

City of Coquitlam

Request for Proposals

RFP No. 23-088

Supply and Delivery of  
Ready Mix Concrete and Precast Concrete

## Table of Contents

<b>SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DEFINITIONS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1 INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPONENTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Purpose .....	5
1.2 Proposal Submission.....	5
1.3 Instructions to Proponents .....	5
1.4 Prices.....	5
1.5 Award to Multiple Respondents.....	5
1.6 Requested Departures.....	6
1.7 Evaluation Criteria .....	6
1.8 Eligibility .....	7
1.9 Term.....	7
<b>2 GENERAL CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Terms and Conditions of Contract.....	8
2.2 Disaster Response Support .....	8
<b>3 SCOPE OF SERVICES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Scope.....	9
3.2 Cleanliness and Disposal of Unwanted Materials .....	10

## [PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORM](#)

### SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMATION

<b>RFP Reference</b>	<p align="center"><b>RFP No. 23-088</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Ready Mix Concrete and Precast Concrete</b></p>
<b>Overview of the Opportunity</b>	The purpose of this RFP is to invite proposals from qualified firms for the Supply and Delivery of <b>Ready Mix Concrete and Precast Concrete</b> as specified within this RFP document.
<b>Closing Date and Time</b>	<p align="center"><b>2:00 pm local time</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Friday, October 27, 2023</b></p>
<b>Instructions for Proposal Submission</b>	<p>Proposal submissions are to be returned in Microsoft Word and any other supporting documents to be consolidated into one PDF file and uploaded through QFile, the City's file transfer service accessed at website: <a href="https://qfile.coquitlam.ca/bid">qfile.coquitlam.ca/bid</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>In the "Subject Field" enter:</b> RFP Number and Name</li> <li><b>Add files in .pdf format and Send</b> (Ensure your web browser remains open until you receive 2 emails from QFile to confirm receipt.)</li> </ol> <p>Phone 604-927-3037 should assistance be required.</p> <p>The City reserves the right to accept Proposals received after the Closing Date and Time.</p>
<b>Obtaining RFP Documents</b>	<p>RFP Documents are available for download from the City of Coquitlam's website: <a href="https://www.coquitlam.ca/Bid-Opportunities">https://www.coquitlam.ca/Bid-Opportunities</a></p> <p>Printing of RFP documents is the sole responsibility of the Proponents.</p>
<b>Instructions to Proponents</b>	The guidelines for participation that will apply to this RFP are posted on the City's website: <a href="#">Instructions to Proponents</a>
<b>Questions</b>	<p>Questions are to be submitted in writing quoting the RFP number and name up to 3 business days before the Closing Date sent to email: <a href="mailto:bid@coquitlam.ca">bid@coquitlam.ca</a></p> <p>Questions received after that time may not receive a response.</p>
<b>Addenda</b>	<p>Proponents are required to check the City's website for any updated information and addenda issued, before the Closing Date at the following website: <a href="https://www.coquitlam.ca/Bid-Opportunities">https://www.coquitlam.ca/Bid-Opportunities</a></p>
<b>Withdrawal of Submission</b>	Proposals may be withdrawn by written notice only, made by an authorized representative of the Proponent sent to email: <a href="mailto:bid@coquitlam.ca">bid@coquitlam.ca</a> prior to the Closing Date and Time.
<b>Terms and Conditions of Contract</b>	City of Coquitlam <a href="#">Standard Terms and Conditions - Purchase of Goods and Services</a> are posted on the City's website and will apply to the Contract awarded as a result of this RFP.

## DEFINITIONS

**“Agreement” “Contract”** means the contract for services or City Purchase Order that will be issued to formalize with the successful Proponent through negotiation process with the City based on the proposal submitted and will incorporate by reference the Request for Proposals, Specifications, Drawings, any additional subsequent information, any addenda issued, the Proponent’s response and acceptance by the City.

