1. **The e-PS Application**

The e-PS is a web based application hosted by the Government Online Centre that will enable all public bodies and suppliers to electronically conduct procurement proceedings from invitation to bid up to contract award. The construction of the system has reached maturity to go live.

2. **e-PS Scope**

With the introduction of the e-PS application, the Mauritius Police Force will be the pioneer public organisation to use the e-PS to launch the first on-line bid for the purchase of IT equipment on 28 September 2015. By end November 2015, eight\(^1\) other public bodies will issue bids on-line, and by July 2016, most of the high spending public bodies are planned to join the system. By end December 2016, all public bodies are expected to use the e-PS to conduct procurement above a defined threshold.

3. **The e-PS Developers**

A consortium comprising Nextenders (India) Pvt. Ltd and Sify Technologies Ltd was awarded a contract in November 2013 by Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to supply, install and commission a public sector electronic system and provide support services over five years. The Procurement Policy Office (PPO) is the implementing agency for the project.

4. **Transformational Effect of e-Procurement in Government to Business (G2B) Environment**

The progressive use of e-PS will result into irreversible transformation in the manner both the public bodies and suppliers will be conducting public procurement.

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\(^1\) Ministries of Environment, Agro-Industry, Youth and Sports, Ocean Economy, Public Infrastructure, Social Security, CEB and CWA
The CEOs, administrative, procurement and technical staff of 204 public bodies and the Central Procurement Board will interface with the private suppliers through a single electronic portal for e-procurement.

5. **Advantages of e-PS**

The application of the digital networking technology of e-PS to public procurement offers opportunities that neither the private nor the public sector should miss. e-PS will:

- Deepen use of ICT in work environment, bridge the G2B digital gap with the private sector and catalyse reform of public sector in modernizing the way public bodies will carry out procurement tasks.
- Lower transaction costs in moving out from paper to digital and improve decision making by flattening bureaucracy and breaking silos work structures.
- Generate management information on each procurement transaction that enables performance driven procurement.
- Increase speed of procurement transactions through relaxation of time and space constraints - connect anytime from anywhere.
- Generate efficiency gains, increased transparency and accountability in use of taxpayer's money.
- Lower potential for fraud and corruption.
- Enhance competition and help lowering contract prices.
- Shorten procurement cycle by compressing bid preparation time, minimize errors in bids, improve bid quality and responsiveness through timelier information on all aspects of the procurement and reduce risks of challenge and application for review.
- Promote government sectoral policy for increased access and share of SMEs in public procurement.

6. **Project to Roll Out in Phases**

The project is designed to be implemented in three phases with progressive rollout, namely:

**Phase 1:** e-PS enables floating of tenders and on-line opening of bids for nine selected public bodies by November 2015. e-PS will progressively roll out to encompass other public bodies and their counterpart suppliers to use the e-Procurement portal;

**Phase 2:** e-PS development progresses to include the remaining stages in the procurement cycle and setting up of a complete procurement Management Information System (MIS), and

**Phase 3:** e-PS enables Framework Agreements and electronic Reverse Auction.
7. **Operation and Management of the e-PS**

The project implementation unit of the PPO runs e-procurement IT skills capacity building of procurement personnel, technical staff, management, and suppliers to operate on e-PS. A Help Desk will provide assistance to e-PS users once the system goes live.

8. **Joint Public Private Sector Steering Committee for e-PS Launch**

As public procurement market covers procurement transactions by all public bodies with a large number of private suppliers, a joint Public Private Sector Steering Committee comprising, amongst others JEC, Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation and Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, has been working on mission mode to deliver on the launch and subsequent rollouts.

The private sector partners have agreed to assist to scale up e-procurement training to reach a wider private sector supplier base.

9. **Wider Public Sector Reform Agenda**

The project has also been elevated to the public sector reform agenda of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms as the growing use of e-PS platform will spin e-procurement to boost public sector reform. It has the sustainable public/private content in terms of people, process, and output to use ICT as driver of performance culture in work environment.

10. **The Critical Success Factors**

The challenge is more of management commitment to change than a technological constraint. It requires:

- Senior management collective commitment to harness change in process and remodel staff behavior in the new work set up to facilitate use of e-PS to carry their respective procurement.
- Management commitment at different levels and among many stakeholders in developing a common understanding of the values of e-PS.
- Developing a strong partnership with the private industry with its network of suppliers.
- Continuous training of the users of the e-PS

28 September 2015