



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

#### **RESPONSE TO THE ARTICLE: ENSURING FAIRNESS AND TRANSPARENCY: MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT ADDRESSES CONCERNS ON CONSULTANT FEES**

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BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN  
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The Ministry of Development wishes to clarify several points raised in recent Borneo Bulletin articles concerning consultancy fees and the procurement of consultant services. The Ministry uphold strict governance procedures to ensure fairness, transparency, and value for money in all government-funded projects.

First, the Ministry emphasizes that the Request for Quotation (RFQ) process follows an open and transparent competitive bidding system in accordance with the Competition Order, Chapter 253, which prohibits anti-competitive behaviours such as price-fixing, collusion, bid-rigging, or abuse of market dominance. This regulatory framework supports healthy competition, protects consumers, and promotes efficiency across the industry.

The Ministry further highlights that competitive bidding is consistent with recognised regional and international best practices for public-sector procurement. It ensures integrity in the appointment of consultants and promotes value for money for government expenditure.

It is important to note that consultants are not selected based on lowest price. Variations in fees among consultancy firms are normal and reflect differences in operational models, overheads, technical expertise, team composition, methodologies, and risk allocation. Such differences indicate a healthy marketplace rather than unfair practices.

Unrealistically low fees do not confer an advantage in the evaluation process. On the contrary, submissions that indicate insufficient resource allocation or unsustainable pricing raise concerns regarding their ability to deliver complex engineering works safely and effectively.

To ensure a sound and balanced evaluation, every RFQ issued by the Department clearly states that proposals are assessed using a 70:30 weighting- 70% for non-priced criteria and 30% for priced criteria. The non-priced component covers the consultant's technical capability, proposed methodology, resource adequacy, team structure and past performance and track record.

The proposed fee forms only part of the assessment under the priced criteria and does not significantly determine the outcome.

This evaluation structure ensures that the appointed consultant possesses the required competency, readiness, and engineering strength to deliver the project to the expected standard, while at the same time ensuring responsible use of public funds and long-term project sustainability.

All evaluations are carried out by the Ministry's designated Tender Evaluation Committee, following strict governance rules and established procurement procedures to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with national regulations.

The Ministry of Development remains committed to upholding high standards in public procurement and ensuring that the engineering and construction industry continues to operate in a fair, competitive, and sustainable environment for the benefit of the nation.

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