required and is noted by “*” in the following list. Additional information may be provided to interested proposers through an “Information Packet” which they may pick up at the stated address. The Connecticut QBS Council advises you to consult with legal counsel for your town before any legal notice is released.

Title:

* Your solicitation should be in the section for legal notices, identified as such. It should be headed by “Request for Qualifications”; “Invitation for Consultants”, or something similar.

Owner:

* State the name of the owner of record. If this is not simply the name of the municipality, state the municipality of the owner. For instance, the volunteer fire department may be the owner, but it is necessary to give the name of the town or district that the fire department is in.

Who:

State what disciplines you are appealing to. Architects, Engineers, Environmental Analysts, or any combination of disciplines which is appropriate. If you do not know which disciplines are involved, use “(Licensed) Design Professional.”

Why:

* What is your objective? It might be to “provide specific architectural service for;” “structural analysis;” “feasibility study;” or even “construction administration.”

A very brief description of the proposed project should be stated. This might be “renovation of and addition to the Central Middle School;” “new town office facility estimated to require 20,000 sq. ft.;” “master plan of 75 acres for use as public recreation area;” or “extension of sewer collection system of approximately 2 miles.”

Preparing the RFQ

What:

* What are you requesting? usually, “letter of interest” or “statement of qualifications.”

Required format may be listed here:

1. Size of firm and availability of time to do the project.
2. Organizational structure.
3. Resumes of key personnel.
4. Overall strength, experience and qualification of the staff members involved.
5. Demonstrated ability to control project cost, quality and schedule.
6. Lists of sub-consultants and/or subcontractors.
7. Relationship to any parent firm or holding company.
8. If a joint venture, details of organization.
9. References.
10. SF 330 may be used in lieu of 1, 2 and 3.

Specific requirements may be listed as appropriate.

- Experience with additions and alterations to historic buildings.
- Ability to interface with multi-lingual neighborhood association.
- Location of firm relative to site.
- Experience with grant applications.
- Ability to prepare presentation material.

Boilerplate:

There are specific statements which are required in certain solicitations by state or municipal regulation. Refer to your Town Charter and check with your legal advisor.

- Affirmative Action
- EOE and EEO
- Minority Business Enterprises/Women Business Enterprises
- Professional Liability and/or general liability insurance
- Evidence of proper licensing and registration

When and Where:

* Provide the name, address and phone number for a contact person. Give a time and location for receipt of Statements of Qualifications. Also give pick-up info for “information packet”, if one is being used.

A sample Request for Qualifications can be found as an Attachment, page A.7.

Preparing the RFQ

SUPPLEMENT

THE INFORMATION PACKET

The purpose of the information packet is to give the owner an opportunity to provide the proposer with more information than can logically be included in the Public Notice which goes into the newspaper. See page 3.4 for contents of the information packet.

Information packets normally include five areas of information:

1. Further description of work to be done.
2. Specific qualifications of the proposer.
3. Commentary on funding.
4. Information available to the proposer.
5. Financial capability of the proposer.

1. Further Description of Work to be Done

It is not the intent that this be a full-blown scope of work. That will be developed between the owner and the top ranking firm when evaluations have been completed. It is, however, a good idea to give a background of the project, particularly if there are aspects which are not readily discernible. The list will vary with each project in each location, but some typical elements are:

- A pre-existing agreement that a neighborhood or resident association will have a right of review.
- The seller of the site is taking responsibility for the removal of contaminants (which may leave large excavations.)
- (For the expansion of an existing housing complex) Access to the site must be developed from adjoining private property. Trucking is not permitted through the existing housing area.
- (For remodeling and renovation) The dates when the existing facility was constructed or when it was last remodeled.
- (Rehabilitation) The owner has been able to make arrangements to temporarily relocate departments by floors (or whatever.) Work must be sequenced around this restriction.

2. Specific Qualifications of the Proposer

If there is a need for emphasis in specific areas, it is appropriate to let the proposers know about it. For instance, if the use of a site is a matter of controversy with the public or with the Planning & Zoning Commission, you might want to ask the proposer what experience he/she has had with procuring land use permits. Similarly, if you need information relative to drawings and outline specifications in order to secure a funding grant, you might want to ask the proposer what experience he or she has in assisting in requests for funding.

Almost all proposers will have some experience in all elements which come up on a project. The purpose of this section is to help you get further, specific information from the proposers which relates to specific issues which are hyper-critical to your project.

Preparing the RFQ

3. Commentary on Funding

The Connecticut QBS Council recommends that you very clearly state the conditions of funding. If certain phases of the design work must be done before application for payment can be made, they should be stated. If it is the intent that the design professional will help in securing any necessary grants for funding, and if the owner has limited funds until this is accomplished, it should be stated.

It is entirely possible that the proposer may be fully qualified but may not have any experience with whatever entity you are using for funding. If appropriate, you may want to include a warning similar to the following: "The owner is not in a position to pay design requisitions directly. All requests for payment will be processed according to the prescribed procedure of the funding source. This is sometimes time consuming, and is beyond the control of the owner."

4. Information Available

Advise the proposer of any pertinent information which will be available to the firm selected to do the design work. Generally, this will include site maps, plans of existing structures, surveys of needs and reports from building officials or fire marshals. Usually it is appropriate to provide site location information with the information packet.

5. Financial capability of the proposer

Financial capability is usually addressed after the first short listing and before interviews. If you want basic information with the Statement of Qualifications, ask for "banking references." In addition, you may need/want information regarding assignation of funds. Wording might be "if Consultants plans to have the revenues from this contract assigned to any bank or other institution (or company, such as parent company), the reason for such assignments must be specified and the assignee designated." Annual reports or financial statements are not usually requested at this time. If required, it is better to limit the request to firms short-listed after evaluation of Statements of Qualifications.

Note:
Do not lose sight of the fact that you are not at this time, requesting a design. You are requesting information as to the qualifications of the proposer so that you may pick the one that is best for your project. In other words, copies of reports, drawings, etc. are not necessary to the proposer now.

J The QBS Facilitator is available to help you with development of the RFQ and the information packet.

Evaluating Responses

GUIDE

EVALUATION ISSUES

Consistency

The process of evaluating and selecting a professional firm is most successful when comparisons are made fairly among the interested firms. This is best accomplished when the exchanges of information are consistent. All firms must receive the same project materials so that their responses are based on the same set of project specifications and constraints. All submittals of qualifications must likewise be judged using identical criteria.

