

A GUIDE TO

Design Innovation — Procurement



Who is this Guide for?

If you are engaging an external design consultancy for:



An INNOVATION PROJECT

e.g. to develop new customer experiences or uncover new business opportunities and revenue streams

AND require design services to help deepen your understanding of consumers, and develop new ideas and concepts.



FINAL DESIGN EXECUTION only

e.g. a graphic designer to design a marketing poster, or an interior designer to design and build a service centre interior



This guide is for you!

Please refer to the separate [Guidelines for Design Procurement](#)

What does the Guide cover?

This guide provides advice and best practices on procuring design services for design innovation projects, including:



A basic understanding of design thinking tools would help you understand the terms used in this guide. If you need a primer, IDEO has some [resources](#) available.

1

UNDERSTANDING

— Design Innovation Procurement Methods

2

SPECIFYING

— Design Innovation Briefs

3

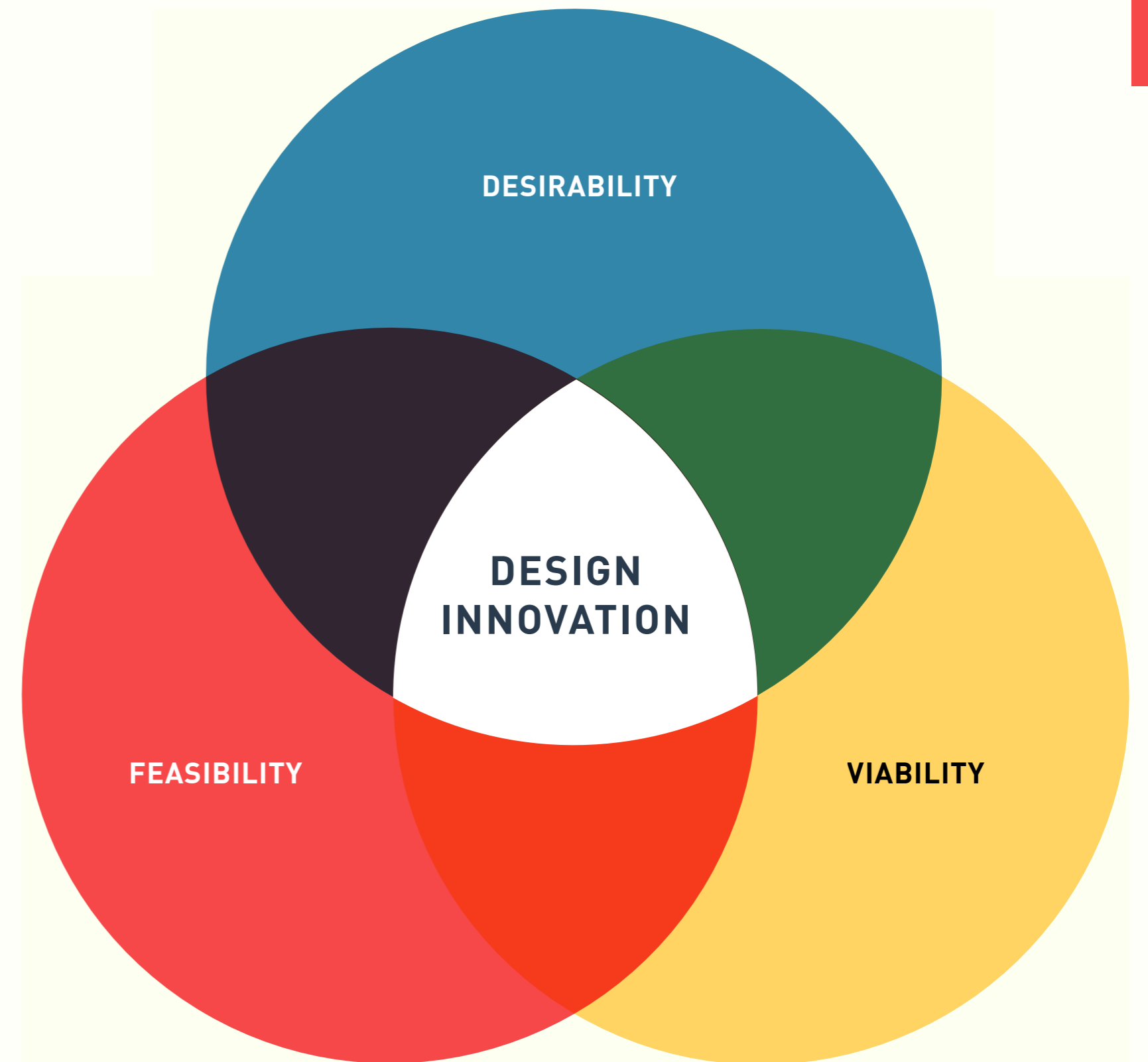
SELECTING

— The Right Partners

What do we mean by **Design Innovation?**




Design can transform products, services and experiences to enhance business competitiveness and improve lives.

Design innovation projects often address complex challenges where problems and solutions are unclear at the start, and only arise from deeper discovery with users. Through the design thinking process, design innovation projects strive to develop solutions that are desirable while being technically feasible and commercially viable.



Design for **Different Purposes**



What?	DESIGN FOR PRODUCT	DESIGN FOR PROCESS	DESIGN FOR STRATEGY
How?	Making things look, feel and work great	Identifying and solving customer problems	Setting the vision, finding and exploring future opportunities
