



Report

On

*Procurement Process and  
Regarding Challenges*

*Banglalink Digital  
Communication Ltd.*



**banglalink**<sup>TM</sup>  
An ORASCOM TELECOM Company

## *Internship Report*

### **Procurement Process and Regarding Challenges, Banglalink**

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#### **Submission Date:**

**June 29, 2015**

## Letter of Transmittal

June 29, 2015

Mr. Saif Hossain  
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Subject: Submission of the internship working report.

Sir,

It is my great honor to submit the report of my Internship Program at **Banglalink Digital Communication Ltd.** In addition, it is a great pleasure that I have been able to submit the internship report on—Procurement Process and regarding Challenges in due time. The whole experience of this internship program enabled me to get an insight into the real life situation. I have tried my best with my knowledge to make a full-fledge report by analyzing all the requirements you have asked for. Besides this, there may be shortcomings. I would be grateful if you consider those from excusable manner.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you for your guidance and suggestions in preparing the report. I will be happy to provide any further explanation regarding this research report if necessary.

Sincerely Yours

Khandaker Mariya  
ID: 11104138

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praises are due to Almighty Allah who enabled me to complete this report. This report titled the overview of the Procurement department in Banglalink. I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my academic supervisor, Mr. Saif Hossain. It would not have been possible for me to complete this report without his help, advice and overall supervision. His constant encouragement and supervision throughout the period of this study have been greatest inducement for me and directly contributed to the accomplishment of the task. I am also indebted to my organizational supervisor Mr. Sayeed Ahmed (Senior Manager Procurement), Mr. Nazirul Islam Khan (Procurement Senior Executive), Ms. Rabeya Ferdouse, Mr. Saud-Al Faisal and to Mr. Sajjadur Rasul, along with others who had kindly spared me with their precious time, support and priceless information. No words of appreciation can sufficiently express the immense gratitude that I owe to the procurement team of Banglalink. Equally I would also like to express my sincere gratitude and indebtedness to the authority of BRAC University for their kind co-operation.

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## **Executive Summary**

Banglalink Digital Communication Ltd has to regularly procure telecommunication equipment, accessories and services to accomplish its goal of delivering world class telecom service to customers. Banglalink's procurement functions are handled by the Supply Chain Management (SCM) Unit of Finance Department. Procurement is the section of SCM, is responsible for handling procurement of products and/services that are directly brought and bought from Vendors. The report describes the Procurement process with Analysis which starts with a Purchase Requisition (PR) from a user department. The report also focuses on different types of challenges and problems faced by the department involved in the procurement system and process. Key general challenges identified are- insufficient time available for end user requirement planning, quality assurance of products supplied by bidders, requirement of many supporting documents from participating bidders, the tradeoff between Compliance and Simplification, focus on price reduction during negotiations by sidetracking quality, pressure of meeting deadlines of user requirements, manual Procurement Approval (PA), lack of manpower, structural problem of PO signing hierarchy, relying completely on one supplier and so on. The report also suggests possible solutions to manage these challenges. The important recommendations are- sufficient time allocation, assuring quality, ensure coordination among procurement team and user department, follow less complex policies regarding documentation, decreasing time allocation for technical evaluation, introducing ORACLE Finance PR Model,

increasing manpower, speed up signing PO process, developing a Standard Operating Procedure for procurement and so on.

## Chapter One

### Introduction

With the advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, globalization and association among the multinational and foreign companies are making their impact in the third world economies including that of Bangladesh. To address this ever increasing competition, Bangladesh financial institutions and other companies are working such a way in order to meet challenges both locally and as well as international markets.

Bangladesh's gross domestic product (GDP) contributed almost \$650 million by the cellphone industries and created nearly 250,000 jobs in the country. A recent study by the international firm Ovum showed that most of the jobs in telecom industries paid significantly higher than that of average job in the country.

With a view to develop skilled professionals in every area, BRAC UNIVERSITY, Bangladesh has undertaken the internship training program for its students. As a partial and essential requirement of BBA degree, the authority has placed me to Banglalink Digital Communication Ltd for having practical experience in telecommunication industry for three months internship program.





## **ORIGIN OF THE REPORT**

This report is an internship report prepared as a requirement for the completion of the BBA program. The primary goal of the internship was to provide an ‘on the job’ exposure to the student and an opportunity for translation of theoretical conceptions in real life situation. The students are placed in enterprises, organizations, research institutions as well as development projects. In this connection, after the completions of the BBA program, I was assigned to the head office of Banglalink Digital Communication Ltd. for practical orientation. I chose the topic “Procurement Process and regarding Challenges” for my internship report under the supervision of Mr. Sayeed Ahmed (Procurement General Manager) and Mr. Saud Al Faysal (Technical Procurement Manager) of Banglalink.



## Objective of the study

### **General Objectives of the report:**

General objective of the project is to fulfill the internship requirement for BBA program. In order to make the students more competent, BRAC University requires the students to take the Internship course, BUS 400, as a BBA program requirement which helps us to get accustomed to the real business world. To complete the course students need to spend three months at an organization and submit an internship report.

### **Specific Objectives of the report:**

From the broad objective stated above we can bring out the following specific objective:

1. To understand and analyze the procurement process of a renowned multinational telecommunication organization like Banglalink Digital Communication Ltd.
2. To identify the strategies & policies for Procurement Process.
3. To find out their key unique features.
4. To analyze the methodology of Procurement Process in a simple way.
5. To find out bottleneck of their process with effective solution to overcome the limitation.
6. To know about the challenges and time loss of their process.
7. To recommend some solutions to the challenges faced by the company.

## Limitations

While doing this project I had to face some limitations. These are as follows-

1. This study has kept limited on analysis. There is no formal test on any hypothesis base as it is a procurement theme.
2. Time is the key constraints of this report.
3. To perform employee survey became impossible because of limitation in number of employee in SCM.
4. All the Information is not easily accessible or not permitted to disclose according to the company policy, rules and regulations on the disclosure of confidential information.

## Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was the Supply Chain Management in Banglalink. But due to lack of access to sources of information, the study mainly focused on the Procurement process of the company. From this point of view this report could be a new contribution in the study of Knowledge, Attitude & Practice in urban Bangladesh concerning Telecommunication. And this can be said as an empirical study.

## Methodology of the study

### **Framework of the report:**

The whole report has been arranged with three specific chapters. Chapter one named as introduction part which includes the introduction of the project. Here the topic, methodology of the study, limitations and significance of the study are introduced. Chapter two named as organization part which includes the description of the overall organization. Part three includes the main project part which includes procurement process, problems, analysis & conclusion.

**Target population:** The target populations for the study are –

1. Internal employees.
2. Vendors of the organization.
3. Key executives.

**Study Area:** The study will be conducted within the organization to represent the procurement process of Banglalink Digital Communication Ltd.

**Data Sources:** For the information of the report various data collected by informal interview with the employees. In addition several studies on Banglalink Digital Communication Ltd of the website publications have been used for this purpose.

### **Phases of the study:**

Data will be collected from different executives, internal employees & company vendors through informal interviews. Besides, several website publications will be studied. As it is a descriptive study of the procurement process of Banglalink Digital Communication Ltd, so there is no specific sample size or population and also there will be no survey for research. It is just an analysis of the critical procurement process of the company. This descriptive study includes information collected from the population through informal interviews. The information

collected for this topic is objective as they are collected from the company's internal employees which are very much genuine.

## Chapter Two

### Company Overview

#### **Banglalink and its Parent Organization**

##### **Orascom Telecom Holding**

Orascom Telecom Holdings (OTH) is considered among the largest and most diversified network operators in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, and has acquired in early 2008 a license to operate mobile services in North Korea.

Established in 1998, the company has acquired seven operating licenses in this region. The organization has managed to build an amazing subscriber base of around 17.5 million subscribers as of March 31, 2005.

Orascom Telecom operates GSM networks in:

- Algeria ("Djezzy")
- Pakistan ("Mobilink")
- Egypt ("MobiNil")
- Tunisia ("Tunisiana")
- Iraq ("IraQna")
- Bangladesh ("Banglalink")
- Zimbabwe ("Telecel Zimbabwe")

The majority stakeholder (56.9%) of the OTH group is the Sawiris family of Egypt, of whom Naguib Sawiris is the present Chairman and CEO. Orascom Telecom is traded on the Cairo & Alexandria Stock Exchange under the symbol ORTE and ORAT respectively, and on the London Stock Exchange traded under the symbol ORTE. The capital of Orascom Telecom is estimated at 1.1 billion Egyptian Pound represented in 110 million shares.

