

ONE-STEP Selection Process for A/E Services

If the anticipated project cost is \$1,000,000 to \$3,000,000 and A/E services are more than \$75,000, begin the procurement process with the following steps:

1. Establish a selection manager and a selection committee.
2. Develop a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) document.
3. Advertise the RFQ.
4. Evaluate the submitted Statements of Qualifications (SOQs).
5. Select the highest-scoring firm for negotiation for potential contract. (If negotiations are unsuccessful, select the next highest-scoring firm, and so on).

1. Selection Manager and Selection Committee Appointment

The borrower should appoint a qualified procurement, contracting, or other capable staff member to serve as selection manager in facilitating these recommended procedures. The selection manager should appoint appropriate staff members or appropriate stakeholders to serve as a selection committee.

Selection committees should be cross-functional teams, comprised of varied, unbiased, responsible, and professional individuals. The selection committee may include representatives from the borrower's lead staff, facility operations/maintenance, department managers, or other internal stakeholders.

For the ONE-STEP process, voting members of the selection committee should be limited to three individuals, not including the selection manager. The selection manager is responsible for facilitating the processes and will be a non-voting member. It is important to verify that there are no real, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest before finalizing selection committee members.

2. Develop a Request for Qualifications Document

This is a "qualifications-based selection" process. No fee or cost information can be requested in the RFQ. The selection manager, with input from the selection committee, should develop the project-specific selection criteria to be communicated in an RFQ document by asking themselves: "What characteristics define the best A/E firm for this project?" (Criteria) and "What qualifications information should we use to judge firms accordingly?" (Deliverables) Selection committee should consider deliverables to include into the RFQ documents.

Three to four major categories of evaluation criteria should be established to allow ease of understanding by all firms and for efficient evaluation by the selection committee. Stability of the Firm, Relevant Experience/Technical Qualifications of the Firm, Previous Performance (references) of the Firm, and Suitability of the Firm are examples of major categories of criteria typically used in many selections. The selection committee should assign appropriate weights to the major criteria categories, which should be communicated to all firms in the RFQ.

However, the selection committee should establish appropriate, "granular" criteria, e.g., years of experience of the firms' proposed project manager in similar projects. Granular criteria should be grouped as a component of a major category. Appendix 2 provides full examples of granular criteria.

The selection manager must collaborate with the selection committee to establish the schedule of events, required deliverables of prospective respondents, required minimum qualifications required, and anything else necessary to communicate in the RFQ.

The sample RFQ document for ONE-STEP process (in Appendix 3) provides examples of deliverables and a typical schedule of events.

Interested firms should be given appropriate time to respond to the RFQ. The RFQ should communicate the schedule of the decision-making process. The selection manager should adhere to the listed schedule of events.

3. Advertise the Request for Qualifications

Once the RFQ is complete, a public notice announcing the procurement opportunity is prepared by the selection manager. The public notice should be posted according to borrower requirements and for public viewing at the Georgia Department of Administrative Services' (DOAS) Georgia Procurement Registry website—http://ssl.doas.state.ga.us/PRSapp/PR_index.jsp.

The public notice should be posted at least 30 calendar days prior to the due date for Statements of Qualifications in response to the RFQ. In addition, if it is deemed advantageous, the public notice may be published in an appropriate general circulation newspaper or other medium in the vicinity of the project location. Newspaper advertisements should reference the DOAS website as the medium for project details and appropriate documents. For efficiency, more than one project may be advertised in a single newspaper notice. An example of a public notice is included as Appendix 1.

The public notice should provide the following information:

- Title of the solicitation/project opportunity,
- Location of the project,
- Name of the project,
- Type of service being procured for the project,
- Link to the RFQ,
- Due date for all responses to the RFQ, and
- Borrower's contracting officer or point of contact.

After the advertisement in the Georgia Procurement Registry, interested firms should not conduct any communications about the solicitation/project with any person other than the specified single point of contact for the procurement. The RFQ should communicate that failure to adhere to this restriction may result in the disqualification of the firm's submittal.

The RFQ document may be posted electronically on the Georgia Procurement Registry, or directly distributed by other means such as email. Regardless of the document distribution method, the selection manager must keep an accurate list of all inquirers and respondents to the advertisement. The list may include specific contact and address information and should be maintained as a part of the overall project procurement record.

