

Agile model for carrying out Action Research, including out-sourcing mechanism and through own staff

As directed by Secretary BISP, the following two options for developing an agile model for carrying out action research, as required periodically by BISP operational wings have been explored. A tentative roadmap and feasibility of implementing both these options, in light of this is outlined below:

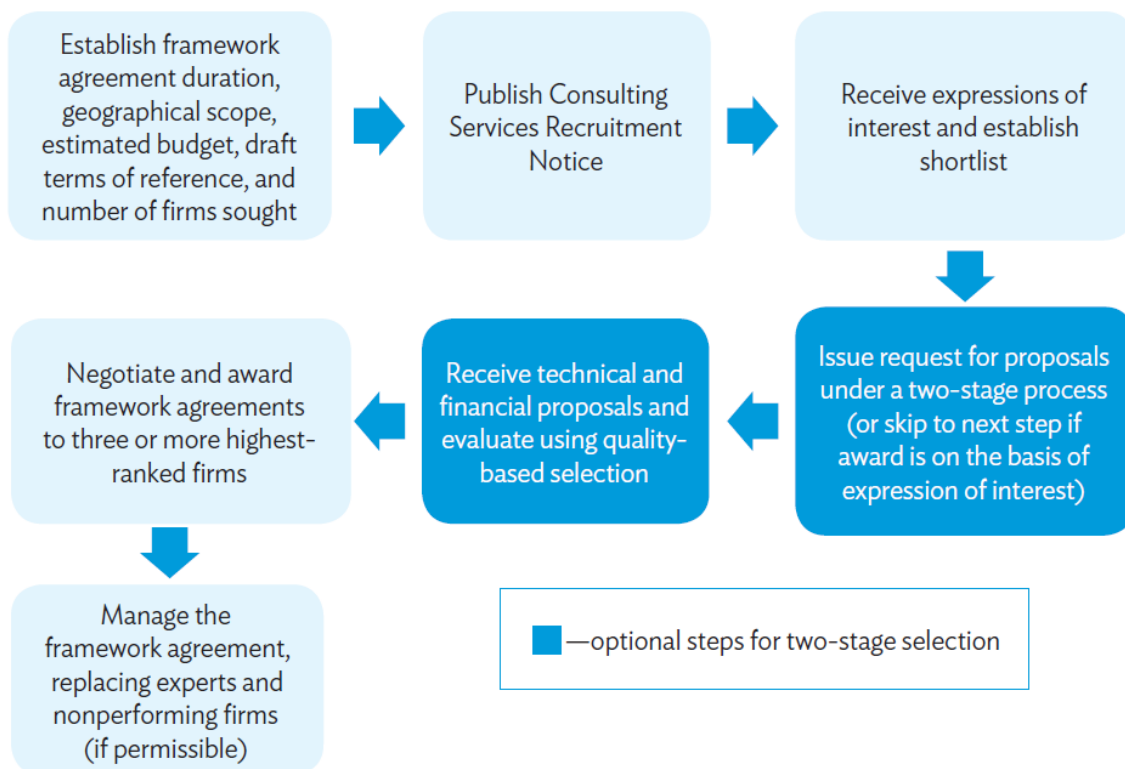
- i. Hiring of third party firm(s) on retainer-ship basis
 - ii. Utilizing BISP field staff for carrying out action research on need basis
2. Regarding hiring of third party firm(s) on retainer-ship basis or under aegis of a framework agreement (as commonly referred to under procurement modalities), it is proposed that a competitive process may be used to solicit expressions of interest from prospective firms on engagement with BISP on research activities on a retainer ship basis. BISP would be able to quickly deploy these firms in case of demand for action research from BISP operational wings, thereby saving time in the procurement process.
3. Based on a review of global good practices in this domain and informal consultations with some local research consultancy firms, salient features of a retainer ship agreement that maybe adopted by BISP is outlined below:

Rationale of Agreement

Consultancy retainership agreements will enable BISP to retain one or more qualified consulting firms or individual consultants for multiple, planned consultancy assignments. Entering into a retainer ship agreement would be most appropriate for BISP in case of the need for an operational wing to carry out action research on urgent basis for effective and timely decision making, which may get delayed in case standard procurement protocols are followed.

Procurement Process

The normal procurement process that generally would need to be followed by BISP for entering into a Retainer ship/ Framework Agreement with a Consulting Firm(s) is outlined below:



Duration/ Cost

As retainers ship agreements are medium-term arrangements, BISP may enter into agreements that generally cover a maximum period of upto 3 years. Before entering into such an arrangement, BISP would need to ensure that there is sufficient interest within the market to establish a retainer ship framework. Such an agreement will not guarantee work for the consultant firms and no retainer fees maybe paid. When a need for services under the framework agreement arises, BISP may issue a simplified contract, to one of the selected firms.

Modalities for Engagement

BISP may assign individual contract(s) to consultancy firms using the following processes, which should be transparently indicated to firms in the request for proposals (RFP) for the framework agreement:

- Publish Request for Expression of Interest to solicit EOIs from prospective consulting firms for engagement under a framework agreement with BISP.
- Shortlist all firms having technical expertise to periodically carry out demand based research, for entering into framework agreement with BISP. These firms can serve as a panel that can be called upon in case of urgent requirement of carrying research.
- When demand for outsourcing research emerges from BISP operational wings, all framework agreement consultant firms can be invited to submit both technical and financial proposals.
- Evaluate the technical and financial proposals and directly select the most appropriate framework agreement consultant firm to carry out the required research work. This is not

generally considered as direct contracting or single-source selection if a competitive process has already been undertaken to establish the framework.

- If none of the framework agreement consultants have the capacity or experience to perform a particular contract (assignment), and opt to procure a firm outside of the framework agreement.

4. The 2nd option of utilizing BISP field staff for carrying out action research on need basis has also been analyzed and it is proposed that field staff / Compliance Monitors can be used for the purpose of collecting data from BISP beneficiaries in the field in off-tranche periods, when the work load of field staff is moderate. This again would be a better option for carrying out action research on an urgent basis. In this regard, the PRU can lead and facilitate this process through the following measures:

- Development of concept paper and scope of study, in collaboration with user wing
- Development of data collection tools and instruments to be employed by BISP field staff in collecting data from the field
- Training staff field in the data collection tools/ questionnaire for data collection
- Development of online interface for collection of data from the field
- Compilation of data received from field and analysis of main findings/ trends and preparation of report for higher management

5. It is also apprised that in line with the 2nd option of utilizing BISP field staff for carrying out action research, PRU has already initiated its work on one study – Beneficiary Needs Assessment Survey, and the same is nearing completion.

6. Foregoing in view, approval is solicited for development of detailed TORs for the retainer ship agreement, on basis of salient features and processes, as proposed above (in Para3).

Dr. Umer Khalid
Team Lead PRU

Director General (CI)