ABSTRACT.

Selecting an appropriate construction contractor is a major decision which may influence the progress and decide the success or failure of any construction project. One of the most important phases in the construction industry is the bidding process. In Sri Lanka, most of the construction projects were not completed on time and the variations are very high. This study analyses the contractor selection criteria used to evaluate qualification of contractors in Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka, contractor selection criteria for all projects need to be prepared based on National Procurement Agency (NPA) guidelines. Further, NPA has defined contractor selection criteria and evaluation procedures, but it needs some improvement. Further, the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) was expected to have a minimum of three members, and at least one should be a subject specialist. However, the decision of the TEC often depends on one person's decision, and other members may have no or less knowledge. This creates an opportunity for corruption. Therefore, it is important to include two or more subject specialists in a TEC, and further, evaluators need continuous training and knowledge upliftment. Further, the contractor upgrading system is available in Sri Lanka and is handled by CIDA (ICTAD), but there is no such system for evaluators. It is compulsory to introduce an evaluator upgrading system to evaluate different values of projects by considering the complexity of the project.

As per NPA, the qualification of a bidder needs to be checked first among them; the lowest bidder needs to be selected. However, currently, evaluators select the lowest bidder first, and then check their qualification. Further, selected low cost bidders are usually completed project scope.

In the final stage of bid evaluation, the need to check post qualification of bidders before awarding but most of the evaluators fail to check post qualification; it is also one of the reasons for project failure. Further, transparency needs to be maintained, and awarding decision needs to be communicated with unsuccessful bidders. It is commonly not followed.

Quality requirement and safety requirement are given less importance during contractor selection in Sri Lanka, but these criteria are given top preference in other countries like Luthuminiya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and the UK.