

Government of Ontario Electronic Tendering (eTendering) System Update – Frequently Asked Questions for Vendors

About the new eTendering service system provided by *BravoSolution*

1. Why has the government of Ontario chosen a new electronic tendering system?

The agreement with the current service provider, MERX Networks Inc. (MERX), ends in May 2014 and Supply Chain Ontario, Ontario Shared Services recently held an open competitive procurement for eTendering services.

Before issuing the Request for Proposal, Supply Chain Ontario also consulted vendors and stakeholders to determine the kinds of services they needed and preferred, and to ensure the procurement for eTendering services was fair, open and transparent.

BravoSolution was the successful proponent in the open and competitive process held by the Ministry of Government Services.

Ontario's trade obligations require the province to designate an eTendering system to post notices about open competitive procurements.

2. Who is the new eTendering service provider?

BravoSolution has been selected as the new eTendering service provider after they were the successful proponent in an open competitive procurement process conducted by Supply Chain Ontario.

3. How will this affect the way vendors access procurement opportunities?

Vendors should find that it will be easy to find procurement opportunities that interest them. Ontario is adopting the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC) system, a widely-used commodity and service coding system. This will make finding procurement opportunities straightforward.

Vendors will also have:

- A new website to search and access procurement opportunities
- The ability to review and download procurement documents without an upfront subscription fee.
- Online bid submissions for some procurements; online bid submissions are being phased in. Fees will apply when vendors submit online proposals.

4. Will Government of Ontario procurement opportunities still be available on MERX?

Effective April 1, 2014 BravoSolution will become the designated eTendering system for Ontario government ministries and new procurement opportunities will no longer be posted on MERX after March 31, 2014.

Procurement opportunities posted on MERX must still be accessed through MERX. All addenda and award postings for procurements that were originally posted on MERX will continue to be posted on MERX.

5. How will BravoSolution be different from MERX?

The new eTendering system will continue to provide the same functionality currently available such as supplier registration, procurement opportunity postings and award notices. The system provides the features and flexibility to enable the Ontario government to continue to modernize procurement.

6. What are the benefits of using BravoSolution?

The new system will allow vendors to access Ontario government procurement opportunities with no upfront subscription or download fees. Fees will be charged only when a vendor submits a bid electronically for procurements; online procurements are being phased in.

The new system will make it easy for vendors to find procurement opportunities that interest them. It adopts the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC) system, a widely-used commodity and service coding system.

Vendors will be able to use new features and services, including online bid submission, as they're introduced.

7. What is the cost to vendors?

There are no costs to register or to download procurement documents of interest. Registration is still required to download procurement opportunities.

As electronic bidding becomes available, vendors will only pay for their electronic bid submissions.

More information will be available on electronic bid submission as this feature becomes available.

8. Will the cost of registering or downloading documents change?

The new eTendering system will provide vendors with the ability to access Ontario government procurement opportunities with no download fees.

As electronic bid submission is implemented, vendors will pay only for their electronic bid submissions. More information will be made available as this feature is implemented.

Transition from MERX to BravoSolution

9. What important transition dates do I need to be aware of?

To access new procurement opportunities:

- Use MERX until March 31, 2014
- Registration and online orientation on BravoSolution in March 2014
- Use BravoSolution starting April 1, 2014.

Procurements posted on MERX will remain active on MERX until the closing deadline or until May 31, 2014.

10. What happens to procurement opportunities that are posted on MERX with closing dates after May 31, 2014?

Supply Chain Ontario is working to minimize these kinds of situations. When this does occur, however, active procurement opportunities will be transferred to BravoSolution. Supply Chain Ontario will provide instructions in procurement documents.

11. Will MERX accounts and information be transferred to BravoSolution?

No. Vendors will need to register on BravoSolution to access Ontario government procurement opportunities.

12. Is training available to learn how to use BravoSolution?

Registration instructions will be made available to vendors through Ontario.ca/supplychain in March 2014. Self-help tools will be available on the eTendering portal Ontario.ca/tenders.

Accessing Ontario government procurement opportunities

13. Who can access information on BravoSolution?

Any suppliers interested in doing business with the Ontario government must register on the new system to access procurement opportunities.

14. Is there a cost to view and download procurement opportunities similar to MERX?

There are no fees to download procurement opportunities from BravoSolution. However, vendors must register to download documents. There is no cost to register.

15. Do suppliers need to register to download procurement opportunities?

Yes. Suppliers interested in downloading procurement opportunities must register on BravoSolution.

16. Will all government of Ontario procurement opportunities be posted on BravoSolution?

All procurement opportunities for Ontario government ministries with procurement values at or above \$25,000 for goods and at or above \$100,000 for services and construction will be posted on BravoSolution effective April 1, 2014.

Certain government agencies may use other posting services. Vendors can continue to monitor these systems for procurement opportunities as well.

Road construction vendors currently using the Ministry of Transportation RAQS system should continue to follow current processes.

Procurement opportunity notifications and amendments

17. How will vendors get up-to-date information about procurement opportunity notices?

BravoSolution will send out an alert to vendors who have registered on the system. When vendors register, they will need to set up their own search criteria so BravoSolution can send relevant procurement opportunity notices.

18. How will vendors get up-to-date information about procurement amendments?

While a procurement opportunity is open, BravoSolution will send alerts to registrants indicating that amendments have been published. Vendors can help ensure they receive these alerts by providing complete and accurate information when they register.

Samples and drawings

19. Can vendors get paper, fax, CD or DVD copies of tenders?

No. Tenders will be available electronically only.

20. Can vendors get prints of construction drawings from BravoSolution?

No. Tenders and any associated attachments will only be available electronically. Drawings will be available for download as an attachment to applicable tenders on BravoSolution.

21. How will BravoSolution support the distribution of samples?

Instructions will be provided in procurement documents when samples are a requirement of that procurement opportunity. Vendors are required to follow these instructions.

22. Where can vendors get more information about BravoSolution?

Over the next few weeks and months, Supply Chain Ontario will communicate directly with the vendor community providing updates on our website at www.ontario.ca/supplychain, and contact vendor associations, and chambers of commerce to provide registration and transition instructions for the new BravoSolution eTendering services.