



GUIDE TO PROCUREMENT USING THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS METHOD

Government Procurement Services Government of Montserrat

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
DPC	Departmental Procurement Committee
EOI	Expression of Interest
GCC	General Conditions of Contract
GOM	Government of Montserrat
GPS	Government Procurement Services
PE	Procuring Entity
PPB	Public Procurement Board
RACI	Responsible Accountable Consulted Informed
RFP	Request for Proposals
SCC	Special Conditions of Contract
TOR	Terms of Reference
XCD	Eastern Caribbean Dollars

PART A: INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of guide

This guide is designed to provide public officers with easy-to-follow guidance on how to conduct procurement using the request for proposals (RFP) method.

RFP is the default procurement method for consulting services. It must always be used unless there is justification for using direct contracting.

Unless the value is low, all eligible consultants are invited to express interest. This is followed by a formal process for inviting and evaluating proposals from shortlisted consultants. Technical and financial proposals are evaluated separately.

RFP may be used to procure consulting services from either consulting firms or individual consultants. Section 8 of this guide covers the procurement of individual consultants, while the rest of the guide covers the procurement of consulting firms.

1.2 Legal framework

Public procurement in Montserrat is governed by:

- the Public Procurement Act 2025 (the “Act”); and
- the Public Procurement Regulations 2025 (the “Regulations”).

This guide is issued by Government Procurement Services (GPS) under section 10 of the Act to provide procuring entities (PEs) with the necessary guidance and direction to implement procurement using the RFP method.

GPS has issued separate guides which provide an overview of the public procurement system, guidance on procurement planning, other methods of procurement and contract award and management.

GPS has also adopted standard tender documents, contract forms and other procurement forms and templates. The use of these documents is mandatory and this guide provides advice on which documents should be used for the RFP method.

The Act and Regulations can be downloaded from <https://tenders.gov.ms/publications>. All other documents are available from GPS by emailing procurement@gov.ms.

In the event of any discrepancies, the Act and Regulations take precedence over this guide and the standard documents. Any queries or suggestions for updates to this guide or the standard documents should be addressed to the Head of GPS.

1.3 Application

The Act, Regulations and this guide apply to all PEs, including ministries, departments, units and subdivisions of the Government of Montserrat (GOM) that engage in procurement.

Government owned entities are required to follow this guide, unless they have their own procurement rules or regulations, approved by the Cabinet on the recommendation of the Public Procurement Board (PPB).

For guidance on donor funded procurement and exemptions to the Act, refer to the Guide to the Public Procurement System.

PART B: OVERVIEW OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

2 Overview of request for proposals

2.1 When to use request for proposals

Request for proposals is the default procurement method for consulting services. It must always be used unless there is justification for using direct contracting. This is because it offers maximum competition and transparency, within a process suitable for the complexity of consulting services.

The RFP method should be used for consulting services of all values.

The first stage of the RFP method is the shortlisting of consultants, usually by inviting expressions of interest (EOIs). Shortlisted consultants are invited to submit technical and financial proposals, which are opened and evaluated in separate stages.

You are not permitted to use RFP for the procurement of goods, works or non-consulting services; instead, use the open tendering, restricted tendering, request for quotations or direct contracting methods.

Do you need a consulting firm or an individual consultant?

Before starting the RFP process, consider whether you need a firm or an individual to deliver the consulting services. Use an individual consultant only where:

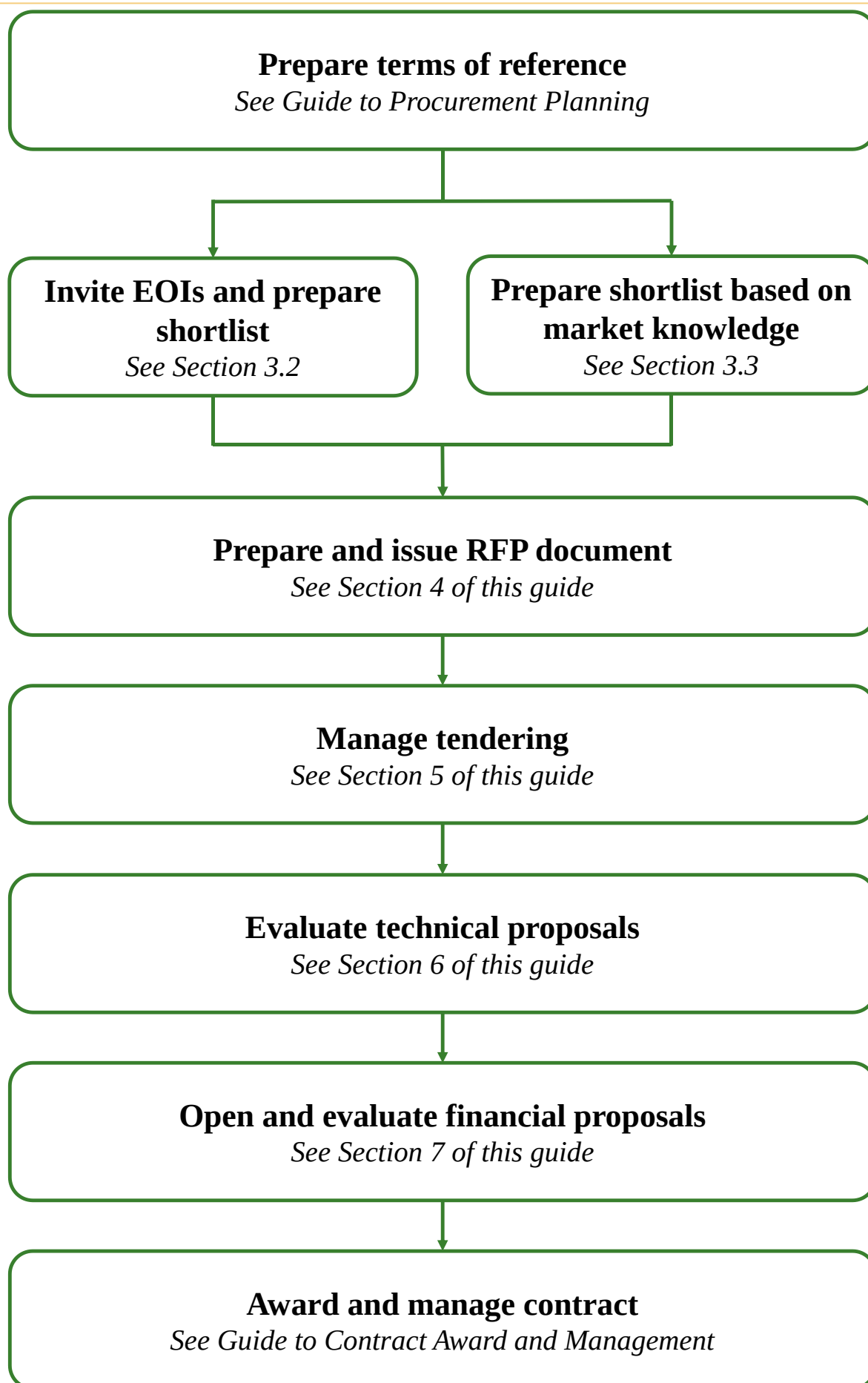
- a team of experts is not required;
- no additional professional support is required; and
- the experience and qualifications of the individual are the paramount requirement.

