

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PROCUREMENT ASSISTANT

Strengthening Central School Initiative under the 13th Five-Year Plan (2025–2030)

1. Background

The Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD), in collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MoIT), is implementing the Strengthening Central School Initiative under the 13th Five-Year Plan (2025–2030), with financial support from the Government of India (GoI).

Under this initiative, MoIT is responsible for overseeing the technical aspects of infrastructure development, while MoESD is responsible for managing the allocated budget and procurement activities. The initiative aims to support the phased development and improvement of school infrastructure and the provision of essential amenities across the 20 Dzongkhags and Thromdes.

The implementation of the initiative is guided by MoESD's mandates and priorities, including equitable access to education, inclusivity, enrollment patterns, the school cluster approach, and the promotion of seamless learning pathways.

Effective procurement planning, coordination, implementation and monitoring are essential to ensure the timely and efficient delivery of goods, works and services required under the initiative. In this regard, a Procurement Assistant will be engaged to provide operational, administrative and documentation support to the procurement function under the direction of the Deputy Chief Procurement Officer, MoESD.

2. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this position is to provide operational and administrative support for planning, coordinating, processing, documenting and monitoring procurement activities financed under the GoI-supported Strengthening Central School Initiative.

The Procurement Assistant shall support the timely, transparent, accountable and cost-effective procurement of goods, works and services in accordance with applicable Bhutanese procurement rules and regulations, approved procurement plans and budgets, relevant financing arrangements, project requirements and instructions issued by the competent authority.

The specific objectives of the position are to:

- Support the timely procurement of goods, works and services required for the implementation of the initiative.

- Assist in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of procurement plans, schedules and related documentation.
- Maintain complete, accurate and auditable procurement records and tracking systems.
- Facilitate coordination among MoESD, MoIT, Dzongkhags, Thromdes, schools, suppliers and other relevant stakeholders.
- Monitor procurement milestones, contract commitments, delivery schedules and contract performance, and report progress to the relevant authorities.
- Support the timely submission of procurement-related information and documentation for financial reporting, project monitoring, management review and audit.
- Provide procedural and documentation support to implementing offices to promote consistency and compliance in procurement practices.

3. Reporting and Working Arrangements

The Procurement Assistant shall work under the direct supervision and guidance of the Sr. Procurement Officer, MoESD, or another designated official.

The position shall coordinate closely with relevant divisions and sections within MoESD, technical officials and project personnel of MoIT, Dzongkhags, Thromdes, schools, suppliers and other stakeholders involved in the implementation of the initiative.

The Procurement Assistant shall perform assigned duties within the limits of delegated responsibilities and shall not independently approve procurement decisions, commit funds, amend contracts, waive procurement requirements or authorize payments unless such authority is formally delegated in accordance with applicable rules and procedures.

4. Key Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Procurement Planning and Preparation

The Procurement Assistant shall:

- Assist in consolidating procurement requirements submitted by relevant divisions, Dzongkhags, Thromdes, schools and project sites in line with approved implementation plans and available budgets.
- Support the preparation, consolidation, updating and monitoring of procurement plans, procurement schedules, procurement forecasts and procurement tracking sheets.
- Review procurement requisitions and supporting documents for completeness, including approved specifications, quantities, cost estimates, budget availability and required authorisations, before forwarding them for further processing.
- Coordinate with the relevant technical officials to obtain or clarify technical specifications, bills of quantities, drawings, delivery requirements, implementation schedules and other technical inputs.

- Assist in identifying procurement activities requiring early initiation, taking into account lead times, project implementation schedules, delivery deadlines and other operational requirements.
- Maintain a consolidated procurement pipeline to track planned, ongoing and completed procurement activities and identify potential delays or bottlenecks.
- Bring incomplete requisitions, inconsistencies in requirements, budgetary concerns and other issues affecting procurement readiness to the attention of the supervisor.

4.2 Procurement Process and Documentation

The Procurement Assistant shall:

- Assist in preparing procurement documents, including requests for quotations, bidding documents, terms of reference, schedules, evaluation templates and other standard procurement forms, as directed by the authorized procurement officials.
- Support the advertisement or invitation process, issuance and distribution of procurement documents, recording of submissions, opening arrangements and maintenance of procurement registers in accordance with applicable procedures.
- Assist in maintaining records of supplier enquiries, clarifications, addenda, submissions and other procurement-related correspondence.
- Provide secretariat and administrative support to procurement and evaluation committees, including compiling documents, preparing meeting materials, recording proceedings and tracking follow-up actions.
- Compile and organise evaluation records and recommendations for review and approval by the competent authority, without independently determining evaluation outcomes or making award decisions.
- Assist in preparing purchase orders, award notifications and other procurement documents following the required approvals and instructions of authorised officials.
- Maintain a clear and complete audit trail of requisitions, approvals, quotations or bids, evaluation records, procurement decisions, purchase orders, contracts, correspondence and other supporting documents.
- Verify that the required approvals, clearances and supporting documents are in place before advancing procurement actions to the next stage.
- Promptly report missing documentation, procedural irregularities, potential conflicts of interest or other concerns to the supervisor.

