

ANNEXURE –5a**5a. CONCILIATION CLAUSE**

The parties to the contract may seek to resolve all their disputes and differences amicably by conciliation in accordance with the Conciliation Rules of HPCL (as in force and may be amended from time to time) , provided however that the disputes(s)/ difference(s) amount to a claim is in excess of Rs. One Crore. If however the disputes or differences are not resolved by Conciliation, the Parties shall be free to approach a Court of competent jurisdiction. (The HPCL Conciliation Rules are attached)

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HPCL CONCILIATION RULES, 2019

Background

Part III of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 makes provisions for alternative dispute resolution through Conciliation, which is emerging as an effective dispute resolution mechanism for Public Sector Enterprises in India.

HPCL intends to increasingly focus on Conciliation as a dispute resolution mechanism and hereby frames the present Rules in conformity with Part III of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 for speedier, cost-effective and amicable settlement of disputes through Conciliation.

1. Title and Commencement

- a. These Rules shall be called the HPCL Conciliation Rules, 2019.
- b. It shall come into force on 16 March 2020.

2. Definitions

- a) “Act” means Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 as amended from time to time.
- b) “Conciliation” means a dispute resolution process whereby the Parties by mutual consent appoint a Conciliator or a Settlement Advisory Committee (SAC) to assist them in their attempt to reach an amicable settlement of their dispute(s) arising out of a defined legal relationship, contractual or otherwise.
- c) “Conciliator(s)” means the Conciliator appointed in accordance with these Rules.
- d) “HPCL” means HINDUSTAN PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED, having its registered office at 17, Jamshedji Tata Road, Churchgate, Mumbai-400020.
- e) “Panel of Conciliators” means the list of eligible persons selected by HPCL to act as Conciliators in conciliation proceedings under these Rules.
- f) “Party” means a Party to a contract with HPCL or a Party to a Conciliation proceeding under these Rules. Further, “Party” means HPCL or the other party to the Conciliation proceeding individually, and “Parties” means both of them collectively.
- g) “Rules” means the HPCL Conciliation Rules, 2019 (as amended from time to time).
- h) “Settlement Advisory Committee” or “SAC” means the Committee of Conciliators appointed under Rule 5 of these Rules.
- i) “Settlement Agreement” means the agreement arrived between the Parties in settlement of their dispute(s), which is the subject matter of Conciliation.
- j) “Working Day” means any of the five days between Monday to Friday, including both Monday and Friday, between 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM (Indian Standard Time), excluding Gazetted holidays and all other holidays declared by the Govt. of India or HPCL.
- k) The masculine gender shall include female and neutral genders and vice-versa. The singular shall include the plural and vice-versa.

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3. Scope and Applicability

- a) These Rules shall apply to any dispute, arising out of or relating to a contractual or defined legal relationship in the form of a contract involving HPCL as a Party, and which involves construction, works, engineering, EPC or Supply or any other contract of a similar nature, where the Parties seeking an amicable settlement of their disputes have agreed that these Rules shall apply. These Rules shall, however, not apply to disputes arising out of or relating to MS/HSD/LPG/SKO/Lube Dealership/Distributorship Agreements and Agreements for Bulk or Packed Road Transportation of Petroleum Products. If the dispute is not settled by Conciliation within 8 (eight) months of the initiation of conciliation or such further period as the parties shall agree in writing, the Conciliation proceedings shall terminate and the Parties shall be free to approach a Court of law.

Provided that these Rules shall be applicable only if:

- i) the dispute arose out of a contract, agreement or other defined legal relationship that has been successfully completed or is ongoing. No dispute arising out of a contract, agreement or other defined legal relationship that has been abandoned by either of the Parties would be covered under these Rules.
 - ii) the date of request for the conciliation is made during the Contract or within 6 months after the Contractual Delivery Date/ Contractual Completion Date or the extended CDD/CCD.
 - iii) the dispute involves claims of an amount not less than ₹ One Crore.
- b) The scope of Conciliation under these Rules shall encompass both domestic and international disputes of a private law nature, whenever/wherever a settlement is possible.
- c) Pendency of judicial or similar proceedings shall not constitute any bar on commencement of Conciliation proceedings under these Rules, even if the proceedings under these Rules are on the same subject matter/issue.
- d) During the pendency of the Conciliation proceedings, the Parties shall not initiate any judicial or similar proceedings in respect of the dispute which is the subject matter of Conciliation, and if any such proceedings have been initiated prior to the commencement of the Conciliation proceedings, the Parties shall maintain status quo in respect thereof as long as the Conciliation proceedings are pending.
- e) These Rules shall however not apply to dispute(s)/ claims which are barred by limitation, or which, by virtue of any law for the time being in force in India, may not be submitted to a Court or Conciliation.
- f) These Rules shall be subordinate to and supplementary to Part-III of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 and the Act will prevail over the Rules to the extent of inconsistency, if any.

