




Title:	Evaluations Policy and Procedures
Reference Number:	PTG-03-14
Approval Date:	8 October 2014
Administrative Responsibility:	Team Leader Finance
Approver:	 Secretary General

1 POLICY

1.1 Purpose

- (1) To establish a framework for how the Secretariat calls for and evaluates the award of grants and applications for tenders for goods, services and capital works.
- (2) This policy is part of a set of policies and procedures that deal collectively with the procurement of goods, services and capital works and the award of grants. A diagram illustrating this framework is provided in clause 3.3.

1.2 Scope

- (1) This policy governs the call for applications under the Procurement and Tendering Policy and Procedures, and the Grants Policy and Procedures.
- (2) It does not extend to applications for permanent or temporary employment with the Secretariat.
- (3) Unless permitted otherwise by written approval of the Secretary General, all staff must abide by this policy.

1.3 Definitions

In this policy, the following words and phrases have the following meanings:

"applications" means collectively, all tender documents, expression of interests and bids under the Procurement and Tendering Policy and Procedures and all applications for grants under the Grants Policy and Procedures;

"call for applications" means collectively, all advertisements calling for tenders, expressions of interest, and bids under the Procurement and Tendering Policy and

Procedures and all advertisements calling for applications under the Grants Policy and Procedures;

“evaluators” means any staff member or independent person approved under either the Procurement and Tendering Policy and Procedures or the Grants Policy and Procedures to evaluate applications.

1.4 Statements

- (1) The call for applications and the subsequent evaluation of those applications are 2 critical stages in the overall process of identifying persons or organisations to either provide specific services or goods for the Secretariat or to be awarded a grant.
- (2) The overall process must be:
 - (a) fair, impartial and in accordance with the evaluation criteria approved as part of the initial approval process under the Procurement and Tendering Policy and Procedures or Grants Policy and Procedures; and
 - (b) carefully recorded to ensure integrity and clear evidence that the process has been open, transparent, secure and confidential.

1.5 Methods of submission of applications

- (1) The Secretariat has 3 accepted methods for the submission of applications:
 - (a) electronically;
 - (b) by postal mail;
 - (c) hand delivery.
- (2) Staff must use the electronic submission method wherever possible or provide it as an alternative to the other two methods.
- (3) Staff must consult the Information Management Unit regarding the use of a specific email address created to receive electronic applications.
- (3) Submission of applications by postal mail or hand delivery must be in the form of a sealed envelope and addressed in accordance with the directions specified in the call for applications.

1.6 Call for applications

- (1) To ensure the widest possible participation and the requisite transparency, staff must ensure that calls for applications include or provide a supplementary guidelines document that includes the following information:
 - (a) purpose and objective of the action;
 - (b) the types of activities to be funded (if relevant);
 - (c) eligible costs for financing (if relevant);

- (d) information and format required;
 - (e) instructions and procedures for applying;
 - (f) summary of the evaluation process to be followed including an indicative timetable;
 - (g) contractual conditions applying to the successful applicant;
 - (h) a point of contact that can answer questions by applicants;
 - (i) methods for submission of applications;
 - (j) address for submission of applications (electronic or physical address);
 - (k) eligibility criteria;
 - (l) evaluation criteria;
 - (m) time and date deadline, including the country to which the time and date refers;
 - (n) pre-application briefing (if any);
 - (o) any other relevant information, including application form (if any) and agreement template.
- (2) Staff must ensure that initial calls for applications under a multi-stage method:
- (a) only requests information, including the following, which are necessary to support a short-listing process:
 - (i) what the applicant can provide;
 - (ii) the applicant's qualifications and previous experience; and
 - (b) describes the pre-qualification process, including the following:
 - (i) nature and scope of the contract or award;
 - (ii) details of the documents available, including documents that give specific description of the contract or award;
 - (iii) information and format required;
 - (iv) contact point for further information;
 - (v) closing date and time;
 - (vi) address to which expressions or registration of interest must be sent and the method of submission (i.e. post or email).
- (3) Staff must liaise with the Information Management Unit to:
- (a) consider the best way to manage receipt of applications;
 - (b) consider how applications will be managed internally;
 - (c) ensure that all documents related to a call for applications are provided to the Public Affairs Unit for uploading on to the Secretariat's website; and
 - (d) coordinate a method by which answers provided to questions of potential applicants before the deadline are uploaded to a FAQ mechanism on the Secretariat's website that can be accessed by potential applicants.
- (4) Calls for applications must include the following disclaimer:

"In the event that further information is required by the Secretariat in relation to the [insert whether it is a proposal, bid or grant application], the Secretariat reserves the right to seek the required information without the need for calling for resubmission of proposals".

