HOW BUSINESSES BENEFIT THE MOST FROM E-PROCUREMENT: A DUTCH ARCHITECTURAL APPROACH

Kornelis Drijfhout*

ABSTRACT. E-procurement development is mainly driven by legal requirements and process improvements. Contracting authorities set up webportals for notices and are paying customers of e-tendering systems. Economic operators follow business opportunities, therefore accepting e-procurement tools available, although they do not always profit from it. Considering competition is key in tendering, businesses should benefit the most from e-procurement. Following an architectural approach obstacles can be eliminated. The innovative Dutch approach offers businesses e-Government building blocks for integrated e-tendering applications: a basic tendering system connected to a mandatory webportal for notices, supported by authentication services, virtual company dossiers and an electronic vault. Business interoperability will secure connectivity with other e-tendering systems.

* *Kornelis Drijfhout – Information manager TenderNed, the Dutch e-procurement system, powered by the ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation.*

INTRODUCTION

Electronic procurement (the use of electronic means by government institutions and other public sector organisations when buying supplies and services and tendering public works) has been used for over a decade to make the tendering process more simple and cost-effective. The rules applicable to electronic procurement are laid down in European directives (2004) and governments have committed to the objective of fully implementing them (2005). Now, in 2012, the conclusion is justified that electronic procurement has not yet delivered on its promise. The process has not become any easier. On the contrary, there seem to be even more obstacles and cost savings are not yet evident.

The situation in the Netherlands is not much different. Although there are plenty of opportunities for electronic procurement, businesses have not yet realised the benefits. Contracting authorities are slow to adopt electronic procurement and businesses only follow suit if asked to do so. Consequently, every contracting authority takes a different approach. This is not necessarily the best solution for business as a whole, even though businesses stand to gain most from the process. That is where most costs can be saved.

In this article I would like to demonstrate that it is possible to create a landscape for electronic procurement where businesses reap maximum benefit. In the Dutch approach - where central government manages the landscape – business interests are paramount.

First, I will briefly describe the current state of affairs in the Netherlands. I will show how different contracting authorities initiate their own e-procurements systems. Next, I will describe the obstacles this creates for participating businesses and provide an analysis of the problem with multiple systems. Then I will get to the crux of the article: a description of the Dutch architectural approach, which includes a free basic system, several central building blocks and an infrastructure for data exchange across the landscape.

DESCRIPTION OF E-PROCUREMENT IN THE NETHERLANDS

Electronic procurement in the Netherlands started with an initiative in the public infrastructure sector. ProRail, a Dutch company responsible for the Dutch rail network, was one of the forerunners. Back in 2002, ProRail introduced a system to simplify the tendering process for businesses. A limited number of businesses were allowed to save their company data on this system. This meant they did not have to provide their financial data for each call for tenders; all they had to do was refer to the dossier in the system. Businesses could also record tender sums and so submit their first electronic tenders. In 2003 a number of contracting authorities in civil engineering (including ProRail, Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, Government Service for Land and Water Management, Province of Noord-Brabant, Rotterdam Department of Public Works and Schiphol Airport) decided to develop a shared platform for publishing tender notices. The *Aanbestedingskalender* was developed in cooperation with CROW, a technology platform for transport, infrastructure and public space. The first notice was published in 2004. In response to the European action plan for the implementation of the legal framework for electronic public procurement, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation decided to develop a new national system combining CROW's website for tender notices and ProRail's procurement system. The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation thereby assumed responsibility for the national rollout of electronic procurement.

In 2006, development started on a new national system for electronic procurement called TenderNed. The lessons learned from the ProRail system and the *Aanbestedingskalender* were incorporated into the new system. TenderNed is a virtual marketplace for electronic procurement, where public bodies and businesses can connect. Contracting authorities publish all their calls for tenders (national and European) on TenderNed. In this way, all contracts that may be of interest to businesses can be found in one place. The entire procurement process can proceed electronically on TenderNed. This makes the tendering process more simple and faster for all parties involved. Please see Appendix 1 for a detailed description of TenderNed.

Under the new Procurement Act, government authorities are obliged to publish all their calls for tenders – both national and European – on TenderNed. The act is expected to come into effect in January 2013. It is not mandatory to participate in the subsequent stages of the procurement procedure electronically.

Several systems have been developed and rolled out – besides TenderNed – by contracting authorities in the Netherlands since 2006. These systems were not developed under the management of the government, but sold by commercial parties. Although each system is different, they all offer the same basic functionality as TenderNed. As the law only stipulates the publication of tender notices on TenderNed, various contracting authorities have chosen to use these systems for their entire procurement process.

