

*Economic Community  
Of West African States*



*Communauté Economique  
Des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*

**WEST AFRICAN POWER POOL**  
**SYSTEME D'ECHANGES D'ENERGIE ELECTRIQUE OUEST AFRICAIN**  
*General Secretariat / Secrétariat Général*

# **WEST AFRICAN POWER POOL**

## **PROCUREMENT PROCESS MANUAL**

**for**

**Consulting Services**

**for**

**Côte d'Ivoire – Burkina Faso**  
**Interconnection Feasibility Study**

**Date: May 7, 2021**

## **Foreword**

This Procurement Process Manual is specifically developed for the procurement of consulting services related to the feasibility study of the Côte d'Ivoire – Burkina Faso interconnection program. The procurement will be undertaken by the West African Power Pool (WAPP) as the Grantee, using the Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) method.

The process includes a two-envelope procedure in the consulting service category for which a Request for Proposals (RFP) is the solicitation document being used. The procurement process is being run by electronic means; the RFP distribution, all procurement related meetings, including the pre-proposal conference and technical and financial opening meetings shall be an online event, and the submission of proposals shall be done solely through electronic means.

## Table of Contents

<b>A. Acronyms and Abbreviations.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>B. Bidding Process.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.0 Initiation .....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.0.1 Procurement Plans .....	6
1.0.2 Requisitioning.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.0.3 Preparation and Review of TOR .....	6
1.0.4 Preparation, Finalization and Approval of RFP .....	6
<b>1.2 Issue of RFP .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.3 Pre-Proposal Conference and Clarifications .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.4 Amendments to the RFP .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.5 Submission Deadline for Proposals .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.6 Formal Opening of Technical Proposals .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>C. The Evaluation Process .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2. Governing Principles.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.0.1 Confidentiality .....	9
2.0.2 Integrity.....	9
2.0.3 Professional conduct.....	10
2.0.4 Fairness .....	10
2.0.5 Independence and accountability .....	10
2.0.6 Continuity of work.....	10
<b>3. Technical Evaluation.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.1 Responsibilities .....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1.1 The Technical Evaluation Panel.....	11
3.1.2 Panel Membership .....	11
3.1.3 Panel Coordinator (PC).....	12
3.1.4 Auxiliary Members .....	12
3.1.5 MCC-appointed Observers .....	13
<b>3.2 Conducting the Technical Evaluation Process .....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.2.1 Convening the TEP .....	14
3.2.2 Preliminary examination of Technical Proposals .....	14
3.2.2.1 Proposal Validity .....	14
3.2.2.2 Partial Eligibility Verification .....	15
3.2.2.3 Verification of Consultant’s Financial Capacity .....	15
3.2.2.4 Verification of references.....	15
3.2.3 Technical Evaluation Methodology .....	16
3.2.4 Individual evaluation of Technical Proposals .....	17
3.2.5 Consensus Evaluation.....	17
3.2.6 The Technical Evaluation Report (TER) .....	18
3.2.7 Notification of Technical Evaluation Results .....	18
3.2.7 Debriefs and Bid Challenges.....	18
3.2.7.1 Debriefs .....	18
3.2.7.2 Bid Challenges .....	19

<b>4. Financial Evaluation .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4.1 Formal Opening of Financial Proposals.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4.2 Checking Financial Proposals Submission Compliance.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4.3 Correction of Arithmetic Errors .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4.4 Currency Conversion .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4.5 Scoring of Financial Proposals .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4.6 Price Reasonableness Analysis.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>4.7 Full Eligibility Verification .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>4.8 Combined Evaluation Report (CER) .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>4.9 Notification of Combined Evaluation Results.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b><i>D. The Award and Contracting Process .....</i></b>	<b>23</b>
<b>5.0 Award, Negotiations and Contract Signature.....</b>	<b>23</b>

## A. Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Description</b>
CER	Combined Evaluation Report
COTR	Contracting Officer's Technical Representative
CPPR/S	Contractor Past Performance Report/Reporting System
FRL	File Request Link
GPO	Grantee Procurement Office
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
NOCER	Notification of Combined Evaluation Results
NOD	No Objection Decision/Document
NOITA	Notification of Intent to Award
NOTER	Notification of Technical Evaluation Results
PC	Panel Coordinator
PP	Procurement Plan
QCBS	Quality and Cost-Based Selection
RFP	Request For Proposals
SPN	Specific Procurement Notice
TEP	Technical Evaluation Panel
TER	Technical Evaluation Report
TOR	Terms of Reference
WAPP	West African Power Pool

## B. Bidding Process

### 1.0 Initiation

#### 1.0.1 Procurement Plans

The Grantee shall prepare a Procurement Plan (PP) that shows the title of the study, the procurement method (QCBS), the estimated amount in US dollars, and the expected date of release of the SPN. This PP shall be in a simple excel sheet that will be submitted to MCC for approval prior to the release of the RFP.