In all other cases, use a consulting firm.

- ➔ See **section 8 of this guide** for the procurement of an individual consultant.
- ➔ The rest of the guide covers the procurement of consulting firms.

2.2 Steps in the RFP process

The flowchart on the next page shows the main steps in the RFP process for the procurement of a consulting firm. Sections 3 to 7 of this guide give further information on the process.



References and templates:

- Sections 24 and 30-31 of the Public Procurement Act 2025
- Regulations 34-43 of the Public Procurement Regulations 2025
- Standard RFP document for consulting services and RFP for framework agreements
- EOI notice templates
- Forms for solicitation approval, record of public opening, declaration for members of evaluation panels, clarification letter and evaluation report

2.3 Roles and responsibilities

The chart below shows who does what in the RFP process for consulting firms by defining who is Responsible Accountable Consulted or Informed (RACI). It lists all tasks and assigns specific roles for each task, as explained in the table below.

Most procurement using RFP will be over the threshold for GPS facilitation.

R	Responsible	Does the work
A	Accountable	Owens the result and signs off
C	Consulted	Provides input before or during the task
I	Informed	Kept updated about decisions or progress

TASK	PE			GPS		PPB or DPC	Consultants
	Accounting Officer (or as delegated)	End user or other PE staff	Evaluation Panel	Procurement staff	Head of GPS		
Prepare terms of reference	A	R					
Prepare and publish EOI notice (unless under XCD 75,000)	I	C		R	A		I
Evaluate EOIs and prepare shortlist	A	R	R	C	C		
Prepare RFP document	A	R		C	C		
Approve RFP document	R	I			R		
Issue RFP document to shortlisted consultants	A	R		I	I		I
Request any clarifications		I					R
Prepare and issue clarifications to consultants		C		R	A		I
Receive proposals	A	R					I
Hold public opening of (technical) proposals		I			C	R	I
Appoint evaluation panel		I	I			R	
Evaluate technical proposals	A	I	R		C		
Hold public opening of financial proposals		I			C	R	I
Evaluate financial proposals and prepare evaluation report	A	I	R		C		
Approve evaluation report		I	I		C	R	
Award contract and notify unsuccessful consultants	A	R					I

PART C: SHORTLISTING CONSULTANTS

3 Shortlisting consultants

3.1 How to shortlist consultants

Under RFP, you should shortlist consultants:

- by inviting and evaluating EOIs where the estimated value is Eastern Caribbean Dollars (XCD) 75,000 or more; or
- based on market knowledge, registered suppliers or other sources of information where the estimated value is less than XCD 75,000.

The shortlist should include a minimum of three consulting firms, where available, and a maximum of six.

All firms included on the shortlist must be qualified to deliver the consulting services in terms of staffing, managerial and organisational capabilities and relevant experience.

Where possible, the shortlist should consist of consultants of the same category and similar capacity and business objectives. For example, you should not shortlist a mix of private companies and non-governmental organisations.

References and templates:

- Regulations 34, 36 and 44 of the Public Procurement Regulations 2025
- Invitation to express interest notice (consulting firms) template

3.2 Invite EOIs and prepare shortlist

An invitation to express interest notice is used to maximise competition and secure a strong shortlist of qualified consulting firms by inviting all potential consulting firms to express interest.

Use the **Invitation to Express Interest (Consulting Firms) Notice** template to prepare the EOI notice. Make sure you use the notice for consulting firms, not individual consultants.

There is no minimum tendering period for submission of EOIs, but you should allow sufficient time for interested consulting firms to prepare and submit a high quality EOI.

The table below summarises the *minimum* advertising requirements for EOI notices under RFP:

Criteria	Advertising requirements
All EOI notices (immediate advertising)	• Publish on the GOM website; AND • Disseminate via a local public radio station.
All EOI notices (after advertising)	Notify in the next issue of the Official Gazette or any other GOM information channel.
PLUS	

All assignments over XCD 75,000	Publish in at least one English language media with adequate circulation to attract foreign tenderers. Notices published on mytenders.co.uk are automatically published on the international Contracts Finder and Find a Tender websites.
Procurement under an international or regional agreement	Publish in any media required by the agreement.

You may also advertise the EOI notice in *additional* media to reach more consulting firms and obtain greater competition. This is recommended for specialised requirements or where there are limited qualified firms within Montserrat. Other media could include:

- trade or sector-based magazines or websites relevant to the procurement;
- partner websites, such as CARICOM institutions that publish procurement opportunities;
- regional procurement websites which publish Caribbean public sector procurement tenders.

After advertising the notice, you may send a copy of the notice directly to any consulting firms who may be interested e.g. registered consultants, past consultants for similar contracts or other companies known to provide the consulting services. Send the notice only, with no additional information.

Receive EOIs until the time and date of the deadline. Late EOIs must be rejected.

The PPB or Departmental Procurement Committee (DPC) will appoint an evaluation panel to evaluate EOIs. Where possible, the same evaluation panel should later evaluate proposals.

Evaluate each EOI using the criteria in the EOI notice. These will typically include:

- relevant experience of similar assignments and working in Montserrat or similar environments;
- availability of suitably qualified and experienced staff; and
- managerial and organisational capabilities.

The evaluation panel should decide whether to evaluate EOIs on a pass/fail basis against each criterion or to award scores with a maximum number of points assigned to each criterion. **Do not shortlist any firm which fails against any criterion or does not meet any minimum acceptable score set!**

Prepare a short report summarising the evaluation of EOIs and recommending which firms should be shortlisted.

The shortlist must be approved by the PPB or DPC, depending on value.

3.3 Prepare shortlist for low value assignments

For assignments with an estimated value below XCD 75,000, the short list may be established without inviting EOIs. Use:

- market knowledge;

- the GPS supplier register;
- past contracts awarded by the PE or other PEs;
- relevant professional associations; and/or
- recommendations by technical experts, providing they have no conflict of interest.

PART D: PREPARE AND ISSUE THE RFP DOCUMENT

4 Prepare and issue the RFP document

4.1 Purpose of the RFP document

RFP documents provide consulting firms with all the information they need to prepare and submit technical and financial proposals. They include:

- the terms of reference for the consulting services required;
- the rules of the tendering process and what to include in technical and financial proposals;
- how proposals will be evaluated, including the methodology and criteria to be used; and
- the type and key conditions of the proposed contract.

A well drafted RFP document is essential for a successful procurement process.

References and templates:

- Section 30(1) of the Public Procurement Act 2025
- Regulation 37 of the Public Procurement Regulations 2025
- Standard RFP documents
- Solicitation approval form

4.2 Standard tender documents

You must use the standard RFP document issued by GPS as a template for preparing your RFP document. The standard document is designed to:

- ensure compliance with the Act and Regulations;
- reduce the time required to prepare an RFP document;
- make it easier for consultants to prepare proposals by providing standard forms; and
- make it easier to evaluate proposals with information submitted in standard forms.

There is also a standard RFP document for framework agreements for consulting services.

- See the **Guide to Framework Agreements** for additional guidance on preparing an RFP document for a framework agreement.