In 2010, 10% to 20% of all calls for tenders at European level were processed completely electronically†. The Netherlands was no exception. Almost 100% of all tender notices are published electronically, but the number of businesses that actually submit tenders electronically is not higher than 20%. By offering TenderNed free of charge, the Ministry hopes to increase the level of electronic procurement to 100%. TenderNed will be the basic procurement system; electronic procurement will be available to everyone. Where contracting authorities have additional requirements, they will be able to choose from commercial suppliers of systems that better meet their requirements.

A new phenomenon has emerged in the past two years: the marketplace. The marketplace concept is a procurement method, whereby for each contract a questionnaire is presented in the form of a competition based on quality and price. The questionnaire is normally placed on a publicly-accessible website, which often belongs to the contracting authority. A large number of parties (representing a large part of the market) take part. Procurement via the marketplace

---

† Study on the evaluation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the legal framework for electronic procurement (Phase II) - Analysis, assessment and recommendations. European Commission Internal Market Directorate-General. Page 172

concept is objective, transparent and non-discriminatory and is therefore in line with the principles of European procurement law. However, the marketplace concept does not normally comply with the statutory lead time and other formal requirements of a formal European procurement procedure. There are currently approximately 50 websites in the Netherlands with active marketplaces.

All these developments and systems are the result of innovation. The contracting authorities are reaping the benefits, forcing business to operate on multiple systems and leaving them with new obstacles. The following chapter provides an analysis of the problem with multiple systems.

ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM WITH MULTIPLE SYSTEMS

If we look at all these developments, then contracting authorities emerge as the driving force of innovation. Contracting authorities decide to procure or use systems to provide better support for their own administrative processes. This is a positive development and considerable administrative costs are saved in this way. However, what is good for the contracting authority is not always good for business. Businesses want to win contracts and are inclined to meet the requirements set by the contracting authorities to be included in the tendering process. If a contracting authority decides to put its contracts on its own website, then businesses will add this website to their favourites list. If they work for ten relevant contracting authorities, then they are obliged to monitor ten websites. If a contracting authority prescribes that they must submit tenders via system X, then businesses will request an account for system X. If the next contracting authority uses system Y, they will need an account for that too.

The messages from the market are clear; businesses complain about the many different systems, but are obliged to conform if they want to be considered for contracts. Businesses follow opportunities. On 1 July 2010, Mr P.A.A. van der Eijnden, director of *Stichting Marktwerking Installatietechniek,* complained to the Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs at the time about the proliferation of electronic procurement platforms.

> *The downside of this proliferation is that each platform has its own unique procedures. For example, businesses have to register according to specific rules, data has to be requested and information has to be entered for each platform, etc. Nothing is standardised. Each platform represents a different system, the functionality of which can vary from information supply to full registration, tendering or auctions.* ‡

The fact that contracting authorities drive electronic procurement through innovation is remarkable, as the parties that really profit from this type of procurement are businesses. Transparency, simplicity and reduction of administrative burden save businesses a lot of money, and if they can save money on processes, they can submit better tenders to contracting authorities. For the public sector to profit collectively from e-procurement, it needs to focus on the benefits for businesses.

The essence of procurement is a free market. By putting out contracts to public tender, businesses can compete to offer the best price and quality. In this way the government, i.e. the tax payer, gets the best value for money. This theory hinges entirely on public procurement. Public means that every business must have access and be able to submit tenders. Only then can we speak of efficient market operation.

Suppose that a tender notice is published in a place known only to two businesses. Competition between two businesses does not really stimulate market forces, so there is little incentive to compete. If you publish the same tender notice in a place where it can be found by fifty businesses, then you have fifty potential competitors. This is the market mechanism and it ultimately translates into lower prices.

The procurement process has been designed in such a way that businesses have to put in a lot of work with no guarantee of success. Electronic procurement can alleviate administrative processes, enabling or motivating more businesses to participate. A contracting authority may prescribe electronic procurement and so make it easier

---

‡ *Burgerbrief* (citizen's letter) from *STICHTING MARKTWERKING INSTALLATIETECHNIEK* dated 1-7-2010

for businesses to submit tenders, but the primary objective of the system will be to optimally support the contracting authority's own process. If every contracting authority uses a system that perfectly supports its own process, who will represent the interests of businesses?

All these different systems create new obstacles. The first obstacle has already been mentioned: Businesses have to register in different places on different systems. A large business may be interested in thirty different clients. If these clients use ten different systems, the business will need ten different accounts. Its employees will need to learn ten different systems. No matter how intuitive the systems are, they will have to learn how to use them: where do you upload documents, how do you create profiles, where can you ask questions, etc.

