



Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur

Institute Research and Development Committee

Minutes of the IRDC Meeting held on 3rd August, 2009 in PBCEC

Members Present: Drs. K. Muralidhar (Chairman), B. Basu (Convener), Rajat Moona, Balaji Prakash, A. Agarwal, P. Munshi, Utpal Das, Nishith Verma, D. Kundu, J. Kumar, S. Sangal, S. Qureshi, Kumar R. Priya, K. S. Singh, J. Subramaniam (representative of regular scientific/Design staff), Ms. Rashmi Parihar (representative of Project Associates working for sponsored projects), Mr. K. Sudheendra Rao (representative of PhD students) and Mr. K. V. Satyamurty

Special invitees: Asst. Registrar (Stores & Purchase), Audit Officer, DORD Staffs (Sharda Tiwari, Pradeep Phalke and Surendra Gupta)

1. Announcement: The minutes of July 27 meeting along with the revised document on Project staff salary was ratified. The revised document will now be sent to Director for his approval. IRDC welcomes Mr. K N Dakhale and K G Arvind Kumar as special invitees.

2. Discussion on the Project related Purchases (indigenous and import): DORD made opening remarks on this issue, which concerns a large number of PIs. It was mentioned that the idea of this meeting is to understand the issues related with the delays on several cases of a number of Project purchases, mostly related to imported equipments. Subsequently, IRDC Convener presented some slides related to the existing purchase procedures related to Import and indigenous purchases and it was followed by a detailed discussion over one and half hour. Among many aspects, various aspects related to procedural convenience, smoothness and fastness, import handling agency's performance, and role of office automation were discussed.

Based on the inputs from IRDC members, the following have been recorded:

- 2.1. AR (R&D), Mr. Satya Murty volunteered to develop a user-friendly - model price quotation, enquiry letter as well as an integrated indent-cum-purchase form for the use of Indenters. These documents will be discussed among IRDC member prior to finalization.
- 2.2. Once such streamlined documents are followed, IRDC was conveyed that the timescale for issue of purchase order from the date of submission of a purchase indent can be expected to be **six working days** in normal circumstances. AR, R&D explained the role of input services in paper movement, a major factor that affects the efficiency parameters. The role of Public Sector Banking in opening LCs, TTS as well as in providing information on online funds transfers, debits etc. have pointed out. The measures being taken up to persuade the sluggish banking system have also been explained. Partially complete files, incomplete Automation system, loss of time in dock movement in courier system, redundancy in paper movement, lack of professional manpower and frequently changing project staff, statutory obligations, mandatory approvals and committee proceedings are few of the definitive factors besides unforeseen and unprecedented situations that are specific to the cases, it was added. A complete approach to handle these issues in a synergistic manner would be saving at least 50 % of the time loss.
- 2.3. It was observed that the purchase related document goes through same office more than once during the entire procedure. This redundancy can be avoided with some scrutiny and making suitable policy change in this regard.
- 2.4. A number of IRDC members expressed concerns over the problems with freight forwarder.
- 2.5. It was generally agreed upon that the office automation needs to be significantly improved so that PIs can see the status of their purchase document online during various stages. There is also a need to integrate Ingress and Oracle software to make the purchase process efficient and also to ensure immediate commitment of expenditure, which will help in better financial planning by the PI. This is viewed as one of the major weaknesses of the system and requires urgent action by Office Automation. This has been understood to be resulting in issue of UCs and overspending against sanctions for lack of online information on the committed expenditure in the Project Accounts.

- 2.6. A brief document detailing the entire purchase procedure will soon be available and this will be of immense help for the new faculty members. AR. R&D has informed the floor that he has been working on development of a comprehensive R&D manual first of its kind in the R&D system of IIT Kanpur, which will cover all the aspects of the R&D management.
- 2.7. It was mentioned by Audit officer that handwritten receipts will be allowed in the interim period, when the computer generated receipts are not available. It was clearly mentioned that many city-based small shops, providing us small equipment accessories, do not have adequate computer infrastructure.
- 2.8. Also, in order to maintain smoothness as well as to check whether various purchases are entered into stock registrar, it was suggested that Audit office staff members can make occasional visits to various departments/labs.
- 2.9. The electronic approval for the committees for the appointment of project staffs as well as purchase will be followed. The e-approval for travel from projects has been already been implemented and is currently followed by PIs. The AR (R&D) has shown considerable enthusiasm for e-approval and conveyed that parallel automation system developed by R&D office for e-approvals and requests shall be made available within a months time. A separate notification with detailed guidelines shall be issued once the system is ready. This is expected to be ready by September 15, 2009.
- 2.10. The softcopy of all the R &D related forms will soon be available in MS-WORD format. Once available, only hardcopies of the electronically filled forms (NOT handwritten forms) will therefore be accepted at DORD office.
- 2.11. Based on the entire discussion, the purchase flow charts will be modified in a separate meeting between Stores, R&D, Audit and Finance wing of the Institute and be put up for the consideration of the IRDC at its next meeting.
- 2.12. It was also suggested that the Stores & Purchase Wing, R&D Office and the Internal Audit wings have to work coherently to make the entire purchase procedure more fast and smooth so that system be strengthened.
- 2.13. The performance of import handling agency will be periodically reviewed by the in-charge, Stores and Purchase. A number of examples were cited to reveal the lacuna in the performance of those agencies.

- 2.14. The members have also quoted the examples of completing the entire purchase process within a couple of days which is appreciable and visualized as the most idealistic situation. However, the realistic situations always overpower the processes which are to be controlled appropriately.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Chair and with special thanks to all the special invitees.

Prepared by

Bikramjit Basu
IRDC Convener

Prepared on 12th August, 2009