

## 10. TENDER NEGOTIATIONS

- (a) Improving Vigilance Administration  
(CVC letter No. 8(1)(h)/98(1) dated 18.11.1998) Page-1
- (b) Improving Vigilance Administration :  
Tenders (CVC letter No98/ORD/1 dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 1999) Page-3
- (c) Applicability of CVC's instruction No. 8(1)(h)/98(1) dated  
18/11/98 on post - tender negotiations to Projects of the World Bank  
& other international funding agencies.  
(CVC letter No. 3 (V)/99/9 dated 1.10.1999) Page-4
- (d) Improving Vigilance Administration : Tenders (CVC letter No.98/ORD/1  
dated 24<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2000) Page-4
- (e) Improving Vigilance Administration :  
Tenders (CVC letter No.98/ORD/1 dated 03 Aug. 2001) Page-5
- (f) Tendering process - negotiation with L-1 (No. 005//CRD/12 dated 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 2005) Page-5
- (g) Tendering process - negotiation with L-1 (No. 005//CRD/12 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2006) Page-6
- (h) Tendering process - negotiation with L-1 (No. 005//CRD/012 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2007) Page-6
- (i) Tendering process - negotiation with L-1 (No. 005//CRD/012 dated 20<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010) Page-7

## 10. TENDER NEGOTIATIONS

### (a) Improving vigilance administration

The Central Vigilance Commission Ordinance 1998 under Section 8(1)(h) directs that the power and function of the CVC will be the following:

"exercise superintendence over the vigilance administration of the various Ministries of the Central Government or corporations established by or under any Central Act, Government companies, societies and local authorities owned or controlled by that Government".

2. Improving vigilance administration is possible only if system improvements are made to prevent the possibilities of corruption and also encourage a culture of honesty. In exercise of the powers conferred on the CVC by Section 8(1)(h), the following instructions are issued for compliance:

#### 2.1 Creating a culture of honesty

Many organisations have a reputation for corruption. The junior employees and officers who join the organisations hopefully may not be so corruption minded as those who have already been part of the corrupt system. In order to ensure that a culture of honesty is encouraged and the junior officers do not have the excuse that because their seniors are corrupt, that they have to also adopt the corrupt practices, it is decided with immediate effect that junior employees who initiate any proposal relating to vigilance matters which is likely to result in a reference to the CVC can send a copy directly to the CVC by name. This copy will be kept in the office of the CVC and data fed into the computer. If within a reasonable time of say three to six months, the reference does not come to the CVC, the CVC then can verify with the concerned authorities in the department as to what happened

to the vigilance case initiated by the junior employee. If there is an attempt to protect the corrupt or dilute the charges, this will also become visible. Above all the junior officers will not have the excuse that they have to fall in line with the corrupt seniors. Incidentally, the seniors also cannot treat the references made directly to the CVC as an act of indiscipline because the junior officers will be complying with the instructions issued under Section 8(1)(h) of the CVC Ordinance 1998. However, if a junior officer makes a false or frivolous complaint it will be viewed adversely.

## **2.2 Greater transparency in administration**

2.2.1 One major source of corruption arises because of lack of transparency. There is a scope for patronage and corruption especially in matters relating to tenders, cases where exercise of discretion relating to out of turn conferment of facilities/ privileges and so on. Each Organisation may identify such items which provide scope for corruption and where greater transparency would be useful. There is a necessity to maintain secrecy even in matters where discretion has to be exercised. But once the discretion has been exercised or as in matters of tenders, once the tender has been finalised, there is no need for the secrecy. A practice, therefore, must be adopted with immediate effect by all organisations within the purview of the CVC that they will publish on the notice board and in the organisation's regular publication the details of all such cases regarding tenders or out of turn allotments or discretion exercised in favour of an employee/party. The very process of publication of this information will provide an automatic check for corruption induced decisions or undue favours which go against the principles of healthy vigilance administration.

2.2.2 The CVC will in course of time take up each organisation and review to see whether any additions and alterations have to be made to the list of items which the organisation identified in the first instance for the monthly communications for publicity in the interests of greater transparency. This may be implemented with immediate effect.

## **2.3 Speedy departmental inquiries**

2.3.1 One major source of corruption is that the guilty are not punished adequately and more important they are not punished promptly. This is because of the prolonged delays in the departmental inquiry procedures. One of the reasons for the departmental inquiry being delayed is that the inquiry officers have already got their regular burden of work and this inquiry is to be done in addition to their normal work. The same is true for the Presenting Officers also.

