Introduction to SEBI (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations

Prepared for 7th Batch of Online CLDP by ICSI-CCGRT February 27, 2023

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- We are a team of qualified company secretaries, chartered accountants, lawyers and managers.

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Meaning of insider trading

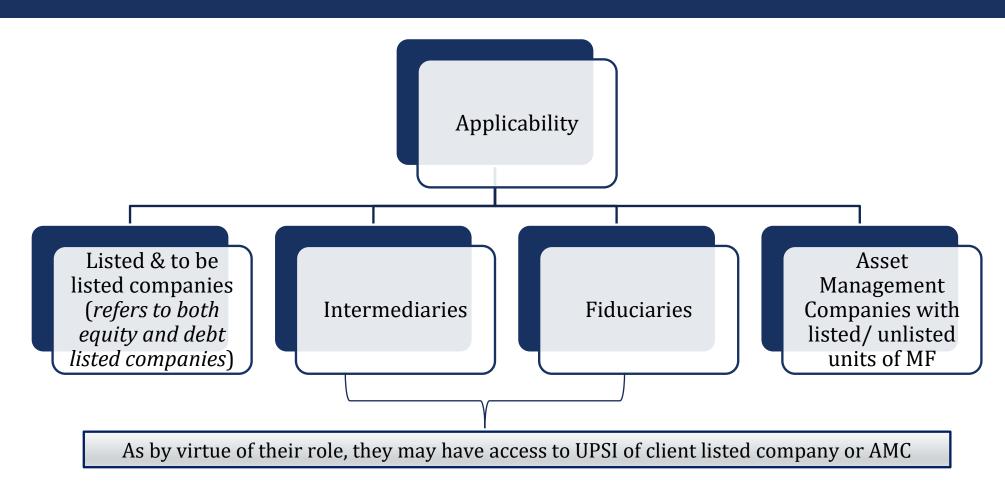
Insider trading

- means trading in the securities of a company by 'insiders' on the basis of their knowledge of Unpublished Price Sensitive Information ('UPSI').
- seeks to exploit inside information to the advantage of a few, and to the disadvantage of the market in general. Hence, insider trading is a fraud upon the market in general.
- Insider trading in not only a civil wrong but also a crime.

Intent to prohibit insider trading

- SEBI is the watchdog of securities market and keeps a check on malpractices by investors in trading of securities.
- Intent of PIT Regulations is maintain stock market at a level playing field, where investors trade.
- No one should be able to beat the market by <u>edge of information</u>.
- Basic investor temptation to outperform the market by getting 'extra' piece of information.
- Section 12A (d) of Chapter VA of SEBI Act, 1992 prohibits person from engaging in insider trading

Applicability of SEBI (PIT) Regulations, 2015



Insider, CP, DP and UPSI

Meaning and differences

Insider vs. CP vs. DP

Insider

Connected person

Any person in possession of or having access to UPSI (rightly or wrongly)

Onus is on the person levelling charge to prove that insider was having access to UPSI

CP

Associated with company during 6 months prior to the concerned act

directly or indirectly, in any capacity, allowing access to UPSI

Onus is on CP to prove that he was not having access to UPSI

DP

Designated by Company as to have access to UPSI

Determined on the basis of function and seniority

Onus is on DP to prove that trade was not motivated on account of UPSI

Insider

DPs: Position or function gives access to UPSI

CP (Presumed Insider)

Unconnected, but in possession of UPSI

Deemed CP: (Rebuttable presumption)

Insider

- Insider has two limbs
 - Insider-insider
 - Connected person
 - Outsider
 - But having or having access to inside information
- Difference in the nature of obligations of outsiders and insiders
 - In case of connected persons
 - Onus of proving innocence is on the insider
 - In case of outsiders
 - Onus is on SEBI

Connected Person (CP)

Connected Person means,-

- any person who is or has been associated with a company, directly or indirectly, in any capacity
- during 6 months prior to the concerned act
- including by reason of frequent communication with its officers
- or by being in any contractual, fiduciary or employment relationship
- or by being a director, officer or an employee of the company
- or holds any position including a professional or business relationship between himself and the company
 - whether temporary or permanent
- that allows such person, directly or indirectly, access to UPSI or is reasonably expected to allow such access.

Deemed to be Connected Person

■ **Deemed to be connected person** means

- immediate relative of connected person
- holding company or associate company or subsidiary company
- intermediary as specified in sec. 12 of SEBI Act or employee or director thereof
- investment company, trustee company, AMC or employee or director thereof
- official of a stock exchange or of clearing house or corporation
- member of board of trustees of a mutual fund or a member of the board of directors of the AMC of a mutual fund or is an employee thereof
- member of the board of directors or an employee, of a public financial institution as defined in sec. 2 (72) of Act, 2013
- official or an employee of a self-regulatory organization recognised or authorized by the Board
- banker of the company
- concern, firm, trust, HUF, company or association of persons wherein a director of a company or his immediate relative or banker of the company, has more than 10% of the holding or interest.

- There is no concept of investment company in India.
- The investment companies are real investment companies
- The phrase therefore seems to have been taken from international laws
- "banker of the company" is also a deemed connected person
- Since the stress is on frequent communication, the relationship manager who has such access must be taken to be "deemed connected"

Re: Deep Industries Limited

- Question arose as to whether certain persons were "Connected persons" as per the Regulations, since they "Liked" certain photos of insiders on Facebook.
- SEBI held that the perusal of Regulation 2(1)(d)(i) shows that the association of the person can be direct or indirect and the association can be in **any capacity** which can include **frequent communication** with its officers by virtue of which such associated person can be reasonably expected to have access to UPSI.
- It was contended that frequent communication would also include communication in their social capacity.

- Penalty of Rs. 2.41 crores was levied.
- However, the case was settled through a settlement order.

Order of the AO

https://www.sebi.gov.in/web/?file=https://www.sebi.gov.in/sebi_data/attachdocs/apr-2018/1523966098348.pdf#page=14&zoom=auto,-15,464

Designated Person (DP)

Persons regulated under erstwhile provisions	Persons regulated under current provisions
Regulates following:	Regulates following
- Promoters	- Promoters
- Directors	- Directors
- Employees	- Designated Persons (includes employees)

Who is a Designated Person?

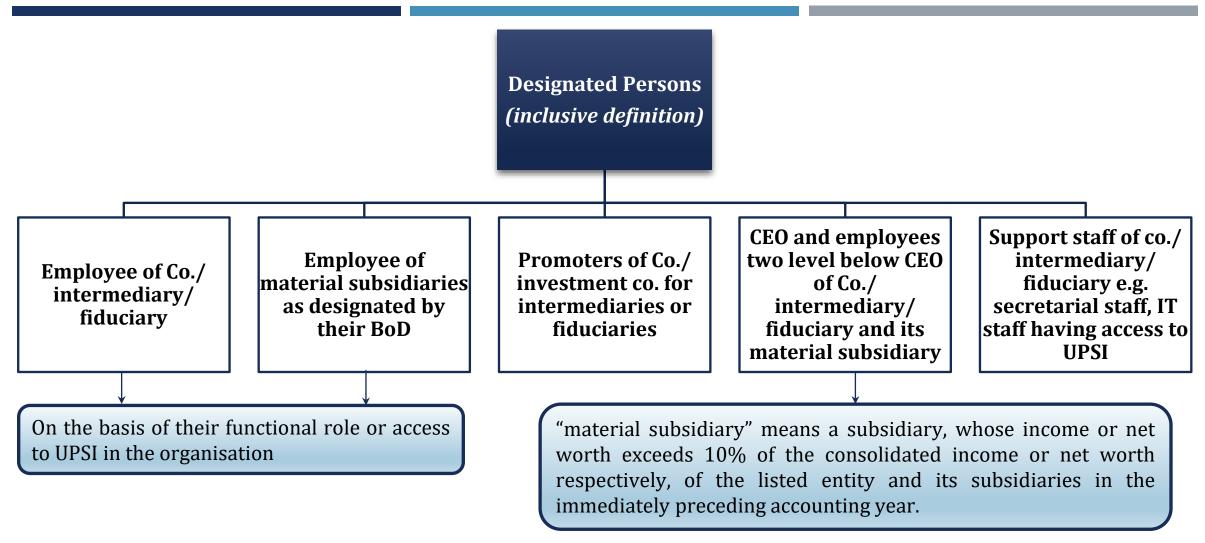
- Person who has been designated by the Company as to have access to UPSI in the Company; and
- Designated persons are determined on the basis of:

