

Introduction to the Master Brief for an architectural design competition

01 Feasibility Study

Before launching a procurement procedure, the contracting authority / the promoter should clarify and examine the various parameters for the possible realisation of the intended project. In a preliminary phase it is important to clarify the needs, define the program and necessary space as well as evaluating a realistic financial framework. For this purpose the contracting authority should appoint independent professional to establish the feasibility of the intended project. The feasibility study can include:

- Evaluation of different sites
- Adequacy of the site for the intended project
- Specification of functions
- Clarification of programmatic needs and the definition of the spaces needed
- Definition of quality requirements, building standard and equipment
- Clarification of existing infrastructure
- Traffic solutions, connections, public transport, parking etc.
- Evaluation of legal parameters and construction law
- Evaluation of the ecological impact of the project
- Evaluation of particular aspects of the site and/or the project (such as historic heritage protection, specific security requirements or health parameters to be respected) -
- Definition of the necessary financial framework
- Time schedule for the procedure, planning and realisation
- Definition of energy standards
- Definition of standards concerning building material (grey energy)
- Sustainability aspects
- Public consultations

The feasibility study as a clarification of fundamental aspects helps the promoter in taking basic decisions. It is not an obligation, but a highly recommended step for the organiser of a competition and a proof of responsible handling.

02 Financial check

Statement of the financial situation of the project.

03 The brief

The contracting authority as promoter is responsible for the competition brief. For this task the contracting authority should ask a competent professional to coordinate and complete the brief. The better the preparation of the procedure and the brief the better the result. The more precisely the question is formulated the sharper the answers will be.

- The setting of tasks, the evaluation criteria, the required documents from the participants and the composition of the jury must be addressed in the brief.
- With the help of the feasibility study the brief sets up realistic parameters and defines the detailed program. The conclusions of the feasibility study should be reflected in the competition brief.
- The feasibility study shall be made available to the participants.
- The work required from the participants must be adequate to the task and provide sufficient information for the understanding of the entry.
- Only such documents shall be requested from the participants for which a professionally competent evaluation is guaranteed.
- The competition brief has to grant the largest spectrum of possibilities to solve the task.
- The jury has to be announced in the brief.
- The jury has to approve the brief.

In particular, the competition brief contains the following:

Procedural Regulations

- a) designation of the contracting authority
- b) indication of competition type and procedure
- c) declaration of liability concerning the regulations
- d) reference to governing regulations pertaining to public procurement law
- e) conditions for participation and indication of deadline for fulfilling the conditions as well as those conditions concerning the contracting authorities, say, in case of extension of the participating group
- f) total prize-money sum for awards (prizes as well as maximum sum and conditions for eventual honourable mentions); information concerning how the prize-money sum was calculated and the approximate number of prizes to be awarded

- g) contracting authority's intention concerning how the work will proceed further as well as the type and scope of the specified contract
- h) regulations concerning the procedure in the case of a disagreement, remedies
- i) names of the jury members, alternate jury members, and appointed experts
- j) names of the selected and/or invited participants
- k) schedule for the completion of the competition (registration date, deadline for questions and answers, time and place to deliver competition entries)
- l) index of the documents delivered to participants
- m) index of work required from participants and specifications concerning the representation of the project
- n) type of identification code for all competition entry documents and obligation to declare the name of the author(s) and their collaborators in a sealed envelope to preserve anonymity

Regulations for formulating Tasks

- a) the brief contains a summary of the task of the competition and indication of the involved fields of expertise
- b) binding specifications shall only be stated concerning very clear issues, where any other solution is absolutely excluded.
- c) Variants (deviations from the specifications¹) should be allowed as often as possible. Attention must be drawn to the need to define the minimum requirements to be met by variants before indicating that variants may be submitted (Article 45 of Directive 2014/24/EU)
- d) The ACE recommends that professional organisations at national or regional level offer consultation as well as an assessment of whether the competition brief is in agreement with this recommendations or not. Such an assessment must be noted in the competition brief.
- e) **Site visit - colloquium**
There shall be the option to visit the site. Questions can be raised and discussions held. The minutes of this meeting have to be submitted to all participants.
- f) **Questions and Answers**
Up to a specified date, the participants can ask questions concerning the competition brief. The jury responds in writing on behalf of the contracting authority, compiles all questions and answers within the indicated time frame in a document available to all (forwarded to all) participants. After circulation of questions and answers reasonable time should be allowed for submission of entries.

