**A BASIC GUIDE**

**DRAFTING TERMS OF REFERNCE FOR APEC PROJECTS**

1. **Background**

Terms of Reference (ToRs) provide an agreed basis for an individual consultant, expert, or a team of contractors to undertake a task or assignment to deliver an output/s under an APEC project approved by BMC. The ToRs also provide a way of measuring the success of the task or assignment and are used in developing the contractual arrangements under which contractors/consultants and POs have to operate.

The purpose of the ToRs is to:

* Provide a strong rationale for the tasks that will be undertaken to deliver an output in accordance with the approved project scope and agreed deliverables;
* Detail the tasks to be performed and the agreed timeframes for their completion in line with the approval project proposal;
* Indicate the types of reports and documents to be produced, and
* Set out the professional requirements (skill sets, experiences) of the individual or team.

1. **Structure and content[[1]](#footnote-1)**

The actual structure and content of the ToRs will depend on the details of the individual tasks or the series of tasks required to be completed to deliver the expected outcomes of a specific APEC project.

The following should make up the **basic structure** of the ToRs:

* Background
* Objectives of the task/project
* Scope of the task or assignment
* Duration and phasing
* Specifications of the skills and expertise required; and
* Reporting requirements.

**The structure is just a guide** and the PO could modify this to suit the particular scope of the task at hand. Some tips regarding the details to be contained under each of the sections on: Background, Objectives and Scope of the ToRs, are outlined below.

* 1. **Background**

This section should include a brief introduction of the details of the activity as contained in the project proposal. It will vary in length from a few paragraphs to up to one page. Where relevant it should include key details on relevance, objectives and methodology as detailed in the project proposal.

* 1. **The Objectives of the task or assignment**

The purpose of this section is to specify very clearly and concisely the objectives of the tasks that are expected to be delivered by the expert, consultant or contractor. It is usually possible to identify **one clear objective** for an assignment or task in terms of the **output/s** required from the assignment.

* 1. **The Scope of the task or assignment**

The purpose of this section is to provide a **detailed description** of the tasks required of the individual or team and the **outputs required**. This has to be sufficiently detailed to ensure contractual obligations for satisfying the ToRs can be clearly met. In general terms, please note that consultants, experts or contractors respond better to a **detailed definition** **of their tasks** **or** **assignments**. The specifications of the tasks/assignment’s scope are the most critical part of the ToRs.

Some suggestions in drafting the ToRs include the following (please note that this needs to be modified to suit the specific scope and duration of the task):

* Use a chronological approach to specifying what needs to be done (if appropriate) if the task is complicated or multi-faceted. This could be separated into activity implementation and reporting stages, if required.
* Ideally, the scope should also refer to the identification of risks which are included in the project proposal.
* Specify the actual **outputs** to be delivered. For outputs that involve documents the scope should refer to the size and content of the report. *See reporting requirements below for further information.*
  1. **Duration and Phasing**

The purpose of this section is to clearly specify the time frame for the assignment with a clear statement of the proposed deadlines. The ToRs should specify the start date and end date and approximate dates for stages of the activity if needed.

* 1. **Specifications of the skills sets and experience**

The purpose of this section is to specify the skills, qualifications and expertise required from individual specialists/expert or a team of contractors. If the tasks involve a team of contractors please ensure that the details about **who does what are detailed and clarified**. In the case of individuals the skills, qualifications and experiences that are required for the task should be very detailed to ensure that the right person or team is selected for the task.

* 1. **Reporting Requirements**

This section is provided so that the reporting requirements are clearly set out in one place and agreed between the Secretariat and the PO.

Most times the acceptance of reports is the trigger for contractual payments so we need to be very specific about what is required. Ideally the ToRs should specify the **dates/timeframes** when the reports are due, the **length** of the document (number of pages), content, the number of copies required, the format, (electronic or hard copy and if the former which format) and who is responsible for delivering this if it involves more than one person.

The ToRs should also contain a generic statement that documents produced should conform to APEC publication guidelines.

1. In line with APEC processes, the PO is required to draft the ToRs in line with the agreed scope of an activity which is approved by BMC. A PD/PE can, in consultation with the PO modify the structure depending on the nature of the activity, the stage of the activity to which they refer, or the team composition. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)