Challenges of Consulting Service Procurement: A Case Study of ADB Funded Projects of LGED

By

Sanjoy Mohan Sarker
Student ID: 24382052

A thesis submitted to the Department of BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Procurement and Supply Management (MPSM)

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD)
BRAC University
November 2025

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

Sanjoy Mohan Sarker

Student ID: 24382052

Approval

The thesis/project titled "Challenges of Consulting Service Procurement: A Case Study of ADB funded Projects of LGED" submitted by Sanjoy Mohan Sarker (Student ID: 24382052) of Summer, 2024 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters in Procurement and Supply Management (MPSM) on November 2025.

Examining Committee:

Supervisor:
(Member)

_____
Md. Saifur Rahman, MCIPS, PMP, PRINCE2®
Deputy Secretary
Ministry of Agriculture

Program Coordinator:
(Member)

_____
Mohammad Sirajul Islam
Senior Academic Coordinator
BIGD, BRAC University

External Expert Examiner:
(Member)

_____
Mir Mehbubur Rahman, MCIPS
Senior Trainer (As of Professor)
BIGD, BRAC University

Departmental Head:
(Chair)

_____
Dr. Imran Matin
Executive Director
BIGD, BRAC University

Ethics Statement

This thesis was conducted with the highest ethical standards solely as a part of Masters in Procurement and Supply Management (MPSM) adhering to the ethical guidelines set forth by the BRAC University. All sources, ideas and data that are not the author's own have been appropriately cited and referenced. All the data collected and analyzed were collected from relevant stakeholders with their wholehearted consent and were used only for academic purposes. Best efforts were made to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the participants involved in the research. No conflict of interest occurred during the data collection process and due diligence was exercised to avoid any form of bias or misrepresentation of data. The research has been conducted with honesty and integrity presenting all the information in the thesis accurately.

Abstract

The procurement of consulting services plays a pivotal role in the successful implementation of development projects financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Bangladesh. Despite the existence of comprehensive procurement policies and regulations, the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) often encounters considerable challenges in ensuring timely and efficient recruitment of consultants. This study investigates the key challenges faced during the consulting service procurement process under ADB-funded projects of LGED, with an emphasis on identifying procedural bottlenecks and institutional constraints. Using both primary data collected through surveys of fifty procurement professionals and secondary data from selected ADB-assisted projects, the research reveals that delays frequently occur during the evaluation and approval stages by 90.48% and 285.37% respectively compared to the best practices described in national procurement rules which contributes largely towards the overall delay by 110.20% during the consultant selection process. Shortages of skilled personnel, limited institutional capacity, procedural complexities, and coordination gaps among stakeholders mainly contributed to this delay. Prolonged approval timelines from ADB and approving authorities further exacerbate these inefficiencies. The study concludes that enhancing staff capacity, simplifying approval mechanisms, adopting digital procurement systems, and improving coordination among stakeholders are critical to ensuring greater efficiency, accountability, and value for money in consultant recruitment. The findings provide practical recommendations for LGED, ADB, and national policymakers to streamline consulting service procurement and strengthen institutional performance in development projects.

Keywords: Consulting Service Procurement; Local Government Engineering Department (LGED); Asian Development Bank (ADB); Procurement Regulations; Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS); Procurement Challenges.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to my beloved life partner Mita Pal for her unconditional love and support towards me and our family. This achievement would not have been possible without her constant support, belief and inspiration.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I am indebted to the Almighty God for providing me with all the blessings and strength to pursue my Masters in Procurement and Supply Management (MPSM) course at BIGD, BRAC University.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor Mr. Md. Saifur Rahman, MCIPS, PMP, PRINCE2®, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, for his invaluable guidance, patience, feedback and continuous encouragement throughout the course of study. His valuable insights, constructive suggestions and enthusiastic supervision were of great help throughout the research work. Working under him was a very knowledgeable experience for me.

I wish to express my gratitude and heartiest thanks to respected examining committee members for their valuable advice and help in reviewing this thesis. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the faculty and staff of BIGD, BRAC University for their continuous support throughout the journey.

I take this opportunity to express heartfelt thanks to my family members, especially to my wife Mita Pal, elder son Soumit Pal Sarker and younger son Sasmit Pal Sarker for their continuous encouragement and understanding during the completion of this research work.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support of my colleagues for their unconditional help, inspiration and great co-operation with data collection and processing. I thank everyone for helping and inspiring me towards the successful completion of my thesis work.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADP	Annual Development Programme
AE	Assistant Engineer
APP	Annual Procurement Plan
BPPA	Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority
CCGP	Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase
CDC	Capacity Development Consultant
CE	Chief Engineer
CMS	Consultant Management System
CPS	Country Partnership Strategy
CPTU	Central Procurement Technical Unit
CRAM	Consultant Recruitment Activity Monitoring
CRLIWM-CHT	Climate Resilient Livelihood Improvement and Watershed Management in Chittagong Hill Tracts Sector Project
CSC	Consultant Selection Committee
CSRN	Consulting Services Recruitment Notice
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DD	Deputy Director
DMS	Design, Monitoring and Supervision
DPP	Development Project Proposal
DPRC	Detail Project Report Consultant
EA	Executing Agency
EAP	Emergency Assistance Project

e-GP	Electronic Government Procurement
EoI	Expression of Interest
FREAP	Flood Reconstruction Emergency Assistance Project
FTP	Full Technical Proposal
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GICD	Governance Improvement and Capacity Development
HOPE	Head of Procuring Entity
ICS	Individual Consultant Selection
IUGIP	Improving Urban Governance and Infrastructure Project
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
OCB	Open Competitive Bidding
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PD	Project Director
PE	Procuring Entity
PEC	Proposal Evaluation Committee
PISC	Project Implementation Support Consultant
PMU	Project Management Unit
POC	Proposal Opening Committee
PPA	Public Procurement Act
PPR	Public Procurement Rules
QCBS	Quality and Cost Based Selection
RCIP	Rural Connectivity Improvement Project
REoI	Request for Expression of Interest
RFP	Request for Proposal

SDE	Sub-Divisional Engineer
Sr. AE	Senior Assistant Engineer
TCO	Total Costs of Ownership
ToR	Terms of Reference
UE	Upazila Engineer
VFM	Value for Money
XEN	Executive Engineer

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Background

Consulting service procurement means hiring of consultants to provide intellectual and professional services like advising, designing, monitoring and or transferring knowledge to an organization. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) consultants are individuals or entities who are able to deliver special proficiency within the specified timeframe in one or more technical areas (Asian Development Bank, 2008). Consultant is a person or entity under contractual agreement with a client for providing intellectual and professional services (MoP, 2008). The consultant plays a vital role in assisting a client by applying their own expertise and experience, along with the combined expertise, experience and resources of their organization. (Parikh, 2015). The choice of consulting firm or individual consultant depends on the need of the particular entity of an organization primarily based on complexity of the required service, urgency of engagement, service duration, and risk of discontinuity by the consultants etc. A few examples of consulting services include engineering design, procurement services, social safeguard studies, environmental studies, construction supervision, quality control, financial advice, internal or external audits, feasibility study etc. When a procuring entity lacks adequate in-house expertise, it may engage consultants to perform the tasks efficiently and within the required timeframe, thereby contributing to the achievement of project objectives. Consultants provide specialized expertise, innovative solutions, and technical knowledge that may not be readily available within the client organization. Consultants offer with various benefits to the organizations such as providing new ideas and best practices to the business features and they deliver faster than the in-house staffs who are overloaded with extra day-to-day routine and operational tasks (Hilditch-Roberts, 2012).

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) is one of the largest public sector organizations of the Government of Bangladesh, responsible for planning, implementing, and managing a wide range of infrastructure development projects. LGED is a pioneer in rural infrastructure development works like roads, bridges, culverts, schools, growth centers etc. by which rural economy gets stronger and quality of rural life improves by reducing poverty. LGED contributes directly to improving rural connectivity, facilitating trade, and enhancing access to education and public services. Along with rural infrastructure development works,

LGED also performs urban and small scale water infrastructure development works through a numerous number of projects. Many of these projects are financed by prominent international development agencies, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB), among others. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is one of the major development partners providing loans and grants to the Government of Bangladesh for implementing development projects through LGED.

Public procurement in Bangladesh is governed by the Public Procurement Act (PPA) of 2006 and the Public Procurement Rules (PPR) of 2008. These documents provide the legal and procedural framework for all types of procurement activities, including consulting services**.** According to (Shiddique, 2015), procurement is defined as "the purchasing or hiring of goods, or acquisition of goods through purchasing and hiring, and the execution of works and performance of services by any contractual means". The definition has been adopted from Public Procurement Rules (PPR), 2008 of Bangladesh. According to the Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority (BPPA), formerly known as Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU), an amount equivalent to USD 30 billion is being spent annually on public procurement of Bangladesh. Nearly 45% of the national budget and approximately 85% of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) are allocated to public procurement expenditures (BPPA, n.d.). These rules promote transparency, accountability, competitiveness, and fairness in public procurement processes. While these principles align broadly with ADB's rules and regulations, integrating both requirements often presents additional procedural and institutional challenges.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The consulting service procurement involves significant investments of time, money and human resources without assurance of a successful outcome (Mitchell, 1994). The procurement of consulting services for ADB-assisted projects under LGED often encounters considerable delays and procedural complexities, despite being guided by ADB's procurement policies, regulations, and guidelines. ADB consistently seeks to achieve economy, efficiency, transparency, fairness, quality and most importantly value for money during funding various projects of LGED. While these are the ADB's core procurement principles, LGED faces many challenges to achieve and uphold these principles during consulting service procurement process. These include inadequate institutional strength, shortage of qualified and experienced procurement professionals, lengthy evaluation and approval processes and poor coordination between the key stakeholders. Such delays not only hinder the timely recruitment of consultants

but also disrupt project implementation schedules, escalate costs, and reduce the effectiveness of the project's development outcomes. Delays in the consultant selection process often cause corresponding delays in the procurement of other project components, leading to requests for project time extensions and cost revisions. Such delays in project implementation have a direct negative impact on the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth. Consequently, despite the presence of a stringent procurement framework, LGED continues to face challenges in ensuring the timely and efficient completion of consulting service procurement. However, no study has yet been conducted to determine the extent of these delays or the underlying causes. Therefore, this study aims to examine the extent of delays and the major challenges faced by the Project Management Unit (PMU) and professionals involved in the evaluation and approval process during consultant selection under ADB-assisted projects of LGED. It further seeks to identify the root causes of these challenges and propose strategic measures to enhance efficiency, accountability, and value for money in consulting service procurement.

1.3 Research Objectives

The key objectives of this research are to:

a) Identify the extent of delays and the major challenges encountered during the recruitment of consulting firms or individual consultants for ADB-financed projects under LGED.

b) Analyze and evaluate the key factors contributing to these challenges, including internal and external issues within LGED and ADB that hinder the successful completion of consulting service procurement.

c) Propose strategic and actionable recommendations to improve the consulting service procurement process for ongoing and upcoming ADB-financed projects implemented by LGED.

1.4 Rationale of the Research

Consulting firms or individual consultants play a pivotal role towards the achieving targets and goals of LGED managed projects, whether they are financed by Government of Bangladesh (GoB) or development partners like ADB, WB or similar Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs). Delays in onboarding the consultants can greatly disrupt the smooth implementation of the project in terms of cost, schedule, quality and risk management. Although ADB has outlined their core procurement principles like efficiency, quality, transparency and value for

money in their Guidance Note on Consulting Services Administered by ADB Borrowers which was published on June, 2018, the implementing agencies like LGED may face significant challenges in timely completion of the procurement process due to lack of institutional awareness and capacity to adhere with the complex standards. Communication gap between key stakeholders may lead to dispute, which may also lead to further delays in the recruitment process.

By identifying the key challenges faced by ADB financed LGED projects during recruitment of consultants and finding the bottlenecks by analyzing these challenges will help LGED officials in gaining insights on the ADB's stringent procurement policy. This will lead to reduced time taken to complete the procurement process. Also, developments partners like ADB or WB may gain insights on the key challenges faced by the implementing agencies and may develop a case specific approach towards mitigating those issues by extending their support. Also, national procurement policy makers may also adopt strategies for better synchronization with international guidelines.

1.5 Research Methodology

This research was carried out by identifying challenges faced by the Project Management Unit (PMU) and procurement professionals who were actively engaged in the consulting firm recruitment process of the ADB assisted projects of LGED. For this study purpose, 4 (Four) ADB assisted ongoing projects of LGED namely Rural Connectivity Improvement Project (RCIP), Emergency Assistance Project (EAP), Flood Reconstruction Emergency Assistance Project (FREAP) and Improving Urban Governance and Infrastructure Project (IUGIP). From these projects, a total of five consulting firm recruitment packages were chosen for secondary data collection. Relevant project personnel were interviewed, and data were gathered through document reviews of the five consulting firm recruitment packages. Based on the collected data, a survey questionnaire was developed and refined to obtain primary data from procurement professionals. The primary data were collected through an online survey conducted using Google Forms. The respondents are all procurement professionals from LGED & other government organizations. Additional data were collected from another ADB assisted Climate-Resilient Livelihood Improvement and Watershed Management in Chittagong Hill Tracts Sector Project (CRLIWM-CHT) of LGED by means of project document review. Three individual consultant selection packages were selected for this study purpose to find out whether the selection process of individual consultants is faster and effective compared to the

consulting firm selection process. Secondary data were used to support the primary data. Different evidence based researches, ADB procurement policy and regulation related documents, Public Procurement Rules (PPR) of Bangladesh, project documents and other reports were consulted to accumulate the secondary data. Upon collecting the data, these were analyzed to identify bottlenecks during the consultant selection process and their possible remedies with recommendation for improving the procurement process.

1.6 Overview of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into four chapters:

Chapter One: Introduction

Background, Statement of the Problem, Research Objectives, Rationale of the Research, Research Methodology and Overview of the Thesis.

Chapter Two: Key Features of ADB Regulations on Consulting Service Procurement

Introduction, Core Procurement Principles of ADB, ADB Procurement Cycle, Procurement related Complaint Handling Mechanism, Conflict of Interest, Consultant Selection Methods, Steps of Consultant Selection Process and Procurement Plan for Selection of Consultants.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Introduction, Research Design, Population and Sampling Strategy, Data Sources, Data Collection Methods and Data Analysis Procedures.

Chapter Four: Results

Description of Survey Respondents, EoI Shortlisting Evaluation, No Objection by ADB on EoI Shortlisting Evaluation, Technical Proposal Evaluation of RFP, No Objection by ADB on Technical Proposal Evaluation, Financial Proposal Evaluation of RFP, No Objection by ADB on Financial Proposal Evaluation, Selection of Consultants: EoI Advertising to Contract Signing, Level of Knowledge Possessed by POC and PEC Members, Number of Procurement Personnel and Adequacy of Logistics, Procurement Personnel Skill Level and Competency, Procurement Personnel Power, Authority, Responsibility and Accountability, Introduction of e-Procurement and Challenges of Service Procurement and their Remedies.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion, Recommendations and Future Scope of Study.

Chapter 2
Key Features of ADB Regulations on Consulting Service Procurement

2.1 Introduction

The Executing Agency (EA), termed as borrower by ADB, is responsible for implementation and successful completion of the project (Asian Development Bank, 2017). The outcomes of the project can be achieved by conducting the procurement process of goods, works, consulting and non-consulting services under the project in an effective and efficient manner. From identification of need to awarding of the contracts and the subsequent management of the signed contracts are very crucial for the ending the project on a high note. The Project Management Unit (PMU) performs majority of these tasks. Procurement of consulting services plays a pivotal role for the smooth completion of ADB assisted projects. Consultants are recruited to provide their expertise and knowledge for conducting feasibility study, design, implementation, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of a project. ADB provides their member countries with loans and grants to take up development projects in multiple sectors. It has developed a comprehensive set of policies and procedures to ensure that their financing is being used by the EA in a fair, transparent and efficient manner. ADB requires the bidders, consultants, EA's and all the procurement personnel involved in the procurement process to follow the ADB regulations and its amendments made from time to time so that the procured goods, works, non-consulting and consulting services are fit for purpose.

The ADB Procurement Policy (2017) and the corresponding Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers (2017) were developed to strike a balance between the rights and obligations of the borrower and the bidders. ADB has also published Consulting Service Administered by ADB Borrowers: Guidance Note on Procurement back in 2018. Bidding and contract documents are prepared based on the principles of the policy, regulations and guidelines. As the outcome of the ADB assisted development projects are heavily dependent on the quality of the consultants, the technical competence and expertise of the consulting firms or the individual consultants are given priority over the required costs. This chapter covers the key features of ADB regulations such as core procurement principles of ADB, ADB procurement cycle, complaint handling mechanism, conflict of interest, consultant selection methods, steps of consultant selection and procurement plan for consultant selection process.

2.2 Core Procurement Principles of ADB

ADB emphasizes on using procurement rules and procedures depending on the circumstances of the particular case during the implementation of a project. But in general ADB has six core procurement principles to be followed during any procurement of ADB assisted projects (Asian Development Bank, 2017). They are:

1. Economy

2. Efficiency

3. Fairness

4. Transparency

5. Quality

6. Value for Money

2.2.1 Economy

The principle of economy requires the procurement processes to be conducted in a cost-effective way without negatively affecting the feasibility of the project. Promoting active participation of qualified consultants or bidders during the consultant recruitment process or other goods or works procurement process to ensure competitive prices, minimizing unnecessary costs incurred due to improper planning, procedural delays or inefficient scope of services and on time recruitment of consultants or suppliers or contractors to enable the timely completion of the assignment and thus preventing price escalations are some of the salient features of this core principle.

2.2.2 Efficiency

The principle of efficiency emphasizes on using “fit for purpose” procurement approaches in such a way that delivers results without compromising the other core principles such as quality, fairness and transparency. Efficiency ensures that the procurement processes are proportional to complexity and risks of the contract. A few examples of ensuring efficiency in procurement are selecting appropriate procurement method, using e-Procurement for streamlining the procurement processes and minimizing delays by simplifying the approval process.

2.2.3 Fairness

The principle of fairness emphasizes on the fact that all qualified and eligible consultants or bidders are to be provided with equal opportunity and treatment in case of participating and competing to win a contract. This will be ensured by having a balance of rights and responsibilities between the executing agency and the consultant. The procurement processes should have clear, transparent, consistent and non-discriminatory criteria. Also there should be a strong mechanism for resolving procurement related complaints to build trust. ADB prefers open competitive procurement process, whenever possible, to enhance the fairness to all the participating consultants or bidders (Asian Development Bank, Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers: Goods, works, nonconsulting and consulting services, 2017).

2.2.4 Transparency

The principle of transparency means making the procurement related key information publicly available through easily accessible and maximum possible available sources. Procurement plans, advertisement of the bid or Expression of Interest (EoI), information of awarded contracts are to be published in the websites of ADB, CPTU and the EA. This principle requires the procurement process to be open and clear. Evaluation reports and other relevant documents should be maintained in such a way which can withstand audit and review of the procurement activities. This principle helps to prevent corruption and builds trust and confidence between the different stakeholders.

2.2.5 Quality

The principle of quality is one of most key requirements of ADB during planning, design, bid document preparation, bid evaluation, contract award, implementation and management of contracts in case of procurement of goods, works and services. The procurement processes should be streamlined to procure inputs and deliver outputs of right standard in a timely and effective manner to achieve development objectives and the overall project outcomes. The value of procurement, complexity of the assignment and risks involved in the procurement process should be taken into consideration while achieving quality. Goods, works and consulting services procured should be “fit for purpose” and should meet the required technical and performance standards. Quality is of paramount importance in case of consulting service procurement where the experience and expertise of the selected consultant largely affect the project outcomes. There are different methods of consultant selection process available to

choose from where appropriate weight is set to the quality and price of the proposal. ADB prefers quality over cost savings as this will enable the successful completion of the project objectives and achieve long-term sustainability (Asian Development Bank, Quality: Guidance Note on Procurement, 2018).

2.2.6 Value for Money

Value for Money (VFM) is in the center of the core procurement principles of ADB. It focuses on optimal use of public funds to achieve the development objectives of the ADB assisted projects. VFM is not about getting the maximum cost savings alone, but also about striking a balance between quality, cost, risk and sustainability. This principle encourages the executing agencies to consider Total Costs of Ownership (TCO) during the procurement of goods, works and services. TCO not only includes the cost of purchasing but also the cost of operation, maintenance and cost associated with the disposal of the goods, works and services procured (Asian Development Bank, Value for Money: Guidance Note on Procurement, 2021). This core principle also urges the procuring agencies to focus on selecting environment friendly, socially responsible and economically viable solutions. VFM can be achieved by effective, efficient and economic use of resources by following all the core principles of ADB and also allocating the risks fairly between the involved parties (Asian Development Bank, Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers: Goods, works, nonconsulting and consulting services, 2017). VFM principle is very crucial in case of consulting service procurement where quality and expertise of the consultants often outweigh the cost considerations. The effective use of value for money principle will reduce the risks associated and improve the efficiency, quality, flexibility, performance, fairness and transparency during the entire procurement cycle. Below there is an illustration of VFM by ADB which has been adopted from the Asian Development Bank documents.

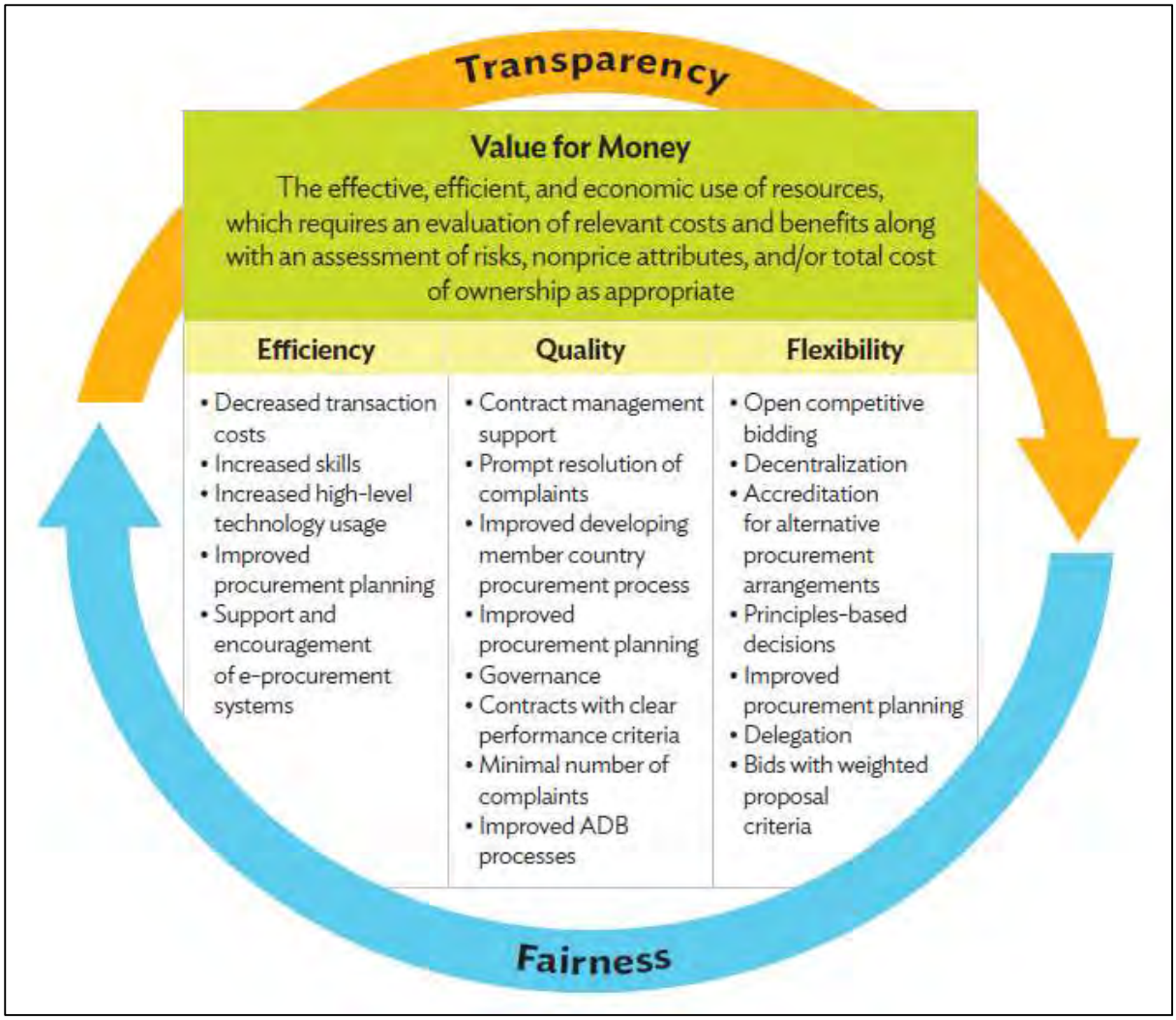

Figure 1: Illustration of VFM by ADB (Asian Development Bank, 2021)

2.3 ADB Procurement Cycle

ADB has their own procurement cycle to achieve sustainability in public procurement. The main phases of the procurement are procurement planning, bidding, bid evaluation, contract award, implementation & contract management and feedback or evaluation. These phases are guided by the core procurement principles of ADB.

The Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) represents the initial stage of the ADB procurement cycle. It serves as a key instrument for prioritizing sectors and development projects to be undertaken by ADB member countries. During this stage, country and sector or agency procurement risk assessments are carried out based on the specific needs of the member country. The CPS ensures that ADB's operations are aligned with the country's development priorities.

The next stage of the procurement cycle is the project conceptualization phase, where the need for transaction technical assistance is identified, and procurement risks are categorized. At this stage, sectoral assessments are conducted, and stakeholders are consulted to determine key development needs. These first two stages form the foundation for all subsequent phases of the ADB procurement cycle. Procurement planning is one of the most important stages of the ADB procurement cycle. The procurement plan is prepared based on the need assessment of the executing agency considering the strategic focus, operational background, market analysis, risk handling and procurement setting (Asian Development Bank, Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers: Goods, works, nonconsulting and consulting services, 2017).

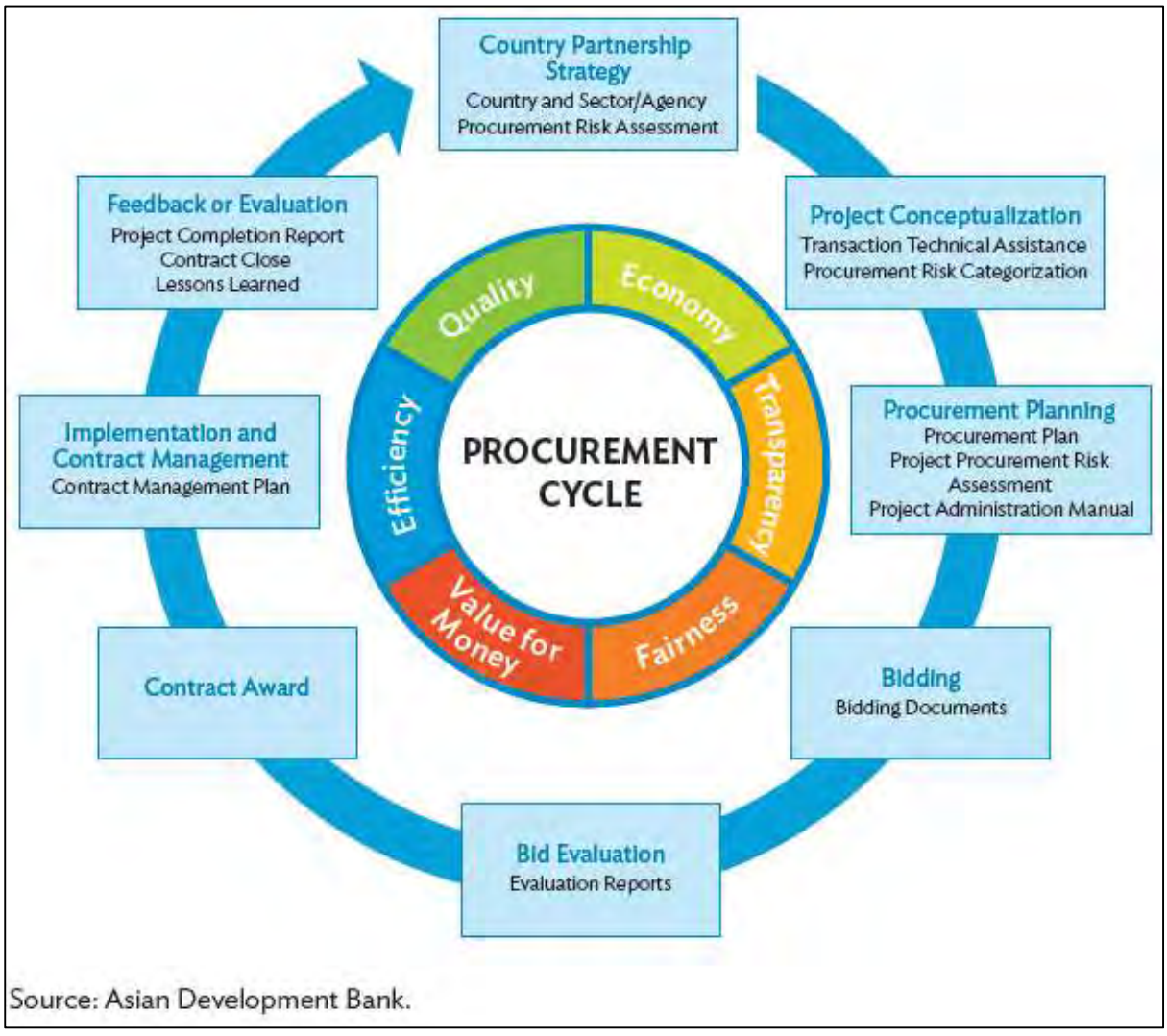

Figure 2: The ADB Procurement Cycle

The next step is bidding where the bidding documents are prepared by the executing agency and provided to the bidders or consultants as applicable. The bid or the request for expression of interest is publicly advertised and bids or EoI's are received from the prospective bidders or

consultants. The next stage is bid evaluation where after receiving the bids or proposals are evaluated following the evaluation criteria stated in the bidding document. A bid or proposal evaluation report is prepared by the executing agency and sent to ADB for their no objection. The next step is contract awarding. Here in this step, contract is signed with the first ranked bidder or consultant based on the technical and financial quality of the bid or proposal. The next stage is implementation and contract management. Here a comprehensive contract management plan is prepared and monitoring and supervision is performed to ensure quality of work or service. Reporting is an important element of this stage. The last stage of the ADB procurement cycle is feedback or evaluation. This stage includes the project completion report and key lessons learned during the project from its inception to closure.

2.4 Procurement Related Complaint Handling Mechanism

The ADB procurement regulation has a structured complaint handling mechanism to ensure transparency and fairness during any procurement of ADB assisted projects. A procurement related complaint may be submitted in writing by an "interested party" or a "complainant" to the executing agency or ADB within the stipulated timeframe set in the bidding document or as instructed in ADB guidelines. ADB defines the interested party as an applicant for pre-qualification, a bidder participating in the bidding process or interested in bidding and a consultant expressing interest or intending to express interest (Asian Development Bank, Bidding-Related Complaints: Guidance Note on Procurement, 2018). Complaints can be submitted in writing through mail, e-mail, electronic procurement system or designated website for complaint handling by EA or ADB. A complaint can be issued before the submission of bids or expressing interests, after submitting the bids or expression of interest but before awarding the contract and after awarding the contract. In general, complaints submitted before the submission of bids or EoI are due to faulty specification or terms of reference, conflict of interest and dissatisfaction on client's clarification on the procurement documents. Complaints received prior to bid submission but before awarding the contract are primarily due to excluding a bidder or consultant from a stage of the procurement process prior to decision of contract award especially after a notification of an intention to award (ITA) a contract where a standstill period applies (Asian Development Bank, Bidding-Related Complaints: Guidance Note on Procurement, 2018). Complaints received after the awarding of contract where a standstill period is not available are generally to challenge the decision to award the contract. After receiving the complaint, the executing agency needs to acknowledge the complaint and

notify ADB regarding the complaint as early as possible. The EA should review the complaint and debrief the complainant regarding their complaint. If the party is not satisfied with EA's response, they have the right to escalate the issue to ADB. After receiving the complaint, ADB promptly forwards the complaint to the EA for their review and resolution according to the ADB guidelines. In general, ADB does not enter into discussion with the complainant until the contract is awarded. But in a few circumstances the may get directly involved in discussion with the complainant depending on the nature of the complaint. If the EA does not resolve the issue following the ADB's procurement regulations, the procurement process may get delayed by a significant amount of time.

2.5 Conflict of Interest

ADB defines conflict of interest as an affair where a party's interest could inappropriately affect the party's performance of professional commitment, contractual commitments or adherence with prevailing laws, rules and regulations (Asian Development Bank, Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers: Goods, works, nonconsulting and consulting services, 2017). ADB advices the bidders, consultants and procuring entities including everyone involved in the procurement activities to disclose any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest as soon as they get aware of. There are quite a few situations where conflict of interest may occur and can negatively impact the bidder or consultant procurement process. A consulting firm or individual who are involved with preparing the project by means of feasibility study or design cannot be recruited for consulting service assignments (i.e. construction work monitoring and supervision, project implementation support, auditing) under the same project. Also, if any consultant is actively engaged in preparation of Terms of Reference (ToR) for an assignment, the same consultant cannot be recruited for the same assignment due to conflict of interest. Any bidder or consultant having a family or business relationship with any personnel from the executing agency or ADB who are closely or distantly engaged with the procurement process should disclose this before submitting their bids or proposals (Asian Development Bank, Guidelines on the Use of Consultants by Asian Development Bank and Its Borrowers, 2013). Such conflict of interest may lead to biased decision making that may give unfair competitive advantage to any particular bidder or consultant. This will undermine the transparency and fairness of the procurement process and may negatively affect the quality of the project outcomes. Failing to declare such conflicts to ADB may lead to rejection of the bids or proposals and no objection on the evaluation report may get delayed until the issue is resolved.

2.6 Consultant Selection Methods

There are several methods and procedures of procurement which are suitable for varying nature of projects, and selecting the appropriate method can speed up the project life cycle (Salem, Salman, & Ghorai, 2018). The following 7 (Seven) methods are used for selection of consultants under ADB's guidelines:

1. Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)

2. Quality Based Selection (QBS)

3. Fixed Budget Selection (FBS)

4. Consultant's Qualification Selection (CQS)

5. Least Cost Selection (LCS)

6. Direct Contracting or Single Source Selection (SSS)

7. Individual Consultant Selection (ICS)

The first 5 (Five) methods fall under the Open Competitive Bidding (OCB) category, the next one is direct contracting when more than one qualified consultant is not available. The last one can be performed using either open competitive bidding, limited competitive bidding or direct contracting. According to PPR, there are also other methods of consultant selection like Community Service Organization Selection (CSOS) and Design Contest Selection (DCS). But these methods are not discussed here in detail as the study is primarily focused on the consultant selection process according to ADB procurement guidelines.

2.6.1 Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)

Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) is the most widely used procedure for consultant selection (Asian Development Bank, Guidelines on the Use of Consultants by Asian Development Bank and Its Borrowers, 2013). Both efficiency and economy is taken into account in this method. First technical competence of the consulting firm is evaluated and then a cost factor is added to ensure value for money during the consultant selection process. The QCBS method is most appropriate when the type of services required are common in nature and complexity is low. The scope of works should be defined accurately. The Terms of Reference (ToR) have to be clear and well defined (Asian Development Bank, Consulting Services Administered by ADB Borrowers: Guidance Note on Procurement, 2018). The time

and other inputs required by the consultants to complete the assignment should be explicitly measureable. Technical and financial weights are to be chosen taking the complexity level and extent of impact of the assignment and also the significance level of quality required to select the consultant. ADB used to suggest adopting technical to financial ratio as 80:20 earlier, nowadays 90:10 is more frequently used in ADB assisted projects (Asian Development Bank, Frequently Asked Questions on Consulting Services, 2021).

In this method of selecting consultants, after finalizing the ToR, Request for Expression of Interest (EoI) is publicly advertised through ADB's Consultant Management System (CMS). A Consulting Services Recruitment Notice (CSRN) is published through CMS website and consultants can express their interest there. From the consultants who expressed their interest on performing the assignment, a shortlist is prepared based on the evaluation criteria and sent to ADB for no objection. After receiving the no objection letter, Request for Proposal (RFP) are issued to the shortlisted consultants to submit two separate envelopes comprising of their technical and financial proposals. First the technical proposals are opened by the Proposal Opening Committee (POC) in presence of the shortlisted consultants who wishes to take part and then handed over to the Proposal Evaluation Committee (PEC) for evaluation of the technical proposals. In case of ADB assisted projects the POC and PEC are same as per ADB guidelines. Financial proposal envelopes are kept sealed and stored securely until they are publicly opened later on. The PEC evaluates the technical proposals based on their conformity to the ToR and the RFP.

After completion of the technical evaluation and obtaining ADB's no objection, the firms who obtained minimum qualifying technical score, only their financial proposals are publicly opened in presence of their authorized representatives. After necessary corrections are made for arithmetical errors and rational adjustment to the financial proposal to ensure that the technical and financial proposals complement each other, an updated total proposal cost is prepared for all the qualified firms. The total score is calculated by weighting and adding the technical and financial scores to determine the overall ranking of the consulting firms. After obtaining no objection on the combined evaluation from ADB, the overall first ranked team will then be invited to enter into the contract negotiation. After the successful negotiation contract agreement can be signed between the executing agency and the consulting firm.

QCBS method is appropriate in case of detailed design, monitoring and supervision of the construction works, project implementation support, installation of equipment, capacity

building initiatives etc. For this study purpose, consulting firm selection packages following the QCBS method are selected as this is the most frequently used consultant selection method.

2.6.2 Quality Based Selection (QBS)

Quality Based Selection (QBS) is a consultant selection method which is used when the quality of the consulting service is the primary focus and cost has a very little importance. During the evaluation only quality of the technical proposal is evaluated. QBS method is most appropriate when the task assigned to the consultants are highly complex in nature and it is very difficult to define the ToR (Asian Development Bank, Consulting Services Administered by ADB Borrowers: Guidance Note on Procurement, 2018). These tasks requires high level of expertise and the assignment can be performed following different methodology hence the cost of the proposal may vary by a great extent. Also a poor quality performance can have a very adverse effect towards the successful completion of the project. For that reason, in QBS method shortlisted consultants are requested to submit only the technical proposal and price is not considered in the evaluation criteria. The consultant with maximum technical score is invited to submit a detailed financial proposal and negotiation is done on the prices. After successful negotiation contract can be signed. This method is appropriate in case of feasibility studies, design of large and complex projects, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), complex master plans, complex multi-disciplinary studies of a complex nature etc.

2.6.3 Fixed Budget Selection (FBS)

Fixed Budget Selection (FBS) is the consultant selection method where the total budget of the assignment is fixed and must not be exceeded. FBS method is appropriate when the EA can define the ToR in a detailed manner and time requirement with personnel inputs can be properly assessed (Asian Development Bank, Consulting Services Administered by ADB Borrowers: Guidance Note on Procurement, 2018). In this method of selection, shortlisted firms are requested to submit, in separate envelopes, their technical and financial proposals as like as QCBS method but the price quoted must be less or equal to the predefined budget. All the technical proposals are evaluated following the predefined evaluation criteria and sub-criteria. The financial proposals of the consultants who obtained minimum qualifying technical score are then publicly opened. Proposals exceeding the fixed budget are rejected. The proposal with the highest technical score within the budget is invited to negotiate, although the negotiated price cannot exceed the predefined budget. After the negotiation the contract can be signed.

FBS method can be adopted in case of repetitive assignments with definite deliverables having budget constraint like training, workshop, survey, data collection, simple feasibility studies etc.

2.6.4 Consultant's Qualification Selection (CQS)

Consultant's Qualification Selection (CQS) is a method where consultants are selected based on their qualification and subject specific expertise. This method is used where advanced proficiency is required to ensure quality service delivery for small value assignments (Asian Development Bank, Consulting Services Administered by ADB Borrowers: Guidance Note on Procurement, 2018). This method is adopted if the assignment duration is short and only a few consultants are found qualified. A more competitive approach would not be justified with respect to the value of the assignment. In this method consultants are shortlisted based on their competence and experience relevant to the assignment in consideration. Then from the shortlisted firms the firm with best qualifications and references is sent the RFP for submission of their combined technical-financial proposal. After the submission they are invited to the negotiation process. If the negotiation with the most qualified firm fails, then the second ranked firm is invited to negotiate. Development of manuals, training curriculum, emergency assessments, small studies or research are a few examples of assignments where consultants could be selected following the CQS method.

2.6.5 Least Cost Selection (LCS)

Least Cost selection (LCS) is a method for selecting consultants of a simple, routine or standard nature for small assignments where scopes of the assignment are well defined (Asian Development Bank, Consulting Services Administered by ADB Borrowers: Guidance Note on Procurement, 2018). ToR is developed in a precise manner and REoI is advertised and a shortlist is prepared from the interested consultants. Then technical and financial proposals are invited from the shortlisted consultants. The financial proposals of the firms obtaining minimum qualifying technical score are then publicly opened. The firm submitting the least expensive proposal is then picked and asked to negotiate and settle the contract. LCS method is generally adopted in case of assignments such as engineering design and/or supervision of simple projects, routine surveys, routine maintenance works, audits etc.

2.6.6 Single Source Selection (SSS)

Single Source Selection (SSS) is a method for selecting a consulting firm or individual consultant directly without any structured competitive process. SSS method is appropriate only

if it seems that the benefits achieved by adopting this method clearly outweigh the advantages of a competitive process. This method can be adopted in case of continuation of the work which had been done by the firm or individual satisfactorily. Also for any emergency response cases when there is not enough time to go for the competitive process, this method may be chosen. SSS is adopted when there is only one firm has the relevant experience or qualification for performing the tasks under the assignment. For very small valued assignments this method may be found appropriate. In this method, a ToR and cost estimate is prepared and technical and financial proposals are requested from the selected consultant. If the technical proposal satisfies the ToR and the pricing is reasonable with respect to the market price then EA can conduct the negotiation process and then sign the contract with the consultant. This process is faster and ensures continuity but it may also lead to bias towards a particular consultant. For that reason, a strong justification must be presented to ADB for their no objection before choosing this method of consultant selection.

2.6.7 Individual Consultant Selection (ICS)

Individual Consultant Selection (ICS) is a method for selecting an individual for performing the tasks under an assignment based on their qualification and experience. The selection process may be open, limited or direct contracting based on the specific need of the project. Individual consultant instead of a team of professionals may be selected only if this is the most efficient way of completing the assignment. If the assignment duration is short-term or intermittent and only individual expertise is required instead of team work then ICS is preferred. If up to 5 (Five) individual consultant are required under a single project for assignments then opting for ICS is advised by ADB, otherwise selection of a firm is preferred. In exceptional cases more than five individual consultants can be selected if the benefits of selecting individuals over a team of experts outweigh in terms of resources required for recruiting, coordinating and management of the said experts (Asian Development Bank, Frequently Asked Questions on Consulting Services, 2021). In this method, a detailed ToR is prepared and REoI is advertised. The individual experts who expresses their interest are then evaluated and shortlisted based on their CVs submitted. CVs are evaluated based on the expert's qualification and relevant experience. Then the highest scoring personnel is invited for contract negotiation. This method of selection is far quicker and simpler than the methods for selecting consulting firms. A few individual consultant selection packages using the open competitive bidding procedure are considered for this study purpose to check whether this process is faster and effective compared to the consulting firm selection process.

2.7 Steps of Consultant Selection Process

As QCBS is the primary method selected for this study purpose, the steps followed in the QCBS procedure in case of ADB administered consulting service procurement are listed below:

i. Preparation of the Terms of Reference (ToR)

ii. Preparation of the cost estimates for the assignment

iii. Public advertising on Request for Expression of Interest (REoI)

iv. Preparation of long list of consultants

v. Preparation of shortlist of consultants

vi. Preparation of Request of Proposal (RFP)

vii. Issuance of Request of Proposal (RFP) to shortlisted consultants

viii. Receipt of technical and financial proposals from shortlisted consultants

ix. Evaluation of technical proposals

x. Opening of financial proposals

xi. Evaluation of the financial proposals

xii. Ranking of proposals based on combined evaluation

xiii. Contract negotiation and signing of contract

xiv. Debriefing

The above steps from preparation of ToR to signing of contract and subsequent debriefing (if any) are followed in case of the QCBS procedure. For recruitment of consultants using QCBS method following the ADB procurement guidelines, the EA is required to obtain no objection from ADB three times during the entire consultant selection process (Asian Development Bank, Guidelines on the Use of Consultants by Asian Development Bank and Its Borrowers, 2013). The EA needs to submit relevant documents to ADB for their checking, validation and due diligence check on the consultant selection process conducted by the EA. First submission to ADB includes the shortlist of the consultants and draft RFP. After ADB provides no objection on the first submission, the RFP is issued to the shortlisted consultants. Second submission to ADB includes the technical proposal evaluation report. After getting no

objection on the second submission, financial proposals are publicly opened and then evaluated. Third submission includes combined evaluation (technical and financial) with ranking of the eligible consultants. After obtaining no objection on the third submission, the EA can negotiate with the first ranked consultant. After successful negotiation between the parties, evaluation reports with all the relevant documents as well as the draft contract agreement are sent to the Approving Authority (AA) for approval of the contract. Once the contract is approved, both parties can sign the contract and send signed contract document to ADB for their acknowledgement. Also if any of the shortlisted consultants who were not awarded the contract, can request the executing agency for a debriefing session regarding their submitted proposal.

On the other hand, in case of Individual Consultant Selection (ICS), the steps followed are listed below:

i. Preparation of the Terms of Reference (ToR)

ii. Preparation of the cost estimate for the assignment

iii. Public advertising on Request for Expression of Interest (REoI)

iv. Preparation of long list of consultants

v. Preparation of shortlist of consultants

vi. Contract negotiation and signing of contract

It can be observed from the above steps that, there are fewer steps required to complete the individual consultant selection process. Unlike the QCBS method, in case of ICS the EA is required to obtain no objection from ADB for a single time instead of three times during the entire consultant selection process. No objection is required only on shortlisting. After obtaining no objection from ADB, the first ranked individual consultant is invited to negotiate with the EA. Similar to QCBS method, after successful negotiation the evaluation report with all relevant documents are sent to the AA for approval of the contract. Once the contract is approved, the consultant and the EA can sign the contract and send copy of signed contract document to ADB for their acknowledgement.

