

5. PRE-QUALIFICATION CRITERIA (PQ)

- (a) Pre- Qualification criteria (PQ)
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5. PRE-QUALIFICATION CRITERIA (PQ)

5.1 The success of a project largely depends on the capability of the contractor/vendor. Pre-qualification is a process to select competent contractors having technical and financial capability commensurate with the requirements of the particular procurement (Project / supply of goods/ hiring of services).

5.2 The pre-requisites of pre-qualification process are-

- Transparency
- Fairness
- Maintenance of competition

5.3 The purpose of any selection procedure is to attract the participation of reputed and capable firms with proven track record. It should be ensured that the PQ criteria are exhaustive, yet specific and there is fair and adequate competition. It should be ensured that the PQ criteria are clearly stipulated in unambiguous terms in the bid documents.

5.4 Commission has issued the following guidelines on Pre-qualification criteria (PQ):

(a) Pre-qualification criteria (PQ)

The Commission has received complaints regarding discriminatory prequalification criteria incorporated in the tender documents by various Deptts./Organizations. It has also been observed during intensive examination of various works/contracts by CTEO that the prequalification criteria is either not clearly specified or made very stringent/very lax to restrict/facilitate the entry of bidders.

2. The prequalification criteria is a yardstick to allow or disallow the firms to participate in the bids. A vaguely defined PQ criteria results in stalling the process of finalizing the contract or award of the contract in a non-transparent manner. It has been noticed that organizations, at times pick up the PQ criteria from some similar work executed in the past, without appropriately amending the different parameters according to the requirements of the present work. Very often it is seen that only contractors known to the officials of the organization and to the Architects are placed on the select list. This system gives considerable scope for malpractices, favouritism and corruption. It is, therefore, necessary to fix in advance the minimum qualification, experience and number of similar works of a minimum magnitude satisfactorily executed in terms of quality and period of execution

3. Some of the common irregularities/lapses observed in this regard are highlighted as under:
 - i) For a work with an estimated cost of Rs.15 crores to be completed in two years, the criteria for average turnover in the last 5 years was kept as Rs.15 crores although the amount of work to be executed in one year was only Rs.7.5 crores. The above resulted in prequalification of a single firm.
 - ii) One organization for purchase of Computer hardware kept the criteria for financial annual turnover of Rs.100 crores although the value of purchase was less than Rs.10 crores, resulting in disqualification of reputed computer firms.
 - iii) In one case of purchase of Computer hardware, the prequalification criteria stipulated was that the firms should have made profit in the last two years and should possess ISO Certification. It resulted in disqualification of reputed vendors including a PSU.
 - iv) In a work for supply and installation of A. C. Plant, retendering was resorted to with diluted prequalification criteria without adequate justification, to favour selection of a particular firm.
 - v) An organization invited tenders for hiring of D.G. Sets with eligibility of having 3 years experience in supplying D.G. Sets. The cut off dates regarding work experience were not clearly indicated. The above resulted in qualification of firms which had conducted such business for 3 years, some 20 years back. On account of this vague condition, some firms that were currently not even in the business were also qualified.
 - vi) In many cases, "Similar works" is not clearly defined in the tender documents. In one such case, the supply and installation of A. C. ducting and the work of installation of false ceiling were combined together. Such works are normally not executed together as A. C. ducting work is normally executed as a part of A. C. work while false ceiling work is a part of civil construction or interior design works. Therefore, no firm can possibly qualify for such work with experience of similar work. The above resulted in qualification of A.C. Contractors without having any experience of false ceiling work although the major portion of the work constituted false ceiling work.
4. The above list is illustrative and not exhaustive. While framing the prequalification criteria, the end purpose of doing so should be kept in view. The purpose of any selection procedure is to attract the participation of reputed and capable firms with proper track records. The PQ conditions should be exhaustive, yet specific. The factors that may be kept in view while framing the PQ Criteria includes the scope and nature of work, experience of firms in the same field and financial soundness of firms.
5. The following points must be kept in view while fixing the eligibility criteria:-

A) For Civil/Electrical Works

- i) Average Annual financial turnover during the last 3 years, ending 31st March of the previous financial year, should be at least 30% of the estimated cost.
- ii) Experience of having successfully completed similar works during last 7 years ending last day of month previous to the one in which applications are invited should be either of the following: -
 - a. Three similar completed works costing not less than the amount equal to 40% of the estimated cost.

Or
 - b. Two similar completed works costing not less than the amount equal to 50% of the estimated cost.

Or
 - c. One similar completed work costing not less than the amount equal to 80% of the estimated cost.
- iii) Definition of "similar work" should be clearly defined.

In addition to above, the criteria regarding satisfactory performance of works, personnel, establishment, plant, equipment etc. may be incorporated according to the requirement of the Project.

B) For Store/Purchase Contract

Prequalification/Post Qualification shall be based entirely upon the capability and resources of prospective bidders to perform the particular contract satisfactorily, taking into account their (i) experience and past performance on similar contracts for last 2 years (ii) capabilities with respect to personnel, equipment and manufacturing facilities (iii) financial standing through latest I.T.C.C., Annual report (balance sheet and Profit & Loss Account) of last 3 years. The quantity, delivery and value requirement shall be kept in view, while fixing the PQ criteria. No bidder should be denied prequalification/post qualification for reasons unrelated to its capability and resources to successfully perform the contract.

It is suggested that these instructions may be circulated amongst the concerned officials of your organization for guidance in fixing prequalification criteria. These instructions are also available on CVC's website, <http://cvc.gov.in>.

(CVC OM No. 12-02-1-CTE-6 Dated 17th Dec 2002)

(b) Pre-qualification Criteria (PQ)

Guidelines were prescribed in this office OM of even number dated 17/12/2002, on the above-cited subject to ensure that the pre-qualification criteria specified in the tender document should neither be made very stringent nor very lax to restrict/ facilitate the entry of bidders. It is clarified that the guidelines issued are illustrative and the organizations may suitably modify these guidelines for specialized jobs/works, if considered necessary. However, it should be ensured that the PQ criteria are exhaustive, yet specific and there is fair competition. It should also be ensured that the PQ criteria are clearly stipulated in unambiguous terms in the bid documents.

(CVC OM No. 12-02-1-CTE-6 Dated 7th May 2004)