Selection Committee

The group formed to develop a short list of firms should be composed of individuals who will be objective, knowledgeable and able to make an intelligent selection decision.
These individuals may be representatives of various groups involved in the project.

Evaluation Criteria

Each firm and its consultants should be evaluated in terms of both their past experience and current capabilities. A firm should be familiar with issues specific to the project type and demonstrate its ability to handle those issues with competence and efficiency. The Checklist in this chapter describes some basic evaluation criteria, however, the Council's facilitator may be able to help develop a more complete list tailored to the project.

Design Sketches

Beware of submissions that include project sketches or concepts, even if prepared in good faith by competent professionals. No matter how appealing or compelling a vision such materials may present, they are usually based on an incomplete understanding of the project and frequently do not represent meaningful design solutions. The best opportunities to compare the creative approaches of interested firms are in their Letters of Interest and during the interview when the firms may also address any project-specific concerns.

Site and Facility Tours

In many cases, tours of a facility or project site are an integral part of the selection process. Such tours, whether handled individually or in groups, permit interested firms an opportunity to obtain first-hand information about the project. Depending on particular project needs, it may be appropriate to offer tours to all interested firms or only to short-listed firms. Generally, the latter is recommended.

Evaluating Responses

Contacting References

Obtaining recommendations and opinions of previous clients is an important part of the evaluation process. A uniform procedure should be established for this purpose.

A Reference Check form can be found in the Appendix at page A.12.

Evaluating Responses

CHECKLIST

ITEMS INCLUDED IN A TYPICAL EVALUATION PROCESS:

q Form a selection committee comprised of objective and knowledgeable individuals

q Establish a policy regarding selection criteria and evaluation forms tailored to the project [A sample evaluation form is shown in the Appendix, page A.10]

q Consider the following basic evaluation criteria:
- Firm's general experience and ‘track record’ on similar projects, *including type and effect of change orders, contract award price versus design firm’s estimates, final construction cost versus contract award price, quality of services during and after design and construction*
- Qualifications, competence and past performance of individuals to be assigned key project responsibilities
- Qualifications of consultants
- Facilities and equipment to be made available to the project by the firm, *including computer capabilities, reproduction and communications equipment, laboratory and testing equipment, and other specialized items*
- Present workload of the firm, current and future commitments of personnel, especially those to be assigned to the project
- Proximity of the firm’s offices to the project site
- Examination of the firm’s offices and/or sites of current or completed projects
- Firm’s reputation and integrity within its profession and the community
- Other recognition of the firm’s achievements, including awards received and technical papers authored by employees
- Special considerations, e.g. some projects may require staff conversant in foreign languages or qualified minority representation

J The Council’s facilitator can assist in developing a complete list of criteria appropriate to the project.

Evaluating Responses

- q Eliminate from consideration any respondents who are least qualified to do the work and develop a short list (3-5 firms) of the most qualified firms to be interviewed

- q Check references using a uniform method before developing a short list. Seek recommendations and opinions of previous clients regarding budget and schedule experience, dependability, attitudes of key personnel, concern for efficiency, economy and environment, sensitivity to community, and quality of service.
  [A reference check form is shown in the Appendix, page A.12.]

- q Notify short-listed firms regarding the interview requirements, including:

  - Date of tour(s) of the site and/or facilities, as appropriate
  - List of interview criteria, questions and an explanation of the scoring and selection process
  - Background materials - feasibility studies, project program, etc.
  - Date, place and time of interview, and names of other short-listed firms

  [A sample memo is shown in the Appendix, page A.14]

- q Notify firms not short-listed to thank them for submitting their qualifications and to inform them as to which firms were short-listed

  [A sample memo is shown in the Appendix, page A.13]

SUPPLEMENT

Evaluating Responses

The list of basic evaluation criteria on page 4.3 and the generic chart for Evaluation of Statements of Qualifications, Appendix page A.10, provide all the elements for evaluation.

It is necessary that each Committee adjust the weighting of the factors to suit the specific project. For instance, the proximity of the office of the design firm to the project site is probably less important on a new project that it is for a rehabilitation or renovation project. A new complex of 24 units of senior citizen housing on an unencumbered site may only require the architect to make an inspection once a week or once every two weeks, so the location of the office is not very critical. On the other hand, a renovation/rehabilitation type of project may require a site visit two or three times a week, or even every day, and the proximity of the architect's office could be a significant factor.

This type of consideration should be applied to each item on the evaluation checklist. Some of the items may not be pertinent to your project. There may be some elements which you must add for your specific project.

Typical additions to the list by selection committees are:

- Familiarity with any State/Federal review procedure.
- Experience in making presentations to Town Councils or Planning & Zoning Commissions.
- Experience in rehabilitations/renovation work where sequencing is necessary.
- (If a team of architects/engineers/special consultants is required) What experience has the professional design team had working together?
- Does the architect (or engineer) have sufficient financing capability to carry the project between payments?
- (Rehabilitation/renovation) Does the firm satisfy any requirements such as Minority Business Enterprises (MBE), etc.?

J The QBS Facilitator will assist you in developing the evaluation criteria for your project.

Evaluating Responses

SUPPLEMENT

Reference Checks

Reference checks are the most important elements in the evaluation process. There is a guide for questions to be asked in Appendix A, page A.12.

It is generally true that any firm will provide reference information related to projects which were successful. Notwithstanding, getting full information on those projects can be very revealing. The questions on the reference check in the Appendix are very good, and will apply in most situations. The nature of your particular project may make it desirable to add to or adjust those questions.

There are a couple of basic steps that you should always take when you are starting the reference check.

> First, ask the person you call whether he or she can spend a few minutes with you on the phone to answer some questions. If you get through to someone who is trying to rush off to a meeting, he/she will not be able to spend the time you will want to get comprehensive answers to your questions.
>
> Second, find out what role the person you are talking to had in the total project. If the person was only involved up front in the selection process and has no knowledge of how the project went, you may want to ask him or her for the name of someone who was involved during the life of the project.

You will notice that the questions emphasize the staff person assigned to a project. It is the nature of the business of professional design that people move around. They do this in order to broaden their experience base. There is nothing wrong with it. On the other hand, if a reference check centers around a particular staff person who was exceptionally good, you will want to be sure that staff person is still with the firm. (This won't come from the person you are talking to, but is something you will want to check out with the firm itself later on.)

