

Chapter V

Preparing Requests for Proposals

116. As noted in earlier chapters, consulting services financed with ADB funds may be either (i) services of teams of consultants from eligible consulting firms, agencies, or organizations;²⁰ or (ii) services of individual consultants recruited from a variety of sources. These services may be recruited either directly by ADB or by the end-user of ADB funds (i.e., the borrower in the case of loan funds or the recipient in the case of grant funds). Normally, consulting services funded by loans are recruited by the borrower, and consulting services funded by TA grants or ADB's administrative budget are recruited directly by ADB.²¹ For loan-funded consultancies, the procurement plan prepared at the time of loan fact-finding or appraisal will indicate the precise method of selection. For TA-funded consultancies, the method of selection is included in the TA Board paper.

117. The bulk of consulting services are recruited as teams from consulting firms. Whether recruitment is done by ADB directly or by the borrower, the procedures for recruiting consulting teams are similar:

- The RFP is prepared and sent to a selected short list of consulting firms.
- Proposals submitted by the firms are evaluated.
- Negotiations are undertaken with the highest ranked firm.

These procedures are the main focus of this chapter on preparing RFPs as well as Chapter VI on evaluating proposals and Chapter VII on negotiating a contract. The procedures for the recruitment of individual and staff consultants funded either by loans, TA grants, or ADB's administrative budget are described in Chapter VIII. Procedures for recruiting other types of consultants are described in Chapter IX.

²⁰ Consulting assignments are classified as national or international. National assignments are open only to consulting firms registered in the project country or individual consultants who are citizens of the project country. International assignments are open to consulting firms and individual consultants from all ADB member countries, including the project country.

²¹ Recently there has been some variation in this pattern. Consulting services for some delegated TA grants are being recruited by the borrower, while some loan-funded consulting services are being recruited by ADB.

118. In the case of a loan-funded consultancy, the recruitment of consulting services is normally undertaken by the EA's project office under the supervision of a consultant selection committee (CSC). The RFP for a loan-funded consultancy is prepared by the EA's project office under the guidance of the responsible ADB division and COSO.

119. In the case of a TA-funded consultancy, recruitment is undertaken by ADB's user division in coordination with COSO. The RFP is prepared by the user division, but when the contract budget for a TA-funded consultancy exceeds \$600,000, the proposal evaluation process is undertaken within ADB by a CSC chaired by COSO. For contract budgets of this amount and below, the user division undertakes the proposal evaluation.

120. The steps to be followed in requesting proposals for consultant teams from qualified firms or other agencies are as follows:

- For a loan-funded consultancy or a delegated TA grant, an assessment of the capacity of the borrower's EA is undertaken, and a procurement plan is prepared during fact-finding or appraisal.²²
- For a loan or delegated TA, a CSC is established by the borrower.
- The consulting services needs are advertised.
- EOIs from consulting firms are received and catalogued.
- A refined long list of candidate consulting firms is prepared.
- Short-listing criteria and evaluation criteria are prepared.
- The short list is selected, and evaluation criteria are approved.
- A consultant recruitment activity monitoring (CRAM) system is set up.
- For ADB-funded TA, clearance of the short list is received from the recipient government.
- RFP documents are prepared.
- Key documents are reviewed, and the RFP is issued.
- The queries of short-listed consultants are addressed.

Each step is discussed separately in this chapter.

²² This step is not normally undertaken for TA grants or individual consultancies for which ADB will be the recruiting agency.

A. Undertaking a Capacity Assessment and Preparing a Procurement Plan²³

121. During project preparation, fact-finding, or appraisal for a loan project, the ADB mission is expected to undertake (in close conjunction with the borrower) an assessment of the borrower's capacity to undertake procurement and consultant recruitment activities.²⁴ Based on this assessment, the borrower (with the assistance of ADB) is required to prepare a procurement plan covering the first 18 months of procurement activity. The procurement plan is expected to be annexed to the minutes of loan negotiations, and it becomes part of the procurement schedule of the loan agreement.

122. The purposes of the assessment are to identify the capacity, procurement, and organizational constraints that might hinder effective project implementation and to determine the overall recruitment risk; to define training needs; and to define the level of oversight required. The purposes of the plan are to address the identified constraints, put in place appropriate review and supervision processes to mitigate the risks, and build up the borrower's capacity to undertake recruitment and procurement activities beyond the project's life cycle.