4.3 Contract Administration, Delivery and Supplier Follow-up

The Procurement Assistant shall:

- Assist in preparing purchase orders, contract documents and delivery schedules based on approved procurement decisions and instructions from authorized officials.
- Maintain an up-to-date contract register containing supplier details, contract or purchase order numbers, contract values, award dates, delivery schedules, implementation milestones, applicable securities or guarantees, expiry dates and other relevant particulars.

- Monitor contract implementation milestones and follow up with suppliers and relevant implementing offices regarding deliveries, progress, delays, incomplete submissions, defects and outstanding contractual obligations.
- Coordinate with designated technical officers and receiving officials to obtain inspection reports, delivery notes, verification records, acceptance certificates and completion documents, as applicable.
- Maintain records of approved contract amendments, variations, extensions, claims, disputes and other contract-related decisions, ensuring that the appropriate authorizations are obtained before such changes are implemented.
- Track outstanding contractual obligations, including applicable warranties, guarantees, defect rectification requirements and other post-delivery obligations.
- Promptly bring delays, non-performance, discrepancies in delivered goods or completed works, potential cost overruns, claims, disputes and other contract-performance concerns to the attention of the supervisor and relevant authorized officials.
- Assist in compiling contract performance information for review by the competent authority.

4.4 Financial Tracking and Reporting

The Procurement Assistant shall:

- Maintain procurement commitment, contract value and expenditure tracking records in coordination with the finance section and relevant project officials.
- Track the financial status of procurement activities, including estimated costs, approved contract values, commitments, payments made and outstanding payment obligations, based on verified information.
- Reconcile procurement status and contract commitments with available budget and expenditure records in coordination with the finance section, and flag discrepancies for verification.
- Monitor the relationship between procurement progress, contractual commitments, delivery status and project implementation schedules to support timely management decisions.
- Prepare periodic procurement progress reports covering planned and completed procurement activities, ongoing processes, contract awards, delivery status, financial commitments, expenditure information, outstanding actions and implementation challenges.
- Support the preparation of procurement-related information required for annual and periodic financial reporting, project reviews, management meetings, audit exercises and other official reporting requirements.
- Ensure that payment-related documents are checked for completeness and forwarded to the authorized finance officials for verification and processing.
- Maintain appropriate supporting records for payments, including contracts or purchase orders, invoices, delivery and acceptance documents, and other required evidence, as applicable.

- Report discrepancies between procurement records, contract commitments and expenditure information to the supervisor and relevant finance officials for review and resolution.

4.5 Coordination and Support to Dzongkhags and Thromdes

The Procurement Assistant shall:

- Serve as a focal support person for routine procurement coordination under the initiative, under the direction of the Head of Procurement Section, MoESD.
- Facilitate the timely exchange of procurement-related information and documentation among MoESD, MoIT, Dzongkhags, Thromdes, schools and other implementing offices.
- Provide procedural and administrative guidance on required forms, supporting documents, procurement schedules, reporting formats and documentation requirements within the scope of assigned responsibilities.
- Follow up with implementing offices on procurement requisitions, specifications, cost estimates, approvals, procurement progress, delivery records and other outstanding information.
- Coordinate with MoIT and designated technical officials regarding technical inputs, specifications, bills of quantities, inspection requirements and implementation matters, referring technical decisions to the appropriate officials.
- Assist in consolidating procurement information received from Dzongkhags, Thromdes and schools to support central monitoring and reporting.
- Identify recurring documentation gaps, coordination challenges and implementation bottlenecks and recommend appropriate follow-up actions to the supervisor.
- Support the dissemination of approved procurement procedures, standard templates, reporting formats and administrative instructions to relevant implementing offices, as directed.

4.6 Compliance, Record Management and Risk Mitigation

The Procurement Assistant shall:

- Apply and support compliance with the applicable Bhutanese procurement framework, approved project arrangements, relevant GoI financing conditions and other applicable requirements governing the specific procurement activity.
- Maintain organised physical and electronic procurement files, registers and document-tracking systems to ensure completeness, traceability, version control and ease of retrieval.
- Ensure that procurement records are properly filed, securely maintained and retained in accordance with applicable record-management, confidentiality and audit requirements.
- Protect confidential procurement information and ensure that suppliers are treated fairly and consistently in accordance with applicable procedures.
- Disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest to the supervisor and comply with applicable conflict-of-interest requirements.