Question number 10 regarding budget cost control, etc., can be briefly stated as, "What was the history of change orders on the project?" Change orders are more likely to occur in projects involving renovation and redevelopment than on new projects. Change orders are not necessarily the fault of the firm that designed the project. Many times they are the result of a change in direction initiated by the owner. (This is another reason why the owner/user should make a complete list of all tasks when the selection process is being started. Sometimes, changes can be avoided if more time is spent detailing the project objective in the beginning.)

Another reason for change orders may be discovery of sub-surface conditions which could not have been seen before work was started. In summary, the history of change orders is important, but the reasons for the change orders are also important.

If your project requires work to be done while facilities are in use, or if it requires sequencing, you should add questions which will elicit information from the person you are talking to.

Evaluating Responses

You may want to add a question which reflects on the financial stability of the firm being checked on such as “Did you ever hear from any of the sub-consultants about unpaid fees?”

It is important that you develop a list of questions for the reference check which each person doing reference checking will use. You must all ask the same thing, or you will not be able to compare results. It is not necessary to have more than one person call each reference if the list of questions being used is the same for all callers.

J T he QBS Facilitator can assist you in preparing questions for reference check.

Conducting Interviews

GUIDE

INTERVIEWS

Purpose

Interviewing the short-listed firms permits a comparison of the firms' different approaches to the design process and their understandings of the project requirements. Interviews are designed for evaluating the personal styles of each firm's management and key personnel, to see how they match up with the project criteria already identified. Determining compatibility between a firm and the project owner/user is, perhaps, an even more important function of the interview process, since direct interaction is essential to eventually developing a design that truly meets the owner's needs. Short-listed firms must be represented at the interview by those key personnel to be assigned to the project, and key consultants should be similarly represented.

Keeping in mind that even 'simple' projects can have complex design requirements, the project owner should not expect design sketches of the project at this time. As noted earlier, an incomplete understanding of project needs should keep firms from producing any meaningful design solutions, and those that are offered and considered may prevent other, perhaps optimal, solutions from being explored.

Setting Up

Where possible, it is wise to have two rooms available so that one firm may be interviewed while another waits separately. While having audiovisual screens, blackboards, easels and other presentation aids available may be useful, most firms will bring all equipment necessary to make their presentations. Having two rooms allows firms to set up and to check equipment in advance, so as to minimize delays in the interview process.

All of the interviews should be scheduled for the same day, at 60-75 minute intervals. Approximately 45-60 minutes should be allowed for each firm's presentation and question-and-answer period, and an additional 15 minutes should be planned for committee members to discuss each presentation among themselves before beginning the next interview.

During the Interview

Questions specific to the project are especially useful in determining how conversant each firm is with the project's requirements. Exploring a firm's approach to the design process is also helpful, but asking for design solutions during the interview is counter-productive. Understanding how a firm will determine appropriate compensation for its services can give insights into how the firm would manage the project. However, questions about specific amounts of compensation are best resolved through detailed discussions with the selected firm after a comprehensive and mutual understanding of the actual scope of services has been achieved.

Conducting Interviews

CHECKLIST

ITEMS INCLUDED IN A TYPICAL INTERVIEW PROCESS:

q Distribute interview criteria to all short-listed firms in advance

q Prepare evaluation sheets

q Schedule all interviews for the same day, approximately 60-75 minutes apart

q Arrange for two rooms, if possible

q Make sure that each interviewer has the opportunity to interview each firm

q Ask project-specific questions, particularly how firms will approach the project's design

q Ask how firms will manage the project

q Ask how firms will develop their professional fees

q Inform each firm as to when a selection decision will be made

[See sample interview questions in the Appendix, page A.16]

J The Council's facilitator can assist in developing both the interview criteria and in preparing the evaluation sheets.

Conducting Interviews

SUPPLEMENT

CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

Preparation for interviews is as important as the interview itself. The Selection Committee must review general project requirements and develop a list of questions which they want the interviewees to address. The RFQ and the accompanying information packet enabled the proposers to submit Statements of Qualifications which should have answered all of your questions regarding their <u>technical ability</u> to do the project. During the interview, you want to become acquainted with the people of the firm who you will be working with and the methodology which they will pursue. To make the interview more effective, it is desirable to send a letter to each of the short list of firms which will be interviewed, telling them what you specifically want to learn.

The Connecticut QBS Council recommends a couple of basic ground rules:

1. Advise the firm being interviewed that it is not necessary for them to review their general qualifications. (You have already reviewed them.)

2. Advise the firm being interviewed that you expect the person or people who will be involved on your project to be present at and to participate in the interview. Some of the best design people are not comfortable making presentations, and we do not recommend that you force that issue. However, anyone expected to be involved in the project should be able to deal with a question and answer format after the formal presentation.

If the committee has strong feelings with regard to slides and video tapes, the interviewees should be made aware of it. Some committees advise firms being interviewed that they should limit any video tape presentation to ten minutes, or whatever the committee finds appropriate.

It is not always necessary or desirable to use a firm that has done a great many projects the same as the one you are contemplating. Sometimes such firms “get into a groove” and you may be better served by a firm that has some new approaches. To have this addressed in the interview, tell the firm that you want to hear about one or two projects where the challenges were similar to your project. You want to know what methodology they pursued to solve the problems on those projects.

A statement of fact: All projects have some kinds of problems, no matter how well designed or executed. You may make that statement to the interviewees and ask them to tell you how they have solved problems on projects they designed. This is particularly useful if there is a team of consultants working together on a rehabilitation/renovation project.

When there is a committee representing the owner, it is advisable to ask the firms being interviewed what their procedure is to interface with the committee. How and when do they feel it is necessary to review design development. What is their policy on ideas and suggestions of the committee? (Note that the committee is not the professional designer, and you should hear something from the firm being interviewed that makes it clear that they are going to <u>listen</u> to all suggestions but will exercise professional judgment before adopting them.)

Conducting Interviews

Particularly in rehabilitation/renovation projects, ask the firm being interviewed how they handle "contract administration". Contract administration is that phase of professional design work which relates to inspections at the job site. Most architect/engineering agreements require the architect/engineer to review the work sufficiently to know that it is being done generally in accordance with plans and specifications. They do not have a responsibility for day-by-day inspection, nor do they replace or become involved with the superintending activity unless there is some specific agreement requiring it. The requirement for design professional overview on a rehab/renovation project is generally much greater than is required for new work.