The standard RFP is suitable for most GOM consultancy requirements. If your RFP is for specialised, complex or particularly high value consulting services, an alternative standard document may be required. In such cases, consult GPS.

4.3 Prepare the RFP document

Use the **standard RFP document** to prepare your RFP document.

Some parts of the document are standard and must not be changed. Others need information specific to the procurement process to be completed before issuing the RFP document:

- Follow the guidance notes in *[green italics]* to insert relevant information or delete parts that are not needed
- Do not change standard text in black font
- **Remember to delete all guidance notes before issuing the document to tenderers.**

The following table shows how to use each section of the standard RFP:

Section of RFP	Guidance on Use
Section 1: Instructions to Consultants	This section provides standard text on the rules of the procurement process and how to prepare proposals. Do not change any text in this section!
Section 2: Data Sheet	The clauses in the Data Sheet provide additional information to supplement the Instructions to Consultants. Enter text relevant to your RFP e.g. details of any pre-proposal meeting and the date and time of the proposal deadline.
Section 3: Evaluation Criteria	The RFP contains: • standard criteria which typically apply e.g. criteria to evaluate substantial responsiveness of proposals and eligibility of tenderers; • suggested text for technical criteria, sub-criteria and maximum scores; and • sample wording for each of the different evaluation methodologies. Add, edit or delete the standard text to indicate the evaluation methodology used and include technical criteria, sub-criteria and maximum scores relevant to the assignment. Unless the evaluation is based on quality alone, insert the minimum technical score.
Section 4: Terms of Reference (TOR)	Insert TOR for the consulting services required. • See the Guide to Procurement Planning for how to prepare your TOR

Section of RFP	Guidance on Use
Section 5: General Conditions of Contract (GCC)	This section provides standard contract clauses which apply to all contracts. Do not change any text in this section!
Section 6: Special Conditions of Contract (SCC)	The clauses in the SCC supplement or amend the GCC. Enter text relevant to the proposed contract conditions e.g. payment terms. Most of the SCC should be drafted before the tender is issued. Final details, such as the supplier's address, will be added at contract award stage.
Section 7: Contract Forms	This section contains standard contract forms, including a contract agreement and templates for an advance payment security. Enter relevant details in the contract agreement before the RFP is issued e.g. the name of the procuring entity and description of the consulting services. All other details will be added at contract award stage. Do not edit the security form, which is standard.
Section 8: Technical Proposal Forms	These forms are to be used by consultants to prepare their technical proposals. Most are standard and should not be changed. Edit as required e.g. to add the correct address for proposal submission. Add any additional forms required and delete any forms not required.
Section 9: Financial Proposal Forms	These forms are to be used by consultants to prepare their financial proposals. Most are standard and should not be changed. Edit as required e.g. to add the correct address for proposal submission. Add any additional forms required and delete any forms not required.

Ensure that the proposal deadline included is at least:

- 21 days for RFP limited to domestic consultants; or
- 30 days for RFP where the shortlist includes international consultants.

These are the *minimum* tendering periods, but you may include longer. A longer period should be used for more complex requirements.

Select which evaluation methodology and type of contract to use!

Under RFP, you may use one of four different evaluation methodologies:

- evaluation based on quality only;
- evaluation based on quality and cost;

- evaluation based on quality within a fixed budget; or
- evaluation based on least cost with an acceptable level of quality.

The RFP for consulting services includes two different types of contract: time-based and lump sum. These have different mechanisms for pricing and payment.

Make sure you select the most appropriate evaluation methodology and type of contract to use, before drafting the RFP document.

- ➔ See section 6.2 for more information on the evaluation methodologies.
- ➔ See the **Guide to Contract Award and Management** for more information on types of contract.

4.4 Approve and issue the RFP document

Use the **Solicitation Approval form** to record approval of your RFP document before it is issued, unless the estimated value is XCD 50,000 or less. Complete the overview of procurement before requesting the following approvals:

- Part A for approval within the PE; and
- Part B for approval by GPS if the estimated value is more than XCD 100,000.

Issue the approved RFP document to all shortlisted consultants at the same time. The RFP document should be uploaded to mytenders.co.uk and the link sent to all shortlisted consultants direct from mytenders.co.uk.

PART E: MANAGE TENDERING

5 Manage tendering

5.1 Clarifications and modifications

During the tendering period you must respond promptly to any requests for clarification received from shortlisted consultants. Where a request for clarification is received:

- ensure that it was received, in writing, before the deadline for clarifications stated in the RFP document: do not respond to any requests for clarification which are not in writing or received late;
- prepare a written response which must answer the question(s) without identifying the consultant who asked the question(s);
- assign numbers to clarification responses so that consultants can ensure they have received all clarifications;
- email the clarification to all shortlisted consultants at the same time.

If required, you may modify the RFP document by issuing a modification. Issue any modification, in writing, in the same way as clarifications. If the modification is issued close to the proposal deadline and/or consultants will require additional time to take the modification into account, extend the proposal deadline.

References and templates:

- Section 30(2)-(5) of the Public Procurement Act 2025
- Regulation 16 of the Public Procurement Regulations 2025

5.2 Receive proposals

Proposals may be submitted electronically through <https://mytenders.co.uk/> or in hard copy to the address given in the RFP document.

If submitted electronically, the system will automatically record the time and date of receipt and keep electronic proposals secure until the proposal deadline.

Where a consultant submits its proposal in hard copy, you must:

- issue a receipt for the proposal before it is placed in the tender box;
- keep a record of all proposals received, marking the name of the consultant and the date and time of receipt;
- keep all proposals secure and unopened in the tender box, ensuring they cannot be accessed before the proposal deadline;
- deliver the unopened proposals to the PPB or DPC immediately after the proposal deadline, ready for the public opening of proposals.

5.3 Hold public opening of proposals

All proposals must be opened in public and the inner envelope containing the technical proposal opened. Envelopes containing financial proposals must remain sealed. All

tenderers have the right to attend the public opening of proposals. This supports transparency in the procurement process.

References and templates:

- Section 30(4)-(5) of the Public Procurement Act 2025
- Regulation 38 of the Public Procurement Regulations 2025
- Record of Public Opening for request for proposals

The public opening will be conducted by:

- the PPB, where the estimated value of the procurement is XCD 200,000 or higher; or
- the DPC where the value is below XCD 200,000.

Prepare for the opening by ensuring that a suitable room, facilities and staff are available. Ensure you have a computer with internet access to open proposals submitted electronically.

At the opening, first open and read out any withdrawal notices. Locate the corresponding proposal and do not open it!

Then open the outer envelope of all other proposals that were received on time, in turn. Open the inner envelope containing the technical proposal but leave the envelope containing the financial proposal unopened. Read out and record:

- the name of each consultant; and
- the presence of a separately sealed financial proposal.

Important rules for public opening of technical proposals

- You must not accept or open any late proposal!
- You must not open any financial proposals!
- You must not open any proposal for which a withdrawal notice has been received on time!
- Do not discuss the merits of any proposal or reject any proposal received before the deadline; the evaluation panel will decide these matters.