#### 1.0.2 Preparation and Review of TOR

The Terms of Reference (TOR) describes the technical details of the consulting services and provides the strategic substance of the RFP. In a QCBS procurement consultants are encouraged to propose their own methodologies.

WAPP will use the TOR developed by the technical experts within MCC and WAPP and other entities as considered relevant by MCC. The TOR will be incorporated into the RFP after the formal approval of MCC.

#### 1.0.3 Preparation, Finalization and Approval of RFP

The RFP will be based on a template agreed between WAPP and MCC on March 17, 2021. Once the dates, time and other information required to finalize the RFP has been filled in, with the (approved) TOR incorporated, the document shall be submitted by WAPP for MCC approval.

### 1.1 Issue of RFP

The RFP shall be issued only after the MCC NOD is provided. The RFP's SPN shall – at a minimum – be advertised in UNDB, DG Market and in at least one newspaper of national circulation in each of the participating countries relevant to the RFP and/or MCC's planned Compact. WAPP will send the link to the Commercial offices of the American Embassy in the relevant countries, seeking their help in further distribution to the relevant firms. In addition to these marketing channels, the SPN may be sent to the consulting firms who has indicated interest in for the upcoming procurement and/or in similar assignments in with WAPP. MCC may ask WAPP for further distribution channels and will also send the SPN link to its own network.

After reviewing the SPN, firms can request the RFP from the Grantee via email as will be specified in the SPN. The Grantee will respond also via email providing an electronic copy of the RFP in pdf format, the technical and financial proposal forms in Microsoft Word format and an FRL which will be the sole means for consultants to upload and submit their proposals. This is further explained in the RFP.

## **1.2 Pre-Proposal Conference and Clarifications**

A Pre-Proposal Conference shall be held as an online event after the issue of the RFP. The Grantee will specify the details of the online event and provide the link in the RFP.

Consultants may seek clarifications in writing on all issues in the RFP, including the TOR, from the issue date of the RFP, at the pre-proposal conference and up to a maximum of 5 business days after the conference as specified in the RFP. The Grantee will respond to all clarifications received by the clarification submission deadline using a Q&A document that excludes the source of the clarification request. If a clarification warrants it, the Grantee shall extend the proposal submission deadline, but shall do so using an Amendment as provided for below, not the Q&A.

## **1.3 Amendments to the RFP**

The Grantee may amend the RFP at any time prior to the proposal submission deadline using an amendment. The amendment shall be in writing, be considered part of the RFP and shall be communicated to all consultants who have obtained the RFP directly from the Grantee.

## **1.4 Submission Deadline for Proposals**

The deadline for the submission of proposals shall be specified in the RFP. No proposals submitted after the deadline shall be accepted. As the procurement is being conducted using electronic submissions, the FRL provided to the consultants shall expire on the proposal submission deadline. Once the FRL expires, the uploading process will cease instantly. Consultants should therefore commence the upload of their proposals in good time. The FRL is the sole means to submit proposals. Proposals submitted by hand, mail, email or courier services are not acceptable.

## **1.5 Formal Opening of Technical Proposals**

The Grantee will set the time for opening of the technical proposals no less or more than a half hour after the proposal submission deadline. The Grantee will use the time between the submission deadline and the formal opening to download and organize the successfully submitted proposals.

The formal opening of Proposals shall be an online event, the details of which shall be provided in the RFP. During this formal opening, the Grantee will open the technical proposal and read out the name and country of the consultant, the existence of a signed technical proposal submission form, the existence of a power of attorney and the existence of a financial proposal that remains unopened and unaccessed until the formal opening of financial proposals. No proposals are rejected at the opening unless the proposal was not submitted through the FRL and/or arrived late by any means.



## C. The Evaluation Process

### 2. Governing Principles

The overarching principles that should govern the evaluation process, the work of the members of the Panel, as well as the actions of all parties involved in the process are given in this section.