**“City” “Owner”** means City of Coquitlam;

**“Contractor”** means the person(s) firm(s) or corporation(s) appointed by the City to carry out all duties, obligations, work and services described in the Request for Proposal and all associated documentation, which may also include mutually agreed revisions subsequent to submission of a Proposal. Both “Contractor” and “Proponent” are complementary in terms of duties, obligations and responsibilities contemplated at the Request for Proposals stage, through evaluation process, execution and performance of the services and Works.

**“Price”** means the amount that will be paid by the City to the Contractor for delivery and acceptance of goods and Services;

**“Project Manager”** means the City staff member appointed to coordinate the Work;

**“Proponent”** means responder to this Request for Proposals;

**“Proposal”** means the submission by the Proponent;

**“Request for Proposals” “RFP”** shall mean and include the complete set of documents, specifications and addenda incorporated herein, and included in this Request for Proposals;

**“Services” “Work” “Works”** means and includes the provision by the successful Proponent of all services, duties, and expectations as further described in this RFP. This will also mean the whole of the Work, tools, materials, labour, equipment, travel, and all that is required to be done, furnished and performed by the Contractor;

**“Shall” “Must” “Will” “Mandatory”** means a requirement that must be met;

**“Supply” “Provide”** shall mean supply and pay for and provide and pay for.

## 1 INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPONENTS

### 1.1 Acknowledgement

The City acknowledges with gratitude and respect that the name Coquitlam was derived from the hə́hqəmiḥə́h word kʷikwə́lə̌m (kwee-kwuh-tlum) meaning “Red Fish Up the River”. The City is honoured to be located on the kʷikwə́lə̌m (Kwikwetlem) traditional and ancestral lands, including those parts that were historically shared with the s̓qə́ciyaʔ təməxʷ (Katzie), and other Coast Salish Peoples.

### 1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this RFP is to invite Proposals from qualified, experienced companies for “as, if and when required” for the supply and delivery of **Ready Mix Concrete and Precast Concrete** as stated within this RFP.

### 1.3 Proposal Submission

Proponents should complete and submit the information requested in this RFP document on the Proposal Submission Form or in a format that is approved and is acceptable to the City.

### 1.4 Instructions to Proponents

Proponents are advised that the rules for participation that will apply to this RFP are located: [Instructions to Proponents](#).

By submission of a Proposal in response to this RFP, the Proponent agrees and accepts the rules by which the bid process will be conducted.

The City will not be responsible for any delay or for any submission not received for any reason, including technological delays or issues by either party’s network or email program, and the City will not be liable for any damages associated with submissions not received.

### 1.5 Prices

Prices shall be all-inclusive and stated in (Canadian Funds). Prices shall remain FIRM for the Term of the Contract.

Prices shall include the provision of all tools, materials, equipment, labour, transportation, fuel, supervision, management, overhead, materials, traffic control, services, all necessary packing and crating (where applicable), Canadian Customs import and export duties, freight, handling, insurance, all other associated or related charges, foreign, federal, provincial and municipal taxes, bonding costs, all licences, permits, inspections and all other requirements necessary for the commencement, performance and completion of Services as described.

Taxes are to be shown separately at time of invoicing.

The lowest price of any Proposal will not necessarily be accepted but will be analyzed to determine best overall value.

### 1.6 Award to Multiple Respondents

The City reserves the right to split the award to multiple Proponents in multiple categories or award both categories to one Proponent.

The City’s intention is to create a roster of Contractors for each category:

**Category 1 – Small Batch Concrete** - 2 cubic meters or less

**Category 2 – Large Batch Concrete** – greater than 2 cubic meters

**Category 3 – Precast Concrete Products**

#### 1.7 Requested Departures

The Proponent acknowledges that the departures requested in the Proposal Submission Form will not form part of the Contract unless and until the City specifically consents in writing to any of them. The City may not consider any departures not stated in the Proponent's Proposal Submission.