2.8 Procurement Plan for Selection of Consultants

A procurement plan is a document which includes all procurement activities i.e. Goods and related Services, Works and Physical Services and Intellectual and Professional Services to be conducted by a Procuring Entity (PE) mentioning the scope, budget, method of procurement, source of funds, contract approving authority and expected time to complete each activity. A document listing and describing all the procurement activities to be undertaken by an EA in a fiscal year is termed as Annual Procurement Plan (APP). The procurement plan for the entire project duration is defined as Total Procurement Plan. Each and every government project has a procurement plan which is an integral part of the DPP. According to PPR 2008, an APP is prepared at the start of each fiscal year and has a scope of updating it every three months. The APP needs to be prepared by the relevant project officials and needs to be approved by the Head of Procuring Entity (HOPE) or his/her authorized representative. After approval of the APP, this needs to be published in notice boards, organizational websites for greater reach among the concerned contractors, suppliers, consultants and relevant stakeholders. The APP has to be published in BPPA website if the estimated cost of the package is above the threshold specified in Schedule II of PPR 2008. Having a procurement plan ensures transparency, accountability and efficiency. It helps the concerned PMU officials to plan at an early stage for the timely completion of the procurement activities under the project. It also guides the project officials to keep track of the schedule and the cost.

According to PPR 2008, there are distinct formats for preparing APP in case of Goods and related Services, Works and Physical Services and Intellectual and Professional Services (MoP, 2008). In case of consulting service recruitment the document contains the following information or data.

1. Package Number

2. Description of Procurement Package

3. Unit (Man-Month, Person-Month etc.)

4. Quantity

5. Procurement Method and Type (QCBS/ QBS/ LCS/ ICS etc. and National/ International)

6. Contract Approving Authority (HOPE/ Ministry/ CCGP etc.)

7. Source of Funds (ADB/ WB/ JICA/ GoB etc.)

8. Estimated Cost (in BDT)

9. Planned Time for Advertising EoI

10. Planned Time for Issue RFP

11. Planned Time for Technical Proposal Opening

12. Planned Time for Technical Proposal Evaluation

13. Planned Time for Financial Proposal Opening and Evaluation

14. Planned Time for Negotiation

15. Planned Time for Approval

16. Planned Time for Signing of Contract

17. Planned Time for Total Time to Contract Signature

18. Planned Time for Completion of Contract

From the above list of information for serial number 9 to 18, there is an option to put planned dates, planned days and actual dates. Although during the planning stage the row for actual days is kept blank, after completing the procurement process this row can be filled up for these procurement activities. Afterwards a comparison can be made between planned date vs actual date to find out whether the procurement activities mentioned in the APP are conducted as planned or if there is a delay.

Chapter 3
Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework used to examine delays and identify challenges associated with the consultant selection process in ADB-assisted projects of LGED. The study integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods using available procurement records and gaining insights from the procurement experts to create a comprehensive understanding of procedural delays, institutional constraints, and capacity-related issues affecting the consulting service procurement process. This chapter describes the research design, population and sampling strategy, data sources, data collection methods and data analysis procedures.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopts a mixed-method research design, combining quantitative analysis of procurement timeframes with qualitative insights obtained from procurement professionals. This design is appropriate because procurement delays are not only measurable through documentary evidence but also shaped by institutional behavior, staff capacity, procedural compliance, and stakeholder coordination—factors best explored through qualitative methods. The integration of both data types enables methodological triangulation, improves analytical robustness, and supports a more holistic interpretation of the challenges and root causes of delay in consultant recruitment.

3.3 Population and Sampling Strategy

The population of this study includes all ADB-assisted projects of LGED that involve procurement of consulting firms or individual consultants, as well as procurement professionals engaged in these activities. The population also includes documents, reports, and records associated with consultant selection processes conducted under ADB procurement guidelines.

A **purposive sampling strategy** was adopted to select a representative set of consulting service packages and survey respondents. Purposive sampling is appropriate for this study because it allows selection of cases that provide the greatest insight into the challenges of ADB-funded procurement, rather than aiming for statistical generalization.

A total of 5 (Five) consulting firm recruitment packages were selected from 4 (Four) different ADB assisted projects of LGED namely Rural Connectivity Improvement Project (RCIP), Emergency Assistance Project (EAP), Flood Reconstruction Emergency Assistance Project (FREAP) and Improving Urban Governance and Infrastructure Project (IUGIP). The consulting firm selection packages were-

1. Detailed Project Report Consultant (DPRC)
2. Capacity Development Consultant (CDC)
3. Design Monitoring and Supervision (DMS) Consulting Services
4. Project Implementation Support Consultant (PISC)
5. Governance Improvement and Capacity Development (GICD) Consulting Services

Detailed Project Report Consultant (DPRC) and Capacity Development Consultant (CDC) were recruited from Rural Connectivity Improvement Project (RCIP). DRPC consulting firm was selected to prepare comprehensive project documents and reports during the project duration. The aim of recruiting CDC firm was to build institutional capacity by providing training to officials, contractors and various stakeholder groups. Design Monitoring and Supervision (DMS) consulting firm was selected from Emergency Assistance Project (EAP). The objective of this consulting service was to monitor and supervise the ongoing infrastructure development works. Recruitment of Project Implementation Support Consultant (PISC) was done from Flood Reconstruction Emergency Assistance Project (FREAP). The focus of the assignment was to design and supervise the flood affected road and bridge infrastructures. Governance Improvement and Capacity Development (GICD) consulting service package was a part of Improving Urban Governance and Infrastructure Project (IUGIP). The purpose of recruiting the consulting firm was to reform urban governance practices and train group of individuals for institutional strengthening. The consulting service packages along with their project name is mentioned below:

Serial No	**Name of the Project**	**Name of the Package**
1	Rural Connectivity Improvement Project (RCIP)	Detailed Project Report Consultant (DPRC)
2		Capacity Development Consultant (CDC)
3	Emergency Assistance Project (EAP)	Design Monitoring and Supervision (DMS) Consulting Services

4	Flood Reconstruction Emergency Assistance Project (FREAP)	Project Implementation Support Consultant (PISC)
5	Improving Urban Governance and Infrastructure Project (IUGIP)	Governance Improvement and Capacity Development (GICD) Consulting Services

Table 1: List of Consulting Firm Selection Packages

Additional data were collected from ADB assisted Climate-Resilient Livelihood Improvement and Watershed Management in Chittagong Hill Tracts Sector Project (CRLIWM-CHT) of LGED by means of project document review. Three individual consultant selection packages were selected for this study purpose to find out whether the selection process of individual consultants is faster and effective compared to the consulting firm selection process. The name of the individual consulting service packages are mentioned below:

Serial No	**Name of the Project**	**Name of the Package**
1	Climate Resilient Livelihood Improvement and Watershed Management in Chittagong Hill Tracts Sector Project (CRLIWM-CHT)	Supervision Engineer
2		Bio Engineer
3		Design Engineer

Table 2: List of Individual Consultant Selection Packages

For primary data, a total of 50 (Fifty) procurement professionals from LGED and other public sector organizations responded to the survey. This sample size is adequate for identifying patterns, perceptions, and recurring issues related to procurement delays.

3.4 Data Sources

Primary data were collected through an online survey conducted using Google Forms. The survey targeted procurement professionals involved in project design, procurement processing, contract management, and administrative approvals. There were a total of twenty six questions in the questionnaire among which the first five questions were constructed to assess the demographic and professional information. The next nineteen questions were related to issues encountered during selection of consultants and their potential remedies consisting of either close ended questions on procurement practices or Likert-scale items assessing perceptions of delay factors. The last two open ended questions were placed to gather insight of the

professionals' regarding challenges of consulting service procurement and their possible remedies. Additional qualitative data were collected through informal interviews with project personnel responsible for preparing evaluation reports and processing ADB submissions.

Secondary data were collected through comprehensive document review of evaluation reports for EoI shortlisting, technical and financial proposals, Annual Procurement Plan, terms of reference (ToR) for the consulting service packages, Procurement monitoring and tracking sheets, ADB procurement policy documents and guidelines and Public Procurement Rules (PPR), 2008 of Bangladesh. These documents provided actual timelines, planned timelines, procedural compliance information, and evidence of administrative processes.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

A comprehensive **document review** was conducted to extract quantitative data on planned and actual durations for each stage of the consultant selection process. Secondary data were gathered from five consulting firm packages and three individual consultant packages. Time taken to complete each stage, delays during evaluation, obtaining no objection and approval processes were identified and recorded for further analysis. Based on the collected data a survey questionnaire was prepared and finalized to collect primary data from procurement professionals.

An **online survey questionnaire**, using Google forms as the platform, was distributed to procurement professionals with prior experience with procurement processes of Government of Bangladesh and various development partner organizations. Participation was voluntary, and all respondents provided their informed consent. The survey captured respondents' perceptions of constraints such as adequacy of staffing, evaluation challenges, approval delays, motivation, institutional capacity, and procedural complexity.

Informal interviews with project personnel and procurement staff were conducted to validate findings from the document review and survey. Interviews provided clarifications on procedural bottlenecks and allowed identification of important issues not gathered through quantitative data.

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

The quantitative data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The average duration of each procurement stages, average and percent deviation from the planned timeframes were

measured as an indication of delays and underlying challenges faced during the entire consultant selection process. Moreover, standard deviation was calculated to assess the extent of variability in delays of the selected packages. Standard deviation was particularly important for understanding inconsistency in evaluation and approval times and for determining whether delays were systemic or sporadic across projects. Bar charts and tables were developed to represent the scenario of delay in procurement process during consultant selection.

Qualitative data from open-ended survey responses and interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Initially the major challenges were picked from received responses based on recurring ideas. Then they were categorized into broader themes such as staffing limitations, lack of motivation, inadequate knowledge of ADB procedures, lack of coordination, and procedural rigidity. These themes were interpreted to explain how they contribute to procurement delays and what their potential remedies are. This approach allowed deeper examination of institutional and behavioral factors influencing the selection of consultants.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Description of Survey Respondents

The survey was carried out among 50 procurement and project management professionals from LGED and other government agencies of Bangladesh. Majority of the respondents (21 out of 50 respondents) were Senior Assistant Engineers (Sr. AE) who are mid-level officials performing procurement activities in a regular basis. There were 13 Assistant Engineers (AE) who participated in the survey. They perform most of the procurement duties of their respective offices and are very pivotal towards the successful completion of the project activities. There were 5 Executive Engineers (XEN) who provided their valuable input in the survey from their vast experience in procurement sector. Also, there were participation of Upazila Engineers (UE) and Sub-Divisional Engineers (SDE) in equal number (3 respondents each). They are mid-level officials performing procurement and project management activities in field level. Project Director (PD), Deputy Project Director (DPD) and Deputy Director (DD) who are senior managerial level officials, also participated in the survey (1 respondent each). Their strategic views were reflected in the survey. Also there are Assistant Manager (AM) and Assistant Director (1 respondent each) who participated in the survey offering their insight on procurement activities from administrative point of view. The number of respondents with their designation is represented in the below table.

Serial No	Designation	Number of Officials
1	Project Director (PD)	1
2	Deputy Project Director (DPD)	1
3	Executive Engineer (XEN)	5
4	Deputy Director (DD)	1
5	Senior Assistant Engineer (Sr. AE)	21
6	Upazila Engineer (UE)	3
7	Sub-Divisional Engineer (SDE)	3
8	Assistant Engineer (AE)	13
9	Assistant Manager (AM)	1
10	Assistant Director (AD)	1
	Total Number of Respondents	**50**

Table 3: List of Survey Questionnaire Respondents

The minimum educational qualification of the survey respondents is B.Sc or equivalent and majority (60% of the participants) of them have post graduate degree (refer to Figure 3).

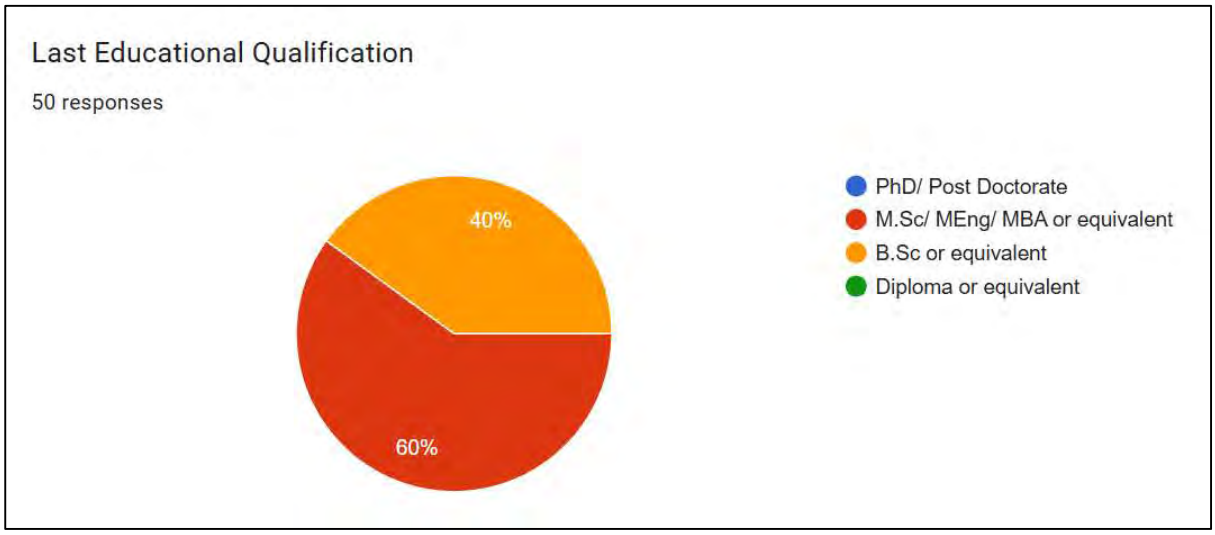

Figure 3: Educational Qualification of Survey Respondents

The survey respondents were asked regarding their length of professional service and majority of them (46%, 23 out of 50) had work experience span of five to eight years (refer to Figure 4). A notable percentage of the professionals had nine to twelve years of experience (26%, 13 out of 50) followed by a group of professionals (20%, 10 out of 50) having thirteen to sixteen years of experience. The distribution indicates a balance between mid-level and senior professionals with vast knowledge and experience.

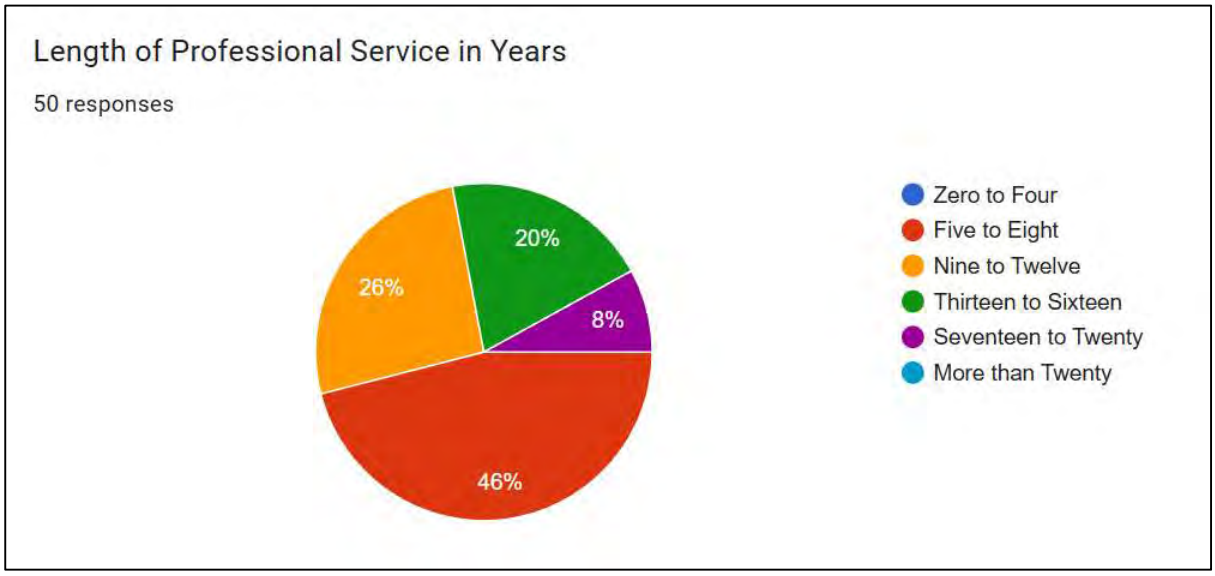

Figure 4: Length of Professional Service of Survey Respondents

The majority of the survey respondents (58%, 29 out of 50) had five to eight years involvement in procurement activities (refer to Figure 5). 22% of the professionals (11 out of 50) had nine to twelve years of experience in procurement sector followed by a group of procurement professionals (14%, 7 out of 50) having zero to four years of experience. The distribution indicates a balance between mid-level and senior professionals with vast knowledge and experience in procurement sector.

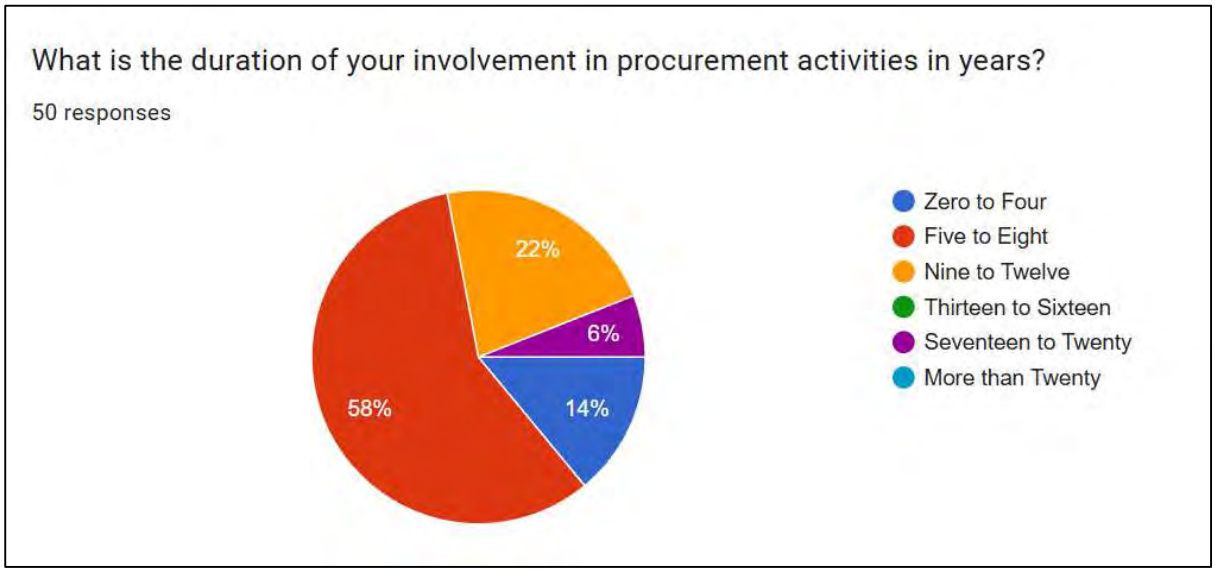

Figure 5: Survey Resopndents' Duration of Involvement in Procurement Activities

4.2 EoI Shortlisting Evaluation

For the aforementioned consulting firm recruitment packages, Expression of Interest (EoI) shortlisting evaluation took an average of 57 days from opening of the EoI to submitting the EoI shortlisting evaluation (i.e. first submission) to Asian Development Bank (ADB) for their no objection. According to the procurement processing and approval timetable presented in Schedule III of PPR 2008, in general the evaluation committee should take up to a maximum of 21 days (three weeks) where the approving authority is HOPE or above with an exception of maximum 28 days (four weeks) if the approving authority is CCGP (for complex cases). Also for consultancy proposals, one additional week shall be allowed to the PEC for all stages of evaluation (MoP, 2008). As the evaluation process of consulting service packages selected for the study purpose are not complex, the allowable timeframe for PEC is a maximum of 28 days (four weeks) for each evaluation process. The respondents of the survey were asked to provide opinion on whether the average time taken for EoI shortlisting evaluation is justified.

74% of the survey respondents (37 out of 50) answered that requiring 57 days on an average to finalize EoI shortlisting is not justified. Remaining 26% participants opined that the time taken during the evaluation is appropriate (refer to Figure 6).

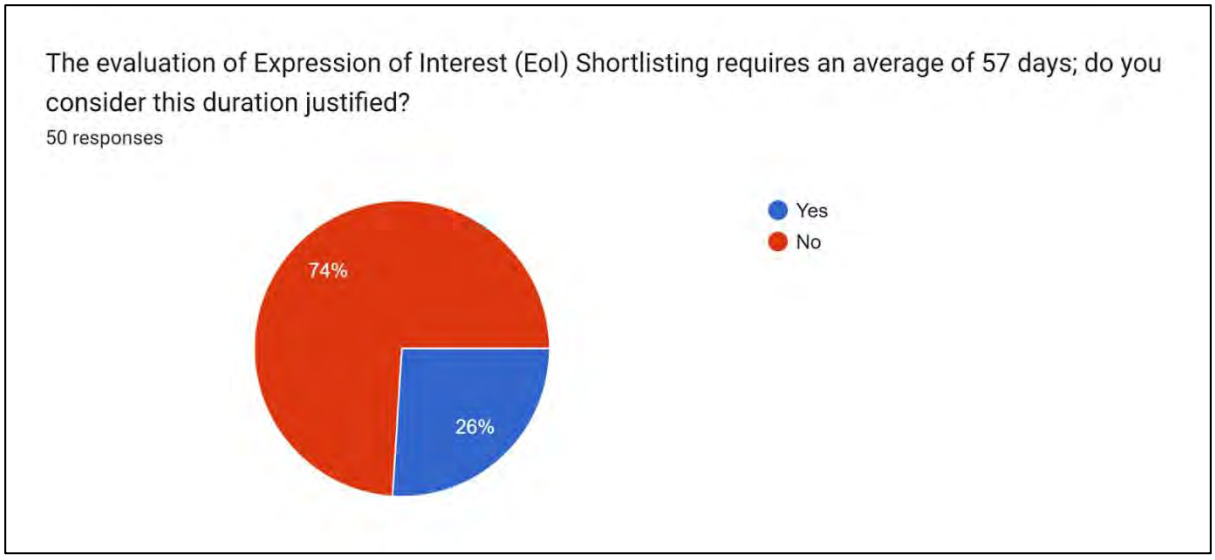

Figure 6: Time required for EoI Shortlisting Evaluation

From the responses it can observed that, there is a strong belief among the respondents that the delay in this process is excessive and negatively impacts the overall time taken to onboard the consulting firm.

During the interview of the respective project personnel, a few potential causes were identified which led to the delay in EoI shortlisting evaluation. These causes were included as options for survey questionnaire and the participants were asked to choose any of the options they perceive as justified.

From the answer provided by the procurement professionals, major reasons for the delay in EoI shortlisting evaluation were identified (refer to Figure 7). These are-

- Shortage of officials at Project Director's Office (27 responses, 54%)
- Insufficient motivation and competency of the PMU staff (27 responses, 54%)
- Lack of knowledge of PD office's staff on ADB's Procurement Guidelines (24 responses, 48%)
- Meeting schedule delay due to unavailability of Evaluation Committee members (22 responses, 44%)

Other significant reasons are-

- Setting up Complex Evaluation Criteria (17 responses, 34%)
- Lack of Coordination between Project Director and other stakeholders (14 responses, 28%)

From the above responses it can observed that, shortage of officials at Project Director's office is the main reason for delay in EoI shortlisting evaluation. Although the Proposal Evaluation Committee for LGED consists of 7 (Seven) members, but member secretary of the evaluation committee plays the most important role in the evaluation process. Project Director of the relevant project acts as the member secretary of PEC and the officials of PD office assist him/her in EoI evaluation. At the same time, the short numbered staffs have to perform other duties of the project. As a result, due to the shortage of officials in PD office, the evaluation takes more time.

