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The Best Criteria for the Selection of Consultant Offices

Construction Industry in Libya

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Abstract

A questionnaire has been designed and presented to determine the most important criteria affecting the choice of the best consulting offices in construction projects in the public sector in Libya. The questionnaire consists of Ninety-nine sub-criterion covering on two main fields. The first field: human resources contain six main criteria and thirty-four sub-criteria. The second field: physical possibilities contain sixteen main criteria and sixty-five sub-criteria. The questionnaire is spreaded over expert engineers, to rate the criteria on likert scale, (1 to 5). The validity and reliability of the questionnaire have been tested to ensure that the collected data is meaningful. In order to ensure the veracity of the internal consistency of the questionnaire, the questionnaire has been distributed over the decision-maker experts to calculate the correlation coefficient Pearson. In the reliability analysis, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and arithmetic average of results have been determined utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Finally, the study shows that there are seven main criteria that mainly control the selection of the consulting office. These criteria are human capabilities, office experience, previous performance level, quality control, office equipment, administrative system, training and development.

Keywords

Consulting offices selection criteria, validity and reliability, correlation coefficient Pearson, Cranach's Alpha coefficient, Libya construction industry

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A/E	Architect / Engineer
CPC	Consultant Pre-selection Criteria
CPE	Consultant's Performance Evaluation
DSS	Decision Support System
EMR	Experience Modification Rating
HVAC	Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning
MIS	Management Information Systems
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Housing Administration
SPSS	Statistical Package Social Sciences
r	Correlation coefficient

Nomenclature

1. Introduction

The selection of the consulting office is a vital issue for the achieve project's properly. Few researches were carrying out in this research area. For instance, Kasma [1] studied the selection of consulting engineering firms for professional services by clients in a number of ways. Too many times, the client makes the selection on price rather than qualifications. The recommended selection procedure for selecting a consulting engineer involves: (1) Soliciting qualifications of firms (2) conducting an explanatory meeting (3) receiving consultant proposals (4) selecting firms to interview (5) conducting interviews (6) negotiating a contract with the selected firm. Yean [2] certain attributes of an architect or engineer (A/E) that may be used to predict his performance. These attributes may be categorized as "hard" or "soft" attributes. Hard attributes include an AE's cognitive ability, job knowledge, task proficiency, and job experience. Soft attributes include an AE's conscientiousness, initiative, social skills, controllability, and commitment. The purpose of this study is to identify those attributes that affect an AE's .The results of the study reveal that an AE's performance can be predicted using three attributes: AE's problem solving ability and project approach, AE's speed in producing design drawings, and the AE's level of enthusiasm in tackling a difficult assignment. Thomas [3] aimed to devise a more objective framework for evaluating consultants' general capabilities during the pre-selection process. The paper begins by identifying the commonly used criteria for pre-selecting engineering consultants. In order to examine the importance of consultant pre-selection criteria (CPC), a questionnaire survey was conducted with clients who were responsible for pre-selecting their consultants; and consultants being pre-selected by the clients. The findings reveal that the perception of the client and consultant groups on the importance of (CPC) was very consistent. Finally, a multi-criteria model for evaluating consultants' general capabilities during the pre-selection is proposed. Based on each candidate score, clients can determine which engineering consultants should be invited to bid for a consultancy assignment.

Lai and Thomas [4] conducted a survey to unveil the standards for various performance levels which correspond to a list of indicators used for gauging engineering consultants' performance at the design stage. A modified horizontal approach is employed to analyses the data, and the results indicate that engineering consultants should fulfill greater than 90% in most of the aspects relevant to the design stage to qualify for an 'excellent' performance rating. By referring to the expected performance standards, clients can identify which quantitative indicators at the design stage should deserve much greater attention to minimize the chance of commissioning an incapable engineering consultant. Thomas and Chow [5] improved the transparency and rigorousness of Consultant's Performance Evaluation (CPE) through the establishment of an evaluating framework for gauging the performance of engineering consultants. In this paper, a comprehensive set of evaluation criteria is identified, and the significance of these criteria is discussed through an empirical survey. Then, a multicriteria model for evaluating the performance of engineering consultants is presented. The results indicate that once an acceptable (CPE) framework is devised, the performance scores can be utilized for various purposes, including monitor and control, incentive and sanction, reselection, technical assessment, and bid evaluation. Al-Khunaizi [6] studied the best professional services in the A/E selection, the quality of the project's specific criteria. These