SMEs in particular are faced with this problem, as is illustrated by the following quote:

> *The failure to establish a common e-procurement platform has resulted in a plethora of different software tools being used across the public sector. This can often be confusing for SMEs looking to engage in e-procurement and can act as a significant barrier to participation.* §

Most systems have an area where you can save documents and reuse them for each call for tenders. In principle, this makes the process easier for businesses that regularly participate in tendering. However, if a business works with several contracting authorities – and therefore several systems – it will have to enter its initial data in various systems. So, if it works with ten different systems, it will have to enter its initial data ten times. Electronic procurement then becomes an increased burden rather than a reduced burden.

Opinions on electronic signatures vary greatly in Europe. Some countries or systems require only a login or password, whereas other countries require you to obtain an advanced electronic signature.

---

§ Contribution to the public consultation (2010 Green Paper) by non-registered organisation European Federation of Small Businesses (FSB).

Businesses participating in two countries need two 'signatures'. As signatures cost money and are not always easy to obtain, it impedes access to public procurement.

> *Of the 31 countries for which the eSignatures status is known, 12 do not explicitly require the use of electronic signatures. These are the countries which have thus left the largest amount of flexibility in their legal regimes, and it is therefore not surprising that these include all Nordic countries (both Member States and non-Member States, i.e. Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden) and the common law countries UK and Ireland.*[**]

The reason why electronic procurement creates new obstacles is because every contracting authority operates from its own perspective. The past years showed that by configuring the process as efficiently as possible for themselves and offering their contractors uniformity, contracting authorities do not necessarily improve things for all businesses. In Europe alone more than 250 e-procurements systems are operational. Only a national government or a European government can break the deadlock. Obstacles can be removed and the fruits of electronic procurement can actually be reaped by defending the interests of all businesses.

National governments and the European Commission in Europe have the ability to do so. All member states of the European Community are bound by the same European guidelines for public procurement. These describe which demands can or may be made on businesses, which criteria they can or may be expected to meet, where a tender notice should be published and how electronic tenders should be handled. EU legislation is the framework within which governments can set out the procurement process. This framework sets transparency, objectivity, accessibility and no unnecessary burdens as starting points for governments. National governments are well-

---

[**] Study on the evaluation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the legal framework for electronic procurement (Phase II) - Analysis, assessment and recommendations. European Commission Internal Market Directorate-General. Page 89

advised to use these starting points when designing the landscape for electronic tendering to guarantee the interests of all businesses.

Reduction of administrative burden can be achieved by treating all businesses as a group. Costs can be reduced by ensuring that businesses need only one access account requiring data to be saved only once, and by standardising the process. Only then will more businesses embrace the process and submit more tenders.

What are the options if national governments were to take responsibility for the uniformity of the electronic procurement process? Some countries are opting to make one central system compulsory. This may be as limited as a national tender notice system, or as extensive as a complete procurement system. The Dutch did not choose this approach. Procurement systems support contracting authorities and businesses and in that sense offer services. Offering only one system will limit the extent of services provided. That would deprive the market of its innovative power and result in deterioration in the quality of services. In addition, there are various systems in use in the Netherlands, which all have the right to exist and added value. The solution is not to limit the number of systems, but to enable them to communicate.

The Netherlands has decided on an architecture approach and will manage its own electronic procurement landscape. In the architecture approach central government will specify which building blocks each procurement system should adopt to join the landscape. A well-known building block is a national platform for tender notices. In Europe the 'Official Journal of the European Union' has been designated as the central location for listing all EU tender notices. In this way businesses do not have to search, but can see at a glance if there are any attractive contracts. There are, however, more building blocks to be defined, for example: a national passport or one central location for storing all procurement documents. The next chapter describes the design envisaged for the Dutch landscape.

THE DUTCH APPROACH

The Dutch government is determined to make access as easy as possible for businesses. Its policy is aimed at removing obstacles that

stand in the way of procurement for businesses. It has formulated the following objectives to achieve this:

- more transparency in matters of procurement and lower search costs for businesses;
- better enforcement of procurement legislation, less chance of mistakes and, following on from this, fewer legal procedures;
- stronger market forces and increased SME participation;
- less administrative burden for businesses (especially for SMEs);
- less implementation burden for contracting authorities.

To realise these objectives the Dutch government will manage the electronic procurement landscape.

3.1 Basic System

Firstly, the Dutch government has had one basic system developed to support the entire procurement process. This system is called TenderNed and is free of charge for both contracting authorities and businesses. By providing a basic system, contracting authorities and businesses can no longer hide behind technical impossibilities or financial obstacles. In accordance with the 2005 Manchester Declaration, 100% of all contracting authorities can now process all their calls for tenders electronically.

