

Discussion: Risk assessment as an explicit dimension for tender evaluation

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The authors suggest nine 'risk factors' that could be introduced, but there is no mention of occupational health and safety matters. This is a subject that cannot be excluded from formal consideration because it is the law of the land. A number of researchers have regularly complained about poor standards in construction health and safety in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Lingard and Rowlinson, 1998, 2005; Poon *et al.*, 2008; Rowlinson, 1997; Yu and Hunt, 2002). Some years ago I was engaged by the client for the Dublin Port Tunnel to set a health and safety task within the tender documents for the evaluation of both the tunnel design contract and the tunnel construction contract. When the tenders were returned, I chaired a small committee to evaluate the quality of the responses and 15% of the tender evaluation marks were awarded under this heading. When a client takes the trouble to make clear that occupational health and safety is a subject to be taken seriously within tender evaluation, it sends exactly the right message to all concerned.

Authors' reply

We fully agree with the contributor on the importance of occupational health and safety matters. As mentioned in Section 1 of our paper, the usual approach is to evaluate construction safety under the technical assessment framework. The problem

is that a tenderer with a very low score in occupational health and safety could achieve an acceptable or even high overall technical score due to high results in other components. With an additional dimension on risk as suggested in our paper, it is possible, if deemed warranted for the project at hand, to introduce specific risk factors (the nine factors listed in Section 4 are not meant to be exhaustive) to draw attention to the fact that if such a tenderer were selected, significant issues with safety performance could arise with, in addition, an adverse impact on the final project cost.

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