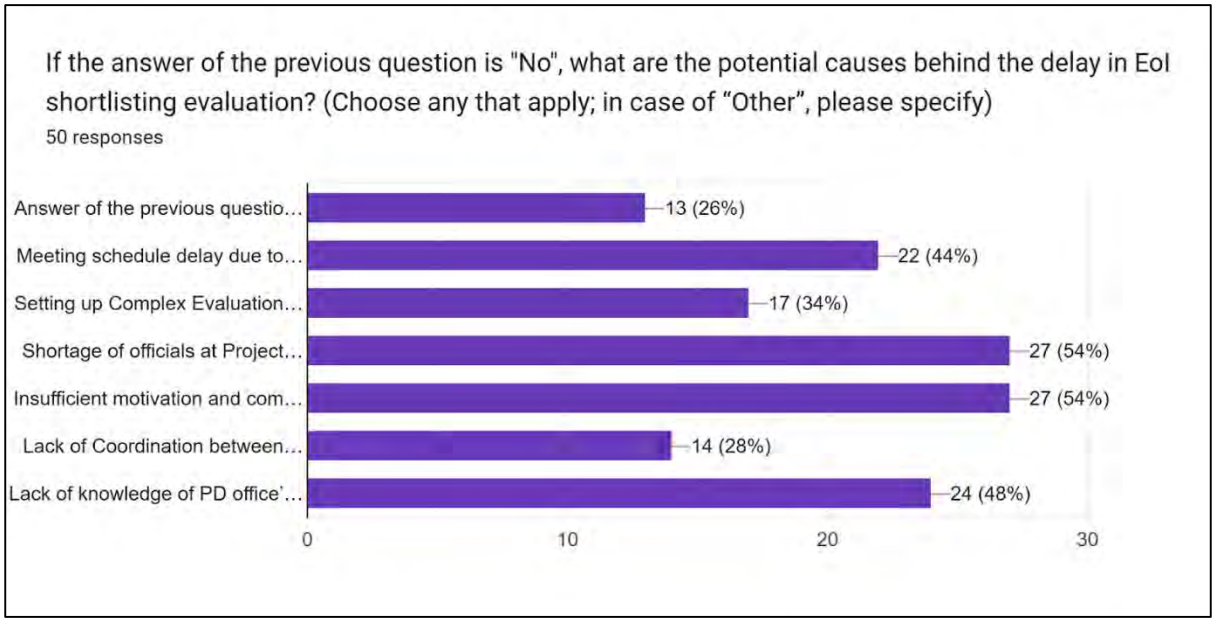

Figure 7: Potential causes of delay in EoI Shortlisting Evaluation

Another equally strong reason for delay in evaluation is lack of motivation and competency of the PMU staff. Firstly there are insufficient officials posted in the PMU and secondly the posted officials in many cases are inefficient and lacks inspiration to perform the duty of EoI evaluation.

Thirdly, Lack of knowledge of PD office's staff on ADB's procurement guidelines leads to further delay in completing the evaluation process. Adequate knowledge on ADB's procurement policy regarding selection of consultants is a must have for completion of the evaluation in an efficient and timely manner.

Meeting schedule delay due to unavailability of Evaluation Committee members was identified as the fourth reason leading to delay in EoI evaluation. At least 2 (Two) meetings are held by the PEC to finalize the evaluation. In the first meeting, the Narrative Evaluation Criteria (NEC) and sub-criteria's are discussed and finalized following the ADB guidelines. In the second and sub-sequent meetings (if any), the submitted Expression of Interests are examined following the agreed upon Narrative Evaluation Criteria (NEC) and firms are shortlisted. A letter is issued to the PEC members after the date and time of these meetings are finalized by the Chairperson of the PEC. Among the 7 (Seven) members of the PEC, there are 3 (Three) external members and remaining members are from LGED. Sometimes few members of the committee becomes unavailable due to various reasons and the meeting needs to be postponed to a later date. These postponements lead to delay in the overall evaluation time taken by the PEC.

The fifth reason for delay in evaluation is setting a very complex evaluation criteria. The Narrative Evaluation Criteria (NEC) is set by the PEC following the ADB guidelines but sometimes a very complex evaluation criteria is set. Also, the data provided by the consulting firm in EoI is not adequate to provide a valid score for each of these criterion. A significant time is lost to find data from the consultants EoI and matching them with the complex evaluation criteria.

Lastly, lack of coordination between Project Director and other stakeholders is another notable reason for delay in evaluation. As Project Director is the member secretary of the PEC, his role is pivotal to successful completion of the consultant selection process. Motivating the PMU staffs to complete the evaluation following ADB guidelines in a timely manner, communicating promptly with the PEC chairperson for setting the dates for meeting, issuing letters to PEC members for attending the meetings, preparing the minutes of the meeting, ensuring signature of the committee members and finally sending the evaluation report to ADB for their clearance are the key steps followed by the Project Director. His coordination with all these stakeholders is very important in avoiding any unnecessary delay during the evaluation.

From the survey data it can be concluded that, multiple factors contribute towards the delay in EoI shortlisting evaluation such as inadequate staffing with lack of skill and inspiration, institutional capacity deficiency, process complexity and lack of coordination.

4.3 No Objection by ADB on EoI Shortlisting Evaluation

After evaluation of the EoI the shortlist of the consulting firms is prepared from the long list. Then the shortlist is required to be sent to ADB for their no objection. To further assess the procurement process of the ADB assisted projects of LGED, the survey respondents were asked whether the time taken by Asian Development Bank (ADB) to provide no objection on the EoI shortlisting evaluation was justified.

A remarkable majority of the survey respondents (45 out of 50, 90%) believes that requiring 53 days on an average to provide no objection on the EoI shortlisting evaluation is not justified. Only 10% of the participants (5 responders) consider that the time taken by ADB to provide no objection is appropriate (refer to Figure 8).

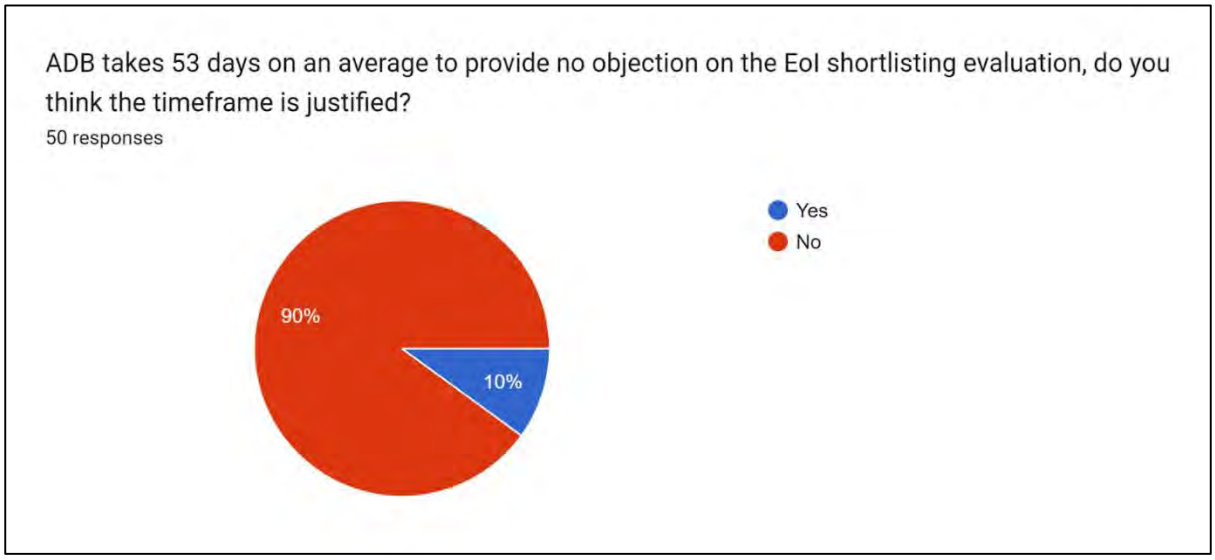

Figure 8: Time taken by ADB for No Objection on EoI Shortlisting Evaluation

The above figure indicates towards a very strong perception among the procurement professionals that the time taken by ADB for providing no objection on shortlisting is excessive and unusual. During the interview, relevant project officials have stated a few potential reasons for the delay in the no objection process.

- ADB officials need to conduct due diligence checks to ensure that no shortlisted consultants are in ADB sanction list.
- ADB may have disagreement regarding the evaluation done by the EA in procurement, technical or procedural aspects.
- Firms with proven record of under-performance might have been shortlisted and ADB could raise objection regarding that.

- The EA may send incomplete evaluation documents and faulty draft RFP document which in turn may lead to clarification requests from ADB during the review process.
- There may have been complaints regarding the procurement process and resolution of complaints may lead to a delayed clearance from ADB.
- ADB staffs may identify actual or potential conflict of interests and remedial actions may further delay the clearance procedure.

The respondents who consider the required time to provide no objection is excessive, were asked to provide their opinion on a more realistic timeframe to be taken by ADB. The responses indicate that a shorter timeframe is preferred by the procurement professionals. Among the 45 respondents who prefer a faster timeline for no objection by ADB, 23 respondents (46%) has opted for 21 (Twenty One) day timeframe and 13 respondents (26%) have selected 14 (Fourteen) day timeframe would be appropriate. The remaining 9 respondents (18%) have opined that the 28 (Twenty Eight) day timeframe is justified (refer to Figure 9).

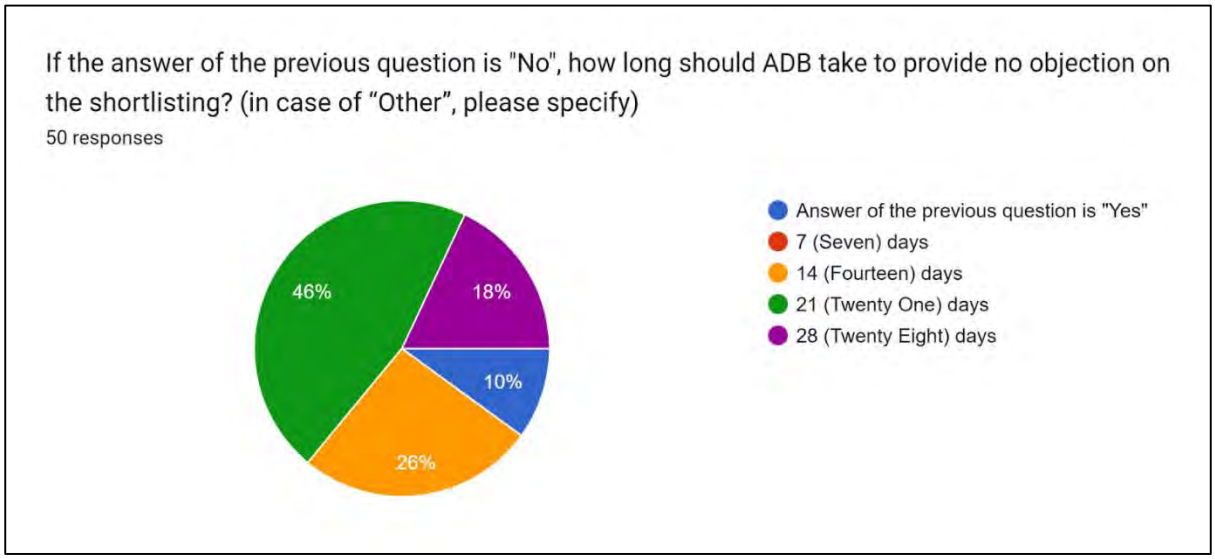

Figure 9: Time limit for ADB's No Objection on EoI Shortlisting Evaluation

The findings of these two survey questions indicate that there is a strong belief among the stakeholders that ADB's current timeframe for providing no objection on EoI shortlisting evaluation is very lengthy and three weeks or less would be a reasonable timeframe. This shorter timeframe is considered as a logical balance between in-depth review and prompt decision making.

4.4 Technical Proposal Evaluation of RFP

For the five packages, technical proposal evaluation took an average of 84 days—from receipt of proposals to submission to ADB for no objection—against the 28-day (four weeks) timeframe specified in PPR 2008. In the context of ADB assisted projects of LGED, the survey participants were asked whether the average time taken for technical proposal evaluation is justified.

78% of the survey respondents (39 out of 50) indicated that spending 84 days on an average to finalize technical proposal evaluation is not justified. Only 22% of the participants (11 out of 50) agrees that the time taken during the evaluation process is justified (refer to Figure 10).

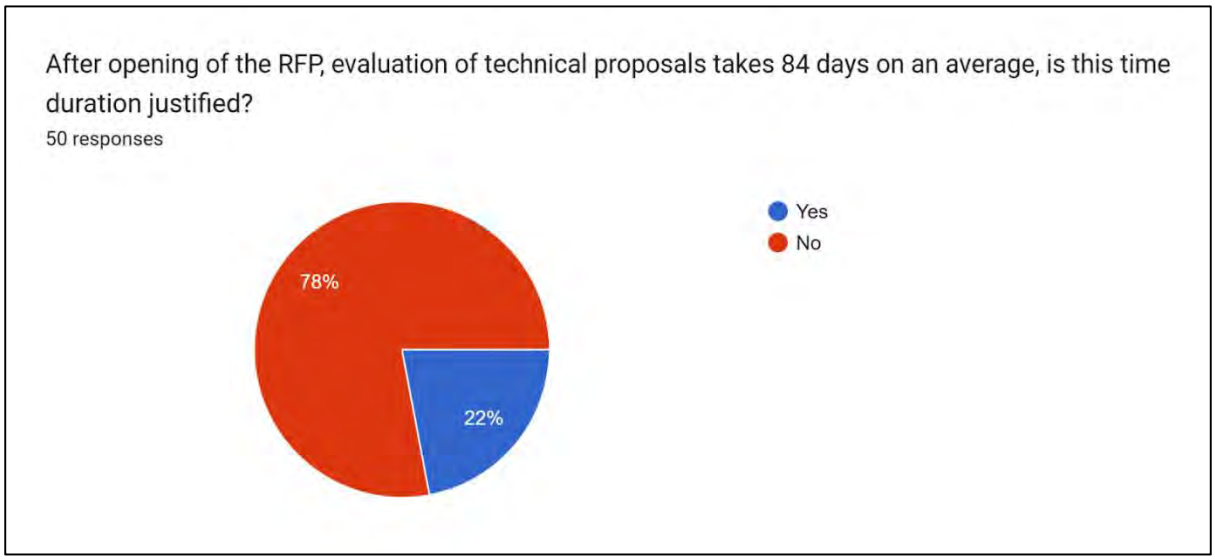

Figure 10: Time taken for Technical Proposal Evaluation

The survey responses suggest that, there is a firm perception among the procurement professionals that the delay in this process is excessively time consuming and poses a threat towards the smooth selection of the consultants.

To further understand the underlying causes behind the delay, the survey respondents were asked to identify reasons behind the excessive delay. From the responses provided by the procurement professionals, the major contributing factors identified (refer to Figure 11) are listed below:

- Shortage of officials at Project Director's Office (29 responses, 58%)
- Insufficient motivation and competency of the PMU staff (28 responses, 56%)
- Setting up Complex Evaluation Criteria (27 responses, 54%)

- Meeting schedule delay due to unavailability of Evaluation Committee members (24 responses, 48%)
- Lack of knowledge of PD office's staff on ADB's Procurement Guidelines (24 responses, 48%)

Other notable reason is-

- Lack of Coordination between Project Director and other stakeholders (15 responses, 30%)

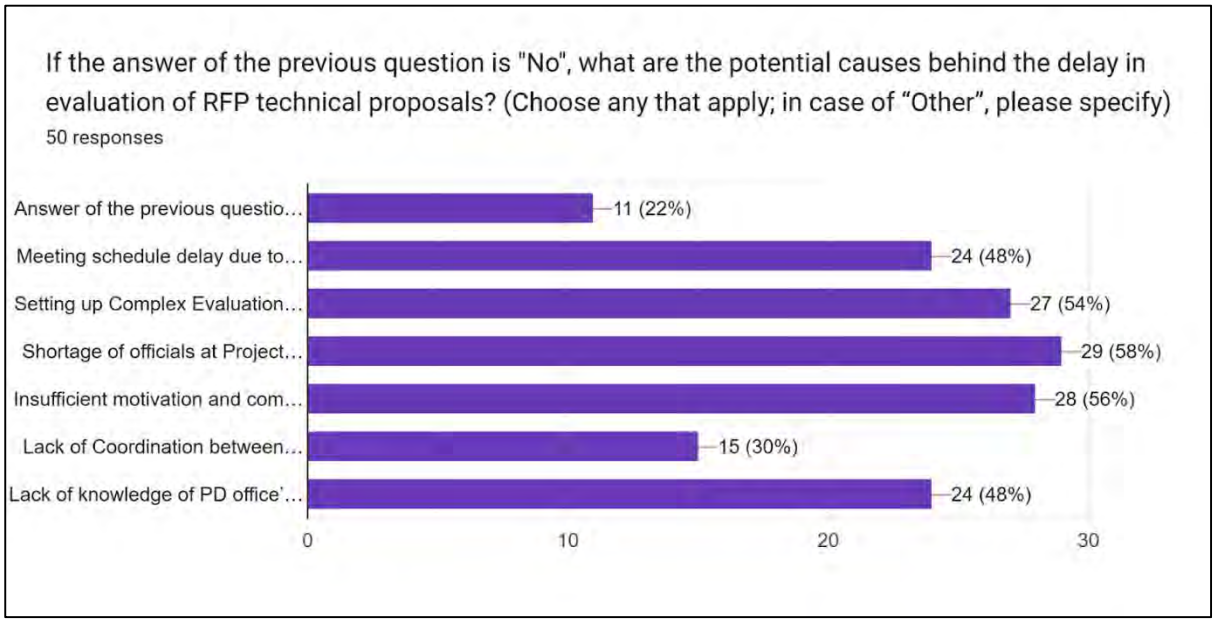

Figure 11: Potential causes of delay in Technical Proposal Evaluation

From the above responses of the survey question it has been identified that, shortage of officials at Project Director's office is the most cited reason for delay in technical proposal evaluation as like as EoI shortlisting evaluation. Lack of motivation and competency of the PMU staff is identified as the second most major reason for delay in the evaluation process. The third significant reason for delay in evaluation is setting a very complex evaluation criteria. As a result sometimes multiple meetings are required to be held to finalize the evaluation. Meeting schedule delay due to unavailability of Evaluation Committee members and lack of knowledge of PD office's staff on ADB's procurement guidelines are next two major reasons behind the delay. Finally, lack of coordination between Project Director and other stakeholders is another notable factor for delay in evaluation.

The above findings indicate that there is no single factor responsible for the delay during the technical proposal evaluation, rather there is a combination of factors responsible for the dely.

Human resource constraints, shortage of capacity and administrative inefficiency are vastly contributing towards the delay.

4.5 No Objection by ADB on Technical Proposal Evaluation

After completing the technical proposal evaluation, the evaluation report along with relevant documents are required to be sent to ADB for their no objection. To further assess the efficiency of this stage, the survey participants were asked whether the average time taken by ADB to provide no objection on the technical proposal evaluation was justified.

A majority of the survey respondents (30 out of 50, 60%) affirmed that requiring 17 days on an average to provide no objection on the technical proposal evaluation is justified. This shows that current timeframe is generally acceptable by the majority of the procurement professionals. However, remaining 40% of the participants (20 responders) consider that there is still scope for efficiency improvement from ADB's end (refer to Figure 12).

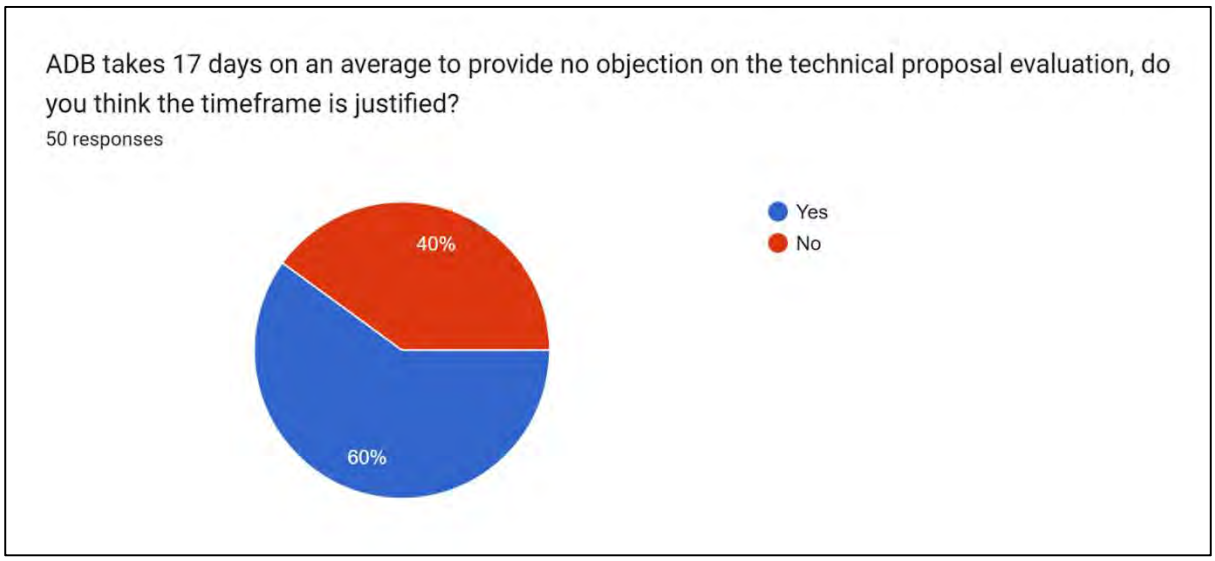

Figure 12: Time taken by ADB for No Objection on Technical Proposal Evaluation

The respondents who have different views regarding the timeframe to provide no objection, were further asked to provide their opinion their preferred timeframe for the no objection purpose. Among the 20 respondents who prefer a faster timeline for no objection by ADB, 10 respondents (20%) has opined for 14 (Fourteen) day timeframe and 8 respondents (16%) have selected 21 (Twenty One) day timeframe would be appropriate. Only 2 respondents (4%) have opted for 7 (Seven) day timeframe. No respondents chosen the 28 (Twenty Eight) day timeframe as justified (refer to Figure 13).

