

(Castries Tuesday November 6th, 2012) The OECS Secretariat's E-Government Regional Integration Project (**OECSEGRIP**) will officially launch a Partial Electronic Tendering System on 8th November 2012 at 8:30 a.m. in Saint Lucia. This feat adds to the long list of achievements of the OECS Member States. For the first time across the Caribbean's technological landscape, a Partial Electronic Tendering System will be implemented in the Caribbean and also for the utilization of multiple countries.

The Partial Electronic Tendering System will initially engage the OECS Pharmaceutical Procurement Service and serve all the OECS Member States. Through this system, interested companies will now be able to submit tenders on line to the OECS PPS, clearly a faster means of data exchange as against the traditional process such as via courier, or regular mail service. The e-tendering system will be applied to the OECS PPS in the first instance and then will be scalable to other goods and services.

Head of OECSEGRIP Karlene Francis says the electronic tendering system is expected to allow the registration of tenders, suppliers and consultants through a fully automated process: ***"This process is effective from the very demand creation where the countries would input the quantities of supplies they need, to advertising online, to preparing the tender documents and then allowing the bidders or vendors to submit their bids on line. Once the bids are submitted on line, bidders can also upload their attachments ahead of or on the deadline date. The automated process also entails evaluation and the system will also allow contract monitoring or contract management."***

The e-tendering system will assist the OECS Pharmaceutical Procurement Service in carrying out its pooled procurement mandate, and include major modules for:

- Centralized Registration;
- User-specific Administrative Dashboards;
- E-Tendering(demand aggregation to signing of contract);
- Basic Contract Management;
- System and Security Administration, and
- Online Help.

“This will lead to better management of the suppliers. The system will also showcase the catalogue of products needed for the suppliers to tender and in so doing we will reduce the amount of errors and need to rework the process caused by traditional errors associated with the manual system.”-

Francis

The e-tendering system will be applied to the OECS PPS in the first instance and then will be scalable to other goods and services such as Education (bulk purchasing of books) etc. Head of Unit the OECS PPS Francis Burnett says this new automated system to be implemented in the region for the first time, will yield a reduction in costs associated with the processing of documents by the OECS Secretariat. He added that vendors will enjoy reduced overhead costs as well since they will be submitting their bids on line: ***“Some tenders actually travel to the OECS PPS to hand-deliver the tender packages but this will help reduce the costs for travel and the risks associated with being delayed in transit. It will also increase the response rate for tendering. Suppliers or vendors will be able to submit their bids and tenders on line right up to the deadline period from any location in the world via the internet and that’s a significant advantage because right now the way it works is that the suppliers submit bids via removable electronic devices and are very nervous about tenders devices being shared with competitors before the bids are open. That new system is a secured online tendering system. It will also provide tenders the further comfort of having to know that their bids will be secured on line and not lodged in a tenders’ box.”***

The developers of the new e-tendering system, European Dynamics S.A., will facilitate a 2-day Inception Workshop for major stakeholders involved in the procurement including Central Medical Stores Managers, Procurement Officials and Ministry of Finance Officials. EDSA will also provide training, and relevant support / maintenance during the warranty period.

The process is being financed from the loans taken by the governments of the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and Grenadines. Each country each received soft loan financing in an amount equivalent to US\$2.4 Million, from the World Bank, for implementation of the OECS Electronic Government for Regional Integration Project (EGRIP). The loans are provided under a special facility of the concessional lending arm of the World Bank, the International Development Association (IDA).

The overall development objective of EGRIP is to promote the efficiency, quality, and

transparency of public services in the beneficiary countries, through the delivery of regionally integrated e-government applications that take advantage of economies of scale. The OECS Secretariat says worldwide experience has shown that a good electronic tendering arrangement is advantageous and in this case they are looking forward to the implementation of the automated system.