123. The procurement plan should finalize the recruitment arrangements for consultants and detail the prior review, post review, and supervision arrangements for the recruitment process. This includes determining the degree of supervision and guidance by ADB during project implementation, and the nature and number of submissions that the borrower requires. The plan should include a brief description of the consulting services packages, selection methods, types of technical proposal, budget for each package, definition of prior review and post review, and recruitment schedules. For sector projects, multitranches financing facility programs, and other projects that include subprojects to be finalized during project implementation, the plan should provide indicative consulting packages and threshold values. The procurement plan should be updated at the end of the first 18 months and, thereafter, once a year.

²³ For loan-funded consultancies; not done for TA grant-funded consultancies unless they are delegated.

²⁴ For a full description, refer to COSO's *Guide to Procurement Capacity Assessment*. An assessment may also be required where TA consultant recruitment is delegated to an EA.

B. Establishing the Borrower's Consultant Selection Committee²⁵

124. The borrower's CSC is the body that oversees the consultant selection process for loans and delegated TA. It is responsible for ensuring that proper procedures are followed and that the selection is fair, transparent, and impartial.

125. Given the wide variety of partner governments and agencies and their diverse institutional arrangements, the CSCs set up by them for loan-funded projects will have a variety of arrangements. Three principles should, however, be followed: A CSC should consist of (i) a knowledgeable but impartial chairperson; (ii) an informed official of the user agency, probably the project director; and (iii) a neutral but knowledgeable member with no vested interests.

126. Depending on the country and its institutional structure, in some cases, the chairperson may be from a different ministry (for example, the Ministry of Finance); in others, a senior official in the ministry or agency concerned may fill the position. ADB should be informed of the composition of the borrower's CSC as soon as it is established.

C. Advertising Consulting Services Requirements

127. To ensure that qualified firms have the opportunity to submit proposals for ADB loan and TA grant consultancy assignments, ADB posts an outline of each project and the consultancy package under "proposed projects" in the business opportunities section of its website at www.adb.org/Business/Opportunities/prprjcs.asp. In the case of TA grants, this is posted, at the latest, after the return of the fact-finding mission, but it is often done earlier if sufficient details are known.

128. In addition, for TA grants, the ADB project officer is responsible for posting a CSRN on the ADB website (www.adb.org/Documents/ADBBO/CSRN/default.asp) after the staff review committee (SRC) meeting or if a waiver of the SRC is received. The CSRN describes the consulting assignment in detail and includes the draft TOR. Posting the TA or loan consultancy package description is the responsibility of the project division and must be done at least 30 days before short-listing.

129. Loan-financed project consultancy requirements are usually posted under the "proposed projects" link in the business opportunities section around the time that PPTA preparation is under way. Further details are updated as the project proposal

²⁵ It is no longer normal practice for ADB to establish a CSC during the process of requesting proposals; CSCs within ADB are, currently, normally convened only to evaluate proposals for TA-funded contracts valued at more than \$600,000 or when there are major issues or problems to be resolved concerning either loan-funded or TA grant-funded consultancies. When convened, the ADB CSC consists of (i) a director of COSO or a professional staff delegated to represent COSO as chairperson; (ii) the project officer; and (iii) a third staff member with a background in a technical area similar to that of the project, who acts as a neutral party.

is firmed up, and the material provided is generally in final form upon the return of the loan fact-finding mission. At that time, the consultancy package will normally have been finalized, TOR will have been prepared, an assessment of the borrower's recruitment and implementation capacity will have been undertaken, and a procurement plan will have been agreed upon with the borrower. After approval by the Board of Directors, loans are no longer shown in the "proposed projects" section of the ADB website or through a CSRN. Instead, they are published as part of the general procurement notice for the project as a whole (see www.adb.org/Documents/ADBBO/procurement.asp).

130. In addition to the website postings, and if considered necessary to get a full range of responsive EOIs, ADB or the borrower may advertise in additional media such as newspapers, magazines, or professional journals.²⁶ Furthermore, the ADB project officer or borrower's project office may also contact a range of consulting firms directly to elicit interest in the consultancy.