4. Evaluate the submitted Statements of Qualifications

As the deadline for SOQs approaches, the selection manager should remind the selection committee about pertinent information, e.g. critical meeting dates, evaluation locations, etc. It is helpful, at this point, for the selection manager to provide the voting members with a concise Guideline for Evaluation document summarizing member duties/deadlines, and quick reference to the deliverables expected in the submittals and to all of the evaluation criteria. (See example in Appendix 4)

The selection manager should develop scoring forms which correspond to the major criteria categories and weighting, for the selection committee to provide for an accurate scoring summary. The scoring form should be as intuitive for the scorer as possible, with clear indicators of scorer number, project, RFQ number, proposing firms, criteria, weighting/points, and scores. (See example below).

Upon receipt of the submittals, copies of all SOQs received and validated by the selection manager should be immediately provided to the selection committee with scoring forms. Each member of the selection committee should review each firm's submittal carefully, frequently referring to the stated evaluation criteria and required deliverables in the RFQ. *Note: if less than three total submittals are received, the borrower may choose to cancel the procurement and re-advertise, or, with appropriate written justification to the file, may continue the selection with less than the required number of firms.*

If applicable in this RFQ (usually only if "Previous Performance" is a first-step criteria). The form may serve as a scoring tool using information received from submitting firm's references who are successfully contacted. (See example in Appendix 5) The selection manager may contact references or get assistance in contacting the references.

Each member should individually score the submittals in each main criteria category using a scoring table or form with the assigned weighting. An example of scoring for one member is below:

SCORER 1 FORM					
RFQ Number ####, ##### (Project Name)					
	Stability 10 possible pts. (weight)	Experience & Qualifications 35 possible pts. (weight)	Suitability 35 possible pts. (weight)	Past Performance 20 possible pts. (weight)	Total Points (100 possible)
Firm A	8	30	25	15	78
Firm B	7	28	30	12	77
Firm C	8	25	32	15	80
Firm D	9	25	32	18	86
Firm E	7	20	25	10	62

In the above example, "Firm D" is the highest-scoring respondent, with "Firm C" and "Firm A" second and third, respectively. This should be a preliminary score, however. Before members turn in scoring forms, an evaluation meeting or conference call should take place, to give members an opportunity to discuss the merits of the submittals as they relate to the RFQ criteria and deliverables and their scores with other scoring members. Each individual member should present his or her assessment of the submittals and discuss any unique perspectives regarding the criteria that he or she wishes to share. After all members of

the selection committee have participated, an open discussion should be held, and the selection committee should determine if it has received enough information to submit individual scoring. Notations are not mandatory but may be attached to scoring forms. However, any notations made must be clear, concise, relevant, and arguably true.

Upon receiving all final scores from selection committee members, the selection manager will tally the scores onto a numerical scoring summary and immediately report the final scoring of firms to the selection committee. Then, the selection manager will ask for the selection committee's approval of the resulting highest-scoring firm. The scoring summary document will serve as a public record for public requests by those interested in the outcome of a selection or as a tool for discussion with unsuccessful respondents.

5. Select the Highest-Scoring Firm for Negotiation for Possible Contract

Once the highest-scoring firm is notified that they have been selected for discussion, negotiations may be initiated to finalize the terms and conditions of the prospective contract, including the fees to be paid.

If a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached with the highest-scoring firm, the borrower will formally terminate the negotiations in writing and enter into negotiations with the second highest-scoring firm, and so on until a mutual agreement is established and the borrower awards an A/E services contract.

The Form of Contract should be developed by or be acceptable to the borrower. After a contract has been executed, all firms should be notified of the award. The selection manager should promptly post the general awardee information as an update to the original advertisement on the Georgia Procurement Registry.

The selection manager shall keep an organized record of all proceedings, and the borrower may agree to provide general debriefings to unsuccessful firms. The selection manager should require such meetings to be scheduled after a contract is fully executed with the successful firm. If the borrower agrees to a debriefing, the selection manager must focus the discussion during the debriefing to actual selection procedures undertaken. Any discussion during debriefings about the evaluation should be limited to positive, objective points primarily related to the successful firm's submittal. Discussion of negative points or deficiencies of any firm and any subjective information such as perceptions and impressions must be strictly avoided in the debriefings.