



Guide to Government Procurement of Design Services

By DesignSingapore Council

Great design can transform Singapore, building an innovative economy and a more loveable city. To support the design industry, a set of guidelines has been developed by the DesignSingapore Council (Dsg) and the Ministry of Finance to help government agencies become better buyers of design and address areas of concerns like requests for unlimited changes, unclear compensation for intellectual property rights, and free pitching of concept proposals.

Created in consultation with the design industry, the guidelines apply to graphic design and visual communication, exhibition, stage, façade and interior design, as well as product and industrial design.

We hope this guide gives you greater insight into the government procurement process for design services.

Who & What this guide is for

If you are seeking to understand the government's processes for procuring design services, **this guide is for you.**

It will help you understand:

- The type of information government agencies should provide in a design brief
- Government agencies' requirements when requesting for quotations and tenders
- Government agencies' considerations for selecting design firms
- How pitch fees and intellectual property generated as outcomes of projects are managed

Basic principles in procurement

When it comes to procurement, government agencies operate on two key guiding principles:

○ Creating an open and fair process

To be fair to both purchaser and supplier, the details in requests for quotes and tenders should be clear and provide adequate information so that the design firms can provide an accurate quote.

○ Balance quality with value for money

Government agencies need to exercise due care when using public funds, and this applies to spending on design services too. Although price is an important consideration, quality is just as important — the government agency needs to ensure that the project is awarded to a competent design firm capable of delivering what is expected.

What a good client brief should contain

The client's design brief is the primary source of information for a design firm to develop a proposal. It should give a clear idea of:

- The **objectives** of the project
- What will be **required** of the appointed design firm

The following is a typical flow of a brief. Do note that not all sections will appear in every brief as project requirements vary.

○ Background information

Background on why the project is being conducted provides context, so the design firm can understand the project needs better.

○ Objectives

The objectives should state the intent of the whole project and its desired outcomes, and not just the work of the design firm.

○ Nature of Design Project

The deliverables of the specific design project. For example, the project could be a printed brochure, or a report on a design research project.

○ Design Guidelines

Are there any design guidelines pre-specified either for the government agency, or for a specific campaign? Knowing if there is an existing colour palette, typography guide, or tone of voice would allow the design firm to get the proposal right.

○ Target Audience

Which group of people is the design intended for? This is important for the design firm to focus on designing for the right audience. Design considerations would vary, depending on the specific target audience.

The brief may also contain the following information that could be useful to the design agency:

○ Market Research

This could give vital information on what the target audience prefers and expects.

○ Constraints and Special Considerations

An example would be the need to take note of particular sensitivities (racial, religious or otherwise) in the proposal.

○ Design Samples

The government agency may provide samples of existing marketing materials or references to designs that they prefer, in order to communicate their expectations more clearly to the design agency.

What a good client brief should contain

The government agency is also expected to specify requirements to enable design firms to better estimate and allocate time and resources for a project. **Information that the design firm needs for quoting and project planning may include the following:**

○ Stages of design project and deliverables

A design project may be divided into several stages, each with its own set of deliverables. This makes larger projects more manageable, and allows billing at each stage, rather than at the end of the entire project.

Please refer to table below for more information on the stages and deliverables.

○ Number of Concepts to be developed

This will help the design firm work out costs and the quotation more accurately.

○ Levels of Approval required

Knowing the client's approval process will help the design firm work out a more accurate quotation.

○ IP Rights Management

When design firms deliver services, such as illustrations, they generate "foreground" IP that the design firms own. These can be charged for rights of usage for period of time or for complete transfer of ownership to the government agency, depending on the client's specifications.

○ Working or Editable Files Required

Design firms most often provide non-editable files (e.g. PDF files) for their clients' retention. If the government agency requires editable or working files, this should be specified in the brief. The design firm should include additional fees in their quotation.

Stages

Deliverables

Design Research - gain insight on the target audience, market characteristics and technical feasibilities

Reports / presentations

Design Concept - develop ideas based on the brief and market research

Concept sketches, mood boards, write-ups, and/or presentations

Technical Development - detailed designs based on chosen concept

Renderings, technical drawings, material swatches, and/or presentations

Implementation - production of approved final design

Project management* / final project delivery (depending on type of project)

*Notes on Project Management at Implementation Stage

- For some projects, the appointed design firm might be required to oversee aspects of production by a third-party contractor on behalf of the purchasing government agency. This is to ensure the proper production of the design.
- A project management/supervision fee could be included for this service.

How design firms & proposals will be evaluated

VALUE OF PROCUREMENT	EVALUATION CONSIDERATIONS	ITEMS REQUIRED
Small Value Purchase (SVP)	Company credentials should suffice in showing the experience of the design team as well as the design style and quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company profile and track record • Portfolio of design works • Credentials of the lead designer working on the project
Invitation to Quote (ITQ) or Invitation to Tender (ITT)	In addition to company credentials, a written Design Proposal may be requested to evaluate the direction that the design team proposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company profile and track record • Portfolio of design works • Credentials of the project team/ lead designer <p><i>Written design proposal (when requested) should be limited to one A4-sized sheet for quotation value and two A4-sized sheets for tender value.</i></p>
Complex Invitation to Tender (ITT) or Request for Proposal (RFP)	Design firms may be shortlisted for presentation and/or to develop a concept design proposal.	<p>Concept design proposals should include more detailed information than the written design proposal. The concept design proposal can include mock-ups, layouts, sketches and more, along with a short write-up to explain the concept.</p> <p>The government agency should specify the number of sheets of design concepts and/or slides needed.</p>

The written design proposal serves two purposes:

- To show an understanding of the needs and constraints of the project
- To demonstrate a relevant design approach that meets the brief

Explain the design approach clearly and succinctly. Sketches can help, but detailed drawings or design solutions should not be included.

Note: The government agency does not own the rights to use design proposals, and should not use the designs if the design agency is not awarded the project.

Recommended pitch fees

The design firm is **entitled to be paid fairly** for their time and effort. If their proposal is shortlisted, the design agency may be asked to present concepts for further evaluation. If they are subsequently not awarded the project, they will be compensated for this work by the government agency in the form of a pitch fee.

The **recommended pitch fees** are detailed in the table below.

Recommended compensation for concept design drawings			
Project Cost (Estimated Procurement Value)	Type 1 Up to \$100,000	Type 2 Above 100,000 and up to \$500,000	Type 3 Above \$500,000
Compensation amount for concept design drawings	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$3,000
Number of sheets of concept design drawings (A1-size or equivalent); or Number of slides of concept design drawings	1 10	2 20	3 30
Compensation amount for each additional sheet of concept drawing (A1-size) or additional 10 slides		\$1,000	

1. An equivalent of an A1-size sheet is 2 A2-size sheets, 4 A3-size sheets or 8 A4-size sheets.
2. The compensation amount is fixed even if the request is for less than the number of sheets or for smaller sheets stated in the table above.

