E-PROCUREMENT IN ICAR: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purchasing and IT organizations are continuously looking to improve the purchasing practices and systems they use to improve the efficiencies and minimize the spend. The recent economic downturn has helped organizations to be more cost-conscious. The software industry has responded to this business need by producing software systems along the lines of industry best practices of purchasing. They come in different forms (providing various functionalities of purchasing) and names such as e-Procurement, Supply Chain Management, Supplier Relationship Management Systems, Strategic Sourcing, and Spend Management Systems etc. However, purchasing scientific equipments of complex specifications for ICAR Institutes through e-Procurement is a major challenge ahead.

This study on 'e-procurement in ICAR: issues and challenges' is a part of dissertation submitted to the Punjab university, Chandigarh for the degree of master of philosophy in social sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the thirty-fourth advanced professional programme in public administration of the Indian institute of public administration, New Delhi.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) tools have the ubiquitous power to make time and distance irrelevant thereby increasing manifold the efficacy of public service delivery. Innovations in ICT have also provided an opportunity for effective working modalities across government agencies. The role of ICT needs to evolve to enable inter-organizational linkages and, with it,

the need for e-government coordination. Therefore here is an urgent need to introduce ICT in ICAR to make it a vibrant organisation.

E-government can contribute significantly to the process of transformation of the government towards a leaner, more cost effective government. It can facilitate communication and improve the coordination of authorities at different tiers of government, within organizations and even at the departmental level. Further, e-government can enhance the speed and efficiency of operations, by streamlining processes, lowering costs, improving research capabilities, and improving documentation and record-keeping. Keeping this in view and also to bring about greater transparency in the procurement, Central Vigilance Commission, GOI vide their order No.98/ORD/1dated 18th December, 2003 suggested to switch over to e- procurement/ e-sale.

E-governance is beyond the scope of e-government. While e-government is defined as a mere delivery of government services and information to the public using electronic means (ICT), e-governance allows direct participation of constituents in government activities. E-governance will allow citizens to communicate with government, participate in the governments' policy-making and citizens to communicate each other. With this importance, the Government of India has approved the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), comprising of 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and 10 components, on May 18, 2006. E-procurement is one of the important MMP under NeGP, which is being implemented to ensure that government procurement becomes simplified, transparent and result-oriented.

Government of Andhra Pradesh envisions providing good governance by establishing a COMMITTED, ACCOUNTABLE, RESPONSIVE, INSPIRING, NATIONALIST, GENUINE Government - CARING Government. E-Procurement is one of the vehicles used in reaching the goal of CARING governance. Through e-Procurement, AP Government has procured goods Rs. 27143 Crore during the year 2006-07 establishing E-Procurement technology feasibility.

The major Challenges in the implementation of E-Procurement are in the field of people, processes, technology and resource. Though people, processes, & technology are within the ambit of ICAR yet without the support of Government resources and participation of public (e-enabling suppliers) at large, e-procurement project cannot be implemented successfully in ICAR.