You should plan to ask questions after the presentation. List some areas you are interested in and—if they have not been addressed completely in the presentation—ask about them.

Sometimes it is a good idea to ask about problems the firm has been involved with and what their solutions were.

- What do you think your most difficult (school; housing; renovations; etc.) project was, and how did you handle it?
- Have you ever been involved in a project where it was necessary to call a contractor's bond? How did you help the owner? Can you help us avoid such a situation?
- Can you help us get a good contractor? How?
- What is your philosophy on change orders? How do you control change orders? Do you feel that every job will sooner or later have change orders? Why?

Bear in mind that the interviewee will probably welcome something reasonably challenging. It will give him/her a chance to show proficiency in unexpected situations.

Most important, don't lose sight of time schedule during the Q and A period.

The evaluation of Statements of Qualifications was an objective evaluation of interested firms. The interview process is a subjective evaluation. It is important that you have an opportunity to become acquainted with the people you will be working with, and you should then include in your evaluation of the interview, a measure of your comfort level with the personalities you will be involved with. By extension and where appropriate, consider how these personalities will interact with any permitting agency or neighborhood association involved.

J The QBS Facilitator is available to assist you in preparing for the interview.

Selecting the Firm

GUIDE

Evaluating the Firms

Following each firm's interview, that firm should be evaluated by each interviewer according to pre-determined criteria. At that point, score sheets should be filled in and given to the committee chairman. [see Checklist 6 for a list of typical criteria] Maintaining objective control over relevant criteria is crucial to keeping the evaluation process consistent and keeping project goals in focus. Filtering out influences such as political concerns, unsolicited design sketches and other external pressures will prevent the selection process from becoming degraded.

Ranking the Firms

After each firm has been evaluated by each interviewer, the head of the interview committee should compile the individual score sheets, or evaluation forms, that include a weight and a score for each criterion or question. The weight given each selection criterion will necessarily vary from project to project.

J The Council's facilitator can assist with this procedure.

The committee should take the time to rank the most qualified firms, review the rankings, attempt to reconcile ranking differences and reach consensus. A ranking of the first, second and third most qualified firms will provide the project owner with clear alternatives if a negotiated agreement cannot be reached with the firm of first choice. [A sample evaluation/ranking system is included in the Appendix, pages A.19 and A.20]

Post-Interview Memo

Once the firms have been ranked, it is common courtesy to prepare and mail a memo to all firms participating in the interview process. The memo should list all interviewed firms in alphabetical order and indicate in what order the committee ranked them.

Note

It may be helpful for the interviewers to review the evaluation criteria described in the Checklist on page A.10 to reacquaint themselves with each firm's general qualifications

Selecting the Firm

CHECKLIST

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING & RANKING FIRMS:

- q Overall competence, intelligence and expertise of the firm’s principals and key employees as presented during the interview; extent of involvement in the project anticipated by those individuals and their availability to the project owner
- q Original thinking, analysis and consideration of specific on-site conditions
- q Firm’s approach to planning, organizing and managing the project effort, including communications procedures, problem-solving and cost estimating methods, quality improvement programs, and other relevant techniques
- q Firm’s process for ongoing communication with the committee
- q Firm’s process for coordinating all involved disciplines
- q Quality of any previous work done by the firm for the project owner

Developing a Scope of Services

GUIDE

DEVELOPING A SCOPE OF SERVICES

Comprehensive Proposal

As soon as possible after selection, the owner and top-ranked firm should jointly develop a detailed scope of services, and the owner should request a comprehensive technical proposal from that firm. The proposal should include a detailed project scope, work schedules, specific roles and areas of responsibility to be assumed by the firm's personnel and consultants, contractual considerations and, where appropriate, development concepts and cost comparisons.

Mutual Understanding

The firm's presentation of its technical proposal should be seen as a starting point for reaching a complete and mutual understanding of the scope of services. As required, further meetings should be planned to evaluate and modify the original proposal. In its final version, it will form the basis for the contractual agreement between the project owner and the selected firm, and it will serve to minimize the possibility of misunderstanding as the project progresses.

Project Type and Scope of Services

An owner's need for design professional services generally falls into two broad categories:

- consultations, investigations and reports;
- services for construction projects, ranging from pre-design to post-construction phases

Publications listed in the Reference section give detailed outlines of typical professional services provided by architects and engineers.

Developing a Scope of Services

CHECKLISTS

PROJECT ELEMENTS TO BE ESTABLISHED:

- Project schedule
- Project phases
- Number and schedule of design submittals
- Time allowed for owner review of submittals
- Areas of responsibility, including those of consultants, i.e. determining the project's "firm of record", assigning responsibility for coordination of all design disciplines
- List of actual consultant firms to be involved in the project

STEPS IN DEVELOPING A SCOPE OF SERVICES:

- Project owner and top-ranked firm jointly discuss the project needs and scope of services
- Top-ranked firm submits a comprehensive scope of services [*including items listed in Checklist above*]
- The scope of services is evaluated and modified, as necessary, by mutual agreement

Developing a Scope of Services

SUPPLEMENT

Developing a Scope of Services

The Selection Committee (SC) should set forth, to the best of its ability, the objective of the project, and should supply all of the details available to it. In the beginning of the QBS Process, time was spent developing a full description of the project. This is one of the places where that is used.

After the opening explanation by the SC, the design team members should share their professional knowledge with the committee so that there is mutual comfort with the detailed Scope of Work which is developed. Not all decisions must be made at this time. The objective is to give the design team members all available information or ideas necessary to make a comprehensive proposal which will address fee.

Most projects break down into phases. There may be a pre-design phase, there may be a design approval stage, there may be a land use permitting stage—there may be any number of significant phases to the project. Each phase will include several tasks.. As a result of the discussion with the SC, the design team should be able to develop a list of phases complete with the tasks to be included in each phase. You must recognize that some of the tasks in later phases may not be identifiable until earlier phases have been accomplished. (It may be necessary to test for contaminants or, on a new site, for soil bearing qualities. The results of those tests will have an impact on design work which is to follow.) At the conclusion of this discussion, the design team is given an opportunity to develop a comprehensive proposal

VERY IMPORTANT Costs of testing can be significant, particularly in the area of contaminants. Be sure that there is full understanding between the SC and the design team regarding what testing must be done, responsibility for having it done and responsibility for payment of the costs.

J The QBS Facilitator can help you review the scope of work you develop to try to make it complete. (The QBS Facilitator will not attend negotiation sessions involving discussion of fees.)

