

Forest Headquarters
Thiruvananthapuram
Dated 03-11-2023

Circular No 5/2023

Sub: Streamlining and decentralization of procurement and upkeep of Electronic Equipments - reg:

Ref: 1. Circular No 4/2008 dated 08-05-2008 of the PCCF & HoFF, Kerala
2. Decision No. 5 of the CCFs' Council meeting held on 02.08.2023.

1. With reference to Circular 1 mentioned above, the Kerala Forest Department implemented a Centralized Procurement System for electronic equipments, aligning with the guidelines in the Store Purchase Manual. The rationale behind this circular was rooted in the observation that local procurement by individual offices often resulted in equipment being acquired without due consideration of factors such as configuration, quality, pricing, and post-sales service arrangements. Also, with the Centralized procurement, the possible price advantage of bulk purchase vis-a-vis fragmented purchases at individual offices was also considered. The Department recognized the need for standardization and cost-effectiveness in equipment procurement across all its offices. Consequently, the introduction of centralized procurement for electronic equipment aimed to address these concerns.
2. However, in the centralized procurement system, the consolidation of needs, handling of complaints, and warranty/AMC monitoring are leading to considerable delays, adversely impacting the day-to-day operations of numerous offices.
3. Furthermore, subsequent to the issuance of Circular 1, the Government introduced an online procurement system (CPRCS) through GO (MS) No 24/2017/ITD dated 18-11-2017. According to clause 5 of this GO, Government Departments are mandated to procure IT hardware devices (e.g., PCs, laptops, printers, scanners,

etc.) exclusively through the Online Centralized Procurement System. This directive was reiterated in Circular No. IT Cell-1/26/2019/ITD dated 18-03-2019. The rationale for implementing this Government Order on online centralized procurement (as stated in the order) is that, *“With extensive implementation of e-governance projects in the state, government departments now procure IT hardware devices for deployment through multiple tender processes. Such individual tender processes are time consuming, cumbersome and encounter huge procedural delays. Government is also not able to leverage the possible price advantage of bulk purchase, due to such discrete procurement process”* It is worth noting that the Government's decision to maximize cost advantages through bulk purchases at the government level has superseded the bulk price advantage envisaged in the centralized equipment procurement approach for various offices within the Kerala Forest Department, as outlined in Circular 1.

4. Additionally, the Government of Kerala amended the Store Purchase Manual 2013 through GO(P) No 2/2018/SPD dated 28.04.2018 and endorsed the utilization of GEM (Government e-Market Place) for the procurement of various Stores.
5. The CCFs' Council, in its meeting held on 02.08.2023, has approved the proposal to decentralize the procurement of electronic equipment, including wireless sets at the field level, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Circular No 4/2008 dated 08-05-2008 of the PCCF & HoFF, Kerala, is hereby revoked.
 - b. The procurement and maintenance of Computers, Laptops, Application Software, UPS Systems, Photocopiers, Multifunction Printer devices, Cameras, Binoculars, Total Stations, Scanners, Global Positioning Systems, Wireless equipment, drones, and their associated accessories, along with licenses where necessary, shall be the responsibility of individual offices within the Kerala Forest Department, extending down to Division level offices (excluding those in Forest Headquarters, Vazhuthacaud). This shall be done in accordance with the delegated financial powers through the CPRCS Portal and/or GEM portal, or any other facility introduced by the Government of Kerala from time to time, in adherence to prevailing rules, guidelines, Government Orders,

Circulars, and provisions in the Store Purchase Manual, as amended over time.

- e. The Purchasing Authority must ensure that all the technical/ administrative aspects for procurement of Electronic Equipments/ Stores, based on the relevant directions issued by department, Government, from time to time, are followed.
- a. The Purchasing Authority must ensure that the equipment remains under warranty or under AMC for a period as stipulated by the Government, following the Guidelines for Condemnation/Scrapping/Disposal of Electronics & IT equipment outlined in G.O. (Ms) No 27/2018/ITD dated 28.10.2018 and G.O. (Ms) No. 30/2021/ITD dated 01.10.2021 (and amendments as applicable).
- e. CCF(IT) will issue technical specifications for common electronic equipment (Desktop Computers, Laptops, and Multifunction printers) to be procured at the field level at the start of each financial year, based on the decisions of the Technical Committee constituted by CCF (IT).
- f. The procurement and maintenance of electronic equipment at the Forest Headquarters will continue to undertaken and be overseen by the Chief Conservator of Forests (IT).

This arrangement shall come into force with effect from the date of this Circular.

**Principal Chief Conservator of Forests &
Head of Forest Force
Kerala**