## **Mission Statement**

OTH's mission is to be the primary telecom operator in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, providing the best quality services to their customers, values to their shareholders, and a dynamic working environment for the employees.

With this mission in mind, OTH had also divested its investment in various locations, including Jordan, Yemen & the Ivory Coast, to concentrate on its core function of providing the primary GSM network in the regions it operates.

Most of its remaining subsidiaries concentrate on adding value added services to its operation than in introducing new packages from time to time, in an effort to provide its customers with a complete mobile solution and in turn add value to its shareholders.

## **Banglalink**

Banglalink Digital Communication Limited with a simple mission of “bringing mobile telephone to the masses” in their mind launched their telecommunication business in February 2005. The company aims to make a difference in the lives of the people. Its vision is to “understand people's needs best and thus create and deliver appropriate communication services to improve people's life and make it easier”. Keeping their mission and vision in their mind, currently Banglalink is the second largest cellular service provider in Bangladesh.

Though the journey of Banglalink is of nearly a decade the original infrastructure of the company was laid in 1989. Sheba Telecom (Pvt.) Ltd. was granted license in 1989 to operate in rural areas (Upazillas) and they expanded their business by obtaining their GSM license in 1996 and launched cellular service in the name of **SHEBA** in fall of 1997 under the joint venture of Bangladeshi Integrated Services Ltd. & Malaysian Techno Resources Industries.

Due to a chronic feud between the companies and other internal problems, in 2004 Orascom Telecom Ventures Limited of Malta (Now Telecom Ventures Ltd. of Malta), a fully owned subsidiary of Global Telecom Holding S.A.E. was set to buy the Malaysian stake of Sheba Telecom in an treaty of USD 25 million. In September 2004 Telecom Ventures Ltd. bought 100% of Sheba Telecom for USD 60 million and rebrands the franchise as Banglalink and launches it on February 10, 2005.

Banglalink cellular service has significant impact on Bangladesh telecommunication market. Overnight cellular communication becomes affordable for wide range of customers where Banglalink changed the mobile phone status from luxury to a necessity.

In July 2013 a merger between Orascom Telecom Bangladesh Limited and VimpelCom takes place and the company name changed to Banglalink Digital Communication Limited with new Slogan “Notun Kichu Koro” translated “Start Something New”.

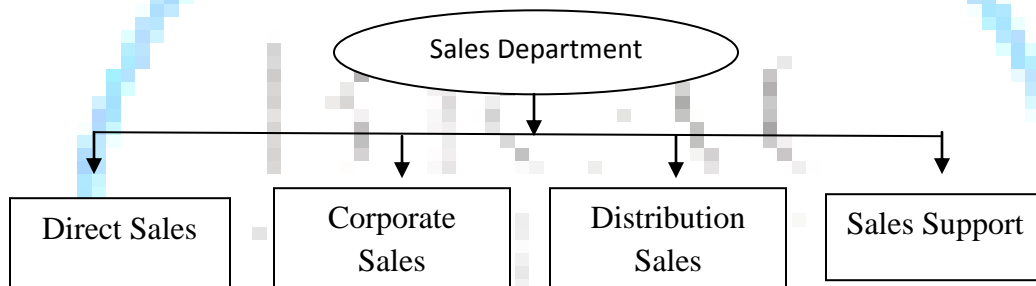
## Structure of the Organization

### Functional Departments of Banglalink

There are approximately eight functional departments in the organization. The functions of these departments are described briefly in the following sections:

#### 1. Sales

One of the most important links in the chain, the sales department is responsible for all the sales activities of the organization. It is divided into four divisions: Direct Sales, Corporate Sales, Distribution Sales and Sales Support.



**Figure1: Sales Department**

#### 2. Marketing Department

The Marketing team also consists of several teams, which includes PR & Communications, VAS, Loyalty & Retention and International Roaming. All teams report to Omer Rashid, the Marketing Director.

The Loyalty & Retention team and The VAS division is responsible for the continuously adding valuable services to provide a complete solution to existing customers, for example, for making conference calling & ring tone/logo downloads possible.

PR & Communication is responsible for designing and developing all promotional materials for the marketing of any new product/package and any other activities. They coordinate and work directly with the advertising agency, vendors and procurement

#### 3. Human Resources

Aside from recruiting and training employees, the HR department is also responsible for disseminating internal communication to all users and in the process of



developing compensation packages for its employees, such as medical insurance under the group plan, life insurance and running several activities such as the Vaccination Program for all.

#### 4. Customer Care

This too is segmented, consisting of the Customer Care division itself, and then there is Care Line, Credit Management Unit and the Support Services Unit. They are responsible for handling customer queries and providing solutions to any problems faced by the subscribers.

While the above departments are all located in the headquarters in Gulshan 2, the Customer Care people are divided between the head office and the Call Center (Star Tower) between Gulshan 1 & 2.

#### 5. IT & Billing

The IT & Billing department, as is evident from the name, is in charge of all the hardware, software and program requirement of the other departments. They also generate the bills for the company subscribers (post-paid).

#### 6. Administration

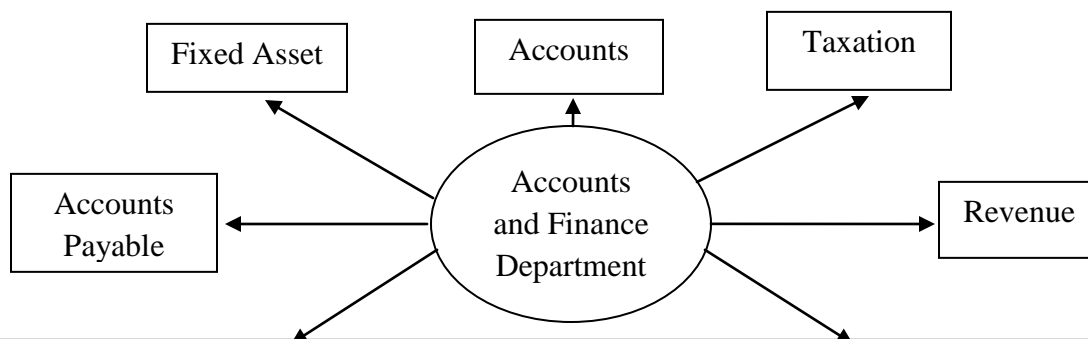
Apart from the Administration division, the department also consists of the Legal division and the Project Management Office.

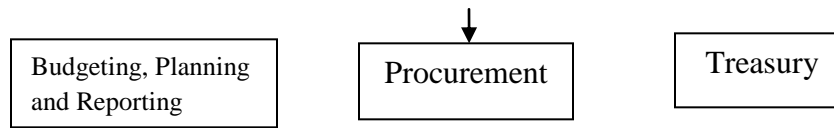
#### 7. Technical

The technical people are all located at Hosna Tower in Gulshan – 1, but many work offsite, taking care of BTS or BSCs. The various divisions of this particular department include Access Network, Core Access, O&M, and Rollout.

#### 8. Finance

The Finance department is the largest department in the head office with an entire floor devoted to their needs. They consist of the Procurement & Cash Management divisions among many others. The whole of finance department is shown below:





**Figure 2: Structure of Finance Department**

Accounting & Finance department of Banglalink is a very important value adding function within the organization. It is believed that Accounting and Finance Department has the role to add value to Banglalink’s business by providing right information on time, ensuring right process and maintaining appropriate control. To achieve this goal the organization provide highest importance to the Automation, Speed, Accuracy and Commercial sense when providing service to their Internal and External stakeholders.

**The unit I was chosen for**

**Procurement:**

Procurement is the acquisition of goods and /or services at the best possible payment terms, through selection and solicitation of sources, preparation and award of contract, in the right quantity and quality, at the right time, in the right place for the direct benefit or use of the organization.

By procurement, in simpler terms, we understand something that encompasses the whole process of acquiring property and services. It begins when the department identifies a need and decides on its procurement requirement.