2.3.2 Each organisation, therefore, may immediately review all the pending cases and the Disciplinary Authority may appoint Inquiry Officers from among retired honest employees for conducting the inquiries. The names of these officers may be got cleared by the CVC. The CVC will also separately issue an advertisement and start building a panel of names all over India who can supplement the inquiry officers work in the department. In fact, it will be a healthy practice to have all the inquiries to be done only through such retired employees because it can then be ensured that the departmental inquiries can be completed in time. If any service/departmental rules are in conflict with the above instructions they must be modified with immediate effect.

2.3.3 In order to ensure that the departmental inquiries are completed in time, the following time limits are prescribed:

(i) In all cases which are presently pending for appointment of Inquiry Officer and Presenting Officer, such appointment should be made within one month. In all other cases, the Inquiry Officer and the Presenting Officer should be appointed, wherever necessary, immediately after the receipt of the public servant's written statement of defence denying the charges.

(ii) The Oral inquiry, including the submission of the Inquiry Officer's report, should be completed within a period of 6 months from the date of appointment of the Inquiry Officer. In the preliminary inquiry in the beginning requiring the first appearance of the charged officers and the Presenting Officer, the Inquiry Officer should lay down a definite time-bound programme for inspection of the listed documents, submission of the lists of defence documents and defence witnesses and inspection of defence documents before the regular hearing is taken up.

The regular hearing, once started, should be conducted on day-to-day basis until completed and adjournment should not be granted on frivolous grounds.

2.3.4 One of the causes for delay is repeated adjournments. Not more than two adjournments should be given in any case so that the time limit of six months for departmental inquiry can be observed.

2.3.5 The IO/PO, DA and the CVO will be accountable for the strict compliance of the above instructions in every case.

## 2.4 Tenders

Tenders are generally a major source of corruption. In order to avoid corruption, a more transparent and effective system must be introduced. As post tender negotiations are the main source of corruption, post tender negotiations are banned with immediate effect except in the case of negotiations with L1 (i.e. Lowest tenderer).

(CVC letter No. 8(1)(h)/98(1) dated 18.11.1998)

### (b) Improving Vigilance Administration : Tenders

Please refer to CVC's instructions issued under letter No 8(1)(h)/98(I) dated 18/11/98 banning post tender negotiations except with L-1 i.e., the lowest tenderer. Some of the organizations have sought clarifications from the Commission as they are facing problems in implementing these instructions. The following clarifications are, therefore, issued with the approval of Central Vigilance Commissioner.

- a) The Government of India has a purchase preference policy so far as the public sector enterprises are concerned. It is clarified that the ban on the post tender negotiations does not

mean that the policy of the Government of India for purchase preference for public sector should not be implemented.

-4-

- b) Incidentally, some organizations have been using the public sector as a shield or a conduit for getting costly inputs or for improper purchases. This also should be avoided.
- c) Another issue that has been raised is that many a time the quantity to be ordered is much more than L1 alone can supply. In such cases the quantity order may be distributed in such a manner that the purchase is done in a fair transparent and equitable manner.

(CVC letter No 98/ORD/1 dated 15<sup>th</sup> Mar 1999)

(c) Applicability of CVC's instruction No.8(1)(h)/98(1) dated 18/11/98 on post- tender negotiations to Projects of the World Bank & other international funding agencies.

The Commission has banned post- tender negotiations except with L-1 vide its instruction No.8(1)(h)/98(1) dated 18/11/98. Subsequently, the Commission had also issued a clarification vide No.98/ORD/1 dated 15/3/99. Notwithstanding the clarifications issued by the Commission, many Departments/Organisations have been approaching the Commission on specific issues which were clarified to the individual departments/organisations.