3.2 e-Government Building Blocks

Secondly, the government will provide the building blocks to help implement the policy objectives for electronic procurement. The following five e-government building blocks are important for the electronic procurement landscape:

- Central tender notice platform;
- Central company dossier;
- Central library for requirements, criteria and catalogues;
- One electronic vault for tenders;
- One access key for businesses (e-Authentication)

3.2.1 Central tender notice platform

The government has legislated that all tender notices must be published in one central place. The associated documents are

available free of charge. Businesses can register to be kept informed of any changes to the tender notices and documents. This transparent approach will ensure that Dutch businesses are informed of all government contracts.

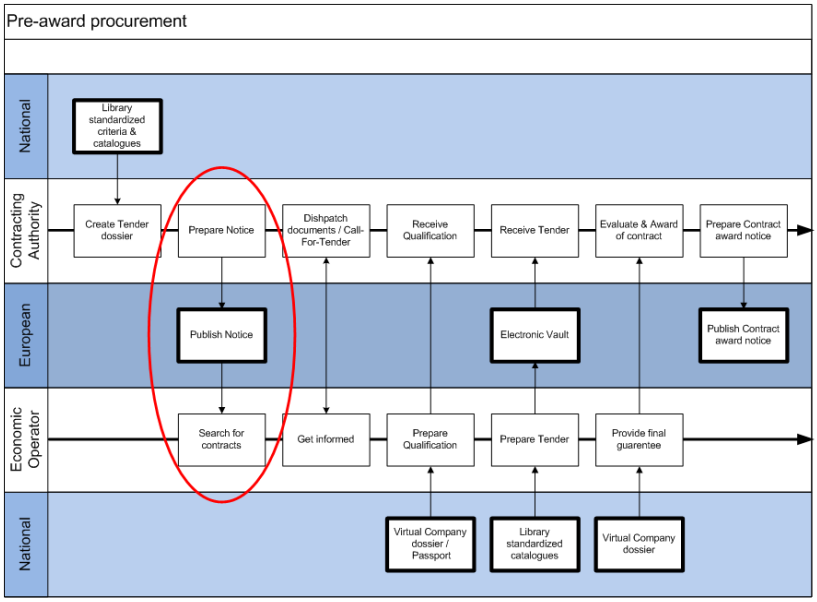

Figure 1: Central platform for national and European tender notices

3.2.2 Central company dossier

The government is also developing one company dossier for all businesses. The company dossier has been designed in accordance with EU legislation, in line with European designs for the Virtual Company Dossier††. This means that businesses will only have to maintain their data, such as their Certificate of good conduct, Proof of no previous bankruptcy and Proof of payment of taxes and social security contributions, in one location. Businesses will be alerted if their data is about to expire. If they want to participate in the

†† The Virtual Company Dossier is one of the components developed by the EU funded project PEPPOL.

tendering process, businesses will simply be able to submit the documents from the company dossier.

At a later stage, it will be possible to link the company dossier to the source files of the issuing authorities, so that documents no longer need to be saved, only data. For example, rather than saving the Certificate of good conduct, the system will record that the businessperson has no criminal past. This data will enable a business to participate in a tendering process and should the contracting authority wish to check it, the business can authorise the authority to check the data at source. In this way administrative burden is transferred from businesses to the government. In this scenario the government is the issuing and the requesting party. In line with the principle that the government is not permitted to ask questions to which it already knows the answer, this transfer is fully justified.

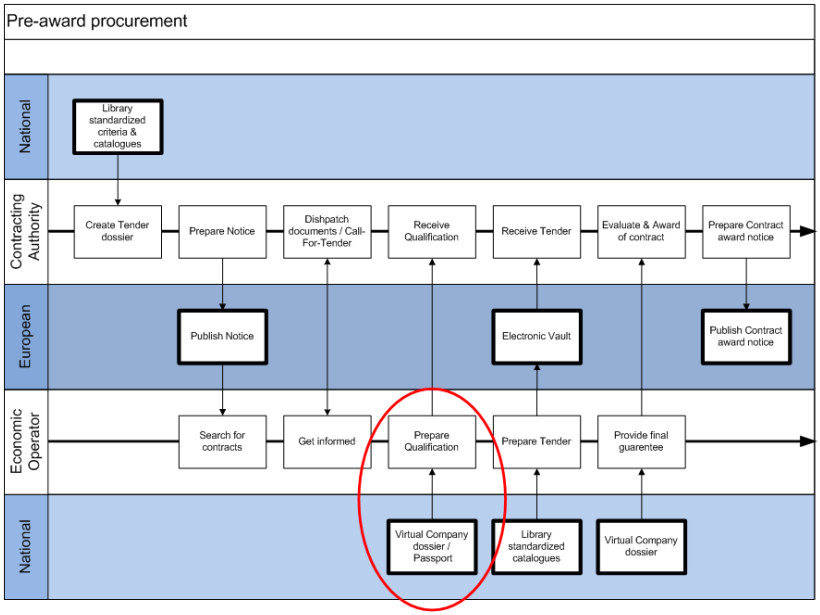

Figure 2: Central company dossier for standard supporting documents

Businesses support this principle. On 21 December 2010, Guill van den Boom, partner at Ernst & Young, states:

