

MINUTES OF OPEN FORUM DISCUSSION WITH CUSTOMERS

Date: 29th October 2015

Place: Community Hall of CDA Guwahati

Time: 10.00 Hrs.

In the light of upholding the principles of good governance and to infuse within the ambit of the department the characteristic like transparency, accountability, rule of law and to promulgate the theory of E3 (economy, efficiency and effectiveness), an open forum discussion with the vendors/suppliers have been carried out in the Community Hall of the CDA Guwahati in consonance with the spirit of Vigilance Awareness Week on 29.10.2015.

2. At the outset, Sh. Chayan Das, Sr. Accounts Officer welcomed Brig Subhash Dixit, Deputy GOC, HQ 51 Sub Area, and requested him to preside over the occasion as Chairman on behalf of GOC 51 Sub-Area. Shri Chayan Das also welcomed Shri Pramod Kumar, IDAS, CDA and other dignitaries.

3. All Officers of CDA Guwahati were present at the discussion. The discussion was attended by around 40 Army Officers and 30 Clerks/JCOs of different units located in Guwahati, Shillong, Dimapur, Tezpur, Jorhat, Likabali, Missamari, Vairengte etc. Around 30 Army/Air Force contractors/suppliers have also attended the Meeting.

4. (a) Brief: In address of Dy GOC, 51 Sub-Area, he appreciated CDA Guwahati for organising Customer Meet first of its kind for open discussion to address all the stakeholders in a common forum. He urged all participants to draw optimum benefit from the Meet. He specifically insisted CDA office for provisioning of following information:

(i) Copy of extract of Rule/position mentioned in GFR/DPM so that unit may get ready reference for replying audit objection raised by the CDA office and learn the same so that similar irregularities may be avoided in future.

(ii) Copy of observations/circulars may be made available to Army through Army Intranet.

With thanks to all, he completed his address.

(b) CDA addressed the issues outlined by Dy-GOC 51 Sub-Area and assured that:

(i) Most of Orders and books of Rules & Regulations are available in CGDA /CDA Guwahati website. However, necessary rules/position specific to the objection will be provided to the unit alongwith objection statement.

(ii) System of making available copies of observations in Army Intranet is already in place. However the matter will be taken care of at appropriate level to avoid any lapses.

5. Sri H. B. Dutta, Sr. AO (Admin) then made a power point presentation highlighting Roles of CDA Guwahati organization, misconception and certain facts regarding functioning of this office, bottlenecks faced by this office. The presentation was supported with miscellaneous illustrations on the related issues for better comprehension. He also emphasized on the basic principle of Audit that main purpose of Audit is not fault finding mission, it is rather a process of correcting the procedural and operational lapse so far as preparation and submission of bills/vouchers/documents are concerned.

6. Shri H. B. Dutta, Sr. AO's (Admin) presentation was followed by a speech by Col Shivendra Kumar, Col. Q, 51 Sub Area, who highlighted the issues related to IFA. Col Q, 51 Sub Area emphasized on earmarking more IFAs and delegate more power to the level of Accounts Officers for speedy decision making. He outlined that Rep of IFA in PC is responsible for decision taken by the PC as a collegiate and therefore, categorically rep of IFA may be not be treated as rep of CDA. A lot of points of disagreement may be settled within the PC and thus delay in obtaining final IFA concurrence and observation raised at later stage may be avoided. He also suggested to provide softcopies of DPM -2009 and DFPDS-2015 in the Army Intranet so that the same are readily available to all the units/formation for reference. He expressed gratitude to the CDA for bridging the gap between executives and CDA Guwahati substantially. He informed that a proposal has been made for portal of CDA Guwahati on Army Intranet and the same is under consideration. Col Q finally expressed his thankfulness for organizing the CUSTOMERS' MEET and anticipated that the MEET will be beneficial in the long run.

7. Thereafter a presentation was made by Shri Rajesh Lall, IDSE, GE (P) Guwahati. He highlighted the issues faced by the MES in catering services to Units while following audit requirement of CDA Guwahati. He requested CDA office to interpret the relevant rule/orders in favour of customer satisfaction and waive petty/trivial objection on the bills.

8. Then stage of open forum was set opened and the CDA took charge to reply all queries raised by the all stakeholder present in the Customer Meet.

(a) Against GEs presentation and in general, CDA informed that CA/Bills are verified with reference to the checklist prescribed in Defence Accounts Department Office Manual Part-VIII (OM Part-VIII) during audit. In case, points in checklist are complied with at the level of unit at very initial stage, most of observation/irregularities may be avoided. For this purpose, relevant checklist are being provided to unit through Army Intranet/e-mail for guidance.