FUNCTION

Eg- Accounts department by virtue of their function shall have access to financial statements even before approval. Secretarial department by virtue of their function shall have access to Board Minutes/AGM Minutes even before finalisation

SENIORITY

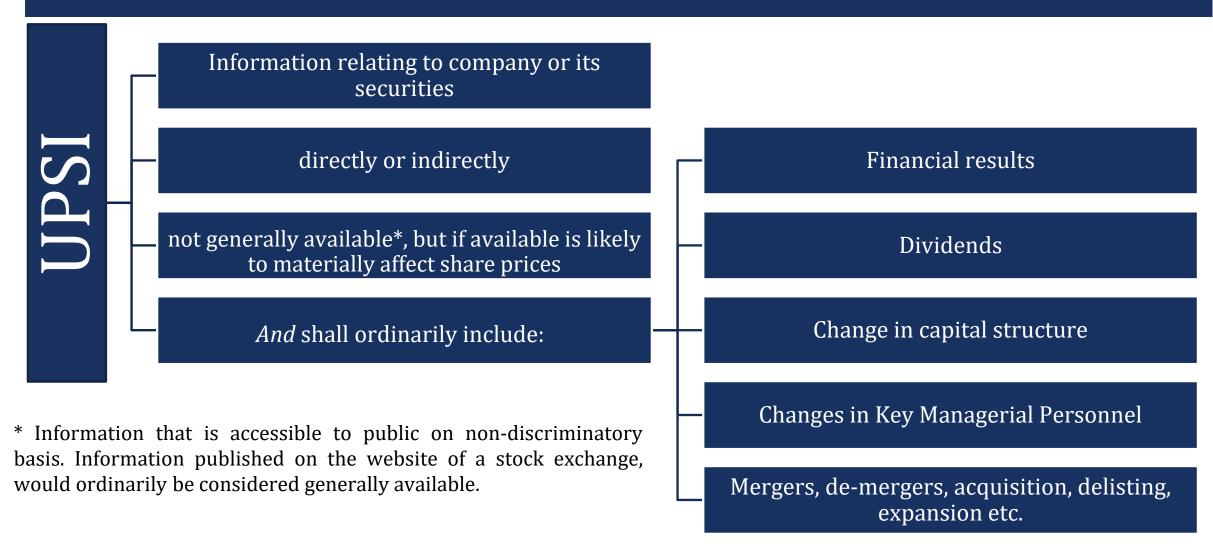
Eg- first two layers of organisational ladder are presumed to have access to UPSI at all times.



Points to ponder:

- Should whole-time director/ managing director of a holding company be added as DP of the subsidiary company?
- whether the term "all promoters" cover promoter group under the ambit of DP?

Unpublished Price Sensitive Information (UPSI)



Other important concepts

Trading means and includes subscribing, redeeming, switching, buying, selling, dealing, or agreeing to subscribe, redeem, switch, buy, sell, deal in any securities.

Points to ponder:

- Whether creation/invocation/revocation of pledge can be deemed as trading?
- Whether trading only in equity shares covered?
- Whether trading in ADR/ GDR also covered?
- Whether gift of shares is also covered?

- Immediate relatives means
- a spouse of a person, and
- includes parent, sibling, and child of such person or of the spouse,
 - any of whom is either dependent financially on such person,
 - or consults such person in taking decisions relating to trading in securities;

Key components under PIT Regulations: An Overview

- Role of Functionaries
 - Board of Directors
 - Codes and Policies
 - Sharing of UPSI
 - Others
 - Audit Committee
 - Managing Director & CEO
 - Compliance Officer
 - Overall responsibilities
 - UPSI related
 - Trading related

- Unpublished Price Sensitive Information
 - Determination;
 - preservation,
 - Communication, sharing etc.
- Designated Persons
 - Identification
 - Responsibilities under the Regulations
- Systems
 - Codes, policies and procedures
 - Internal controls

Role of various functionaries

Board of Directors, Audit Committee, Managing Director/CEO and Compliance Officer

Role of Board of Directors

Codes and Policies

- Formulate a policy for determination of "legitimate purposes" [Reg. 3(2A)]
 - as part of Code of Fair Disclosure.
- Formulate a Code of Fair Disclosure in line with Schedule A [Reg. 8(1)]
 - Designate a senior officer as a Chief Investor Relations Officer [Sch. A(3)].
- Formulate a Code of Conduct to regulate, monitor and report trading by its Designated Persons ('DPs') and immediate relatives in line with Schedule B [Reg. 9(1)]
 - Primary responsibility is that of MD/CEO
- Formulate a Code of Conduct to regulate, monitor and report trading by its Designated Persons ('DPs') and immediate relatives in line with Schedule C [Reg. 9(2)]
- Formulate a policy and procedures for inquiry in case of leak of UPSI [Reg. 9A(5)]
- Have a whistle-blower policy [Reg. 9(6)]

Sharing of UPSI

- Determine sharing of UPSI in the best interest of the Company, in connection with a transaction [Reg. 3(3) and (4)]
 - Whether or not attracting open offer obligations under SAST;
 - Requiring the parties to execute NDA and abstain from trading in securities.
- Ensure maintenance of Structured Digital Database ('SDD') [Reg. 3(5)]

Others

- Identify and designate a Compliance Officer [Reg. 9(3)]
 - To administer the code of conduct and other requirements.
- Specify the DPs to be covered by the Code of Conduct [Reg. 9(3)]
 - In consultation with the Compliance Officer.
- Ensure preservation of SDD for atleast 8 years [Reg. 3(6)]
- Ensure that MD/ CEO ensures compliance w.r.t. Code of Conduct and framing of internal controls [Reg. 9A(3)]

Role of Audit Committee

- Review compliance with the Regulations atleast once in a financial year. [Reg. 9A (4)]
- Verify adequacy and effective operation of internal control systems. [Reg. 9A (4)]
- Chairman of Audit Committee to receive reports from the Compliance Officer atleast once in a year. [Sch. B]

Role of MD/CEO

- Formulate a Code of Conduct to regulate, monitor and report trading by its Designated Persons ('DPs') and immediate relatives in line with Schedule B [Reg. 9(1)]
 - With the approval of the Board.
- Put in place an adequate and effective system of internal controls which includes. [Reg. 9A (1)&(2)]
 - Identification of employees who have access to UPSI as Designated Persons (DP);
 - Identification of UPSI and maintain its confidentiality as per the requirements of the Regulations;
 - Placing restrictions on communication or procurement of UPSI;
 - Maintaining lists of persons with whom UPSI is shared;
 - Signing confidentiality agreements or serving notice of confidentiality;
 - Ensuring other compliances under the Regulations;
 - Putting in place an adequate & effective system of internal controls;
 - Periodically review the effectiveness of such internal controls.

