



## **Qualifications Based Selection (QBS)**

When a building project is initiated by an agency representing the public, the selection of a qualified design professional becomes even more important. The architect's work in the public realm has an overwhelming impact on the ultimate success of the project. Critical issues of feasibility, fiscal accountability, design, functional efficiency and imagery all hinge upon the prudent, professional judgment of the selected architectural designer. The means of selecting reliable, professionally competent design professionals for service in the public interest is crucial. The quality of the services provided by the architect is the single most important factor in determining the overall construction and life cycle costs of a building. Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) is an objective, flexible procedure for obtaining architectural, engineering, land surveying and other related professional design services for public projects. The QBS process is helpful to frequent users of design services, as well as one-time users with little or no past practical experience working with design professionals. It provides owners with a selection process that is straight-forward and easy to implement, is objective and fair, can be well documented, and is open to public scrutiny. Professional design services represent only a small percentage of the construction budget of any building, and an even smaller proportion of its life cycle cost. It is in the best interest of the taxpayer to ensure only the most qualified individuals and firms are selected for the design of public facilities.

### **How Qualifications Based Selection Works:**

Every construction project is unique, yet the owner often may not fully grasp the complexities of the project, nor recognize the variety of design services required to transform the generalized concept into reality. A knowledgeable and thoroughly qualified design professional can guide an owner through the intricacies of schematic and developmental design. In the construction process, the architect serves as the owner's agent, representing the owner's interests in day-to-day dealings with governmental agencies, contractors, suppliers, equipment manufacturers and others providing regulatory reviews or services. It is crucial that the owner and architect share a professional relationship characterized by trust, respect and effective communication. QBS is the most widely endorsed method for selecting professional design consultants. In 1972, the U.S. Congress required all agencies of the federal government to use QBS. The law requires architects and engineers to be selected on the basis of qualifications, subject to fair and reasonable compensation. Nearly 40 states now mandate the use of a similar procedure. The QBS process usually involves the following steps:

1. The owner prepares a description of the project to be built or problem to be solved, referred to as a preliminary scope of services.
2. The owner invites design professionals to submit statements of qualifications for the project at hand.
3. Statements of qualifications are evaluated and several individuals or firms are selected, or short-listed in the standard nomenclature, for further consideration.
4. The individuals or firms are then interviewed and ranked according to an evaluative scoring system.
5. On the basis of these evaluations, the top-ranked professional or firm is notified of their selection for the project and opens discussion with the owner leading to agreement on a final scope of services culminating in a contract between the two parties.