04 The design brief has to be approved by all jury members in its meeting before launching the competition.

¹
See below under B

Master Brief for an architectural design competition by the Architects' Council of Europe

Note: this document can be used to prepare an architectural design competition according to the European legal framework (Public Procurement Directive)² and the relevant recommendations by the ACE concerning architectural design competitions (9 rules). This document provides a template based on best practise experience and recommendations. A competition which uses this template provides the client with the best projects and safeguards the interests of both the client and the architects.

The document can be used by public as well as by private clients.

A

Introduction / invitation / general part

NAME of design competition

1. Contracting Authority / private client

Name

Address

T

F

E

W

Contact person

The contracting authority is bound to the legislation of public procurement /
The client is private and is not bound to the legislation of public procurement

2. General introduction and description of the task

Estimated cost of project / budget

²
In this case, for publication the Standard form 12
- Design contest notice - has to be used.

3. Eligibility

A The competition is open to architects.
(Definition of the architect according to Articles 46-49 of the Professional Qualifications Directive³)

B The following proof(s) of eligibility is (are) requested

See Directive: Article 58 - Selection criteria

1. Selection criteria may relate to:
 - (a) suitability to pursue the professional activity;
 - (b) economic and financial standing;
 - (c) technical and professional ability.

Contracting authorities may only impose criteria referred to in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 on economic operators as requirements for participation. They shall limit any requirements to those that are appropriate to ensure that a candidate or tenderer has the legal and financial capacities and the technical and professional abilities to perform the contract to be awarded. All requirements shall be related and proportionate to the subject- matter of the contract. (...)
These minimum levels shall be indicated in the contract notice.

C In the case of a pre-selection: Criteria for the selection of candidate

See Directive: Article 80 -

The admission of participants to design contests shall not be limited:

- (a) by reference to the territory or part of the territory of a Member State;
- (b) on the grounds that, under the law of the Member State in which the contest is organised, they would be required to be either natural or legal persons.

Where design contests are restricted to a limited number of participants, the contracting authorities shall lay down clear and non-discriminatory selection criteria. In any event, the number of candidates invited to participate shall be sufficient to ensure genuine competition.

note: design contests are not open to members of the jury panel, advisory experts or the competition secretary. The business associates and the close relations of competition judges are also excluded from the competition. Furthermore, anyone who has been involved in the preparation of the competition conditions or any person related to a funding party to the extent that he or she would have a clear advantage over other competitors is ineligible.⁴

³ Directive 2005/36/EC, amended by Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System ('the IMI Regulation')

⁴ In cases of conflict of interest within the scope of Directive 2014/24/EU (Article 24) an exclusion is only permitted where the conflict of interest cannot be effectively remedied by other less intrusive measures, see Article 57 para. 4. e).

4. Description of the ADC procedure / type of contest

Open, restricted, one/ two phase, invited etc.

See Directive: Article 78:

- (a) design contest organised as part of a procedure leading to the award of a public service contract;
- (b) design contest with prizes or payments to participants.

5. Description of the ADC procedure / type of contest

National procurement law
 Competition rules of (country, organisation)

The competition complies with the 9 recommendations of the ACE

6. Jury members

Expert jury members

(and substitute)

(and substitute)

(and substitute)

Other jury members

(and substitute)

(and substitute)

(and substitute)

Advising members (participating in the jury meetings without right to vote)

(and substitute)

(and substitute)

(and substitute)

See Directive: Article 81 - Composition of the jury

The jury shall be composed exclusively of natural persons who are independent of participants in the contest. Where a particular professional qualification is required from participants in a contest, at least a third of the members of the jury shall have that qualification or an equivalent qualification.

Article 82 - Decisions of the jury

1. The jury shall be autonomous in its decisions or opinions.
2. It shall examine the plans and projects submitted by the candidates anonymously and solely on the basis of the criteria indicated in the contest notice.
3. It shall record its ranking of projects in a report, signed by its members, made according to the merits of each project, together with its remarks and any points which may need clarification.
4. Anonymity must be observed until the jury has reached its opinion or decision.
5. Candidates may be invited, if need be, to answer questions which the jury has recorded in the minutes to clarify any aspects of the projects.
6. Complete minutes shall be drawn up of the dialogue between jury members and candidates.

Recommendation:

More than half of the jury members should be independent from the client and have the same qualification as the participants.

The chairperson of the jury has to be chosen from the group above.

The professional organisations have to be involved in the selection of the jury members.

7. Post-competition intention of client / follow-up contracts

The decision of the jury is binding on the contracting authority / client (see Public Procurement Directive annex VIId).

The client intends to negotiate with the winner / the winners of the competition for further planning / general planning works.