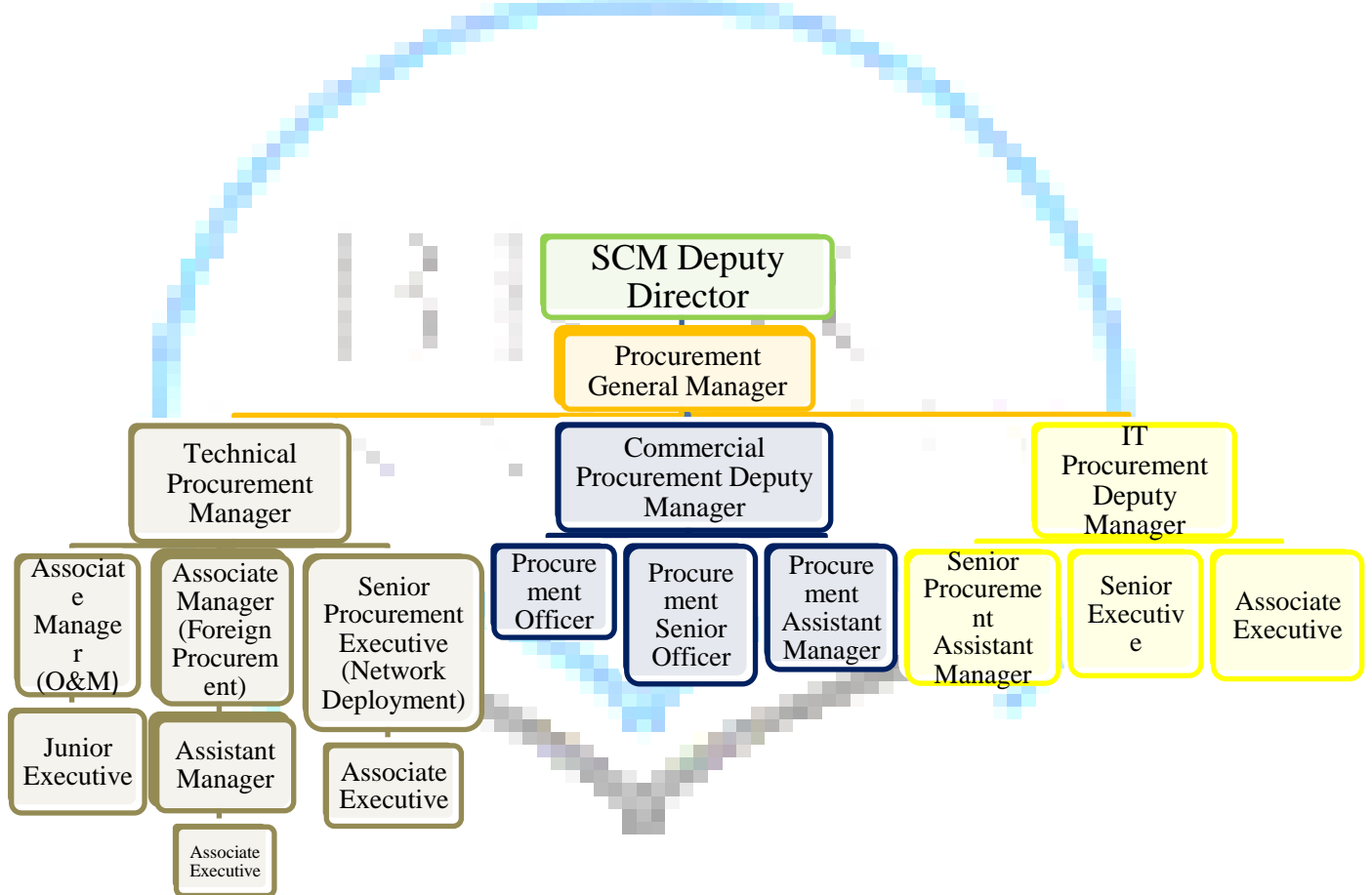
In general, two types of procurement can be observed in organizations. They include:

Direct procurement: Direct procurement is usually performed by a full-time professional operating within a “purchasing department”.

Indirect procurement: Indirect procurement may be handled by a separate department. However, it is also performed by people in all areas of a company; procurement is not their full-time role.

The procurement division in Banglalink works under the accounting and finance department and plays a major role in maintaining a good collaboration with other departments within the organization. Procurement team works under two sections, namely: 1. Procurement Technical 2. Procurement Non-technical or Commercial

## Operational Network Organogram



**Figure 3: Procurement Organogram**

### Procurement Technical

As I mentioned earlier, procurement department plays a vital role of the organization and the technical team plays one of the most crucial functions to expand its network capacity. This team primarily works for purchasing goods concerning civil construction such as equipment, towers, generators, BTS, base stations and others. Technical team mainly receives request from Network Deployment for their huge requirement regarding network expansion.

For example, when Network deployment identifies the need for network expansion in certain areas and thus require setting up of BTS tower and antennas in both Greenfield [1] and Rooftop [2], they sent Purchase Request [3] to Technical team. Vendor will start work only when they are supposed to receive the Purchase Order [4] from procurement. As a result, the user departments always need to rely on procurement team for any type of request for technical purchase as Procurement team has the authority of Purchase Order creation. The whole process of raising PR to issuance of PO is discussed fully in below:

Technical procurement mainly deals request from the following four user departments:

- Rollout
- Operation and Maintenance (O & M)
- Access Network
- Core Network

And there are small assigned groups of 2-3 members within Procurement Technical to deal with each user group.

### **Rollout:**

Rollout sent Purchase Request to Technical Procurement mentioning the detailed specifications or detailed scope of work (SOW) [5] required for the particular site, work completion time, proposed supplier, site location where works needed to be done etc. Upon receiving the Purchase Request, the assigned Technical procurement team request to issue Purchase Order.

The following Purchase Order is issued by Technical Procurement for Rollout:

- BTS (Base Transceiver Station) / MSC (Mobile Switching Center), Civil and Technical works
- Various Materials and services (Towers, Generator etc.)
- Consultancy (Tower, Foundation design and supervision)

### **Operation and maintenance (O & M)**

After the completion of the rollout process by the different vendors, it is needed to maintain those BTS or MSC site to run frequently. If any kind of restructure or equipment damages occurs then the user department sends the PR to the Procurement. After that procurement technical team

assign the vendor to solve the problem. The following PurchaseOrder is issued by the O & M technical team:

- Maintenance service contract (Generator, AC)
- Various Materials for support operation (Cable, Connector and tools)

### **Access Network**

Access Network maintains network performance in terms of regulating radio frequency, controls transmission protocol; ensure sound network quality by managing base substation. To carry out those responsibilities they need equipment and thus place purchase request to the procurement department. Access Network mainly deals with:

- TP (Transmission Planning) [Advanced Multiplexer]
- RF (Radio Frequency) & Planning
- Network Quality
- BSS (Base Sub Station)

### **Core Network**

Core network team's responsibility is to maintain core network operation through Main Switch Center (MSC), Value Added Service (VAS) and Intelligent Network (IN) through customized software designed for the specified purpose and thus to provide those facilities they need to procure equipment related to this responsibility.

### **Procurement Non-Technical**

Procurement Non-Technical deals with only purchase of non-technical materials needed by the various functional units of Banglalink. Purchase Requests are raised by the following departments:

#### **Marketing**

Marketing department mainly deals with Public Relation (PR) & Marketing Research. Furthermore they raise PR for contracts of Bill Boards, T.V. and Radio Advertisements including the remuneration of models.

#### **Sales**

Sales department arranges meetings with the dealers and suppliers to fix contracts incorporate and regional areas. The Expenditure of arranging the venues and refreshments are sent to non-technical for PO issuance.

- Corporate and Regional Sales
- Sales Support
- Trade Marketing

### **Admin**

If any branch of Banglalink is opened, its decoration, furniture, generator, UPS etc. are purchased through procurement non-technical. Moreover, legal related activities including defending and attempting for law suits, payment of lawyers are approved by this department. Supply of lunch for the employees in cafeteria and other entertainments for any occasion, Contract agreement for hiring transport, fuels etc. are approved through Procurement Non-Technical.

### **IT**

All IT equipment like Computers (P.C or Lap Top), Printer and Toner, Scanner etc. and allelectrical works, LAN works are purchased through procurement non-technical.

### **Customer Care Department (CCD)**

All sorts of logistic supply for CCD, expenditure for conducting training and workshops including participants' food and training materials are raised by CCD to procurement non-technical.

