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MEDIA RELEASE

OCG Congratulates Public Bodies for Registering a 100% QCA Report Submission Compliance Rate for Newly Introduced QCA Web Portal

Kingston, Jamaica; December 4, 2012 – The Office of the Contractor General (OCG) congratulates all 197 Procuring Public Bodies and their respective Accounting and Accountable Officers for their compliance, in the interest of public transparency, with the requirements of the OCG's recently introduced Quarterly Contract Award (QCA) Web Portal. All 197 Public Bodies, whose contract award activities are currently being monitored by the OCG, were declared fully compliant in filing their 2012 3rd quarter QCA Reports to the OCG, in compliance with the newly designed Format.

The OCG, on June 25, 2012, by way of a letter of even date, which was sent to the Accounting/Accountable Officers of all Procuring Public Bodies, launched its QCA Web Portal, which was conceptualized with the vision of, *inter alia*, (a) enhancing the substance of the information submitted by Public Bodies and (b) improving the OCG's review and assessment process of the procurement activities of all Public Bodies.

The newly created QCA Web Portal, now provides the OCG with the unprecedented ability to (a) track the various stages of the procurement process for all contracts which are awarded by Public Bodies from inception to completion and, thereby, provide, for the first time, an analysis of the time taken at each stage of the procurement process, (b) comprehensively and systematically assess and analyze each Public Body's compliance with the varying aspects of the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) Procurement Guidelines through its QCA Reports and (c) publish, on its website, the award particulars of the GOJ contracts that have been awarded by the country's Public Bodies, which range in value from \$500,000.00 to infinity, as opposed to the previous threshold of \$275,000.00 to \$10,000,000.00.

The OCG has noted with much concern, the fact that the alleged 'cumbersome nature' of the Procurement Guidelines have been emphatically argued by many as the primary justification for the extensive delays experienced by Public Bodies in the award and execution of government contracts. Contrarily, the OCG contends, based upon its own analyses, that the principal cause for delays in the procurement process is attributed to the time taken by some Public Bodies to evaluate and secure the requisite approvals.

It is in this regard that the OCG now deems it prudent to recommend that the GOJ take the necessary steps to impose maximum timelines for the evaluation and approval stages of the procurement process, in an effort to ensure efficiency and guard against unnecessary delays.



Given that the OCG has only ten (10) Inspectors to monitor the over 11,000 Government contracts which are awarded annually in values which exceed \$275,000, the QCA Report regime has substantially assisted the OCG's contract monitoring process by enabling it to utilize computer-based technology to scrutinize the particulars of the estimated 11,000 contracts which are captured under the regime.

Having regard to the passage of Hurricane Sandy and the reported difficulties which were encountered by several Public Bodies with the launch of the new system, the OCG, in an effort to facilitate a smooth transition took the decision to provide two (2) separate extensions to the stipulated deadlines of October 31, 2012 and November 7, 2012, the latter of which the OCG's rigidly enforced Zero Tolerance Policy was applied. The Zero Tolerance Policy of the OCG was first introduced in October 2006 to combat Public Bodies which were refusing to comply with the lawful requisitions of the OCG.

Prior to the institution of the aforesaid Policy, which calls for the mandatory referral of delinquent Public Bodies to the Director of Public Prosecutions for criminal prosecution, the highest Public Body compliance rate that was ever recorded by the OCG was 13%. No exception to the application of the Policy has ever been allowed by the Contractor General in the five (5) years that the Policy has been in force.

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