Use the **Record of Public Opening for request for proposals form** to record the opening:

- Follow the guidance notes in *[green italics]* to record details of the proposals opened.
- Use only the page for technical proposals, deleting the page for financial proposals.
- Ensure the attendance record is signed by all persons who attend the opening.
- Members of the PPB or DPC who open proposals must sign to certify the record as a true record of the opening.

Send a copy of the record to all consultants whose proposals were opened.

PART F: EVALUATE TECHNICAL PROPOSALS

6 Evaluate technical proposals

6.1 The evaluation panel

The evaluation panel appointed by the PPB or DPC is responsible for evaluating proposals and preparing an evaluation report with recommendations for contract award.

Before starting the evaluation, every member of the evaluation panel must sign the

Declaration for Members of Evaluation Panels. This is to:

- confirm that you do not have a conflict of interest or to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest that does exist;
- confirm that you will keep the evaluation process confidential; and
- confirm that you will maintain the expected standards of integrity and professionalism.

You must evaluate proposals fairly, impartially and in accordance with the evaluation methodology and criteria in the RFP document!

- Only use the evaluation methodology and criteria in the RFP document!
- Base the evaluation only on information included in proposals or through any clarifications of proposals!
- Apply the evaluation criteria objectively and in the same way for all proposals!
- Ensure that all evaluation decisions are recorded and justified in the evaluation report!

The evaluation panel should work independently when awarding technical scores, before consolidating and comparing scores. For all other aspects of the evaluation, the evaluation panel should work together.

References and templates:

- Section 31(1) and (3) of the Public Procurement Act 2025
- Regulations 39-41 of the Public Procurement Regulations 2025
- Declaration for Members of Evaluation Panels (conflict of interest and confidentiality)
- Evaluation Report for consulting services
- Individual Evaluator Scoresheet
- Consolidated Technical Evaluation Scoresheet
- Clarification letter

6.2 Evaluation methodologies

There are four different evaluation methodologies which can be used to evaluate proposals for consulting services. The table below shows the four methodologies and when each should be used.

Evaluation methodology	When to use
Evaluation based on quality only The most advantageous proposal is the one with the highest technical score. Price is not a factor in the evaluation.	Should rarely be used as cost is not a factor in evaluation. Use when quality is the overriding factor e.g. for assignments: • which are highly specialised or complex, where it is hard to define precise TOR and consultants are expected to demonstrate innovation; • with a high downstream impact; or • that can be carried out in substantially different ways, so that proposals are hard to compare.
Evaluation based on quality and cost Technical and financial scores are weighted and the most advantageous proposal is the one with the highest combined score.	Use to balance the quality of proposals against the cost of the services, when there are well defined TOR. May be used for simple or complex assignments.
Evaluation based on quality within a fixed budget Consultants are informed of the budget and the most advantageous proposal is the one with the highest technical score which is within the budget.	Use when the assignment is simple and can be precisely defined and the budget is fixed.
Evaluation based on least cost with an acceptable level of quality The most advantageous proposal is the one with the lowest price, providing it passes the minimum technical threshold.	Use for assignments of a standard or routine nature where well-established practices and standards exist and the estimated value is less than XCD 100,000 e.g. financial audits, architectural and engineering design for non-complex works.

You must include the evaluation methodology, criteria and any weightings or minimum technical score in the RFP document. You should also include *either* the estimated level of input by key experts *or* the estimated budget. For evaluation based on quality within a fixed budget, you must include the fixed budget and state that any proposal which exceeds this maximum budget will be rejected.

6.3 Overview of evaluation

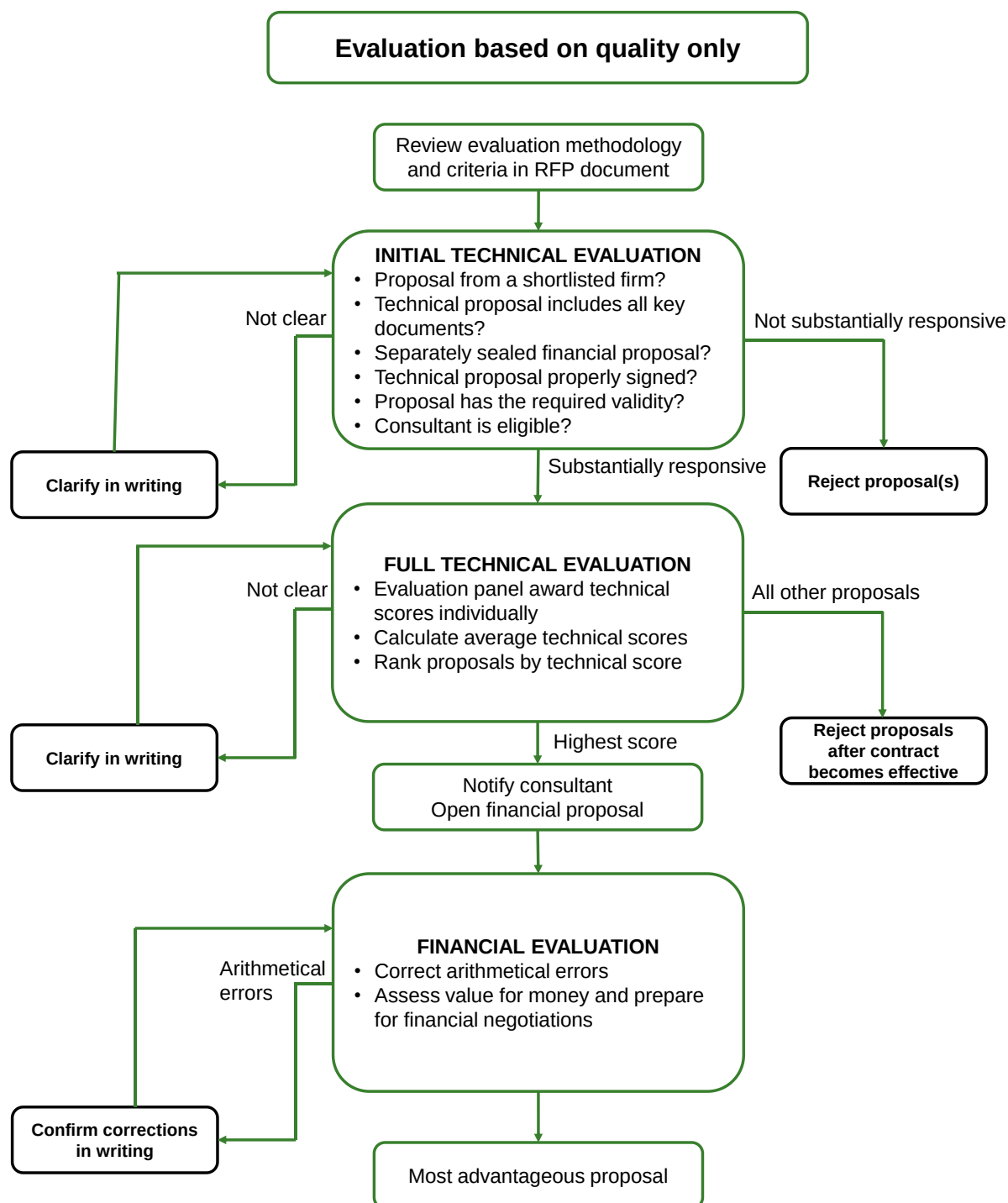
The purpose of the evaluation is to objectively assess and compare all proposals received on time, using the methodology and criteria specified in the RFP document, to determine the most advantageous proposal.