Negotiating an Agreement

GUIDE

Contract Terms

Following selection of the top-ranked firm, contractual terms should be identified before a fee is finalized. A legal document that defines the services and various terms associated with delivering those services should be in written form and should address the following topics:

- Identification of the parties to the agreement and a description of the project
- Identification of the detailed scope of services, outlining basic services to be provided and additional services not included in the basic services that may be required and that may require advance authorization
- A listing of owner responsibilities and items the owner is obliged to provide
- A schedule and/or deviation for completing the agreed to services
- Definition of method and timing of payments
- Identification of what probable construction costs and opinion of what total project costs mean
- Miscellaneous general conditions, items related to termination, reuse of documents, insurance, controlling law, successors and assigns, dispute resolution, allocation of risk, notices, survival, and severability

Standard forms of agreement are available from the American Institute of Architects, the Engineers Joint Contract Documents Committee, and other professional societies. Regardless of the form, both parties would be well advised to submit the contract documents for legal review prior to signature.

Negotiating Fees

Once the project owner and the selected firm have the same expectations and understanding of the project requirements, it is normally not difficult to reach an agreement on fee. However, selection of a firm by qualifications provides no guarantee that its compensation requirements will be acceptable to the project owner. Having already established a 1, 2, 3 ranking of firms (see Chapter 6) ensures that, if an agreement cannot be reached with the top-ranked firm, two alternative qualified firms have been identified.

To initiate fee negotiations, the top-ranked firm should submit to the owner its proposal for compensation. Negotiations should consider adjustments to the scope of services in relation to the proposed fee. If an agreement on fee and scope of services cannot be reached with the top-ranked firm, the project owner should formally terminate negotiations with that firm and invite the number 2 ranked firm to develop a scope of services with the owner, submit a comprehensive proposal and repeat the negotiation process. If an agreement cannot be reached with the number 2 firm, that negotiation should be formally ended and the process repeated with firm number 3. In the event all three negotiation attempts are unsuccessful, the project should be re-examined in terms of expectations and available funds.

Negotiating an Agreement

Compensation Structures

Like any business, a professional firm must account for all its costs, including direct labor and expenses, and portions of general overhead, return on capital investment, risk management and other non-reimbursed costs attributable to the project, plus a fair profit. The firm may be compensated for these costs by a number of standard methods:

Lump Sum arrangements may be best suited when the scope of services is well defined. A schedule of payments for various phases of the project's development should be incorporated into the lump sum agreement.

Cost Plus or ***Time and Materials*** methods are cost-based arrangements that may be desirable when the scope of particular services is less well defined. Compensation may be structured as direct and overhead expenses plus a fixed fee, as salaries times a multiplier plus expenses, or as standard billing rates plus expenses. Cost-based methods should have a maximum agreed-upon-limit for each phase of the project, which may contain a contingency for unexpected costs.

Other methods of compensation that may be considered include ***Percentage of Construction Cost, Retainers, and Per Diem*** systems of reimbursement. Before arranging for compensation through these alternative methods, the project owner should consult with the Council's facilitator, who can advise the owner regarding their potential disadvantages.

Once the contractual form is agreed upon, there is comfort for the owner, the design professional and the public that a competent firm has been engaged, the services and timing are well defined, and the compensation is equitable for the assignment—the project is ready to be initiated.

Negotiating an Agreement

SUPPLEMENT

Negotiating an Agreement

There may be specific arrangements required by the entity having control over the project. Regardless, the negotiating process always starts the same way. The top ranked firm is called in to meet with the Selection Committee, and there is a discussion to develop the detailed Scope of Work as described in Chapter 7.

When possible, it is better to let the architect/engineer present his/her proposal, rather than to just have it handed in. During the review of the proposal, it may be discovered that some elements of work have not been included, or there may be more work included than was intended. There is no reason why the proposal cannot be adjusted during the time of presentation by adding or subtracting elements to the scope.

Usually, when the QBS Process is used, negotiation is conducted only with the top ranked firm until or unless it is not possible to reach agreement (in which case, the same process is followed with the next ranked firm.) However if the Town Charter or funding agency requires consideration of more than one firm, it may be necessary to go through the scope of development process individually with each of the two or three top-ranked firms. It is necessary to give each of those firms an opportunity to present their proposal. Proposals may still be adjusted to satisfy scope changes, but “bargaining” should be avoided. The legal procedure may require you to deal with the two or three ranked firms but it is very unusual to require use of the one with the lowest fee. You should select the one that you feel will produce the best result for the project.

One of the advantages of the comprehensive proposal is your ability to adjust it with the design professional as the project advances. For instance, because of testing requirements in Phase I, the design professional may only be able to give you a range of fees for Phase II. After the testing is done, the design professional can tell you where in that range he/she will now be for Phase II. In this fashion, you need only purchase those services which you require, or you may be able to add those services which become necessary as a result of added information. The total fee frequently can be limited by using a form of agreement that requires reduction in like amount of some phases of work to compensate for other phases which are increased.

When you have arrived at a mutually satisfactory, detailed scope of work, and a comprehensive fee proposal to match it, it is time to enter into a formal contract with the design professional. There are many forms of contract which may be used for the various types of design work. Frequently the funding agency requires a specific form of contract. There are also forms of contract developed by the AIA. The Connecticut QBS Council does not make any suggestion or recommendation as to what kind of contract you should use. We do advise you to seek legal counsel. Prior to the execution of any contract, be certain to obtain Board of Finance or funding agency approval, if required, and have your legal counsel review it.

J The QBS Facilitator can assist you in interpreting any of these procedures however, the Facilitator will not attend negotiating sessions nor comment on the suitability of fees proposed.