Some administrative processes can be standardised to reduce the administrative burden with reference to the tendering process. For example, participants in a tendering process could submit their documents to a central procurement body once a year.‡‡

3.2.3 Central library for requirements, criteria and catalogues

The Central library for requirements, criteria and catalogues is being developed for contracting authorities as a counterpart to the company dossier. This library will be managed by experts in the field of procurement, e.g. PIANOo (the Dutch Public Procurement Expertise Centre), for the benefit of all Dutch contracting authorities. The library will contain the established European criteria for qualitative selection as well as national sustainability criteria. All contracting authorities will be able to use the requirements and criteria stored in the library in their calls for tenders. This has a standardising effect. Although it is not compulsory to use approved requirements and criteria, it can be very useful. Besides having a standardising effect, it also makes the process more professional. This will benefit businesses enormously, because they will recognise the standard requirements and be able to respond with standard documentation.

‡‡http://www.computable.nl/artikel/ict_topics/overheid/3725883/1277202/aanbesteding-kan-goedkoper-via-centraal-loket.html

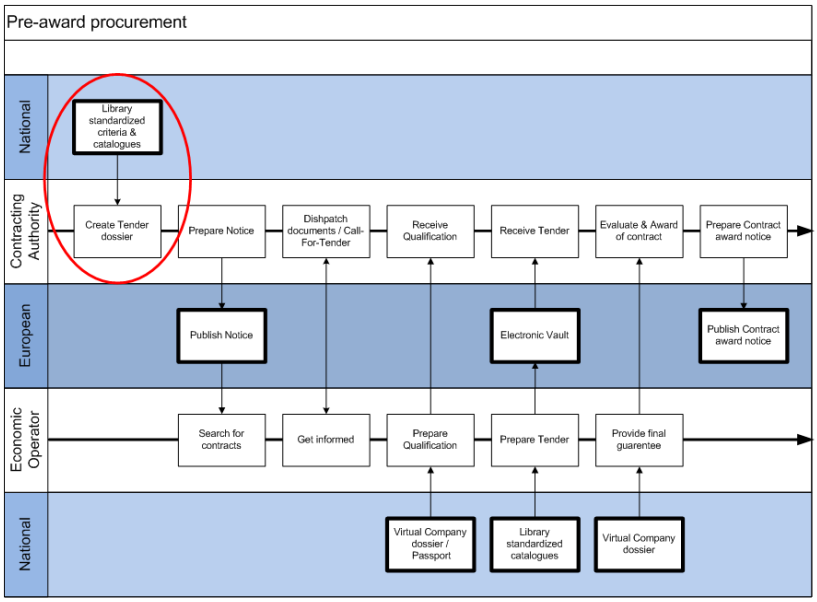

Figure 3: Central library for requirements, criteria and catalogues

3.2.4 One electronic vault

The fourth building block being developed is the electronic vault. This is where businesses will be able to submit their tenders electronically until the deadline for submitting tenders. Contracting authorities will have no access to the vault until after the submission deadline. It will only be possible to open the vault in accordance with the principle of dual control, i.e. if authorised by at least two persons. This guarantees complete objectivity for businesses; their data cannot be viewed before the closing time, and they can withdraw their tender if required. Contracting authorities are guaranteed secure submission of tenders.