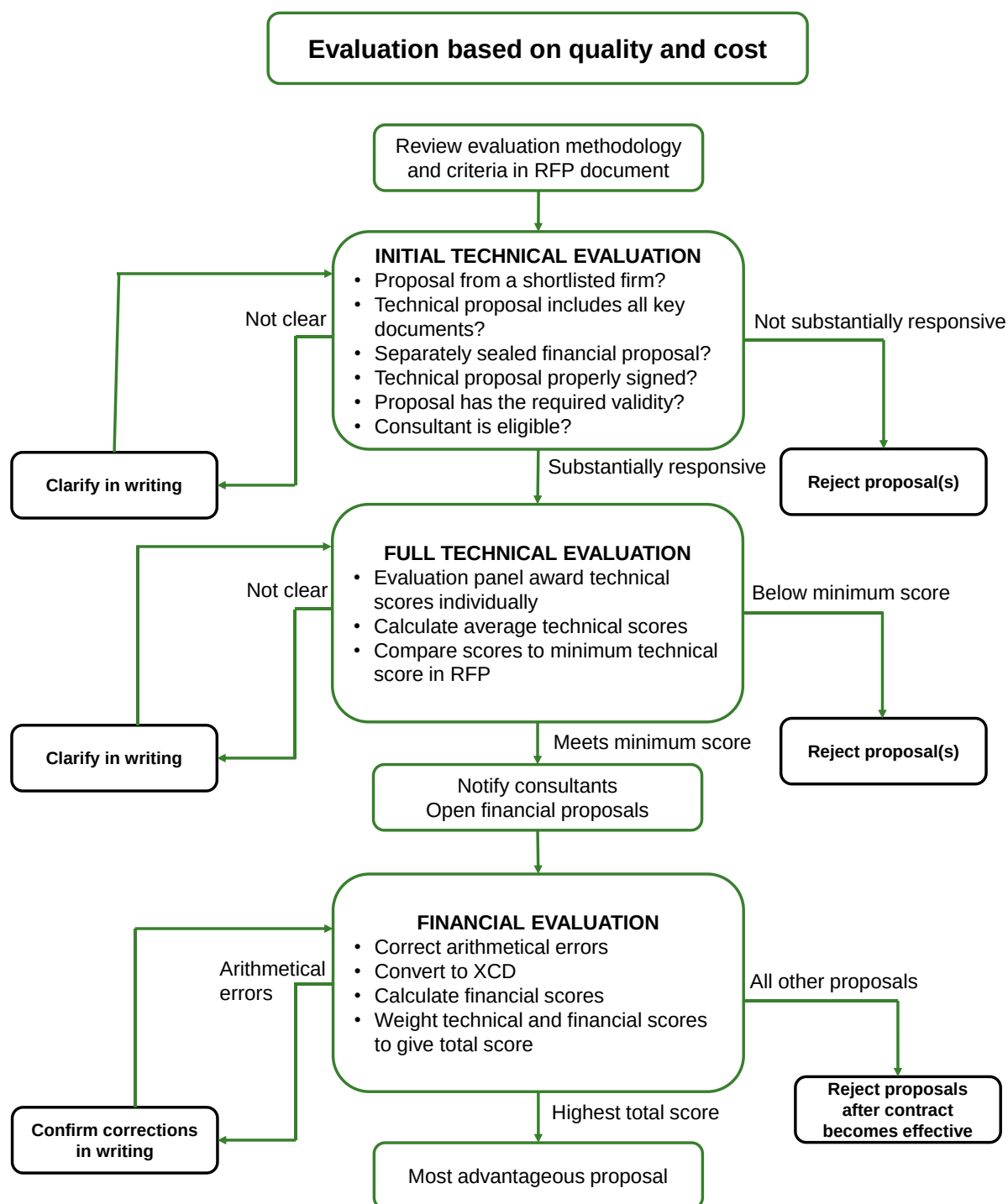
For all evaluation methodologies, the evaluation process follows the same stages:

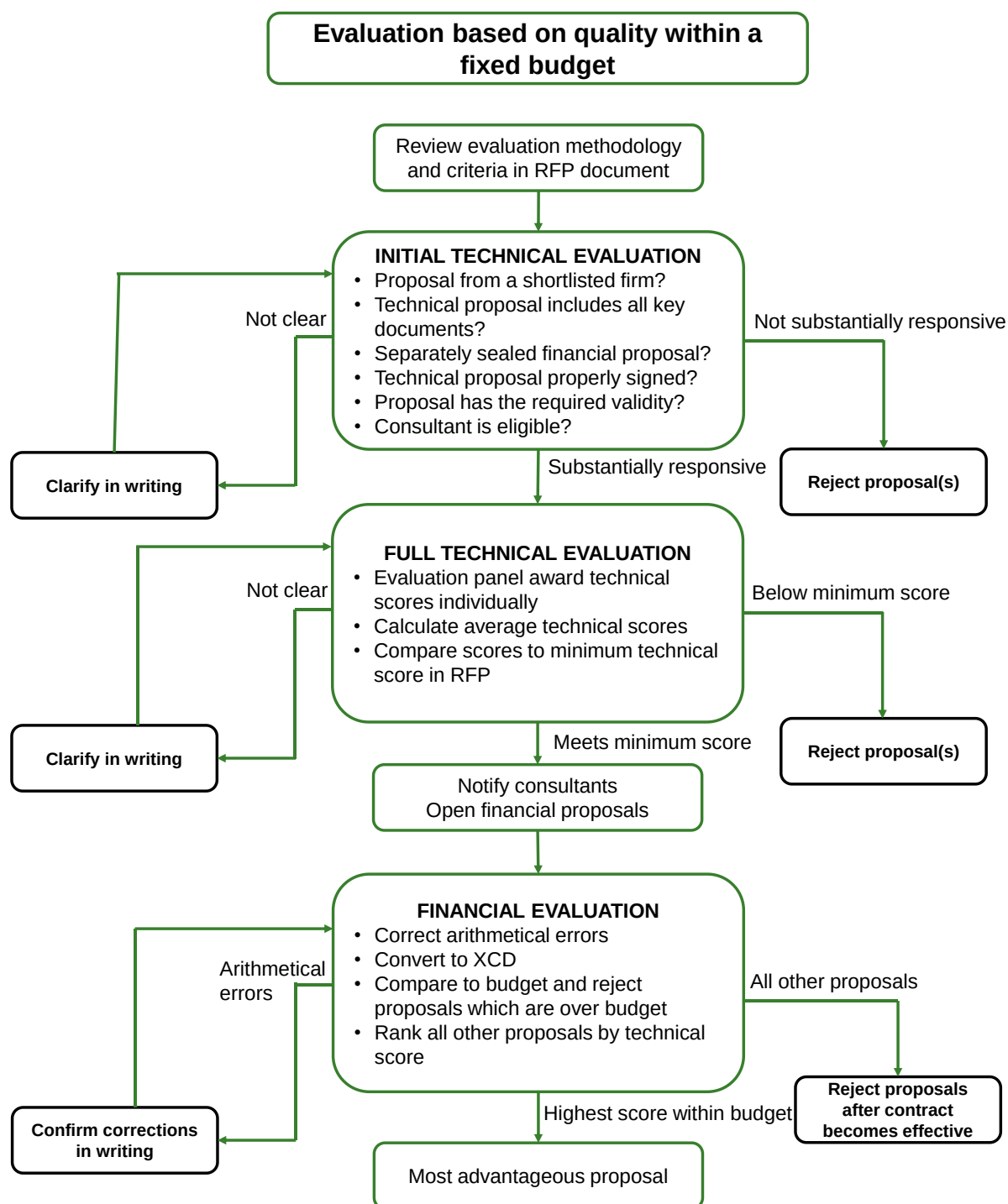
- **initial technical evaluation** to determine whether technical proposals are substantially responsive to the requirements of the RFP document, have been properly signed and are generally in order and whether consultants meet the eligibility criteria listed in the RFP document;
- **full technical evaluation** to award technical scores to each substantially responsive proposal by applying the criteria, sub-criteria and point system specified in the RFP document; and
- **financial opening and evaluation** to determine which is the most advantageous proposal, based on the evaluation methodology indicated in the RFP.