List of References

Consulting Engineering - a Guide for the Engagement of Engineering Services, American Society of Civil Engineers, 345 E. 47th St., New York, NY 10017, Manuals and Reports on Engineering Practice, No. 45, 1981

A Guide for the Development and Administration of Engineering Contracts for Highway Projects in the United States, American Road and Transportation Builders Association, 525 School St., S.W., Washington, DC 20024, Technical Bulletin No. 261, Revised 1983

A Guide for Negotiation of Engineering Agreements for Highway Projects and Guide Specifications for Consultant Services, American Road and Transportation Builders Association, 525 School St., S.W., Washington, DC 20024, Technical Bulletin No. 253, Revised 1984

The Architect-Engineer Primer of Federal Government Contracting, Federal Publications, Inc. and the Committee on Federal Procurement of Architectural /Engineering Services, One Lafayette Centre, Washington, DC 20036, 1983

Professional Selection of Professional Engineers, National Society of Professional Engineers, 2029 K St., N.W., Washington, DC 20006, 1983

Guidelines For Retaining Consultants To Provide Architectural And Engineering Services, Institute of Municipal Engineers, American Public Works Association, 1313 E. 60th St., Chicago, IL 60637, 1973

The Model Procurement Code for State and Local Governments (1979) and *Model Procurement Ordinance for Local Governments*, (August, 1982) American Bar Association, Professional Services Group, 750 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611. Order Billing No. 7-000036

Qualifications-Based Selection - A Process for the Selection of Architects by Public Owners, The American Institute of Architects (AIA), 1735 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20006, January 1992

Professional Engineering Services - A Guide to the Selection and Negotiation Process, a joint publication of the Consulting Engineers Council of Texas and Texas Society of Professional Engineers, 1993

A Guide to the Procurement of Engineering & Architectural Services, American Consulting Engineers Council

Consulting Engineering - A Guide for the Engagement of Engineering Services, prepared by the Subcommittee on Revision of Manual No. 45 of the Committee on Standards of Practice of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), 345 East 47th St., New York, NY 10017-2398, revised edition

Selection and Use of Engineering and Architectural Consultants - Guidelines for Public Agencies, Institute for Municipal Engineering, a division of the American Public Works Association

List of References

You And Your Architect, The American Institute of Architects (AIA), 1735 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20006

Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services, prepared by the Engineers Joint Contract Documents Committee (EJCDC). This document may be obtained from the American Consulting Engineers Council, 1015 Fifteenth St., N.W., Washington, DC 20005, telephone 202/237-7474, fax 202/898-0068, latest edition

Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect (for Professional Services), The American Institute of Architects (AIA), 1735 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20006, telephone 202/626-7300, latest edition

QBS Forms

THE QBS PROCEDURE

#1. List Work (charge to department)

Assign tasks; Prioritize; Schedule

#2. Develop Information

General description; back-up packet

#3. Public Notice...RFQ

Legal Notice

#4. Evaluate S.O.Q.'s; Check references

Standard forms, recorded

#5. Interview Stage

Develop questions; Standard form, recorded

#6. Negotiate

Develop scope first, then fee.

QBS Forms

Schedule of Activities

The following schedule has been established by (owner) for (project):

Date:

___________ (1) Identification of needs is finalized by the owner. A scope of work in general terms is developed.

___________ (2) Interested and potential firms are identified by owner to receive requests for Letter and Statements of Qualification.

___________ (3) Requests for Letters and Statements of Qualification mailed to interested and invited firms.

___________ (4) Letters and Statements of Qualification due. (Allow a minimum of 10 days for firms to submit their materials.)
Note: Before the next action date, references should be reviewed.

___________ (5) Develop a short list of 3 to 5 firms for subsequent interviews. Selection should be based on qualifications, references and compatibility with owner's project.

___________ (6) Letter mailed to short-listed firms advising them of the date for interviews and pre-interview tour of site/facility, along with criteria to be reviewed during the interview.

___________ (7) Letter mailed to all firms not on short list informing them of firms to be interviewed and expressing appreciation for their interest.

___________ (8) Tour of site/facility at (time) and (location). Tours should be scheduled at least 10 days prior to the date of interviews to allow for preparation.

___________ (9) Scheduled interviews conducted. best qualified firm selected.

__________ (10) Contract with selected firm negotiated and implemented.

__________ (11) Letter mailed to all firms interviewed informing them of the (Date) results of the interviews and expressing appreciation for their involvement.

__________ (12) Post-selection requirements completed (public hearings, etc.)

QBS Forms

Preliminary Scope of Work

(A scope of work should include the following information in general terms and be limited to one page.)

1. Owner

2. Project name

3. Project Location

4. Contact person

5. Identification and involvement of groups (for example; boards, committees, citizens groups, etc.)

6. Description of studies, surveys and preliminary feasibility work done that is relevant to the project and available to the firms that will be interviewed.

7. Requirements for further feasibility planning prior to development of plans, design work or field survey.

8. Project outline and anticipated general requirements (for example: demolition, renovation, new construction, land use, environmental, waste management, etc.).

9. Anticipated process/involvement of groups.

10. Approval process/involvement of groups.

11. Other requirements: referendums, public hearings, etc.

QBS Forms

Requests for Letters of Qualification

TO: (List all firms in alphabetical order)

FROM: (owner), (contact), (title)

SUBJECT: Request for Statements of Qualification

Your firm is invited to submit your Statement of Qualification to become eligible for a possible interview for (engineering, architectural, land surveying) services relative to (study, survey, design, construction) requirements for (owner).

Project Description:

Preliminary requirements are based on studies performed by the (name of organization or committee).

Attached to this letter are the following:

(1) A list of materials and information that should be included with your Statement of Qualification.

(2) A general definition of the preliminary scope of the work.

(3) A schedule of dates and requirements for the selection process.

For firms that are selected for an interview, a tour of the site and/or facility will be arranged.

Your letter and Statement of Qualification should be forwarded to the following address--to be received no later than (time), (day), (date).

TO: (name)
(title)
(organization)
(address)

QBS Forms

Requirements for Letter of Qualification

(owner)
(project)

Your letter of Qualification should include the following information:

(1) Name, address and brief description of firm.

(2) Resumes of key personnel to be assigned to this project.

(3) Statement as to firm's particular abilities and qualifications related to this project. *(For example, many agencies require Standard Form 330 which is used by the Federal Government and many other government organizations.)*

(4) Description of other projects by this firm, or key personnel, pertinent to this project. Include reference contact information.

(5) Additional information, not included above, which you feel may be useful and applicable to this project. You may want to limit the amount of information firms can provide in this section.

Some agencies require the information to be submitted in binders with the information divided into sections according to a table of contents provided by the agency. A sample table of contents is included on page A.6.

QBS Forms

Required Format for Responses

Firms are required to utilize the following format. Any additional information should be contained in a clearly marked appendix.

1. Qualifications of firm (Include SF 330)

2. Listing of key people and the amount of time they will devote to the project.

3. Suggested time schedule for each phase of the project.

4. Listing and qualifications of subcontractors.

5. Project approach. (Enough detail should be provided to show evidence that the firm understands the needs of the community and the project.)