Role of the Compliance Officer

- Overall responsibilities [Reg. 2(1)(c)]
 - Compliance of policies, procedures;
 - Maintenance and preservation of records;
 - Monitoring adherence to the rules for UPSI preservation;
 - Monitoring of trades;
 - Implementation of the Codes;
 - Providing reports to the Chairman of the Audit Committee/ Board;
 - Maintaining list of DPs and obtaining requisite disclosures.
 - Submitting disclosures to SE;

UPSI related

- Giving due notice to persons to maintain confidentiality of UPSI [Reg. 3(2B)];
- Informing SEBI promptly of leak of UPSI, inquiries and results thereof [Reg. 9A(5)];
- Making employees aware about whistle blower policy [Reg. 9A(6)];
 - To enable employees to report instances of leak of UPSI.
- Determining trading window closure for DPs or class of DPs. period [Sch. B(4)];

Trading related

- Reviewing and approving trading plans submitted by insiders [Reg. 5(3)];
 - Notifying the trading plan to SE and monitoring its implementation.
- Deciding on obtaining disclosures from CPs [Reg. 7(3)];
- Granting pre-clearance of trades by DPs (including immediate relatives) [Sch. B(6) & (8)];
 - Seeking declaration for preclearance.
- Granting relaxation from contratrade restrictions [Sch. B(10)];
 - Disgorging profits in case of contratrade.
- Crediting penalty amounts collected from DPs to IPEF. [Sch. B(12)].

Key elements of framework for PIT controls: An Overview

Controls relating to UPSI

- Identification of UPSI
 - Manner of determining 'information';
 - Price sensitivity of information;
 - Persons responsible for determining;
 - UPSI v/s material events.
- Communication or sharing of UPSI
 - Based on policy for legitimate purpose.
- Preservation of UPSI
 - Giving notice of confidentiality, execution of NDA;
 - Chinese Walls;
 - Process in case of leak of UPSI.
- Making UPSI generally available
 - Code of Fair Disclosure.
- Maintenance of SDD
 - Manner and pre-requisites;
 - SDD compliance certificate;
 - Consequence of violation of SDD maintenance.

Controls relating to DPs

- Identification of DPs
 - Manner of determining;
 - Persons responsible.
- Handling of UPSI by DPs
 - Manner and purpose of sharing UPSI.
- Monitoring of trades by DPs
 - Code of Conduct;
 - Trading window controls;
 - Tracking of trades;
 - Pre-clearance requirements;
 - Contra trade restrictions.
- In case of intermediary/ fiduciary
 - Code of Conduct;
 - Maintenance of restricted list;
 - Monitoring of trades by DPs;
 - Maintenance of SDD.

Determination of UPSI

Meaning, manner of determination

Determination of UPSI: Meaning of "information" (1/2)

- UPSI necessarily is "information"
- EU's <u>Market Abuse Regulation</u> uses the term "information of precise nature"
- It then defines such information:
 - Information shall be deemed to be of a precise nature if it indicates a set of circumstances which exists or which may reasonably be expected to come into existence, or an event which has occurred or which may reasonably be expected to occur, where it is specific enough to enable a conclusion to be drawn as to the possible effect of that set of circumstances or event on the prices of the financial instruments.
- Unless information reaches concretisation, it is not an "information".
- When information reaches certainty, that is when it requires dissemination to the public.

- Between the concretisation stage and dissemination stage, the information is unpublished.
- If material, it is a UPSI.
- The idea is to preserve the confidentiality of information at this stage, not to result into selective disclosures.
- Key features of UPSI:
 - Recognising something as UPSI is not a bet on the certainty of happening; a UPSI may die down and not become market information at all:
 - There is surely an element of subjectivity is recognition of something as "material".

Determination of UPSI: Meaning of "information" (2/2)

- For it to be UPSI, it has to be "information"
 - The meaning of the term "information" has to fit into overall meaning of UPSI:
 - Material non-public information, based on case law, has been defined by SEC in <u>Final Rule on Code of Fair Disclosures</u> as "there is a substantial likelihood that a reasonable shareholder would consider it important" in making an investment decision"
 - Mere intent, desire, or dream cannot be regarded as information.
 - Information has to weight the probability of occurrence, over that of non-occurrence
- Since, the definition of UPSI refers to material impact on prices, the information should be "material".

- A project/development or task becomes a probabilistic or potential information when the probability of its occurrence is higher.
- It becomes a concrete information when the uncertainty is largely removed.
 - At this stage, since it is material, the information requires disclosure in terms of Reg 30. of LODR
- Until the concretisation and dissemination of the information, the probabilistic information is with some persons, not democratic.
 - It is this availability of potentially material information with some persons which needs to be recorded in SDD
 - In Basic v. Levinson, 485 U.S. 224, it was held that "materiality with respect to contingent or speculative events will depend on a balancing of both the indicated probability that the event will occur and the anticipated magnitude of the event in light of the totality of company activity".

Determination of UPSI: Meaning of 'Price Sensitive' & 'Unpublished'

- What is price sensitive information?
 - Information likely to materially affect the price of the securities
 - When made generally available
- How to determine the price sensitivity?
 - It is probabilistic in nature
 - Requires 'taking of a view' based on price sensitivity.
 - Quantum of impact on price cannot be ascertained upfront
 - Impact on other parameters that will ultimately impact the price, to be ascertained
 - Forms the basis for determining the thresholds
 - E.g. 10 % of turnover or net-worth or specific limit.
- Correlation with material events under Reg. 30
 - Event / information that is deemed material under Reg. 30
 - May or may not be price sensitive.
 - Event/information determined as material under Reg. 30
 - Will be deemed to be price sensitive
- System of determining
 - Feedback system to be adopted
 - Type of information not regarded as material in the past, however, had an impact on price
 - System should be dynamically reviewed and evolved

- What is Unpublished?
 - Information that is not generally available
- When is an information said to be generally available?
 - Information available on a non-discriminatory basis
 - Information published on the website of stock exchange, would ordinarily be considered generally available
- Disclosure of material event/ information to the stock exchange
 - Information ceases to be unpublished.
 - Becomes generally available information
- Manner of making UPSI generally available
 - As per Code of Fair Disclosure
 - Prompt public disclosure once credible and concrete information comes into being
 - Uniform and universal dissemination
 - No selective disclosure
 - In case of any inadvertent selective disclosure, prompt corrective action
 - Until then, handle all UPSI on need to know basis.

UPSI & Material events: manner of determination

- Material events and information
 - Guidance on criteria for determining materiality given in Reg. 30 of Listing Regulations
 - Events deemed to be material
 - Indicated in Para A of Part A of Schedule III to Listing Regulations
 - Events determined to be material
 - Indicated in Para B of Part A of Schedule III to Listing Regulations
 - Based on the impact of the omission of an event or information is likely to result
 - in discontinuity or alteration of event or information already available publicly;
 - in significant market reaction if the said omission came to light at a later date;
 - Based on the opinion of the board of directors
 - Manner laid down in the board approved policyFor determination of materiality.
 - One or more KMP authorized to determine
 - Includes events relating to subsidiaries
 - Material for the listed parent.