The commission shall comprise the general scope of work of an architect or a general planning contract.

8. Jury report

The evaluation of the entries has to be reported by the jury. The jury has to make recommendations concerning the further steps taken by the promoter and the future development of the winning entry.

9. Prize money / compensation

There is a total price fund of to be divided.....

In the case of a restricted procedure each participant should, in case of an invited competition each participant has to be compensated for a valid entry.

The following prizes shall be awarded:

1st prize €

2nd prize €

3rd prize €

X honorary mention €

X honorary mention €

X honorary mention €

All together:

If it is deemed necessary, the prize fund will be divided by the jury unanimously in a different manner. In any case the whole sum of prize money has to be distributed.

Recommendation:

In an open competition the prizes shall be in proportion to (1) the estimated amount of work done in submitting the entry, (2) preparing the required documents, and (3) the value of the entry to the commissioner, i.e. the utility of the competition for the commissioner.

The competition task and the required documents shall be described in the competition conditions sufficiently clearly for the competitor to be able to estimate the performance required.

In an open competition there will normally be three prizes, and other entries will be recognized by honourable mentions.

In a two-stage open competition those entries which are submitted in accordance with the competition conditions and which are chosen for the second stage shall receive equal compensations. The actual prizes will be awarded on completion of the second stage.

10. Timetable

Publication / Announcement of the competition

Site visit /Seminar

Deadline for written questions

Questions and answers (compiled into anonymous memorandum) circulated to all participants

Deadline for submission of entries

Jury meeting(s)

Announcement of results (event)

Exhibition

Commencement of project

Completion of project

11. Copyright / Authors' rights

The copyright of all competition entries rests with the entrants. The contracting authority / client have copyright of the competition entries for the purpose of publicity and exhibition only.

12. Organisation of the competition / Competition secretariat

(Company) Name

Address

T

F

E

W

Recommendation:

The competition should be organised by an architect / professional entity qualified to provide architectural services under the Professional Qualifications Directive⁵.

13. Format of the submitted entries

Every element of the submitted entry has to show:

- a number of six digits
- the name of the entry

The entry includes a sealed envelope with the number/name of the entry which contains the name of the author.

The entries awarded prizes remain with the client, all other entries can be taken by the organiser and / or returned to participants.

14. Complaint procedure / Settlement of disputes

The procedure for the settlement of disputes is as follows:

Appeal bodies

⁵
 Directive 2005/36/EC , amended by Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System ('the IMI Regulation')

B

Competition details (contents)

15. The task

Description of the task, its background, its history

Description of the urban framework, its history and its expected future, traffic planning, etc.

16. Room Program / Schedule of Accommodation

See table annex XX

17. Legal framework (links to building regulations, norms, etc.)

Description of the zoning plan, master plan, development scheme

18. In case of existing legal protection to the building, relevant neighbouring buildings

19. Statement by the town planning department, or similar

20. Energy aspects and aspects concerning sustainability

21. Parking regulations and needs

22. Feasibility study (if it exists) and / or other existing studies, proposals, designs concerning the project

23. Geological survey

24. Submission requirements

Floor plans	1/500 1/200 (town planning project/project)
Relevant sections	1/500 1/200
Facades	1/500 1/200
Further relevant drawings	
All drawings have to be delivered on A0/A1/... vertical/horizontal.	

Scale model 1/1000 1/500 (town planning project /urban design project).

Participants should provide a scale model with the surrounding area and the shape of terrain.

Participants should provide a board for the scale model to be put inserted / get advice on how to make the board.

Table with areas, volumes and other relevant data.

The preparation of these tables is recommended to include the requirements of the project and to be filled in with the known data regarding the project.

25. Evaluation / awarding criteria

25.1 Urban criteria

- Urban fabric
- Design of exterior spaces
- Quality of landscape planning
- Traffic solution

25.2 Architectural criteria

Beauty
 Design approach
 Idea of the design
 Structure
 Architectural quality of spaces, appearance

25.3 Functional criteria

Development system exterior and interior
 Zoning of interior areas, through ways, connections
 Functionality of the solution
 Traffic solution external and internal

25.4 Ecological criteria

Energy consumption Area / volume factor
 Façade areas
 Use of building material
 Maintenance Sustainability
 Grey energy

25.5 Economic criteria

Economic evaluation of the submission, by building cost and maintenance costs
 Constructive system, engineering factors
 Life cycle costs

C

Documents

List of documents

Site plan

All other plans and documents needed

[ANNEX: Design Contest Notice](#)



Funded by
the European Union

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