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- g) These Rules are broad standard Conciliation procedures meant for a flexible, systematic, expeditious and amicable settlement of disputes and Parties may mutually agree in writing to make appropriate adjustments/ changes, and such mutually agreed departures/ deviations from any of these Rules shall not in any circumstances render a Conciliation proceeding or any Settlement Agreement reached pursuant thereto invalid, illegal or void.
- h) Subject to subsequent agreement between the Parties, Conciliation under these Rules may be invoked, even if Conciliation is not the prescribed dispute settlement mechanism or these Rules are not the prescribed Conciliation Rules under the relevant contract/agreement.
- i) Raising of any issue or point of dispute, by any Party in writing or otherwise in any communication (electronic or otherwise) between the Parties (without its resolution) shall not be considered as seeking Conciliation under these Rules, unless such Conciliation proceedings are formally invoked in writing under these Rules by a Party, stating clearly the subject matter in dispute/ difference and seeking the consent of the other Party(ies) for Conciliation. Every Conciliation shall commence only if the other Party(ies) accept(s) in writing its willingness to enter into Conciliation.

4. Panel of Conciliators

- a) HPCL shall, with the approval of Director (HR) of HPCL, prepare and maintain a Panel of Conciliators, consisting of persons having good standing in the field of Oil and Gas, Refineries, Marketing of Petroleum Products, Engineering and Projects, Law or Justice within sixty (60) days of these Rules coming into force. The Panel will be updated from time to time as required. The Director (HR) of HPCL may add any name to or delete any name from the Panel of Conciliators.
- b) The Conciliators in the Panel of Conciliators, shall be independent persons, who are not serving employees, or consultants or advisers of HPCL.
- c) Persons who have attained the age of 70 years will automatically cease to be on the Panel of Conciliators. In case where a Conciliator has been appointed and during the pendency of conciliation proceedings, he/she attains the age of 70 years, he/she will continue to be a conciliator till completion of the conciliation proceedings, whether by means of a Settlement or Termination of the Conciliation Proceedings or otherwise as provided under the Act.
- d) All the members of the Panel shall have equal status and parties will not have any right to challenge the appointment of a Conciliator on the ground that its nominee Conciliator has higher status than the other Conciliator.

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- e) The following persons may be enlisted in the panel of Conciliators:-
- i. Retired Chairman & Managing Director, Retired Functional Directors of any Central Public Sector Enterprise in India.
 - ii. Independent experts in the field of Oil and Gas, Construction or Engineering and Projects (a) having minimum 25 years' experience; (b) being preferably registered with an institute of arbitration in India and (c) having experience of handled at least one or more arbitration or conciliation.
 - iii. Retired Judges of the Supreme Court of India & High Courts in India.
 - iv. Retired PSU employees of and above the level of Chief General manager of a Schedule 'A' PSU in India.
 - v. Legal practitioners/ Advocates having minimum experience of (a) 25 years post enrollment (in case of practicing advocates) in High Courts/ Supreme Court or (b) 25 years post qualification (in case of in house counsel).
- f) The Panel of Conciliators shall contain an Annexure, giving details of the qualifications of the Conciliators, including professional and technical experience.
- g) A person shall be empaneled as a Conciliator only after obtaining his consent to be so empaneled.
- h) A person in the Panel of Conciliators shall not be entitled to any monetary benefit or remuneration/fees or any other facility only by virtue of his/her name being in the Panel of Conciliators. He will be entitled for fees, etc. only when he/she is actually appointed as a Conciliator or forming a part of a SAC in relation to a specific dispute under these Rules. An appointment on the Panel of Conciliators under sub-rule (a) shall ordinarily be for a period of 3 (three) years from the date of appointment. Such period may be extended or curtailed at the discretion of HPCL.
- i) Removal of a person from the Panel of Conciliators shall not have the automatic effect of removal/withdrawal of the said person from an existing Conciliation Proceeding in which such person is acting as a Conciliator, unless the said Conciliator is removed specifically from the dispute in question.
- j) Disqualifications of persons as Conciliators and/ or removal:
- The following persons shall be deemed to be disqualified for being empaneled as Conciliators, and if already empaneled/ appointed, shall be liable to be removed:
- 1) A person who has been adjudged as insolvent or is of unsound mind or physically incapable of performing the work of a Conciliator.