UPSI

- Includes few events deemed to be material under Reg. 30
 - Financial results;
 - Dividend;
 - changes in KMP;
 - change in capital structure;
 - mergers, de-mergers, acquisitions, delistings, disposals.
- Events determined to be material
 - Deemed UPSI?
 - 'Events' determined 'material' if it is likely to 'materially affect the price'.
 - Criteria is same as definition of UPSI
- KMP authorised under Reg. 30 should be responsible for determining UPSI
 - Recording of reasons, rationale
 - For determination as well as non-determination
- Events/ information that materially impacted the price in the past

The trajectory of information in an organisation

- N: The MD spots a tender/scheme of the Orissa Govt whereby there will be allotment of land, provided the entrepreneur makes an minimum capex of Rs 500 crores in a new plant. Other conditions are there.
- N+1 Captivated by the idea, the MD would want to examine the feasibility of setting up a new unit in Orissa.
- N+3 The MD discusses the matter with the CFO and the two agree to engage one of the consulting firms to do a feasibility study for setting up the Orissa plant
- N+15 At this stage, an in-principle board approval is taken by circulation for carrying the feasibility study, to be reported back to the Board.
- N+ 75 The feasibility study comes a couple of months later. The study inter alia recommends an investment of Rs 650 crores. This will nearly doubling the current capacity of the company

- N+ 90 After doing further work on the matter, the MD and the CFO set up an internal team to identify the technology/machinery vendor, make financial projections, identify land parcel, etc.
- N+ 115 A board meeting is to be called by the CS, setting up the details as currently available.
- N + 123 Board resolution passed for making application to the Govt of Orissa for the plant; if the application succeeds, the matter to come back to the board.
- N+ 125 Application made
- N+ 155 Govt of Orissa sanctions the application
- N+ 170 Further board resolution for setting up a WOS
- N+ 170 At this stage, the information is disclosed to SE

Metamorphosis of "information" to publication



Indicative list of UPSI

- Acquisitions/ takeovers
 - Proposal for merger/ amalgamation
 - Setting up a significant subsidiary or joint venture by way of significant expansion of business/assets
 - Proposal for setting up new units
 - Dissolution of a significant subsidiary or a joint venture
- Revenue side UPSI
 - Financial results of a company
 - Expansion of production capacity, new product launch
 - Major orders of a non-recurring nature or unusual concession agreement, or similar item
- Expense side UPSI
 - Significant breakdown in production
 - Disruption of operations due to natural calamity, strikes, lockouts etc
- Shareholder related UPSI
 - Proposal for declaration of dividend
 - Management change/shareholders' agreement indicating change of control
 - Proposal for raising funds through increase in capital
- Regulatory changes/ approvals related UPSI

Debt-related UPSI

- Debt-restructuring arrangements or inter-creditor arrangements
- Application for CIRP by the company itself or by any operational/ financial creditor against the company
- Potential but almost certain Default in loans or debt servicing obligations
- Corporate governance UPSI
 - Changes in management structure
 - Resignation of independent directors signalling corporate governance issue
- Litigation/ exposures/negatively impacting UPSI
 - Tax demand notice received by the company
 - Notice for initiation of any major regulatory proceedings against a company
 - Initiation of arbitration proceedings for a major demand/claim
 - Commencement of investigation by regulators such as RBI, SEBI etc
 - Fraud/defaults by promoter or KMP or by the listed company
 - Arrest of KMP or promoter
 - Initiation of forensic audit
 - Giving of guarantees, indemnity, becoming surety for third party

Dealing with UPSI

Communication, Preservation and Dissemination

Communication of UPSI

Restriction on communication of UPSI

- No person shall:
 - communicate, provide, or allow access; or
 - procure from or cause the communication
 - With respect to UPSI, relating to a company or securities listed or proposed to be listed

Exception

Communication or procurement is in furtherance of legitimate purposes, performance of duties or discharge of legal obligations.

What is legitimate purpose?

- Refers to sharing of UPSI in ordinary course of business by an insider with outsiders for business purpose, without circumventing the prohibitions of PIT Regulations.
- Inducement and procurement of UPSI not in furtherance of one's legitimate duties and discharge of obligations would be illegal.

Manner of determining 'legitimate purpose'?

- The Board of Directors of every company to formulate a policy
 - For determination of 'legitimate purpose'
 - as a part of Code of Fair Disclosure and Conduct.
- Such policy may include:
 - Instances of sharing that can be regarded as 'legitimate'
 - required in the ordinary course of business;
 - Pursuant to statutory requirement;
 - Pursuant to regulatory order or direction.
 - Board of directors determine under Reg. 3 (3)
 - Sharing of information is in the best interest.
 - Person responsible in determining if the purpose is legitimate or not;
 - Process of sharing
 - As per the Code of Conduct.
 - Person to whom UPSI is provided must be sensitized about the policy and confidentiality so as to avoid leakage.
 - Entry in Structured Digital Database

Preservation of UPSI: Responsibility and Manner

- Board of Directors
 - in case of sharing of UPSI for a transaction
 - entailing an obligation to make an open offer or not
 - Which, in the view of the Board, is in the interest of the Company.
 - require the parties to execute agreements
 - to contract confidentiality and non-disclosure obligations on the part of such parties
 - such parties to keep information so received confidential,
 - except for the purpose of the approved transaction
 - Parties to abstain from trading in securities of the company when in possession of UPSI.
 - ensure CEO/MD frames internal controls
 - Formulate written policies and procedures for inquiry
 - In case of leak or suspected leak of UPSI
- Audit Committee
 - Review compliance with PIT regulations
 - Verify adequacy and operative effectiveness of internal controls

- CEO/ Managing Director
 - Framing of internal controls for:
 - Identification of UPSI and maintaining its confidentiality
 - Adequate restrictions on communication or procurement of UPSI
 - Identifying all employees having access to UPSI as DPs
 - Maintaining list of all employees and other persons with whom UPSI is shared
 - Signing confidentiality agreements or serving notice of confidentiality
 - Complying with other relevant requirements.
 - Periodic process review to evaluate effectiveness of internal controls
- Manner of preservation
 - having a process of how and when people are brought 'inside' on sensitive transactions;
 - having norms for appropriate Chinese Wall procedures, and processes for permitting any designated person to "cross the wall".
 - Physical separation of departments
 - Restrict flow of information
 - Security of sensitive documents
 - Information barriers for restricting flow of material nonpublic information
 - Handling information on need to know basis
 - Executing NDA/ giving notice of confidentiality

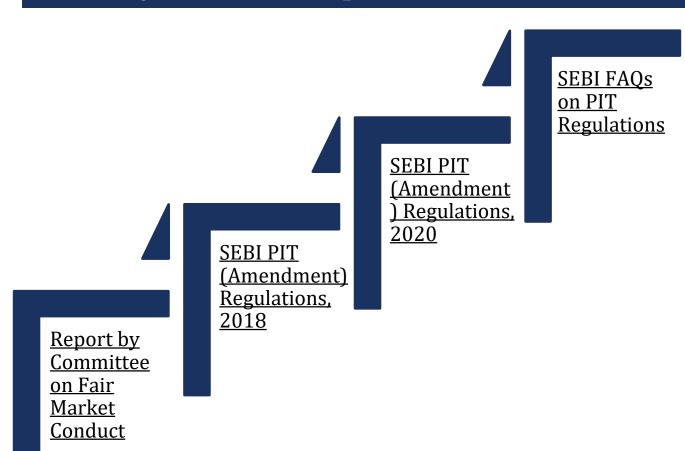
Disclosure of UPSI

- Making it generally available
 - Ceases to be UPSI upon making it generally available
- Responsibility of the Board of Directors
 - Formulate a code of practices and procedures for fair disclosure of UPSI
 - Based on principles provided in Schedule A
 - Prompt public disclosure once credible and concrete information comes into being;
 - Uniform and universal dissemination of UPSI;
 - Prompt dissemination of UPSI that gets disclosed selectively, inadvertently or otherwise.
 - Appropriate and fair response to queries on news reports and requests for verification of market rumours by regulatory authorities
 - Requirements relating to meetings with analysts and research personnel
 - UPSI not to be shared
 - making of transcripts or records of proceedings of meetings
 - ensure official confirmation and documentation of disclosures made
 - Handling UPSI on need to know basis.
- Responsibility of Chief Investors Relations Officer
 - Dissemination of information and disclosure of UPSI

Maintenance of Structured Digital Database

Intent, manner, pre-requisites, reporting requirement.

