Government of Nepal
Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport
Department of Roads
Development Cooperation Implementation Division

Strategic Road Connectivity & Trade Improvement Project (SRCTIP)

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Notice No. SRCTIP/02/077-78

Amendment on REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)

Date of first publication: **11th August, 2020 (The Kathmandu Post National Daily)**

In reference to REOI Notice published for **Short Listing of Consulting Firms for Detailed Design and Technical Support Consultant for Research and Training Centre at Gajuri**; following Amendment has been made,

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SRCTIP/02/077-78	SRCTIP-DOR-CS-QCBS- 7	The Expression of Interest submission deadline is extended up to 9th September 2020.

The other terms and condition remain the same.

Program Coordinator

POST PHOTO: BEEJU MAHARJAN

A boy bathes at a stone spout in Bagalamukhi, Lalitpur.

Government lacks system to monitor builders' bid capacity

The monitoring body says it is updating software to enforce bidding capacity criteria.

PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA
KATHMANDU, AUG 23

On February 15, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli told Parliament that awarding contracts to companies without examining their capacity had resulted in low capital expenditure.

According to the Oli, a handful of builders and contractors were holding the lion's share of the government contracts.

Contracts worth 44.4 percent of the total contracts related to urban developments were in the hands of just 18 companies. Similarly, contracts worth 47.6 percent of total contracts related to roads were also in the name of 18 companies and contracts worth 66.7 percent of total contracts related to water supply were also held by 18 companies.

"The government is correcting these anomalies by amending the public procurement regulation," the prime minister had said in his Parliament address.

The government last year made provision of awarding contracts based on the capacity of the bidding companies through the eighth amendment to the Public Procurement Regulation.

But the government is yet to develop a proper system that helps examine the bid capacity of companies, according to the government officials and contractors.

Although the Public Procurement Monitoring Office has the office has a software where some details of contracts can be uploaded, it is not comprehensive enough to calculate the bidding capacity of the companies involved in project development.

"The software does not show details about which contract is running, which company has completed the work and how much work a company has accumulated," a senior official at the procurement monitoring office told the Post.

As per the eighth amendment to the regulation, a bidder can get a contract up to seven times its average turnover of three years. The amount equivalent to the seven times the size of average turnover of three best years of the bidder should be calculated by deducting the annual liability of the existing contracts. The provision regarding bid capacity is also expected to create opportunities for more contractors.

> Handful of builders holding lion's share of government contracts, says Oli.

But so far these bidding criteria have not been put to the test, as the procurement monitoring office lacks the system and updated information to track the activities of builders and contractors.

"Recently, there has been discussion regarding this issue at the Prime Minister's Office and efforts are being made to accommodate all necessary information regarding the bid capacity of companies," the official at the procurement monitoring office said.

In the absence of an advanced integrated software system, the Department of Roads has been relying on documents submitted by the bidders to evaluate their capacity.

"We have no option but to depend on the documents submitted by bidders, as there is no proper system in place that can automatically give a clear picture about the bid capacity of the companies," said Shivahari Sapkota, spokesperson for the department.

Many contractors have been uploading their details in the software of the procurement monitoring office but there is still a need for an integrated software system, contractors say.

Rabi Singh, president of Federation of Contractors' Association of Nepal, said there should be a system that automatically shows the latest bidding capacity of a contractor.

The federation has long been demanding for standard bidding capacity criteria so that more contractors could vie for government contracts. There are around 15,000 contractors across the country, according to the federation.

"With a single company occupying a large number of contracts, many other companies are struggling to survive," Singh told the Post.

Despite the monitoring office starting to take details from the contractors, there has been little coordination between the office and the government agencies that awards contracts.

For example, the Department of Roads issues by far the largest number construction related tenders and awards contracts every year. However, there is little coordination between the procurement monitoring office and the department regarding the enforcement of regulation on bidding capacity.

"We only check whether the bidding companies have been blacklisted or whether they have any court case from the procurement monitoring office at the moment," said kota, the spokesperson of the department.

The department maintains its own software 'Contract Monitoring System' where it keeps details of contracts—when the contract was awarded, who the contractor is, deadline of contract and whether any deadline of contract has been extended.

"But it only gives us information about road and bridge contracts. It does not have any records on contracts involving other projects," said Sapkota.

Kathmandu's delay in enacting ...

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However, the federal government is yet to present the bill related to it in the federal parliament. In the absence of such a law, the federal government continues to oversee school education as it used to happen when the country was under the unitary system.

Local governments have similarly been barred from overseeing basic health services in the absence of a federal health law.

Establishment and operation of hospitals and other health facilities, as well as the formulation of policies and plans for basic health, would come under their jurisdictions once there was an umbrella law.

"It is clear that people in Kathmandu are making every effort to delay the devolution of power," Bansalal Tamang, the general-secretary of National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal, told the Post. "Otherwise there is no reason why the federal laws shouldn't be readied even five years after the promulgation of the statute."

It is not that the federal parliament is sluggish by nature.

It can endorse laws swiftly if there is the need. The majority of Acts related to fundamental rights that had constitutional deadlines have been enacted.