(b) CDA expressed his great concern about the un-even flow of bills and non-uniformity in utilization of fund. He mentioned that last year about approximately 80,000 of bills were received. But during the current year, only 10% of bills have been received. Less number of bill till date are due to consumption of time in understanding of system for transition from DFP-2006 to DFPDS-2015 at the level of Unit. It is expected that bulk amounts of bills are to arrive in Main Office CDA Guwahati during last three months of FY. As powers have been enhanced at unit level, most of bills will be more than Rs.50,000/- and thus come under the power of Accounts Officer for passing. As there is shortage of

staff/AO in Main Office CDA Guwahati, it is foreseen than clearance of bill in time may suffer adversely. As such, he insisted that all units to maintain even flow of bill to the CDA Office so that rush of work at the closing month may be controlled.

(c) CDA also mentioned that optimum effort has been made to provide IFA Coverage to units located at Guwahati for implementation of DFPDS-2015.

(d) CDA expressed concern over the non-usage of option 'Client Area' and 'Public Grievances' in CDA Guwahati website by all concerned. He urged all vendors to obtain ID from CDA Guwahati so that they may be aware about their latest Bill/fund Status for which they are now depended upon physical paper information. Similarly, any grievance may be brought directly to the personal notice of CDA through option 'Public Grievance'.

(e) He also clarified that objections are raised against the unit not vendors, therefore, vendors need not approach CDA office for settlement of the objections. In case of difficulties faced by unit in preparing reply/compliance of objections, they may consult CDA Office directly.

(f) Specific queries raised and clarification given during the Customer Meet are enumerated in Annexure-A enclosed.

9. **Valedictory Speech by CDA**

CDA finds that MES contractor are not aware of the facilities of 'Client Area' available in CDA Guwahati website. He requested all MES Contractor to apply for login ID from CDA office through respective GE offices.

Effort will be made by CDA Guwahati to provide information on status of bill viz., date of receipt/return/clearance direct to the e-mail of beneficiary or through SMS. Software is required to be designed for this purpose.

Unit may follow checklist while submitting bills to the CDA office so that returning of bill and consequent delay may be minimized.

Follow up action towards commitment made in this meeting will be taken up the CDA office.

10. The meeting ended up with vote of thanks offered by Shri Chayan Das, Sr. AO.

Annexure-A to Minutes of Customer Meet-2015

Sl. No.	Query raised	Clarification given
1	Lt. Col. D. S. Poovaiah GE 868 EWS queried with an example that out Rs. 10 Cr. allotment CDA releases Rs. 7.5 Cr. and balance amount lapses due to non-release of fund by CDA	Cash Assignments are released on basis of instructions issued by the CGDA New Delhi. If specific amount is needed, proper justification is required to be placed on record, otherwise CA is allowed on proportionate basis. Further, Monthly Expenditure Reports are regularly uploaded in CDA Guwahati website and Army Intranet for dissemination to the units. Units are require to access the CDA Guwahati website through User_id & Password issued by this office. However, it has been observed that units are not accessing the facility. Units may obtain the User ID & Password by sending a request to Shri S. S. Dev Roy, Sr. Accounts Officer (EDPS) to cda-guw@nic.in and also contact at Mobile No.: 9435302179
2	Lt. Col. D. S. Poovaiah GE 868 EWS again raised an query regarding random objections raised by this office/AOs GEs on Periodical Service, Special Repair of building etc	Controller himself replied that during review of works done in 23 AOs GEs Offices, no Building Block Register was found maintained as such it is not possible to assess nos. of repairs undertaken in a particular building, total cost of repairing which are vital from audit point.
3	Lt. Col. D. S. Poovaiah GE 868 EWS further highlighted a case where due to wrong interpretation of Govt order a wrong objection was raised by AO GE and due to which the whole process was delayed	Controller informed that such instances may be brought to his notice directly through e-mail < cda-guw@nic.in >. He further, brought to the notice of all concerned that any complaints/grievances etc may be also be sent through the CPGRAMS portal available in the Website of CDA Guwahati. The same are directly accessed by the CDA himself for proper redressal of grievances.
4	Shri Pankaj Tyagi, IDSE, Project Manager, Likabali raised an query as to who is responsible for preparation/maintenance of Building Block Register as he has not seen such register before.	There was an exchange of views amongst MES Officers and Shri Rajesh Lal, IDSE GE Guwahati clarified that such register known as RTMB and are maintained by GEs. This is an auditable document.