D. Expressions of Interest

131. In the case of recruitment by the borrower, EOIs are normally sent directly to the project office of the EA by consulting firms and other agencies interested in providing expertise for the consultancy concerned. The address for submission is listed on the ADB website both under the "proposed projects" section and in the general procurement notice. EAs should only accept EOIs submitted in a uniform, standard format. The EOI template for TA may be used as a guide. This is available in the portion of the ADB website at www.adb.org/Consulting/toolkit-template.asp. Any advertisement posted by the EA should indicate where a firm may obtain a copy of the EOI template. If a firm submits an EOI in any other format, it is sent a copy of the standard format and requested to fill it in. The returned and completed form is then considered the official EOI. The deadline for submission for completed EOIs in the proper format may be extended by 2 weeks beyond the original deadline if an EOI in a different format has originally been submitted.

132. For consulting services being recruited directly by ADB, the CSRN page of the ADB website provides a link to allow interested firms the opportunity to submit an electronic EOI directly. This can be viewed on the ADB external website by going to www.adb.org/Documents/ADBBO/CSRN/default.asp and clicking on a particular project. ADB's preference is for electronic EOIs submitted in this way, although firms may send in additional hard-copy material if they wish.

²⁶ This is a requirement under the procurement regulations of some DMC governments.

133. Whether recruitment is by ADB or by the borrower, the recipient should document all EOIs received, give them full consideration, and treat them with impartiality.

E. Associations Between and Among Consulting Firms

134. A group of consulting firms may form an association to express interest together and have their qualifications and experience considered jointly. Associations may take the form of joint ventures or subconsultancies. Under a joint venture, all members are jointly and severally liable for any possible contract entered into with an EA or ADB. Under an association, partners have a looser connection, and only one firm in the group contracts directly with the EA or ADB. An association (whether joint venture or subconsultancy) must nominate one member to represent it during the selection process, but if successful, all members of a joint venture sign the contract and are responsible for the entire assignment, whereas only the lead firm signs the contract under a subconsultancy. In either case, the qualifications of all firms participating in a joint venture or an association are assessed during short-listing. However, for subconsultancies more weight is placed on the lead firm when the assessment is made. To determine the nationality of a joint venture or association for the purpose of short-listing, ADB or the EA uses the nationality of the lead firm of an association. When expressing interest in an assignment, a lead firm, either international or national, cannot be a member of another subconsultancy or joint venture. Once short-listed, a joint venture or subconsultancy may take on additional partners to broaden its range of expertise and experience.

F. Preparing the Refined Long List

135. The first step in the selection process is to prepare a refined long list of consulting firms. Either the EA's project office in the case of borrower recruitment or the ADB project officer in the case of ADB recruitment normally prepares a refined long list. The source of the refined long list is usually EOIs received during the advertising process. These may be supplemented by CMS searches, especially if not enough firms have expressed interest. The refined long list normally consists of 15–20 firms from a broad geographic spread of ADB member countries. Only firms registered in ADB member countries may be considered for the refined long list. Firms should be placed into broad geographic country groupings, of which one is for firms from DMCs, to ensure global coverage.

136. To prepare a refined long list, the qualifications and experience of all firms that have submitted an EOI are reviewed. CMS files can be reviewed to examine the experience of firms that ADB has previously employed. The list of sanctioned firms should be reviewed to ensure that none are included in the list, and evaluations of past performance of any firms that have previously been recruited may also be reviewed. Individual EAs or governments may have their own

list of preferred or disallowed firms. Firms should be assessed on their technical capacity as shown by their experience. An assessment of experience is most important for contracts to be selected through STPs and BTPs since, unlike for FTPs, the proposal formats do not include a category for experience of the firm. In effect, evaluation of the firms' experience is undertaken during the long-listing process.