#### 2.0.1 Confidentiality

Confidentiality refers primarily to the information that the Panel members and all parties involved in the evaluation may become aware of during their review of the proposals. Any information that is not intended for public use, as determined by the Grantee, shall not be disclosed to anyone outside the evaluation team (which includes the Panel members as well as the parties with particular responsibilities, as detailed below). Access to proposals shall be limited to the Panel members in the conditions described below and any sensitive documents and information shall be distributed strictly on a need-to-know basis. No information about the examination, clarification, or evaluation of proposals or decisions about the contract award can be disclosed by the Panel members to any party not officially involved with the procurement process at any time before or after the contract award, including to the WAPP or any government entity. Disclosures to MCC will also be limited to the MCC Procurement Director. Any attempt by a consultant to influence the process in any way (whether by initiating contact with Panel members or otherwise) will result in the immediate exclusion of their proposal from further consideration.

The same strict confidentiality shall also cover the identities of the Panel members. The names of the Panel members must remain confidential in order to decrease the possibility of undue influence by the competing entities, and to protect them from any repercussions even after the selection process. To this end, Panel members shall not attend the public opening of technical and financial proposals, so their identities can remain confidential. As an exception, if members of the Grantee staff are also Panel members, they may attend the public opening in their official capacity, but their Panel affiliation shall remain confidential.

#### 2.0.2 Integrity

All parties involved directly or indirectly in the evaluation process (Panel members, auxiliary members, Grantee staff, MCC) are required to perform their respective duties with integrity and in good faith, with due regard for the public interest. No party shall be under any conflict between their responsibilities in the evaluation process and their personal or business interests. Any such real, potential or perceived conflict of interest shall be promptly disclosed to the Panel Coordinator, who will exclude such party from participating further in any capacity in the evaluation meetings.

Panel members shall duly comply with all applicable MCC anti-fraud and corruption principles, policies and guidelines, as informed by the Grantee Procurement Office.

### 2.0.3 Professional conduct

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As the Panel members should be selected exclusively based on their technical expertise and experience, it is expected that they demonstrate the highest level of professional conduct throughout the evaluation process. The same applies to all parties involved in the process (Grantee teams).

### 2.0.4 Fairness

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Panel members shall evaluate the documents under their review solely based on the merits of each individual proposal, without any bias, favoritism, or prejudice for or against any of the proposals or the individuals or entities submitting the proposals. Each proposal shall be evaluated strictly based on its responsiveness to the criteria stipulated in the RFP, not in relative comparison with any of the other proposals. Panel members shall not be influenced by any prior knowledge of, or experience with, any of the consultants, either acquired personally or by third parties, except for reference checks or CPPRs collected by the GPO.

### 2.0.5 Independence and accountability

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Each Panel member shall act independently and in full accord with his own experience, professional expertise, and conscience. All Panel members are equal and therefore equally and individually responsible and accountable for their opinions and decisions.

Panel members shall duly report to the Panel Coordinator, Grantee and/or MCC any improper acts of interference or attempts at coercion of any sort, aimed at influencing their decisions during the evaluation.

### 2.0.6 Continuity of work

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The evaluation process requires the full and continuous commitment of all Panel members. Consequently, during the evaluation, Panel members should be 100% dedicated to their work in the Panel, which should not be treated as a side task in addition to their day-to-day job responsibilities.

If at any time and for whatever reason, any Panel member becomes unavailable for more than one (1) day during the evaluation process, or becomes unsuitable to serve as Panel member following the occurrence of any situation that require the removal of a Panel member (e.g. conflict of interest), the Panel Coordinator should – in coordination with the Grantee - seek MCC's approval to remove such members together with all their inputs, findings, notes or conclusions pertaining to the evaluation. If replacement Panel members had been identified and appointed at the time when the Panel was formed and depending on the stage of the evaluation process, the Panel Coordinator may appoint such replacements to step in and take over the responsibilities of the replaced Panel members. If the evaluation is in an advanced stage and the appointment of a replacement is impractical and would lead to delays, then the evaluation shall continue with the reduced number of Panel members. In case of any confusion in this decision, the Grantee should consult with MCC.

The only exceptions to the full-time commitment of the Panel members are the periods when the Panel awaits for consultants' responses to clarification requests, or to any auxiliary members' analysis, input or conclusion.