5	Shri Pankaj Tyagi, IDSE, Project Manager, Likabali informed that often CDA/AO GE raises objections of petty nature which could be waived	CDA replied that nature of objection has been standardized to avoid raising of observations on petty nature. 30 types of common mistakes committed by various units in processing of purchase/bills have been prepared as checklist for compliance by the units to minimize avoidable correspondences. The checklist has been uploaded in the Army Intranet for wider publicity and compliance by units.
6	Lt. Col. Nandita Pandey, Station Workshop, EME Guwahati requested to waive objections on items of urgent requirement/repair works.	It was replied to take into consideration the content of aforesaid checklist while processing purchase etc.
7	Lt. Col. Nandita Pandey, Station Workshop, EME Guwahati also sought advice as to how emergency purchases can be made without concurrence of IFA.	CDA advised to invoke Rule 145 and 146 of General Financial Rules 2005 in such cases.
8	Rep of M/S Nivedita Enterprise raised an query regarding validity of CDA Guwahati observations on issues where technical expertise require since technical specification varies from station to station.	CDA requested for information on any specific case from the vendor since without referring to documents no comment can be offered. Further, the Controller informed that units were not following procedure for technical vetting etc. Controller also appraised that on similar cases IAR has been raised and included in report of CGDA.
9	Rep of M/S Nivedita Enterprise regarding an objection raised by SC-IV section where items were found to be supplied at more than the MRP. The rep informed that the rate was quoted on the basis of searches made by them in the WEB. The rep also informed that they quote such high rate to cover geographical variation, time lag between date of supply and receiving of payments etc.	Shri T. C. Gogoi, E Section replied that there is no provision to procure items at a higher price than the MRP.

10	Rep of M/S Nivedita Enterprise raised a point that CDA office receive bills through Speed Post whereas while returning the same with observations etc the same are returned through Ordinary Post, which delays the whole procedure	Controller himself replied to the query and informed that normally Speed Post services is engaged to send such items. However, during the end of the financial year due to lack of sufficient fund bills etc had to be sent through Ordinary Post. Further, Controller advised to provide E-MAIL IDs of Units/Contractors/suppliers to this office, so that such correspondence can be sent by e-mails which will remove postal delays and grievance.
11	Sh. Rakesh of M/S R. K. Builders raised that bills are not passed on urgent basis despite their completion of work on urgent basis. 30-90 days are taken to clear the bills in CDA Guwahati.	Controller clarified that this office is delivering its jobs at optimum efficiency despite acute shortage of officers & staff. Due to communication gap correct information are not disseminated to the vendors in time. For which vendors have been requested to provide their e-mail ids to ensure faster communication. Col. Q also added that since the inception of IFA system and involvement of IFA, delay in every stage has minimized substantially.
12	Sh. Rakesh of M/S R. K. Builders put his grievance that Security Deposits are not released despite completion of contractual liability period.	Controller responded that on review of list of Security Deposits (SD) held with this office it was found that some of the SDs has already been released but it is presumed that vendors are not aware of the release of same for which pro-active action has been taken at this end. Units have been requested to collect e-mails of vendors and forward the same to this office for intimating position of SDs to vendors as well as status of bills.
13	One MES Contractor raised an issue regarding appropriateness of observation raised by this office/AOs GE on Sales Tax and Labour Cess since these are non financial matters and therefore may be dropped	Controller assured that the matter will be discussed in AOs GEs conference likely to be held.

14	Rep of M/S Nivedita Enterprise proposed to implement SMS Service for informing vendors regarding receipt/payment etc of bills and thereby reducing communication gap.	CDA assured that the advice will be considered for implementation.
15	Rep of M/S Nivedita Enterprise pointed that name of his firm is listed more than once in the website of CDA Guwahati whereas they have only one firm with one bank account only etc.	CDA requested to units to obtain fresh Mandate Forms from vendors and send this office for updation.
16	Rep of M/S Nivedita Enterprise further pointed that observations are raised against units whereas the vendors suffer the most due to inordinate delay in receipt of payments.	Controller reiterated that 30 types of common mistakes committed by various units in processing of purchase/bills have been prepared as checklist for compliance by the units to minimize objections/avoidable correspondences. The checklist has been uploaded in the Army Intranet for wider publicity and compliance by units.

Annexure-B

Follow up action

1. **Registration of vendors:** Circular to all GE/CE/CWE issued to provide vendor registration for creating their log-in ID so that information relating to them can be disseminated directly.
2. **For streamlining release of Security Deposit:** Circular issued to all GE/CWE/CE and AO(GE) for reconciliation of claim on Security Deposit so that reason of delay can be pinpointed.
3. **IT Procurement:** Circular quoting relevant provision in DPM are issued to all units so that observation at the stage of bill passing may be avoided.
4. **Checklist:** Checklist followed in CDA Guwahati are being circulated to all for guidance so that points watched by CDA Guwahati can be complied by the unit while forwarding bill to this office.
5. **Providing Status of bill receipt/return/passing:** Viability of Software for providing real-time information through SMS/Email is under study. However information through CDA Guwahati 'Client Areas' is being made shortly.