G. Preparing Short-Listing Criteria and Evaluation Criteria

1. Short-Listing Criteria

137. Short-listing criteria are normally prepared by the project office of the EA for borrower recruitment and by the ADB project officer for direct ADB recruitment. Short-listing criteria should be succinct but should provide a sound basis for selecting firms from a particular country grouping. Typical short-listing criteria include

- experience with activities similar to the consultancy,
- experience in similar geographical areas,
- experience with similar project authorities,
- past experience with ADB projects and or TA (especially important for PPTA),
- nature of the firm (e.g., whether it is a small, specialized firm with limited staff or a large firm with access to a pool of expertise),
- firm history (i.e., has it been in business for an extended period and developed a track record in the field and/or region?), and
- degree of in-house quality control (for example, if the firm adheres to requirements of the International Standards Organization or has an ethics code).

2. Evaluation Criteria

138. At the same time as the short-listing criteria are prepared, proposed evaluation criteria for the selection of the firm and its personnel are also prepared. Technical proposals are evaluated against a range of criteria, depending on the type of proposal being used. As noted in Chapter IV, FTPs are evaluated on

- the qualifications of the proposer,
- the approach and methodology, and
- personnel.

STPs are evaluated based on

- a brief (10-page) approach and methodology, and
- personnel.

BTPs are evaluated on the basis of

- a staffing schedule and graphic work plan, and
- personnel.

Note that weights for the three broad criteria for FTPs are flexible, while those for STPs and BTPs are fixed.

139. These criteria are further broken down into subcriteria, and weights are applied to them as shown in Tables 3, 4, and 5. All weights for any type of proposal add up to 1,000.

Table 3: Sample Standard Evaluation Criteria for a Full Technical Proposal	
Item	Example of weights given (for FTPs, these may vary)
I. Qualifications of Proposer (100–200)	
a. Experience in similar projects	70
b. Experience in similar geographic areas	50
c. Additional relevant subcriteria (optional)	30
II. Approach and Methodology (200–400)	
a. Understanding of objectives	40
b. Quality of methodology	80
c. Innovativeness (or comments on the TOR)	40
d. Work program	70
e. Personnel schedule	30
f. Counterpart facilities	20
g. Proposal presentation	20
III. Personnel (500–700)	
a. Nominated international consultants (each evaluated separately)	
Team leadership (concurrent with another position)	50
Road engineer	80
Transport economist	90
Environment specialist	80
Social/poverty specialist	100
b. Nominated national consultants (each evaluated separately)	
Road engineer	40
Transport economist	40
Environment specialist	35
Social/poverty specialist	35
Total	1,000

Table 4: Sample Standard Evaluation Criteria for a Simplified Technical Proposal	
Item	Weights given (for STPs, these are normally fixed)
I. Approach and Methodology (300)	300
a. Approach and work program	200
b. Personnel schedule	50
c. Presentation	50
II. Personnel (700)	700
a. Nominated international consultants (each evaluated separately)	
b. Nominated national consultants (each evaluated separately)	
Total	1,000

Table 5: Sample Standard Evaluation Criteria for a Biodata Technical Proposal	
Item	Weights given (for BTPs, these are normally fixed)
I. Staffing Schedule and Work Plan	100
II. Personnel	900
a. Nominated international consultants (each evaluated separately)	
b. Nominated national consultants (each evaluated separately)	
Total	1,000

140. Further and separate selection criteria are prepared for personnel. The evaluation criteria for personnel are prepared by dividing the rating of each expert into three parts: (i) general qualifications, (ii) experience related to the project, and (iii) overseas/country experience. These, in turn, are assigned a percentage weight to signify their relative importance for evaluation. The percentage weights applied to these factors would normally be within the percentage ranges in Table 6. Should a position being evaluated be that of team leader, the proposed candidate would be evaluated twice—that is, once for the technical position and once for the team leader position.

Table 6: Normal Percentage Weights for Evaluation Criteria

Factor	Weight (range, in %)	Example
General qualifications	10–20	15
Project-related experience	60–70	70
Overseas/country experience	10–20	15
	Total	100

141. Once the weights for the evaluation are decided upon, they are summarized in a personnel evaluation sheet and a summary evaluation sheet, which will be included in the RFP to be issued to short-listed firms. An example of a personnel evaluation sheet is shown in Figure 4, and a summary evaluation sheet for an FTP is shown in Figure 5.

142. For loans and delegated TA, these proposed evaluation criteria are submitted to the borrower's CSC for approval at the same time as the short list is prepared. For nondelegated TAs, these are submitted by the user division to COSO for approval on a no-objection basis along with the short list (as discussed in the next section).