Examples	Product, Visual, Interior Design	Service & Experience Design	Strategic Design
Method	STANDARD PROCUREMENT	DESIGN INNOVATION PROCUREMENT	
Design Scenario	<p>NEW MARKETING COLLATERALS</p>  <p>Produce a set of marketing collaterals to promote a business</p>	<p>A NEW RETAIL EXPERIENCE</p>  <p>Develop a new experience to improve customer satisfaction and staff engagement to boost sales at their retail store</p>	<p>A NEW ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE</p>  <p>Uncover new business opportunities as the business environment is getting more challenging</p>

Design Scenario

MARKETING COLLATERALS

- develop the visual style and format
- make sure it is eye-catching and easily understood
- can be produced cost-effectively

RETAIL EXPERIENCE

- understand their customer profile and buying habits, the customer and staff journey, pain points and wow moments
- develop a service blueprint to help guide and operationalise their new experience

ROADMAP

- work with staff and customers to understand their business strengths and customer needs
- establish a new vision for their business
- create ideas for new product and service offerings
- test with customers to develop potential new revenue streams

STANDARD PROCUREMENT



DESIGN INNOVATION PROCUREMENT

Insights

Clear understanding of user needs

Research is needed to understand and synthesise user insights

Challenge

Not complex, and know how to solve

Very complex with many unknowns and multiple view points and there is a need to clearly understand and frame the challenge

Solution

Solution already known

Many possible different solutions to the challenge, depending on the user insights and stakeholder needs



