



**POLICY DOCUMENT NO. 3**

**APPOINTMENT OF A GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTANT**

INTRODUCTION

The appointment of a Geotechnical Consultant should result in best possible benefit for the project, the client and the consultant. As the peak body for geo-professionals concerned with soil mechanics and geotechnical engineering, ISSMGE has a responsibility to set out guidelines for appointing a Geotechnical Consultant. The guidelines set out below are aimed at assisting clients and consultants to achieve a mutually satisfactory outcome of the appointment process.

CONSULTANT'S ROLE

The consultant can play a number of roles in a project:

- Technical: For example, ground investigations; material testing; design of permanent and temporary works
- Managerial: For example, contract administration; project cost, progress and quality control
- Advisory: For example, interpretation and analysis of geotechnical conditions; dispute resolution; forensic investigations.

In many of these roles, it is important that the consultant is involved in all phases of the project including planning, investigation, design and construction.

SELECTION OF A CONSULTANT

The selection of a consultant should be based primarily on the consultant's ability and experience. Although cost of consulting services is a consideration, appointments made primarily on the basis of cost without due consideration of other factors seldom produce a satisfactory result. Factors to be considered when selecting a consultant are expertise (particularly on specialised projects), track record, resources (personnel and equipment), availability, reputation, and financial wellbeing.

DEFINING THE BRIEF

Where a client has a sound understanding of the scope of consulting services required, the client may call for proposals from a short list of selected consultants. Where a client is unsure of the scope of services to be provided, the client may pre-select a consultant and negotiate the brief and terms of appointment with that consultant. Alternatively, the client may call for proposals from selected consultants in which they define the scope of services on which their proposals are based. The client may then make his selection based on the sufficiency of the services offered. Clients should respect the confidentiality of such proposals. Consultants should refrain from re-quoting on the basis of another consultant's proposals.

APPOINTMENT OF A CONSULTANT

The appointment of a consultant should be confirmed in writing either by the client or the consultant. The appointment should specify the scope of services, deliverables, exclusions, programme, remuneration details, and contractual arrangements between the parties including dispute resolution and limit of liability. Remuneration for consulting services may be on a time-and-cost basis, a lump sum for a defined scope of work or based on an agreed percentage of the project cost.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Consultants should refrain from bidding on work for which they are not sufficiently skilled or experienced. They should also avoid bidding for work at rates which do not permit the delivery of an adequate and professional service or where the scope of the work is so limited that there is no reasonable likelihood of a successful outcome to the project. Consultants should avoid entering into contracts that impose obligations beyond the normal professional duty of exercising due skill, care and diligence without due consideration of the increased liability implied by such contracts.

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