The responsibility of formulating these laws lies with the respective ministries of the federal government, which are tabled in Parliament after the Cabinet's approval. Laws come into force only after both Houses of the federal parliament endorse them by a simple majority.

Legal experts see the indifference of the 275 members of the House of Representatives also as a reason for the delay.

Raju Chapagain, chairperson of the Constitutional Lawyers' Forum, said it is unfortunate that lawmaking is not the priority of lawmakers.

"I don't see lawmakers' focus on the lawmaking process, though that is their prime responsibility," Chapagain told the Post.

Lawyers also say that provincial and local governments should also share the blame for not being proactive enough to put pressure on party leaders in Kathmandu.

According to Chapagain, they are instead busy lobbying for increasing the budget in their constituencies and implementing projects under the local infrastructure development programme.

Khim Lal Devkota, who writes extensively on federal affairs, said provincial lawmakers can also take a proactive role in enacting provincial laws.

"The constitution says the law will be void if the provincial laws contradict the federal laws, but that doesn't bar them from introducing their own laws," Devkota told the Post. "How long are they going to wait for the federal law to be in place?"

According to Devkota, the provincial governments should formulate their laws to exercise their constitutional authority. "If some issues arise, let the court handle them," said Devkota.

Shalikram Jamarkattel, minister for internal affairs and law of Bagmati Province, said the federal government has weakened federalism by delaying the laws.

"Weakening federalism means disrespect to the People's War and the people's movement. It is also against the spirit of the constitution," Jamarkattel told the Post. "We have a progressive constitution, but it is meaningless unless it gets implemented. Its implementation is incomplete without effective and powerful provincial and local governments."

The provincial governments don't even have authority to decide on using the government and guthi land on their own, according to Jamarkattel.

"The Federal Land Act and amendment to the existing Guthi Act are a must to delegate that authority to us," said Jamarkattel. "We haven't been allowed to even finalise land for our administrative buildings, let alone for other matters. This is an example of how weak the provincial governments are in the lack of federal laws."

Newly built hospital in Kapilvastu yet to come into operation

MANOJ PAUDEL
KAPILVASTU, AUG 23

Shivaraj Municipality had started the construction work of a hospital in mid-May, amid the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. The construction of the building has completed, but the hospital is yet to start its services, as it lacks human resources.

"The physical infrastructure of the hospital is ready. We are facing problems running the hospital due to a lack of manpower," said Sheshkanta Paudel, chief administrative officer of the municipality.

According to him, the hospital, Basic Health Centre, a few months ago had appointed two auxiliary health workers and auxiliary nurse midwives on a contract basis.

"For the time being, we are going to deploy them to the hospital and start providing health services," said Paudel.

In May, an executive meeting of the municipality had decided to construct the hospital for coronavirus patients. Mahadev Pokharel, chairman of the consumer's committee responsible for the construction work, said the hospital was built at the cost of Rs 7.2 million.

"The municipality had provided Rs 6.5 million and locals donated the remaining 10 percent of the construction amount," said Pokharel.

The hospital building has six rooms that can accommodate six beds each, a store room, a room for health check ups and two other rooms for staff.

"We constructed the hospital within three months to help the municipality fight against Covid-19. But the hospital has yet to start its services, as it doesn't have health workers," he said.

However, the executive committee of the municipality has already endorsed the position of a medical doctor for the hospital.

"The isolation centre, which is being operated at a resort in Kharendrapur, will be shifted to the hospital after the hospital comes into operation. The health facility will be developed into a municipal hospital after the coronavirus pandemic is over," said Netraraj Adhikari, mayor at the municipality.

Shivaraj Municipality is not the only local unit in the district that is ill-equipped to deal with the pandemic. Kapilvastu District Hospital, the only hospital in the district headquarters of Taulihawa, has been sealed for the past two weeks, depriving many of health services. The hospital management decided to seal the hospital on August 10 after 25 of its health workers tested positive for Covid-19.

Similarly, Bijayanagar Rural Municipality is also facing difficulties in managing its Covid-19 patients, mainly due to a shortage of skilled human resources.

"The risk of coronavirus transmission is increasing day by day. But we have not been able to effectively control the disease's spread and provide treatment to the infected people due to the shortage of health workers," said Gopal Thapa, chairman of Bijayanagar Rural Municipality.

Out of the posts for 30 health workers in Bijayanagar, 11 of auxiliary health workers and auxiliary nursing midwife are vacant now.

In Krishnanagar Municipality, four posts of MBBS doctor and six posts of senior auxiliary health workers and auxiliary health workers are vacant in Shivaraj Hospital. Likewise, 26 posts of health workers in Maharajgunj, 13 in Shuddhodhan and eight in Shivaraj municipalities in the district are vacant now.

POST PHOTO: MANOJ PAUDEL

The hospital in Shivaraj Municipality was built for Covid-19 patients but has been unable to start services due to a lack of human resource.