- 2) A person against whom criminal charges are framed by a criminal court and are pending for final disposal or, who has been convicted by a criminal court/ Tribunal for any offence and a sentence of fine or imprisonment has been passed against him. (This will not include fines for petty cases like traffic violation or penalties given purely because the person held a particular office {like an occupier in a factory} provided he has no personal involvement in the same).
 - 3) A person against whom disciplinary proceedings have been initiated by the appropriate disciplinary authority and are pending or, has resulted in a punishment.
 - 4) A person against whom an adverse report/ remark is received from the Vigilance Department of HPCL or the CVC or CBI or the Government of India, which lends doubts as to the integrity of the person or otherwise makes him unsuitable to hold the position.
- k) Provided always that HPCL may, in its sole discretion, change the eligibility criteria or modify/ rescind any portion or the whole of these Rules or not include any person as a Conciliator in its Panel, without assigning any reasons and such decision shall not be called in question by any person/ party.

5. Composition of the Conciliation Tribunal

- a) Conciliator(s) shall be appointed by the mutual consent of the Parties from the Panel of Conciliators maintained by HPCL in respect of a particular dispute. There shall be a Sole Conciliator in Conciliation proceedings where the disputed claim (or all claims put together) is less than ₹ 5,00,00,000 (Rupees Five Crores). However, where the disputed claims are more than ₹ 5,00,00,000 (Rupees Five Crores), the Conciliation Tribunal shall consist of two Conciliators. In case of 2 Conciliators, each Party to the Dispute shall appoint one Conciliator each from the Panel maintained by HPCL.
- b) In case the Parties fail to agree on a Conciliator(s) from the Panel of Conciliators maintained by HPCL, the Parties shall be at liberty to mutually agree to appoint any other Conciliator(s), who is/are not in the Panel of Conciliators maintained by HPCL.
- c) The Conciliator(s), as and when appointed by the Parties for a specific Conciliation proceeding, shall constitute and function by the name and style of “Settlement Advisory Committee” or “SAC” in regard to the dispute(s) referred for Conciliation and shall conduct Conciliation proceedings under these Rules. The SAC can be of a sole conciliator or of 2 conciliators.
- d) When a person is approached in connection with his possible appointment as a Conciliator in respect of a specific dispute, he shall disclose any circumstances likely to give rise to justifiable doubts as to his impartiality or independence. A Conciliator, from the time of his appointment and throughout the Conciliation proceedings shall, without any delay, disclose any such circumstances to the Parties, unless they have already been informed of such circumstances. Such person shall not act or continue to act as a Conciliator if either Party objects to his so

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acting or continuing to act due to the existence of such circumstances. Such circumstances shall include:

- An interest in or connection with the subject matter of the dispute,
 - A relationship with a party, including a relationship of lawyer and client.
- e) On the appointment of a Conciliator in respect of a specific dispute, the Conciliator shall give a Declaration as per **Schedule-A** of these Rules.
- f) If a Conciliator withdraws himself or he/she is removed by the Parties from a Conciliation Proceeding on the ground of continued absence for any three scheduled meetings/hearings or is otherwise unavailable for the Conciliation proceeding for no justifiable reason(s) or does not hold conciliation proceedings or cannot act further because of the objection of a party under sub-rule d) above or any reason which disqualifies him, the parties may appoint an alternative Conciliator in the same manner as contemplated herein.
- g) The appointment will take effect from the date of such intimation about the constitution of the Conciliation Tribunal.
- h) If any appointed Conciliator resigns or dies or is unable to perform his functions during the Conciliation, then HPCL may terminate the appointment of such Conciliator and inform him and the parties accordingly. The Parties shall take further steps to fill up the vacancy so caused as per 5(a) above.
- i) No person shall be appointed as a Conciliator in respect of more than three disputes at a time.

6. Commencement of Conciliation

- a) HPCL or the Party who has entered into a contract of the nature stated in 3(a) above with HPCL, and who wishes to settle any dispute, shall serve a written notice/invitation for Conciliation Proceedings under these Rules, to the other Party. This will be done only after the normal official avenues of resolving disputes under any contract or existing practice are exhausted.
- b) A written notice/invitation for Conciliation proceedings shall, inter alia, contain the following details:
- i. Identity of the Party giving the written notice/invitation - name, official address, email address, contact number(s), official representative, etc.
 - ii. Specific consent of the party for Conciliation under these Rules.
 - iii. Name of proposed Conciliator(s) from the Panel of Conciliators maintained HPCL.
 - iv. Details of the contract, a brief description of the dispute which is sought to be settled through Conciliation, details of the amounts claimed and the total amount claimed.
 - v. A statement that there are no other issues or disputes.