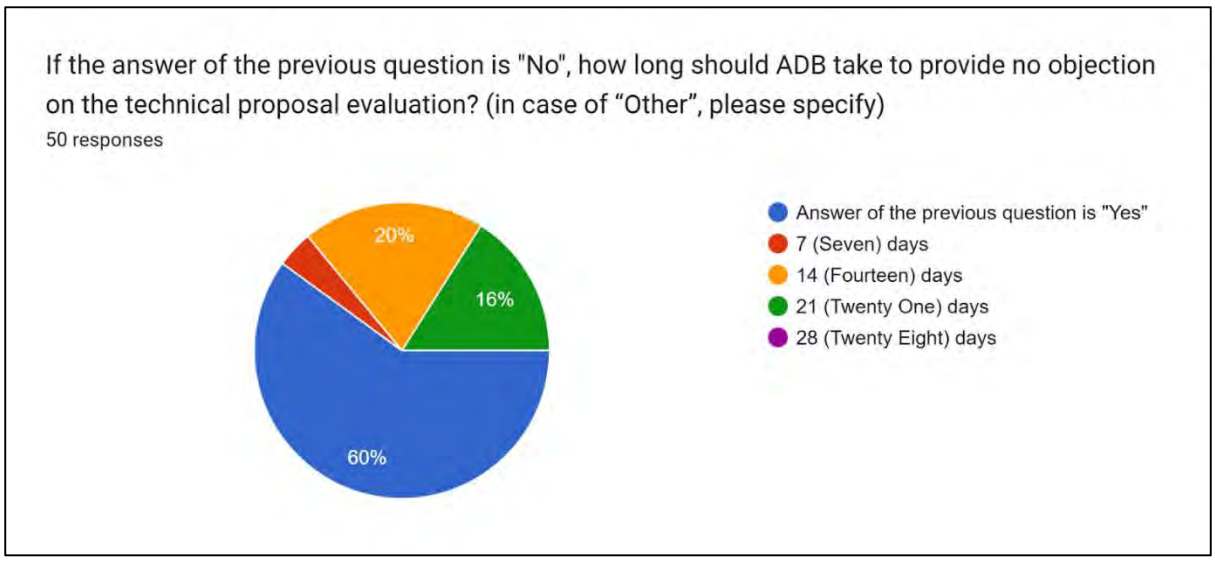

Figure 13: Time limit for ADB's No Objection on Technical Proposal Evaluation

The survey results indicate that the time taken by ADB for providing no objection on technical evaluation is realistic and generally acceptable by majority of the relevant stakeholders. However, a notable number of stakeholders are optimistic that a two-week window would be a reasonable timeframe.

4.6 Financial Proposal Evaluation of RFP

Financial proposal evaluation took an average of 19 days from public opening of the financial proposals to submitting the financial evaluation with final ranking of the eligible consultants (i.e. third submission) to ADB for their no objection. The survey responders were asked whether the average of 19 day time for financial proposal evaluation is justified. A majority of the survey respondents (34 out of 50, 68%) indicated that this timeframe is not justified. Only 32% of the participants (16 out of 50) considered the timeframe as justified (refer to Figure 14).

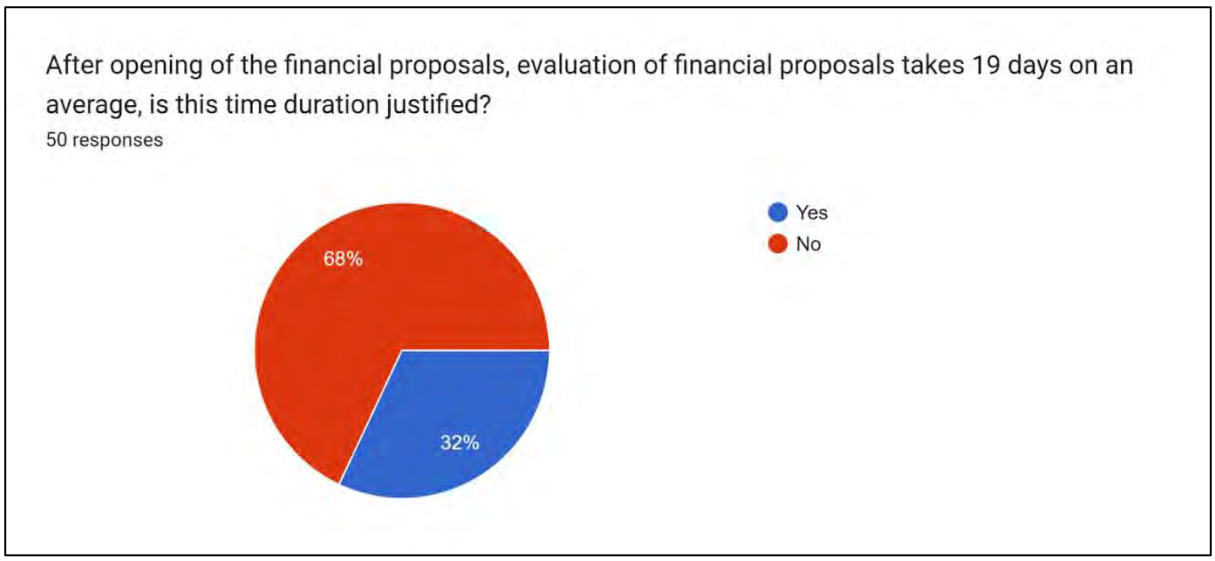

Figure 14: Time taken for Financial Proposal Evaluation

The survey data suggests that, the duration of financial proposal evaluation taken by the client's Consultant Selection Committee (CSC) is perceived as excessive. To further explore the reasons behind this perception, the survey respondents were asked to identify the bottlenecks leading to this excessive delay. From the responses provided, the major contributing factors identified (refer to Figure 15) are listed below:

- Meeting schedule delay due to unavailability of Evaluation Committee members (27 responses, 54%)
- Shortage of officials at Project Director's Office (26 responses, 52%)

The other noteworthy factors are-

- Insufficient motivation and competency of the PMU staff (11 responses, 22%)
- Lack of knowledge of PD office's staff on ADB's Procurement Guidelines (11 responses, 22%)
- Lack of Coordination between Project Director and other stakeholders (11 responses, 22%)

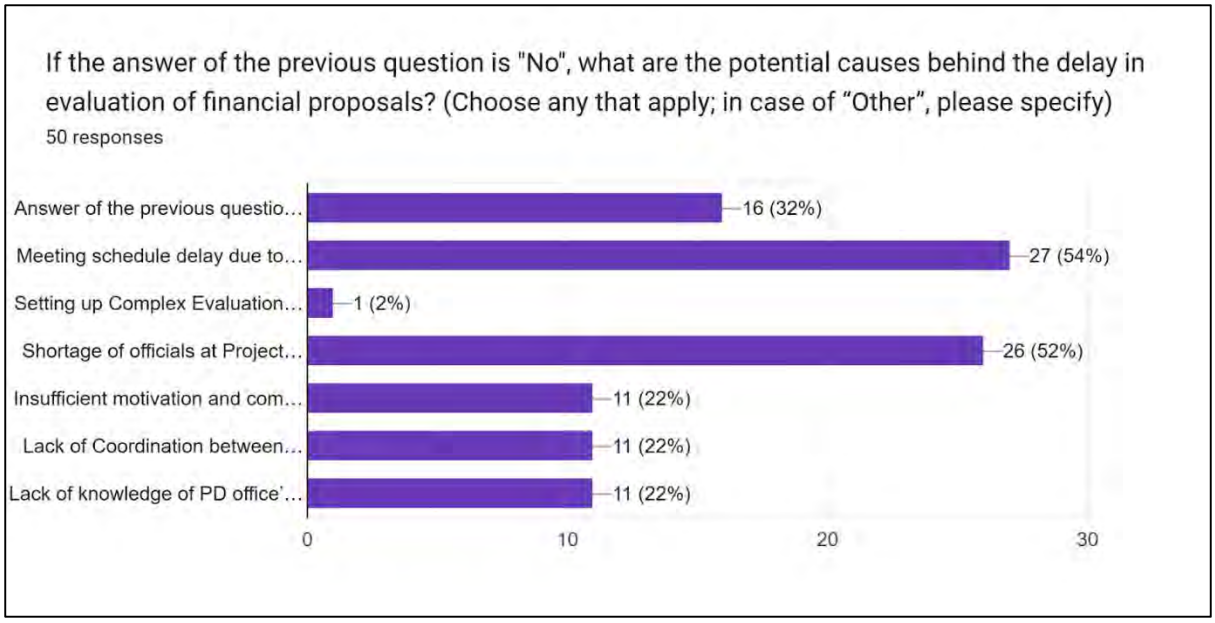

Figure 15: Potential causes of delay in Financial Proposal Evaluation

The survey results indicate that, meeting schedule delay due to unavailability of Evaluation Committee members is the most cited reason for delay in financial proposal evaluation. Shortage of officials at PD office is identified as the second most major reason for delay in the evaluation process. The other significant reasons for delay in evaluation are lack of motivation and competency of the PMU staff, lack of knowledge of PD office's staff on ADB's procurement guidelines and lack of coordination between Project Director and other stakeholders.

4.7 No Objection by ADB on Financial Proposal Evaluation

Once the financial proposal evaluation is finalized by the EA, the evaluation report is sent to ADB for their no objection. The survey participants were asked to provide their opinion on the average time taken by ADB to provide no objection on the financial proposal evaluation. A vast majority of the survey respondents (42 out of 50, 84%) perceive that requiring 16 days on an average to provide no objection on the financial proposal evaluation is not justified. Only 16% of the participants (8 responders) consider that the time taken by ADB to provide no objection is appropriate (refer to Figure 16).

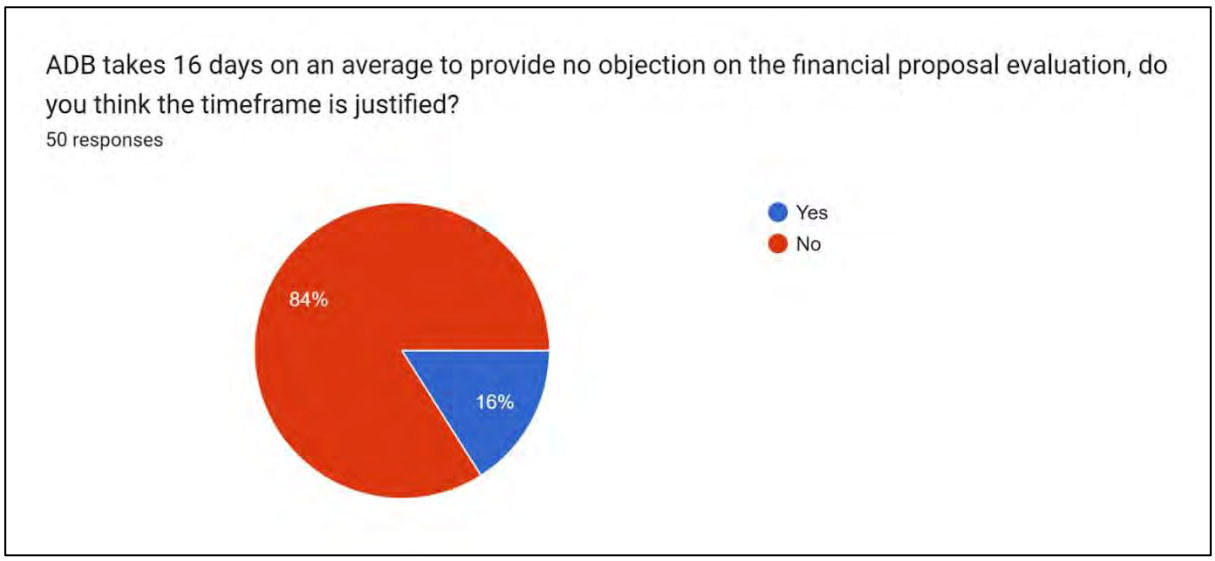

Figure 16: Time taken by ADB for No Objection on Financial Proposal Evaluation

The respondents who consider that the time taken by ADB to provide no objection is excessive, were asked to provide their opinion on a more realistic timeframe to be taken by ADB. The responses indicate that a much shorter duration is preferred by the stakeholders. Among the 42 respondents who prefer a faster timeline, 32 respondents (64%) has opined for 7 (Seven) day timeframe and 10 respondents (20%) have selected 14 (Fourteen) day timeframe would be appropriate. No respondents chosen the longer timeframes more than two weeks (refer to Figure 17).

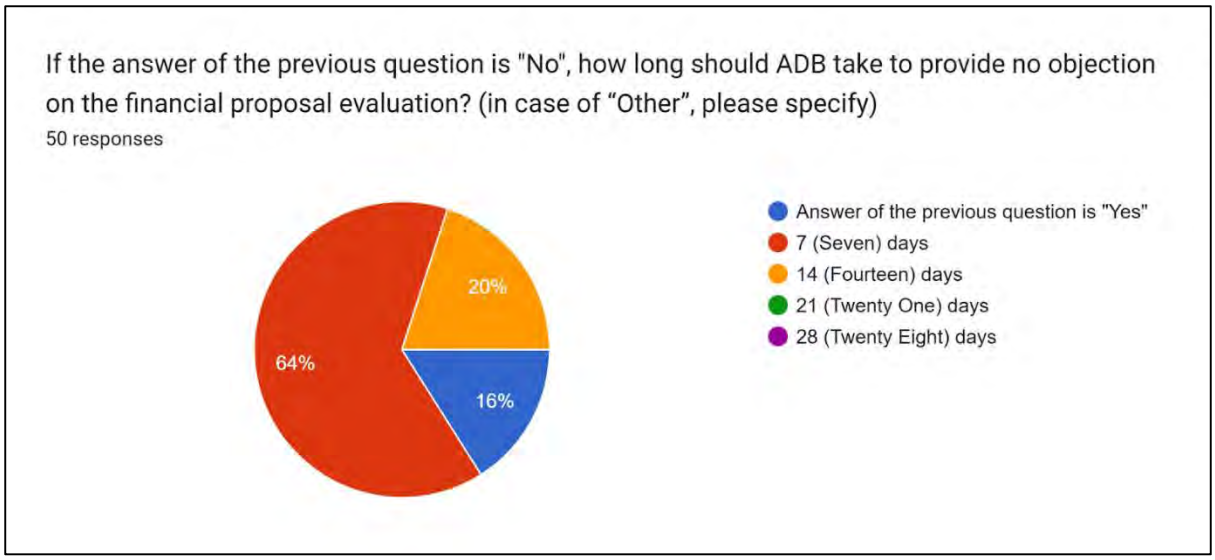

Figure 17: Time limit for ADB's No Objection on Financial Proposal Evaluation

The findings of these two survey questions clearly demonstrates a strong desire for a faster response time from ADB during this process.

4.8 Selection of Consultants: EoI Advertising to Contract Signing

As per the collected primary and secondary data from concerned LGED PMUs, the overall time taken for recruitment of a consulting firm is 536 days on an average. The timeframe includes all the steps from publication of EoI advertisement to signing of the contract between EA and the consulting firm.

Serial No	Name of the Project	Name of the Consulting Service Package	Contract Approving Authority	Time taken for Consultant Selection		Delay in Days	Delay in %
				Planned Days	Actual Days		
1	RCIP	DPRC	CCGP	281	677	396	140.93%
2	RCIP	CDC	CCGP	281	762	481	171.17%
3	EAP	DMS	HOPE	189	319	130	68.78%
4	FREAP	PISC	Ministry	248	394	146	58.87%
5	IUGIP	GICD	CCGP	276	525	249	90.22%
Average				255	536	281	110.20%

Table 4: Duration of Consulting Firm Selection Packages

From the above table and below figure (refer to Table 4 and Figure 18) it can be observed that, approving authority for DPRC, CDC and GICD consulting service packages is Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase (CCGP). For DMS consulting service the AA is HOPE and for PISC package the AA is Ministry. For LGED, the Chief Engineer (CE) acts as the HOPE. As per APP, the average planned time for these 5 packages is 255 days from EoI advertisement to signing of the contract. The average actual time taken for completing the consultant selection process for these 5 packages is 536 days (nearly 18 months). This indicates a massive overall delay of 281 days (more than 9 months) on an average which is 110.20% more compared to the expected duration. Evaluation of the expressions of interest & RFP technical proposal, obtaining no objection from the development partner and approval of the evaluation reports by the approving authority largely contributed towards the overall delay.

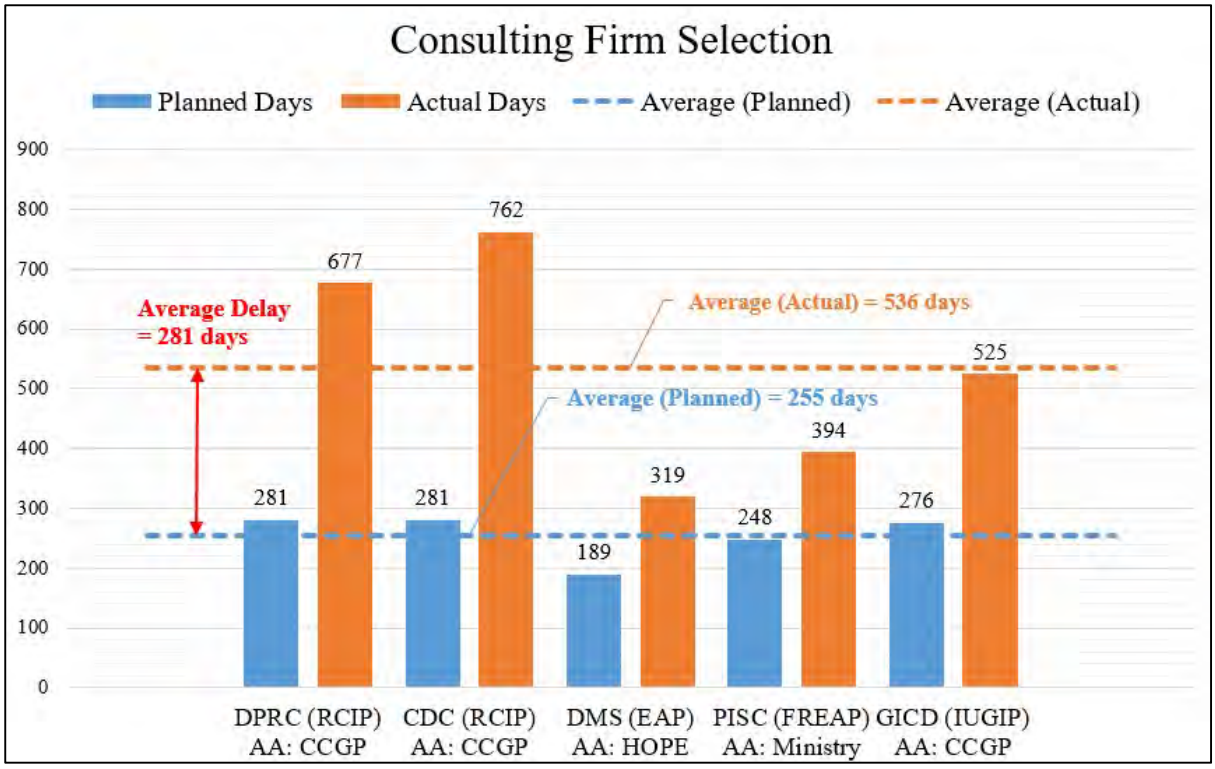

Figure 18: Overall time taken for consultant selection: planned vs actual

While the PPR stipulates a 28-day timeframe for evaluation of EoIs, the EA took an average of 57 days in case of these packages. The RFP technical proposal evaluation took 84 days on an average instead of suggested 28 days (four weeks). At the same time, the RFP financial proposal evaluation was conducted within 19 days on average. These three stages of evaluation cumulatively contributed towards 76 days delay which is 90.48% more than the allowable timeframe set in the PPR (refer to Table 5). ADB took 53 days for providing no objection on EoI shortlisting evaluation, 17 days in case of RFP technical proposal evaluation and 16 days in case of financial proposal evaluation. A total of 86 days are taken by ADB to provide no objection on three submissions during the consultant selection process.

Sl. No	Name of the Project	Package Name	AA	Time taken for Evaluation in days			Total Time Taken in days	Allowed Total Time in days	Delay in days	Delay in %
				EoI	Technical Proposal	Financial Proposal				
1	RCIP	DPRC	CCGP	49	42	16	107	84	23	27.38%
2	RCIP	CDC	CCGP	91	85	24	200	84	116	138.10%
3	EAP	DMS	HOPE	57	62	21	140	84	56	66.67%
4	FREAP	PISC	Ministry	59	66	15	140	84	56	66.67%
5	IUGIP	GICD	CCGP	27	164	19	210	84	126	150.00%
Average				57	84	19	160	84	76	90.48%

Table 5: Delay in Evaluation of Consulting Firm Selection Packages

Also, the approving authority took 158 days (more than 6 months) on an average to approve these contracts. Compared to the procurement processing and approval timetable furnished in Schedule III of PPR 2008, an average delay of 117 days occurred during the approval stage which is 285.37% more than the allowed timeframe (refer to Table 6).

Sl. No	Name of the Project	Package Name	Approving Authority	Time taken for Approval by AA in days	Allowed Time in days	Delay in days	Delay in %
1	RCIP	DPRC	CCGP	276	56	220	392.86%
2	RCIP	CDC	CCGP	302	56	246	439.29%
3	EAP	DMS	HOPE	1	14	-13	-92.86%
4	FREAP	PISC	Ministry	91	21	70	333.33%
5	IUGIP	GICD	CCGP	117	56	61	108.93%
Average				158	41	117	285.37%

Table 6: Delay in Approval of Consulting Firm Selection Packages

In case of the three contracts approved by CCGP, the average planned time is 280 days and the average actual time taken is 655 days (nearly 22 months). A huge average delay of 375 days (more than 12 months) occurred for these packages (refer to Table 7 and Figure 19). So the consultant recruitment process gets delayed by 134.29% where the approving authority is CCGP. Approving authority took a lot more time to approve the contracts when the evaluation reports were sent to CCGP compared to the packages approved by HOPE/ Ministry.

Serial No	Name of the Project	Name of the Consulting Service Package	Contract Approving Authority	Time taken for Consultant Selection		Delay in Days	Delay in %
				Planned Days	Actual Days		
1	RCIP	DPRC	CCGP	281	677	396	140.93%
2	RCIP	CDC	CCGP	281	762	481	171.17%
3	IUGIP	GICD	CCGP	276	525	249	90.22%
Average				280	655	375	133.93%

Table 7: Duration of Consulting Firm Selection Packages: Approver CCGP

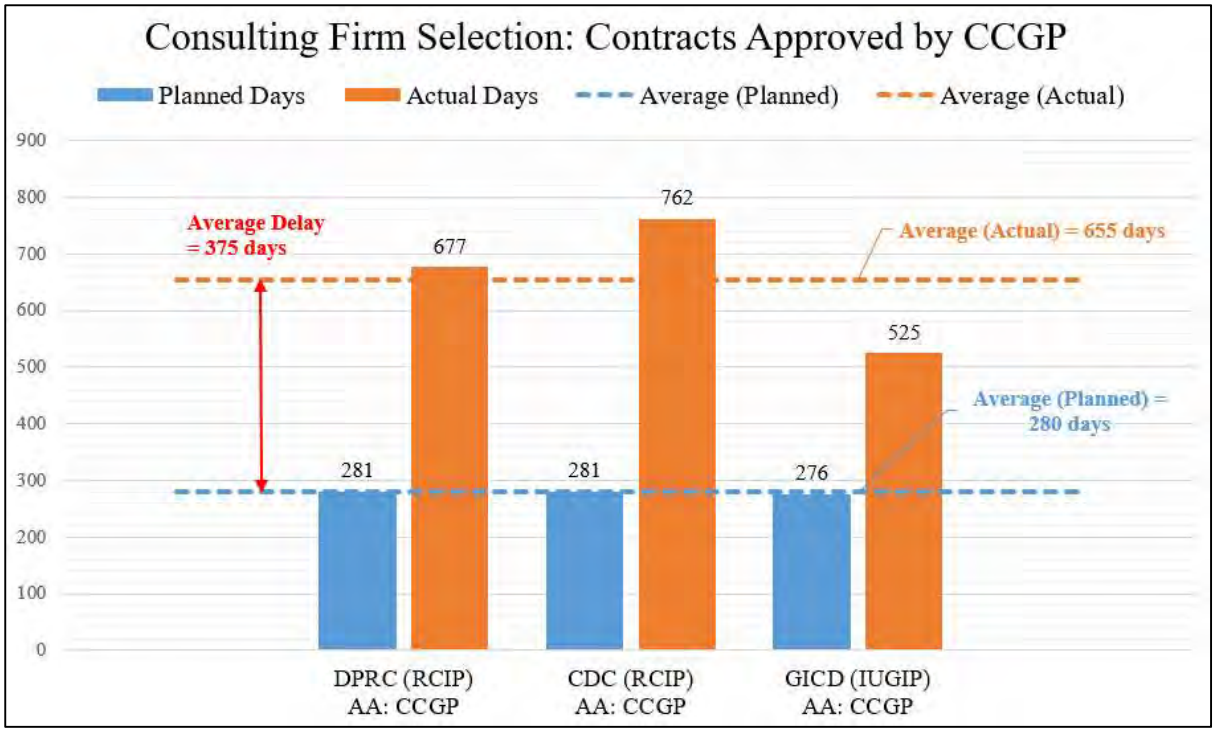

Figure 19: Overall time taken for consultant selection: Approver CCGP

The three stages of evaluation conducted by EA took 89 days more than the allowable timeframe set by the PPR which indicates 105.95% more delay with respect to maximum allowed time for evaluation (refer to Table 8).

