

No..OFF 1 CTE 1
Government of India
Central Vigilance Commission
(CTE's Organization)

Satkarkta Bhawan, Block A,
GPO Complex, INA
New Delhi-110023
Dt. the 25TH November 2002

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Appointment of Consultants

While highlighting the common lapses/irregularities observed in the Construction works undertaken by the PSUs/Banks, under the guidance of Consultants, the Commission had issued certain guidelines vide letter No. 3L PRC 1 dated 12.11.1982 [copy enclosed-Annexure-1] so as to avoid recurrence of such lapses. These were further emphasized vide letter No. 3L-IRC-1 dated 10.1.1983 [copy enclosed-Annexure-II], inter-alia, bringing out the guidelines circulated by the Bureau of Public Enterprises in their letter no. DPE/GL-025/78/Prodn./PCR/2/77/BPE/Prodn. dated 15.07.1978 and it was reiterated that the appointment of Consultants should be made in a transparent manner.

2. However, it has been observed during intensive examination of various works/contracts by the CTEO that these instructions are not being followed by a large number of organizations. The consultants are still appointed in an ad-hoc and arbitrary manner without inviting tenders and without collecting adequate data about their performance, capability and experience. In some cases, the consultants were appointed after holding direct discussions with only one firm without clearly indicating the job-content and consultation fee payable to them. Often the scope of work entrusted to the consultants is either not defined properly or the consultants are given a free hand to handle the case due to which they experiment with impractical, fanciful and exotic ideas resulting in unwarranted costs. The organizations display an over-dependence on consultants and invariably abdicate their responsibility completely to the latter. The officials do not over see the working of the consultants resulting in the latter exploiting the circumstances and at times, in collusion with the contractors, give biased recommendations in favour of a particular firm. It has also been noticed that the consultants recommend acceptance of inferior items/equipments / payment for inadmissible items and also give

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undue benefit to the contractors like non-recovery of penalties for the delayed completion. The position in respect of projects with multiple consultants is still worse as the self-interest of so many outside agencies takes precedence over the loyalty towards the organization. These agencies tend to collude or collide with each other, and both the situations are detrimental to the smooth implementation of the project.

3. Some of the common irregularities/lapses observed during the last four years or so in this regard are highlighted as under:-

- i) One organization engaged architect from a very old panel, prepared about 15 years back.
- ii) An organization invited and short-listed 5 consultants but awarded the contract to the highest bidder on the plea that the bidder had done a very good job in some other project with the organization. Extra amount of account of travel expenses, boarding and lodging was also sanctioned beyond contractual terms.
- iii) A bank for construction of its Head Office in Mumbai, short-listed three firms after a thorough scrutiny of offers submitted by a large number of bidders. The price bids of these firms were opened , but in a surprising manner, the work of consultancy was awarded to an L-2 firm thus compromising all ethics of tendering.
- iv) The payment terms to the contractors are often allowed quite liberally. In one case, the consultant's fee was paid on quarterly basis without linking the same with the progress of the project. Full payments had been authorized even before the completion of the project. In another work, the consultants were paid substantial amount at an early stage of the project though they had submitted only preliminary drawings. Subsequently, the consultants failed to complete the job and the department took no action against them. In yet another case, the consultant was allowed extra payment for additional documents that he had to generate due to re-tendering of the case. However, the reasons for re-tendering were found attributable to the consultants and instead of penalizing, they were rewarded with extra payment.

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- v) The consultants tend to increase the cost of the work for more fees as generally the fee of the consultants is fixed at a certain percentage of the final cost of project. In an office building work, tender was accepted for Rs.10.00 crores but during execution, specifications were changed and actual cost on completion was twice the tendered cost. Thus, the consultant was unduly benefited as there was no maximum limit fixed for the consultant's fee.
- vi) In the consultancy agreement generally the nature of repetitive type of work is not defined. In one work, 4 similar blocks comprising of 100 hostel rooms each were constructed. The consultants were paid same standard fees for each block. Due to this, the organization suffered loss at the cost of the consultant.
- vii) There is no check on consultant's planning, design and execution. In one work, pile foundation for a workshop building was designed with the capacity of the piles, capable of carrying twice the required load. In the same project, high capacity piles (450 mm dia, 20 m deep) were provided for a single-storeyed ordinary office building, which did not require pile foundation at all.
- viii) In another case, the project was for a design and construction of a training institute on a big plot of land in a very posh and expensive area. The whole construction was two storied with no scope for future expansion. Ironically all other buildings in the vicinity are multi-storeyed highlighting the fact that space utilization here was very poor. Further, the walls in the reception area and on the outside of the auditorium were provided with acoustic insulation with no rationale. For air-conditioning of the library instead of providing a single AHU of suitable capacity with ducting, etc. 20 plus AHUs had been provided in the room. Such fanciful ideas along with poor planning and supervision resulted in the project suffering heavy cost and time overruns.
- ix) In one of the works for a bank in Mumbai, the substation equipment has been installed in the basement area, jeopardizing the safety aspect, as Mumbai gets its fair share of heavy rains and the area is also in close proximity to the sea.