### **3. Technical Evaluation**

#### **3.1 Responsibilities**

##### **3.1.1 The Technical Evaluation Panel**

The Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP or Panel) membership, individually and collectively, has the responsibility to carry out the evaluation process strictly according to the evaluation criteria and methodology contained in the RFP, as per the guidance of the GPO, and in accordance with this Process Manual. No new evaluation criteria or requirement may be introduced at any time after the submission of proposals, regardless of its importance or relevance for the procurement. Each Panel member also has individual and the Panel as a whole has a collective responsibility for decisions made by the group. Panel members must note that no national preferences of any kind are permitted. Therefore, no additional points or favoritism or disfavor of any kind may be shown based on the nationality of the firm/organization, partners/subcontractors or personnel, or on the personal knowledge of anything about any submission.

##### **3.1.2 Panel Membership**

Panel membership should be kept between 3 and 6 members (it is not necessary to have an odd number of members). MCC prefers to have at least one member shall be hired competitively from the private sector, local or international, but may make an exception for this procurement in certain circumstances (for example, the capability and availability of other panel members as identified). WAPP shall seek MCC's written approval for the Panel composition.

Each Panel member must commit to applying only the evaluation criteria and methodology described in the RFP in a fair, transparent and consistent manner, and not let their outside knowledge or previous experience with any of the competing consultants influence their assessment. The Panel members shall individually evaluate each proposal on the basis of its responsiveness to the provisions of the RFP, strictly applying the evaluation criteria, scores, weightings and methodology specified therein, without seeking or accepting any influence, recommendation or interpretation offered by any third party.

While it would be impractical to forbid talking among Panel members, the contacts and consultation between the members shall be kept to a minimum, to avoid turning the evaluation into a group activity.

It is preferable that the actual conduct of the evaluation shall be confined to the room(s) where the proposals are kept by the GPO and the Panel members shall not be allowed to take the proposals out of these designated spaces. Considering the COVID situation, MCC may allow the evaluation to be conducted remotely where one or more Panel members can take the proposal to their workplace and participate virtually.

Use of Panel members' personal computers may be allowed by the Panel Coordinator

### 3.1.3 Panel Coordinator (PC)

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Considering that this is only one procurement currently planned to be managed by WAPP, MCC will assign its staff or a consultant to be the PC. The Panel will follow instructions of the PC.

The PC may request WAPP's assistance from other staff in the GPO to assist and carry out the following:

- a) Circulating and collecting the "Declarations of Impartiality and Confidentiality";
- b) Checking compliance of proposals with the submission requirements;
- c) Conducting administrative review of the proposals;
- d) Seeking/receiving clarifications as may be requested by the Panel members;
- e) Verifying the consultants' compliance with the financial qualification requirements;
- f) Collecting references, including CPPRs;
- g) Price review (correction of arithmetical errors);
- h) Keeping the minutes of all meetings of the Panel, and registering attendance at meetings;
- i) Keeping the relevant records and documents;
- j) Compiling the supporting annexes to the Evaluation Report.

### 3.1.4 Auxiliary Members

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If necessary for the evaluation process, the PC may request WAPP to appoint additional experts to assist the Panel in certain specific areas related to the verification and evaluation of proposals, such as:

- a qualified financial expert may assist in checking the financial statements and reports and in computing the necessary ratios and requirements in order to demonstrate the financial capacity of the consultants according to the requirements of the solicitation documents;
- a qualified legal expert may assist in checking that all legal requirements stated in the solicitation documents are met by the consultants;
- qualified environmental, social or gender expert may assist in checking that all specific requirements stated in the solicitation documents are met by the consultants.

The auxiliary members shall report to the PC. To the extent possible, the GPO and Grantee will draw these experts from their own staff, existing contractors and consultants. If such experts are drawn from the existing pool of the Grantee's contractors or consultants, they may be remunerated for their activity in support of the Panel, according to their respective contracts.

The opinion of such experts on the adequacy of the proposals shall be reviewed by the Panel members, who can choose to accept it or not when deciding on a particular proposal's conformance to the requirements of the procurement. In any case, the experts' opinion should be duly recorded and included as an annex to the evaluation report.

### 3.1.5 MCC-appointed Observers

MCC reserves the right of its own staff, agents or consultants to observe the proceedings of the Panel. The presence of an MCC observer is not an approval or endorsement of the results of the evaluation panel, and in no way binds MCC to approve the results. Observers shall not evaluate or vote on any proposal but could offer guidance to the TEP or the PCC when such guidance is solicited.