- (5) Calls for applications must provide sufficient information about how the action will be awarded and managed, the method of payment, guarantees (where relevant), and how to submit complaints in regards to the procurement process. All complaints must be directed to the internal auditor or to the staff member that manages the internal auditor independent from the responsible staff member, unless agreed to otherwise by the Secretary General.
- (6) Staff must be conscious of keeping application costs low and they must not seek information from applicants that is of little relevance to the evaluation process.
- (7) Calls for applications must be uploaded to and advertised on the Secretariat's website for a minimum of 2 weeks and any change to them must be published as well. Calls for applications for awards or contracts exceeding FJD100,000 must be advertised for a minimum of 1 month.
- (8) Other relevant national and international publication and media sources may be sought for advertisement purposes.
- (9) Staff must liaise with the Public Affairs Unit to ensure that calls for applications are circulated to relevant contact listing and networks.

1.7 Management of applications

- (1) The Information Management Unit has the overall responsibility for managing all information related to this policy. Staff must ensure that all relevant information produced under this policy is submitted to the Information Management Unit for filing.
- (2) Applications received electronically must be managed by the Information Management Unit unless an alternative method was devised depending on the nature of the action. The Information Management Unit or relevant person must not open or forward any application to any other person until after the deadline date and the official opening of applications.
- (3) All submitted and received applications must be registered as follows by the staff member receiving the applications:
 - (a) electronically, if the application was received electronically; or
 - (b) if the application was received by mail or hand delivery:
 - (i) the time and date must be written or stamped on the application; and
 - (ii) it must be initialled by the person receiving the application on behalf of the Secretariat.

- (4) Electronic applications must be converted into PDF format and filed electronically after the deadline date and the official opening of the applications.
- (5) The Information Management Unit must create and maintain a secure electronic working folder for the filing of all electronic applications.
- (6) Applications received by postal mail or hand delivery must be kept in a secured applications box as soon as it has been registered. The applications box must be kept at reception during work hours and must be stored at the Information Management Unit after hours.
- (7) The Information Management Unit must ensure the security of the applications box.
- (8) All applications received electronically, by postal mail or hand delivery must not be opened until after the deadline date for submissions. If the call for applications is cancelled before the opening, the postal and hand delivered applications must be returned unopened. Electronic applications must be sent back electronically.
- (9) All opening of electronic, postal mail or hand delivered applications must be in the presence of at least 2 evaluators (if there are at least 2 evaluators) or in the presence of another staff member. The purpose of the opening is to check that the applications are generally in order. At the completion of the opening of applications, evaluators present must record in a short file note the following:
 - (a) how the tenders were received;
 - (b) who opened the tenders and the names of everyone present at the opening;
 - (c) how the original tender documents are filed for security.
- (10) Once the applications have been opened, a electronic and physical working folder must be established to file all the applications. The working folders must only be accessed by the Information Management Unit and evaluators.
- (11) Staff must take appropriate measures to ensure all applications are kept confidential and only shared on a 'need to know' basis.

1.8 Evaluation

1.8.1 General

- (1) Evaluators must evaluate applications in accordance with the relevant principles stipulated in the Procurement and Tendering Policy and Procedures or the Grants Policy and Procedures.
- (2) Evaluators must strictly adhere to instructions given to applicants in the call for applications by assessing applications only in the following order:
 - (a) the eligibility criteria;

- (b) the evaluation criteria.

1.8.2 Eligibility criteria

- (1) The eligibility criteria refers to the minimum standards, including the following, which the applicant must meet to be considered for the contract or award:
 - (a) restrictions provided in the Procurement and Tendering Policy and Procedures and the Grants Policy and Procedures;
 - (b) legal and administrative status;
 - (c) rules on nationality and age;
 - (d) minimum requirements or qualifications or years of experience;
 - (e) specifically for grant awards, eligible actions such as type of activities, sectors, and geographical areas;
 - (f) requirements for meeting of deadline for submission of tenders;
 - (g) requirements to address specific issues that may be required by call for applications.
- (2) Upon assessment on the above criteria, the eligibility assessment must be marked with a FAIL or PASS grade.
- (3) Notwithstanding sub-clauses (1) and (2), evaluators after careful consideration may allocate a PASS for applicants who do not strictly satisfy some of the more basic eligibility criteria. For example, a PASS may be awarded to an application where the lapse in the submission deadline was very minor and there were limited submissions. By contrast, the specific eligibility criteria stated in the Grants Policy and Procedures, and Procurement and Tendering Policy and Procedures must not be waived in any circumstance.