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- x) In many cases, the consultants charge exorbitant traveling expenses. For a work in Punjab, Mumbai based Architects were appointed. The fee payable to them was Rs.6.00 lakhs, but the actual traveling expenses ultimately paid to them were to the tune of Rs.7.5 lakhs.
- xi) Sometimes the consultants pass on their responsibility to the contractor . In one work, the consultant was supposed to give design ad drawing as per the consultancy agreement. While preparing the tender document for construction work, the responsibility for the preparation of drawings and structural design was entrusted with the construction contractor by adding a condition to that effect. The contractors loaded the quoted rates for the above work and the consultant was benefited at the cost of the organization.
- xii) In case of road projects, it was observed that consultants under different categories like general consultants, planning & design consultants and construction management consultants were appointed for almost all the activities of the projects without competitive bidding. The work done by the consultants is not checked by the departmental engineers who feel their job is mainly to issue cheques to the consultants/contractors.

4. The above list is only illustrative and not exhaustive. The Commission would like to reiterate the instructions regarding appointment of consultants. The appointment of consultants should be absolutely need based and for specialized jobs only. The selection of consultants should be made in a transparent manner through competitive bidding. The scope of work and role of consultants should be clearly defined and the contract should incorporate clauses having adequate provisions for penalizing the consultants in case of defaults by them at any stage of the project including delays attributable to the consultants. As far as possible a Project Implementation Schedule indicating maximum permissible time for each activity should be prepared with a view to arrest time overruns of the projects. There should be no major deviation in the scope of work after the contract is awarded and the consultant should be penalized for poor planning and supervision if the deviations result in excessive cost overruns. Further, the consultant's fee should be pegged based on the original contract value. The role of the consultants should be advisory and recommendatory and final authority and responsibility should be with the departmental officers only.

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It is suggested that these instructions may be circulated amongst the concerned officials of your organization for guidance in appointment/working of consultants in the engineering works/contracts. These instructions are also available on CVC's web site, <http://cvc.nic.in>

Sd/-
(M.P.Juneja)
Chief Technical Examiner

Encl: As above

To

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केन्द्रीय सतर्कता आयोग
CENTRAL VIGILANCE COMMISSION



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सं./No..... 011/VGL/063-334701

दिनांक / Dated 23rd January, 2017

Circular No. 01/01/17

Subject :- Systemic Improvement Guidelines - Engagement of Consultants – regarding.

Attention is invited to Commission's Circular No.08/06/11 dated 24th June, 2011 (**copy enclosed**) regarding selection and employment of consultants. The Commission, taking into account the practices and procedures, being followed by various organisations, would advise following measures while finalising the contracts for engaging consultants:

- (a) **Framework of Instructions of GOI / Guidelines of CVC / others** : Departments / Organisations (employer / client), engaging a consultant, should draw attention of the consultant to the relevant and extant instructions of Government of India, GFR issued by Ministry of Finance, guidelines of CVC and provisions of the Procurement Manual / relevant instructions of the respective organisation, as applicable to the subject matter of the advice / service to be rendered by the consultant and required to be complied with.
- (b) **Accountability of the employer / client and the consultant**: A consultant engaged by the employer has to have a certain degree of accountability, on its part, for any advice and / or for any service rendered to the employer, keeping in view norms of ethical business, professionalism and the fact that such advice / service is being rendered for a consideration, as per the terms of the contract. At the same time, the employer also has to have its share of accountability, for accepting the advice and services, provided by the consultant.

To ensure adequate accountability, suitable tender terms and conditions for apportioning accountability, between the employer and the consultant, need to be incorporated. Also, there should be suitable provisions to enforce such accountability, in case of improper discharge of contractual obligations / deviant conduct by / of any of the parties to the contract.

- (c) **Conflict of Interest:** The consultant shall avoid any conflict of interest while discharging contractual obligations and bring, before-hand, any possible instance of conflict of interest to the knowledge of the employer / client, while rendering any advice or service.

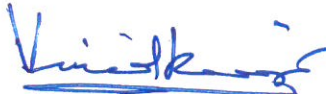
The consultant must act, at all times, in the interest of the employer / client and render any advice / service with professional integrity. A consultant is expected to undertake an assignment / project, only in areas of its expertise and where it has capability to deliver efficient and effective advice / services to the employer.

- (d) **Maximum Possible Use of In-house Expertise:** Before arriving at a decision to engage consultant and in matters of accepting advice / service rendered by the consultant, all organisations should, in the first instance, explore the possibility of using in-house expertise. Proof checking / peer review, in case of advice rendered by a consultant, especially in high value projects, may be advantageous.

2. Apart from above, following few measures may be considered for better and efficient execution of consultancy contracts:

- (a) Suitably incorporating Integrity Pact in the consultancy contracts.
- (b) An advisory to the consultant, in suitable format, to keep in view transparency, competitiveness, economy, efficiency and equal opportunity to all prospective tenderers / bidders, while rendering any advice / service to the employer / client, in regard with matters related to selection of technology and determination of design and specifications of the subject matter, bid eligibility criteria and bid evaluation criteria, mode of tendering, tender notification, etc.
- (c) Normally, pre-bid conference and timely addressing of objections / queries, in appropriate manner, from prospective tenderers / bidders should be in place.
- (d) Suitably incorporating a provision making the consultant to cooperate fully with any legitimately provided / constituted investigative body, conducting inquiry into processing or execution of the consultancy contract / any other matter related with discharge of contractual obligations by the consultant.