MCC-appointed observers may attend the working sessions of the Panel and/or only the consensus meetings. With the prior approval of MCC, they may have access to the proposals for their own understanding, but in no case, they shall influence the Panel proceedings.

## 3.2 Conducting the Technical Evaluation Process

The evaluation under 2-envelope procurements focuses on the technical evaluation and the preparation of the Technical Evaluation Report (TER), while the recommendation of award is only made after the opening of the financial proposals and finalization of the Combined Evaluation Report (CER).

The technical evaluation involves:

- (i) the preliminary examination of technical proposals for administrative compliance, eligibility, and financial capacity (to be conducted by the GPO);
- (ii) collecting consultants' references regarding their past performance (also GPO);
- (iii) the technical evaluation proceedings of the TEP;
- (iv) preparation of the Technical Evaluation Report (TER).

After the Grantee and MCC approve the TER, the Financial Proposals will be opened in a public opening, and the technical and financial scores will be then computed to generate the combined evaluation results.

Price reasonableness analysis and full eligibility verification for the highest-ranked consultant will be conducted and documented by the GPO and included in the Combined Evaluation Report

(CER). After the Grantee and MCC approve the CER, the highest ranked consultant shall be invited to negotiate the contract.

Once the NOITA is sent to the successful consultant (and the NOTER to the unsuccessful consultants), WAPP will offer debriefing to the losing consultants who ask for it. WAPP will further follow the Interim Bid Challenge System (IBCS), before negotiating and signing a contract with the highest evaluated consultant.

WAPP will follow MCC's guidance on negotiations, which are essentially the clarification of the technical and financial proposals, and not a negotiation to change the proposal that may affect the rankings in the evaluation.

The finalized draft contract will be sent to MCC for approval before signing.

### 3.2.1 Convening the TEP

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This is the responsibility of the Panel Coordinator. WAPP will follow guidance from the PC.

### 3.2.2 Preliminary examination of Technical Proposals

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The GPO shall examine the Technical Proposals to confirm that all documentation requested in the solicitation document has been provided, and to determine the completeness of each proposal submission.

The GPO may request clarification or missing information from the consultants, if it is considered that doing so would not harm the principles of an open, fair, competitive and transparent procurement.

Failure of the consultant to provide the information requested may result in rejection of the proposal. The Grantee in consultation with MCC shall make a principle-based determination as to what shall be considered material and in so doing, will carefully consider the judgment that best serves the principles of an open, fair, competitive and transparent procurement. If a consultant is disqualified because of material deficiencies in providing the information requested, its Technical Proposal will not be evaluated further, and its Financial Proposal shall be returned unopened at the end of the selection process.

#### 3.2.2.1 Proposal Validity

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In accordance with the relevant provisions of the solicitation document, proposals must remain valid for the period specified in such clause. The GPO shall examine each proposal to confirm its validity. Proposals valid for a shorter period than the validity period stipulated in the solicitation documents will be rejected as non-responsive and not reviewed further. The results of the proposal validity verification will be reported to the TEP.

### 3.2.2.2 Partial Eligibility Verification

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The evaluation proceedings must include verification that consultants are eligible to be awarded a contract funded by MCC. The eligibility of the consultants (a firm/organization participating on its own, the lead firm/organization in associations and all firms/organizations in a joint venture), shall be verified (“partial eligibility verification”) at this stage of the evaluation process. If the consultants are eligible based on the aforementioned sources, their proposals will be deemed eligible with regard to this step and may proceed in the technical evaluation process. In the case of a positive record(s) for one or more consultants, additional research will be conducted as to whether the result may be a “false positive,” and MCC will be notified. In the circumstance of a potential disqualification, the Grantee will consult with MCC prior to a final determination to disqualify a consultant. If a consultant is disqualified because it has been found not eligible, its Technical Proposal will not be evaluated further, and its Financial Proposal shall not be opened.

Eligibility verification will be done by the GPO and the results will be reported to the TEP and referenced in the TER.

The sources (and corresponding weblinks) for the eligibility checks are as follows:

- a. System for Award Management (SAM)  
- <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/searchRecords/search.jsf>
- b. World Bank Debarred List - <https://www.worldbank.org/debarr>
- c. US Government Consolidated Screening List -  
[https://2016.export.gov/ecr/eg\\_main\\_023148.asp](https://2016.export.gov/ecr/eg_main_023148.asp)
- d. US State Sponsors of Terrorism List - <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/list/c14151.htm>

### 3.2.2.3 Verification of Consultant’s Financial Capacity

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The GPO shall validate that proposals provide information on the economic and financial capacity of the consultant, and that the relevant forms required in the RFP are complete.