H. Selecting the Short List and Approving the Evaluation Criteria

143. For loan-funded consultancies, the short list is prepared and the selection criteria are approved by the borrower's CSC, with oversight of the short-listing process by the ADB user division in coordination with COSO. For TA grant-funded consultancies, these steps are undertaken by the user division. The short list, evaluation criteria, a note describing the basis for selection, and a data sheet for the RFP²⁷ are then submitted to the relevant COSO director for approval on a no-objection basis.

144. For the short list, six firms are normally selected from the refined long list based on the short-listing criteria and after a review of the submitted EOIs.

145. The short list must represent, to the extent possible, ADB member countries in a reasonably geographically balanced manner. Normally, only one consulting firm from any member country is included. In special cases, two firms from one country may be included, provided sufficient justification is given and with the approval of the relevant COSO director for ADB-recruited consultancies.

146. Minutes of all steps in the short-listing process should be kept, and these should include a focused discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the submitted EOIs in the context of the application of relevant short-listing criteria. Reasons should be given as to why the firms identified for short-listing are considered the most qualified.

²⁷ See Chapter V, Section J for more information on the data sheet.

Figure 4: Sample Personnel Evaluation Sheet

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK PERSONNEL EVALUATION SHEET										CONFIDENTIAL
Name of Firm:										
POSITION/AREA OF EXPERTISE	NAME	A		B		C		TOTAL SCORE (A+B+C+D)		
		General Qualifications		Project-Related Experience		Overseas/Country Experience				
		15%		70%		15%				
		Rating	Score	Rating	Score	Rating	Score			
a.	Team leadership *		0		0		0	0		
b.	Expert 1 (Team Leader)		0		0		0	0		
International Consultants		15%		70%		15%		(A+B+C)		
c.	Expert 2		0		0		0	0		
d.	Expert 3		0		0		0	0		
e.	Expert 4		0		0		0	0		
f.	Expert 5		0		0		0	0		
g.	Expert 6		0		0		0	0		
h.	Expert 7		0		0		0	0		
I.	Expert 8		0		0		0	0		
j.	Expert 9		0		0		0	0		
k.	Expert 10		0		0		0	0		
National Consultants	NAME	A		B		C		TOTAL SCORE (A+B+C)		
		General Qualifications		Project-Related Experience		Experience w/ Intl. Org.				
		15%		70%		15%				
		Rating	Score	Rating	Score	Rating	Score			
a.	Expert 11		0		0		0	0		
b.	Expert 12		0		0		0	0		
c.	Expert 13		0		0		0	0		
d.	Expert 14		0		0		0	0		
e.	Expert 15		0		0		0	0		
f.	Expert 16		0		0		0	0		
g.	Expert 17		0		0		0	0		
h.	Expert 18		0		0		0	0		
I.	Expert 19		0		0		0	0		
j.	Expert 20		0		0		0	0		
k.	Expert 21		0		0		0	0		
l.	Expert 22		0		0		0	0		
m.	Expert 23		0		0		0	0		

Rating: Excellent - 100% Very Good - 90% Above Average - 80% Average - 70% Below Average - 50% Noncomplying - 0%

Score: Rating x percentage assigned to criterion *The Team Leader must be Expert 1.

Note: Interband ratings are not allowed in application of the above rating scale. For example, only a score of 90% or 80% can be given, not 85%, 87%, etc.

I. Setting up a Consultant Recruitment Activity Monitoring System

147. After short-listing, the CRAM system is activated. This is a system for monitoring the steps in the consultant recruitment²⁸ process. It is based on a matrix called a “CRAM frame,” which shows the steps normally followed in the recruitment process, the normal length of time to complete each step, the planned date of completion of each step, the actual date of completion of each step, and deviations from the planned dates. Staff responsible for monitoring the recruitment process can use the CRAM frame to identify delays and to act promptly to get the recruitment process back on schedule.

148. The CRAM frame is established upon the return of the TA fact-finding mission in the case of TA grants and during formulation of the procurement plan in the case of loans. For TA grants, the project officer and the assigned COSO officer are responsible for keeping the CRAM frame up to date. For loans, this is the responsibility of the borrower agency through a specific appointed officer, who reports the steps in the recruitment process to the ADB project officer.