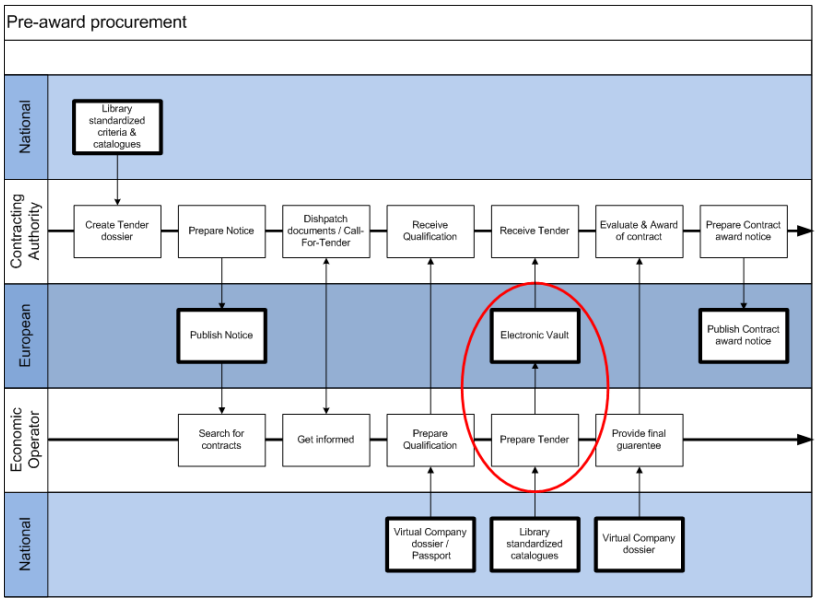

Figure 4: Electronic vault for tenders

3.2.5 One access key for businesses (e-Authentication)

e-Authentication was developed to make access to authorities more easy. This is the key Dutch businesses can use to exchange data with the government, for example when applying for a license or subsidy, or participating in a tendering process. e-Authentication manages user identification of employees through assigned roles. The option of using e-Authentication to place an advanced electronic signature will be explored in the coming year. As long as mutual authentication of advanced electronic signatures has not been agreed at European level, the use of e-Authentication is not compulsory. Businesses that do not have e-Authentication, e.g. foreign businesses, can use other means of identification to participate in the procurement process.

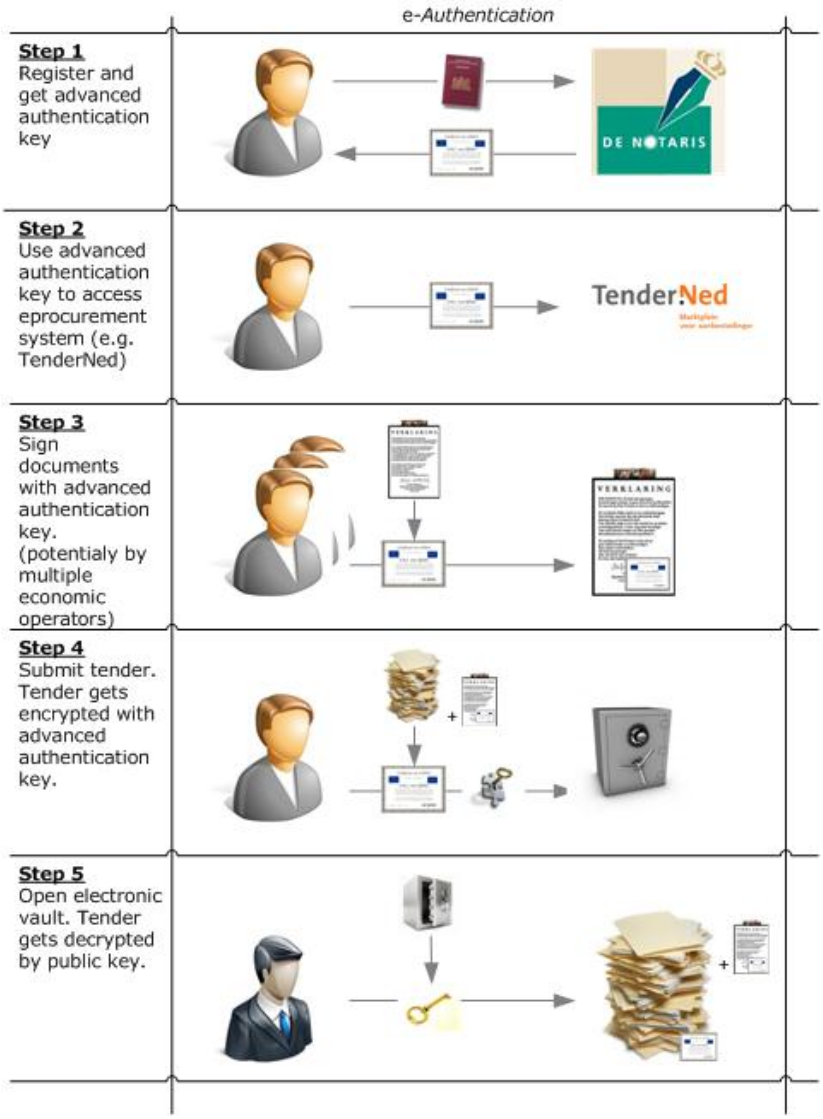

Figure 5: The five applications of e-Authentication for electronic procurement.

3.3 Data Exchange Infrastructure

The third and final aspect of the Dutch approach to electronic procurement is interfacing all these individual components. In the procurement process, data is exchanged between the systems of individual contracting authorities/businesses and the central building blocks. Data is also exchanged between e-procurement systems used by contracting authorities and businesses. This requires an adequate and secure infrastructure. To prevent the Dutch market from becoming an island, it must be linked to existing European infrastructures, such as those developed by PEPPOL. In this way, Dutch businesses have access to the European market as well as being able to use the national building blocks, such as e-Authentication, the company dossier and the electronic vault.