History and development



Intent of SDD

Commentary of Shri T K VishwanathanCommittee Report -

"that once the information is shared with these outsiders, the company has no control over it. Therefore, the company must keep track of the first level of recipients, such that, if investigation so needs it, the company can establish a trail. Each of the fiduciaries, likewise, are supposed to be answerable for the integrity and protection of the confidentiality of the information received by them."

- Helps in establishing trail of flow of information
- Helpful in investigation pertaining to insider trading matters

Regulatory basis for SDD maintenance – Reg. 3 (5) & (6)

- The board of directors or head(s) of the organisation of every person required to handle unpublished price sensitive information shall ensure
 - that a structured digital database is maintained;
 - containing the nature of unpublished price sensitive information; and
 - the names of such persons who have shared the information; and
 - the names of such persons with whom information is shared
 - along with the Permanent Account Number or any other identifier authorized by law where Permanent Account Number is not available.
 - such database shall not be outsourced; and
 - such database is maintained internally with adequate internal controls and checks such as time stamping and audit trails to ensure non-tampering of the database.

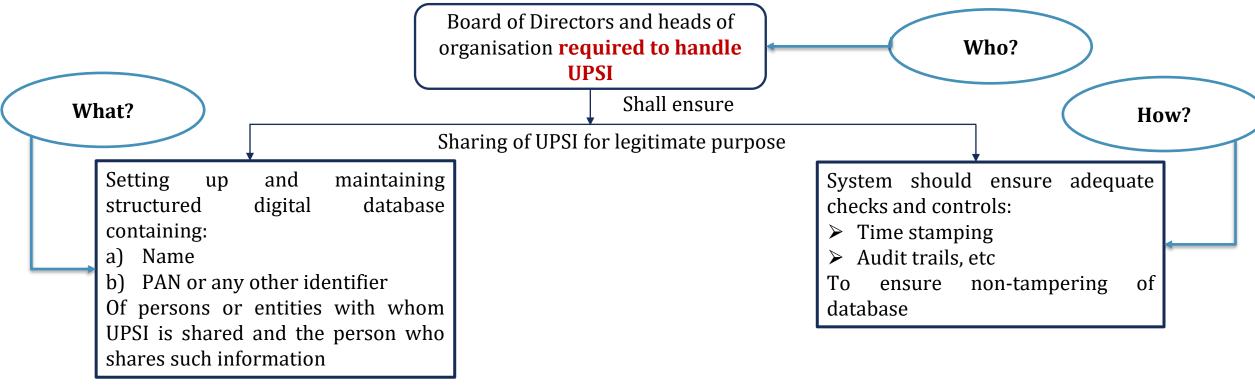
- The board of directors or head(s) of the organisation of every person required to handle unpublished price sensitive information shall ensure
 - that the structured digital database is preserved
 - for a period of not less than eight years after completion of the relevant transactions; and
 - in the event of receipt of any information from the Board regarding any investigation or enforcement proceedings,
 - the relevant information in the structured digital database shall be preserved till the completion of such proceedings.

Global equivalents

- Difficult to find precise global equivalent
- However, the nearest comparable may be Article 18 of <u>Market Abuse Regulation</u> of the EU
- This requires preparation of an "insider list"
 - a list of all persons who have access to inside information and who are working for them under a contract of employment, or otherwise performing tasks through which they have access to inside information, such as advisers, accountants or credit rating agencies.

- The list shall at least include:
 - the identity of any person having access to inside information;
 - the reason for including that person in the insider list;
 - the date and time at which that person obtained access to inside information;
 - the date on which the insider list was drawn up.
- Issuer shall update the Insider List promptly, with each update mentioning the date and time
- Retention of insider list for 5 years
- There is a concept of Permanent Insider List persons who are regularly in receipt of such information. These names may not repetitively be entered
- There is Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/347 relating to Insider Lists in electronic form

Maintenance of Structured Digital Database



Other requirements

- Information should be preserved for 8 years after completion of relevant transaction
- Should be maintained internally and not outsourced
- Entry will be required to be made for sharing internally or externally (FAQ No. 3 & 6)
- ➤ If any entry made needs to be altered, then a separate entry can be made citing reference to the earlier one with full corrected details and the reasons for correction. (FAQ No. 7)
- > To be maintained independently by every company and not at group level (FAQ No. 9)

Suggested minimum contents of SDD

Supplier of Information			Recipient of information		
Name	PAN	Any other information	Name	PAN	Any other information
Category of the person (Note 1)					
Nature of UPSI and reason of sharing UPSI					
Date and Time of sharing					
Purpose of Sharing					
Date when UPSI became publicly available					
NDA or confidentiality agreement executed in this regard					
Date of entry in SDD					
Details of person making the entry (Note 2)					
Remarks, if any:					

Note 1:

The categories of recipients shall include: Designated Persons (DPs); Employees of the Company who are not DPs; Connected Persons;

Note 2:

The database shall be maintained under the supervision of the Compliance Officer of the Company;

The database shall be reviewed by the Compliance Officer on a periodic basis.

The identity of the person accessing the database is required to be established for the purpose of audit trail (*FAQ no. 8*)

Manner of maintaining SDD

- Pre-requisites
 - Maintained internally and not outsourced
 - Audit trail to be maintained
 - Facility of date and time stamping
 - Shall be tamper-proof
- Can it be maintained on Excel sheets?
 - Spreadsheets are easy; however, no audit trail, unless created by security features.
 - Some tech experts contend that even enabling tracking creates an audit trail; there are others who recommend VBA codes (which may not be very hard to create).
 - There are some <u>write-ups from the UK</u> which have expressed doubts on whether Excel is a good tool for insider lists as required by UK regulations.
- Can it be maintained on Google sheets?
 - Time stamping is possible
 - Audit trail possible since the edit history is maintained
 - Maintained on google cloud, so may amount to outsourcing

- Softwares provided by third party
 - May be used if all features are there
 - Need to ensure that the same does not result in "outsourcing"
 - FAQs have clarified that use of external software maintained internally by company does not amount to outsourcing
- Suggested mode for maintenance
 - Emails may be tagged as "containing price-sensitive information" at the time of sharing information
 - Systems to be linked such that all such emails are captured automatically
 - Once events are identified, other relevant information may be populated by those having access controls
 - In case of multiple people having access controls, there still need to have a centralised point of control
- In case of Fiduciaries/ intermediaries
 - To be maintained likewise for UPSI received from client entities (*FAQ No. 2 and 6*)
 - In case of UPSI being shared with listed entity, entry to be made accordingly.

SDD compliance certificate - what it is, and what it is not?

What the Compliance Certificate is?

- That the Company is maintaining SDD, in the manner required by reg 3 (5)
- The SDD answers the basic attributes access control, non tamperability, audit trail, etc
- If an item has been internally recognised as UPSI, and the same has been shared internally or externally, procedures exist to ensure that the sharing of such information is entered into the SDD
 - Such procedures are working satisfactorily

What the Compliance Certificate is not

- Whether information has properly been characterised, or omitted from being characterised, as UPSI
- Whether UPSI has been shared by someone inside the entity, other than on need to know basis
- Whether UPSI has been shared by someone without entering the same in the SDD
- Whether an outsider has obtained access to UPSI, or shared the same with someone
- Whether trades have been made while in possession of UPSI

Requirement of SDD compliance certificate

From where does the requirement trigger?

- Q1 of FY 22-23 notices sent to listed entities by SEs
- Q2 and Q3 of FY 22-23 circulars issued by SEs dated 28th October, 2022
- Q4 of FY 22-23 separate circular to be issued by the SEs.