- Assist in identifying procurement risks, including delays, incomplete documentation, inconsistent specifications, potential non-compliance, contract-performance concerns and discrepancies in procurement records.
- Promptly report suspected irregularities, unexplained deviations, potential breaches of procurement procedures and other compliance concerns to the supervisor.
- Assist in responding to audit observations, inspection findings, verification requests and compliance reviews by retrieving relevant documents, compiling supporting information and tracking corrective actions.
- Maintain a register of audit observations, compliance issues and follow-up actions assigned to the procurement function, where required.
- Ensure that no procurement requirement is independently waived and that any proposed deviation, amendment or exception is referred to the competent authority for consideration and approval.

4.7 Monitoring, Performance Tracking and Knowledge Management

The Procurement Assistant shall:

- Maintain an updated procurement monitoring system covering the status of procurement activities from planning and initiation through evaluation, award, delivery, completion and closure, as applicable.
- Track key procurement milestones and identify activities at risk of delay against approved procurement and project implementation schedules.
- Assist in compiling procurement performance indicators, including procurement cycle progress, contract award status, delivery timeliness and outstanding contractual obligations, as required.
- Prepare summary reports, status updates and supporting data for project coordination meetings and management reviews.
- Record meeting decisions, assigned responsibilities, agreed deadlines and action points relating to procurement, and follow up on outstanding actions.
- Document recurring procurement issues and lessons learned to support improvements in procurement planning, coordination and implementation.
- Support the development and maintenance of standard procurement templates, checklists, registers and reporting formats for consistent use across implementing offices.

4.8 Other Duties

- Attend procurement, project implementation and coordination meetings as assigned.
- Prepare meeting materials, maintain minutes or records of proceedings where required, and follow up on agreed procurement actions.
- Assist in preparing official correspondence, briefing notes, submissions and other procurement-related documents.
- Undertake other procurement-related duties assigned by the Sr. Procurement Officer, MoESD, or another designated supervisor, provided that such duties are consistent with the purpose of the position and the requirements of the initiative.

5. Expected Deliverables

The Procurement Assistant shall be expected to produce and maintain the following outputs, as applicable to the approved work plan and reporting schedule:

1. Consolidated procurement plans, schedules and procurement tracking sheets.
2. Complete procurement files and updated procurement registers for goods, works and services.
3. Updated contract and supplier registers, including delivery schedules, milestones and outstanding obligations.
4. Periodic procurement progress reports covering procurement status, contract awards, delivery progress, financial commitments and outstanding issues.
5. Procurement commitment and expenditure tracking records prepared in coordination with the finance section.
6. Complete documentation supporting procurement decisions, contract administration and payment processing.
7. Updated records of procurement risks, delays, audit observations, compliance issues and corrective actions.
8. Consolidated procurement information and supporting documents required for management reviews, project monitoring, audit and other official reporting.
9. Meeting records, action trackers and follow-up updates for procurement-related coordination activities.

The frequency, format and submission deadlines for these deliverables shall be determined by the supervisor and the applicable project reporting requirements.

6. Accountability and Limits of Authority

The Procurement Assistant shall be accountable to the Sr. Procurement Officer, MoESD, or the designated supervisor for the accuracy, completeness, timeliness and proper maintenance of assigned procurement records and deliverables.

The position is primarily operational, administrative and supportive. Accordingly, the Procurement Assistant shall not, unless formally authorized under applicable rules and procedures:

- Approve procurement plans, procurement methods, evaluation outcomes or contract awards.
- Make independent technical determinations or alter approved specifications.
- Commit funds, enter into contractual obligations or approve contract amendments.
- Waive procurement requirements or authorize deviations from approved procedures.
- Certify the technical quality or acceptance of goods, works or services.
- Approve or authorize payments.

All decisions requiring formal approval shall be referred to the competent authority, and technical certifications shall be undertaken by the designated technical officials.

7. Professional Conduct and Confidentiality

The Procurement Assistant shall perform all assigned duties with integrity, impartiality, professionalism, diligence and accountability. The position holder shall maintain confidentiality, safeguard procurement records, avoid conflicts of interest, ensure fair treatment of suppliers and comply with applicable government rules, procurement procedures, project requirements and instructions issued by authorized officials.

Any suspected misconduct, irregularity, conflict of interest or breach of procurement requirements shall be reported promptly through the appropriate official channels.

8. Performance Assessment

The performance of the Procurement Assistant shall be assessed by the designated supervisor based on the quality, accuracy and timeliness of assigned work and the extent to which the position contributes to effective procurement implementation under the initiative.

Performance assessment may consider the following criteria:

- Timely preparation and updating of procurement plans, schedules and tracking systems.
- Completeness, accuracy and accessibility of procurement and contract records.
- Timeliness and reliability of procurement progress reports and financial tracking information.
- Effectiveness of coordination and follow-up with relevant stakeholders and implementing offices.
- Timely identification and reporting of procurement delays, documentation gaps, risks and compliance concerns.
- Responsiveness to audit queries, management requests and assigned follow-up actions.
- Adherence to confidentiality, ethical standards, applicable procurement procedures and delegated authority.

The assessment shall be based on assigned duties, agreed deliverables and the reporting requirements established by the competent authority.