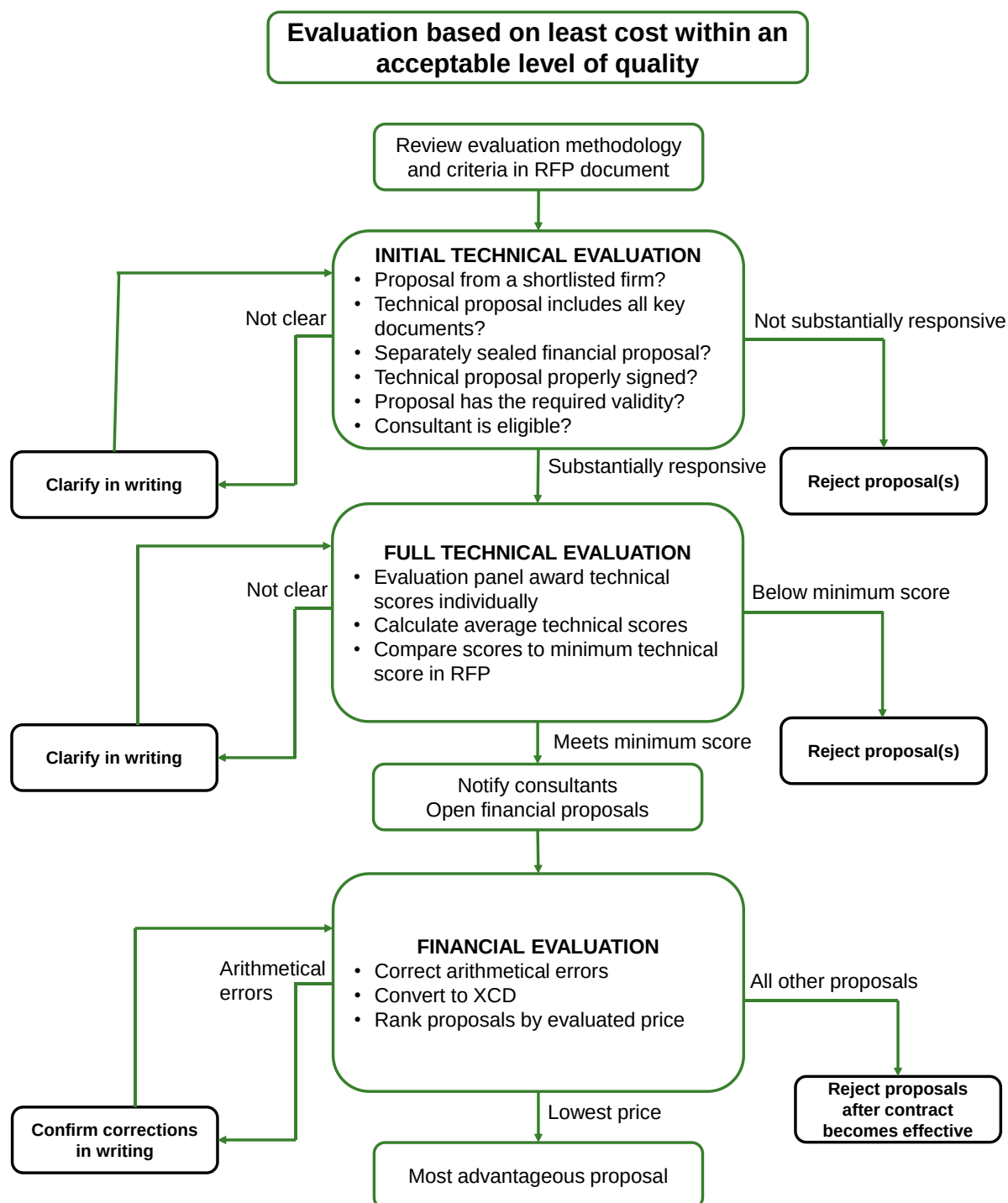
The technical evaluation is similar for all evaluation methodologies. The key difference is in selecting which proposals proceed to the financial opening and evaluation. The approach to financial evaluation and selecting the most advantageous proposal then differs for each evaluation methodology.

The flowcharts on the following pages summarise the evaluation process for each evaluation methodology.









6.4 How to determine substantial responsiveness

The evaluation panel must decide whether each proposal is “substantially responsive” or “not responsive” to the requirements of the RFP document.

Use the evaluation and eligibility criteria listed in section 3 of the RFP document as checklists to define what is meant by substantial responsiveness for both technical and financial proposals.

A proposal is considered to be **substantially responsive** if it conforms to all the terms, conditions and specifications of the RFP document without material deviation or reservations.

A material deviation is one which would detrimentally affect the scope, quality or performance of the consulting services or would change the consultant’s risk and responsibilities under the contract.

A proposal may still be considered substantially responsive if it contains:

- minor deviations that do not materially differ from the characteristics, terms, conditions and other requirements of the RFP document; or
- errors or oversights that can be corrected without touching on the substance of the proposal.

You must reject proposals which are not substantially responsive or do not achieve any minimum technical score!

You may clarify or correct minor deviations, errors or oversights.

The table below provides guidance on what would typically be considered material or minor deviations, but the evaluation panel should decide which deviations are material or minor for each proposal. It is important to treat all consultants in the same way when deciding whether a deviation is material or minor.

Material Deviations	Minor Deviations
Proposal submission forms not completed or signed	Proposal checklist missing
Failure to submit key technical information such as methodology, workplan, team composition or CVs	Missing details on Tenderer Information Form
Unacceptable methodology or completion schedule	Certificate of Incorporation not included
Consulting services do not comply with the description of requirements	Supplier Code of Conduct or Labour Compliance Declaration not included
Unacceptable payment terms proposed	Arithmetical errors
Breakdown of fees or reimbursable expenses not completed or signed	Formatting issues or spelling mistakes in the proposal

6.5 Clarification of proposals

You may request clarifications from consultants where there are minor deviations in a proposal or errors or oversights that can be corrected without touching on the substance of the proposal. For example, you may request a consultant to submit a missing document, providing it is not an essential document such as a proposal submission form, a key technical form or the breakdown of fees or reimbursable costs. Do not request a clarification where there is a material deviation.