What does the certificate pertain to?

 compliance with respect to maintenance of SDD and capturing of all events of sharing of UPSI

Periodicity and timelines of compliance certificate?

- On a quarterly basis
 - For Q2 FY 22-23 by 18th November, 2022
 - For Q3 FY 22-23 by 21st January, 2023

Who is required to certify?

 Compliance Officer of the Company or a practicing Company Secretary

Manner of submission

- BSE: BSE Listing Centre > Listing Compliance >
 Compliance Module > Structured Digital Database
 (SDD) Compliance Certificate
- NSE: This certificate has to be emailed on the following email id of the Exchange: sdd_pit@nse.co.in

Power to SE to inspect the SDD system

- After giving notice of 1 working day
- If company is non-compliant with respect to SDD, appropriate action shall be initiated by the Exchanges

Placing of certificate before the Board

Recommended as responsibility w.r.t. SDD maintenance is on the Board.

Format of SDD compliance certificate

COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE FOR THE QUARTER ENDED
(Pursuant to Securities and Exchange Board of India (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015)
I,, Compliance Officer of (name of listed entity), or I,, Practising Company Secretary appointed by (name of listed entity) am aware of the compliance requirement of Structured Digital Database (SDD)
pursuant to provisions of Regulation 3(5) and 3(6) of Securities and Exchange Board of India (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015 (PIT Regulations) and I certify that
1. the Company has a Structured Digital Database in place
2. control exists as to who can access the SDD
3. all the UPSI disseminated in the previous quarter have been captured in the Database
4. the system has captured nature of UPSI along with date and time
5. the database has been maintained internally and an audit trail is maintained
6. the database is non-tamperable and has the capability to maintain the records for 8 years.
(relevant points from 1 to 6 can be striked off in the case of non compliance)
I also confirm that the Company was required to capture number of events during the quarter ended and has captured number of the said required events.

I would like to report that the following noncompliance(s) was observed in the previous quarter and the remedial action(s) taken along with timelines in this regard:

Consequences of violation of maintenance of SDD

- Instances of violation
 - No audit trail
 - Not maintained internally
 - No time stamping
 - Capable of being tampered/ instance of actual tampering
 - Details not filled entirely
 - Entry for certain instance of sharing UPSI not captured
 - Rectification entry not made in the manner provided in FAQ no. 7
 - Entry made by person not authorized
 - Entries not maintained for 8 years or till completion of proceedings, as the case may be.
 - Non-submission of compliance certificate
 - Incorrect reporting made in compliance certificate

- As per <u>BSE Circular dated 4th November, 2022</u> & NSE circular dated 4th November, 2022
 - Company will be displayed as "non-compliant with SDD" under the 'Get Quote' page of Exchange Website of the listed entity
 - from the next trading day till
 - Exchanges have satisfactorily verified that the company has completely complied
- As per <u>BSE Circular dated 25th January, 2023</u> & <u>NSE circular dated 25th January, 2023</u>
 - Details of the Compliance Officer will also be displayed under the 'Get Quote' page, where the above information is displayed.

Trading in possession of UPSI

Trading on the basis of UPSI

- No insider shall trade in securities that are
 - listed or
 - proposed to be listed
- When?
 - while in possession of UPSI
- When a person who has traded in securities has been in possession of UPSI, his trades are presumed to have been motivated by the knowledge and awareness of UPSI.

Probable defences

- For connected persons
 - onus of establishing, that they were not in possession of UPSI, shall be on such connected persons
 - This is very important as connected person should be able to prove innocence
 - Exonerating circumstances need to be proved
- in other cases
 - the onus would be on the Board
 - For persons other than connected person, SEBI needs to prove guilt.

Probable defences

- Transaction is an off-market inter-se transfer between promoters who were in possession of same UPSI without being in breach of Reg. 3 and both parties had made a conscious and informed trade decision.
- the transaction was carried out through the block deal window mechanism between persons who were in possession of UPSI without being in breach of Reg. 3 and both parties had made a conscious and informed trade decision. Such UPSI was not obtained by either person under reg. 3(3).
- transaction was carried out pursuant to a statutory or regulatory obligation to carry out a bona fide transaction.
- transaction was undertaken pursuant to the exercise of stock options in respect of which the exercise price was pre-determined in compliance with applicable regulations.
- For non-individual insiders
 - the individuals who were in possession of such UPSI were different from the individuals taking trading decisions. Such decision-making individuals were not in possession of such UPSI when they took the decision to trade
 - appropriate and adequate arrangements were in place to ensure that the regulations are not violated
 - no UPSI was communicated by the individuals possessing the information to the individuals taking trading decisions and
 - there is no evidence of such arrangements having been breached
- the trades were pursuant to a trading plan set up in accordance with Regulation 5 (Refer next slide).

TRADING PLAN

CONCEPT AND RELAXATIONS

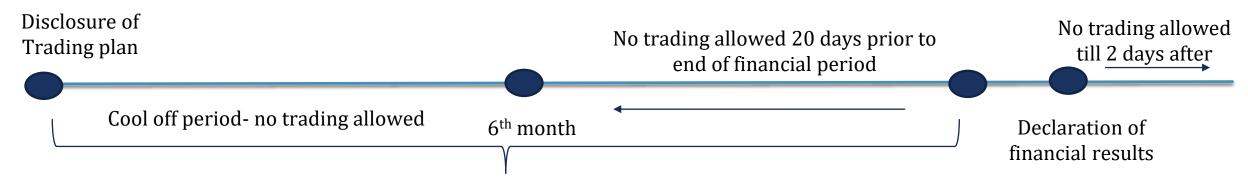
Concept of trading plan

Intent of trading plan

- Ensure persons who may perpetually have possession of UPSI to trade in securities
- No market violation, as trading plan was pre-decided even before the insider got access to UPSI

Trading plans remain unpopular

- Why?- The trading restriction makes its unrealistic
- Once entered have to be traded
- Either the value of trade or number of securities to be traded, along with nature/intervals/dates to be set out.



Trading period- 12 months

No overlap with other trading plan

Relaxations provided to trades executed through trading plan

Pre-clearance of trades not required

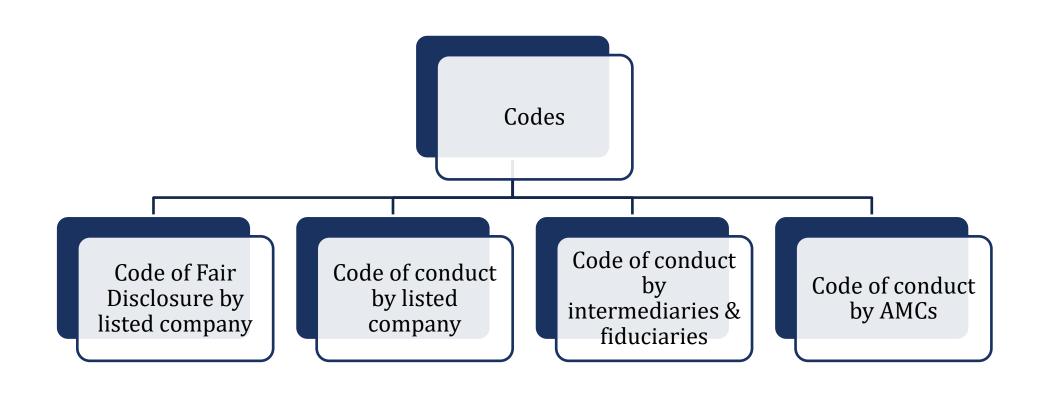
Trading window norms shall not apply

Restrictions on contra trade shall not apply

Codes and Policies under PIT Regulations

Applicability and contents of Codes

Codes under PIT Regulations



Code of Conduct v/s Code of Fair Disclosure

Parameters	Code of Conduct	Code of Fair Disclosure
Applicability of the Code	DPs and their immediate relatives	Board of Directors and Chief Investor Relations Officer
Intent	to regulate, monitor and report trading by its Ds and immediate relatives of DPs	To ensure prompt and uniform disclosure of UPSI and avoid its selective disclosure
Minimum standards	Minimum standards as per Schedule B	Minimum standards as per Schedule A
Intimation to stock exchange	Formulated Code of Conduct to be confirmed to the stock exchange	Formulated Code of fair disclosure and amendments thereto to be intimated to the stock exchange
Disclosure on website of the Company	No disclosure required	Need to be disclosed