3. The Commission desires that the above guidelines be brought into the notice of all concerned.


(J. Vinod Kumar)
Director

To

- (i) The Secretaries of all Ministries / Departments of GOI
- (ii) All Chief Executives of CPSUs / Public Sector Banks / Public Sector Insurance Companies / Autonomous Bodies etc.
- (iii) All CVOs of Ministries / Departments of GOI / CPSUs / Public Sector Banks / Public Sector Insurance Companies / Autonomous Bodies etc.
- (iv) Website of CVC



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सं./No..... 011/VGL/063 -134657

दिनांक / Dated..... 24th June, 2011

Circular No. 08/06/11

Subject: Selection and employment of Consultants.

The issue of role and professional liability of consultants in government contracts has been under consideration in the Commission for quite some time. The Commission has decided that following guidelines, be kept in view while finalising the contracts for engaging consultants.

1. Conflict of Interest. The consultant shall not receive any remuneration in connection with the assignment except as provided in the contract. The consultant and its affiliates shall not engage in consulting or other activities that conflict with the interest of the employer under the contract.

The contract shall include provisions limiting future engagement of the consultant for other services resulting from or directly related to the firm's consulting services in accordance with following requirements:-

(a) The consultants shall provide professional, objective, and impartial advice and at all times hold the employer's interests paramount, without any consideration for future work, and that in providing advice they avoid conflicts with other assignments and their own interests. Consultants shall not be hired for any assignment that would be in conflict with their prior or current obligations to other employers, or that may place them in a position of being unable to carry out the assignment in the best interest of the employer. Without limitation on the generality of the foregoing, consultants shall not be hired under the circumstances set forth below:

(i) **Conflict between consulting activities and procurement of goods, works or non-consulting services (i.e., services other than consulting services covered by these Guidelines)** – A firm that has been engaged by the employer to provide goods, works, or non-consulting services for a project, or any affiliate that directly or indirectly controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with that firm, shall be disqualified from providing consulting services resulting from or directly related to those goods, works, or non-consulting services. Conversely, a firm hired to provide consulting services for the preparation or implementation of a project, or any affiliate that directly or indirectly controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with that firm, shall be disqualified from subsequently providing goods, works, or services (other than consulting services covered by these Guidelines) resulting from or directly related to the consulting services for such preparation or implementation. This provision does not apply to the various firms (consultants, contractors, or suppliers) which together are performing the Contractor's obligations under a turnkey or design and build contract.

(ii) **Conflict among consulting assignments** – Neither consultants (including their personnel and sub-consultants), nor any affiliate that directly or indirectly controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with that firm, shall be hired for any assignment that, by its nature, may be in conflict with another assignment of

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the consultants. As an example, consultants assisting a employer in the privatization of public assets shall neither purchase, nor advise purchasers of, such assets. Similarly, consultants hired to prepare Terms of Reference (TOR) for an assignment shall not be hired for the assignment in question.

(iii) Relationship with Employer's staff – Consultants (including their experts and other personnel, and sub-consultants) that have a close business or family relationship with a professional staff of the Employer (or of the project implementing agency) who are directly or indirectly involved in any part of: (i) the preparation of the TOR for the assignment, (ii) the selection process for the contract, or (iii) the supervision of such contract may not be awarded a contract, unless the conflict stemming from this relationship has been resolved in a manner acceptable to the Employer throughout the selection process and the execution of the contract.

(iv) A consultant shall submit only one proposal, either individually or as a joint venture partner in another proposal. If a consultant, including a joint venture partner, submits or participates in more than one proposal, all such proposals shall be disqualified. This does not, however, preclude a consulting firm to participate as a sub-consultant, or an individual to participate as a team member, in more than one proposal when circumstances justify and if permitted by the RFP.

(b) Unfair Competitive Advantage - Fairness and transparency in the selection process require that consultants or their affiliates competing for a specific assignment do not derive a competitive advantage from having provided consulting services related to the assignment in question. To that end, the Employer shall make available to all the short listed consultants, together with the request for proposals, all information that would in that respect give a consultant a competitive advantage.

2. Professional Liability - The consultant is expected to carry out its assignment with due diligence and in accordance with prevailing standards of the profession. As the consultant's liability to the Employer will be governed by the applicable law, the contract need not deal with this matter. The client (purchaser) may, however, prescribe other liabilities depending on the requirement in each case without any restriction on the Consultant's liability as per the applicable law.

The Commission desires that the above guidelines be brought into the notice of all concerned.



(J Vinod Kumar)
Officer on Special Duty

To

1. All Chief Vigilance Officers of Ministries / Departments / PSUs / Banks / Insurance Companies / Autonomous Organizations / Societies / UTs.
2. All Secretaries to the Government of India.
3. All CEOs / Heads of Organizations of PSUs / Banks / Insurance Companies etc.