149. The countdown of the CRAM frame schedule normally begins upon submission of the short list. Thereafter, the schedule is regularly monitored, and deviations from the agreed-upon schedule are brought to the attention of the project officer by COSO. An updated CRAM sheet needs to be attached to several submissions that the borrower makes to ADB during recruitment. These instances are pointed out below. Further details on the use of the CRAM system are provided in PAI 2.02 parts D and E.

J. Government Clearance of the Short List (for ADB-recruited consultancies)

150. In case of recruitment by ADB, at this point and prior to issuing the RFP, the short list must be cleared by the recipient government—usually, the EA but sometimes also the ministries of finance and/or planning. This is to ensure that firms to which the government could justifiably object (based on previous experience) are not included in the short list. Normally, the government is given 10 working days to respond, and a lack of response is treated as concurrence. If the government objects to a particular firm, then it must fully justify its objection. The objection must be considered and credible. If a firm is removed from the short list, a replacement is not provided. Moreover, a suggestion from the government to place new or additional firms on the short list, as occurs from time to time, will not be accepted.

²⁸ The recruitment process monitored by the CRAM system is considered to encompass preparation of the RFP (Chapter V), evaluation (Chapter VI), and negotiation (Chapter VII).

K. Preparing Documents Required for the Request for Proposals

151. Once the short list and the evaluation criteria are prepared, the next step is to prepare the documents required for the RFP. The standard package issued to the short-listed consultants includes

- ❑ **Section 1** – An invitation letter, which also provides the names of all short-listed firms;
- ❑ **Section 2** – Instructions to consultants, including instructions on preparing technical and financial proposals, a data sheet, and the evaluation criteria;
- ❑ **Section 3** – Standard forms for technical proposals;
- ❑ **Section 4** – Standard forms for financial proposals;
- ❑ **Section 5** – For TA grant-funded consultancies, the TA paper, including the TOR; for loan-funded consultancies, the RRP along with a full background description of the project, the consultancy, as well as the TOR;
- ❑ **Section 6** – Standard forms of contract (examples of both time-based and lump-sum contracts should be included); and
- ❑ **Section 7** – List of ADB’s member countries.

Templates for these documents can be found on the ADB website under Documents on Consulting Services at www.adb.org/Consulting/documents.asp. Most of these documents are standard forms or have already been prepared (such as the TA paper or RRP); but in assembling this package, it is important to ensure that the data sheet is properly prepared and that evaluation criteria are the same as agreed upon during the CSC meeting.

152. The data sheet is particularly important. It indicates the (i) selection method, (ii) type of technical proposal requested, (iii) proposed budget for the assignment (see Box 2), (iv) deadline for ADB or the borrower to receive the proposal, (v) number of copies of the proposal required, and (vi) name and address to which proposals are to be sent. For ADB recruitment, ADB normally requires that copies of the proposal be sent to headquarters in Manila, and that copies be sent to the EA and the resident mission. An example of a completed data sheet is given in Appendix 2.

Box 2. Preparing Budgets for QCBS

For the QCBS selection method, the proposed budget will indicate the total amount of the contract, along with a fixed amount for contingencies and fixed sums (known as “provisional” sums) for specific items. The total contract amount may be either a maximum amount or an estimated amount. A decision whether to use a maximum or estimated budget is taken at the time of RFP preparation and depends on the level of contingency available and the degree of certainty about the cost of the consulting assignment. Normally a maximum contract amount is preferred in order to prevent ambiguity during the evaluation process as to which financial proposals are responsive and which are not.

The provisional sums are not subject to variation and are expected to be included in the financial proposal in full. They include such items as funds to recruit NGOs, finance field surveys and equipment, or hold seminars or conferences. Provisional sums are sometimes also used in preparing a budget for

FBS. It is critical that the data sheet be prepared correctly, since the consultants’ financial proposal will depend on the information given. The budget should also deal with taxes on international consultants in an appropriate way. For loan-funded consultancies, this depends on the laws and practices of the country.

Taxes should be either

- excluded from the budget if remuneration of international consultants will be considered tax free;
- excluded from the budget if the consultants will be expected to pay tax without reimbursement; or
- included in the budget if it is the end-user’s policy to impose taxes and duties but then to reimburse them directly to the experts concerned.

