



Canadian Association of Management Consultants    Association canadienne des conseillers en management

The **Single Voice** of Management Consulting in Canada

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Mr. Wayne Arthurs, MPP  
Pickering – Ajax – Uxbridge  
Parliamentary Assistant to the Chair of Management Board of Cabinet  
Chair of the “Doing Business with the Ontario Government Task Force”  
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Dear Mr. Arthurs,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Management Consultants (CAMC) I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to participate in the “Doing Business with the Ontario Government” Task Force hearings held recently across the province. The CAMC members who attended found the hearings informative and productive. When you met with our group before the formal Task Force proceedings began in Toronto, we were pleased to hear that the themes you mentioned reflect many of the points that CAMC has been raising at the sessions. We look forward to seeing the final report and recommendations from the Task Force.

As you know, the CAMC members raised a number of points during the hearings. We want to take this opportunity to highlight them one more time.

- There should be distinction in RFPs between management consulting and IT projects. Management consulting covers a broad range of services, and reflects diverse competencies. They are delivered by large, medium and small partnerships, corporations, consortia, and sole providers.
- Many of the VORs currently with the Ontario Government have built-in biases against small and medium-sized firms and small providers. For example, the information and level of detail required can make it onerous for small providers to bid.

We would also like to clarify an apparent misunderstanding that came to light at one of the Task Force meetings. The CAMC was not consulted by MBS and did not provide any advice or recommendations regarding the RFP for VOR MBS-BMS-01 prior to it being issued. We did, however, meet with MBS after it was issued and provide suggestions for future VORs.

At many of the Task Force Hearings, CAMC members highlighted five principles that we think should drive the design of any Vendor of Record RFP for management consulting services. These principles are as follows:

Principle 1:

The structure of any RFP for management consulting services should reflect the true nature of management consulting, where the assignments (whether “solution-based” or “task-based”) are typically defined in terms of desired processes, deliverables or outcomes, rather than roles or resources. Furthermore, the qualifications for each and every assignment should be defined in terms of consulting competencies that are specific to the assignment.

Principle 2:

The RFP structure, text and requirements should be kept as simple as possible in order to get the maximum number of responses from qualified proponents and for the ease of OPS clients. Firms should qualify based on a minimum set of essential consulting competencies, based on previous assignment descriptions and supported by client references.

Principle 3:

VORs should be equally available to all firms, regardless of size, structure or business model or line of service. The VOR evaluation process should not discriminate against how services are to be provided. As well, sufficient time should be provided in the VOR schedule for potential proponents to organize themselves in order to qualify under the mandatory requirements, (e.g.) in complying with legal form. Unincorporated entities should be given the opportunity to incorporate; sole providers should be given the opportunities to form consortia; and so on.

Principle 4:

Firms should be able to qualify independently of any particular tool, technology, methodology, or proprietary body of knowledge. The qualifications and services should be defined in terms of broadly defined and generally understood consulting competencies. If there are requirements for a specific body of knowledge or experience, such criteria can be identified at the RFR stage.

Principle 5:

Information should be collected from respondents only when reasonably required by the government to evaluate bids and protect its legitimate interests.

Financial information about firms should be collected only if MBS has a fair and effective way of using it to evaluate the financial capability of respondents to provide the contracted services. Information on the pricing of client assignments should be categorized, rather than required in exact amounts.

It should also be taken into account that respondents are often bound by confidentiality agreements that limit what they can disclose about previous projects or clients.

In addition to these principles, there were several other concerns and recommendations raised by CAMC members:

- RFPs are generally open for bidding for too short a time. This discriminates against smaller firms or newly organized entities that have to set aside substantial percentages of their otherwise billable time.
- Too frequently RFP deadlines are extended, usually at the last possible moment. This calls the integrity of the RFP process into question.
- Too frequently, the government's evaluation process is unilaterally extended beyond that specified in the RFP. Aside from the obvious issue of fairness, this required small firms to lock in their resource for an additional and unplanned for period of time.
- Debriefings for bidders are usually less-than-helpful. Direct bid comparisons are not possible and too often the officials giving the debriefing were not directly or heavily involved in the evaluation.
- Rules with respect to communication between bidders and government officials should be more strictly enforced.

Again, we thank you for allowing CAMC to participate in these hearings and trust that the recommendations we have provided will prove to be useful and easily implemented in future VOR RFPs.

Should you require additional information or if the CAMC can provide further assistance with respect to the procurement process of the Government of Ontario, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Heather Osler, CAE  
President and CEO