Overview

eProcurement is the process by which the physical tendering activity is carried out using Internet and associated technologies. eProcurement facilitates the user to introduce ease and efficiency without compromising the required procedures of the organisation and also provides transparency, resulting in the savings of time and money, shortening of procurement cycle time, ease of operation to the implementing organisation and to the bidders.

In view of the benefits and advantages of the eProcurement system, Govt of India, has included this under one of the mission modes of National eGovernance Action Plan (NEGAP) for implementation in all the Government departments across the country.

Government eProcurement System of NIC (GePNIC):

NIC has developed a generic Govt eProcurement system, built on using open source technologies for implementation across the states in the country with the following main features:

- Registration/enrollment of the Govt officials & the bidders
- Tender creation & Publishing
- Publishing of Corrigendum
- Publishing of pre-bid meeting documents
- Online bid submission/re submission as many times as required
- Facility for Online payment collection through bank payment gateway
- Encryption of bids submitted by the bidder
- Facility for single/two/multiple cover bid system
- Withdrawal of online bids
- Tender opening online
- Automatic evaluation of the financial bid
- Updation of the committee recommendations at each stage of the tender process
- Mail communication at various stages to bidders/Govt officials
- Award of the Contract (AOC)
- Adheres to the guidelines of Central Vigilance Commission, Asian Development Bank & World Bank

Digital Signature Certificates (DSC):

The Digital Signature Certificates are an integral part of the entire eProcurement process. They have to be used by both the buyers i.e Govt officials as well as bidders, to ensure the security of the transactions, authentication of the users of the system and the digital signing of the documents published in the eProcurement site at various points of time. DSC’s are the legal requirements under the Indian IT Act. Dept officials should use dual key pair of the certificates and bidders should use single pair of certificates. GePNIC supports multivendor DSC’s/eTokens provided by NICCA/TCS/SIFY/nCode etc.

Modules of GePNIC:

Registration:

The stakeholders of the system such as the Tender Inviting Authorities (TIA) & the bidders have to get themselves registered into the system to carry out the procurement activities. Each one of them will be identified with a user id & password followed by the registration of Digital Signature Certificates.

Registration for the bidders is free and can participate in all the tenders after the process. Entry will be allowed into the system by two factor login using user id & password allotted, followed by the DSC login, by which only the authorized persons will be permitted to do the activities as per the roles identified during the registration process.
Publishing of the tender

The authorised officials from the TIA will create the tender documents, from the standard ones and after verification, the tenders will be published into the system. The documents in the system are digitally signed using DSC's and then published. The system allows multi cover tenders, online/offline payment and online/offline bid submission and other important clauses as necessary. Anybody can see the tenders and download the tender documents freely, from the website.

After the tender is published, clarifications from the bidders, one to one, can be provided online by the TIA, as necessary. Pre-bid meeting documents can be published after the meeting is over, depending on the needs.

Bid Submission

Bidders after registration into the system, can update and keep ready, in advance, under MY SPACE, all important non-sensitive documents necessary to submit for each tender again & again, avoiding manual duplication work in this regard.

Bidders get ready the documents along with the fee payments and submit them online within the submission end time. The fee payment is permitted either by online or offline as per the details indicated in the tender. The bidder can claim EMD exemption as applicable. The bid documents submitted, after digitally signing, gets encrypted using the bid opener’s key and updated into the system, thereby ensuring that nobody opens it, before the tender opening time. The relevant non-sensitive documents are selected during bid submission and stored into the system without encryption. The bidder gets acknowledgement after the successful submission of the bid into the system.

The bidder can resubmit the bid any number of times cover wise, if permitted in the tender. Bidder can withdraw the bid if he decides later point of time. The bidder can submit the manual bid, if allowed in the tender, and registration is compulsory in this case.

Tender opening:

The bids submitted for a tender, are opened online by the authorised bid openers of 2/3 officials once the scheduled time is reached. The bid documents encrypted earlier, are decrypted and opened one by one along with the non-sensitive documents if available, and then evaluated, printed, signed and submitted to the committee for technical evaluation purposes. After online bids are opened, the manual bids if any, are opened and then updated into the system. The bid opening committee updates its recommendations which can be seen by the bidders online under tender status.

With respect to single cover system, all the bids are opened in the first instance itself.