#### 1.8 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria of each proposal will be determined in accordance with the following:

Proposal Evaluation Summary	Maximum Points to be Awarded
<a href="#">Corporate</a>	20
<a href="#">Sustainable Benefits and Social Responsibility</a>	10
<a href="#">Technical</a>	20
<a href="#">Financial</a>	50
Total	100

The criteria for evaluation of the Proposals may include, but is not limited to:

##### **Corporate Experience, Capacity and Resources**

- Business and technical reputation and capabilities; experience, financial stability, capacity and resources
- Fleet Size
- References
- Health and Safety

##### **Sustainable Benefits and Social Responsibility**

- Sustainable benefits
- Reconciliation
- Social Responsibility

##### **Technical**

- Methodology, set-up and execution of the Work
- Quality Assurance and Safety
- Response times

##### **Financial and Value Added**

- Unit Prices, Standing time

These criteria will be used to determine best overall value to the City. Proposals will be compared to select one or more that are most advantageous.

**And, upon selection of one or more lead Proponent(s):**

- References may be contacted
- Interviews may be conducted

The City reserves the right to check references on other projects even if they are not specifically listed. Information obtained from references will be confidential and will not be disclosed to any Proponents.

These criteria will be used to determine best overall value to the City as well as any other criteria that may become evident during the evaluation process.

The City may, at its discretion, request clarification or additional information from a Proponent with respect to any Proposal and the City may make such requests to only selected Proponents. The City may consider such clarifications or additional information in evaluating a Proposal.

Incomplete Proposals or Proposals submitted on forms other than the Proposal Form may be rejected.

Proponents agree the City may disclose names of Proponents and total award amount, however, unevaluated results, unit prices, rates or scores will not be provided to any Proponents.

The City reserves the right to reject without further consideration any Proposal which in its opinion does not meet the criteria it considers essential for the Work outlined in this RFP.

Where only one Proposal is received, the City may reject such and re-issue the RFP on a selected basis.

#### 1.9 Eligibility

For eligibility, and as a condition of award, the successful Proponent would be required to meet or provide the equivalent:

- a) Commercial General Liability (CGL) insurance \$5M coverage provided on the [City's Standard Insurance Form](#)
- b) Be registered and provide WorkSafeBC clearance
- c) Accept the City's standard Terms and Conditions posted on the City's website: [Standard Terms and Conditions - Purchase of Goods and Services](#)
- d) A City of Coquitlam or Tri Cities Intermunicipal [Business License](#)

#### 1.10 Term

The initial term of the Contract is One (1) years with the option to extend the Contract for additional terms, upon mutual agreement of the parties.

## **2 GENERAL CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT**

### **2.1 Terms and Conditions of Contract**

The City's [Standard Terms and Conditions - Purchase of Goods and Services](#), as published on the City's website, the Conditions listed in this RFP, along with the accepted Proposal, addenda and any subsequent clarifications, correspondence, the totality of which will constitute the Contract.

### **PROJECT SPECIFIC TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

### **2.2 Disaster Response Support**

Ready mix concrete is considered a critical item in the City's emergency preparedness plan for disaster recovery. Depending on the nature of a major emergency and the subsequent infrastructure damage, a large demand may exist for such Products. The demand of the same products may also exist from other customers in these circumstances; however Proponents should consider that the City's needs may be a priority in limiting economic impacts to the community and ensuring public safety and health by restoring infrastructure as soon as possible.



### 3 SCOPE OF SERVICES

#### 3.1 Scope

Supply of Ready Mix Concrete to job sites designated from time to time by the City within its corporate boundaries.

The Contractor shall supply and deliver ready-mix concrete and or precast concrete to various job sites within the boundaries of the City of Coquitlam. There shall be free unloading time of twenty (20) minutes per load or five (5) minutes per cubic meter, whichever is greater.

The Contractor shall be able to deliver concrete in a timely manner. Generally, orders placed in the morning are expected to be delivered in the afternoon of the same day as the order and orders placed in the afternoon will be for the next business day. Quicker delivery may be required at times and will be discussed with the Contractor prior to ordering. If the Contractor cannot supply the concrete on time, the City will have the option to go to another Contractor for concrete.

