

Electronic Contract Management System (eCMS)

Aquilent designed and implemented the VA's new enterprise-wide, fully integrated, web-based electronic acquisition platform that supports the full contract management lifecycle.

the objective_

As part of a department-wide effort to modernize financial, accounting, and acquisition business systems at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the department established the Electronic Contract Management System (eCMS) initiative. The objectives of this initiative included developing paperless processes for solicitations, vendor submission of proposals, bid evaluation and award determination, contract writing, and contract management processes, as well as establishing and enforcing standard acquisition practices and policies department-wide.

VA required a solution that would ensure continuity of contracting operations in case of disaster and maintain compliance with all federal and agency regulations. The solution would have to provide seamless integration of acquisition business processes with other VA systems for financial, accounting, and purchasing practices.

the solution_

Based on Aquilent's Epic solution, eCMS is hosted at VA's Austin Information Technology Center (AITC), supporting a user community of over 1,600 contracting staff.

Aquilent is the system integrator for eCMS, with responsibility for system design and implementation, deployment, support, sustaining engineering, and training. Beginning with requirements gathering, project management, and business process analysis, Aquilent proceeded to the design, implementation, testing, and deployment of the full eCMS solution, including integration of COTS and custom software as well as integration with existing VA systems such as IFCAP and CAATS, and other federal government systems including FPDS-NG, FedBizOpps, GSA eBuy, CCR/BPN, ORCA, and EPLS.

Aquilent also provides software quality assurance—including functional and performance testing, user acceptance testing, and audits of work products and management



processes—and training of end users, system administrators, and operations staff. To ensure system integrity and user acceptance, Aquilent performs system configuration and administration in addition to maintenance and help desk support, including on-site support of eCMS users.

The Payoff

After two years of prototypes, pilots, and numerous releases to build the core set of eCMS capabilities, VA began a nationwide rollout to the full contracting user community. This rollout included training and certification of VA's contracting staff and on-site, desk-side support of users at several critical sites.

The eCMS solution provides a robust set of capabilities:

- > Capture of purchase requisitions from VA's legacy requisitioning and financial system, IFCAP.
- > Creation of solicitations (RFQ, RFP, IFB, RFI), including proper inclusion of clauses and attachment of solicitation documents such as statements of work and electronic drawings.
- > Transmission and electronic posting of solicitations to the Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps) and GSA eBuy systems.
- > Electronic receipt of vendor proposals and quotes via a web-based vendor portal or GSA's eBuy.
- > Online evaluation of vendor responses, including online evaluator scoring, evaluation summaries, and award recommendations.
- > Creation of contract and order documents, with rules to enforce warrant level restrictions.
- > Transmission of award information to the Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation (FPDS-NG).
- > Storage of solicitation, vendor response, contract, and order documents and data in a central, electronic repository.
- > A web-based Intranet site supporting the contracting community in collaboration, knowledge management, information sharing, communication, training, and user support.

HIGHLIGHTS

- > Supports contract management functions from solicitation to closeout.
- > Supports a user community of more than 1,600.
- > Integrates with a variety of existing VA and federal government systems.
- > Provides for paperless solicitations, proposals, bid evaluation and awarding, and contract writing and management.

