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24 January 2024

All contractors on the
List of Approved Contractors for Public Works and
List of Approved Suppliers of Materials and Specialist Contractors for Public Works

Dear Sir/Madam,

Implementation of Electronic Tendering System for Works Contracts

In line with the Government's pledge to digitalise the public services, this letter announces the implementation of the Electronic Tendering System¹ ("e-TS") for works contracts under the ambit of Central Tender Board ("CTB") and Public Works Tender Board ("PWTB").

Background

2. Since the rollout of e-TS for works contracts (now known as "e-TS(WC)") in June 2022, 30 works contracts from six works departments² have been selected for application. The implementation of e-TS(WC) in these pilot contracts has been smooth with the following objectives achieved:

- (a) promoting electronic procurement;
- (b) improving the efficiency of the tendering process;
- (c) facilitating tender participation by allowing tenderers round-the-clock access for downloading tender documents; and

¹ The Electronic Tender System could be accessed through the hyperlink - <https://www.ets.gov.hk>

² Including the Architectural Services Department, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Drainage Services Department, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, the Highways Department and the Water Services Department

- (d) saving tenderers' effort in printing and submitting tenders in hard copy to tender box which is also environmentally friendly.

Full Implementation of e-TS(WC) on 1 July 2024

3. Having regard to the satisfactory performance of e-TS(WC) in the pilot contracts and after consulting the relevant stakeholders, we have decided to apply e-TS(WC) for handling all works tenders under the ambit of CTB and PWTB (**except those mentioned in paragraphs 6 and 7 below**) that are to be invited **on or after 1 July 2024**.

4. Following the full implementation of e-TS(WC), tenderers will have to handle the tendering process, which includes, inter alia, checking tender invitations, downloading tender documents/supplementary information/addenda, raising tender queries and receiving responses, submitting tenders, receiving tender clarifications and making responses, and receiving award results via the system.

Interim Arrangement for Submission of Tenders

5. As an interim measure to cope with any unforeseen situations concerning the integrity of files to be uploaded by tenderers, we will permit tenderers to have an option to submit their tenders in paper-based form **in addition to** their e-submissions via e-TS(WC). This interim arrangement will be applicable for works tenders to be invited from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 (both dates inclusive). Afterwards, submission of tenders in paper-based form will not be allowed.

Exception

6. For works tenders involving special submission requirements, such as submission of physical models/pamphlets/project reference materials or tender proposals in special file formats or due to some special reasons which render the application of e-TS(WC) for tender submission not suitable, the work departments concerned will make it clear in the notice of tender invitation that tenderers are required to submit their tenders in paper-based form. It should however be noted that for such works tenders, the following tender processes including receiving tender invitations, downloading tender documents/supplementary information/addenda, raising tender queries and receiving responses, receiving tender clarifications and making responses, and receiving award results shall still be made via e-TS(WC).

7. At present, e-TS(WC) is not applicable to works contracts involving prequalified tendering or open tendering. We will make announcement in due course

as to when e-TS(WC) will be extended to cover works contracts involving such kinds of tendering. In the meantime, the entire tendering process of prequalified tendering or open tendering will be conducted using paper-based form.

Registration

8. If you are not yet a Registered User of e-TS(WC), you are encouraged to enroll as soon as possible. Please refer to the user manual and teaching video on the “e-Tendering System” theme page of GovHK website³, which will show you the detailed steps of account registration.

Organisational e-Cert

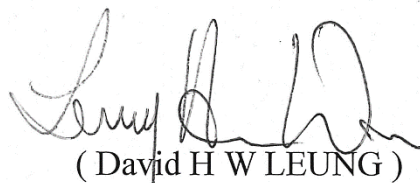
9. When submitting tenders via e-TS(WC), electronic files are required to be digitally signed with the use of an Organisational e-Cert. You are therefore reminded to apply for/renew the Organisational e-Cert as early as practicable to avoid any delay in application which may hamper your tender submission via e-TS(WC). In this connection, you may wish to visit the websites of the two recognised certification authorities⁴ for details of the application procedures.

Support

10. To allow all contractors to get familiar with e-TS(WC) before its mandatory application, training sessions will be arranged by this Bureau in March and April 2024, details of which will be announced in due course. Besides, we are running two helpdesk cum telephone hotlines (General Enquiry: 3997 1844 or Technical Support: 6310 9329) to provide timely and prompt assistance to users.

11. For enquiries, please contact Mr Eric Chan, AS(WP4)7, on 3509 8711.

Yours faithfully,



(David H W LEUNG)

for Secretary for Development

³ The user manual and teaching video could be accessed through the hyperlink -

<https://www.gov.hk/en/theme/etendering/usermanual/>

⁴ Hong Kong Post : <https://www.hongkongpost.gov.hk/index.html>

Digi-Sign Certification Services Limited : <https://www.dg-sign.com/eng/index.htm>

c.c. The Hong Kong Construction Association
Hong Kong General Building Contractors Association
The Hong Kong Federation of Electrical and Mechanical Contractors
The Hong Kong Electrical and Mechanical Contractors' Association
The Hong Kong Registered Contractors Association

Internal

CAS(W)7, AS(WP4)1, AS(WP4)3, AS(WP4)7, AS(WP4)8 and TS