##### a) Ready Mix Concrete

Ready Mix Concrete shall be manufactured in conformance with C.S.A. Standard Can/CSAA23.1-M90 Concrete Materials and Methods of Concrete Construction. specifications:

	Ready Mix Concrete Type	Slump and Range
.1	32 MPA 20mm 5-8% (Street Mix)	80 +- 20
.2	32 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Street Mix)	80 +- 30
.3	32 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Curb Mix)	60 +- 20
.4	32 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Curb Mix – Hand Form)	60 +- 20
.5	40 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Ultra High Early Strength)	80 +- 20
.6	35 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Ultra High Early Strength)	80 +- 20
.7	32 MPA 10mm Exposed Aggregate	80 +- 30

Volume and type of Work: Supply of 100 to 150 m<sup>3</sup> of ready mix concrete annually, majority of the Work (95%) are truck loads less than 2 m<sup>3</sup> and approximately proportions of Works are 90% Sidewalks and 10% Curb.

##### I. **Category 1 – Small Batch Concrete** - 2 m<sup>3</sup> or less

The City's preference is to have the ability to order small loads (2m<sup>3</sup> or less) and/or not to have any minimum order quantity restriction; and the preference is to have no additional service charge related to customization.

##### II. **Category 2 – Large Batch Concrete** – greater than 2 m<sup>3</sup>

The City's preference is to have the ability to order large loads (2m<sup>3</sup> or greater).

b) Precast Concrete includes but not limited to:

- Precast Concrete Bull-Nose
- Precast Transition Barrier (810-690mm & 690-457mm)
- Precast Concrete Low Barrier (approx. 457mm)
- Precast Concrete Roadside Barrier (810mm & 690mm)
- Precast Concrete Drainage Barrier
- Stac-A-Bloc & Bench Bloc

### 3.2 Cleanliness and Disposal of Unwanted Materials

The Contractor is responsible for the cleanliness of what they bring to the job sit and accountable for the disposal and or removal of all excess materials. The job sites, at all times must be kept clean of any debris to avoid mishaps and all unwanted materials must be disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner at approved sites with no extra expense to the City.



City of Coquitlam

## PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORM

RFP No. 23-088

### Ready Mix Concrete and Precast Concrete

Proposals will be received on or before 2:00 pm local time on

Friday, October 27, 2023

(Closing Date and Time)

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

Proposal submissions are to be returned in Microsoft Word and any other supporting documents to be consolidated into one PDF file and uploaded through QFile, the City's file transfer service accessed at website: [qfile.coquitlam.ca/bid](http://qfile.coquitlam.ca/bid)

**1. In the "Subject Field" enter:** RFP Number and Name

**2. Add files in .pdf format and "Send"**

(Ensure your web browser remains open until you receive 2 emails from QFile to confirm upload is complete.)

Proponents are responsible to allow ample time to complete the Proposal Submission process. If assistance is required phone 604-927-3037.

<b>Legal Name of Proponent</b>	
<b>Contact Person and Title</b>	
<b>Business Address</b>	
<b>Telephone</b>	
<b>Email Address</b>	

## 1. DEPARTURES AND AWARD

a) **CONTRACT** - I/We have reviewed the City's [Standard Terms and Conditions - Purchase of Goods and Services](#) and would be prepared to enter into an agreement that incorporates the City's Standard Terms and Conditions, amended by the following departures (list, if any):

Section	Requested Departure(s) / Alternative(s)

b) **SERVICES** - I/We have reviewed the Scope of Services as described in this RFP and are prepared to meet those requirements, amended by the following departures and additions (list, if any):

Requirements – Requested Departure(s) / Alternate(s) / Addition(s)

c) **AWARD** - For eligibility of award, the City requires the successful Proponent to complete and have the following in place before providing the Goods and Services. **Section 1c items are not required as part of this Proposal but may be required prior to entering into an agreement with the City.**

i. <b>WCB</b> - WorkSafe BC coverage in goodstanding and further, if an "Owner Operator" is involved, personal operator protection (P.O.P.) will be provided:	WCB Registration Number:
ii. <b>Insurance</b> – Provide Insurance coverage as per the <a href="#">City's Standard Insurance Form</a>	
iii. <b>Vendor Info</b> - Complete and return the City's <a href="#">Vendor Profile and Electronic Funds Transfer Application (PDF)</a>	
iv. <b>Business License</b> - A City of Coquitlam or Tri Cities Intermunicipal <a href="#">Business License</a>	

