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Advancing Higher Education in Maldives Through E-learning Development



Report on Equipment Procurement and Installation

Work package 3, Result 3.2. Equipment

Executive Summary

The equipment required under the scope of the AMED project was initially listed in the project proposal and updated in 2019. based on the more specific needs identified in WP1. The process was lead by MNU as lead project beneficiary and assisted by expertise of the project partners. CARNET was also in charge of process monitoring and project reporting, as part of WP3.

MNU Procurement department followed the governing rules and guidance imposed by the Maldives Finance Ministry. Procurement of Training Centre equipment was devided into 3 smaller groups (8 items), as well as Procurement of Classroom and Campus equipment (15 items), while E-learning studio procurement consisted of 1 group (27 items).

Due to COVID-19 situation, there were many challenges faced during the process: local unavailability of sophisticated items, time-consuming open bid process, changes in the market price and USD exchange rate, closed borders and disrupted logistics of the suppliers caused delivery delays.

However, delays did not cause delays in programme piloting (WP5).

All equipment items that were procured were delivered. A few items did not procure due to reasons stated in the attached equipment list.

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Procurement process

In order to acquire the required equipment's and software, procurement department strictly followed the governing rules and guidance implemented by the Maldives finance ministry designed to ensure transparency of the procurement process.

Procurement department followed the equipment list provided by the faculty. And to ensure the correct equipment is being purchased the procurement department and IT department closely worked together to ensure the accuracy of the specification and requirement of the equipment.

Procurement department would like to thank the staffs of IT department, Finance and the respected faculty in providing the assistance required whenever requested. We would also like to thank the Vice chancellor Dr Mohamed Shareef and Deputy Vice chancellor Hussain Haleem for the continued guidance, advice and solution provided in order to complete the procurement process of the items required for the AMED project.

Summary of rules followed

1. For the items costing between MVR 2,000.00 and below purchased with a purchase order
2. For the items costing between MVR 2,000.00 to MVR 35,000.00 purchased with purchase order
3. For items costing MVR 35,000.00 and above purchased via open bidding process
4. Approvals from relevant department to proceed with the purchase and contracting after the open bidding

Note: All items were evaluated and approved by the IT department prior to purchase to ensure the required specification is met.

Summary of open bidding process

1. An announcement is made along with Information sheet and specification sheet on Gazette.
2. A period of minimum seven days is provided for the bid submission for any party interested
3. After collecting the bids which meets the announcement required is submitted to IT department for evaluation of items to ensure the correct items are being bought and meets the required specification.
4. After the completion of evaluation, the bid documents are submitted to the procurement committee as per the rules and regulation to ensure the procurement department followed the guidelines, rules and regulation
5. After the approval of procurement committee, the bid documents are sent to finance department for the approval (to spend and all)
6. After the finance approval is provided, an agreement is signed between the bid winner and MNU to deliver the items within the given time frame.

Challenges faced

The year 2020 and 2021 has been a difficult year due to several factors, including the covid-19 pandemic forced lockdowns and the enforced mobility restrictions between islands and within the islands in 2020 and now in 2021 as well. These factors impacted the implementation of the procurement plan and process as well. Following are the noticeable challenges faced during the procurement process.

1. Unavailability of complex and sophisticated items locally which meets the specification required.
2. The process of completing the open bid process is time consuming.
3. The global health pandemic resulted in high acquisition cost due to changes in the market price and USD exchange rate.
4. The pandemic disrupted the logistics of the suppliers and further delays due to the border of the country being closed.

In order to address the challenges, the management of MNU acted promptly to provide the solution. In order to speed up the bidding process many staff worked beyond the official working hours including IT department and Finance department. Procurement committee members supported in arranging the previously unscheduled meetings and also assisted in avoiding any delays that can be mitigated.

However, the pandemic affected the equipment procurement and installation outcomes in ways beyond the reach of MNU. Little could be done by the management of MNU regarding the spikes in market price and USD exchange rate which created a deficiency in the country due to the border closing. This was challenging since Maldives is mainly dependent on the tourism sector.

Nonetheless, the management showed flexibility to the suppliers and provided assistance in sorting the disrupted logistics chain in the country which allowed many suppliers the ability to adopt and change their approach resulting in the successful completion of the agreement signed.

Equipment list

See attached list. Equipment highlighted in red did not procure.

Installation process

1. Status of the studio

The installation process was also affected due to the challenges faced during the equipment procurement process and caused delays in the process. The installation plan was developed in 2020 and a contractor was finalised in 2021. The process was planned to start in April 2021 after the procurement of the majority of the equipment (see the equipment list). However, there was another delay in the installation process start date with a request from the finalised contractor to delay the signing of the contract to after the holy month of Ramadan (13th April 2021 to 13th May 2021). Finally, the installation work on the studio started on 17th May 2021 and the contracted party is expected to complete the studio by 30 May. At present, this can be challenging due to the current Covid-19 situation in the Maldives and the imposed curfew from 16:00 hours. Even with possible delays, it was expected that the physical work is completed by 15th June.

The procurement of office furniture required for the studio is implemented. Equipment installation process was completed approximately in August 2021.

Studio was officially opened in May 2022 during AMED Final conference.

2. Status of the training room

The required electric wiring work is completed and the equipment is installed and arranged by the IT department approximately in June 2021.

3. Status of equipment installation in the campuses

All equipment that were procured and allocated to Campuses have been shipped to the respective campuses and the campus managers have been advised on the installation process. Equipment was installed in the following campuses: L. Gan Campus, S. Hithadhoo Campus, GDh. Thinadhoo Campus, and HDh. Kulhudhuffushi Campus.

Despite the challenges faced due to COVID-19 and inability to unload the equipment from boats, etc., MNU was committed to the completion of the equipment procurement and installation process and also to finish the process at the earliest possible time.

List of relevant documents used during the procurement process are a part of the financial reports.

Annex

- **AMED 3.2_Procurement status_Report annex_final**

Photos of selected equipment