1

UNDERSTANDING

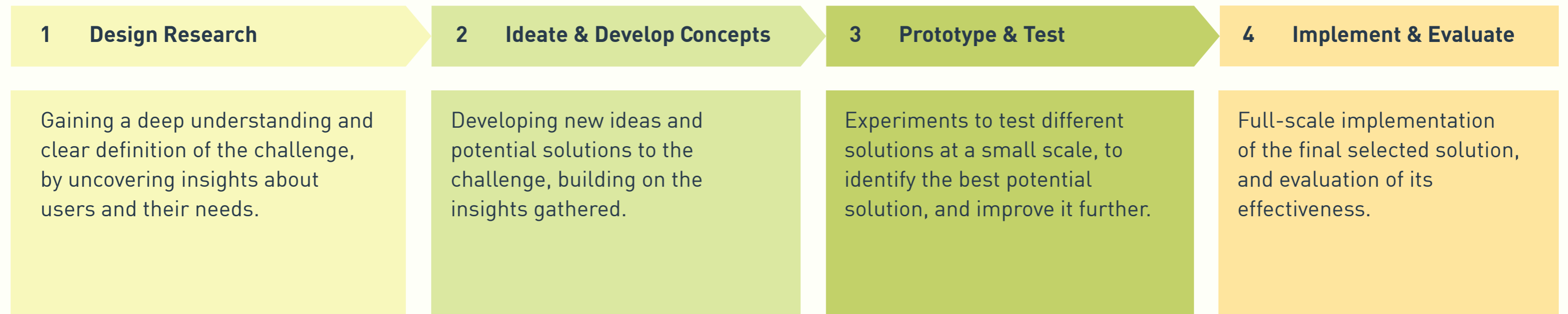
— Design Innovation Procurement Methods

The first step to successfully procuring services for design innovation is understanding your needs, and what procurement methods are appropriate. Here, we've outlined some common scenarios to help show what that means!

Design Innovation Process

Design Innovation projects often go through the following activities in an iterative process. This ensures there is clarity in the problem being solved, alignment around a shared vision and reduced risk through iteration.

Different consultancies have different capabilities — structure your procurement process to ensure that partners appointed have the domain expertise to carry out the relevant activities for each stage and deliver the project outcomes.



1-4 Knowledge Transfer and Training Throughout Process

Learning to apply design innovation skills and methods throughout the process.

Activities and Deliverables in Each Stage

1 Design Research

Activities

- Interviews & observations with users & stakeholders
- Global trend scan

Deliverables

- Reports on research findings: trends, insights on user needs, pain points, user profiles, journey maps, challenges & opportunity areas

2 Ideate & Develop Concepts

Activities

- Ideation & co-creation workshops
- Selection of concepts to prototype

Deliverables

- Indicative strategy, roadmap or service blueprint
- Visualisation of design concepts for prototyping

3 Prototype & Test

Activities

- Prototyping (from low to high resolution)
- Test hypothesis, review feedback, refine prototype iteratively

Deliverables

- Test results & selection of prototypes for full implementation
- Refined service blueprint & customer journey map

4 Implement & Evaluate

Activities

- Design & implement new solutions
- Develop & implement related organisational re-structuring, processes, KPIs

Deliverables

- Final solution implemented
- Measurement & evaluation of outcomes, KPIs and impact

1-4 Knowledge Transfer and Training Throughout Process

- Activities** - Design Thinking workshops & hands-on training
- Mentorship & coaching for senior management & working

- Deliverables** - Training curriculum & toolkits

Different Procurement Methods

Because different challenges require different types of capabilities, it may be better to have a combination of firms handle the various stages of a project.

The following slides illustrate two possible scenarios where different partners may be engaged at different stages.

1 Design Research

2 Ideate & Develop Concepts

3 Prototype & Test

4 Implement & Evaluate

1-4 Knowledge Transfer and Training Throughout Process

Scenario A - No further testing

Details on page 11

Single Tender

Separate Tender

Scenario B - Further testing required

Details on page 12

Single Tender

Spiral Contracting enables projects to proceed in stages, and proposed solutions to be tested within a single tender process.

SCENARIO A

Specific capabilities required to implement final solutions

Initial design strategy and roadmap identifies clear and specific solutions to be implemented, and little or no further testing is needed to select the right solution to achieve desired outcomes.



1 - 4 Knowledge transfer on solution development

Single Tender

Appoint a **design consultant** to develop strategy and roadmap

DELIVERABLES

Tender 1

Design Strategy Consultant

- Develops roadmap detailing strategies to grow sales, e.g. omnichannel experience incorporating e-commerce and redesigned retail store
- Coaches internal team on innovation skills

Separate Tenders

Based on the roadmap, a separate set of tenders are called to appoint **other partners** for final implementation of the proposed concepts.

Tender 2

Digital developer

Develops e-commerce platform for online sales

Tender 3

Store designer

Redesigns retail store incorporating digital elements

Tender 4

BPR consultant

Develops improved workflows to raise staff productivity

Tender 5

Marketing agency

Develops new marketing materials

SCENARIO B

Further testing needed to identify final solution

Used when it is unclear what solutions will achieve the desired outcomes, and further testing and evaluation is needed.