**As of the date of this Proposal, we advise that we have the ability to meet all of the above requirements except as follows (list, if any):**

--

## 2. CORPORATE

**a) CAPABILITIES, CAPACITY AND RESOURCES** - Proponents to provide information on the following (use the spaces provided and/or attach additional pages, if necessary):

- i. Structure of the Proponent, background, how many years they have been in business and organizational history (e.g. mission, vision, corporate directions, years in business, etc.):

--

- ii. Proponent is describe their capabilities, resources and capacities, as relevant to the Services requested in the RFP: This includes their capacity to take on this project in regards to other work the Proponent may have ongoing:

--

**b) REFERENCES** – Proponent shall be competent and capable of performing the Services requested and successfully delivered service contracts of similar size, scope and complexity. The City reserves the right to contact any person(s), agency(ies) or firm(s) not listed as part of an independent review (use the spaces provided and/or attach additional pages, if necessary):

### Reference No. 1

<b>Description of Contract</b>	
<b>Size and Scope</b>	
<b>Work Performed</b>	
<b>Start Date</b>	
<b>End Date</b>	
<b>Contract Value</b>	
<b>Project completed on budget</b>	
<b>Project completed on schedule</b>	
<b>Reference Information</b>	Company
	Name:
	Phone Number:
	Email Address:

### Reference No. 2

<b>Description of Contract</b>	
<b>Size and Scope</b>	
<b>Work Performed</b>	

<b>Start Date</b>	
<b>End Date</b>	
<b>Contract Value</b>	
<b>Project completed on budget</b>	
<b>Project completed on schedule</b>	
<b>Reference Information</b>	Company
	Name:
	Phone Number:
	Email Address:

Reference No. 3	
<b>Description of Contract</b>	
<b>Size and Scope</b>	
<b>Work Performed</b>	
<b>Start Date</b>	
<b>End Date</b>	
<b>Contract Value</b>	
<b>Project completed on budget</b>	
<b>Project completed on schedule</b>	
<b>Reference Information</b>	Company
	Name:
	Phone Number:
	Email Address:

c) HEALTH AND SAFETY	
I. Confirm the Proponent has a written safety program in place that meets the requirements of WorkSafeBC?	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b>
II. Is your company COR (Certificate of Recognition) certified with respect to WorkSafeBC?	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b>

d) SIZE OF FLEET
Provide the number and type of different ready mix concrete trucks in your Fleet.

**3. SUSTAINABLE BENEFITS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

I. Describe all initiatives, policies, programs and product choices that illustrate your firm's efforts towards sustainable practices and environment responsibility in providing the services that would benefit the City
II. What policies does your organization have for hiring apprentices, indigenous peoples, recent immigrants, veterans, young people, women, people with disabilities and any other groups:
III. What policies does your organization have for the procurement of goods and services from local small and medium sized business or social enterprises or Indigenous owned businesses:
IV. What policies does your organization have to support reconciliation with indigenous peoples:

4.

## TECHNICAL

**a) APPROACH and METHODOLOGY**

Summarize the key features of your Proposal and the Technical Approach to be used. Provide a brief description the various components required for successful completion of the Work.

**I. Delivery, Set-Up and Execution** - Proposals should address the plan for the delivery, set up and execution of the Work; as well as the disposal, recycle or reuse for the surplus materials. Include any safety and pedestrian control measures.

**II. Quality Assurance** - Provide the measures the Proponent will use to maintain quality control for the Services being performed.

**III. Delivery Response Times** - Timely delivery is important to the City. Provide details on delivery response times

**IV. Safety** - Proponent is to state how they will address safety on the Work site.



5.

