Qualifications-Based Selection and Cost-Effectiveness

Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) is a competitive procurement process that requires a project owner to hire design professionals (engineers, land surveyors, architects, etc.) based on their qualifications and competence.

QBS Benefits

Lower Construction Cost Growth
3% compared to 10% national average

Decreases Schedule Growth
Allows an owner to work with design team to refine scope

More Efficient O&M
Better quality design and innovation

Less Chance of Costly Litigation
Public safety and satisfaction are paramount

Does QBS Achieve Cost-Effectiveness?

QBS prohibits the use of cost as a factor in the initial evaluation and selection of design professionals. Instead, firms are ranked based on their qualifications, experience, and demonstrated competence. After identifying the best-qualified firm, only then may a project owner enter into negotiations for the scope of the work and, subsequently, a fair and reasonable price. If a fair price cannot be agreed upon, negotiations are cancelled and the client moves on to negotiate with the second most qualified firm.

Design professionals have the greatest potential to influence the short- and long-term success of a project. On typical projects, design represents less than 2 percent of the overall cost of a project’s lifecycle but it impacts the cost of every successive aspect, from the construction, to the operations and long-term maintenance.

Hiring the most qualified design professional is the best way to ensure that the final constructed project is completed on time and on budget.

A quantitative study found that QBS-based projects are better than the national average in terms of both lower construction costs and lower schedule growth: While the industry average on construction cost growth is approximately 10 percent, QBS projects experience 3 percent growth. On construction schedule growth, the national average of about 10 percent can be compared to QBS projects, which have an average of about 3 percent growth. On construction schedule growth, the national average of about 3 percent can be compared to QBS projects, which have an average of about 3 percent growth.

Design services are not a commodity—your hire is for a unique set of knowledge, expertise, and experience.