

# ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR IN EVALUATION

The evaluation facilitator, typically the buyer, manages the evaluation process of a procurement.

The facilitator's general responsibilities include:

1. Creating the Score Sheets.
2. Scheduling the Evaluator Conference and all evaluation meetings.
3. Creating an evaluation packet for each evaluator that contains the necessary documents to complete the evaluation in an effective and compliant manner.
4. Managing the consensus meeting and updating the consensus score sheets.
5. Managing the demonstrations, if applicable.
6. When the evaluation is complete, compiling the required evaluation documentation for the comprehensive procurement record.

## Score Sheets

The facilitator creates the evaluation score sheets and includes the individual score sheets in the evaluation packet he/she compiles for each evaluator. (The buyer will create the score sheets if the buyer is not the facilitator.)

For more information about the evaluation score sheets, go to [Evaluation Score Sheets](#).

## Evaluator Conference

The facilitator contacts the evaluators to schedule the Evaluator Conference as soon as feasibly possible after the bids are opened and checked for compliance. The meeting date, time, and venue are generally communicated through an email calendar request. (The buyer typically schedules the evaluation meetings if the buyer is not the facilitator.)

The Evaluator Conference is provided by OSP, or by an APO if the agency has someone in this position. Typically, it lasts about an hour but is often shorter, and occasionally longer, depending on the amount of questions the evaluators have.

At this meeting, the facilitator provides each evaluator with his/her packet of evaluation materials, as well as instruction regarding:

1. The purpose and general process of evaluation.

2. Executing the individual scoring and consensus meeting according to procurement law.
3. The confidentiality and security of the proposals and the evaluation process.

For APOs who will facilitate the evaluator conference for their agency, contact OSP if you have any questions regarding the process and procedures for evaluation. OSP can provide a content outline for the facilitator to use for instructing the evaluators on the above topics.

For agency buyers who will utilize an OSP representative to provide the evaluation conference, contact OSP when you are ready to schedule the meeting. OSP will set up a conference call and forward the necessary documents for the conference to the buyer who will compile them in the evaluation packets for the evaluators to have on hand during the meeting.

### **The Evaluation Packet**

The facilitator/buyer should compile the following items in the evaluation packet for each evaluator:

1. A Confidentiality and Conflict Disclosure Form.
  - This form outlines the confidentiality requirements of the evaluation process. It also requires that the evaluator disclose any issue that may pose a conflict for the evaluator in participating in the scoring process.
    - A conflict may cause an evaluator to be removed from the evaluation team. OSP can provide guidance regarding this.
    - Each evaluator (and anyone attending the evaluation meetings, such as the agency procurement staff) must read and sign this document. The signed forms must be retained in the official procurement record.
2. A copy of the Evaluation of Proposals Policy, which can be found on the “Laws, Rules and Guidelines” page of the OSP website.
  - OSP can answer any questions regarding this policy.
3. A copy of the solicitation document with all attachments, as well as any Q&A, Addendum, or other related documents that were posted with the RFP.
  - Evaluators should read and be familiar with all solicitation documents, especially the contractual requirements, prior to scoring the proposals.
4. A complete copy of each proposal. (Technical portion only; not pricing.)

5. An individual score sheet for each proposal.
  - The individual score sheet lists each evaluation question that must be scored by the evaluator.
  - Individual score sheets will be returned to the facilitator prior to the consensus meeting, typically the day before the consensus.
6. A copy of the Scoring Description Table.
  - This describes the value assigned to each point used in scoring. It provides guidance for the evaluator in determining a score.
7. The Evaluation Process and Guidelines document for evaluators to use as reference when completing the individual scoring. A copy of this document can be provided by OSP.

## **The Facilitator's Duties During Evaluation**

The evaluation facilitator is responsible for guiding the evaluators through the evaluation process. This may consist of, but is not limited to:

1. Following up with the evaluators during the individual scoring process to ensure the individual score sheets will be completed and submitted in a timely manner.
2. Entering the individual scores onto the Consensus Score Sheet.
3. Reviewing the consensus score sheet to determine for which evaluation items discussion is necessary.
  - Although evaluators should review and discuss all evaluation items, those items where the scoring shows a greater disparity of scores among the evaluators (for example: scores of 2s and 4s on the same item) are areas where the facilitator should ensure that thorough discussion takes place.
4. Scheduling the date, time, and venue for the consensus meeting.
5. Directing and encouraging discussion during the consensus meeting. Pointing out focus points where consensus discussion may be needed.
6. Handling the elimination of a proposal from the evaluation process should an evaluator(s) point out a technicality in the proposal content that would deem it non-responsive.

