

## **INTEGRITY PACT IN COCHIN PORT TRUST**

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has been promoting integrity, transparency, equity and competitiveness in transactions by various organizations of the Government of India. Public procurement is an area of concern for the CVC, and many steps have been taken to put proper systems in place. In this context, Integrity Pact (IP), a tool conceptualized and promoted by Transparency International, an international NGO, aimed at preventing corruption in public contracting, has been found useful.

It has been decided by Ministry of Shipping that all organizations under the Ministry will implement IP. IP should cover every tender / procurement above a specified threshold value. The threshold value of contracts / procurements / transactions incorporating IP would be such that it covers 95% by value of all contracts / procurements / transactions of the organization in the last 3 years. Presently the threshold is fixed as Rs. 3Crores.

IP essentially envisages an agreement between prospective vendors / bidders, and Cochin Port Trust (CoPT), committing the persons / officials of both sides not to resort to any corrupt practice in any aspect of the contract at any stage. Only those vendors / bidders, who commit themselves to IP with CoPT, would be considered competent to participate in the bid process. Any violation would entail disqualification of the bidders and exclusion from future business dealings. IP, in respect of a particular contract should cover all phases of the contract, from the stage of Notice inviting Tender (NIT) / pre-bid stage, till the conclusion of the contract, ie., final payment or the warranty / guarantee period.

IP would be implemented through Independent External Monitors (IEMs), who are eminent persons appointed by the organization, with approval of CVC. The term of appointment for an IEM would be 3 years. Name of the IEM will be mentioned in NIT.

The IEM would review independently and objectively assess, as to whether and to what extent parties have complied with their obligations under the IP. IEM would have access to all contract documents, whenever required. The bidders may raise disputes / complaints if any, with the IEM. The IEMs would examine complaints received by them and give their recommendations / views to the Chairman of Port Trust. Recommendations of IEMs would be in the nature of advice and would not be legally binding. Their role is independent in nature and the advice once tendered would not be subject to review at the request of the organization.

Shri. P C Cyriac, IAS (Retd.) who was Addl. Chief Secretary to Govt. of Tamilnadu, had been the IEM of CoPT from 2010 to 2013. On completion of his 3 year tenure, Sri. K K Vijayakumar, IAS (Retd.) has been appointed as the IEM of CoPT with effect from January 2014.