

The procurement of goods and services for consumers in the OECS is to be significantly enhanced following the historic launch of the region's first electronic or e-tendering system.

The e-tendering system which was launched on Thursday November 8th 2012 in Saint Lucia will begin in the first instance through the OECS Pharmaceutical Procurement Service OECS PPS. The system is expected to be subsequently used to procure other goods and services for the people of the OECS.

Head of the OECS E-Government for Regional Integration Project OECSEGRIP Karlene Francis says the first e-tendering system demonstrates the ability and agility to implement solutions to accelerate the economic and social development of the region's people: "***The e-procurement is defined as the procurement of goods, works and services, through internet based information technologies and e-procurement is emerging worldwide because of the potential to reform processes, promote competition, promote integrity in public procurement as well as enhance transparency and accountability. It is also believed to be a driver of procurement reform.***"

Francis indicated that with proper application the e-tendering system can help to reduce corruption. She also noted some of the benefits expected from the implementation of the OECS e-tendering system for goods and services starting with the procurement of pharmaceuticals: "***We anticipate that this system will lead to a significant reform of traditional procurement processes and will automate the current processes for the OECS PPS and at the national level so that more time can be taken to develop strategic decisions about other areas for pooled procurement . There is also the potential for the reduction in the cost of goods and services*** ."-Francis

