

## **FOREIGN CORRUPT PRACTICES ACT OPINION PROCEDURE**

### **28 C.F.R. part 80 (current as of July 1, 1999)**

#### **Sec. 80.1 Purpose.**

These procedures enable issuers and domestic concerns to obtain an opinion of the Attorney General as to whether certain specified, prospective--not hypothetical--conduct conforms with the Department's present enforcement policy regarding the antibribery provisions of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977, as amended, 15 U.S.C. 78dd-1 and 78dd-2. An opinion issued pursuant to these procedures is a Foreign Corrupt Practices Act opinion (hereinafter FCPA Opinion).

#### **Sec. 80.2 Submission requirements.**

A request for an FCPA Opinion must be submitted in writing. An original and five copies of the request should be addressed to the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Criminal Division, Attention: FCPA Opinion Group. The mailing address is 10th & Constitution Avenue, NW, Bond Building, Washington, DC 20530.

#### **Sec. 80.3 Transaction.**

The entire transaction which is the subject of the request must be an actual--not a hypothetical--transaction but need not involve only prospective conduct. However, a request will not be considered unless that portion of the transaction for which an opinion is sought involves only prospective conduct. An executed contract is not a prerequisite and, in most--if not all--instances, an opinion request should be made prior to the requestor's commitment to proceed with a transaction.

#### **Sec. 80.4 Issuer or domestic concern.**

The request must be submitted by an issuer or domestic concern within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. 78dd-1 and 78dd-2, respectively, that is also a party to the transaction which is the subject of the request.

#### **Sec. 80.5 Affected parties.**

An FCPA Opinion shall have no application to any party which does not join in the request for the opinion.

#### **Sec. 80.6 General requirements.**

Each request shall be specific and must be accompanied by all relevant and material information bearing on the conduct for which an FCPA Opinion is requested and on the circumstances of the prospective conduct, including background information, complete copies of all operative documents, and detailed statements of all collateral or oral understandings, if any. The requesting issuer or domestic concern is under an affirmative obligation to make full and true disclosure with respect to the conduct for which an opinion is requested. Each request on behalf of a requesting issuer or corporate domestic concern must be signed by an appropriate senior officer with operational responsibility for the conduct that is the subject of the request and who has been designated by the requestor's chief executive officer to sign the

opinion request. In appropriate cases, the Department of Justice may require the chief executive officer of each requesting issuer or corporate domestic concern to sign the request. All requests of other domestic concerns must also be signed. The person signing the request must certify that it contains a true, correct and complete disclosure with respect to the proposed conduct and the circumstances of the conduct.

**Sec. 80.7 Additional information.**

If an issuer's or domestic concern's submission does not contain all of the information required by Sec. 80.6, the Department of Justice may request whatever additional information or documents it deems necessary to review the matter. The Department must do so within 30 days of receipt of the opinion request, or, in the case of an incomplete response to a previous request for additional information, within 30 days of receipt of such response. Each issuer or domestic concern requesting an FCPA Opinion must promptly provide the information requested. A request will not be deemed complete until the Department of Justice receives such additional information. Such additional information, if furnished orally, shall be promptly confirmed in writing, signed by the same person or officer who signed the initial request and certified by this person or officer to be a true, correct and complete disclosure of the requested information. In connection with any request for an FCPA Opinion, the Department of Justice may conduct whatever independent investigation it believes appropriate.

**Sec. 80.8 Attorney General opinion.**

The Attorney General or his designee shall, within 30 days after receiving a request that complies with the foregoing procedure, respond to the request by issuing an opinion that states whether the prospective conduct, would, for purposes of the Department of Justice's present enforcement policy, violate 15 U.S.C. 78dd-1 and 78dd-2. The Department of Justice may also take such other positions or action as it considers appropriate. Should the Department request additional information, the Department's response shall be made within 30 days after receipt of such additional information.

**Sec. 80.9 No oral opinion.**

No oral clearance, release or other statement purporting to limit the enforcement discretion of the Department of Justice may be given. The requesting issuer or domestic concern may rely only upon a written FCPA Opinion letter signed by the Attorney General or his designee.

**Sec. 80.10 Rebuttable presumption.**

In any action brought under the applicable provisions of 15 U.S.C. 78dd-1 and 78dd-2, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that a requestor's conduct, which is specified in a request, and for which the Attorney General has issued an opinion that such conduct is in conformity with the Department's present enforcement policy, is in compliance with those provisions of the FCPA. Such a presumption may be rebutted by a preponderance of the evidence. In considering the presumption, a court, in accordance with the statute, shall weigh all relevant factors, including but not limited to whether information submitted to the Attorney General was accurate and complete and whether the activity was within the scope of the conduct specified in any request received by the Attorney General.

### **Sec. 80.11 Effect of FCPA Opinion.**

Except as specified in Sec. 80.10, an FCPA Opinion will not bind or obligate any agency other than the Department of Justice. It will not affect the requesting issuer's or domestic concern's obligations to any other agency, or under any statutory or regulatory provision other than those specifically cited in the particular FCPA Opinion.

### **Sec. 80.12 Accounting requirements.**

Neither the submission of a request for an FCPA Opinion, its pendency, nor the issuance of an FCPA Opinion, shall in any way alter the responsibility of an issuer to comply with the accounting requirements of 15 U.S.C. 78m(b)(2) and (3).

### **Sec. 80.13 Scope of FCPA Opinion.**

An FCPA Opinion will state only the Attorney General's opinion as to whether the prospective conduct would violate the Department's present enforcement policy under 15 U.S.C. 78dd-1 and 78dd-2. If the conduct for which an FCPA Opinion is requested is subject to approval by any other agency, such FCPA Opinion shall in no way be taken to indicate the Department of Justice's views on the legal or factual issues that may be raised before that agency, or in an appeal from the agency's decision.

### **Sec. 80.14 Disclosure.**

(a) Any document or other material which is provided to, received by, or prepared in the Department of Justice or any other department or agency of the United States in connection with a request by an issuer or domestic concern under the foregoing procedure shall be exempt from disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552 and shall not, except with the consent of the issuer or domestic concern, be made publicly available, regardless of whether the Attorney General responds to such a request or the issuer or domestic concern withdraws such request before receiving a response.

(b) Nothing contained in paragraph (a) of this section shall limit the Department of Justice's right to issue, at its discretion, a release describing the identity of the requesting issuer or domestic concern, the identity of the foreign country in which the proposed conduct is to take place, the general nature and circumstances of the proposed conduct, and the action taken by the Department of Justice in response to the FCPA Opinion request. Such release shall not disclose either the identity of any foreign sales agents or other types of identifying information. The Department of Justice shall index such releases and place them in a file available to the public upon request.

(c) A requestor may request that the release not disclose proprietary information.

### **Sec. 80.15 Withdrawal.**

A request submitted under the foregoing procedure may be withdrawn prior to the time the Attorney General issues an opinion in response to such request. Any request so withdrawn shall have no force or effect. The Department of Justice reserves the right to retain any FCPA Opinion request, documents and information submitted to it under this procedure or otherwise and to use them for any governmental purposes, subject to the restrictions on disclosures in Sec. 80.14.

**Sec. 80.16 Additional requests.**

Additional requests for FCPA Opinions may be filed with the Attorney General under the foregoing procedure regarding other prospective conduct that is beyond the scope of conduct specified in previous requests.