2. A clarification sought by many Departments/Organisation, which is vital and has relevance to many of the organisations relates to the applicability of the above said instruction of CVC to World Bank Projects. It has been decided after due consideration, that in so far as the World Bank Projects and other international funding agencies such as IMF, ADB etc. are concerned, the department/organisations have no other alternative but to go by the criteria prescribed by the World Bank/concerned agencies and the Commission's instruction would not be applicable specifically to those projects. However, the instructions of the CVC will be binding on purchases/sales made by the departments within the Country. The CVC's instruction of 18/11/98 will apply even if they are made with sources outside the Country and if they are within the budget provisions and normal operations of the Department/Organisation,

3. All CVOs may ensure strict compliance of this instruction.

4. This instruction is also available on CVC's Website at <http://cvc.nic.in>  
(CVC letter No.3(V)/99/9 dated 1.10.1999)

(d) Improving Vigilance Administration - Tenders

Please refer to CVC's instructions issued under letter No 8(1)(h)/98(I) dated 18/11/98, banning post tender negotiations except with L-1.

2. The Commission has been getting a number of queries on how to handle the matter if the quantity to be ordered is more than L-1 can supply or about placement of orders on Public Sector Undertakings. It is requested that such matters may be dealt with in accordance with the clarifications issued by the Commission vide its letter of even number dated 15.3.99(copy enclosed).

3. Some of the organizations have sought clarification as to whether they can consider the L-2 offer or negotiate with that firm if L-1 withdraws his offer before the work order is placed, or before the supply or execution of work order takes place. In this regard, it is clarified that such a situation may be avoided if a two-bid system is followed (techno-commercial) so that proper assessment of the offers is made before the award of work order. Therefore, if L-1 party backs out, there should be retendering in a transparent and fair manner. The authority may in such a situation call for limited or short notice tender if so justified in the interest of work and take a decision on the basis of lowest tender.

4. The Commission has also been getting references for its advice on the procedures being followed in individual cases of tenders. The Commission would not involve itself in the decision making process of individual authorized. It, however, would expect the organizations to implement its instructions dated 18.11.98, in its spirit and to ensure that the decisions of administrative authorities are transparent.

(CVC letter No 98/ORD/1 dated 24<sup>th</sup> Aug 2000)

(e) Improving Vigilance Administration - Tenders

Please refer to the instructions issued by the Commission vide its communication No 8(1)(h)/98(1) dated 18 Nov 1998, banning post-tender negotiations except with L-1.

It is clarified that the CVC's instructions dated 18 Nov 98, banning post-tender negotiations except with L-1 (i.e., the lowest tenderer), pertain to the award of work/supply orders etc., where the Government or the Government Company has to make payment. If the tender is for sale of material by the Government or Government company, the post-tender negotiations are not be held except with H-1 (i.e., the highest tenderer), if required.

(CVC letter No 98/ORD/1 dated 03<sup>rd</sup> Aug 2001)

(f) Tendering Process - Negotiation with L-1

A workshop was organized on 27<sup>th</sup> Jul 2005 at SCOPE New Delhi, by the Central Vigilance Commission, to discuss relating to tendering process including negotiation with L-1. Following the deliberations in the above mentioned Work Shop, the following issues are clarified with reference to para 2.4 of Circular No.8(1)(h)/98(1) dated 18\* November, 1998 on negotiation with L-1, which reflect the broad consensus arrived at in the workshop.

(i) There should not be any negotiations. Negotiations if at all shall be an exception and only in the case of proprietary items or in the case of items with limited source of supply. Negotiations shall be held with L-1 only. Counter Offers tantamount to negotiations and should be treated at par with negotiation.

(ii) Negotiations can be recommended in exceptional circumstances only after due application of mind and recording valid, logical reasons justifying negotiations. In case of inability to obtain the desired results by way of reduction in rates and negotiations prove infructuous, satisfactory explanations are required to be recorded by the Committee who recommended the negotiations. The Committee shall be responsible for lack of application of mind in case its negotiations have only unnecessarily delayed the award of work/contract.

2.2 Further, it has been observed by the Commission that at times the Competent Authority takes unduly long time to exercise the power of accepting the tender or negotiate or re-tender. Accordingly, the model time frame for according such approval to completion of the entire process of Award of tenders should not exceed one month from the date of submission of recommendations. In case the file has to be approved at the next higher level a maximum of 15 days may be added for clearance at each level. The overall time frame should be within the validity period of the tender/contract.

3.3 In case of L-1 backing out there should be re-tendering as per extant instructions.

(No.005/CRD/12 Dated 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 2005)

(g) Tendering process - negotiation with L1

Reference is invited to Commission's instructions of even number dated 25.10.2005 on the above subject. A number of references have been received in the Commission, asking for clarification on issues pertaining to specific situations.