The results of the financial capacity checks will be reported to the TEP and attached as an annex to the TER. The TEP will review and duly consider the outcome of the financial capacity checks when formulating their conclusion about the consultant’s capacity to handle the assignment.

### 3.2.2.4 Verification of references

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The GPO will issue the reference survey to each of the references provided by the consultants in their proposals, considering the time needed for completing this task. To the maximum extent possible, reference questionnaires shall be designed to solicit information as opposed to judgments or opinions. All responses should be kept in the GPO archives for the procurement. The questionnaire and the responses should be transacted through electronic means, with a deadline for response. The GPO may need to make phone calls to the referees to ensure that they respond in time.

All or some of the following resources may be used in obtaining reference and past performance information to use during the evaluation process:

Consultant Supplied References. At the beginning of the evaluation process the GPO will contact the references or clients provided by the consultants in their proposals using the Corporate Questionnaire Form and the Key Personnel Questionnaire Form. The consultant should be informed if its references do not respond within the allowed timeframe so the consultant could follow up with them.

MCA Identified References. It is mandatory for the consultants to list all MCC funded contracts in their proposal. The GPO may obtain reference checks from other MCAs having contracts with the consultant and the relevant key personnel. References can be generated for these contracts through a request to MCC.

Contractor Past Performance Reporting System. MCC's Contractor Past Performance Reporting System (CPPRS) mandates regular reporting by the MCAs on contractor performance. The CPPRS reports shall be used as a reference source for verifying a consultant's past performance on other MCA contracts. The GPO shall gather any CPPRS Report submitted for contractors through MCC.

MCC Provided References. MCC staff may be identified as a reference in a consultant's proposal; however, MCC staff may only provide references for contracts for which the MCC staff member is the COTR for MCC awarded contracts. MCC staff members will not provide references for MCA contracts.

The impact of negative references shall be factored in by the TEP members at the end of the consensus scoring process as described below.

### 3.2.3 Technical Evaluation Methodology

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The methodologies for evaluating the technical proposals is follows and will be provided in the RFP.

#### **Integer Method**

The Integer Method is the use of a limited set of whole numbers to rate proposal criteria, for example 0 – 6, where

- 0 means *Not meeting the requirements*
- 1 means *Significant deviation from the requirements*
- 2 means *Marginal deviation from the requirements*
- 3 means *Meeting the requirements*
- 4 means *Marginally exceeding the requirements*
- 5 means *Significantly exceeding the requirements*
- 6 means *Outstandingly exceeding the requirements*



### 3.2.4 Individual evaluation of Technical Proposals

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To expedite the process, the TEP may commence with the individual evaluations at the same time that the GPO performs the steps described above. However, if a proposal is determined not to be responsive or eligible for evaluation after completion of the above steps, it will be removed from further evaluation.

Each TEP member must individually evaluate the Technical Proposals based on evaluation and qualification criteria specified in the solicitation document, and according to the agreed evaluation methodology. The Technical Proposals should be evaluated based on their individual merits against the established criteria, not compared and ranked against each other.

Individual Evaluation Worksheets are provided to the TEP members to facilitate the evaluation process.

All questions from the TEP members shall be submitted in writing to the Panel Coordinator, who would decide when to call in a meeting of the members to discuss the questions; if a TEP member wishes to discuss his/her list of questions before the end of the day, s/he may request for such a meeting. Outside this meeting, conversation in the panel room should be kept to a minimum.

### 3.2.5 Consensus Evaluation

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If there are six (or more) proposals, a consensus meeting may be held after evaluation of the first three proposals; with a second consensus meeting being held after the last three or more proposals are evaluated by the members of the TEP; otherwise, the meeting can be held after the end of all evaluations.

During these consensus meetings, which are facilitated by the PC, the TEP members:

- (i) will provide their rationale in applying the adjectival ratings or integers, and the strengths and weaknesses from the individual evaluations;
- (ii) will compare, discuss and reach consensus on the strengths and weaknesses and the corresponding adjectival ratings or integers for each evaluation criterion;
- (iii) discuss and agree on final points on a consensus basis.

The TEP members have the right to maintain a dissenting opinion, and the justification for such an opinion, if applicable, shall be documented in the TER. Such dissenting score will not be used in the consensus scoring.