Sl. No	Name of the Project	Package Name	AA	Time taken for Evaluation in days			Total Time Taken in days	Allowed Total Time in days	Delay in days	Delay in %
				EoI	Technical Proposal	Financial Proposal				
1	RCIP	DPRC	CCGP	49	42	16	107	84	23	27.38%
2	RCIP	CDC	CCGP	91	85	24	200	84	116	138.10%
3	IUGIP	GICD	CCGP	27	164	19	210	84	126	150.00%
Average				56	97	20	173	84	89	105.95%

Table 8: Delay in Evaluation of Consulting Firm Selection Packages: Approver CCGP

AA took 232 days (nearly 8 months) on an average to approve the evaluation report after submissions were made by the EA. An average delay of 176 days occurred during the approval stage which is 314.29% more than the allowed timeframe (refer to Table 9).

Sl. No	Name of the Project	Package Name	Approving Authority	Time taken for Approval by AA in days	Allowed Time in days	Delay in days	Delay in %
1	RCIP	DPRC	CCGP	276	56	220	392.86%
2	RCIP	CDC	CCGP	302	56	246	439.29%
3	IUGIP	GICD	CCGP	117	56	61	108.93%
Average				232	56	176	314.29%

Table 9: Delay in Approval of Consulting Firm Selection Packages: Approver CCGP

There are also some procedural delay due to the procurement guidelines of ADB. As per PPR, the EoI advertisement needs to be published for a minimum of 14 (Fourteen) days (for National Procurement) or 21 (Twenty one) days (for International Procurement). Although, ADB CMS website allows a minimum of 15 (Fifteen) days for recruiting a firm, but a Consulting Services Recruitment Notice (CSRN) is usually advised to be published for at least 30 (Thirty) days in case of selecting a consulting firm for wider circulation and submission. Also, as per PPR, the EA needs to allow a minimum of 28 days (for National Procurement) or 42 days (for International Procurement) for preparation and submission of the proposal. But, as per ADB guidelines, for a Full Technical Proposal (FTP) 45 days are required for submission of a proposal by a short-listed firm.

While the average delay provides an overall indication of the time required to complete procurement activities, it does not fully express the extent of dispersion within the sample data set. Reporting the standard deviation for the prevailing data set is therefore necessary to present a more robust and comprehensive analysis. The standard deviation measures the variability of delays across packages and indicates the degree to which individual observations deviate from the mean. This information is critical because the effectiveness and reliability of a procurement system depend not only on its average performance but also on the stability and predictability of its processes.

Sl No	Name of the Project	Package Name	AA	Delay in Days (x_i)	Average Delay in days ($\bar{x}$)	$(x_i-\bar{x})^2$	$\sum(x_i-\bar{x})^2$	Variance (s^2)	Standard Deviation (s)
1	RCIP	DPRC	CCGP	396	281	13225	95275	23818.75	154.33
2	RCIP	CDC	CCGP	481		40000			
3	EAP	DMS	HOPE	130		22801			
4	FREAP	PISC	Ministry	146		18225			
5	IUGIP	GICD	CCGP	249		1024			

Table 10: Delay in Approval of Consulting Firm Selection Packages: Approver CCGP

From table 10 we can observe that, for a small sample size, although the average overall delay to complete the procurement process is 281 days but the standard deviation is 154.33 days which is quite high for the packages under consideration. A high standard deviation which is almost 55% of the average delay, reflects substantial inconsistency in procurement timelines, implying that delays are not uniform and that some packages experienced significantly longer or shorter processing periods than others. The findings therefore highlight considerable inconsistency in procurement performance, suggesting that delays are not uniformly distributed and may be influenced by differing administrative, technical, or contextual factors across the cases. This definitively indicates that there are varying sets of challenges faced by each of these projects which in turn contributes to delay in the procurement process.

For gaining valued opinion from the survey participants, they were asked to provide their opinion on the justification of this average duration taken to onboard the consultant. The response was overwhelmingly negative. 47 out of 50 survey respondents (94%) perceive that requiring 536 days on an average to complete the consultant selection process is not justified. Only 6% of the participants (3 respondents) consider it justified (refer to Figure 20).

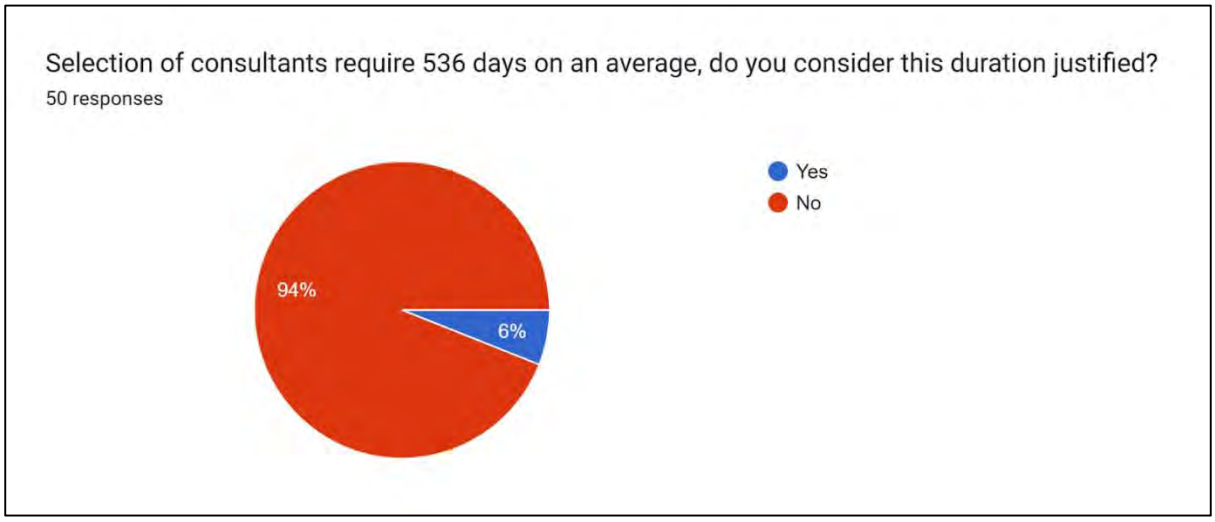

Figure 20: Overall time taken for selection of Consulting Firm

In order to identify strategies for expediting the consultant selection process, the survey respondents were asked to suggest ways that can be adopted to reduce the overall time taken to onboard the consultants. The responders were free to select any number of options they feel appropriate. From the responses provided by the procurement professionals, key ways to reduce the overall time taken were identified (refer to Figure 21). These are-

- Arrangement of training to reduce knowledge gap on ADB's Procurement Guidelines (42 responses, 84%)
- Proper monitoring of different stages during the recruitment process (39 responses, 78%)
- Introduction of e-Procurement for recruitment of consultants (37 responses, 74%)
- Proper communication between Project Director and other stakeholders (26 responses, 52%)
- Inclusion of staff from PD office in PEC for motivation and shared responsibility (25 responses, 50%)
- Introduction of rewarding system for PEC members (19 responses, 38%)
- Punishment of the officials responsible (8 responses, 16%)
- Outsourcing the evaluation process (6 responses, 12%)

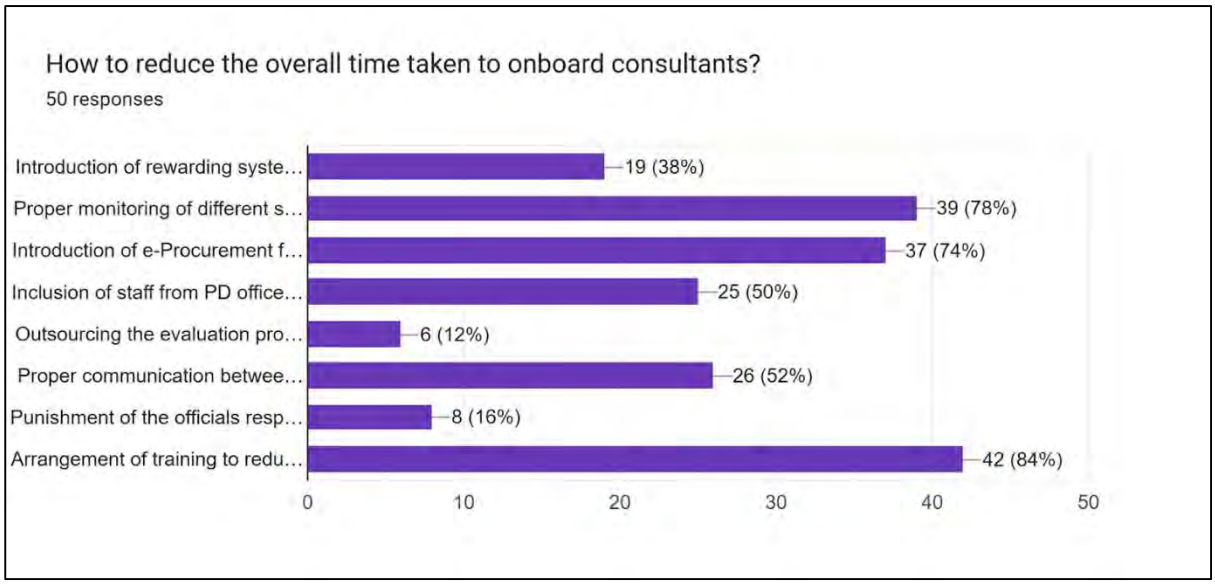

Figure 21: Ways to reduce overall time taken for selection of Consulting Firm

The most selected option was arrangement of training to reduce knowledge gap on ADB's procurement guidelines. It indicates that the lack of understanding of ADB's procurement policy, guidelines and principles among the officials of PMU including the Project Director often leads to significant procedural delays. Addressing the knowledge gap through training programs on procurement guidelines of ADB will increase the efficiency of the officials in preparation of ToR, RFP, evaluation documents and in turn will reduce the overall time taken to select the consultants.

Another very closely selected option was to properly monitor the different stages during the recruitment process. The steps where there are severe delays should be very closely observed to identify the underlying issues leading to the delay. The timelines of different stages should be continuously tracked to complete the consultant selection process on time.

Another significant intervention identified was the introduction of e-Procurement for recruitment of consultants. Automation and digitalization of the recruitment process is considered to be a very effective tool to increase transparency, accountability and efficiency. Majority of the respondents perceive that using e-Procurement for consultant selection will reduce the overall time taken.

Proper communication between the Project Director and other stakeholders and inclusion of staff from PD office in PEC for motivation and shared responsibility were also considered as significant ways to minimize delays. Better communication and coordination between the PD, PMU officials, PEC members, counterparts at ADB and approving authority will reduce the overall time taken to recruit the consultants by a great extent.

Introduction of rewarding system for PEC members to incentivize the timely evaluation and document preparation process was also suggested by some of the respondents. A few respondents perceive that punishment of the officials responsible for the delays will ensure accountability. But while this option could be potentially impactful for a short duration, punitive actions may be found as counterproductive in the long run.

A minority of the respondents opted for outsourcing the evaluation process. The lack of confidence in this approach is possibly due to concerns regarding cost and loss of organizational control over the process.

Selection of consultants using Individual Consultant Selection (ICS) method was also explored to check whether this process is faster and effective compared to the consulting firm selection process.

Serial No	Name of the Project	Name of the Consulting Service Package	Contract Approving Authority	Time taken for Consultant Selection		Delay in Days
				Planned Days	Actual Days	
1	CRLIWM-CHT	Supervision Engineer	HOPE	102	98	Before Time
2		Bio Engineer	HOPE	102	102	On Time
3		Design Engineer	HOPE	102	98	Before Time

Table 11: Duration of Individual Consultant Selection Packages

From the above table and below figure (refer to Table 11 and Figure 22) it can be observed that, approving authority for all three packages (Supervision Engineer, Bio Engineer and Design Engineer) is Head of Procuring Entity (HOPE). For these three packages of LGED, the Chief Engineer (CE) is the AA. As per APP, the average planned time for these 3 packages is 102 days from EoI advertisement to signing of the contract. The average actual time taken for completing the consultant selection process for these 3 packages is 100 days. The EA took 47 days on an average to complete the EoI shortlisting evaluation in case of these packages. ADB took only 23 days for providing no objection on EoI shortlisting evaluation. Also, the approving authority took only a single day to approve these contracts.

It can be observed that, instead of delay, the consultant recruitment process is completed within the stipulated timeframe. As there is no issuance of RFP in case of individual consultant selection process, this process is lot faster compared to the selection of consulting firms.

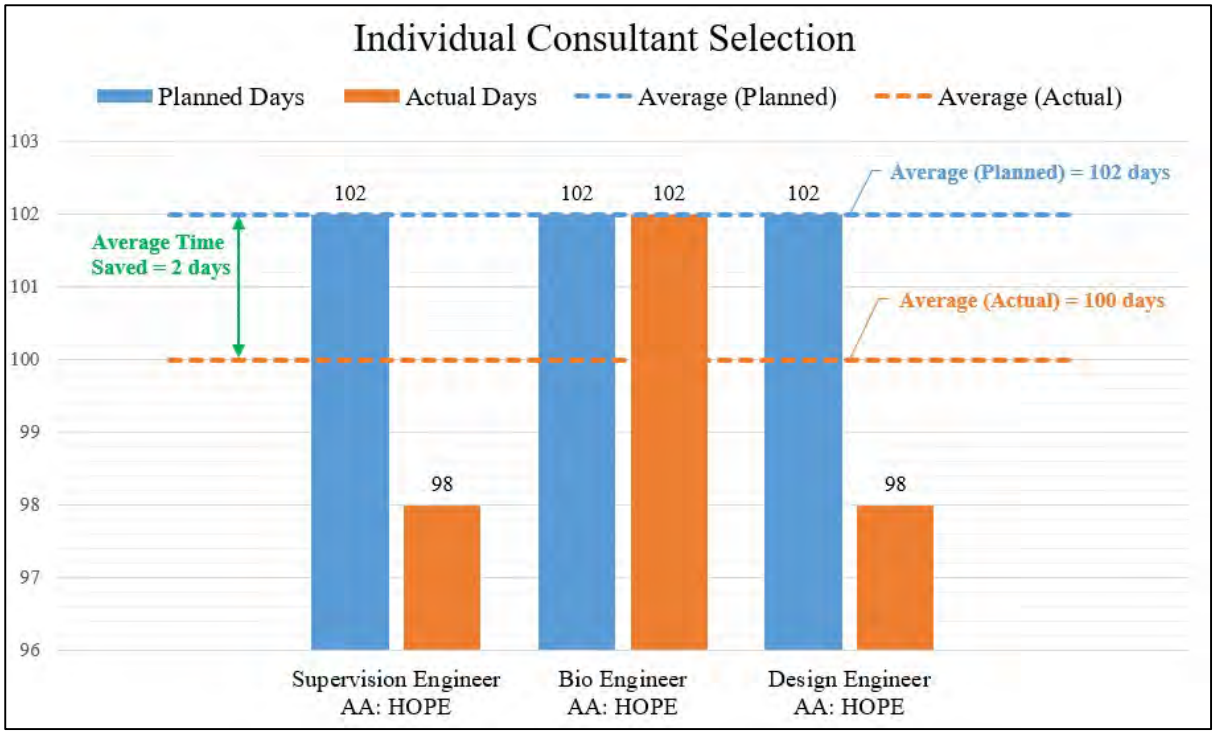

Figure 22: Overall time taken for individual consultant selection

4.9 Level of Knowledge Possessed by POC and PEC Members

The POC and PEC members play a very pivotal role in the selection process of the consultants. As per ADB guidelines the PEC of the EA should open the EoI's/ proposals submitted by the consultants. As a result, the POC and PEC is same in case of ADB assisted projects of LGED. The PEC for LGED consists of 7 (Seven) members. Among them there are 3 (Three) external members and the remaining members are from LGED. An adequate level of expertise and knowledge of the committee members is very essential for active participation of the members during the consultant selection process. The survey respondents were asked about the level of knowledge and expertise possessed by the POC and PEC members regarding service procurement processing as outlined in PPR 2008.

31 out of 50 survey respondents (62%) rated the knowledge level as good. Additionally, 7 respondents (14%) rated the knowledge level as very good. However, it is mentionable that 9 respondents (18%) rated the knowledge level as average and 3 respondents (6%) has rated their knowledge level as poor. No respondents have rated the knowledge level as excellent (refer to Figure 23).

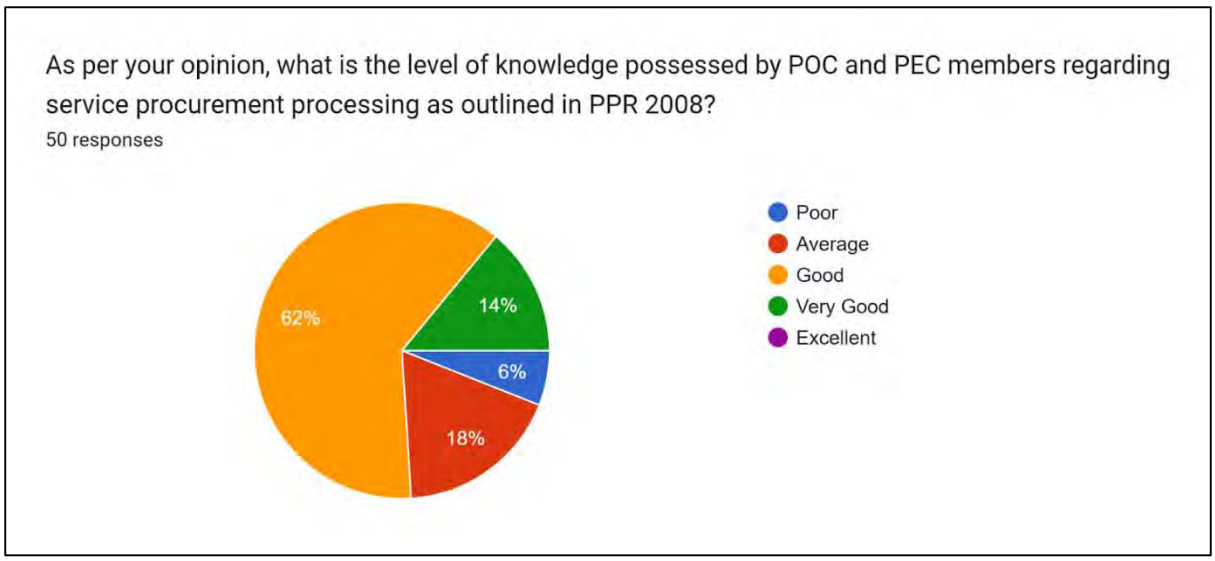

Figure 23: Level of knowledge possessed by POC and PEC Members

The responses suggest that majority of the stakeholders believe that the POC and PEC members have reasonable and adequate level of understanding of consulting service procurement. However, a notable segment of stakeholders feel that there is still room for improvement.

4.10 Number of Procurement Personnel and Adequacy of Logistics

For timely completion of the consultant selection process there should be adequate logistics and sufficient number of officials with procurement knowledge at the PMU. The right resources should be available at the right time, in right quantity at the right place. The survey respondents were asked about the adequacy of logistics and the number of procurement personnel at the PMU.

An overwhelming 90% of the survey respondents (45 out of 50) opined that the logistics and number of procurement personnel in the PMU are not adequate. The remaining 5 respondents (10%) expressed their satisfaction at the number of procurement personnel and adequacy of the logistics (refer to Figure 24).

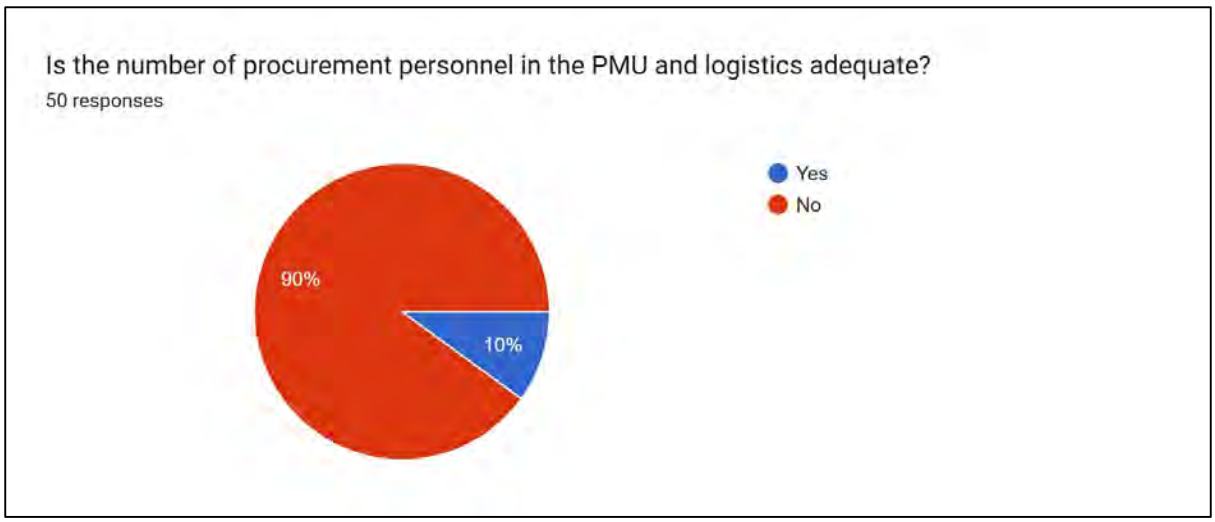

Figure 24: Number of procurement personnel and adequacy of logistics

There is a strong consensus among the survey respondents that there is shortage of procurement personnel at PMU. This shortage indicates that there is institutional constraint within the PMU's. Increasing the number of officials with procurement knowledge and enhancing the logistics is very essential for selection of consultants in a timely and efficient manner.