### **Human Resources**

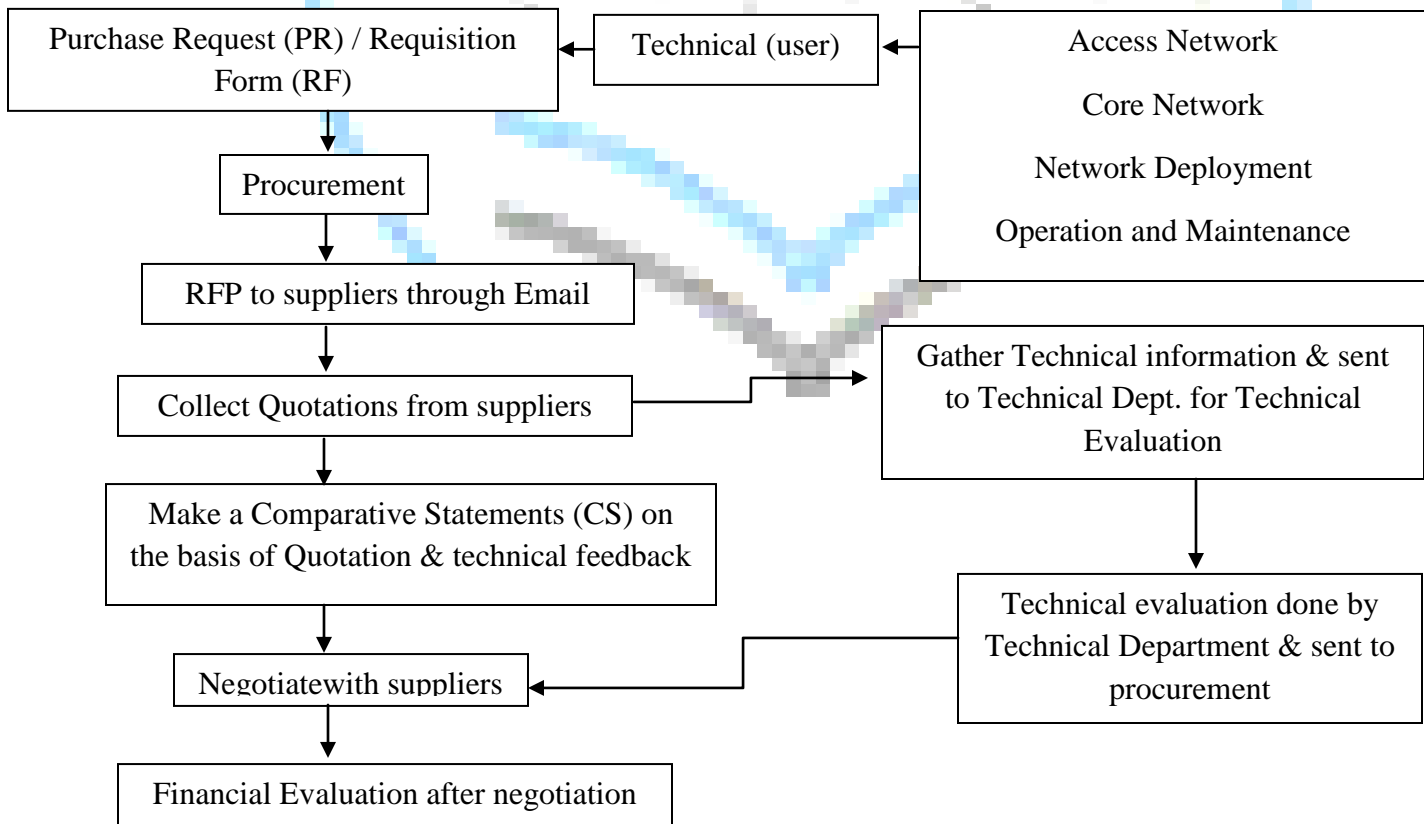
In providing service training to the officers and employees of Banglalink for skill development is raised by HR department to procurement non-technical.

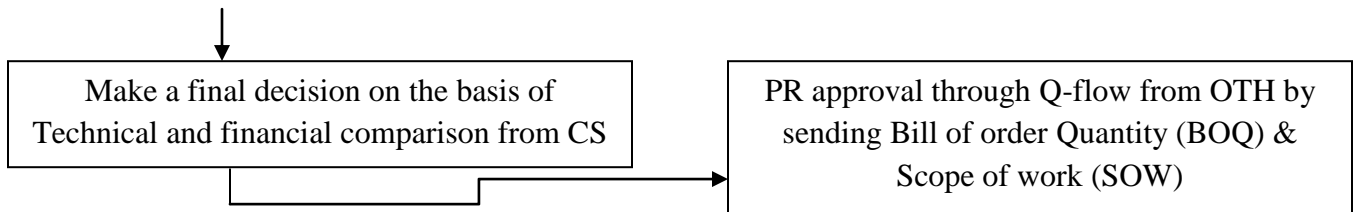
## Chapter Three

### *The whole process of PR to PO in Local procurement*

#### **Purchase Request Approval Process:**

When any department feels the need for standard goods or services, for example, purchasing generators, fixing up lights, Air conditioners, Servicing of PCs, organizing training or workshop, issuing of employee ID Cards, maintenance of security systems etc., they raise Purchase Order (PO) or send Request for Proposal (RFP) to vendors.





**Figure 4: Step down of Purchase Request approval process**

The process involves the following RFP activities:

1. User department source vendor for given Scope of Work (SOW).
2. Floating of RFP to potential vendors through official email. The email contains
  - a. Scope of Work with detail Bill of Quantity (BOQ) [6].
  - b. The last date and time of submitting the RFP.
  - c. Vendors submit technical offer and financial offer separately in two sealed envelope or by soft copy only to procurement department.
  - d. Request of acknowledgement of RFP along with proper official signature from vendor is required.
  - e. In case if any vendor fails to meet the deadline of RFP submission, then the vendor company needs to take approval from HOD (Head Of the Department) of procurement.
3. After receiving the offers (Technical and Financial) from vendors, procurement department forward the technical offer to the requester or user department for further evaluation.
4. Whereas the financial offer from the vendor, remains with procurement and are opened in presence of at least two members of procurement, to maintain transparency.
5. Financial offer should have following information (These information should be communicated with the vendor before RFP float):
  - a. Clear Price information including VAT/TAX as per Govt. Rule
  - b. Delivery / work completion time
  - c. Validity of offer
  - d. Warranty terms (if applicable)