The GPO will make best its effort to obtain references; however, if references are not received for a particular consultant, the TEP should not penalize the consultant.

The PC will follow MCC's established procedures for preparing the TER.

### 3.2.6 The Technical Evaluation Report (TER)

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At the end of the technical evaluation process, the Panel Coordinator shall prepare a report documenting the results of the technical evaluation process. The TER shall substantiate the results of the evaluation and describe the strengths and weaknesses of each Technical Proposal.

The TER must be signed by all TEP members, observers, and submitted to the Grantee for review and approval and then to MCC. It is not necessary to regroup the TEP for the signature purpose only; their approval and signatures could be secured via fax or electronic means. The GPO will submit the TER for the Grantee's management's concurrence and approval, and then send it to MCC for review and approval. The Grantee management, if not satisfied with the report, may seek clarification from the TEP or call for a new TEP, but cannot alter the recommendations on its own.

Once the TER is approved by MCC, the consultants shall be informed about their scores as provided for in the next section below.

If no consultants meet the minimum qualifying technical score, the GPO may recommend to the Grantee either to:

- (i) enter into negotiations with the highest ranked consultant if so allowed in the solicitation document or authorized by MCC; or
- (ii) cancel the selection procedure, as none of the proposals satisfy the requirements of the solicitation document.

### 3.2.7 Notification of Technical Evaluation Results

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After MCC provides the NOD to the TER, the Grantee shall notify all consultants who submitted proposals of the outcome, using a NOTER. Consultants may – on the basis of the NOTER – seek a debrief (as explained below), or submit a bid challenge.

The NOTER shall be transmitted via email (either in the body of the email or as a signed and attached letter) to each consultant using MCC's templates as will be provided by the PC.

### 3.2.7 Debriefs and Bid Challenges

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#### 3.2.7.1 Debriefs

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The RFP shall specify that any consultant who wishes to ascertain the grounds on which its proposal was not selected may request an explanation from the Grantee. The debriefing is conducted by the Grantee who shall provide an explanation of why such proposal was not selected, either in writing and/or in a debriefing meeting, held online.

The scope of the debriefing is limited to identifying the technical deficiencies or weaknesses of the consultant's proposal. Debriefings shall not discuss the following:

- i. Trade secrets or other proprietary information including the methodology or approach of other consultants;
- ii. Financial or cost information about other consultants;
- iii. Evaluation scoring or the ranking of the consultants, or
- iv. Other consultants' proposals.

A consultant may request a debriefing by submitting a written request to the Grantee within two (2) business days after that date on which the consultant received notification of either the technical or the combined evaluation results. The Grantee should acknowledge receipt of this request and inform the consultant of the scheduled debriefing date by electronic means, with immediate acknowledgement requested. To the maximum extent practicable, the debriefing should occur within three (3) business days after receipt of the written request.

#### 3.2.7.2 Bid Challenges

Based on the debriefing information received, a consultant may determine if it wishes to submit a bid challenge, it will follow the Bid Challenge System as listed in the RFP.

## 4. Financial Evaluation

### 4.1 Formal Opening of Financial Proposals

After the Bid Challenge period has elapsed, all consultants who submitted proposals shall be invited to attend the public opening of the Financial Proposals. TEP members shall not attend the opening, as their identities should remain confidential. However, TEP members who are staff of the Grantee can attend.

Only the financial proposals of consultants who attained the minimum qualifying technical score shall be opened. The Grantee shall conduct the opening, publicly announcing the following elements of each opened Financial Proposal: present and signed Financial Proposal Submission Form, name and country of the consultant, the total technical score achieved by the consultants whose Financial Proposals are opened, and total Price of their Financial Proposals. After conclusion of the opening of Financial Proposals, the Grantee shall prepare the minutes, which will be attached to the Combined Evaluation Report (CER). A copy of the minutes will be sent to MCC, and to those consultants whose Financial Proposals were opened.

## **4.2 Checking Financial Proposals Submission Compliance**

The Grantee shall examine the Financial Proposals to confirm that all documentation requested in the solicitation document has been provided, and to determine the completeness of each proposal submission.

Specifically, it should be confirmed that:

- (a) The documentation is complete and the Financial Proposal Submission Form or the Financial Offer is enclosed;
- (b) The Financial Proposal has been signed by an authorized representative of the consultant's organization;
- (c) All pages of the original Financial Proposal are initialed by the same authorized representative.