1 - 4 Knowledge transfer on solution development

Single Tender

Appoint a **design consultant** to develop strategy and roadmap

DELIVERABLES

Tender 1

Design Strategy Consultant
- Develops strategy leveraging data to grow sales at retail stores, but final solution is unclear due to varying conditions at different stores
- Coaches internal team on innovation skills

Spiral Contracting - Tender 2

Multiple partners are engaged to propose different prototypes and solutions, and are shortlisted based on pre-set evaluation criteria. Spiral contracting enables projects to proceed in stages, and proposed solutions to be tested within a single tender process.

MULTIPLE INITIAL SOLUTIONS

A Loyalty App

B E-commerce Solution Add-on

C In-store Recommendations Tablet

A Loyalty App

B E-commerce Solution Add-on

SELECTED SOLUTION

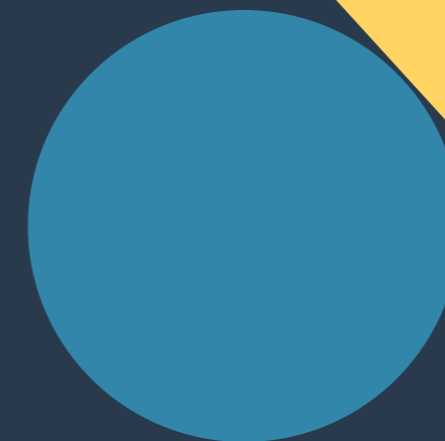
A Loyalty App

2

SPECIFYING

— Design Innovation Briefs

Now that you have an idea of how to structure the procurement process, next comes telling potential partners what you need them to do.



The Brief

— Specifying what needs to be done





A good brief will give potential partners:

- a clear sense of the scale and boundaries of the project
- flexibility to propose their own approach to solving the challenge

The brief should provide answers to these questions:

- Why are you doing this project?
- What you do hope to achieve?
- What is the scale and scope of the project?
- What does the partner need to do?
- Any important points the potential partner should note?

But first, Key Principles

-  **Ask for a clear & concise proposal**
 - Request a two-page proposal that details the approach, opportunity areas, and partners' point of view regarding the challenge
 - Supporting information like details of methods and track records can be submitted as annexes
-  **Provide flexibility**
 - Give partners creative latitude to propose approaches, methodologies and activities that can achieve the intended outcomes most effectively
-  **Give a sense of the scale and boundaries of the project**
 - Provide sufficient background information so partners can quote accurately e.g. context, work already done, and project limitations and boundaries
 - Specify any fixed deliverables
 - Incorporate a briefing to give partners the opportunity to make clarifications
-  **Be clear about Intellectual Property rights**
 - This will reduce the likelihood of disputes about IP ownership in the future

Key Components of a **Design Brief**

Here's an overview of what's needed, explained further in the following slides.

A Background & Context

Why are you doing this project, and what you do hope to achieve?

- Context of the project & any background data available
- Write-up on the project
- Objectives / Impact
- Users & other stakeholders
- Key stakeholders and decision makers

B Project Requirements

What is the scale and scope of the project, and what does the partner need to do?

- Project schedule & key dates
- Milestones & deliverables
- Expected activities and scale
- Any fixed deliverables
- Expected involvement of other partners

C Other Important Points

Any important points the potential partners should note?

- Specific capabilities needed
- Budget available
- References / examples of desired project outcomes

This section only covers information that should be in the brief, i.e. requirement specifications. Information on contractual obligations, format of proposal, evaluation criteria and payment schedules should also be included as part of your final RFP document.

A Background & Context

Why are you doing this project, and what you do hope to achieve?



Context

- Background of your organisation
- Business or policy context, strategies developed and relevant trends
- Any available data, or research that has been done in the past?