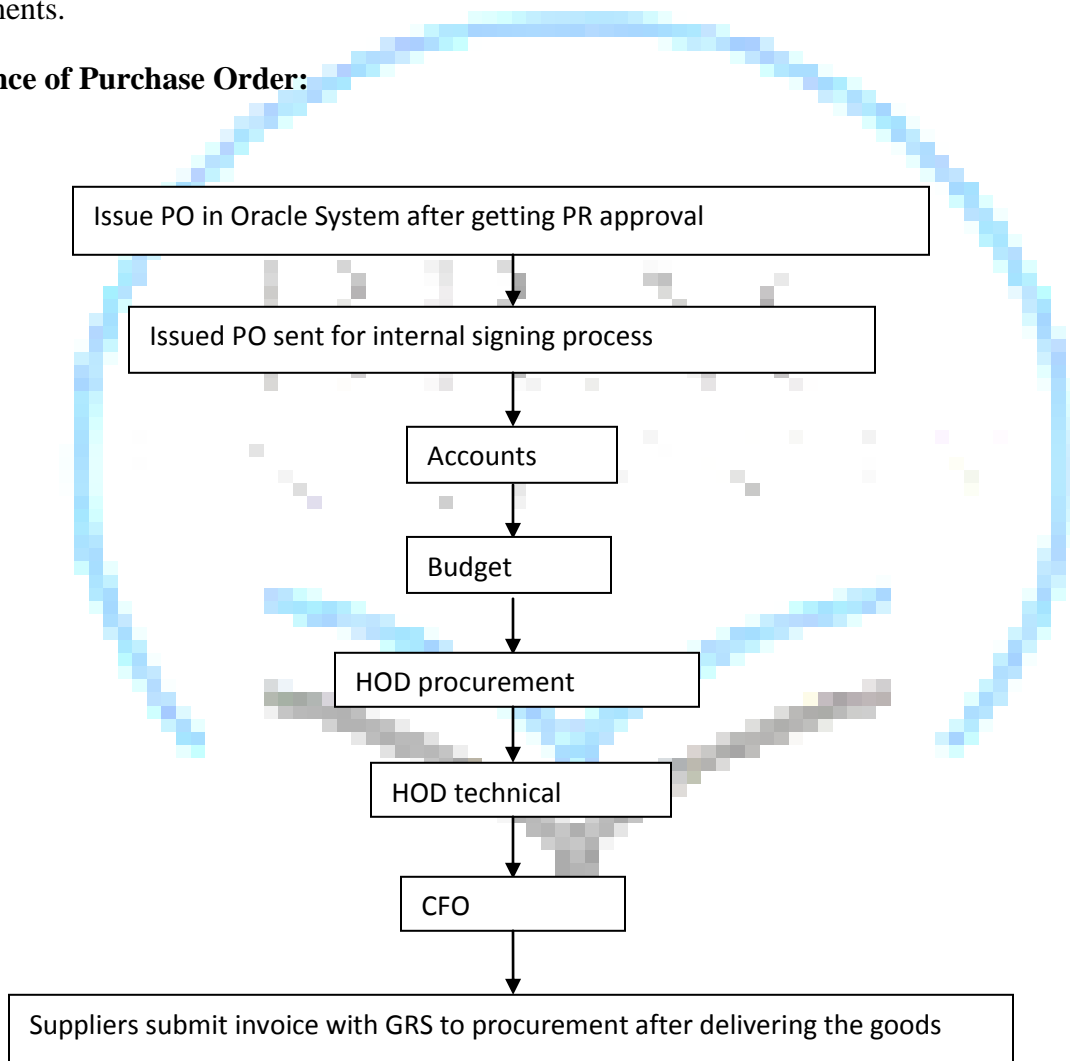


e. Payment term

6. After technical evaluation from user department, a negotiation meeting is called from procurement either by mail or by making call. If there are more than three approved vendors, the selection committee will choose three vendors with lowest asking price. It is mandatory that at least two members of procurement to be present in all negotiation meeting.

7. On the basis of negotiation, a Comparative Statement (CS) [7] is prepared mentioning the final price of goods or services agreed upon by the company along with the approval of corresponding line manager and HOD of procurement. CS also contains proper User evaluation of technical documents.

**Issuance of Purchase Order:**



**Figure 5: Issuance of Purchase Order process**

Generally the procurement process deals with the receipt of approved purchase request and ends with the delivery of goods and services by issuing PO (Purchasing Order). Technical team of procurement issues PO against PR that raise for technical purpose. The issuers of PO's are the buyers of goods and services.

After the PO is created by buyer it is reviewed by the supervisor and forwarded to accounts and budget respectively for approval. After the approval from budget the PO is returned to procurement for next level of approvals based on "PO approval hierarchy". At any stage if PO is rejected it gets back to buyer for changes or additional information or clarification.

Following is the step-down of PO issuance process

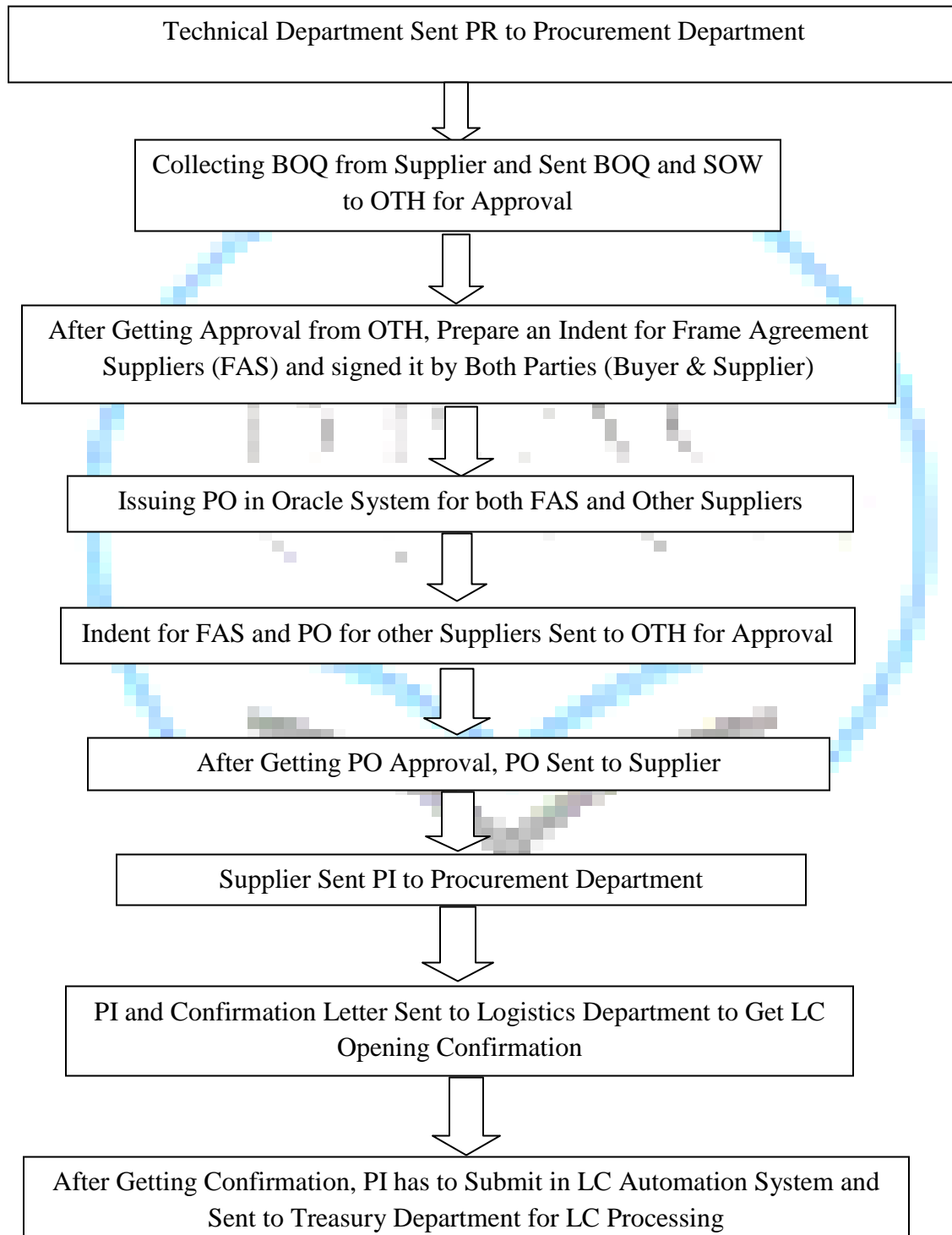
1. Buyer creates PO and sends to supervisor.
2. Supervisor verifies and sends PO to Accounts and Budget for approval.
3. After Budget, approval from HOD of Procurement and User department is required.
4. Lastly, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) provides approval on PO.
5. When PO is approved it is handed over to the supplier for delivery of items.
6. After goods are delivered supplier gets signature on delivery 'chalan' from receiver and submits invoice to procurement along with copy of delivery 'chalan' and PO.
7. Requesting department sends GRS (Goods Received Sheet) to procurement to confirm receiving of goods.
8. Procurement registers receiving of Goods in Oracle and forwards invoice to accounts payable.
9. Accounts payable arrange payment to supplier as per payment terms in the PO. For advance payment procurement mentions advance payment terms in PO and a copy of PO is handed over to accounts payable after approval and advance is made as per terms of PO.

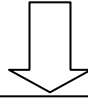
## **Foreign Procurement**

The above discussed process is a process to procure locally within the territory of Bangladesh. What if, Banglalink procure from outside the country? The process is little bit different than the local purchase as there are many processes involved while procuring from international market.

Banglalink procures from different international suppliers. Mainly they have four Frame Agreement Suppliers (FAS) from whom they procure major parts for expansion of network and thus come up with excellent service quality.

The whole process of foreign procurement is shown in the following page:





Procurement has to follow up the Total Process, whether the Shipment has arrived and inform Logistics to Clear the Shipment

**Figure 6: Foreign Procurement process**

Four suppliers are as follows:

- Huawei
- Nokia Siemens networks
- Ericsson
- SOMITOMO Corporation

The process for issuing PO is almost similar to what we have discussed in the local procurement apart from some valid changes. In foreign procurement, there is very little scope of negotiating with 'Frame Agreement Suppliers' than other international suppliers like Rosenberger, Draka, etc.