perform the proposed work. The principles of validity and reliability are fundamental cornerstones of the scientific method. Many researchers have identified the main criteria for contractor's selection for the public sector of different countries. For instance, Hatush and Skitmore [7] identified the criteria for prequalification and bid evaluation. The findings indicate that the most common criteria considered by procurers during the prequalification and bid process are those pertaining to financial soundness, technical ability, management capability, and the health and safety performance of contractors. The Department of Treasury and Finance [8] introduced guidelines for tender evaluation using weighted criteria for building works and services. Rather than automatically accepting the lowest price, the tender assessment process applies weighting for skills, quality, experience and previous performance in a manner to ensure value for money. Mahdi *et al.* [9] introduced an approach to structuring a Decision Support System (DSS) to select the optimum contractor. The decision criteria include project time duration, past experience record, the use of discounted cash flow technique, quality of

criteria are the financial, technical, managerial capability and competence of each A/E to

Reliability and validity is a major issue when it comes to research, indeed failure to assure the validity and/or reliability of the findings may cause the research to be questioned even worse rejected as invalid. Reliability refers to consistency and/or repeatability of the measurement; in other words, consistency can relate here to the questionnaires being clear and well define in order to not confuse the respondents and repeatability here means that if searchers have findings from a group they should be able to repeat the survey and get exactly the same results. Validity encompasses the entire experimental concept and establishes whether the results obtained meet all of the requirements of the scientific research method, their results are statistically analyzed and the test modified to improve the rational validity [10].

performance and project safety.

This paper outlines the procedure followed to design questionnaire, and analyze its result. The procedure is divided into four steps: identifying the main criteria and sub-criteria that affect selection and prequalification of consulting offices, designing the study questionnaire, collecting data, and finally analyzing results of the respondents that will be used for further study.

In order to identify the most effective criteria that affect the selection of the consulting offices, the following procedures are followed:

(1) From the literature review, the most repeated criteria were chosen.

(2) Semi-structured interviews were conducted with construction experts; see Appendix (A) to select the most important criteria. In these interviews, criteria were listed, then mixed, combined, and finally selected to suit the construction industry in Libya. The experts represent all parties of the construction industry in Libya. Accordingly, the sample consists of the decision-makers (owner, consultant, and contractor). Each group has two divisions: public and private. The public owners include ministries, general authorities, administrations...etc. Private owners include contracting companies.

(3) Based on the literature review and the semi-structured interviews, the final list for the criteria that affects the selection of the consulting offices was determined. All criteria represented in Appendix (B).

The final form of the questionnaire consists of (99) sub-criterions that core two main fields.

- Human resources contains (6) main criteria and (34) sub-criteria.
- Physical possibilities contain (16) main criteria (65) sub-criteria.

3. The internal consistency of the questionnaire

In statistics and research, internal consistency is typically a measure based on the correlations between different items on the same test (or the same subscale on a larger test). It measures whether several items that propose to measure the same general construct produce similar scores. Internal consistency can be measured by calculating the correlation coefficient between the questionnaire data. To ensure the veracity of the internal consistency of the questionnaire, questionnaire is spreaded over (35) of experienced engineers, given in Appendix (A), in order to calculate the correlation coefficient is a statistical measure of the strength of a monotonic relationship between paired data. In a sample, it is denoted by (r) and is by design constrained as follows: $\underline{k} r \leq +1$ and its interpretation is the closer (r) is to (+1) the stronger the monotonic relationship. For interpreting the correlation coefficient, the rang is assumed as given in Table (1).

No.	The value of (r)	Type of relationship
	0.00-0.19	very weak
2.	0.20-0.39	weak
3.	0.40-0.59	moderate
4.	0.60-0.79	strong
5.	0.80-1.0	very weak

Table (1) Interpretation of the correlation coefficient (r) [10]

In the current study, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) [11] was used to calculate the correlation coefficients based on Pearson product moment correlation. The results are given in Tables (2), (3). Moreover, arithmetic means are calculated to identify the importance of each criterion of criteria in two fields: i.e. (human resources and physical possibilities).