- During evaluation, committee members should consider whether each proposal is “responsive.” A “responsive” proposal conforms in all material respects to the specifications and requirements set forth in the solicitation.
    - If any evaluator initially considers any of the proposals to not be responsive, the evaluator should notify the facilitator.
    - The facilitator (or buyer), after consulting with the committee, should determine whether to eliminate the proposal from further evaluation as non-responsive, or whether the committee should proceed with the evaluation of that proposal as being arguably or potentially responsive.
      - Contact OSP if you have questions regarding the responsiveness of a proposal.
    - If the facilitator (buyer) determines that the proposal is clearly not responsive and should be eliminated from further evaluation, he/she must record that determination in writing along with the justification for it.
      - To notify a prospective contractor of the rejection of its proposal for being non-responsive, see Procurement Manual section 7.3 Executing an RFP, Step 5.
7. Requesting clarification of the proposal content should the evaluators feel that they are unable to score an item due to the proposal response being ambiguous or unclear.
- Contact OSP for guidance should you have questions about the clarification procedure.
8. Coordinating the input of a subject matter expert should the evaluators feel this is necessary to accurately score a proposal item(s).
- Contact OSP for guidance should you have questions about the procedure for utilizing a subject matter expert in evaluation.
9. Updating the consensus score sheets (most efficiently, in real time during consensus) as evaluators decide to adjust their original, individual scores.
10. Ensuring that all score sheets are signed, and that all evaluation documents are collected for the comprehensive procurement record after the consensus meeting.

## **Critical Factors for a Successful Evaluation**

The following are critical factors for evaluators and facilitators to keep in mind during an evaluation. A facilitator should be prepared to guide evaluators in these matters should questions arise. The Evaluator Conference Guide (can be requested from OSP) and the Evaluation Process and Guidelines for Evaluators documents are good resources for this information. A facilitator may also contact OSP for additional guidance.

- Evaluation is a confidential process and proposal content must be kept secure.
  - Only the buyer/procurement personnel/evaluation facilitator, the evaluators, and any requested subject matter expert(s) may have access to the information provided in the proposals.
- When assigning point values, evaluators must use only the whole numbers in the scoring key at the top of the Individual Score Worksheet and as shown on the Scoring Description Table.
- Evaluators should be free from any irrational bias and assign the number from the Scoring Description Table that most fairly corresponds to the technical value of the response.
- The comment column on the individual score sheet is provided so that evaluators can note their thoughts regarding the relative strengths and/or weaknesses of a proposal response, but it is not mandatory to make a written comment.
  - Keep in mind that individual score sheets are subject to the Freedom of Information Act so make sure comments are appropriate and professional.
- Evaluators must enter a score for every question field.
  - Do not leave any blank score fields. To indicate that a response does not appear acceptable, evaluators may use a zero (0).
  - Consider the quality and adequacy of each response *as it directly addresses the specific criteria* and assign the score that best corresponds to the quality description in the scoring key.
  - If a particular proposal item is outside an evaluator's realm of experience, he/she must still assign a score to the best of his/her judgement and may rely on other committee members' expertise during consensus discussion to assist in finalizing an individual score.
- Scoring should be based on the individual merit of the proposal. Proposals should not be compared and scored against the other proposals.
- Evaluators must score *only* on the content of the proposal and how it responds to the criteria set forth in the solicitation. Do not refer to outside sources or knowledge

(such as prior knowledge of the prospective contractor, the internet, other media, etc.) as a basis for the score. Do not assign point values based on non-substantive elements of a proposal, such as type size, font style, paper color, etc.

- Score *consistently* among prospective contractors as to any areas where the responses are substantially the same.
  - Example: If an evaluator gives a prospective contractor a score of **3 points** for a call center being open 8:00-5:00, every other prospective contractor scored by that evaluator who has a call center open 8:00-5:00 **MUST also have a score of 3 points** from that evaluator.
- Do not have side discussions with another individual committee member regarding the proposals. All discussions should take place during the consensus meeting only.
- If an evaluator finds information in a proposal that appears to conflict with the solicitation requirements or does not meet them, notify the facilitator immediately. The facilitator/buyer will seek resolution.
- If an evaluator finds information for which clarification is needed from the prospective contractor, notify the facilitator/buyer immediately. If necessary, the buyer will contact the prospective contractor and provide clarification information to the evaluators.
- If the committee feels it may need the expertise of a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for highly technical items in a proposal, the facilitator can provide direction regarding this.
- Keep in mind:
  1. A solicitation may specify a minimum technical score required to pass evaluation.
  2. The cost points can affect the ranking and final outcome of the apparent successful prospective contractor.
- If you have a question regarding the evaluation process or the Individual Score Worksheet, please notify the facilitator who will seek clarification as needed.

## **Compiling the Comprehensive Procurement Record**

After the evaluation, the facilitator must ensure that all score sheets are complete and signed. These become part of the comprehensive procurement record.

The facilitator must also collect all copies of the proposals and any other documentation created by the evaluators during evaluation. Proposals with any marks deemed meaningful,

and the other retained documents, must be included as permanent documents in the contract folder and provided as comprehensive documents in the event of a FOIA request.