4.11 Procurement Personnel Skill Level and Competency

Procurement personnel at the PMU should have adequate procurement knowledge, skill and competency for effective completion of the consultant selection process. Lack of understanding about the procurement steps especially as per ADB's guidelines on consulting service procurement can be detrimental for the recruitment process. It may lead to misinterpretation of procurement rules, can delay the recruitment process and poses a greater risk of non-compliance with the guidelines of the development partner.

The survey respondents were asked whether the procurement personnel at the PMU are adequately skilled and competent. 74% of the survey respondents (37 out of 50) believe that the procurement personnel at the PMU are not skilled or competent enough for conducting the consultant recruiting process smoothly. The remaining 13 respondents (26%) expressed their satisfaction at the level of skill and competency of the procurement personnel working at the PMU (refer to Figure 25).

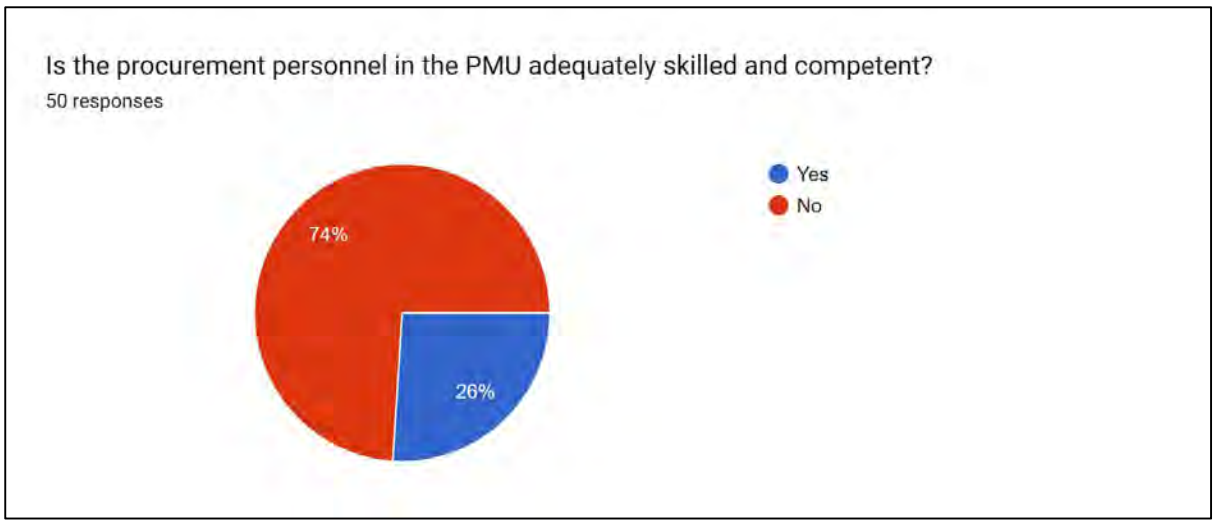

Figure 25: Procurement personnel skill level and competency

The survey results indicate that there is lack of adequately skilled and competent procurement personnel at the PMU level. This is a big bottleneck which leads to a long delay in the consultant selection process.

4.12 Procurement Personnel Power, Authority, Responsibility and Accountability

Procurement personnel at the PMU should possess a certain amount of power and authority to make timely decision to resolve procurement related issues emerged during the consultant selection process. If there is lack of authority and the delegation of power is limited, it can lead to delays in procurement process as they remain dependent on the higher officials for routine decision making and approvals. If they are not empowered there will be limited sense of shared responsibility and ownership. Moreover, poor accountability mechanism may reduce performance incentives and which in turn can undermine transparency of the recruitment process.

The survey respondents were asked whether the procurement personnel within the PMU possess the necessary power, authority, responsibility and accountability. 70% of the survey respondents (35 out of 50) believe that the procurement personnel at the PMU are not sufficiently empowered. Only 15 respondents (30%) perceive the level of empowerment the procurement personnel have is adequate (refer to Figure 26).

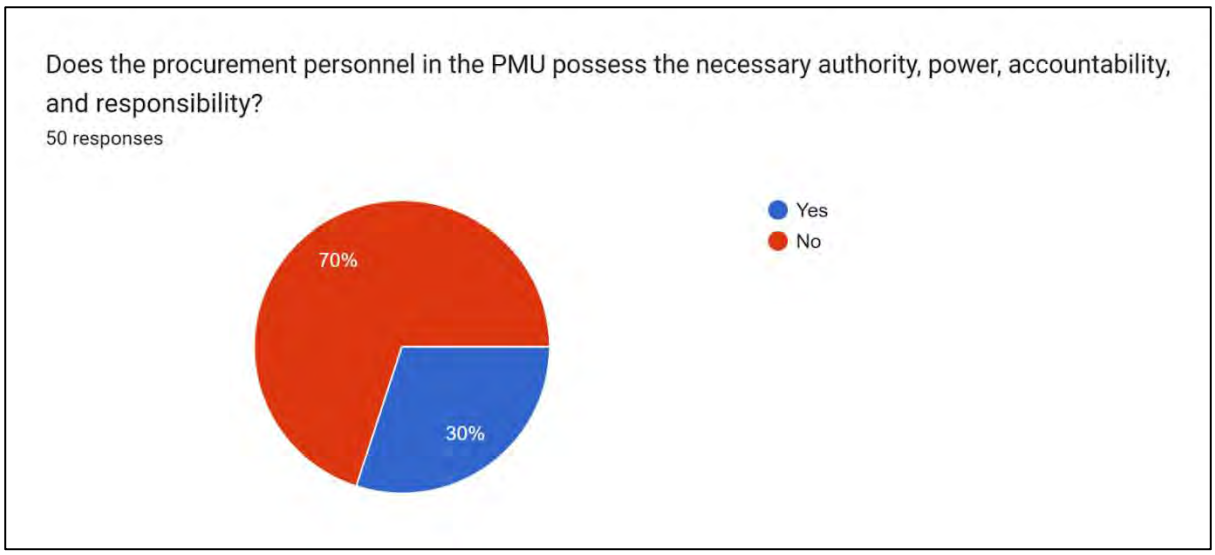

Figure 26: Procurement personnel power, authority, responsibility and accountability

From the survey result it is evident that the procurement officials are not empowered enough to perform their function effectively. A proper balance between power, authority, responsibility and accountability should be established to improve the consulting service procurement efficiency in case of ADB assisted projects.

4.13 Introduction of e-Procurement

E-Procurement is defined as leveraging the use of digital tools by the executing agencies, prospective bidders, audit and regulatory organizations and others in processing the procurement of goods, works and services and the contract management process to ensure VFM and good governance in public procurement (Asian Development Bank, E-Procurement: Guidance Note on Procurement, 2018). "The term e-government procurement (e-GP) broadly refers to the use of electronic systems to handle any or all steps of the public procurement process" (Asian Development Bank, e-Government Procurement Handbook, 2013). ADB always encourages the EAs to upgrade their procurement process by adopting e-Procurement whenever possible to ensure transparency and efficiency in public procurement. Using electronic platforms can help aiding the EAs to follow the ADB procurement cycle especially for procurement planning, bidding, bid evaluation, contract award and contract implementation stages. Using e-procurement for consultant selection process offers a win–win situation for all relevant stakeholders involved (Thai, 2009). As per statement of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for their member countries, public procurement expenditure was 12.7% of the GDP back in 2023. Also, 29.9% of the total government

expenditures were made through public procurement (OECD, 2025). 10% of the procurement cost may be saved by efficient use of electronic procurement (Asian Development Bank, e-Government Procurement Handbook, 2013). "From manual processes to digital transformation, Bangladesh's public procurement reforms have not only revolutionized governance but also saved billions while ensuring transparency, efficiency, and sustainability in national development" (Standard, 2025). LGED is already conducting procurement of goods and works using Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) system introduced by CPTU (currently known as BPPA). But, still the service procurement is being conducted by manual system.

The survey respondents were asked whether the adoption of e-Procurement will decrease the time required for consultant selection. A vast majority of the survey respondents (42 out of 50, 84%) believe that introduction of e-Procurement will reduce the overall time required for the consultant selection process whereas only 16% of the respondents (8 out of 50) have disagreement with the statement (refer to Figure 27).

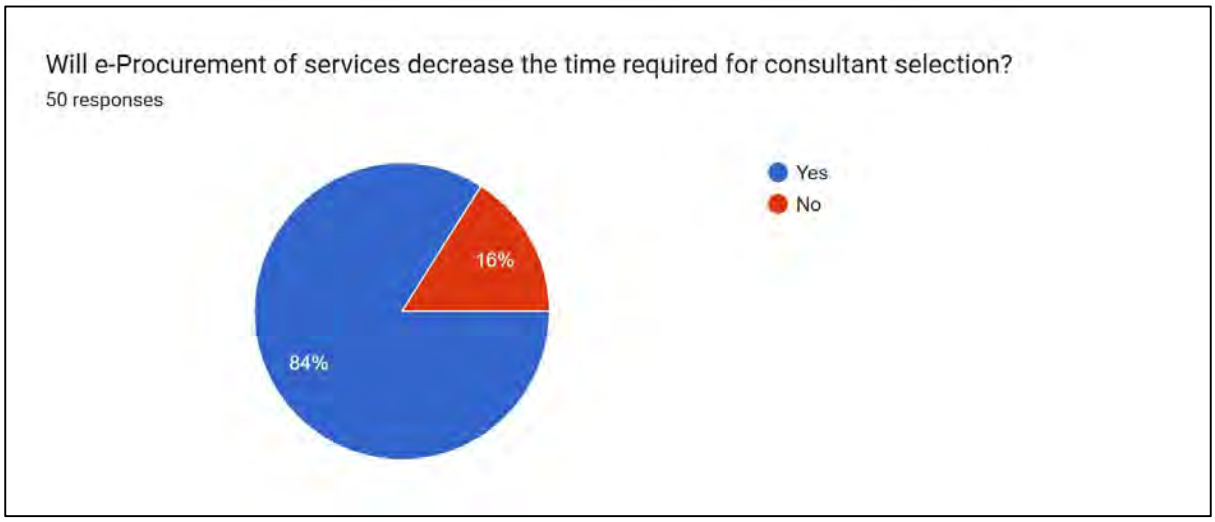

Figure 27: Introduction of e-Procurement

The perception of the majority of the survey respondents clearly favors the adoption of e-Procurement systems over the paper based, time consuming manual process. To ensure accountability, greater efficiency and reduction in consultant selection time e-Procurement system under ADB assisted projects.

4.14 Challenges of Service Procurement and their Remedies

The survey respondents were asked two open ended question regarding the challenges of service procurement and remedies to those challenges. Many responses were received and the key responses are summarized below:

There is significant delay in evaluation of EoI shortlisting and RFP due to shortage of skilled and motivated manpower at PMU level. Also if approving authority is Ministry or CCGP then the approval takes much longer time. The professionals at ministry level are not much familiar with the procurement process. Sometimes there is lack of effort from the PEC members especially from the external members to complete the evaluation in time or within the stipulated timeframe as per PPR and DP guidelines. Sufficient human resources at PMU should be engaged to perform evaluation activities. The professionals at PMU, executing agencies, approving authority office and other relevant stakeholders should be trained well to overcome the lack of knowledge on procurement process and develop their capacity to enable them to make more informed decision. Inclusion of more effective or qualified members from the PE office in the PEC is suggested to minimize the delay in evaluation. These steps can significantly reduce the delays in different stage of the consulting service procurement process.

Consulting firm recruitment is already a lengthy process. The burden adds up when original key experts soon after contract signing becomes unavailable and hence replacement is required, which is another time consuming and bureaucratic process. Replacement of experts should be strictly discouraged in absence of a valid ground. Applying performance security in all service procurement can help in this regard.

The evaluation process allows for a significant degree of subjective judgment in assessing proposals, which may lead to biases, favoritism, or corruption. Assessing qualitative judgment differs often between the PEC members based on their level of knowledge and experience. So it is difficult to agree on a common ground during evaluation. To enhance transparency and fairness, the criteria for determining a proposal's alignment with the expected outcomes should be more detailed and precisely defined. The evaluation criteria for qualitative judgment can be more structured with clear definition so that committee members can be encouraged to explain their reasoning.

In service procurement, as per current practice, no verification of the submitted information is mandatory in the evaluation stage. It is not aligned with the principle of transparency.

Consultants often engage in a writing spree to win the bid, neglecting the importance of not deviating from the facts. At least, mandatory verification on a random basis should be introduced in the consultancy evaluation. Establishing clarity on proposal submission and providing customized tables (according to evaluation criteria) to the participants to provide responses. BPPA can create online database where procuring entities can exchange their verified certificates for consultant selection. This will save time in finding the required information.

Another challenge is that in present system the quality of the consultants cannot be properly ensured only by evaluating the CV as there is no provision of conducting interview sessions. The CV doesn't always reflect the actual potential of a consultant. Sometimes during original output time, the selected candidates fails to deliver. A thorough interview session can be introduced to assess candidates' communication skills and practical knowledge. The qualification written in CV should be verified to confirm the authenticity of the skill and working experience of the consultant.

There is a lack of proper documentation skill among the consultants which leads to longer RFP submission time. Capacity development of the consultants and sharing detailed qualification criteria before application/proposal submission for fair contest among consultants. This will shorten the evaluation period and will make the process more transparent.

Clearance delay from ADB is another challenge. Quick Response from ADB regarding 'no objection' clearances can make the recruitment process more time bound.

Lack of e-procurement system is another major challenge for effective consulting service procurement. E-procurement system should be introduced to make the process more efficient and reduce delays in different stages.

Chapter 5
Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has explored the key challenges associated with the consulting service procurement in case of ADB assisted projects of LGED. Through review of ADB guidelines, collection of data from the project offices and structured questionnaire surveys involving fifty officials engaged in procurement activities in their organization, the study has identified a few critical challenges faced which led to significant delay during different stages of the consultant recruitment process. The key challenges are summarized here in a structured way along with recommendations on how to overcome the identified challenges.

5.1 Conclusion

Recruitment of a consulting firm involves a series of tasks starting from preparation of terms of reference to the signing of the contract. First of all, Terms of Reference (ToR) needs to be prepared and clearance to be taken from ADB on the developed ToR. Then cost estimates for the assignment is prepared followed by the public advertisement of the Request for Expression of Interest (REoI). After that the EoI's are received and duly opened, a long list of consultants are prepared and then after evaluation a certain number of consultants are shortlisted. Then, no objection on the shortlisting evaluation has to be taken from ADB and approval of the shortlisting evaluation is taken from the Head of Procuring Entity (HOPE). After that the RFP is prepared and issued to the shortlisted consultants to receive technical and financial proposals from them. After receiving the proposals, the technical proposals are opened. Evaluation of the technical proposals are performed and no objection is taken from ADB and subsequent approval on the technical evaluation has to be taken from the HOPE. After getting approval on the technical evaluation, financial proposals are opened and evaluated. The technical and financial scores are combined and the proposals are ranked accordingly. The combined evaluation needs to be sent to ADB for their no objection and the same needs to be approved by the HOPE. After that, the contract is negotiated with the first ranked consulting firm and draft contract is signed between the parties. Then all the documents are sent to the approving authority for their approval. After obtaining approval, the contract is signed. We can observe that, there are lots of task involved in the consulting firm recruitment process and requires a long time. But if the PPR and ADB guidelines are followed by the personnel involved in the consultant selection process, they will be able to perform their tasks efficiently and effectively hence the selection process will be smooth and faster.

From the analysis we can observe that, the average time taken to onboard the consulting firm is 536 days on an average. The overall time considered in the survey is from advertisement of EoI to signing of the contract. This timeframe is considered as excessive and unjustified by a vast majority (94%) of the respondents. Procedural delay has been identified in different stages of the consultant selection process. A long time is taken by the executing agency to finalize the EoI shortlisting evaluation. Also there is a long delay in obtaining no objection on the shortlisting evaluation from ADB. So here the challenge is delay in obtaining no objection from ADB. During the RFP technical evaluation, a huge time is taken by the PEC and PMU officials which is unjustified. There is a cumulative average delay of 76 days during evaluation of EoI shortlisting, RFP technical and financial evaluation which is 90.48% more than the allowable timeframe set in the guidelines. In case of both EoI shortlisting evaluation and RFP technical proposal evaluation there are a few causes identified for the delay. Shortage of officials at Project Management Unit (PMU), insufficient motivation and competency of the PMU staff, lack of knowledge of the involved officials on ADB's procurement guidelines, lack of coordination between Project Director and other stakeholders are a few key challenges resulting in abnormal delays in the evaluation process. Also, an average delay of 117 days occurred during the approval stage which is 285.37% more than the allowed timeframe. The challenge here is lack of knowledge and skill of the involved officials on public procurement rules and ADB's procurement guidelines. Majority of the survey respondents perceive that the POC and PEC members have reasonable and adequate level of understanding of consulting service procurement but still a very long time is being taken by them to complete the evaluation process. So the challenge here is that the personnel with adequate procurement knowledge are not functioning well. Their active participation can speed up the recruitment process and hence overcome the challenges associated with the recruitment process. The consultant recruitment process is still being conducted by paper based manual process. Automation in few steps of the selection process can reduce the time taken by the PEC. So the challenge here is the absence of e-Procurement in consulting service procurement. Also there is another issue which often adds to the burden is after contract signing a few experts become unavailable due to long delay in the recruitment process and they need to be replaced by experts with equivalent or better qualifications. So the replacement of consultants is another challenge of consulting service procurement.

5.2 Recommendations

Efficient selection of consultants is critical to achieving the goals and targets of ADB assisted projects of LGED. The challenges identified during the study not only affect the project timelines but also deteriorate the quality and utilization of resources. By addressing the institutional, procedural and human resource related challenges as outlined in this research, LGED and ADB can make significant progress towards achieving a more responsible, efficient, sustainable and transparent procurement framework. Based on the key findings of this research, the following recommendations are being proposed to overcome the identified challenges of consulting service procurement in case of ADB assisted projects of LGED.

a) Strengthening of Project Management Unit (PMU)

The PMU plays a pivotal role in the selection process of the consultants following the procurement guidelines of ADB. Overall management of the project activities lies on the officials of the project. For timely completion of consultant recruitment process PMU acts as a central body which connects with the POC/ PEC, the interested consultants, approving authority and ADB. The shortage of qualified officials in the PMU hampers the timely completion of the consultant recruitment process. Delay in evaluation of EoI shortlisting and RFP technical evaluation, inconsistent documentation, communication gap between the PMU and key stakeholders like ADB and the approving authority can be avoided with deployment of officials with adequate procurement knowledge, skill and competency. The procurement personnel at PMU should be empowered with adequate power and authority. To reduce the knowledge and skill gap of the PMU officials, adequate training and capacity building programs should be undertaken. The PMU should be equipped with necessary logistics for the better service delivery of the PMU officials. A certain level of power and authority helps the procurement personnel in making informed decision during the consultant selection process. A balance of power and authority should be maintained to strengthen the mechanism of holding the PMU officials responsible and accountable for their tasks performed during the entire process to ensure transparency. Clear distribution of role and effective team work between the PMU officials under a strong leadership of the Project Director will boost their performance level. By strengthening the PMU a better upward, downward and horizontal communication and coordination between the PMU officials and other stakeholders will be ensured and there will be significant

improvement in the timeliness and quality of procurement activities in case of ADB assisted projects of LGED.

b) Conforming to PPR and ADB procurement guidelines

During consulting firm or individual consultant selection in case of ADB assisted projects, the Public Procurement Rules 2008 and ADB procurement guidelines must be strictly followed by the PEC/ POC of the EA. The timeframe suggested for each step should be strictly followed by all the procurement personnel. One weakness of the Public Procurement Act (PPA) or Public Procurement Rules (PPR) is that there is no mention of the action to be taken in case of not following the suggested timeframes. The officials at PMU and the evaluation committee members often can take advantage of this weakness and the overall recruitment process may get delayed. The procurement rules or guidelines can be amended by the policy makers to mention the actions to be taken more explicitly. Also, there is no provision of document verification and taking interview of the consultants. As a result, sometimes CV's are being window dressed to demonstrate capacities and expertise that the experts actually do not possess. BPPA can create online database to help procuring entities to verified documents for consultant selection. The interviewing process may be included during the negotiation process of the consulting firm recruitment. ADB guidelines or applicable guidelines in case of other development partners must be followed to ensure compliance. Executing agencies must be more vigilant in conforming to PPR and ADB procurement guidelines.

c) Simplification of approval process of ADB

In the ADB assisted projects, no objection has to be obtained at different stages of the consulting service procurement such as EoI Shortlisting evaluation, RFP technical evaluation and RFP financial evaluation. Significant time is being taken by EA's to complete the evaluation and clearance delay from ADB is only making the situation worse. All three submissions are required to be submitted by the EA within a logical timeframe. ADB takes around three months to provide no objection on these submissions. Consultant Recruitment Activity Monitoring (CRAM) tool is being used by ADB to keep track of the consulting service recruitment process. Automated tools can be used by ADB to streamline the evaluation report and other document review process. ADB may reassess their internal processes to provide no objection to each submission within a shorter period of time without compromising the mandatory

compliance issues and other required due diligence checks. The PMU officials especially the Project Director needs to maintain effective communication and collaboration with ADB to expedite the approval process.

d) Optimizing the evaluation process of consulting service procurement

We can safely state that the evaluation process largely contributes to the overall delay during the consulting firm or individual consultant recruitment process. The EoI shortlisting evaluation took around two months on an average, RFP technical proposal evaluation took close to three months and RFP financial proposal evaluation took almost three weeks. In total more than five months were taken to complete the evaluation process. In the Proposal Evaluation Committee, external members are included and sometimes their unavailability becomes an issue. Also, multiple meetings are required to be arranged to complete the evaluation process. But as there is a timeframe mentioned in PPR and ADB procurement guidelines, this should be strictly followed by the evaluation committee. Special attention is to be given by all the evaluation committee members and PMU officials to complete the evaluation process within the stipulated timeframe.

e) Recruitment of Individual Consultants

A potential remedy to minimize delays during the consultant selection process could be adoption of individual consultant selection process where applicable. There are fewer steps involved to complete the individual consultant selection process compared to the consulting firm selection process. EA is required to obtain no objection from ADB for a single time instead of three times during the entire consultant selection process. Hence, this process is faster and effective. But, it should be kept in mind that selection of individual consultant is only encouraged if this is the most efficient way of delivering the tasks of the assignment. Where there is requirement of a team of professionals, ICS is discouraged. A hybrid approach may also be adopted like recruiting a few key individual experts to make significant progress of the project activities during the initial phase and then selecting one or more firms as appropriate for the remainder of the project duration.

f) Capacity development to enhance procurement related knowledge and skill

We have seen that delay occurs during the evaluation process of the consulting service procurement. A long delay also occurs during the approval process when the approving authority is Ministry or CCGP. Almost eight months are taken by CCGP to approve the evaluation report. This is a long delay and consultant onboarding process get delayed indefinitely. Meanwhile, a few key experts take other job opportunities elsewhere due to the delay in the procurement process and become unavailable. Due to their unavailability, replacement of these experts are required. The replacement of experts is also a time consuming process. To realize the benefits of engaging consultants in case of ADB assisted projects, timely completion of the procurement process is a great challenge. The POC/ PEC members, PMU officials, consultants and approving authority officials must be taken under the capacity development programs on PPR and ADB procurement guidelines. Each executing agency including LGED can undertake training programs to enhance the skill and knowledge level of the officials within the organization. ADB also can increase the frequency of trainings conducted on procurement processes to develop the capacity of various stakeholders.

g) Introduction of e-Procurement for consulting service procurement

Although in LGED, works and goods procurement is being conducted through e-GP system, paper based manual process is still being used for consulting service procurement. In this manual process a significant time is wasted in each stage and it is a very time consuming process. Introduction of e-Procurement can significantly reduce the time required for consulting service procurement. Effective implementation of e-Procurement can reduce processing times in procurement compared to the paper based manual process. This system can offer a reduced risk for all users as quite a few tasks can be automated to prevent mistakes. This will improve transparency and fairness of the recruitment process by disclosing relevant information to the interested consultants and maintaining confidentiality of sensitive information. In this information technology based system the tasks are required to be performed sequentially and the evaluation committee members including the approving authority will feel the obligation to perform their duties within the timeframe as the digital footprint will be available for future review. Enhancement of the current e-GP system should be made to properly facilitate the consulting service procurement. Also, ADB can enhance the functionality

of CMS website to allow the executing agencies to issue, receive and open the request for proposals.