No	Human resources	(r)	Type of relationship	Arithmetic mean		
Cana	prity to accomplish the work	(1)	Type of relationship	Antimicuc incan		
1	1 Availability to qualified personnel 0.802 very strong 2.963					
2	Professional qualification/experience	0.002	strong	2.963		
2	Present workload	0.712	strong	2.963		
J Uum		0.740	strong	2.902		
	Number of (Engineers)	0.709	strong	2 088		
4	Number of (Engineers)	0.708	strong	2.988		
5	Experience of (Engineers)	0.880	very strong	2.993		
6	I raining of (Engineers)	0.789	strong	2.986		
/	Qualification of (Engineers)	0.842	very strong	2.989		
8	Registry in professional organizations	0.538	moderate	2.986		
9	Provides disciplines (Engineers)	0.839	very strong	2.986		
10	Number of. (Technicians)	0.625	strong	2.989		
11	Experience of (Technicians)	0.837	very strong	2.986		
12	Training of (Technicians)	0.811	very strong	2.986		
13	Qualification of (Technicians)	0.774	strong	2.986		
14	Registry in professional organizations	0.535	moderate	2.985		
15	Provides disciplines (Technicians)	0.810	very strong	2.986		
Adm	inistrative system	•				
16	Procedures manual	0.745	strong	2.975		
17	Detailed scheduling for every project	0.607	strong	2.973		
18	Costs management program	0.555	moderate	2.971		
19	Risk management program	0.630	strong	2.963		
Technical ability and skills						
20	CV`s to be provided	0.617	strong	2.960		
21	Personnel	0.710	strong	2.959		
22	Technical expertise of project team	0.733	strong	2.956		
23	Plant and equipment	0.806	very strong	2.942		
Offic	e experience	I	, ,			
24	Years of experience	0.838	verv strong	2.984		
	Number previous projects in the same field and		,			
25	the task	0.812	very strong	2.982		
	The average value of previous projects in the					
26	same field and the task 1 .	0.817	very strong	2.977		
27	Number previous projects in the fields and tasks	0.812	very strong	2.981		
27	The average value of previous projects in the	0.012	very strong	2.701		
28	fields and other tasks	0.640	strong	2.981		
29	The number of previous owners	0.834	very strong	2 979		
30	Percentage of owners of previous projects	0.736	strong	2.978		
31	Working with different contract types	0.750	moderate	2.978		
Trai	ning and development	0.500	moderate	2.770		
22	Staff training	0.651	strong	2 077		
32	Darticipate in scientific conferences	0.031	Su Olig	2.977		
24	Prancipale in scientific conferences	0.844	very strong	2.974		
- 54	Presence integrated library	0.803	very strong	2.975		

Table (2) Correlation coefficient and arithmetic mean for human resources criteria

No.	Physical possibilities	(r)	Type of relationship	Arithmetic mean			
Firm's background							
35	Reputation	0.476	moderate	3.00			
36	Technical competence /qualification	0.764	strong	2.977			
37	Experience with similar project	0.671	strong	2.975			
Proj	Project approach						
38	Approaches to time schedule	0.473	moderate	2.982			
39	Approaches to quality	0.542	moderate	2.978			
40	Design approach / methodology	0.525	moderate	2.975			
Fina	ncial capability						
41	Financial statement	0.535	moderate	2.975			
42	Financial references	0.422	moderate	2.973			
Cost							
43	Tender price	0.671	strong	2.974			
44	Transportation cost	0.783	strong	2.971			
45	Consultancy cost	0.726	strong	2.968			
Com	munication ability		C				
46	Awareness of responsibility	0.282	weak	2.984			
47	Ability to persuade	0.388	weak	2.963			
Fina	ncial soundness						
48	Financial stability	0.585	moderate	2.967			
49	Credit rating	0.355	weak	2.960			
50	Banking arrangements and bonding	0.303	weak	2.955			
51	Financial status	0.333	weak	2.953			
52	Liquidity ratio	0.355	weak	2.931			
Ren	Itation	0.571	weak	2.711			
53	Past failures	0 542	moderate	2 967			
54	Past owner / consultant relationship	0.439	moderate	2.967			
55	Length of time in business	0.261	weak	2.940			
56	Other relationships	0.356	weak	2.938			
Man	agement capability						
57	Project management organization	0.420	moderate	2.945			
58	Experience of technical personnel	0.806	very strong	2.967			
59	Management knowledge	0.689	strong	2.966			
Heal	th and safety	1					
60	Safety	0.423	moderate	2.944			
61	Experience modification rating (EMR)	0.555	moderate	2.937			
62	Health and safety on previous projects	0.605	strong	2.966			
63	Details of occupational safety and housing administration (OSHA)	0.396	weak	2.937			
64	Management safety accountability	0.775	strong	2.964			
Rele	vant experience						
65	relevance to the tendered project	0.688	strong	2.963			
66	Role of the tendered	0.515	moderate	2.921			
67	Project cost	0.774	strong	2.959			
68	Duration of the project	0.515	moderate	2.921			