Technical Evaluation:

The technical committee goes through the technical bids opened earlier and based on the recommendations, the results are updated into the system, on the selection of the bidders, the committee member details, the date of financial bid opening and the report of the recommendation. The concerned bidders get intimation by mail on their selection. There is no automatic technical evaluation built in right now into the system and the decision of the committee is final and binding. The bidders can see the recommendations under tender status.
Financial bid Opening:

At this stage, only the technically qualified bids of the bidders for the tender are opened online again by the authorised bid openers of 2/3 officials once the scheduled time is reached. The price bid documents encrypted earlier are decrypted and opened one by one, evaluated, printed, signed and then submitted to the committee for financial evaluation purposes. After online price bids are opened, the manual bids, if any, are opened, converted into xis form & then updated into the system. The system generates a comparative statement of the price bids for evaluation by the committee. The recommendation of the bid opening committee is updated, which can be seen by the bidders online under tender status.

Financial Evaluation:

The financial committee goes through the price bids & the comparative chart and based on the recommendations, the results are updated into the system, on the selection of the bidders, the member details, and the report of the recommendation. The concerned bidders get intimation by mail on their selection. There is no automatic financial evaluation built into the system and the decision of the committee is final and binding. The bidders can see the recommendations under tender status.

Award of the Contract:

The TIA, based on the recommendations of the financial evaluation committee, and after getting approval, prepares the order manually and then updates the order along with the contract details. The bidder is informed by mail about the award of the contract. In addition, the bidders can see the Award of the contract under tender status and also against results of the tender option in the tender site.

Security:

The security is implemented both at the level of content and payments. The following security features are built in as an integral part of the GePNIC system.

- Usage of legally valid class of Digital Signature Certificates as per IT Act 2000 for authentication and non-repudiation at all levels.
- Usage of time stamping services
- 128 bit encryption with SSL security
- Access to sensitive content such as price bid based solely on authorisation.
- Rights/roles allocation are such that it ensures only authorised personnel to perform the tasks
- Complete compliance to IT Act 2000 for legal sanctity.
- Security audit certification from the recommended certified auditors.
- Encryption of the password of the users and the bids submitted by the bidders

Audit Log:

The GePNIC system has been built in with comprehensive audit log facility for detailed auditing on all the transactions that are taking place. The audit log is a secured one and tamper proof with provision to know the details whenever required, in an user friendly way, for auditing purposes.
Benefits of Implementing GePNIC system:

- Fast & efficient process, reduces the procurement cycle time.
- The complete procurement transaction thro’ GePNIC happens in a transparent manner. The system captures the justification and comments of approvers at each stage and thereby enables users and approvers associated with a transaction to justify their decision.
- Encryption ensures integrity of the bids submitted.
- eProcurement brings down the cost of doing business for the suppliers which in turn will reduce the prices quoted by the suppliers.

Benefits to bidders:

- Information on all tenders is available at one place to the suppliers.
- The bidder need not make unnecessary trips to the Organisation to collect details on the tenders published.
- The bidder need not submit bulky multiple copies of his bid in paper form.
- 24X7 access enables the bidder to submit his bid and access to tender status, from anywhere and anytime.
- After online bid submission, the bidder can know the status of his bid online.
- The bidder is allowed to modify his bid even after his bid is submitted online.
- Increased reach as the bidder has access to the tenders of all the depts.
- Lower bidder development cost as various departments will have new suppliers on the web application.
- The system inspires confidence among the bidders as being fair & transparent.

Status of Implementation in the States/Organisations:

The GePNIC system has been implemented in the states of Tamil Nadu, Orissa, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh UT, PWD Punjab, PMGSY tenders in 18 states, Mahanadhi Coal Fields Ltd(MCL), Orissa and in NICSI, the sister concern of NIC.

So far, around 25000 tenders with a value of Rs. 50000 crores have been published across all the states/units, within a period of two and half years.

For any information on GePNIC, please contact:

National Informatics Centre(NIC)
A-Block, CGO Complex,
Lodhi Road,
New Delhi - 110003.
Mail: etender@nic.in

National Informatics Centre Services Incorporated
Hall No.2 & 3, 6th Floor, NBCC Tower,
15-Bhikiji Cama Place, New Delhi - 110066.
Tel: 91-11-26105054, Fax: 91-11-26105212
Mail: nicsi@nic.in