Before procuring from FAS, Banglalink needs to make an Indent for agreement purpose. The indent possesses:

- Buyer Name
- Supplier Name
- Purchase Order (PO) Number
- Indent Number
- Onshore/Offshore
- Description about goods/services
- Value of goods or services rendered from suppliers
- Payment Terms
- Delivery Schedule
- Terms of Shipment (CPT/CFR)

Whether the agreement is onshore [8] or offshore [9] based should be clearly mentioned on the indent. 'Indent' is the agreement paper of procuring from frame agreement suppliers. After preparing the indent, both parties (Buyer and Supplier) have to sign on this agreement as it is a legal obligation for both parties. Then the indent is sent to Orascom Telecom Holdings (OTH) for approval through the software 'Q-flow'.

After the approval from OTH, PO is delivered to suppliers and suppliers then send a Proforma Invoice (PI) [10] to buyer (Procurement Department) for LC opening process. LC [11] opening is a major task for procuring internationally. Treasury and Logistics Department facilitate this procurement process to purchase from international suppliers.

Procurement sends the PI and LC Confirmation letter to Logistics Department to check all the documents required for LC opening. In confirmation letter, the following are mentioned:

- PI Number
- Date of PI
- Supplier Name
- Value of LC

After getting LC Opening confirmation from Logistics Department, the PI and Confirmation Letter is submitted in LC Automation System where it needs to fill up a form giving the following details:

- PO Number
- Indent Number
- LC Opening Firm Name
- Beneficiary Name
- LC Advisory Bank Name
- Description of goods
- LC Value
- Term of Shipment
- PI Number
- PI Date
- Quantity
- LC Expiry Date
- Payment Terms
- Attachment of Confirmation Letter and PI

Finally Treasury Department proceeds for LC Opening with the bank. But, procurement has to monitor closely about the shipment schedule and goods delivered to Banglalink warehouse as delay in shipment hampers business.

## **My responsibility, my work**

Now comes what I did amidst of the procurement team. I worked for the Procurement Technical department and performed the following tasks:

### **1. Floating RFP (Request for Proposal):**

On the basis of decisions made by seniors, I had to float RFP to vendors through email with attached technical specifications. Technical specifications include BOQ (Bill of Quantity) specifying number of units the company wants to procure.

### **2. Updating database:**

My first task was to update the vendor database of the Procurement Unit. The unit had more than 300 vendors in their list and my task was to call them and ask for their updated e-mail address, trade license and VAT registration certificate. The task wasn't the easiest as many of the vendors changed their numbers and thus reaching them was difficult. While many vendors were supportive in giving the necessary documents, most of them were reluctant and thus receiving files from them were difficult. I wasn't given a particular time frame for the task but was told to give periodical reports about the database update. As Banglalink was going digital, I was told to collect the soft copies of the files only, put them in a folder and update it in the master database. I have been working on the updates in between other works. Finally after 25 days I submitted the updated file to my line manager. Out of 300 vendors, I successfully managed to update the details of all the vendors. My line manager seemed to be fully happy with my work as because it was a long periodical work which I finished just within 25 days.

### **3. Receive Necessary documents from dispatch center:**

I had to receive all kinds of documents and papers appear for the employees of finance department from dispatch center. Vendors submit their documents to the dispatch center of Banglalink which is in the ground floor of Gulshan head office. Dispatch center send me a mail

alerting about all that documents. My job was to collect them through signing and distribute them to the appropriate persons. Without my sign dispatch center was not authorized to discharge any of the documents of procurement unit. These documents include technical and financial offers, vendor enlistment papers (trade license, vat registration, company profile, bank statements, and so on), employee's personal documents, appreciation gifts from any vendor etc.

#### **4. Sorting out POs and file them:**

I had to sort out the files, put them in a chronological order and then file it. This task wasn't brainstorming, but was a bit monotonous. As the company was trying to reduce the stacks of papers from the office, I was given a huge pile of PO (Purchase Order) and was told to first look through the files and sort the necessary papers. Then I had to arrange them in an ascending order and then put them in a file. The first thing, I did was check all the PO numbers and see whether they are updated in the database or not. If they are not updated, I had to update it, and then take the printout of the update confirmation and then sort.

#### **5. Keeping track of Purchase Order signing hierarchy:**

Between departments, there is a lead time of one day to keep the PO for signing purpose. Therefore, after every PO issuance my duty was to keep track of each step the PO is moving.

If the PO remains in any department (Accounts, Budget or User) for more than 1 day, I had to make calls or send emails or physically go to that department to know about the reasons behind the holdup.

#### **6. Filing and documentation:**

Before delivering POs to vendor I had to make copies of all the original signed POs so that while collecting the original PO from procurement, a received sign on the copy of each PO is taken from supplier with date. Then I had to take print out of every POs with all the authorized sign and filing them according to the PO number. All these are mandatory in order to avoid any future hassle.

#### **7. Maintaining liaison and providing feedback:**

From time to time I had to provide feedback to suppliers regarding their queries. Moreover if there were any missing data in the company profile submitted by the supplier for vendor enlistment process, in that case I had to call and fill in the missing information.

For informing meeting with procurement members either I had to mail vendors or call them up.

#### **8. Documents Digitization:**

In the last week of my internship at Banglalink I was given a serious task which was scanning of vendor enlistment documents. As the company was trying to reduce the stacks of papers from the office, a direct order came from the high authority to record the soft copy of the documents needed for vendor enlistment process. Therefore my supervisor personally asked me to scan all the documents for example Trade License, Vat Registration, Company Profile, Anti-Bribery Contract, and Contractual Agreement etc. I had to scan all these documents for every single vendor of both technical and non-technical procurement. After that I had to save them in two separate folders accordingly and forward it to the assigned team members.

### **9. Partial Cooperation:**

All the above tasks were fully my responsibility to perform. However, I did some partial works too for my team members. I helped Mr. Nazirul Islam Khan and Mr. Sajjadur Rasul to prepare some CS (Comparative Statement) for issuing POs. I also prepared some Tender Mandates which needs to be included in the full bunch of a particular PO. Preparing Tender Mandate was not supposed to my job which I did only to help one of my team member Mr. Nazirul Islam Khan.

### **Challenges I faced at work**

As it was my first job after my student life, I was completely unaware of the corporate culture. At work, every task, taking responsibility and performing to its end was challenging. The major challenge I faced was to cope up with the new world of “professionalism”. It was a completely new domain for me and took me some time to fathom the intensity and responsibilities that are associated.

I had to communicate with people of diverse culture and background that, at times, exchange of information or even cordial conversation becomes rigid. For instance, once I had to attend a foreign supplier from Egypt, the way he talked it took me a while to understand what he was talking about and to reply him. Sometimes I even had to attend people, who speak colloquial Bengali that too was difficult for me to follow.

Moreover the biggest challenge I faced while working here is meeting deadlines. Every member in the team had to work under vigorous pressure in order to avoid exceeding leadtime. At times it



was very chaotic for me to sort and file almost 30-40 POs in a day and on the other hand receive and record all the details of almost 20-30 vendors. In the meantime answering calls or checking emails and also sometimes attending suppliers made it even harder. As I had to focus on many things at a time, I can portray myself as a multitasker. Being a multitasker is sometimes annoying as you can't properly indulge yourself into one task and some other things will always occupy your focus.

### **Challenges & Analytical Solutions**

- 1. Insufficient time available for end user requirement planning:** Requirement planning from the user's end is the basis for the planning from the procurement side. Due to busy work schedule, user departments do not find enough time for planning their procurement requirements. As the end user plan comes late, SCM is pressurized to make its own plan in a very short time. Then SCM has to take a firefighting approach, and are unable to provide quality service.

Solution: The top management of Banglalink needs to be involved in end user requirement planning. Higher management should instruct users and their supervisors to allocate sufficient time for end user requirement planning. Management of different departments has to prioritize this requirement planning when they initiate any procurement, and incorporate this action in their work schedules. SCM should continuously monitor this planning process of the user and give deadlines to the users so that they finish in due time.

- 2. Inefficiency in inter-departmental handover of works:** A lot of time wastage occurs in inter-departmental handover during installation works of the bidder. For example, bidders of technical departments have to work stepwise with planning, rollout, implementation, and acceptance units. When work with one unit of Banglalink is finished, transfer of responsibility to the next phase is time consuming. New bidders have no idea about the different types of transfers during a project and have difficulties in coping.

Solution:Banglalink should take steps to improve inter-departmental coordination during any procurement function. Bidders should not be awaited during their work.