Table (3) Correlation coefficient and arithmetic mean for physical possibilities criteria

No.	Physical possibilities	(r)	Type of relationship	Arithmetic mean			
Man	Management skills and systems						
69	Quality system	0.807	very strong	2.958			
70	Project management tools	0.792	strong	2.952			
71	Program software	0.658	strong	2.948			
72	Environmental management system	0.718	strong	2.948			
Meth	nodology	•					
73	program of works	0.617	strong	2.941			
74	Key performance indicators	0.710	strong	2.907			
75	Division of work into subcontracts	0.396	weak	2.890			
76	Innovate procedure	0.597	moderate	2.912			
77	Reporting and recording systems	0.687	strong	2.840			
78	Quality plan	0.725	strong	2.840			
Price	2	•					
79	Fixed capital cost	0.779	strong	2.890			
80	Variable tender costs during the contract	0.515	moderate	2.890			
Q 1	Special adjustments during the contract	0.462	moderate	2.810			
01	period	0.405	moderate	2.810			
82	Maintenance costs	0.563	moderate	2.775			
83	Operating costs	0.439	moderate	2.773			
Qual	lity control						
84	Assurance program and quality control	0.570	moderate	2.981			
85	Obtain certificates quality	0.704	strong	2.981			
Previous performance level							
86	Quality standards, target performance	0.546	moderate	2.840			
87	Time control	0.718	strong	2 912			
88	Completion date and extensions of time granted	0.447	moderate	2.912			
89	Failure to completed contract	0.436	moderate	2.907			
90	Delay	0.409	moderate	2.892			
91	Cost overruns	0.382	weak	2.890			
92	Assess the performance for the previous projects in the same field and the task	0.708	strong	3.00			
93	Assess Performance of previous projects in the other fields and other tasks	0.788	strong	2.996			
94	Use of self-assessment methodology for performance	0.695	strong	2.989			
95	Relationship with insurance companies	0.759	strong	2.890			
Offic	ce equipment						
96	Office area	0.623	strong	2.981			
97	Number consultant office the branches	0.681	strong	2.979			
98	The use of new technologies	0.673	strong	2.979			
99	Condition and procedures of equipment	0.237	weak	2.810			

Table (3) Continue-correlation coefficient and arithmetic mean for physical possibilities criteria

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The results confirm that the questionnaire has a high degree of internal consistency. Table (2) shows that the study sample answers in human resources when choosing consulting office is very high, reaching the highest value of the arithmetic average (2.993). For the human capabilities criterion / experience engineer and architect. The lowest value of the arithmetic average (2.942) is obtained, for the technical ability and skills criterion / plant and equipment. From the results given in table (3), it is shown that the study sample answers in Physical possibilities when choosing consulting office is very high. It can be seen that the highest value of the arithmetic average is (3.00) for the level of previous performance / assess the performance during the previous projects. The lowest value of the arithmetic average is (2.773) for the price criterion / operating costs. Seven criteria have been identified as a result of their highest value of the arithmetic average, and therefore, considered the most important criteria for the selection of consulting offices in contracts for construction projects in Libya. Figure (1) summarizes the basic criteria for the selection of consulting offices in construction projects in Libya. The validity of the questionnaire has been carried between each of the two fields as given in the table (4). It can be shown that a correlation between each area of the questionnaire with a total score of the questionnaire. This confirms that the questionnaire has a high degree of internal consistency.