For ADB-recruited consultancies, payments are normally tax free to international consultants.

L. Review of Key EA Documents by ADB and Issuance of Request for Proposals

153. For loan-financed consultancies, when required by the procurement plan, key documents are normally sent to ADB for approval before the EA issues the RFP. This is normally the first submission by the EA to ADB for review during the recruitment process. Documents to be reviewed include the following:

- the long list;
- the short-listing criteria and approved short list along with a focused discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the submitted EOIs in the context of the application of the relevant short-listing criteria, and why the six firms identified for short-listing are considered most qualified;
- the evaluation criteria;
- the RFP including TOR, background information, the EA’s budget for the assignment, the selection method, and the type of proposal required;
- the draft contract; and
- the CRAM frame.

The relevant ADB project division reviews these documents and submits them to the relevant COSO division, along with any comments, for approval on a no-objection basis. A formal CSC meeting may be convened to review this documentation within ADB if major issues are to be resolved. Once approvals have been received, RFPs may be sent to the short-listed firms.

M. Responding to Queries of Short-Listed Consultants

154. Consultants may request clarification about any of the RFP documents within a reasonable time²⁹ prior to the proposal submission date. Any request for clarification is to be sent in writing to the address indicated on the data sheet. The EA or ADB will then respond in writing and send written copies of the response—including an explanation of the query but without identifying its source—to all short-listed consultants. At any time before the submission of proposals, the EA or ADB may amend the RFP by issuing an addendum. The addendum is sent to all short-listed consultants and is binding on them. To give consultants reasonable time to consider an amendment to their proposals, the EA or ADB at its discretion, if the amendment is substantial, may extend the deadline for submitting the proposal.

155. In the context of responding to queries of short-listed consultants, some key points of clarification with regard to personnel need to be made:

- ADB does not object to more than one firm proposing the same individual. Some firms require a statement of exclusivity from their proposed team members, but this is not a requirement of ADB for ADB-selected consultancies or for EA-recruited consultancies. In the case of EA-recruited consultancies, some DMC governments may also require exclusivity, but the rules for this vary from country to country.
- For ADB-recruited consultancies, former ADB staff and spouses of ADB staff may be included in a proposal, but their clearance by ADB³⁰ is required prior to contract negotiations if the firm proposing them is the highest-ranked proposer.

²⁹ Normally 15 days unless otherwise specified in the data sheet.

³⁰ Clearance is required from the Budget, Personnel and Management Systems Department if it is the first time a former staff member is being recruited as a consultant.

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1. **Q.** In terms of consulting services, what are the purposes of the procurement capacity assessment?
A. To identify the capacity, procurement, and organizational constraints that might hinder effective project implementation; to determine the overall recruitment risk; to define training needs; and to define the level of oversight required.
2. **Q.** In terms of consulting services, what are the purposes of the procurement plan?
A. To address the constraints identified by the capacity assessment, put in place appropriate review and supervision processes to mitigate the risks, and build up the borrower's capacity to undertake recruitment and procurement activities beyond the project's life cycle.
3. **Q.** What should the procurement plan include?
A. It should finalize the recruitment arrangements for consultants and detail the prior review, post review, and supervision arrangements for the recruitment process. It should indicate, among other items, the budget for each recruitment package, the selection method, the type of proposal, and the time period envisaged for the recruitment process.
4. **Q.** Who should form the core of a borrower's CSC?
A. At the very least, (i) a knowledgeable but impartial chairperson; (ii) an informed official of the user agency, probably the project director; and (iii) a neutral but knowledgeable member with no vested interests.
5. **Q.** Where is the best place to find forthcoming consulting services assignments advertised?
A. On the ADB website under "proposed projects." Further information on TA grant-funded consultancies is provided under CSRNs, also on the website. For approved loan projects, information is given under Procurement Notices.
6. **Q.** Who is responsible for direct oversight of the short-listing and preparing the RFP for loan-funded consultancies and of the short-listing of TA grant-funded consultancies?
A. The project officer of the user division, in coordination with COSO.
7. **Q.** How does ADB receive EOIs for ADB-recruited consulting services?
A. Electronically, through the CSRN page on the website.

