

Qualifications-Based Selection



When procuring engineering and related services, government agencies get the best value when they award contracts based on the qualifications of offerers. In addition to delivering quality projects, government agencies are responsible for safeguarding the public's health and well-being while being accountable to taxpayers. Selection of design professionals using qualifications as the initial criteria accomplishes these goals.

What is QBS...

QBS was codified in the Brooks Act in 1972 to protect the interests of taxpayers. The Brooks Act requires any project that includes any Federal Funding to use a QBS process to select design professionals. Over the life of a project, engineering-related services account for less than 0.5 percent of total costs. Yet these services play a major role in determining the other 99.5 percent on the project's life-cycle costs, as well as the quality of the completed project.

Why Does QBS Make Sense...

Most individuals would not select medical or legal services for a critical matter based solely on cost—these highly skilled services are too important to leave up to the lowest bid. Likewise, engineering is a highly skilled profession, and the services that engineers provide directly affect public safety and welfare.

QBS Works Because...

- 1 Results in Lower Overall Cost.** QBS lowers the overall cost of projects through better designs, better bids, and lower risk of change orders during construction while minimizing long term maintenance and repair costs.
- 2 Safeguards Public Interest.** QBS allows government agencies to protect the public's health and safety by focusing on qualifications to achieve the agency's requirements rather than lowest cost.
- 3 Promotes Communication and Technical Innovation.** Using QBS, owners have the opportunity to fully define the project scope during the selection process. This process results in a project that is fully thought-through, and fosters innovative, creative, cost-saving and timesaving approaches to problems.

HOW DOES QBS WORK?

Selecting a Design Firm

- 1** An owner identifies the general scope of work and develops a selection schedule.
- 2** A request for qualifications is issued.
- 3** Statements of qualifications are evaluated.
- 4** A short-list of qualified firms to be interviewed is determined.
- 5** Interviews are conducted and the firms are ranked.

Negotiating a Contract

- 6** The owner invites the highest-ranked firm to assist in defining a detailed scope of work.
- 7** The design firm develops and submits to the owner a detailed fee proposal based on the agreed-upon scope of work.
- 8** If the proposed fee is not acceptable to the owner, the owner and designer work together to modify the scope of work, schedule, and budget to determine if an agreement on fee can be achieved.
- 9** If an agreement cannot be reached with the top-ranked firm, those negotiations are ended and negotiations begin with the next-most-qualified firm.
- 10** An agreement covering scope and fee is executed.
- 11** Firms involved in the selection process are given post-selection feedback, when requested.