 Table (4) Correlation coefficient to every fields of the questionnaire

The field	The value of (r)	Type of relationship
Human resources	0.897	very strong
Physical possibilities	0.844	very strong

4. Reliability analysis of the questionnaire

The idea behind reliability [10] is that any significant results must be more than a one-off finding and be inherently repeatable. This will reinforce the findings and ensure that the wider scientific community will accept the hypothesis. Without this replication of statistically significant results, the experiment and research have not fulfilled all of the requirements of testability. This prerequisite is essential to a hypothesis establishing itself as an accepted scientific truth. The SPSS is used to calculate Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Table (5) displays the results obtained. Overall the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for the questionnaire results is (0.985), which is very high and indicates a strong internal consistency.

Table (5) Statistical results for reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)

The field	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Human resources	34	0.974
Physical possibilities	65	0.973
Total of items questionnaire	99	0.985

5. Conclusion

The current study shows that there are seven main criteria that mainly control the selection of the consulting office in Libya. These criteria are human capabilities, office experience, previous performance level, quality control, office equipment, administrative system, training

and development. These seven main criteria consists of (31) sub-criterion for the design stage, and (31) sub-criterion for the supervision stage as shown in Figure 1

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No.	Expert	Contact information
1.	Alatkan for Engineering Consulting and Contractor	www.upa.org.ly
2.	SARAYA Engineering Consultants	www.sarycons.com
3.	Alasass Consultant Engineers	www.tagecoly.com
4.	AL-WAHA for Engineering and Technical	www.nomadiacompany.com
5.	EHAF Consulting Engineer	www.ehaf.com
6.	ALEMARA OFFICE of Engineering Consultant	www.alemara.ly
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8.	Dar Tripoli Engineering Consultants	(+218)91 4269212
9.	Al Aman office to Engineering Consultancy	(+218) 913210678
10.	EL AFIFI Expertise House of Engineering Consultant	www.elfifconsultint.com
11.	Consulting Office for Architecture	(+218) 619091807
12.	Office of the Arab city for Consulting Engineers	www.arabcity-ly.com
13.	Office Mimar / Engineering Consultancy	(+218) 913129846
14.	The bridges Office of Engineering Consulting	(+218) 912101032
15.	ECG engineering consulting group	www.ecgsa.com
16.	Sabbour Associates	www.sabbour.com
17.	Experience House Office for Engineering Consultancy	(+218) 913796921
18.	CEGMAN Consulting Engineering Group	www.cegman.com
19.	AL-AMED ENGINEERING Consultants	www.al-amed.com
20.	Africa Bureau Consulting Engineers	(+218) 925480620
21.	Company Al- Aman for Plastic manufacturing.	www.pwct.ly
22.	Majdal Contraction & Construction	www.railroads.org.ly
23.	National Union Consultants	www.nuc.ly
24.	Immar Tripoli Libya Construction	www.aucc.ly
25.	Arab Union Contracting Co.	www.raba.ly
26.	Motelet construction co.	www.acacos.ly
27.	Nomadia for general construction & electrical works	www.najmat-eleemar
28.	The national real estate for investment & construction	www.arabcont.com
29.	Afwag Pre-Engineered Building Co.	www.afwag.com
30	SAMA General Construction Company	www.sama-ly.com
31	Arasam Contracting and Real Estate Investment	www.arasam.com.lv
22	AL EPUAD general construction & real estate	
32. 22	AL-LDHAK general Construction & real estate	www.alebhar.com
<u> </u>	Araceknoon General Contracting co.	www.araceknoon.com
34.	New Tripoli's Contracting and Real Estate Investment	www.expoarabia.com
35.	(F.E.S.C) FESSATO for Engineering Services	www.fessato.org.ly

Appendix A: List of chosen experts in Libya Consulting offices/contracting companies