- vi. Where a No Claims/Dues Certificate has been issued to HPCL, a statement that the claims are pertaining only to those items which have been specifically excepted and mentioned as exceptions in the said No Claims/Dues Certificate.
- vii. An undertaking that:
- No interest shall be claimed in any judicial or similar proceedings or during conciliation, for the period commencing from the date of written notice/invitation for Conciliation, upto the completion/ conclusion of the Conciliation by a Settlement Agreement or Termination or otherwise in terms of these Rules.
 - Not to initiate any judicial or similar proceedings in respect of the dispute mentioned in the written notice/invitation for Conciliation during the pendency of the Conciliation proceedings and, if any such proceedings have been initiated prior to the written notice/invitation for Conciliation, that the party agrees to maintain status quo in respect thereto during the pendency of the Conciliation proceedings.
- c) The Party receiving the written notice/invitation for Conciliation may, within 30 (thirty) days of receipt of the notice/invitation, accept the invitation for Conciliation wholly, or may accept the invitation only in respect of some claims mentioned in the written notice/ invitation and not in respect of the rest of the claims, or on the condition that its dispute/ claim(s) with the other party may also be settled through Conciliation under these Rules. Such limited or conditional acceptance shall constitute a counter-invitation for Conciliation. In case of a counter-invitation, the first Party shall within 15 (fifteen) days of receipt of the counter-invitation give its reply as afore-stated. The Party accepting the invitation for Conciliation or giving the counter-invitation for Conciliation, as the case may be, shall also comply with the requirements of sub-rule (b) above, to the extent applicable.
- d) If no reply under sub-rule (c) is received from the other Party, on whom written notice/invitation/counter invitation for Conciliation under sub-rule (a) or sub rule (c) has been served, the invitation/counter invitation for Conciliation may be treated as ‘rejected’.
- e) Conciliation proceedings under these Rules shall be deemed to commence on the day the party giving the invitation/counter-invitation for Conciliation receives a written intimation of acceptance of such invitation/counter invitation from the other party (Commencement). For Conciliation proceedings with more than two Parties, such proceedings shall be deemed to commence on the day the last intimation of acceptance of invitation/counter-invitation for Conciliation is received from a Party.
- f) If the Parties fail to agree on appointment of Conciliator(s) and constitution of SAC within 60 (sixty) days of the Commencement of the Conciliation proceedings as per sub rule (e) above or such extended time period as agreed between/amongst the Parties, whichever is longer, the efforts of dispute settlement through Conciliation shall be treated as ‘failed’.

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7. Conciliation Proceedings

- a) Upon his appointment, the conciliator may request each party to submit to him a brief statement in writing describing the general nature of the dispute, the points at issue and the amount, if any, of the claim(s) and counter claim(s). Each party shall send a copy of such statement to the other party. At any stage of the conciliation proceedings the conciliator may request a party to submit to him such additional information as he deems appropriate.
- b) The SAC may, if it considers necessary, permit or request the Parties to submit further written statement(s) along with other documents/evidence in support thereof.
- c) The first meeting of the Parties shall be called by the SAC, after consulting the Parties involved, at a convenient date and time, within 10 (ten) working days of receipt of written statement mentioned in the preceding sub-rule (a) and sub-rule (b). During the first meeting, a tentative time-frame and broad work-schedule of the Conciliation proceedings shall be finalized by the SAC after due consultation with and consent of the Parties.
- d) The SAC shall, as much as possible, proceed with the Conciliation proceeding on an issue by issue basis, after proper identification of the relevant issues with the consent of the Parties.
- e) The SAC, with the consent of the Parties, may also call for material witness(es) to assist the Committee.
- f) Each Party shall send a copy of its communication, written submission and all other document(s) filed before the SAC to the other Party.
- g) Opportunity shall be given to the Parties during the Conciliation proceedings to openly and fearlessly express their views so as to enable the Parties to better understand and appreciate each other's viewpoints.
- h) It shall be open to the Parties or the Conciliator(s) to make any proposal or counter proposal for amicable settlement of the dispute at any time during the Conciliation proceeding. The SAC may also make such proposal after consulting and hearing the Parties.
- i) All the parties shall commit to participate in the proceedings in good faith with the intention to settle the dispute(s), if possible.

8. Representation, venue and other broad principles

- a) Advocates shall not be allowed to participate in the Conciliation Proceedings under these Rules and Parties shall plead their own cases.
- b) Parties shall, however be free to appoint their employees, officers, directors or in-house Law Officers to plead their own cases.