

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

B/686 The Honourable Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central (**Mr Osman Mahomed**)

To ask the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities –

Whether, in regard to the Backbone Optical Ground Wire Network Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Central Electricity Board Fibernet Ltd., information as to

(a) the name of the consultant employed in April 2016 therefor, indicating the (i) criteria and procedure followed for the selection and (ii) terms and conditions of appointment thereof and (b) if any other consultancy firm has been paid fees in regard thereto and, if so, give details thereof?

REPLY ON TUESDAY 30 JULY 2019

Madam Speaker,

As I explained in my reply to the previous question, the Backbone Optical Ground Wire Network Project was initiated and completed in the years 2001 to 2003.

The consultant appointed in 2016 could not have been involved in that project. I assume therefore that the Honourable Member is referring to the **Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing Based Optical Transmission Network Project** to which he referred in his previous question.

That consultant was appointed in May 2016 in order to advise CEB as to the best technology to be adopted to optimise the OPGW network so as to develop that network into a telecommunications network.

With regard to part (a) the Project Consultant who was appointed in May 2016 is Mr Rajesh Kumar Babu, an Indian Citizen.

I am tabling the criteria for the selection of the Project Consultant.

As regards the procedure for the selection of the consultant, the CEB approached one local recruitment agency Alentaris and four foreign recruitment agencies for a list of potential candidates. The agencies were:

1. PentaConsulting, United Kingdom
2. Hays Recruiting Experts Worldwide, United Kingdom
3. Deltareco , India
4. Shella Consultants, India

By the closing date, only Hays Recruiting Experts Worldwide and Penta Consulting provided lists of candidates. Five candidates were shortlisted for an interview, which was conducted by Skype and telephone on 1 April 2016 by a panel comprising Mr. Rajcoomar Bikoo Board Member, Mr. Ally Damree, then Board Member and Mr. Gerard Hebrard, then General Manager.

With regard to part (ii), the terms of appointment of Mr Babu were that he would be paid remuneration amounting to USD 11,000. I have to point out that Mr. Babu is now performing the duties of General Manager.

With regard to part (b), I am informed by CEB that in accordance with the terms of engagement of Penta Consulting Limited, it was required to pay 20% of the annual salary of the Project Consultant as “Finder’s fee” for the first year of contract. CEB has, therefore, paid a professional fee of \$ 24,000 to Penta Consulting, UK.