2. The Commission's guidelines were framed with a view to ensuring fair and transparent purchase procedure in the organizations. The guidelines are quite clear and it is for the organizations to take appropriate decision, keeping these guidelines in view. In case they want to take action in deviation or modification of the guidelines, to suit their requirements, it is for them to do so by recording the reasons and obtaining the approval of the competent authority for the same. However, in no case, should there be any compromise to transparency, equity or fair treatment to all the participants in a tender.

(005/CRD/12 Dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2006)

(h) Tendering process - negotiations with L-1

Reference is invited to the Commission's circulars of even number, dated 25.10.2005 and 3.10.2006, on the above cited subject. In supersession of the instructions contained therein, the following consolidated instructions are issued with immediate effect:-

i) As post tender negotiations could often be a source of corruption, it is directed that there should be no post-tender negotiations with L-1, except in certain exceptional situations. Such exceptional situations would include procurement of proprietary items, items with limited sources of supply and items where there is suspicion of a cartel formation. The

justification and details of such negotiations should be duly recorded and documented without any loss of time.

-7-

ii) In cases where a decision is taken to go for re-tendering due to the unreasonableness of the quoted rates, but the requirements are urgent and a re-tender for the entire requirement would delay the availability of the item, thus jeopardizing the essential operations, maintenance and safety, negotiations would be permitted with L-1 bidder(s) for the supply of a bare minimum quantity. The balance quantity should, however, be procured expeditiously through a re-tender, following the normal tendering process.

(iii) Negotiations should not be allowed to be misused as a tool for bargaining with L-1 with dubious intentions or lead to delays in decisionmaking. Convincing reasons must be recorded by the authority recommending negotiations. Competent authority should exercise due diligence while accepting a tender or ordering negotiations or calling for a re-tender and a definite timeframe should be indicated so that the time taken for according requisite approvals for the entire process of award of tenders does not exceed one month from the date of submission of recommendations. In cases where the proposal is to be approved at higher levels, a maximum of 15 days should be assigned for clearance at each level. In no case should the overall timeframe exceed the validity period of the tender and it should be ensured that tenders are invariably finalized within their validity period.

(iv) As regards the splitting of quantities, some authorized have expressed apprehension that pre-disclosing the distribution of quantities in the bid document may not be feasible, as the capacity of the L-1 firm may not be known in advance. It may be stated that if, after due processing, it is discovered that the quantity to be ordered is far more than what L-1 alone is capable of supplying and there was no prior decision to split the quantities, then the quantity being finally ordered should be distributed among the other bidders in a manner that is fair, transparent and equitable. It is essentially in cases where the authorized decide in advance to have more than one source of supply (due to critical or vital nature of the item) that the Commission insists on pre-disclosing the ratio of splitting the supply in the tender itself. This must be followed scrupulously.

(v) Counter-offers to L-1, in order to arrive at an acceptable price, shall amount to negotiations. However, any counter-offer thereafter to L-2, L-3, etc., (at the rates accepted by L-1) in case of splitting of quantities, as pre-disclosed in the tender, shall not be deemed to be a negotiation.

2. It is reiterated that in case L-1 backs-out, there should be a re-tender.

(No.005/CRD/012 Dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar 2007)

(i) Tendering Process - Negotiations with L1

Attention is invited to the Commission's circular no. 4/3/07 dated 3.3.07 on the issue of "Tendering Process - Negotiations with L1"

In the said circular it has, among other things, been stated "As post tender negotiations could often be a source of corruption, it is directed that there should be no post tender negotiations with L1, except in certain exceptional situations." It has come to Commission's notice that this has been interpreted to mean that there is a ban on post tender negotiations with L-1 only and there could be post tender negotiations with other than L1 i.e. L2, L3 etc. This is not correct.

It is clarified to all concerned that- there should normally be no post tender negotiations. If at all negotiations are warranted under exceptional circumstances, then it can be with L1 (Lowest tenderer) only if the tender pertains to the award of work/supply orders etc. where the Government or the Government company has to make payment. However, if the tender is for sale of material by the Government or the Govt. company, the post tender negotiations are not to be held except with H1 (i.e. Highest tenderer) if required.

2. All other instructions as contained in the circular of 3.3.2007 remain unchanged.
3. These instructions issue with the approval of the Commission and may please be noted for immediate compliance.

(CVC Circular No.01/01/10 issued vide letter No.005/CRD/012 Dated 20<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010)