6. Insurance. The firm shall show evidence of general liability, auto, workers compensation, and at least $1 million in professional liability coverage.

7. Description of other projects by this firm, or key project personnel, pertinent to this project. Include reference contact information.

8. Addition information, not included above, which you feel may be useful and applicable to this project. You may want to limit the amount of information firms can provide in this section.

QBS Forms

EXAMPLE OF LEGAL NOTICE

Request for Qualifications

The (Owner/Agency) of, (Municipality), Connecticut invites Statements of Qualifications for Professional Design [use Engineer, Architect, Land Surveyor, etc. if appropriate] services from qualified firms, licensed in Connecticut, for the design and construction contract administration for the following project:

> [Limit description in legal notice to 30 words or less. If further description is required, use a packet of further information - as described on attached sheets.]

Professional liability insurance will be required for (limit).

Evaluation of responding firms will be based on the following criteria:

1. Description of firm, consultant firms and experience of working together as a team.

2. Professional background and previous experience of each person of your firm and of each of your consultants to be assigned to this project.

3. Your proposed project management plan and the role of each person to be involved.

4. Recent experience on similar projects and how that might relate to this project. Provide names and telephone numbers of persons representing the owner [optional - "and general contractor"] for each.

5. Unique or other relevant experience.

6. Capability of the firm to develop and maintain schedules and budgets.

7. Location where design work on this project is to be accomplished. [Depending on size and nature of project] Standard Form 330 must be submitted as part of your statement of qualifications. [Depending on size and nature of project] Interested firms may pick up a packet of further information by contracting (Name and address of appropriate agent: Town Clerk, Purchasing Agent's office, etc.).

Please furnish (number) copies of your submittal to (Person/Department/ Address) by (time) o'clock, (date). A maximum of three (3) firms will be selected for personal interview. You will be notified by (date) of these results of the initial screening process.

This is an example of a "Legal Notice" which has been used successfully by many municipalities. The Connecticut QBS Council recommends that the "Legal Notice" be reviewed by your legal counsel and checked for conformance with your charter or any controlling policies.

QBS Forms

ITEMS INCLUDED IN A TYPICAL EVALUATION PROCESS:

- ❑ Establish a policy regarding selection criteria and evaluation forms tailored to the project.

- ❑ Consider the following basic evaluation criteria:

- Firm's general experience and 'track record' on similar projects, including type and effect of change orders, contract award price versus design firm's estimates, final construction cost versus contract award price, quality of services during and after design and construction.

- Qualifications, competence and past performance of <u>individuals</u> to be assigned key project responsibilities.

- Facilities and equipment to be made available to the project by the firm.

- Present workload of the firm, current and future commitments of personnel to be assigned to the project.

- Proximity of the firm's offices to the project site.

- Firm's reputation and integrity within its profession and the community.

QBS Forms

Evaluation of Statements of Qualification

It is suggested that the weights and values assigned be on the same scale as those used for interviewing short-listed firms, which you will do later.

Highest number = most value / Rating Column: 1-5 points / Weight Column: 1-10 points, depending upon the importance to the project.

Owner:	Project:	
Project Description:		
Firm:		
Address:		
City	State:	Zip:
Phone:	Contact	

Criteria:	Rating x	Weight =	Total
1. Firm's history and resource capability to perform required services.			
2. Evaluation of assigned personnel.			
3. Related experience (as appropriate): design services, studies, construction coordination, demolition, land surveys, etc.			
4. Qualifications of other members of the design team (subconsultants).			
5. Budget, cost controls experience and results.			
6. Familiarity with local area geography, construction practices and economy.			
7. Firm's perception of project requirements.			
8. Reference check (transfer evaluation from reference check form).			
9. Quality assurance/quality control.			
		Grand total:	
Reviewer:			

Evaluation of Statements of Qualifications (continued)

This form is provided for the person in charge of the review group to summarize the results of the process and narrow the number of firms which submitted qualifications down to the firms short-listed to be interviewed.

Firm->	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Reviewer 1										
Reviewer 2										
Reviewer 3										
Reviewer 4										
Reviewer 5										
Grand Totals										
Divided by max possible score										

Divide each firm's grand total by the maximum possible score. For example, each firm is rated 1 to 5 with weights of 10 for 8 criteria (5 x 10 x 8 = 400 points per reviewer). Maximum possible score = 400. List the top ranked firms on the short list to be interviewed.

QBS Forms

Reference Check

Owner:	Project:	
Project Description:		
Firm:		
Address:		
City	State:	Zip:
Phone:	Contact	
Project Referenced:		

1. What was your project?

2. When was it completed?

3. What did the firm do for you? (design, construction coordination, studies, survey, etc.)

4. Who was the staff person assigned to work with you on the project?

5. Were you satisfied with the staff person's work?

6. Did firm personnel work well with the committee/board and staff on all requirements of the project?

7. Was the project started and completed on time?

8. Did the firm achieve the project's goals?

9. Did the firm demonstrate good problem-solving skills?

10. Was the budget, cost control and financial administration within the planned controls and limitations?

11. Did you and the design team work well together?

12. Would you hire the firm for another similar project?

13. What is your overall evaluation of the firm based on your experience?

14. Other questions:

QBS Forms

Letter to Firms Not Selected for Interview

TO: (List firms not selected for interview in alphabetical order)

FROM: (Owner)
(Contact)
(Address)

SUBJECT: Status of Selection Process
(Project)

The (name of committee or organization) would like to express its appreciation to you and your firm for submitting your Letter of Qualification.

After careful consideration of all firms who submitted their qualifications, the (name of committee or organization) has selected (number) firms to interview.

For your information, the firms selected for further consideration are:

(list firms in order)

While your firm was not selected for an interview, we appreciate your interest in our project and the resources spent on the preparation of your proposal.

QBS Forms

Letter to Firms Selected for Interview

TO: (List firms in alphabetical order)

FROM: (Owner)
(Contact)
(Address)

Subject: Interview Schedule and Requirements
(Project)

The firms listed above have been selected for interviews relative to the (study, design, etc.) work necessary to implement this project.

Attached to this letter are the following:

1. An interview score sheet which will be used by the (interviewing group or individual) during the interview session.
2. An evaluation form for use of the person in charge to compile the evaluation scores.
3. A copy of (name of studies or reports) compiled by (name of group).