- 3. Quality Assurance of Products supplied by bidders:** SCM does not have sufficient expertise to verify the quality of products supplied by different bidders. The Logistics personnel of SCM do not have the technical skills to check whether the specifications required were fulfilled by the bidder when they accept the products from the port. Only when the product is delivered to the user can any deviations to the specifications be identified; by that time partial payment is already made to the bidder.

Solution:Banglalink needs to set up policies that would allow technical personnel to join the Logistics Team when they accept the goods. Since bidder compliance to specifications can be fully tested only after implementation, SCM should negotiate that majority of the payments to bidders should be made when the user issues Final Acceptance Certificate.

- 4. Lack of knowledge of user departments about the Procurement process:** If the relevant personnel of user departments are not acquainted with the policies and procedures, their application is faulty. This leads to misunderstandings and hampers the procurement process.

Solution:Trainings, workshops, seminars, etc. needs to be arranged to educate personnel of user departments about the procurement process.

- 5. No single source of information for a particular procurement:**For a particular purchase requisition, data is handled and stored by multiple persons, and so it becomes difficult for a single person to know specific information.

Solution: Database software for procurement should be developed containing different files for each requisition process. For each file or record, personnel concerned with the process only should be given access to facilitate sharing and using of information between team members.

- 6. Lack of coordination between Procurement unit and user departments:**Coordination between Procurement unit and user department is poor in the RFQ process. The members of CFT often act on their own in a disorganized manner which hampers fulfillment of group objectives.

Solution: Coordination between various user departments and Procurement unit should be increased. If management feels that a team is not working well, the team should be reorganized. Team leader should be always accountable for performance of the CFT.

- 7. Requirement of many supporting documents from participating bidders:**Banglalink demands many documents from bidders during tender submission such as Client list,

Bank Solvency report, Certificate from Chamber of Commerce, TIN Certificate, Trade License, VAT Registration etc. It is difficult for a new bidder to prepare all these required documents within the time given.

Solution:Banglalink should allow enough time for bidders to prepare these documents. If possible, the tender submission time should be increased if bidders apply for extension.

- 8. Vendors do not furnish required information in RFQ response:**At present vendors are not providing all required information in response to the RFQ requirements. As a result the team has to arrange several meetings to assist them in providing all the required data in their RFQ response. Longer procurement cycle time is occurred which results to non-compliance with stipulated time as per SLA.

Solution:Banglalink should allow enough time for vendors to prepare the documents. If possible, the tender submission time should be increased if vendors apply for extension. There should be a standard RFQ template that will be maintained for all type of procurement considering the legal contents.SCM should arrange a pre bid meeting with vendors to have clear vendor understanding on the required information and the evaluation process.

- 9. The tradeoff between Compliance and Simplification:** In the pursuit of professional excellence, Banglalink gives high emphasis on compliance. But such focus has opportunity costs- the procurement process of Banglalink has become too complex. Due to lack of simplification, too much time in the procurement process is spent on unimportant details. For example, Banglalink has such loyal vendors who are related with the company from the beginning. Within this long period many of them shift their corporate office several times but kept their previous corporate addresses in the documents. As Banglalink's recent modified policy every documents of enlisted vendors need to have the same address. Thus procurement unit is wasting lots of their valuable time in managing all these requirements of Contract Management unit andoccurringlots of unnecessary manual meetings with the vendors.

Solution: The management of Banglalink needs to realize the heavy opportunity cost that the company is incurring due to compliance issues. SCM needs to strike a sound balance between simplification and compliance and make the procurement process as less bureaucratic and less complex as possible. The current policy of matching address in every document of vendors needs to be changed. Before enlisting any new vendor SCM should inform the chosen vendor about this particular requirement. If any vendor does not meet this requirement SCM should not enlist them.Thus both the opportunity cost and precious time will be saved.

- 10. Inability of bidders to follow specifications strictly:**For certain cases, bidders can only partially comply with the specifications of the user. For example, bidders may offer different brand of parts, quality, country of origin, etc. from those in the item description.

While implementing projects or supplying products, bidders can only partially fulfill the specifications. If these supplied products do not match with the system in place, the user departments would have great difficulties in carrying out their operations.

Solution: Procurement unit currently includes some clauses and annexes to minimize such failures to comply with specifications, e.g. performance bond, warranty clauses, maintenance clauses, etc. In case of failure of the bidder, Banglalink can ask for compensation as stated in the clauses. Since bidders cannot comply fully with the specifications, users have to be realistic and flexible.

**11. Existing vendor evaluation criteria is not sufficient:** A comprehensive vendor evaluation jointly conducted by user and SCM is not in practice at present. Currently SCM evaluates vendor based on only four criteria, they are:

- Delivery
- Time
- Quality
- Responsiveness.

Solution: Existing vendor evaluation criteria should be more specific to address more issues relating to performance of a supplier. There should be standard evaluation format for similar products. User department should only perform technical evaluation.

**12. Sourcing Risk (Bias of users towards certain bidders):** User department often gets influenced by bidders of certain products. These gives the particular bidder high bargaining power during negotiations. This also leads to selection of suppliers who are less qualified or whose products are more expensive than similar type of bidders. This situation becomes worse when members of the user department have preference for certain brands or bias towards specific bidders.

Solution: Procurement unit needs to take protective measures to minimize the effects of the bargaining power of suppliers. For example, Procurement unit members in negotiation need to prepare themselves thoroughly before going to negotiation. Also, user department personnel need to be briefed about the influencing tactics used by different bidders. If Procurement unit thinks that a particular member of the user department is biased towards a specific bidder, then his/her supervisor or manager should be notified. That particular member should be relieved from his duties in the project.

**13. User department takes long time in technical evaluation:** Technical evaluation takes more time than stipulated time per SLA. As a result efficiency of the whole process is reduced.

Solution: Technical evaluation committee should evaluate the received RFQ/RFT based on the predetermined evaluation criteria/ template. There should have standard template

for similar products to evaluate technical specification. Effective pre bid meeting can reduce the possibility of vendors misunderstanding on technical specification in RFQ.

- 14. Focus on price reduction during negotiations by sidetracking quality:** During negotiations, Procurement unit tends to focus too much on price and gives less importance to quality and lifetime cost issues. When user departments are firm about quality, the bidder has to offer a premium product. But often, representatives from SCM do not understand this situation and prioritize high rates quoted by the bidder as the main issue during negotiations. Also, due to inflationary pressures during certain periods, the cost of raw materials and other expenses increase. So, to win contracts, bidders often sacrifice good quality and service and quote the lowest possible prices. So, the sustainability of the product gets decreased.

Solution: Procurement unit should give more importance to quality and lifetime costs of a product during negotiations. Sometimes, the bidder may offer a lower price than the competitors; but that product may incur higher expenses during its operational life. So, the CFT has to be careful when choosing a low-cost provider and should not sacrifice quality for better pricing. Also, Procurement unit should monitor the rate of inflation and market trends of equipment prices.

- 15. No standard format of RFQ:** No standard RFQ format is maintained in Banglalink. Every time when a PR of a product is released, Procurement unit has to prepare RFQ template. As a result the general and legal contents are not properly defined in RFQ. Also the RFQ is prepared and located manually. For these reasons huge time is spent for the preparation of RFQ and legal vetting which decreases the efficiency of the procurement unit. Due to insufficient documents in RFQ misunderstanding can be created with vendors. This may leads inability of Procurement unit to complete the procurement of required product on time.

Solution: SCM should maintain a standard RFQ template for all type of procurement. All the general and legal contents will be considered in the standard template. Template of RFQ should be prepared by preparation and distribution team. Using standard RFQ template with detailed information will simplify the document finalization process. It will also remove the necessity of legal vetting.

- 16. Misunderstanding with bidders about RFQ:** As there is no standard template of RFQ in Banglalink, sometimes technical specification and other legal terms are not properly defined in RFQ, which leads to misunderstanding with bidders. As a result frequent sittings are required to fulfill the quires from bidders.

Solution: Using standard RFQ template, SCM can avoid this kind of misunderstanding as all the technical, general and legal contents are properly defined. That means due to

providing structured documents to the bidders from Banglalink will reduce the queries of bidders.

- 17. Top management influence in contract awarding:** Sometimes top management influences the contract-preparation process. This forces Procurement unit to compromise and set terms and conditions according to management's decision.

Solution: Banglalink needs to make Procurement unit and/SCM autonomous in its procurement process free from any influence from any quarter.

- 18. Pressure of meeting deadlines of user requirements:** Pressure of meeting deadlines affects the quality of the contract prepared. Procurement unit does not get the opportunity to analyze all the details and implications of the contract.