Code of Conduct of listed company v/s that of intermediaries and fiduciaries

Parameters	Code of Conduct of listed company	Code of Conduct of intermediaries and fiduciaries
Person responsible for formulation	CEO & MD formulates with the approval of Board of Directors	Head of organisation
Minimum standards	Minimum standards as per Schedule B	Minimum standards as per Schedule C
Restricted list	No express requirement of maintaining restricted list	Requires maintenance of restricted list for approving or rejecting applications for pre-clearance of trades
Trading window closure	Trading window is required to be closed by listed company	Trading window is closed by client listed company

Code of Fair Disclosure - Principles

Prompt public disclosure of UPSI that would impact price discovery

Uniform and universal dissemination of UPSE to avoid selective disclosure.

Designation of a senior officer as a chief investor relations officer

Prompt dissemination of UPSI

Appropriate and fair response to queries on news reports and requests for verification of market rumours by regulatory authorities

Ensuring that information shared with analysts and research personnel is not UPSI

Developing best practices to make transcripts or records of proceedings of meetings

Handling of all UPSI on a need-to-know basis.

Code of Conduct by listed company

- Applicable on DPs and immediate relatives
- Onus of formulation of code on CEO and MD
- To regulate, monitor and report trading by DPs and their immediate relatives
- Compliance officer to administer the code

Identification of DPs on the basis of role and function apart from seniority

Policy in relation to access to UPSI on need-to-know basis, Chinese wall procedures, how to bring people inside

Functions of the Compliance Officer

Dealing with leak of UPSI, protection against victimization of informants

Threshold & formats for seeking pre-clearance, reporting of trade, disclosures - initial, annual & continual, personal information

Restriction in relation to contra trade, period of closure of trading window

Penalty and reporting in case of contravention of the Code

Process on how and when people are brought "inside"

To be included in the Code of Conduct of listed entities and intermediaries and fiduciaries.

There should be a system to track where the information emerges upto the time information is disclosed to the public Who is authorized to share the information With whom the information is shared along with executing confidentiality agreements Analyzing the reason of sharing such information The protocol of sharing the information Sensitizing the person with whom the information is to be shared

Assuring that the person understands that the information is confidential

Policy for inquiry in case of leak of UPSI

Identify the source of leakage of UPSI

Mechanism to handle the leak of any UPSI Plug loopholes in internal control system in order to prevent leak of UPSI in future

Inform SEBI about leak of UPSI

Mechanism to initiate appropriate inquiries on becoming aware of leak/ suspected leak of UPSI

Educate employees regarding reporting of leak/ suspected leak of UPSI

Procedure for inquiry in case of leak/ suspected leak of UPSI should be provided

Authorizing Audit Committee/ SRC to take necessary steps against the person found guilty Taking action against the person responsible for leak of UPSI and informing SEBI promptly of inquiries and result of the same.

Code of conduct by intermediaries and fiduciaries

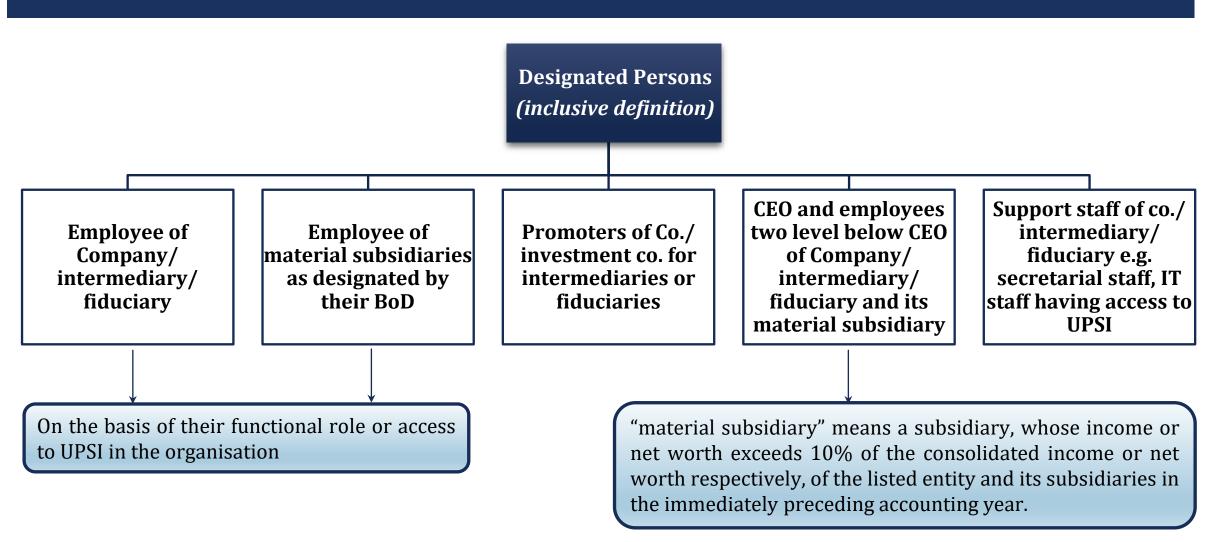
- Why is this code required?
 - UPSI flows from companies to fiduciaries and intermediaries
 - Need to protect such information
- The head of organisation shall be responsible for formulating the code
- To regulate, monitor and report trading by its DPs and immediate relatives of DPs
- Similar norms of code of conduct for listed companies applicable on intermediaries and fiduciaries
- Compliance officer has to maintain 'restricted list' with widespread control for restricting use of UPSI
- Identification of DPs
 - Functional- Staff which get access to information. Eg- in case of consultant, point of contact of the listed co.
 - Seniority- Based on designation such as senior partners, associates etc.

The listed company shall ensure that it deals with only such market intermediary/ every other person, who is required to handle UPSI, who have formulated a code of conduct as per the requirements of the Regulations

Controls relating to Designated Persons

Identification, handling of UPSI, monitoring of trades etc.