Each firm will be allowed 45 minutes to present their qualifications and to answer questions. The interviewers will schedule 15 minutes between interviews for informal discussion of information presented during the preceding interview. At the completion of the interviews, the individuals will rank the firms interviewed in accordance with their determination of which firm is most competent and compatible to do the work. The firm deemed most qualified will then enter into discussions with the owner to determine a detailed scope of services. Then, the contract terms and fee will be negotiated for the design services. if agreement on contract terms and fee cannot be reached, the negotiations with that firm will be formally terminated and the firm ranked second will be invited in for contract negotiations.

Interviews will be held at (address and room location). Interviews will be held on (day and date). The order and time of interviews is:

(Firm A) (time)
(Firm B) (time)
(Firm C) (time)

A tour of the site/facility will be arranged for (day and date). Please have your firm's representative make arrangements with (owner's representative and phone number) for a time on this date.

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CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING AND RANKING FIRMS:

1 Overall competence, intelligence and expertise of the firm's principals and key employees as presented during the interview; extent of involvement in the project anticipated by those individuals and their availability to the project owner.

1 Original thinking, analysis and consideration of specific on-site conditions.

1 Firm's approach to planning, organizing and managing the project effort, including communications procedures, problem-solving and cost estimating methods, quality improvement programs, and other relevant techniques.

1 Firm's process for ongoing communications with the committee.

1 Firm's process for coordinating all involved disciplines.

1 Quality of any previous work done by firm for the project owner.

QBS Forms

Interview Questions and Score Sheet

Category	Rating	Weight	Total
1. Project Team Qualifications and relevant individual experience Unique knowledge of key members relevant to project Time commitment of key members to project Principal level involvement in project			
2. Design Management/Organization Team organization Project Management Plan Coordination of various disciplines How will project scope be controlled? Production facilities within geographic area Project schedule maintenance Demonstrated ability to meet budget requirements Cost control methods. Responsible person. Change order history on similar projects Realistic priority of project within firm Production techniques Quality Assurance/Quality Control plan			
3. Design Ability/Potential Firm’s perception of design opportunities in project Design opportunities within constraints of project location Sensitivity to existing building characteristics Approach to maximize energy conservation opportunities Awareness of problems in renovation Comprehension of design requirements (client needs) Maximize quality within value analysis Maximize net-to-gross space utilization Simplicity in design, yet aesthetically pleasing			
4. Demonstrated Design Experience Demonstrated capability on similar project Fire safety, ADA, environmental and safety standards Value analysis and life-cycle cost analysis Historic preservation Past performance on other projects (reference check) Design integrity of past projects			
5. Special Demonstrated sensitivity to community involvement in planning process Knowledge of local labor and material market Familiarity with environmental quality parameters Familiarity with cooperative use of buildings Others			
		Grand Total:	

QBS Forms

Interview Questions and Score Sheet (Continued)

Instructions to Interviewers: During the interview, rate each firm on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest in each of the five categories. Enter the score under Rating. The pre-assigned Weights are established with a maximum of 10 points for each category. At the completion of the interview, multiply the Rating by the predetermined Weight for each category and enter the Total. Add all the Totals to establish your Grand Total. The person in charge will combine all of the interviewers' Grand Totals. Assuming that all ten categories were weighted at 10, a maximum of 50 points could be earned if a firm received the maximum Rating of 5 in each category.

Interview Summary Form

For use by the person in charge of the interviews to compile all scores of firms participating in the interview process.

Enter the Grand Total for each firm as recorded by each interviewer on the Interview Score Sheet. After all entries are entered and totaled, divide the combined total for each firm by the maximum possible score.

Interviewer	Firm A	Firm B	Firm C	Firm D
Interviewer 1				
Interviewer 2				
Interviewer 3				
Interviewer 4				
Interviewer 5				
Grand Totals:				
Divide by max score to get average :				

QBS Forms

Optional Shorter Form for Interviewing Firms

To: (Firms to Be Interviewed)

From: (Owner)

Subject: (Project)

Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded
1. Grasp of Project Requirements		
2. Design Approach/Methodology		
3. Key Personnel and Roles		
4. Pertinent Experience (Firm)		
5. Pertinent Experience (Individuals)		
6. Consultant/In-House Resources		
7. Technical Project Management		
8. Responsiveness to Owner's Concerns		
9. Method of Compensation		
10. Other Relevant Issues:		
	Grand Total:	

Notes:

QBS Forms

Sample Interview Questions and Score Sheet

Owner: Town of Smithville Project: Oak Street School

Category	Rating	Weight	Total
1. Project Team Qualifications and relevant individual experience Unique knowledge of key members relevant to project Time commitment of key members to project Principal level involvement in project	3	8	24
2. Design Management/Organization Team organization Project Management Plan Coordination of various disciplines How will project scope be controlled? Production facilities within geographic area Project schedule maintenance Demonstrated ability to meet budget requirements Cost control methods. Responsible person. Change order history on similar projects Realistic priority of project within firm Production techniques Quality Assurance/Quality Control plan	5	8	40
3. Design Ability/Potential Firm's perception of design opportunities in project Design opportunities within constraints of project location Sensitivity to existing building characteristics Approach to maximize energy conservation opportunities Awareness of problems in renovation Comprehension of design requirements (client needs) Maximize quality within value analysis Maximize net-to-gross space utilization Simplicity in design, yet aesthetically pleasing	4	10	40
4. Demonstrated Design Experience Demonstrated capability on similar project Fire safety, ADA, environmental and safety standards Value analysis and life-cycle cost analysis Historic preservation Past performance on other projects (reference check) Design integrity of past projects	4	7	28
5. Special Demonstrated sensitivity to community involvement in planning process Knowledge of local labor and material market Familiarity with environmental quality parameters Familiarity with cooperative use of buildings Others	3	7	21
		Grand Total:	153

QBS Forms

Sample Interview Summary Form

For use by the person in charge of the interviews to compile all scores of firms participating in the interview process.

Enter the Grand Total for each firm as recorded by each interviewer on the Interview Score Sheet. After all entries are entered and totaled, divide the combined total for each firm by the maximum possible score.

Interviewer	Firm A	Firm B	Firm C	Firm D
Interviewer 1	153	160	168	158
Interviewer 2	163	158	192	178
Interviewer 3	172	185	194	188
Interviewer 4	158	162	172	162
Interviewer 5	155	180	182	175
Grand Totals:	801	845	908	861
Divide by max score to get average :	4.005	4.225	4.540	4.305

$ 10.00