

# e-Procurement: Bridging Digital Divide

*An Exclusive Interview with Sh. Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra, IAS, IT Secretary, Govt. of Orissa on successful completion of one year of Implementation of NIC-GePin Orissa*

**i** We congratulate you on completion of one year of successful roll out of eProcurement system in Govt. of Orissa on July 2009. We would like to hear more from you on the mission you have accomplished.

**PKM:** Thank you. I extend my hearty congratulation to all the team members who have really worked hard for the success of the project. In fact, this was a mission mode project of Govt. of India and a major initiative of Govt. of Orissa.



*e-Procurement Implementation workshop is in progress*

**i** Can you please brief us the initial phases of the evolution of the project?

**PKM:** Initially, we thought of making a generic module to cater to the tendering process of works procurement. Orissa Government's works procurement is guided by OPWD code (Orissa Public Works Department code). Process re-engineering exercise was carried out

with the help of National Informatics Centre. Alongside, a Mission team was formed with engineers from major engineering departments such as Works, Water Resources, Housing and Urban development, and Rural Development department. This was a massive restructuring exercise and led to the freezing of AS-IS and TO-BE documents. With the active support of the Hon'ble Chief

Minister, Orissa, the project got an impetus with formation of State Level Steering Committee on e-Procurement.

**i** How could you plan out the Infrastructure requirements that led to the desired

level of e-readiness in a short span of time?

**PKM:** The major challenges were to make available the requisite infrastructure like computers, Internet connectivity to various department users at Chief Engineers, Superintendent Engineers and at Executive Engineers level offices and a strategy so that remote bidding can



**Sh. Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra, IAS,**  
*IT Secretary*  
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be made available to bidders. Accordingly, about 400 cyber kiosk owners were trained throughout the state as facilitators and Government rates for bidding by various classes of contractors were fixed. DIOs of NIC District Units facilitated the tender publishing and bidding for departmental users as well as Training to bidders. Media publications & Advertisements, User manuals, self-learning kit were distributed among the Bidders community & depts.

DSC management being a major issue, NIC was requested to set up RA office at Bhubaneswar. I express my sincere thanks to Dr. B.K Gairola DG, NIC and Dr. Y.K Sharma DDG, NIC for establishing

the RA office at Bhubaneswar. The requisite server infrastructure, back up server management etc. have been carried out at NIC Data center and day to day server management is being looked after by NIC, Bhubaneswar.

**i** **What are the major initiatives you have undertaken for the sustenance of this unique G2B e-Governance system & Operational Management aspects?**

**PKM:** Yeah, we are setting up a State Procurement Cell to act as an umbrella organization to manage all procurement related issues on a day to day basis. The objectives of this Cell would be:

- Re-design and re-visit procedures and identify redundant and non-transparent process and establishing best procurement practices.
- Standardisation of documents and processes for procurement of works, goods and services across the state.
- Formulation of public procurement act etc.

**i** **It is understood that when projects of such magnitude and complexity are planned, impediments are inevitable. What were the major roadblocks you have faced?**

**PKM:** After the development of the software by National Informatics Centre the major challenge was to sensitize Government users for tender publishing and

training of bidders to use the system for online bidding. For this large-scale implementation, a Project Management Unit to assist mission was formed under IT department. NIC team, Mission and PMU members trained approx 1500 department users in KIIT University campus in June 2008 and the training went for a month continuously in the first phase.

Piloting was carried out on 17th March, 2009 with just two tenders in hybrid mode. Tender fees were waived off during pilot for online bidding as an incentive to bidders. The overwhelming result indicating 70% online bids provided the necessary inspiration to march ahead. With this the Government notification was issued to compulsorily do away with manual tendering w.e.f 1st July, 2008.

**i** **You have been driving the Project from the Front and now how do you articulate factors of Success for such a complex e-Governance project?**

**PKM:** I am indeed satisfied that even the World Bank and Asian Development Bank have reviewed the entire software, the process, technology etc. and given positive remarks.

The synergy among various officers, Technology providers with a proactive leadership under the Hon'ble Chief Minister brought such a complex project to where it is today. With Periodic Review, a clear understanding regarding the responsibilities of officers as well as the stakeholders of the project led to its success.

I would attribute successful GePNIC (Government eProcurement System of National Informatics Centre) implementation at Orissa to all the members who have contributed significantly in this project namely Sh. K.S Raghavan and Mr. M Manivanan from NIC, Chennai, Sh. S.K Panda, SIO, Orissa, Sh. A. K. Hota, Sh. T.P Ray and Sh. Nihar Ranjan Biswal from NIC, Bhubaneswar. Er. G.B Kar, Er. B. B Padhy, Er. P.K Behera, Er. B. Bala and Er. Trinath Behera from Orissa eProcurement Mission.

**Interviewed by: S K Panda**  
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*Training sessions going on at KIIT*