8. **Q.** What does a refined long list of consulting firms normally consist of?
- A.** It may consist of 15–20 firms from a broad geographic spread of ADB member countries. At least one DMC is usually included, and other firms may be placed into broad geographic country groupings to ensure global coverage. The source of the refined long list is usually EOIs received during the advertising process. These may be supplemented by searches through ADB’s CMS system or the borrower’s own resources. Sanctioned firms are not placed on the refined long list.
9. **Q.** Who normally prepares the short-listing criteria?
- A.** The project office of the EA for EA recruitment; the ADB project officer for direct ADB recruitment.
10. **Q.** What are some typical short-listing criteria?
- A.**
- experience with activities similar to the consultancy,
 - experience in similar geographical areas,
 - experience with similar project authorities,
 - experience with ADB projects and/or TA (especially important for PPTA),
 - nature of the firm (e.g., whether it is a small, specialized firm with limited staff or a large firm with access to a pool of expertise),
 - firm history (i.e., has it been in business for an extended period and developed a track record in the field and/or region?), and
 - the degree of in-house quality control (for example, if the firm adheres to the requirements of the International Standards Organization or has an ethics code).
11. **Q.** What particular items are evaluated under FTPs, STPs, and BTPs?
- A.** FTPs are evaluated on the
- qualification of the proposer,
 - approach and methodology, and
 - personnel.
- STPs are evaluated based on
- a brief (10-page) approach and methodology, and
 - personnel.
- BTPs are evaluated based on
- a staffing schedule and graphic work plan, and
 - personnel.

12. **Q.** How many evaluation points are allocated in total to each type of proposal?
A. 1,000.
13. **Q.** Which category gets the largest number of points in any type of proposal?
A. Personnel.
14. **Q.** What are the three factors assessed when evaluating personnel?
A. general qualifications,
 project-related experience, and
 overseas/country experience.
15. **Q.** How many firms are normally selected for the short list?
A. Six from a geographic spread of ADB member countries, usually including one from a DMC.
16. **Q.** Who normally selects the short list?
A. For loan-funded consultancies, the formal selection is normally done by the borrower's CSC. For ADB-funded consultancies, selection is done by the project officer of the user division and sent to COSO for approval on a no-objection basis.
17. **Q.** How many firms may be included from each member country?
A. Normally only one, but not more than two.
18. **Q.** Besides the short list itself, what other documents are prepared at the time of short-listing?
A. A summary evaluation sheet, a personnel evaluation sheet, and minutes of short-listing.
19. **Q.** What is the CRAM?
A. A system for monitoring the steps in the consultant recruitment process. It is based on a matrix called a CRAM frame, which shows the steps normally followed in the recruitment process, the normal length of time to complete each step, the planned date of completion of each step, the actual date of completion of each step, and deviations from the planned dates.
20. **Q.** When the user government is reviewing a short list for a TA grant-funded consultancy, is it possible for it to recommend a substitute firm?
A. No. Firms may be dropped from the short list if there is a valid reason, but no substitute firm may be added.

21. **Q.** Where can templates for most documents required for RFPs be found?
- A.** On the ADB website at www.adb.org/Consulting/documents.asp.
22. **Q.** Why is the data sheet one of the most important parts of an RFP?
- A.** The data sheet is particularly important because it indicates the following:
- the selection method,
 - the type of technical proposal requested,
 - the proposed budget for the assignment,
 - the deadline for ADB or the borrower to receive the proposal,
 - the number of copies of the proposal required, and
 - the name and address to which proposals are to be sent.
23. **Q.** If prior review by ADB is required by the procurement plan before issuance of the RFP, what documents are normally reviewed?
- A.** Included are the following:
- the long list;
 - the short-listing criteria and approved short list;
 - the evaluation criteria;
 - the RFP including TOR, background information, the EA's budget for the assignment, the selection method, and the type of proposal required;
 - the draft contract; and
 - the CRAM frame.
24. **Q.** When responding to a query on the RFP from a short-listed firm, to whom should ADB or the EA respond?
- A.** All short-listed firms.
25. **Q.** Can the date for submission be extended if there is a good reason to do so?
- A.** Yes.