Solution: Procurement unit needs to preserve ample time for the contract-preparation so that it can comfortably meet the user's requirement deadline. So, Procurement unit has to finish the previous stages in due time, and prevent rush of work during contract finalization.

- 19. Manual Procurement Approval (PA):** The whole process of raising PR till PO delivery to the vendor is very time-consuming as it needs to go through a long hierarchy of signing process. At present all Purchase Approvals (PAs) are obtained manually. Each PA requires signatures of the concerned personnel as per LOA. As a result:

- Staff has a huge workload
- The process becomes time inefficient
- Unavailability of authorized person as per LOA, sometimes the procurement process literally gets stagnant

Solution: By introducing "ORACLE Finance PR Module" the whole process of signing can be completed efficiently. For instance, each task would be completed much faster if the user department sends the PR using the automation process and forwards it to procurement. Likewise, procurement, after issuance of PO, would send that to respective departments through a centralized system (Accounts, Budget, Head of user department and CFO) for their approval. Each department will have access to this centralized system and thus get the notification of receiving PO. After getting approval from the concerned signatory, the PO will be forwarded to the next approval level automatically. This will speed up the whole process of PO delivery using less manpower. I believe in-house software developers from the IT department would be able to develop the system.

- 20. No provision of providing advance payment to bidders:** According to the VimpelCom Procurement Policy, subsidiary companies cannot make any advance payment for products to their bidders. Many bidders do not have enough funds to manufacture the large volume of products required by Banglalink. So, they have to take loans from banks to get



the capital. Since they have to pay interest on these loans, their costs in the project increases making them quote higher prices in their offers.

Solution:Banglalink's management needs to convince Axiata to allow advance payment to bidders. Then Banglalink would be able to help bidders financially and eliminate their interest payments. As the costs of bidders go down, they would be able to offer lower prices.

- 21. Centralized decision process:**For Foreign Procurement every time it needs to take approval from OTH which issometimes time consuming.

Solution:If OTH sends an authorized signatory to Banglalink to deal withforeign procurement, would make the process faster.

- 22. Unavailability of cabinets:**Due to shortages of file cabinets, sometimes it was very difficult to file up the POs andtrace them back in organized manner. Whenever someone needs to find any old PO, he/she has to manually face a lot of difficulties among the stacks of files. Every time cabinets are filled with files procurement unit needs to send those files to the warehouse of Banglalink which is a little time consuming.

Solution:Introducing more space or shelves can reduce the timetaken to find the single PO among the stacks of files.

- 23. Lack of Manpower:** In the Procurement unit of Banglalink many tasks are still performed manually. Because of less manpower source every member of technical and non-technical procurement is performing multiple tasks which are not even in their Job Description. Therefore valuable times of the employees are being wasted in many less significant works and they are losing their work motivation day by day.

Solution:Procurement team needs to hire more people if automation is not implemented in order tomeet up huge workload.

- 24. Structural problem of PO signing hierarchy:** It is thought that delay in PO delivery to vendor is the sole responsibility of Procurement,but it is not the case. Actually to make a PO ready after issuance has to go through a longhierarchy of signing which is extremely time consuming.

Solution:To speed up the time, it would have been better to take clearance from Accounts and Budgets when PR is approved. In this way Procurement can save 2-3 workingdays and get the rest PO approval within one week instead of 10-12 days.

- 25. Relying completely on one supplier:** When Banglalink reward any supplier for any particular service which requires some specific equipment, the rewarded supplier is obliged to provide thatequipment. Therefore there is always a high chance that suppliers may compromise the quality of required equipment but charge a bit high.

Solution: Instead of going for turnkey solutions, procurement can segregate the working order among different suppliers thus it would be more cost effective. For instance, buying nut bolts, shelter, power cable steel etc. needed for construction of BTS tower can be purchased from different suppliers with competitive price instead of relying on one. To be more specific when PO is issued in the name of a particular supplier, that supplier company is responsible to buy the materials needed and used for construction better if Banglalink can supply the materials needed from elsewhere in more competitive price.

**26. Introducing Reverse-Auction method for suppliers:** Many companies have successfully made this up by saving money on the goods and services they purchase by using Reverse-Auctions [12], which allow suppliers the ability to compete for business instead of just submit a quote. The result is a better price, often 10-20% lower than what was paid previously. Because of the competitive and public nature of auctions, suppliers can see when they have been out-bid, providing justification to lower their bid further.

## Conclusion & Recommendations

Telecom industry in Bangladesh is relatively more competitive in comparison to other business sectors such as the agriculture and garments. Nonetheless, the unlimited potential of this sector has commended inquisitive interests from all concerned. The impact of global excitement of the telecom sector is clearly visible in Bangladesh as well. In the recent years, this sector has grown enviably.

Telecom industry in Bangladesh is now working on to be differentiated among users' mind. They introduced a new culture to be followed by the younger citizens of our country. It's called "mobile mania". The importance and necessity of this commodity has vast spread into the majority of the population.

Regarding my days spent at Banglalink, I gathered knowledge that is going to help me in building my career in future. Workings in the procurement department of Banglalink, has enriched my knowledge about different terms and instruments that are essential for local and foreign procurement. Observing the processes through which the procurement department runs, I have suggested some alternative ways in my report that needs to be observed by the experienced eye and can be implemented in the existing process or by expanding the current process into new one.

Nowadays, worldwide companies are successfully realizing benefits from their procurement initiatives and are viewing procurement as an integral part of their overall corporate strategy.



They no longer perceive procurement as a cost center, but rather as a strategic lever for improving profits or funding new initiatives. Efficient and effective procurement translates any investment into substantial profit.

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## APPENDIX A

### Glossary

1. **Greenfield** is the location where towers are setup in the middle of a field
2. **Rooftop** is the location where towers are setup on the rooftop of a building.
3. **Purchase Request (PR)** is an authorization for a purchasing department to procure goods or services. It is originated and approved by the department requiring the goods or services.
4. **Purchase Order (PO)** is a commercial document issued by a buyer to a seller, indicating the type, quantities and agreed prices for products or services the seller will provide to the buyer. Sending a PO to a supplier constitutes a legal offer to buy products or services.
5. **Scope of work** is a chronological division of work to be performed under a contract or subcontract in the completion of a project. Also called work scope
6. **Bill of quantities (BOQ)** is a bidding document prepared usually by a quantity surveyor, it is an itemized list of materials, parts, and labor (with their costs) required to construct, maintain, or repair a specific structure.
7. **Comparative Statement (CS)** is a statement which follows a consistent format and covers different periods of time. Useful for spotting best offers among vendors
8. **Onshore** when International Suppliers provide the goods or services from within the territory of the country.
9. **Offshore** when they supply the goods or services from outside the country.
10. **Proforma Invoice** is a document that states a commitment from the seller to sell goods to the buyer at specified prices and terms.
11. **L C** is a binding document that a buyer can request from his bank in order to guarantee that the payment for goods will be transferred to the seller.
12. **Reverse Auction** is initiated by the buyer. A buyer places a request to buy an item and specifies a price from many sellers.

## Appendix B

### **Interview questioners:**

1. At present how many employees are working Procurement unit?
2. Does Banglalink have any specific plan for purchase or budget?
3. What about the efficiency of procurement team?
4. What are the problems SCM faces?
5. What is the basis of vendor selection by procurement department?
6. Does the template used during RFQ floating cover all necessary data?
7. Is any problem faced from the vendors?
8. What is the software Banglalink uses in SCM?
9. Is there any well-defined strategy for negotiation?
10. What are the problems that Procurement unit is facing?
11. Is there any problem to coordinate among works of personnel of negotiation team?
12. Is it always possible to follow the standard cycle for procurement process?
13. What type of bottlenecks are SCM unit facing now?
14. Is the warehousing process done properly?
15. What about warehouse management?
16. What type of strategy do you follow to tackle sudden order/emergency purchase situation?
17. Is it possible to maintain time schedule for every purchase?
18. How Internal Stakeholders affect procurement process?
19. How difficult it is to uphold honesty in procurement unit?
20. What are the issues regarding negotiations?
21. How external stakeholder management affect procurement process?
22. What are the issues associated with Documentation of vendors?
23. Is it possible to always find the qualified vendors for every purchase?
24. What/How is the response rate and standards of the vendors?

25. Do they always deliver on time with proper required quality?