The big challenge for such an infrastructure is to reach agreement about the semantic meaning of data. If data is being exchanged between systems, all parties in the infrastructure must have the same understanding of any piece of data. There is no need to reinvent the wheel in this respect, as European standards are available for use. PEPPOL's Virtual Company Dossier is based on CEN/BII (Business Interoperability Interfaces for Public procurement in Europe) standards. CEN/BII also defines other transactions, such as dispatch of structured requirements and criteria, and submitting tenders. The Netherlands actively contributes to the development of these standards and intends to use them for the electronic procurement infrastructure.

Large-scale European enterprises also see standardisation as the solution. Capgemini UK responded to the Green Paper with the following recommendation.

> *Streamline, standardise and simplify the procurement process for contracting authorities and suppliers. Everyone involved should feel that the process is an improvement over the non "e" way of doing business. The interoperability across the European market,*

as highlighted by the PEPPOL project, is a very important aspect of this standardisation.§§

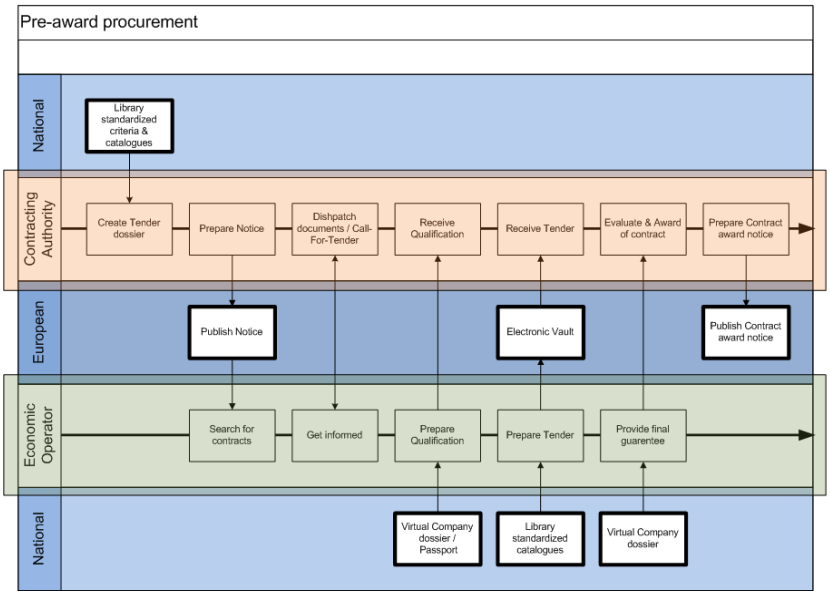

Figure 6: The Dutch infrastructure for electronic procurement.

The government is developing an infrastructure to enable the basic system, the procurement-specific and generic building blocks, and commercial parties to communicate. Contracting authorities and businesses will be free to choose between the basic system or a market package. Even though contracting authorities uses a market package, the infrastructure will allow them to use the central library, which will improve professionalism and standardisation. The infrastructure will enable contracting authorities to place tender notices on the central tender notice platform, which will improve transparency. The infrastructure will allow businesses to gain access to all information with their own keys and submit tenders, which will improve accessibility. The infrastructure will provide businesses with

§§ Contribution to the public consultation (2010 Green Paper) by non-registered organisation Capgemini UK.

access to their company dossier, so that they can easily qualify for tendering, which will reduce administrative burden by simplifying the process. The infrastructure will make the electronic vault available to businesses (so that they can submit their tenders) and contracting authorities (so that they can retrieve them), which will increase objectivity and irrefutability. Finally, the infrastructure will link contracting authorities and businesses, so that they will be able to exchange data between their respective systems.

3.4 Under construction

The Dutch procurement landscape is under construction. The basic system (TenderNed) is already available and being used by the Dutch contracting authorities and more than 10,000 businesses. Five commercial suppliers are registered on the central tender notice platform – the first building block available to other systems. In the next two or three years more building blocks should be made available to suppliers, starting with the company dossier and e-Authentication. In line with the expansion of the European infrastructure, the Dutch infrastructure will increasingly facilitate data exchange between systems.

CONCLUSION

Although there are plenty of opportunities for electronic procurement in 2012, businesses have not yet fully realised the benefits. This is because all innovation in this area is driven by the contracting authorities. They procure the systems and, in doing so, choose the suppliers that best meet their needs. The needs of the contracting authorities do not necessarily correspond to the needs of businesses. The interests of businesses are not being served.

That is remarkable, because all objectives for electronic procurement are aimed at businesses: uniformity, transparency, simplification and standardisation. By drastically reducing transaction costs for businesses, participation in the tendering process becomes much more attractive. The more businesses take part, the stronger the market forces, which ultimately leads to better quality for lower tender costs.