1.8.3 Evaluation criteria

- (1) The evaluation criteria used by evaluators must be the same as the evaluation criteria in the call for applications.
- (2) Evaluation ratings must be made on the basis of the information requested and included in the application
- (3) Evaluators must decide before carrying out the evaluation exercise whether to provide their marking as a collective group or individually scored and totaled.
- (4) If the marking is scored individually and totaled, the accumulated score must be adjusted to reflect a proportionate score out of 100.
- (5) To ensure consistency, evaluators must evaluate tenders according to a predefined marking sheet template, or in the absence of one, a marking sheet developed by the evaluators (examples of which can be obtained from the Information Management Unit).

- (6) The evaluation criteria consist of two categories: technical and financial (price). In evaluating applications, the following general rules must be used:
- (a) for consultancies:
 - (i) applications that do not achieve at least half the available points for the technical evaluation must not be considered as competent enough to complete the assignment, and must be excluded from further evaluation;
 - (ii) the maximum score available for price¹ must be awarded to the lowest technically suitable application, and other applications must be awarded proportionate scores for price by using the following formula:
$$\frac{\text{Price of Lowest Priced Technically Suitable Application} \times 20\%}{\text{Applicant's Estimated Price}}$$
 - (iii) the successful application will be the applicant with the highest accumulated score among all the applicants. This applicant should generally be the one submitting the least expensive offer classified as 'technically compliant' during the technical evaluation;
 - (b) for grants, goods and capital works:
 - (i) applications that do not achieve at least half the available points for technical evaluation must not be considered as competent enough to be awarded the grant or contract, and must be excluded from further evaluation;
 - (ii) the successful application must be the one with the highest accumulated score among all the applicants.
- (7) A written report of the evaluation must contain the following for approval:
- (a) overview of how the evaluation was conducted;
 - (b) the specific procedures adopted;
 - (c) summary of the scoring;
 - (d) the recommendation on the preferred applicant that was evaluated in accordance with this policy;
 - (e) attachment of completed and signed marking sheets.

1.8.4 General rules

¹ Noting that under the Procurement and Tendering Policy and Procedures, 80% must be awarded for technical competencies and 20% must be awarded for price.

- (1) To protect the integrity of the procurement evaluation, all communication between an evaluator and a potential applicant must be formal.
- (2) In the interest of transparency, information provided to an applicant in the call for applications and evaluations process that may provide that applicant with a competitive edge must be made available to all other applicants. This should be done via a Q&A mechanism on the Secretariat's website.
- (3) Where relevant, applications must be subject to formal referee checks.
- (4) Applicants must not provide additional information after the deadline, unless additional information is required of applicants to assist evaluators finalise their assessment. Where appropriate, the opportunity to provide additional information should be provided to all applicants still in the running for the contract or award.
- (5) Staff must ensure that a contractual situation is not inadvertently created during the evaluation process and if in doubt, must seek the advice of the Corporate Legal Officer.

1.9 Conflict of interest

- (1) Evaluators must ensure that the evaluation process is above suspicion of actual or perceived conflict of interest.
- (2) Any actual or perceived conflict of interest that arises during the evaluation process must be declared and discussed with other evaluators or with the relevant approving authority as soon as it arises.

2. PROCEDURES

2.1 Evaluation procedures

- (1) Evaluators may make their own evaluation procedures provided that it is documented in their final report and is consistent with this policy and principles stipulated in the Procurement Policy and Tendering Policy and Procedures, and the Grants Policy and Procedures.
- (2) Notwithstanding sub-clause (1), the evaluation procedures should broadly involve the following stages:
 - (a) Administration and registration of applications: Staff must administer and register applications in accordance with clause 1.7(1) to 1.7(7).
 - (b) Opening of applications: Staff must open applications in accordance with clause 1.7 (8) to 1.7 (10).