A Financial Proposal not meeting these requirements may be rejected. Any rejection on these grounds will have to be fully justified in the Combined Evaluation Report (CER).

A Financial Proposal Submission Compliance Checklist will be used to record the compliance with submission requirements of each Financial Proposal. The Financial Proposal Submission Compliance Checklist should be referenced in the TER.

## **4.3 Correction of Arithmetic Errors**

In cases of a discrepancy between a partial amount and the total amount, or between words and figures the former will prevail. In addition to the above corrections, activities and items described in the Technical Proposal but not priced, shall be assumed to be included in the prices of other activities or items. In cases where an activity or line item is quantified differently in the Financial Proposal from the Technical Proposal, no corrections will be applied to the Financial Proposal in this respect.

The outcome of the checking of arithmetic errors shall be referenced in the CER.

## **4.4 Currency Conversion**

All financial proposals shall be submitted in United States Dollars (USD) as defined in the RFP. No other currency will be allowed or accepted.

## **4.5 Scoring of Financial Proposals**

The technical and financial weights and the procedures for combining these scores are provided in the RFP.

#### **4.6 Price Reasonableness Analysis**

Following MCC's guidelines and as directed by the PC, the GPO will conduct a verification of the market-reasonableness of the prices offered by the highest ranked consultant. A negative determination (unreasonably low or unreasonably high price) could be a reason for rejection of the highest ranked proposal, in which case the GPO may recommend to the Grantee to proceed with the next ranked consultant.

#### **4.7 Full Eligibility Verification**

Prior to completing the CER, the eligibility of the highest ranked consultant (firm/organization participating on its own, and all firms/organizations in case of a joint venture) and all key personnel and subcontractors shall be verified ("full eligibility verification") as a final stage of the evaluation process.

Eligibility verification will be conducted by the GPO using the sources listed under Partial Eligibility Verification section of this Manual. If the consultant and all key personnel and subcontractors are eligible based on the aforementioned sources, its Proposal will be deemed eligible and may be awarded the contract. In the case of a positive record(s) for the consultant or one or more of key personnel and subcontractors, additional research will be conducted as to whether the result may be a "false positive," and MCC will be notified. If a consultant is disqualified because it has been found not eligible, the GPO may recommend to the Grantee to invite the next-ranked consultant for negotiation.

The results of the full eligibility verification shall be documented in the CER.

#### **4.8 Combined Evaluation Report (CER)**

At the end of the evaluation process, the GPO shall prepare a report documenting the results of the evaluation process. The CER shall substantiate the results of the financial and combined evaluation and make recommendations for contract award.

The CER should contain:

- (a) The results of technical evaluation (technical scores, strengths and weaknesses of Technical Proposals).
- (b) A brief description of the Opening of the financial proposals and financial evaluation process and actions taken by the GPO.
- (c) The results of the financial evaluation (financial scores).
- (d) The results of the combined evaluation (combined scores) and ranking of consultants.
- (e) The results of the price-reasonableness analysis of the price offered by the first-ranked consultant.

- (f) The results of the full eligibility verification (including key personnel and subcontractors) of the first-ranked consultant.
- (g) A recommendation for contract award.
- (h) Recommendation on any issues to be discussed with the winning consultant during contract negotiations.

Services of the TEP members could be retained up to the stage of CER finalization. In this case, the CER will be signed by TEP members, in addition to the Panel Coordinator.

#### **4.9 Notification of Combined Evaluation Results**

After MCC provides approval to the CER, the Grantee shall notify the successful Consultant using a NOITA and the unsuccessful consultants, using a NOCER. The NOITA shall not constitute a contract with between the Grantee and the successful Consultant and the Grantee can cancel the NOITA without incurring any liability.

## D. The Award and Contracting Process

### 5.0 Award, Negotiations and Contract Signature

If there are no outstanding bid challenges after the NOITA and NOCER were issued, the Grantee shall enter negotiations with and award to the successful consultant recommended for award in the CER. The bases of the technical and financial negotiations are detailed out in the RFP. Should the negotiations fail, the Grantee shall seek MCC's NOD to negotiate with the 2<sup>nd</sup> ranked consultant.

Upon successful negotiations, the Grantee shall send the contract together with the DOS – adapted from the TOR and the successful Consultant's proposal – for MCC's approval before signing the contract with the successful Consultant. The Contract may be signed by electronic means using a legally binding and digitized eSignature system.

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