Write-up on the Project

- What is the project about, and what is the key challenge?
- What are the opportunities and drivers of the challenge?
- Are there any project limitations or boundaries partners should be mindful of?



Objectives / Impact

- What are the desired outcomes and how will they be measured?



Users & other stakeholders

- Who are the users, and how might they benefit from the project?
- Who are the stakeholders and what are the insights around them?



Visit for a [sample brief!](#)

B Project Requirements



What is the scale and scope of the project, and what do tenderers need to do?



Stakeholders

- Key decision-makers
- Other stakeholders and their roles
 - e.g. Other government agencies, organisations etc.



Scope of Services and Deliverables

- Milestones of the tender and corresponding deliverables
- Scale of the deliverables / activities in the project
 - e.g. Main user groups, number of users / stakeholders to be interviewed, expected activities
- Any fixed deliverables
 - Describe the indicative resolution (low, medium or high) needed for fixed deliverables
- Is the appointed partner expected to work with other parties?
 - e.g. Other parts of the project that is being done by other partners or in-house
 - e.g. Partner is expected to manage downstream implementation as well

C Other Important Points



Project Schedule

- Key dates the tenderers must meet
- Expected frequency of meetings for update or decision-making
- Estimated start date and project duration



Capabilities needed

- e.g. Design research and ethnography
- Specific execution capabilities e.g. digital design, spatial design



Budget / Resources

- Consider specifying your budget as a range or ceiling so that partners can propose cost appropriate activities and deliverables



Reference / Examples

- Provide good references of projects that would give partners a sense of your project goals

3

SELECTING

— The Right Partners

Great! We've covered how to determine the approach to procure design services for your innovation project, and to develop a brief to tell potential partners what you need them to do.

Now, how do you select the right partner to work with?

What you should request

Here is some information you can request, that will help you understand their capabilities. But here's another suggestion – talk to them!

We suggest interviewing shortlisted companies, so that you can clarify with them directly on their proposal and capabilities.

Background Materials

Portfolio and Track Record

- Company Profile
- Relevant past projects & case studies
- Client references
- Significant awards and achievements

Project Team Credentials

- Profile and experience of project lead and other key members

Others

- Written design proposal (2 pages)
- Interview

What you should look out for

Here are some key points you can consider, to determine if the capabilities and proposal are the right fit for you.



You should not request for detailed drawings and concepts within the proposal. If you require more detailed concepts for further evaluation, please consider compensating the consultancies with a pitch fee.

Portfolio and Track Record

- Demonstrates user-centric approach
- Good translation from design research insights to proposed concepts / solutions
- Work shows good impact and is well-executed

Project Team Credentials

- Shows contextual knowledge relevant to the project e.g. Understanding of local culture, domain knowledge / analogous industries, etc.
- Capabilities to deliver / implement the project e.g. Design research, digital design etc.

Others

- Demonstrates good understanding of project aims and constraints
- Point of view is robust, well-considered & provides fresh perspectives
- Relevant and well-defined approach

That's it!

— We've covered it all!

1

UNDERSTANDING

— Design Innovation
Procurement Methods

2

SPECIFYING

— Design Innovation
Briefs

3

SELECTING

— The Right
Partners

Final Checklist

Here's a final checklist to help you make sure you have everything covered. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact us at innovation@designsingapore.org

1 Procurement Method

- Challenge is complex and does not have an obvious solution
- Determine:**
- Capabilities needed
- Procurement approach
- Structure and scope of the procurement

3 Selecting Partners

- Request for:**
- Portfolio and Track Record
- Project Team Credentials
- Written design proposal (2 pages)
- Interview

2 Design Brief

Key Principles

- Request a clear and concise proposal
- Provide flexibility
- Give a sense of the scale and boundaries of the project
- Be clear about IP rights

Does the brief answer:

- Why are you doing this project?
- What you do hope to achieve?
- What is the scale and scope of the project?
- What does the partner need to do?
- Any important points the partners should note?

DesignSingapore Council's

mission is to develop the design sector,
help Singapore use design for innovation and growth,
and make lives better

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