- (c) Evaluation of technical capacity: Staff must evaluate applications in accordance with clause 1.8.2 and 1.8.3.
 - (d) Evaluation of financial offers: If applicable, once the technical evaluation has been completed, the evaluators must check that the financial offers contain no obvious arithmetical errors. Any obvious arithmetical errors should be corrected without penalty to the applicant. Staff must be guided by clause 1.8.3.
 - (e) Choice of successful applicant: Staff must be guided by clause 1.8.3.
- (3) Evaluators must appoint from among themselves or another staff member to act as secretary to the evaluators. The secretary is responsible for carrying out all administrative tasks connected with the evaluation process. This will include:
- (a) keeping the minutes of all formal meetings of the evaluators and the relevant records and documents; and
 - (b) registering attendance at meetings and compiling the evaluation report and its supporting annexes.

3. MISCELLANEOUS

3.1 Further Information

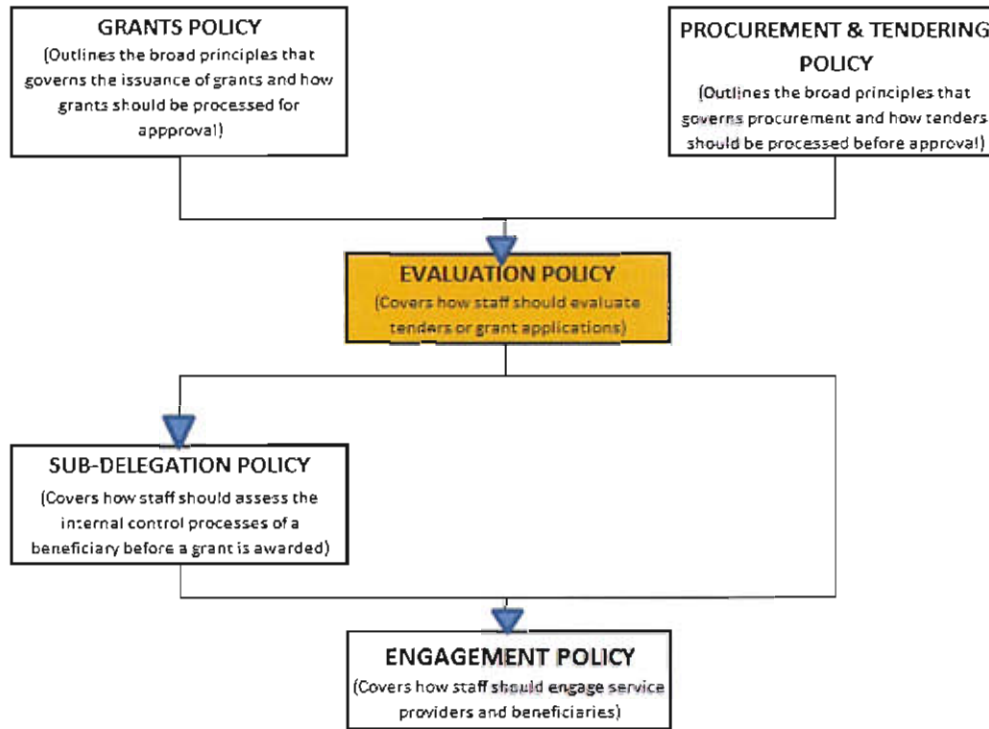
- (1) Please contact the Team Leader Finance for general queries.
- (2) For information relating to the management of information under this policy, please contact the Information Management Unit.
- (3) For information relating to conflict of interest, interpretation of this policy, and the integrity of the call for applications and evaluation process, please contact the Corporate Legal Officer.
- (4) In most circumstances, the Secretariat will have established templates that staff must use as part of this process. Please contact the Team Leader Finance or Corporate Legal Officer for verification.

3.2 Related Policies and Procedures

Secretariat's Code of Conduct and Values
 Delegations Policy and Procedures
 Engagement Policy and Procedures
 Grants Policy and Procedures
 Procurement and Tendering Policy and Procedures
 Risk Management Policy and Procedures
 Risk Management Guidelines and Procedures
 Sub-Delegations Policy and Procedures

3.3 Procurement and Grants Framework

This diagram illustrates the set of policies and procedures that collectively make up the Secretariat’s procurement and grant framework.



3.4 Document History

Revision #	Date	Description of changes	Completed By
1	August 2014	New draft. Also incorporates provisions that were formerly in the Consultancy Policy (now repealed).	Corporate Legal Officer