Value addition to e-governance initiatives;
Kerala integrates e-payment with e-procurement
2-way payments made online

Thiruvananthapuram, 15 April 2013: In yet another move that could bring-in revolutionary advancements towards its ongoing efforts to ensure transparency in state administration; the IT Department has integrated an e-payment mechanism to its existing e-procurement system wherein bidders can make payment online towards tender document fees and EMD and Government can make online refunds of EMD amount to the unsuccessful bidders' bank accounts in a time bound manner. This is aimed at further enhancing transparency and for ensuring complete confidentiality and anonymity in the Government tendering process.

The integration of e-Payment system will replace the present, conventional system of payment of tender document fees and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) through Demand Drafts.

The newly introduced "on-line payment system integrates e-payment to e-procurement, thereby ensuring complete confidentiality and anonymity in the tendering process", says Sh. P H Kurian IAS, Principal Secretary, IT Department. One of the key features of online payment mechanism for e-Procurement project, according to Sh. P H Kurian, is its payment mode. 'The bidders having account with SBT can now make online payments through SBT's Internet banking facility. Bidders having account with other banks can also make payments through NEFT payment gateway of SBT'

For a bidder opting to make payment through the NEFT payment gateway, a pre-filled Challan will be made available by the e-Procurement system. The bidder with this prefilled Challan can make an online NEFT payment using Internet Banking facility of the bank in which he holds an account, by adding the account number in the Challan as Beneficiary.

Alternately if he doesn't have an internet banking facility he should take a print out of the pre filled challan and can visit his bank branch and transfer money from his Bank account. The bidder should exercise this option 48 hours before the closing of bid. This feature of offline payment would be available only till December 2013. The other Inter-Bank remittance channels viz. RTGS and GRPT are not available for e-tender process.

Online Refund mechanism to unsuccessful bidders' bank accounts

Another advantage of e-Payment mechanism is that it facilitates online refund mechanism for unsuccessful bidders, straight into their accounts. Here again, the attraction is 'further enhancement of efficiency

and confidentiality of Government transactions' Sh. Kurien adds, 'as online transaction details remain unknown till opening of bids'. Ease of submitting payments by bidders without them being physically present in the respective Tender Inviting Authority's office is another convenience. This also serves as an enabler for breaking the cartels.

The online payment for e-tendering & procurement also ensures faster and secure collection of amount by the Government as 'amount gets deposited automatically in a designated account', says Dr. C Jayasankar Prasad, Director-KSITM. It further relieves department users from activities like receipt of DD, its safe storage and remittance to Government. No paper work will be needed from Department users anymore, for remitting the amount from bidders to Government and back.

E-Government Procurement (e-GP) is web based solution for Government – to – Business (G2B) procurement leveraging the benefits of ICT tools. Government of Kerala has implemented the e-Government Procurement system to enhance transparency, confidentiality & efficiency in Public procurement activities and monitor the same on a real-time basis. Kerala State IT Mission is the implementing agency for e-Procurement system across the State. www.etenders.kerala.gov.in is the e-Procurement website for Government of Kerala.

KSITM has established a Project Management Unit (PMU) for managing & monitoring project implementation of e-procurement in Kerala. A fully operational e-Procurement cell (helpdesk cum training centre) with 8 support staffs has been established in

Thiruvananthapuram for departmental users and bidders. A Nodal Officer account for departments and management of user accounts on e-Procurement system has also been created..

The e-Procurement project was launched on 07th December 2011 and PWD was the 1st government department to publish the online tender. 4346 tenders valued at Rs. 2340 Crores have been floated as on 15th April 2013. KSITM has extended training to

1500 departmental users in user organizations. Around 2300 bidders have registered themselves on e-procurement system till date.

Sh. Oommen Chandy, Hon'ble Chief Minister will formally launch e-payment system in government procurements on 17 April, in the presence of Sh. P K Kunhalikkutty, Hon'ble Minister for IT and Sh. K M Mani, Hon'ble Minister for Finance.

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