The Dutch architectural approach keeps an eye on business interests. By managing the electronic procurement landscape the Netherlands ensures maximum business participation in the tendering process.

Management does not constitute prescribing one mandatory central procurement system. In an architectural approach government makes a basic system available to all authorities. The basic system will include central building blocks, to which other commercial systems should also have access. The various electronic procurement systems in use can be interfaced with e-Authentication, the tender notice platform, the company dossier, the electronic vault and the central library for requirements, criteria and catalogues. Commercial systems will focus on providing the best service to contracting authorities and in due time to businesses. By making the central building blocks available to everyone, the government promotes transparency, objectivity, simplicity and professionalism – thus eliminating or reducing obstacles in the procurement process for businesses – without sacrificing the innovative power of these commercial parties.

APPENDIX 1 - TenderNed

How does it work for contracting authorities?

Electronic procurement via TenderNed saves time, helps prevent contracting authorities making procedural errors, reduces the administrative burden and promotes standardisation – a strong market demand.

Automatic selection of the right tender notice forms
The contracting authority can enter a number of basic attributes for the call for tenders, such as title, nature of the contract, European or national, etc. TenderNed then determines the correct publishing form and helps the user complete the required fields. In this way the call for tenders always meets the legal procedural requirements. The same applies to European procurement. TenderNed ensures that the call for tenders is submitted using the correct European tender notice form and publishes the tender on TED (Tenders Electronic Daily).

Library
Contracting authorities can save frequently-used data and documents, such as standard criteria and requirements, on TenderNed. With one click they can be added to a new call for tenders. TenderNed even enters some data automatically, such as contract data and exclusion clauses. The eight standard exclusion clauses are already recorded in all contracting authority libraries. This means standardisation and time savings.

Authorisation roles
To help contracting authorities control the process, they can assign various roles to employees in TenderNed. This authorises them for certain transactions. For example, it could allow a process leader to publish a call for tender, a team member to edit but not publish a call for tender, and a guest member to view a call for tender. The local administrator performs a key role; he or she assigns the roles.

Contact with businesses
Interested businesses can download the documents for a call for tenders from TenderNed (specifications, Summary of additional information and changes, etc.). They can also use TenderNed to ask

any questions they may have. The answers are automatically sent to all interested businesses. In this way the system guarantees that every business involved has all relevant information.

Evaluation of tenders
TenderNed provides an assessment 'scorecard' for the selection of candidates and evaluation of tenders. Contracting authorities, of course, remain responsible for assessing the quality of the tenders. TenderNed calculates the final score for each business based on its ratings and weightings.

Collaboration on procurement
Joint procurement with another contracting authority is easy to organise with TenderNed. The contracting authority simply sends an invitation via TenderNed, the other authority accepts and the link is made. The contracting authority can then also add employees from the other authority to the procurement team. Every team member can work on the procurement dossier from his or her own workstation.

Private tender
Contracting authorities can use TenderNed for private tenders to select businesses, by name, address, CPV code, or NUTS code, and invite them to submit a tender.

Statistiekverplichting
Dutch contracting authorities automatically comply with their legal obligation to submit data for statistical purposes *(Statistiekverplichting).* The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation can generate the data itself, which is required for the annual reports on European procurement, via TenderNed. Contracting authorities no longer need to supply the data.

Archiving
All steps in the procurement process can be recorded in TenderNed. In this way a dossier is built up. After a contract is awarded, you can simply download and archive the dossier.

How does it work for businesses?

TenderNed offers numerous advantages to businesses too: reduced administrative burden, transparency, protection against procedural errors, and time savings.

Business profile
Businesses can create their own profiles in TenderNed based on their business interests. They are then automatically updated as soon as a call for tenders is published that may be of interest, i.e. they are fully informed on time.

Interested businesses can download the specifications and the Summary of additional information and changes from TenderNed. They are automatically informed of any amendments and can view any questions and answers exchanged with other businesses on TenderNed. In other words, businesses will always have all relevant information on time.

Company dossier
Businesses can create a company dossier in TenderNed for saving documents that frequently need to be submitted, such as the Certificate of good conduct or turnover figures. In this way they can be added to the tender documents with the click of a mouse, and frequently-required documents can be saved in such a way that TenderNed will recognise them and automatically add the correct ones to the registration or tender.

Bid team
Bid team members can help draw up tender documents from their own workstations. These are not accessible to other employees.

Completeness check
TenderNed checks whether all requirements and criteria have been fulfilled. If not, the business is warned that missing documents still need to be added. The documents for common requirements are automatically added from the company dossier.

Submit a tender
A business signs its tender with a secure code and sends it - together with all corresponding documents - to the online electronic vault. In other words, no more sorting, printing, copying and personally delivering large volumes of paperwork.