Appendix B: Questionnaire

(1)	Identify the importance of each criterion in the selection of consulting offices(1)unimportant(2)less important(3)importance medium								
(4) No.	The main criteria	(5) Very Important The sub-criteria	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
		1-Reputation		Π					
1.	Firm's background	2-Technical competence /qualification							
	1 mm b buenground	3-Experience with similar project							
		4-Present workload							
2.	Capacity to	5-Availability to qualified personnel							
	accomplish the work	6-Professional qualification/experience							
		7-Approaches to time schedule							
3.	Project approach	8-Approaches to quality							
	5 11	9-Design approach / methodology							
	T	10-Financial statement							
4.	Financial capability	11-Financial references							
		12-Tender price							
5.	Cost	13-Transportation cost							
		14-Consultancy cost							
		15-CV`s to be provided.							
	Technical ability and	16-Personnel							
6.	skills	17-Plant and equipment.							
		18-Technical expertise of project team.							
7	Assurance and	19- Assurance program and quality control							
1.	quality control	20- Obtain certificates quality							
		21- Number of (Engineers)							
		22- Experience of (Engineers)							
		23- Training of (Engineers)							
		24- Qualification of (Engineers)							
		25- Registry in professional organizations							
0	TT 1 11.1	26- Provides disciplines (Engineers)							
8.	Human capabilities	27- Number of. (Technicians)							
		28- Experience of (Technicians)							
		29- Training of (Technicians)							
		30- Qualification of (Technicians)							
		31- Registry in professional organizations							
		32- Provides disciplines (Technicians)							
		33-Financial stability							
		34-Credit rating							
9.	Financial soundness	35-Banking arrangements and bonding							
		36-Financial status							
		37-Liquidity ratio							
10	Communication	38-Awareness of responsibility							
10.	ability	39-Ability to persuade							
	,	40-Safety							
		41-Experience modification rating (EMR)							
11.	Health and safety	42-Health and safety on previous projects							
		43-Details of (OSHA)							
		44-Management safety accountability							
		45-Relevance to the project tendered							
10	Dolovent anneries	46-Role of the tendered							
12.	Relevant experience	47-Project cost							
		48-Duration of the project							
	Training and	49-Staff training							
13.	development	50-Participate in scientific conferences							
	development	51-Presence integrated library							

No.	The main criteria	The sub-criteria	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Methodology	52-program of works					
		53-Key performance indicators					
14		54-Division of work into subcontracts					
14.		55-Innovate procedure to be used					
		56-Reporting and recording systems					
		57-Quality plan					
		58-Procedures manual					
15	Administrative	59-Detailed scheduling for every project					
15.	system	60-Risk management program					
		61-Costs management program					
		62-Quality system					
	Management skills	63-Project management tools					
16.	and systems	64-Program software					
		65-Environmental management system					
		66-Past failures					
		67-Length of time in business					
17.	Reputation	68-Past owner/contractor relationship					
		60 Other relationships					
		70 Office grap					
		70-Office alea					
18.	Office equipment	71-Number consultant office the branches					
		72-The use of new technologies					
		73-Condition of equipment					
		74-Quality standards, performance levels					
		75-Time control					
		76-Completion date and extensions					
		77-Failure to completed contract					
		78-Delay					
	Previous	79-Cost overruns					
19.	performance level	80-Relationship with insurance companies					
	performance lever	81-Assess performance for the previous projects in the					
		same field and the task					
		82-Assess performance of previous projects in the other					
		fields and other tasks					
		83-Use of self-assessment methodology after the					
		completion					
		84-Years of experience					
		85-Number of previous projects in the same field and					
		the task					
		86- The average size of previous projects in the same					
		field and the task					
20		87-Number and size of previous projects in the fields					
20.	Office experience	and other tasks					
		88- The average value or size of previous projects in the					
		fields and other tasks					
		89-The number of previous owners					
		90-Percentage of previous owners					
		91-Working with different contract types					
		92-Fixed capital cost					
		93-Variable tender costs during the contract period					
21	Price	94- Adjustments during the contract period					
<i>2</i> 1.	1 1100	95-Maintenance costs					
		96-Operating costs					
		07 Project management organization					
22	Management	08 Experience of technical personnel					
22.	capability	00 Management knowledge					
	-	99-management knowledge					