Any clarification must be requested in writing, using the **clarification letter** template. The request and the response must be recorded in the evaluation report. Where GPS is providing facilitation services, it will assist with requesting clarifications from consultants.

During the financial evaluation, you must correct arithmetical errors in proposals following the procedure listed in section 1 of the RFP document. Where any corrections are made, ask the consultant to accept the correction through a clarification request. Where the consultant does not accept the correction, you must reject the proposal.

Proposal clarifications must not be used to amend the proposal price, with the exception of the correction of arithmetical errors.

6.6 Initial technical evaluation

The initial technical evaluation is used to assess whether proposals are substantially responsive to the requirements of the RFP document e.g. they contain all required documents, are generally in order and have been properly signed. This avoids the evaluation panel spending time conducting a full technical evaluation on proposals which are not responsive. The initial technical evaluation also eliminates consultants who are not eligible.

The table below shows the steps required to conduct and record the initial technical evaluation.

Step	What to do
Identify the criteria to apply	Review the tables of criteria in section 3 of the RFP document. These list the criteria which must be used for the evaluation and the documents or information required to demonstrate responsiveness. Section 3 of the RFP document also states which missing documents should result in rejection of the proposal and which may normally be obtained through a clarification request. However, the evaluation panel has the final decision on whether to consider missing documents as material or minor deviations.
Prepare evaluation grids	Use the preliminary examination tables in the evaluation report to record the results for each technical proposal opened. There are separate tables for: - substantial responsiveness of the technical proposal; and - eligibility. The tables in the evaluation report include the substantial responsiveness and eligibility criteria typically included in RFP

Step	What to do
	documents. You must edit the criteria so that they match the RFP document exactly. Delete any criteria which do not apply to the RFP document.
Evaluate technical proposals	Insert “yes” or “no” for each technical proposal against each criterion. Request clarifications from tenderers where required; see section 6.5 for guidance. Add notes underneath the tables to explain where you have accepted a minor deviation or requested a clarification.
Decide on substantial responsiveness	Complete the evaluation panel’s overall conclusion in the bottom rows of each table by entering “yes” or “no”.

Reject any proposal which is not substantially responsive, or where the consultant is not eligible. Rejected proposals will not be included in the full technical evaluation.

6.7 Full technical evaluation

The full technical evaluation is used to award technical scores to each substantially responsive proposal by applying the criteria, sub-criteria and point system specified in the RFP document.

Technical criteria, sub-criteria and the maximum scores for each must be related to the requirements of each assignment and listed in the RFP document!

Technical criteria should include:

- the consultant’s relevant experience for the assignment;
- the quality of the methodology and/or workplan proposed;
- the qualifications of key experts proposed; and
- where relevant, transfer of knowledge

The standard RFP includes example criteria, sub-criteria and indicative points.

The maximum scores must total 100 points!

The table below shows the steps required to conduct and record the full technical evaluation.

Step	What to do
Identify the criteria to apply	The evaluation panel should: • review the technical evaluation criteria in section 3 of the RFP document; and • discuss the criteria to ensure they have a shared understanding of the criteria and approach to scoring.

Step	What to do
Prepare individual scoresheets	The chair of the evaluation panel should use the individual evaluator scoresheet to prepare scoresheets by entering the following information from the RFP in the yellow cells: - the technical criteria, sub-criteria and maximum scores; - percentage weightings for key experts; and - the minimum technical score (unless evaluation is based on quality only).
Award technical scores individually	Each member of the evaluation panel should work independently to award scores to each proposal. Enter scores in white cells in the scoresheet. Total scores will be calculated automatically. Do not compare scores with other evaluators at this stage!
Compile scores	The chair of the evaluation panel should use the consolidated technical scoresheet to compile scores. Follow the instructions in the scoresheet to enter all required information, including technical scores from each evaluator for each proposal.
Compare scores and check for consistency	The evaluation panel should check scores for consistency of approach. Discuss any significant disparities in a meeting of the evaluation panel. In exceptional cases, where there has been inconsistency or misunderstanding, individual evaluators may adjust their scores. No evaluator is obliged to adjust his or her scores!
Determine which financial proposals to open	The consolidated technical scoresheet will automatically calculate total technical scores. It will also indicate whether a proposal has passed or failed against the minimum technical score (not relevant for evaluation based on quality only). The financial proposal(s) to open are: - the highest scoring proposal for evaluation based on quality alone; or - all proposals which meet or exceed the minimum technical scores for all other evaluation methodologies. Reject any proposal which does not meet the minimum technical score.

6.8 Prepare the technical evaluation section of the evaluation report

Complete the first sections of the **Evaluation Report template for consulting services** to record the results of the technical evaluation. Use all relevant standard text and follow the guidance notes to insert, edit or delete information specific to your evaluation.

Tips on using the Evaluation Report template

- Start by aligning the criteria in the initial technical evaluation grids in the appendices with the criteria in section 3 of your RFP document, as outlined in the sections above. Use the evaluation grids to complete the initial technical evaluation.
- Insert the consolidated technical scoresheet to show total technical scores.
- Then complete the main text which summarises the technical evaluation, including any proposals rejected for failing to meet the minimum technical score.

Complete the evaluation report after the financial evaluation!

PART G: OPEN AND EVALUATE FINANCIAL PROPOSALS

7 Open and evaluate financial proposals

7.1 Public opening of financial proposals

Notify the consultants whose financial proposals will be opened of the date, time and place for the opening. All consultants have the right to attend the public opening of financial proposals. This supports transparency in the procurement process.

Notify any consultants who did not achieve any minimum technical score or were considered not substantially responsive to the requirements of the RFP that their financial proposals will not be opened.

References and templates:

- Section 30(4) of the Public Procurement Act 2025
- Regulations 38(3) of the Public Procurement Regulations 2025
- Record of Public Opening for request for proposals

The public opening will be conducted by:

- the PPB, where the estimated value of the procurement is XCD 200,000 or higher; or
- the DPC where the value is below XCD 200,000.

Prepare for the opening by ensuring that a suitable room, facilities and staff are available. Ensure you have a computer with internet access to open proposals submitted electronically.

Open each financial proposal. Read out and record:

- the name of each consultant;
- the technical score of the consultant; and
- the total proposal price.

Use the **Record of Public Opening for request for proposals form** to record the opening:

- Follow the guidance notes in *[green italics]* to record details of the proposals opened.
- Use only the page for financial proposals, deleting the page for technical proposals.
- Ensure the attendance record is signed by all persons who attend the opening.
- Members of the PPB or DPC who open proposals must sign to certify the record as a true record of the opening.

Send a copy of the record to all consultants whose financial proposals were opened.

