

# What to Look For When Comparing Proposals

A practical checklist for evaluating product design and product development consultancies before you sign anything. Use it to compare proposals on a like-for-like basis and to spot what a proposal is not telling you.

## THE CHECKLIST

### Fifteen questions to ask every consultancy

Run each proposal you receive against these questions. A good consultancy will answer all of them clearly and in writing. Anything missing is a flag worth raising before committing.

- End-to-End Support**  
Can the consultancy support the full product journey through to mass manufacturing, not just design or prototyping?

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- Accurate Pricing**  
Can the consultancy provide full and accurate manufacturing unit pricing and tooling costs for the designed product?

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- Manufacturing Capability**  
Can the consultancy manufacture the product they design, or will you need to find and manage factories yourself?

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- Long-Term Partner**  
Can the consultancy act as a long-term product partner, rather than a transactional design service?

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- On-the-Ground Presence**  
Will the consultancy stay involved once the product is in the market, supporting manufacturing, quality, and warranty matters?

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**Team in China**

Does the consultancy have its own team on the ground in China if you are manufacturing offshore?

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**Shipping and Logistics**

Will the consultancy help organise shipping and delivery of the final product to your local or international markets?

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**Packaging**

Is packaging design included in the scope, or treated as a separate or later cost?

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**Design for Manufacture**

Will the consultancy design with manufacturability, cost, and scalability in mind, not just appearance?

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**Compliance**

Can the consultancy manage product compliance requirements and support relevant standards, testing, and documentation?

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**Project Management**

Will the consultancy guide the project with clear stages and stay transparent about scope, costs, and next steps?

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**Team Expertise**

Is the team made up of designers, engineers, and manufacturing specialists, or just designers?

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**Real Experience**

Does the consultancy bring significant real-world experience across product development, for example 80 or more years of combined team experience?

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**IP Protection**

Can the consultancy protect your intellectual property when working with overseas suppliers?

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**R&D Accreditation**

Is the consultancy a government-accredited research and development provider, recognised for the rigour and documentation of its R&D work?

# What good answers look like, and what Pro-Dev does

The checklist is the easy part. The harder part is knowing what a good answer looks like. Below is the reasoning behind each question, and how Pro-Dev approaches it.

## REASON 01

### End-to-End Capability Reduces Risk

Many proposals focus only on design or early prototyping, then hand the project off. Every handover is a chance for cost, time, and quality to slip. Pro-Dev proposals are structured around the full product journey, through to mass manufacturing, so the same team is accountable from sketch to shipped product.

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## REASON 02

### Accurate Pricing Reflects Real Manufacturing Experience

Accurate unit pricing and tooling costs require real factory engagement, not estimates pulled from a spreadsheet. Pro-Dev works directly with factories and has its own established supply chain network of long-term partners, built over many years. This is how we provide clear, production-ready pricing once the design is finalised.

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## REASON 03

### Multi-Disciplinary Teams Produce Better Outcomes

Designers working alone may not understand manufacturing constraints or engineering requirements. Pro-Dev's team includes experienced engineers, designers, and manufacturing specialists. Every design decision is informed, practical, and production-ready, not something that looks great on a screen but cannot be made at volume.

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## REASON 04

### Experience Brings Confidence and Clarity

Pro-Dev's team brings over 80 years of combined experience across multiple industries and product types. That depth lets us anticipate challenges before they become problems, guide complex projects, and deliver commercially viable outcomes, not just clever ideas.

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#### REASON 05

### Long-Term Partnership Avoids Costly Delays Later

Some consultancies deliver design files and step away. Anything that goes wrong in production becomes your problem to solve. Pro-Dev works as a long-term product partner and continues to support clients as products move into production and the market.

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#### REASON 06

### Packaging and Production Decisions Affect Cost and Launch

Packaging and manufacturing choices made late in the process add cost and delay launch. Pro-Dev considers both early as part of the overall development process, so the product, the box, and the factory line all come together at the same time.

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#### REASON 07

### Compliance Is Easier and Cheaper When Planned Early

Compliance requirements vary across markets and are often left until late in the process. By then they cost more to fix. Pro-Dev factors relevant standards in early and supports compliance planning, test coordination, and documentation for the markets the product is going into.

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#### REASON 08

### On-the-Ground Control Protects Quality

Overseas manufacturing carries real risk without direct oversight. Pro-Dev has its own staff based in China who manage quality assurance and quality control directly on the factory floor, rather than relying on a third-party sourcing agent whose interests sit with the factory.

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#### REASON 09

### Clear Project Management Avoids Delays and Gaps

Product development means coordinating design decisions, engineering detail, factories, suppliers, logistics, and compliance, all in parallel. Pro-Dev runs structured project management across the full journey, covering design, engineering, supply chain coordination, logistics planning, and compliance support. Responsibilities are clear, handovers are managed, and projects move forward in a controlled and predictable way.

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## REASON 10

# R&D Accreditation Adds Rigour and May Improve Project Economics

Pro-Dev is officially approved by New Zealand Inland Revenue (IRD) as a Research and Development provider. Eligible New Zealand clients may be able to claim a 15% tax credit on qualifying R&D costs under the R&D Tax Incentive (RDTI). For Australian and United States clients, the same accreditation provides added confidence in the rigour, documentation, and quality of our R&D work, against a standard externally assessed by government.

## TALK TO US

# Bring your product from idea to market.

Get in touch for an initial conversation about your project. No obligation. No pressure. All conversations are 100% confidential. We sign an NDA before discussing your project.

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