Circular No. 1 of 2012

From: Chairman, Central Procurement Board

To: Heads of Public Bodies

Preparation and Vetting of Bidding Documents

It has been noted that the process of vetting of bidding documents suffer inordinate delays, which often given rise to criticism. The delays can be attributed mainly to the fact that the bidding documents submitted for vetting, in majority of cases, contain elements/clauses that are not clear or not in compliance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act and the Regulations, resulting in exchange of correspondences and further consultations, which at times take months.

2. Our objective for 2012 is to reduce significantly delays in the vetting of bidding documents, which will enable the award of contracts within the shortest possible time.

3. With that objective in mind, the Central Procurement Board (CPB) has introduced a Checklist for vetting of bidding documents, as per Annex I, for the guidance of public bodies. The Checklist will ensure that all necessary elements are taken into account in the preparation of the bidding documents, and will greatly contribute to expedite the vetting of the documents by the Board.

4. If the bidding documents are in good shape, the evaluation process will also become much easier, resulting in further gains in man-hours.

5. Moreover, to ensure due diligence in the preparation of a bidding document, it is advisable that the document be reviewed by another officer and finally cleared by the Tender Committee of your Organization, prior to submission to the CPB for vetting.

6. Furthermore, to avoid wasting time in exchange of correspondences on issues requiring further clarifications/consultations, the CPB, henceforth, intends to proceed as follows:-

(i) on receipt of bidding documents for vetting, CPB will as far as possible respond within two weeks time communicating to the public body concerned its views/comments, and

(ii) all officials concerned with the procurement will be convened to a meeting at the CPB, where all issues will be discussed, and agreement reached on amendments that need to be brought to the bidding documents.

2/…
7. On the other hand, new measures are being introduced to expedite the evaluation of bids and the award of contracts, which include, inter alia, the holding of briefing sessions with members of each evaluation committee to ensure that evaluations are carried out within reasonable time frame.

8. The CPB is also prepared to hold pre-vet meetings, where necessary, with officers concerned with the preparation of bidding documents, with a view to providing them with general guidance prior to their embarking on the task.

9. Through these new measures, the time taken for the vetting of bidding documents and the award of contracts will be significantly reduced.

10. Heads of public bodies are kindly requested to ensure that procurement officers do have recourse to the Check-list in the preparation of bidding documents for submission to the Central Procurement Board, and that the request for vetting is henceforth made in the format at Annex II. The request should be signed by an officer not below the rank of Assistant Secretary or equivalent.

11. Please note that any request for vetting not made in the recommended format will not be entertained.

12. This Circular supercedes Central Procurement Board Circular No. 1 of 2010 on this subject.