

# MEMS NEWSLETTER

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**A monthly forum for sharing progress on MEMS on-going activities and other related professional matters between MEMS and Participating Health Facilities**

*(Issued by the Mission for Essential Medical Supplies - MEMS)*

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### **Dear Reader**

By wishing you a Happy New Year we are delighted hereby to launch the MEMS Newsletter. The objective of this short Newsletter is to initiate a forum whereby MEMS and the Participating Health Facilities (PHF) can share information and in particular to provide an update to PHF on the progress of the envisaged Prime Vendor (PV) Program, an undertaking which still is done in close collaboration with Management Sciences for Health (MSH). The Newsletter will also serve as a forum for improving communication between us.

Since a lot has been done in the development of MEMS we think it is worth sharing some of the progress made during the course:

### **Progress in establishing the MEMS Prime Vendor (PV) Program**

As you will remember, in February-March last year, a MEMS team visited your facility to quantify your hospital drugs and medical supplies requirements through the 'Needs Assessment' exercise. The assessment was followed by a workshop, June 4-5 at CEDHA, to discuss and verify your requirements.

An output of the workshop was the first MEMS standard list, including all items: drugs, laboratory and other medical supplies.

On basis of the hospital's requirements and the MEMS standard list, a standardized list of items to be tendered through pre-qualified vendors was prepared. Beside this the MEMS tendering document/request for proposal (RFP) was composed of a document, which in details described the conditions for supply to PHF. The document, among other areas required the PV to comply with all aspects of quality assurance of products to be delivered as well as delivery and payment systems that were considered appropriate for the PHF.

The RFP and the list of requirements were submitted to six pre-qualified vendor.

One of the vendors withdrew from the process because he demanded quantity guarantee of the hospital requirements. MEMS considered this not possible at this early stage.

The five remaining vendors submitted their bids in October 2003. The bids were evaluated and discussions were held with all vendors to establish their commitment in undertaking the role of PV for MEMS.

MEMS has now been able to successfully identify one vendor, who seems to be able to meet more than 90% of the hospital needs at a reasonable cost.

Following this success the next steps are envisioned as follows:

- Meeting with the identified vendor to discuss, review and finalise its bid to meet the remaining MEMS conditions by January 13 2004 e.g. verification of prices indicated in the RFP, expansion of MEMS to serve other incoming hospitals and establishment of a transshipment store in Arusha, where PHF will be collecting their supplies.
- On January 16-17 2004 a MEMS meeting will be conducted with the doctors in charge and some pharmaceutical staff from the PHF. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and agree on how to deal with the few items that the vendor may have difficult in acquiring e.g. due to problems related to drugs registration.
- After this meeting, MEMS staff on February – March 2004 will be visiting the individual PHF to discuss their annual cost of supplies that shall be purchased from the vendor as well as other matters such as the drafted Memorandum of Understanding between

the PHF and MEMS. In essence this MOU would require PHF, who signs the MOU, to commit its purchases of the items submitted to the PV through MEMS. This commitment aims at making the program sustainable and to work as expected.

- Following these visits there will be an all-facility workshop where details of the program will be discussed and agreed upon as well as working out order schedules and other related matters.
- As a back up to the PV, MEMS will identify a secondary vendor from whom supplies may be procured, in case the PV fails.
- Subsequently MEMS will develop and sign a contract with the selected prime and secondary vendors clearly outlining the role of each party.
- Other activities to follow will include training on how to:
  - place orders electronically
  - taking samples of delivered consignments, making simple quality control tests and documentation.
  - contract management and in particular following up the performance of the vendor as well as MEMS in the implementation of objectives of the program.

On a monthly basis MEMS will be updating the PHF on the progress of the program.

#### **Improved Communication between Hospitals and MEMS through Satellite Communication (VSAT)**

Like the availability of quality and affordable drugs and other medical supplies, an efficient communication between MEMS and PHF is an important component of the whole MEMS project. For this reason MEMS in collaboration SatCoNet (the VSAT expert) did a survey at all the participating hospitals on how best the communication facilities should be installed and utilized. The SatCoNet survey reports for each hospital are yet to be finalised. These reports will be sent to respective hospitals after finalisation.

During the survey information on the IT/computer skill of personnel, whom are going to utilize the communication facility was collected. The report is

already prepared and shall be communicated to you soon.

The survey done by SatCoNet experts will also give the hospitals a perception of the amount of bandwidth required by each hospitals. This will help in forecasting the cost of running the satellite facility and the best possible way of minimising the cost to each hospital though various alternative such as sharing bandwidth and time for using Internet among participating hospitals.

The survey on the computer literacy among the personnel concerned clearly showed a need for training on computer and information technology skills. The training will be conducted before starting the utilization of VSAT communication.

The planning and implementation of the utilization of communication facilities will be extensively discussed in the next issue on the MEMS Newsletter.

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