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Date : 04-03-2010

News / Story reproduced with thanks:- **Pharmabiz**

Kerala government to introduce e-tender for drug purchases

Thursday, March 04, 2010 08:00 IST

Joseph Alexander, New Delhi

Direct link to the News/Story:-

<http://www.pharmabiz.com/article/detnews.asp?articleid=54354§ionid=>

After replacing the central purchase committee with the Kerala Medical Services Corporation Ltd (KMSCL) a few years back, the State is planning to introduce e-procurement to ensure transparency and also is looking to work as the purchasing agency for other States.

The move to introduce online tendering also comes in the wake of a lot of criticism in the recent past about the alleged corruption in drug purchase by the government and blacklisting of a few companies recently. The e-tendering is expected to curb corruption and make the process transparent, according to sources. It will also keep the bogus companies out of the process and bring down the expected time for clearance. Besides, it will also avoid the troubles faced by manufacturers to be present in person for bidding as per the present practice.

Following the reports in the vernacular dailies about the alleged corruption in drug purchase by the government, the State medical department has tightened the norms for tendering process this year.

The bidding process for the current year has got off to a start recently under tightened norms and in a more professional way. Sources said efforts were being taken to keep the middlemen and brokers out of the process as only authorized representatives from the manufacturers could attend the process. The certificate to prove their market presence, a non-conviction certificate, issued by the respective drug control department and the certificate from Sales Tax Department, have been made compulsory for the drug manufacturers to participate in the bidding.

In the third year of its drug purchase, the KMSCL has started receiving massive response from the drug companies such that the number of companies participating in the bidding has gone up to 177 from 154 when compared to that of last year.

The KMSCL is planning to secure ISO certification in a bid to expand its operations out of the State also. It is also approaching the World Bank for empanelling for drug procurement. If it happens, the agency can take up the drug purchasing for other interested States also by procuring drugs for WB-funded schemes in other States.