Health workers under attack as lack of Covid awareness is fuelling stigma

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"State agencies have failed to disseminate right information regarding the pandemic," Thapaliya told the Post. "Either people are being told that the virus will kill or they are being fed misinformation like it is similar to the flu and that home remedies can cure the disease." Nepal reported its first Covid-19 case in January. As of Sunday, according to the Health Ministry, 31,953 people have tested positive including 149 deaths.

So far 18,631 people have recovered.

The World Health Organization says that during the Covid-19 pandemic, more than ever, protecting the health and lives of health care providers on the front line is critical to enabling a better response.

"This unprecedented public health emergency has demonstrated that health facilities, medical transport, patients as well as health care workers and their families can–and–do become targets everywhere," the UN health agency said in a statement last month. "This alarming trend reinforces the need for improved measures to protect health care from acts of violence."

In the third week of June, the United Nations Country Team in Nepal, together with over 30 national and international organisations, collectively launched a campaign, calling for an end to stigma and discrimination against people, amidst the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

The statement came in the wake of alarming accounts of stigmatisation against health workers, Covid-19 recovered people and their families and returnee workers, among others.

In April-end, health workers, who had gone to Udayapur for contact tracing after the district reported a sudden surge in Covid-19 cases, were routinely turned away from hotels and restaurants and even denied food and lodging. According to doctors, in big cities like Biratnagar, Birgunj and Chitwan, some health workers have been denied entry into their apartments and manhandled by mobs.

Dr Madan Upadhyay, former medical superintendent at Narayani Hospital in Birgunj said that several nurses and paramedics serving at Narayani Hospital in Birgunj were reluctant to go home after duty, due to fear of stigma and humiliation.

According to Upadhyay, who was recently transferred to the Health Ministry, Narayani Hospital was even vandalised by the mob. Over 70 health workers of Narayani Hospital have tested positive for Covid-19 and some infected health workers have been serving the infected people.

According to the Ministry of Health, over 500 health workers including 140 doctors have been infected as of now. Dr Mukti Ram Shrestha, former chairman of Nepal Medical Association, an umbrella organisation of medical doctors, said social stigmatisation of health workers not only exposes the lack of communication and awareness but also shows what the Nepali society is heading towards.

"If people are losing their conscience and mob mentality rules the roost then it is clear that the society is not going towards the right direction," Shrestha told the Post. "I am afraid if this continues, if health workers are stigmatised and assaulted, they will be left with no option than to resign and stop treating."

According to a Lancet research, frontline healthcare providers are at increased risk of reporting Covid-19 positive compared with the general community.

Doctors say there is a need to spread awareness among the members of the public that health workers are at increased risk of contracting the virus, but if they are stigmatised, the communities will ultimately suffer.

"Health workers are being attacked and intimidated due to fear that since they are infected, they will jeopardise the lives of others in society," said Dr Lochan Karki, chairman of Nepal Medical Association.

"People are forgetting that they themselves could get infected and others could turn against them. There has been an erosion in humanity and this is a danger sign in itself for our society."

The association is planning an emergency meeting of its office bearers to discuss the growing attacks on health workers.

The World Health Organisation last month emphasised the need for risk communication in the wake of increasing attacks on health workers across the world amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"These attacks on health care speak to the importance of adequate risk communication at all levels of society to reduce fear, stigma and—ultimately—violence," it said.

"How we communicate about Covid-19 is critical in supporting people to take effective action to combat the disease and protect health care."

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health has said that it has taken attacks on health workers seriously and that it will take steps to address the situation.

"Health care workers are forced to live under constant psychological threats of getting infected, attacked and humiliated by the mob," Dr Sameer Kumar Adhikari, joint spokesperson for the Health Ministry, told the Post. "It will be very difficult to provide health care services if such attacks don't stop. We will take some decisions for the safety of health workers."

According to doctors working in the field of risk communication, a pandemic requires clear, unhindered and accurate flow of information—to the public, to doctors, nurses and health workers and to institutions that are providing services.

"Those who believed that the disease would kill us attacked health workers or stigmatised them out of fear that they would spread the infection in the society," said Thapaliya. "Others, who believe that the infection is like any other flu, are making light of the disease and not wearing masks. Both are the result of communication failure."

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TIME EXTENSION NOTICE

Machhapuchchhre Bank Limited (MBL), an "A" class Commercial Bank of Nepal, has published notice for the invitation of sealed BID proposal for the "Implementation of the Core Banking Solution in the Bank" by giving 21 days' notice period.

The Bank has further extended the submission date by 7 days and extended submission deadline of the proposal is August 30, 2020.

Tender Documents already submitted by the firms/companies are properly safeguarded at the bank and will be considered for the tender process. Bidders can submit password protected (Secured) digital copy of Bid Document (Technical and Financial).

For more details please see the notice published on The Kathmandu Post of August 02, 2020, or contact to General Administration & Procurement Department, Head Office, Lazimpat.

Extended Submission Deadline: August 30, 2020 by 3.00 PM, Nepal Standard Time (NST) (Note: In case of public holiday, the submission deadline will be the next working day)

The bank reserves the right to accept/reject any or all proposals fully or partially without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Machhapuchchhre Bank Limited
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