7.2 Financial evaluation

The financial evaluation is used to:

- determine whether financial proposals are substantially responsive to the requirements of the RFP document, have been properly signed and are generally in order;

- check that financial proposals are complete and consistent with technical proposals; and
- apply the methodology and criteria listed in section 3 of the RFP to determine the most advantageous proposal.

References and templates:

- Section 31(1) and (3) of the Public Procurement Act 2025
- Regulations 39-41 of the Public Procurement Regulations 2025
- Record of Public Opening for request for proposals
- Declaration for Members of Evaluation Panels (conflict of interest and confidentiality)
- Evaluation Report for consulting services
- Financial Scoresheet
- Clarification letter

To determine substantial responsiveness, use the same approach as for the initial technical evaluation:

- Identify the criteria to apply: review the table of financial evaluation criteria in **section 3 of the RFP document**;
- Prepare evaluation grids: use the financial evaluation table in the **evaluation report** and insert the criteria from the RFP document;
- Evaluate financial proposals: insert “yes” or “no” for each proposal against each criterion, requesting clarifications as required and adding notes to explain any minor deviations accepted or clarifications requested; and
- Decide on substantial responsiveness: enter “yes” or “no” in the bottom row to show the evaluation panel’s overall conclusion.

See section 6.4 for further guidance on how to determine substantial responsiveness and section 6.5 for how to request clarifications.

The table below shows the steps to complete the financial evaluation.

Step	What to do
Correct arithmetical errors	Check the calculations in all financial proposals for any errors. Use the methodology in section 1 of the RFP document to correct any errors. Ask the consultant to accept the correction through a clarification request: see section 6.5 for guidance. Where the consultant does not accept the correction, reject the proposal.

Step	What to do
Convert proposals to a single currency	Where all proposals are in XCD or the evaluation is based on quality only, skip this step. Where any proposals are in different currencies, convert prices to XCD. Use the exchange rate indicated in section 1 of the RFP document which is usually the exchange rate of the Bank of Montserrat on the date of the proposal deadline.
Determine the most advantageous proposal	This step is different, depending on the evaluation methodology used! See further details below.

The table below shows how to determine the most advantageous proposal for each evaluation methodology.

Evaluation methodology	Steps
Evaluation based on quality only	Only the financial proposal of the most advantageous proposal has been opened. Analyse the proposal to assess whether it offers value for money and to prepare for financial negotiations.
Evaluation based on quality and cost	Use the financial scoresheet to calculate financial and total scores. This is an Excel spreadsheet with automatic calculations. The first tab of the spreadsheet has instructions for how to use it. First enter the technical and financial weightings from the RFP and the price of the lowest priced proposal. Then enter the technical score and evaluated price of each proposal. The financial score, weighted scores and total combined score will be calculated automatically. The proposal with the highest combined score is the most advantageous proposal.
Evaluation based on quality within a fixed budget	Check the evaluated price of each proposal against the maximum budget stated in the RFP. Reject any proposal which exceeds the budget. Rank all other proposals by technical score. The proposal with the highest technical score, which is within the budget, is the most advantageous proposal.
Evaluation based on least cost with an acceptable level of quality	Rank all proposals by evaluated price.

Evaluation methodology	Steps
	The proposal with the lowest evaluated price is the most advantageous proposal.

7.3 Hold negotiations

Negotiations are often held under the RFP method, but the scope of negotiations permitted depends on the evaluation methodology used.

References and templates:

- Section 22(5) of the Public Procurement Act 2025
- Regulations 39(13)-(16), 40(5) and 41(4) of the Public Procurement Regulations 2025

The table below shows the scope of negotiations permitted for each evaluation methodology.

Evaluation methodology	Scope of negotiations
Evaluation based on quality only	Price was not taken into account during evaluation so may be negotiated. You may also negotiate details of the technical proposal.
Evaluation based on quality and cost <i>or</i> Evaluation based on quality within a fixed budget	You may negotiate technical details, such as adjustments to the TOR, methodology or workplan, precise inputs by key experts or special conditions of contract. No price negotiations permitted.
Evaluation based on least cost with an acceptable level of quality	No negotiations permitted.

Prepare for negotiations by listing the topics for discussion and agreeing GOM's objectives for each point. Decide what would be the ideal or acceptable outcomes.

Invite the consulting firm for negotiations, stating the date, time and location (or online) and sharing an agenda.

During negotiations, discuss all points and record minutes. **Do not commit GOM to a contract during negotiations as approvals are still required before contract award!**

Ask the consulting firm to agree to the negotiation minutes. Include details in the evaluation report.

If negotiations fail to result in an acceptable contract within 14 days, terminate the negotiations and invite the next ranked firm for negotiations.

Inform the first-ranked consultant of the reasons for terminating negotiations. You must not reopen the earlier negotiations.

7.4 Finalise the evaluation report

Complete the final sections of the **Evaluation Report template for consulting services** to record the results of the financial evaluation. Use all relevant standard text and follow the guidance notes to insert, edit or delete information specific to your evaluation.

Tips on using the Evaluation Report template

- Start by aligning the criteria in the evaluation grid for substantial responsiveness of financial proposals in the appendix with the criteria in section 3 of your RFP document, as outlined above. Use the evaluation grid to assess the substantial responsiveness of financial proposals.
- For evaluation based on quality and cost, insert the financial scoresheet to show total combined scores.
- Then complete the main text which summarises the financial evaluation, including any negotiations and the recommendation for award.
- All members of the evaluation panel must sign the completed evaluation report.

7.5 Approval of evaluation report

Submit the evaluation report to the PPB or DPC for approval of the contract award recommendation. You should submit to:

- the PPB, where the value of the procurement is XCD 200,000 or higher; or
- the DPC where the value is below XCD 200,000.

Following approval:

- if the contract value is XCD 100,000 or more, issue a notice of intention to award to all consultants who submitted a proposal and wait for the expiry of the standstill period;
- debrief consultants on request;
- issue a contract to the successful consultant, using the draft contract in sections 5-7 of the RFP document; and
- if the contract value is XCD 100,000 or more, publish a contract award notice.

All procurement under the RFP method will require a standstill period, unless the value is less than XCD 100,000 or urgent public interest considerations require the contract to be awarded without a standstill period.

A contract manager will be designated to ensure the signing and mobilisation of the contract and to manage the contract through to completion.

- See the **Guide to Contract Award and Management** for more detailed guidance on how to award and manage contracts, including the requirement for a standstill period.

PART H: PROCUREMENT OF INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS

8 Procurement of individual consultants

8.1 When to use an individual consultant

Use an individual consultant where:

- a team of experts is not required;
- no additional professional support is required that an individual could not provide for themselves; and
- the experience and qualifications of the individual are the primary requirement.

Use a consulting firm where:

- multiple experts or inputs in several different disciplines are required;
- there is a requirement for coordination of multiple inputs or significant administrative support; or
- a team of experts are required to work together with collective responsibility.

You should decide whether you need a consulting firm or an individual consultant as part of your procurement planning.

References and templates:

- Section 24(1) of the Public Procurement Act 2025
- Regulation 42 of the Public Procurement Regulations 2025
- GPS invitation to express interest notice (individual consultants) template

8.2 Process for procurement of individual consultants

The flowchart below shows the steps in the process for the procurement of individual consultants with guidance on each step.

