



PR#427

PRESS RELEASE

GOB Clarifies Licensing Payment

Belmopan. August 25, 2021. 2:10 p.m.

There are documents circulating that show a payment from the Government of Belize to Smart for Microsoft Licenses. Following an investigation, the Office of the Prime Minister can clarify that a payment of \$3.37M was made to Smart Belize for the renewal of Microsoft 365 license subscriptions for the Government of Belize.

The facts are as follows:

On June 10, 2021, the Central IT Office (CITO) invited bids for the renewal of government's Microsoft 365 licenses. The licenses were up for renewal on June 24, 2021, and bids were to be submitted no later than June 18, 2021.

Three bids were sent in – one from BTL, one from Smart and one from Inova Solutions, a regional company. The bids were password-protected by each individual bidder, to be opened only in the presence of all parties.

At 2:30 p.m. on June 18, representatives from BTL, Smart and Inova Solutions, in the presence of Ian Smith, CITO's chief information officer, and Artemio Osorio, Ministry of Finance's procurement director, opened the bids via password.

The Smart bid was lower than that of BTL and Inova Solutions, and the Bid Evaluation Committee recommended to the Ministry of Finance that Smart Belize be awarded the contract. The ministry accepted that recommendation.

The process was open, transparent and fair. There was and could not have been any interference, since all three bids were password protected. The entire tendering process was handled by CITO without interference.

The Government of Belize has a mandate from the people of Belize to cut costs wherever possible, and will remain true to that mandate as together, Belize's economy can be rebuilt.

Ends

For further information, please contact:

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