5.3 Future Scope of Study

This study has been conducted using data from 4 (Four) ADB assisted ongoing projects of LGED. Data were collected from these projects for a total 5 (Five) consulting firm recruitment packages. Data were also collected from another ADB assisted project of LGED for 3 (Three) individual consultant selection packages. In future, a study can be conducted taking more ADB assisted projects into consideration so that the data set becomes large enough to identify more hidden challenges and their remedies.

Also, during this study EoI advertisement date to contract signing date is considered. But the time required for preparation of Terms of Reference (ToR) and preparation of estimates could also be considered during the study. Further study can be undertaken to take these times into consideration for a better view on the overall time taken for selection of consultants.

References

Asian Development Bank. (2008). *Consulting Services Operations Manual.*

Asian Development Bank. (2013). *e-Government Procurement Handbook.*

Asian Development Bank. (2013). *Guidelines on the Use of Consultants by Asian Development Bank and Its Borrowers.*

Asian Development Bank. (2017). *ADB procurement policy: Goods, works, nonconsulting and consulting services.*

Asian Development Bank. (2017). *Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers: Goods, works, nonconsulting and consulting services.*

Asian Development Bank. (2018). *Bidding-Related Complaints: Guidance Note on Procurement.*

Asian Development Bank. (2018). *Consulting Services Administered by ADB Borrowers: Guidance Note on Procurement.*

Asian Development Bank. (2018). *E-Procurement: Guidance Note on Procurement.*

Asian Development Bank. (2018). *Quality: Guidance Note on Procurement.*

Asian Development Bank. (2021). *Frequently Asked Questions on Consulting Services.*

Asian Development Bank. (2021). *Value for Money: Guidance Note on Procurement.*

BPPA. (n.d.). *BPPA | Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority*. Retrieved October 06, 2025, from BPPA: https://cptu.gov.bd/about-cptu/central-procurement-technical-unit.html

Hilditch-Roberts, H. (2012). A best practice guide for hiring consultants. *Strategic Direction, 28*(3), 3-5. doi:10.1108/02580541211203709

Mitchell, V.-W. (1994). Problems and Risks in the Purchasing of Consultancy Services. *The Service Industries Journal, 14:3*, 315-339. doi:10.1080/02642069400000036

MoP. (2008). *Public Procurement Rules (2008).*

OECD. (2025). *Government at a Glance 2025.* Paris: OECD Publishing. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1787/0efd0bcd-en

Parikh, S. (2015). *The consultant's handbook : a practical guide to delivering high-value and differentiated services in a competitive marketplace.*

Salem, O., Salman, B., & Ghorai, S. (2018). Accelerating construction of roadway bridges using alternative techniques and procurement methods. *Transport*, 33(2), 567-579. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.3846/16484142.2017.1300942

Shiddique, M. R. (2015). *Challenges of Service Procurement – A Case Study at the Second Rural Transport Improvement Project of Local Government Engineering Department.*

Standard, T. B. (2025, January 23). *The Business Standard.* Retrieved October 26, 2025, from https://www.tbsnews.net/: https://www.tbsnews.net/supplement/paradigm-shift-public-procurement-1050266

Thai, K. V. (2009). *International Handbook of Public Procurement.*

Appendix A: Breakdown of Consulting Firm Selection Timeframe

Breakdown of time required (in days) for selection of consulting firm under five packages from four ADB assisted projects of LGED is provided below:

Sl No	Steps	DPRC Firm RCIP	CDC Firm RCIP	DMS Firm EAP	PISC Firm FREAP	GICD Firm IUGIP	Remarks
1	Advertise EoI	0	0	0	0	0	
2	EoI Receive/ Opening	37	34	29	29	36	
3	PEC Meeting 01	23	28	8	22	2	
4	PEC Meeting 02	11	35	38	28	14	
5	First submission to ADB	15	28	11	9	11	
	Time taken for EoI Shortlisting Evaluation	**49**	**91**	**57**	**59**	**27**	**57 Days**
6	No Objection on Submission 1 From ADB	84	42	48	21	70	
	Time taken for NOC on Shortlisting by ADB	**84**	**42**	**48**	**21**	**70**	**53 Days**
7	Issuing of the RFP	13	11	3	10	4	
8	Receipt of proposals	51	49	28	46	49	
9	PEC Meeting 01	8	15	15	4	7	
10	PEC Meeting 02	21	49	27	56	75	
11	Second submission to ADB	13	21	20	6	82	
	Time taken for Technical Evaluation of RFP	**42**	**85**	**62**	**66**	**164**	**84 Days**
12	No Objection on Submission 2 From ADB	19	23	21	3	19	
	Time taken for NOC on Technical Evaluation by ADB	**19**	**23**	**21**	**3**	**19**	**17 Days**
13	Public opening of financial proposal	9	14	6	11	6	
14	Third submission to ADB	7	10	15	4	13	
	Time taken for Financial Evaluation of RFP	**16**	**24**	**21**	**15**	**19**	**19 Days**
15	No Objection on Submission 3 From ADB	20	22	16	11	7	
	Time taken for NOC on Financial Evaluation by ADB	**20**	**22**	**16**	**11**	**7**	**16 Days**
16	Negotiation Meeting	13	9	4	8	5	
17	Submission to HOPE/ Ministry for Approval	29	42	16	30	1	
18	Approval From HOPE/ Ministry/ CCGP	276	302	1	91	117	
	Time taken for Approval by Approving Authority	**276**	**302**	**1**	**91**	**117**	**158 Days**
19	Contract Signing	28	28	13	5	7	
	Time taken from EoI Advertisement to Contract Signing	**677**	**762**	**319**	**394**	**525**	**536 Days**
	Approving Authority	CCGP	CCGP	HOPE	Ministry	CCGP	

Breakdown of time required mentioning the actual dates for selection of consulting firm under five packages from four ADB assisted projects of LGED is provided below:

Sl No	Steps	DPRC Firm RCIP	CDC Firm RCIP	DMS Firm EAP	PISC Firm FREAP	GICD Firm IUGIP	Remarks
1	Advertise EoI	31-01-21	06-11-20	25-06-22	08-10-23	11-09-22	
2	EoI Receive/ Opening	09-03-21	10-12-20	24-07-22	06-11-23	17-10-22	
3	PEC Meeting 01	01-04-21	07-01-21	01-08-22	28-11-23	19-10-22	
4	PEC Meeting 02	12-04-21	11-02-21	08-09-22	26-12-23	02-11-22	
5	First submission to ADB	27-04-21	11-03-21	19-09-22	04-01-24	13-11-22	
	Time taken for EoI Shortlisting Evaluation	**49**	**91**	**57**	**59**	**27**	**57 Days**
6	No Objection on Submission 1 From ADB	20-07-21	22-04-21	06-11-22	25-01-24	22-01-23	
	Time taken for NOC on Shortlisting by ADB	**84**	**42**	**48**	**21**	**70**	**53 Days**
7	Issuing of the RFP	02-08-21	03-05-21	09-11-22	04-02-24	26-01-23	
8	Receipt of proposals	22-09-21	21-06-21	07-12-22	21-03-24	16-03-23	
9	PEC Meeting 01	30-09-21	06-07-21	22-12-22	25-03-24	23-03-23	
10	PEC Meeting 02	21-10-21	24-08-21	18-01-23	20-05-24	06-06-23	
11	Second submission to ADB	03-11-21	14-09-21	07-02-23	26-05-24	27-08-23	
	Time taken for Technical Evaluation of RFP	**42**	**85**	**62**	**66**	**164**	**84 Days**
12	No Objection on Submission 2 From ADB	22-11-21	07-10-21	28-02-23	29-05-24	15-09-23	
	Time taken for NOC on Technical Evaluation by ADB	**19**	**23**	**21**	**3**	**19**	**17 Days**
13	Public opening of financial proposal	01-12-21	21-10-21	06-03-23	09-06-24	21-09-23	
14	Third submission to ADB	08-12-21	31-10-21	21-03-23	13-06-24	04-10-23	
	Time taken for Financial Evaluation of RFP	**16**	**24**	**21**	**15**	**19**	**19 Days**
15	No Objection on Submission 3 From ADB	28-12-21	22-11-21	06-04-23	24-06-24	11-10-23	
	Time taken for NOC on Financial Evaluation by ADB	**20**	**22**	**16**	**11**	**7**	**16 Days**
16	Negotiation Meeting	10-01-22	01-12-21	10-04-23	02-07-24	16-10-23	
17	Submission to HOPE/ Ministry for Approval	08-02-22	12-01-22	26-04-23	01-08-24	17-10-23	
18	Approval From HOPE/ Ministry/ CCGP	11-11-22	10-11-22	27-04-23	31-10-24	11-02-24	
	Time taken for Approval by Approving Authority	**276**	**302**	**1**	**91**	**117**	**158 Days**
19	Contract Signing	09-12-22	08-12-22	10-05-23	05-11-24	18-02-24	
	Time taken from EoI Advertisement to Contract Signing	**677**	**762**	**319**	**394**	**525**	**536 Days**
	Approving Authority	CCGP	CCGP	HOPE	Ministry	CCGP	

Appendix B: Breakdown of Individual Consultant Selection Timeframe

Breakdown of time required (in days) for selection of individual consultant under three packages from one ADB assisted project of LGED is provided below:

Sl No	Steps	Supervision Engineer CRLIWM	Bio Engineer CRLIWM	Design Engineer CRLIWM	Remarks
1	Advertise EoI	0	0	0	
2	EoI Receive/ Opening	14	14	14	
3	PEC Meeting 01	19	19	19	
4	PEC Meeting 02	19	19	19	
5	First submission to ADB	9	9	9	
	Time taken for EoI Shortlisting Evaluation	**47**	**47**	**47**	**47 Days**
6	No Objection on Submission 1 From ADB	23	23	23	
	Time taken for NOC on Shortlisting by ADB	**23**	**23**	**23**	**23 Days**
7	Negotiation Meeting	10	10	10	
8	Submission to HOPE for Approval	2	2	2	
9	Approval From HOPE	1	1	1	
	Time taken for Approval by Approving Authority	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1 Day**
10	Contract Signing	1	5	1	
	Time taken from EoI Advertisement to Contract Signing	**98**	**102**	**98**	**100 Days**
	Approving Authority	HOPE	HOPE	HOPE	

Breakdown of time required mentioning the actual dates for selection of individual consultant under three packages from one ADB assisted project of LGED is provided below:

Sl No	Steps	Supervision Engineer CRLIWM	Bio Engineer CRLIWM	Design Engineer CRLIWM	Remarks
1	Advertise EoI	21-03-24	21-03-24	21-03-24	
2	EoI Receive/ Opening	04-04-24	04-04-24	04-04-24	
3	PEC Meeting 01	23-04-24	23-04-24	23-04-24	
4	PEC Meeting 02	12-05-24	12-05-24	12-05-24	
5	First submission to ADB	21-05-24	21-05-24	21-05-24	
	Time taken for EoI Shortlisting Evaluation	**47**	**47**	**47**	**47 Days**
6	No Objection on Submission 1 From ADB	13-06-24	13-06-24	13-06-24	
	Time taken for NOC on Shortlisting by ADB	**23**	**23**	**23**	**23 Days**
7	Negotiation Meeting	23-06-24	23-06-24	23-06-24	
8	Submission to HOPE for Approval	25-06-24	25-06-24	25-06-24	
9	Approval From HOPE	26-06-24	26-06-24	26-06-24	
	Time taken for Approval by Approving Authority	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1 Day**
10	Contract Signing	27-06-24	01-07-24	27-06-24	
	Time taken from EoI Advertisement to Contract Signing	**98**	**102**	**98**	**100 Days**
	Approving Authority	HOPE	HOPE	HOPE	

Appendix C: Annual Procurement Plan for Consulting Firm Selection

Annual Procurement Plan (APP) for selection of consulting firm under five packages from four ADB assisted projects of LGED is provided below:

Sl. No.	Package No.	Description of Procurement Package Services	Unit	Quantity	Procurement Method & Type	Contract Approving Authority	Source of Funds	Estimated Cost (Lac Taka)	Time Code for process	Advertise EOI	Issue RFP	Technical Proposal Opening	Technical Proposal Evaluation	Financial Proposal Opening & Evaluation	Negotiation	Approval	Signing of Contract	Total time to Contract Signature	Remarks
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*	*16*	*17*	*18*	*19*	*20*
1	CS-04/ RCIP/PM U/DPRC	Detail Project Report Consultant (DPRC)	PM	1118	QCBS Internatio nal	CCGP	GoB and ADB	4,591.690	Planned Dates	15-12-20	28-02-21	14-04-21	19-05-21	09-06-21	30-06-21	25-08-21	22-09-21	22-09-21	
									Planned Days	0	75	45	35	21	21	56	28	281	396 days delay
									Actual Dates	31-01-21	02-08-21	22-09-21	22-11-21	28-12-21	10-01-22	11-11-22	09-12-22	677	
2	CS-02/ RCIP/PM U/CDCM	Capacity Development Consultant (CDC)	PM	6966	QCBS National	CCGP	GoB and ADB	8,186.000	Planned Dates	15-09-20	29-11-20	13-01-21	17-02-21	10-03-21	31-03-21	26-05-21	23-06-21	23-06-21	
									Planned Days	0	75	45	35	21	21	56	28	281	481 days delay
									Actual Dates	06-11-20	03-05-21	21-06-21	07-10-21	22-11-21	01-12-21	10-11-22	08-12-22	762	
3	EAP/LGE D/CON-2	Design Monitoring and Supervision (DMS) Consulting Services	PM	183	QCBS National	HOPE	GoB and ADB	596.500	Planned Dates	25-06-22	27-08-22	24-09-22	15-10-22	29-10-22	12-11-22	03-12-22	31-12-22	31-12-22	
									Planned Days	0	63	28	21	14	14	21	28	189	130 days delay
									Actual Dates	25-06-22	09-11-22	07-12-22	28-02-23	06-04-23	10-04-23	27-04-23	10-05-23	319	

Sl. No.	Package No.	Description of Procurement Package Services	Unit	Quantity	Procurement Method & Type	Contract Approving Authority	Source of Funds	Estimated Cost (Lac Taka)	Time Code for process	Advertise EOI	Issue RFP	Technical Proposal Opening	Technical Proposal Evaluation	Financial Proposal Opening & Evaluation	Negotiation	Approval	Signing of Contract	Total time to Contract Signature	Remarks
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*	*16*	*17*	*18*	*19*	*20*
4	EFP/LGED/CON1	Recruitment of Project Implementation Support Consultant (PISC)	PM	1133	QCBS National	Ministry	GoB and ADB	2,999.999	Planned Dates	04-10-23	13-12-23	27-01-24	24-02-24	16-03-24	06-04-24	11-05-24	08-06-24	08-06-24	
									Planned Days	0	70	45	28	21	21	35	28	248	146 days delay
									Actual Dates	08-10-23	04-02-24	21-03-24	26-05-24	13-06-24	02-07-24	31-10-24	05-11-24	394	
5	IUGIP/GICD/02/2022	Governance Improvement and Capacity Development (GICD) Consulting Services	PM	8244	QCBS National	CCGP	GoB and ADB	11,302.45	Planned Dates	10-08-22	19-10-22	03-12-22	07-01-23	28-01-23	18-02-23	15-04-23	13-05-23	13-05-23	
									Planned Days	0	70	45	35	21	21	56	28	276	249 days delay
									Actual Dates	11-09-22	26-01-23	16-03-23	15-09-23	11-10-23	16-10-23	11-02-24	18-02-24	525	

Appendix D: Annual Procurement Plan for Individual Consultant Selection

Annual Procurement Plan (APP) for selection of individual consultant under three packages from one ADB assisted project of LGED is provided below:

Sl. No.	Package No.	Description of Procurement Package Services	Unit	Quantity	Procurement Method & Type	Contract Approving Authority	Source of Funds	Estimated Cost (Lac Taka)	Time Code for process	Advertise EOI	Negotiation	Approval	Signing of Contract	Total time to Contract Signature	Remarks
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*	*16*
1	CRLIWM/LGED/ICS/SD-01-03	Selection of Individual Consultant - Supervision Engineer 3 Nos	PM	216	ICS National	HOPE	GoB and ADB	450.000	Planned Dates	15-03-24	14-05-24	28-05-24	25-06-24	25-06-24	On or before time
									Planned Days	0	60	14	28	102	
									Actual Dates	21-03-24	23-06-24	26-06-24	27-06-24	98	
2	CRLIWM/LGED/ICS/SD-04	Selection of Individual Consultant - Bio Engineer 1 Nos	PM	48	ICS National	HOPE	GoB and ADB	150.000	Planned Dates	15-03-24	14-05-24	28-05-24	25-06-24	25-06-24	On or before time
									Planned Days	0	60	14	28	102	
									Actual Dates	21-03-24	23-06-24	26-06-24	01-07-24	102	
3	CRLIWM/LGED/ICS/SD-05-06	Selection of Individual Consultant - Design Engineer 2 Nos	PM	60	ICS National	HOPE	GoB and ADB	300.000	Planned Dates	15-03-24	14-05-24	28-05-24	25-06-24	25-06-24	On or before time
									Planned Days	0	60	14	28	102	
									Actual Dates	21-03-24	23-06-24	26-06-24	27-06-24	98	

Appendix E: Survey Questionnaire

The following is a survey form meant to uncover possible obstacles for the service procurement of a few Asian Development Bank (ADB) assisted projects at LGED. The researcher greatly appreciates your valuable response. The researcher promises that the data you submit will be kept private and used exclusively for purposes of research.

Research Topic: Challenges of Consulting Service Procurement: A Case Study of ADB Funded Projects of LGED

1. Your Name

……..

2. Designation

……..

3. Last Educational Qualification

PhD/ Post Doctorate

M.Sc/ MEng/ MBA or equivalent

B.Sc or equivalent

Diploma or equivalent

Other ……

4. Length of Professional Service in Years

Zero to Four

Five to Eight

Nine to Twelve

Thirteen to Sixteen

Seventeen to Twenty

More than Twenty

5. What is the duration of your involvement in procurement activities in years?

Zero to Four

Five to Eight

Nine to Twelve

Thirteen to Sixteen

Seventeen to Twenty

More than Twenty

6. The evaluation of Expression of Interest (EoI) Shortlisting requires an average of 57 days; do you consider this duration justified?

Yes

No

7. If the answer of the previous question is "No", what are the potential causes behind the delay in EoI shortlisting evaluation? (Choose any that apply; in case of "Other", please specify)

Answer of the previous question is "Yes"

Meeting schedule delay due to unavailability of Evaluation Committee members

Setting up Complex Evaluation Criteria

Shortage of officials at Project Director's Office

Insufficient motivation and competency of the PMU staff

Lack of Coordination between Project Director and other stakeholders

Lack of knowledge of PD office's staff on ADB's Procurement Guidelines

Other ……

8. ADB takes 53 days on an average to provide no objection on the EoI shortlisting evaluation, do you think the timeframe is justified?

Yes

No

9. If the answer of the previous question is "No", how long should ADB take to provide no objection on the shortlisting? (in case of "Other", please specify)

Answer of the previous question is "Yes"

7 (Seven) days

14 (Fourteen) days

21 (Twenty One) days

28 (Twenty Eight) days

Other ……

10. After opening of the RFP, evaluation of technical proposals takes 84 days on an average, is this time duration justified?

Yes

No

11. If the answer of the previous question is "No", what are the potential causes behind the delay in evaluation of RFP technical proposals? (Choose any that apply; in case of "Other", please specify)

Answer of the previous question is "Yes"

Meeting schedule delay due to unavailability of Evaluation Committee members

Setting up Complex Evaluation Criteria

Shortage of officials at Project Director's Office

Insufficient motivation and competency of the PMU staff

Lack of Coordination between Project Director and other stakeholders

Lack of knowledge of PD office's staff on ADB's Procurement Guidelines

Other ……

12. ADB takes 17 days on an average to provide no objection on the technical proposal evaluation, do you think the timeframe is justified?

Yes

No

13. If the answer of the previous question is "No", how long should ADB take to provide no objection on the technical proposal evaluation? (in case of "Other", please specify)

Answer of the previous question is "Yes"

7 (Seven) days

14 (Fourteen) days

21 (Twenty One) days

28 (Twenty Eight) days

Other ……

14. After opening of the financial proposals, evaluation of financial proposals takes 19 days on an average, is this time duration justified?

Yes

No

15. If the answer of the previous question is "No", what are the potential causes behind the delay in evaluation of financial proposals? (Choose any that apply; in case of "Other", please specify)

Answer of the previous question is "Yes"

Meeting schedule delay due to unavailability of Evaluation Committee members

Setting up Complex Evaluation Criteria

Shortage of officials at Project Director's Office

Insufficient motivation and competency of the PMU staff

Lack of Coordination between Project Director and other stakeholders

Lack of knowledge of PD office's staff on ADB's Procurement Guidelines

Other ……

16. ADB takes 16 days on an average to provide no objection on the technical proposal evaluation, do you think the timeframe is justified?

Yes

No

17. If the answer of the previous question is "No", how long should ADB take to provide no objection on the financial proposal evaluation? (in case of "Other", please specify)

Answer of the previous question is "Yes"

7 (Seven) days

14 (Fourteen) days

21 (Twenty One) days

28 (Twenty Eight) days

Other ……

18. Selection of consultants require 536 days on an average, do you consider this duration justified?

Yes

No

19. How to reduce the overall time taken to onboard consultants? (Choose any that apply; in case of "Other", please specify)

Introduction of rewarding system for PEC members

Proper monitoring of different stages during the recruitment process

Introduction of e-Procurement for recruitment of consultants

Inclusion of staff from PD office in PEC for motivation and shared responsibility

Outsourcing the evaluation process

Proper communication between Project Director and other stakeholders

Punishment of the officials responsible

Arrangement of training to reduce knowledge gap on ADB's Procurement Guidelines

Other ……

20. As per your opinion, what is the level of knowledge possessed by POC and PEC members regarding service procurement processing as outlined in PPR 2008?

Poor

Average

Good

Very Good

Excellent

21. Is the number of procurement personnel in the PMU and logistics adequate?

Yes

No

22. Is the procurement personnel in the PMU adequately skilled and competent?

Yes

No

23. Does the procurement personnel in the PMU possess the necessary authority, power, accountability, and responsibility?

Yes

No

24. Will e-Procurement of services decrease the time required for consultant selection?

Yes

No

25. In your opinion, what are the challenges of service procurement?

……

……

……

26. In your opinion, what are the remedies to those challenges of service procurement?

……

……

……