## FINANCIAL

**a) READY MIX CATEGORY 1 PRICES (less than 2 cubic meters)-** Prices proposed are to be all inclusive; therefore, include all labour, material, tools, equipment, transportation, fuel, supervision, disposal fees, permit fees and any other items required for provision of the services (exclude GST):

ITEM	SCOPE OF WORK	Slump and Range	Unit of Measure (UOM)	PRICE (exclude GST)
i.	32 MPA 20mm 5-8% (Street Mix)	80 +- 20	M3	\$
ii.	32 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Street Mix)	80 +- 30	M3	\$
iii.	32 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Curb Mix)	60 +- 20	M3	\$
iv.	32 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Curb Mix – Hand Form)	60 +- 20	M3	\$
v.	40 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Ultra High Early Strength)	80 +- 20	M3	\$
vi.	35 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Ultra High Early Strength)	80 +- 20	M3	\$
vii.	32 MPA 10mm Exposed Aggregate	80 +- 30	M3	\$
viii.	Standing/waiting time	State UOM:		\$
ix.	Other not Listed:	State UOM:		\$

**b) READY MIX CATEGORY 2 PRICES (greater than 2 cubic meters) -** Prices proposed are to be all inclusive; therefore, include all labour, material, tools, equipment, transportation, fuel, supervision, disposal fees, permit fees and any other items required for provision of the services (exclude GST):

ITEM	SCOPE OF WORK	Slump and Range	Unit of Measure (UOM)	PRICE (exclude GST)
x.	32 MPA 20mm 5-8% (Street Mix)	80 +- 20	M3	\$
xi.	32 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Street Mix)	80 +- 30	M3	\$
xii.	32 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Curb Mix)	60 +- 20	M3	\$
xiii.	32 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Curb Mix – Hand Form)	60 +- 20	M3	\$
xiv.	40 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Ultra High Early Strength)	80 +- 20	M3	\$
xv.	35 MPA 14mm 5-8% (Ultra High Early Strength)	80 +- 20	M3	\$
xvi.	32 MPA 10mm Exposed Aggregate	80 +- 30	M3	\$
xvii.	Standing/waiting time	State UOM:		\$
xviii.	Other not Listed (specify):	State UOM:		\$

**c) PRECAST CONCRETE CATEGORY 3** - Prices proposed are to be all inclusive; therefore, include all labour, material, tools, equipment, transportation, fuel, supervision, disposal fees, permit fees and any other items required for provision of the services (exclude GST):

SCOPE OF WORK	Unit of Measure (UOM)	PRICE (exclude GST)
Precast Concrete Bull-Nose	Each	\$
Precast Concrete Low Barrier	Each	\$
Precast Concrete Roadside Barrier	Each	\$
Precast Concrete Drainage Barrier	Each	\$
Precast Concrete Median Barrier	Each	\$
Precast Concrete Pier Barrier	Each	\$
Other not Listed (specify or attach pricing)	Each	\$

**Attention Purchasing Manager:**

6. **I/We, the undersigned duly authorized representative of the Proponent**, having received and carefully reviewed all of the Proposal documents, including the RFP and any issued addenda posted on the City's website [www.coquitlam.ca/Bid-Opportunities](http://www.coquitlam.ca/Bid-Opportunities), and having full knowledge of the Site, and having fully informed ourselves as to the intent, difficulties, facilities and local conditions connected to performing the Services; submit this Proposal in response to the RFP.
7. **I/We** agree to the rules of participation outlined in the [Instructions to Proponents](#) and should our Proposal be selected, agree to the City's [Standard Terms and Conditions - Purchase of Goods and Services](#) and will accept the City's Contract as defined within this RFP document.
8. **I/We acknowledge** receipt of the following Addenda related to this Request for Proposals and have incorporated the information received in preparing this Proposal.

Addendum No.	Date Issued

**This Proposal** is submitted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

**I/We have the authority to sign on behalf of the Proponent and have duly read all documents.**

<b>Name of Proponent</b>	
<b>Signature(s) of Authorized Signatory(ies)</b>	<b>1.</b>
	<b>2.</b>
<b>Print Name(s) and Position(s) of Authorized Signatory(ies)</b>	<b>1.</b>
	<b>2.</b>