Identification of Designated Persons



Obligations of Designated Persons (DPs)

Timely disclosures

- Initial disclosures on holding of securities
- Continual disclosures on occurrence of trade
- Annual disclosures of personal details of DP (Details in the next slides)

Compliance with the Code

 Comply with the Code of Conduct of the company (see slides on code of conduct)

Prohibition on trading during TW closure

 Cannot execute trades during closure of trading window (see slides on trading window)

Obtain preclearance before trading

 Pre-clearance to be obtained from Compliance Officer, before trade during permitted period (see slides on preclearance)

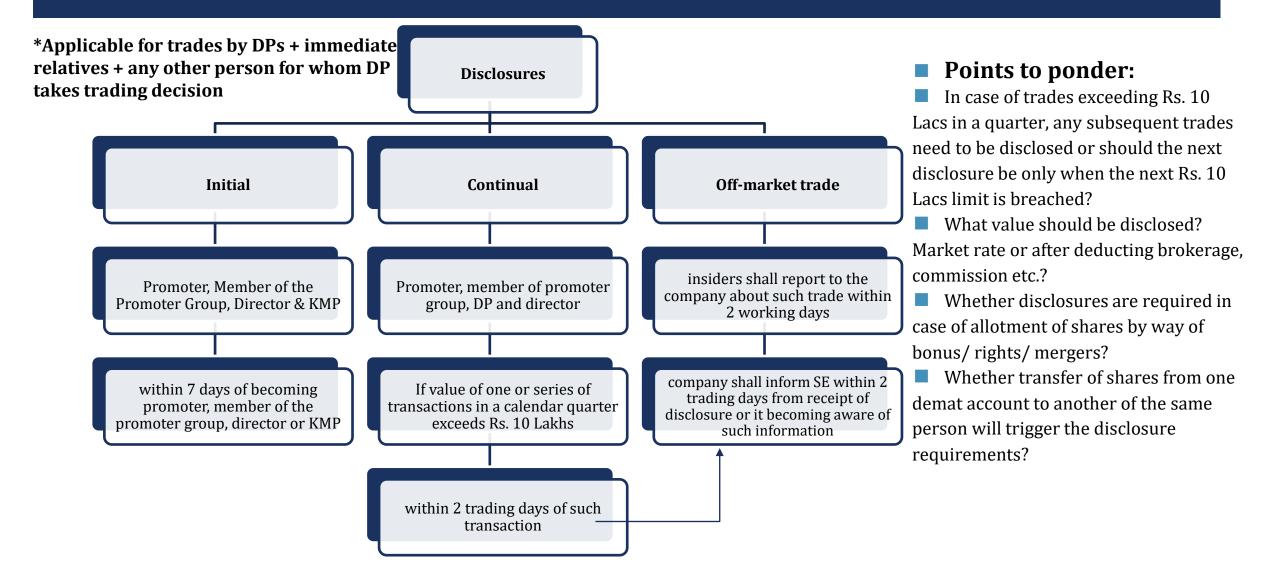
No contra trade for 6 months

 No contra trade to be executed for the next 6 months (see slides on contra trade)

Disclosure requirements by DPs

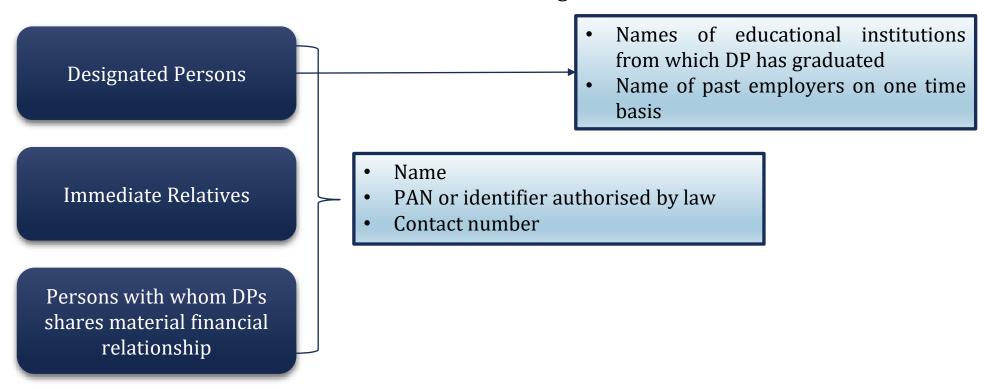
Initial, continual, annual disclosures

Disclosure requirements on the DPs



Annual Disclosure by DPs

On annual basis and as and when the information changes:



- Such as a transaction of a loan or gift during imm. preceding 12 months equivalent to at least 25% of DP's annual income
- Shall exclude arms' length transaction

System Driven Disclosures

- Listed company provides information including PAN of promoters, promoter group, DPs, directors ('entities') to designated depository.
 - Changes to be informed on the same day.
- For PAN exempt entities, demat account number is specified by listed company.
- Information was required to be provided within 10 days from the date of Sept 09, 2020.
- Any subsequent update in the details of the entities is informed to the designated depository on the same day.
- The transaction(s) carried out on T day is disseminated on T+2 day basis.
- In case of any discrepancy, the issue is resolved by listed company, stock exchanges and depositories in coordination with one another.

Points to ponder:

- Whether details of immediate relatives are also required to be provided along with the details of DPs?
- In case a DP is a foreign national who does not have PAN or a demat account number, what should be submitted in the system driven disclosures?

Trading Window Closure

Concept, purpose, freezing of PAN at security level

Trading Window restrictions

- Trading Window
 - In case of Financial Results
 - **■** Trading window shall be closed:

31st March, 2022 (quarter end)

Declaration of financial Results

- In case of other UPSI
 - Trading window shall be closed from the point of time the information is available to insider

No trades permitted during window closure, except for

Off market inter-se transfer between insiders having same UPSI

Transaction executed through block deal mechanism by insiders except for UPSI under Reg. 3 (3)

Carried out pursuant to statutory or regulatory obligation Pursuant to
ESOP
where
exercise
price was
predetermined

Pledge of shares for raising of funds, subject to preclearance by compliance officer Transactions such as acquisition by conversion of warrants or debentures, subscribing to rights issue, further public issue, preferential allotment, buyback, or delisting

48 hours after declaration of Results

Transactions which are undertaken through any other mechanism as may be specified by SEBI

In case of nonindividual
insider:
Individuals
possessing the
information
and those
taking
decisions were
different

Trading window closure – points to ponder

- When should the trading window be closed by the company?
- Shall the trading window be closed for every UPSI?
- Can grant of ESOP be made in trading window closure period?
- Whether DP can trade during the trading window closure for which pre-clearance was earlier provided by the compliance officer when the trading window was opened?
- If the trading window is closed, whether the compliance officer is required to inform the DP or rejecting their trades during pre-clearance would be sufficient?
- During trading window closure, whether trades pursuant to trading plan can be executed?

Whether trading window closure should be intimated to the SE?

- Companies inform the stock exchange about the trading window closure period at the beginning of every quarter.
- BSE, *vide* its circular dated <u>February 03, 2014</u>, advised the companies to disclose the applicable trading window closure period while disclosing the UPSI.
- The intent of the circular was to inform the stock exchange that for a particular UPSI, the company had closed the trading window. Such intimation was to be given while disclosing UPSI and not when the UPSI was generated.
- Therefore, in our view, the companies should not inform the SE about the trading window closure period at the beginning of every quarter as it defeats the entire purpose of preservation of UPSI.

Re: Falcon Tyres Limited

- It was observed by SEBI that the company had not formulated the Code of Internal Procedure and Conduct and Code of Corporate Disclosure Practices and trading window closure system in accordance with the PIT Regulations, 1992
- The company claimed that there was no trading window system as the directors/ employees of the Company did not trade in the securities of the Company
- The AO held that lackadaisical and uninvolved manner in which the officers of the company have contended themselves provided an ample scope for misuse of UPSI.

Penalty of Rs. 1 crore was imposed on the Noticees

Order of the AO

https://www.sebi.gov.in/enforcement/orders/feb-2014/adjudication-order-ak-ao-18-22-2014-in-respect-offalcon-tyres-limited-mr-pawan-kumar-ruia-mr-s-ravi-mr-sunil-bhansali-and-mr-mc-bhansali-in-the-matter-of-falcon-tyres-limited 27294.html

Re: Edelweiss Financial Services Limited

- Default in closure of trading window for material information mentioned in Regulation 30 of LODR
- As per the then existing provisions of law every "material information" as per the LODR Regulations was a "price sensitive information" as per the PIT Regulations, 2015 also, consequently warranting a closure of trading window.
- The practice of merely making the relevant employees cognizant of their responsibilities does not tantamount to closure of trading window as has been expected in the law.

Penalty of Rs. 5 lakhs was levied on the compliance officer

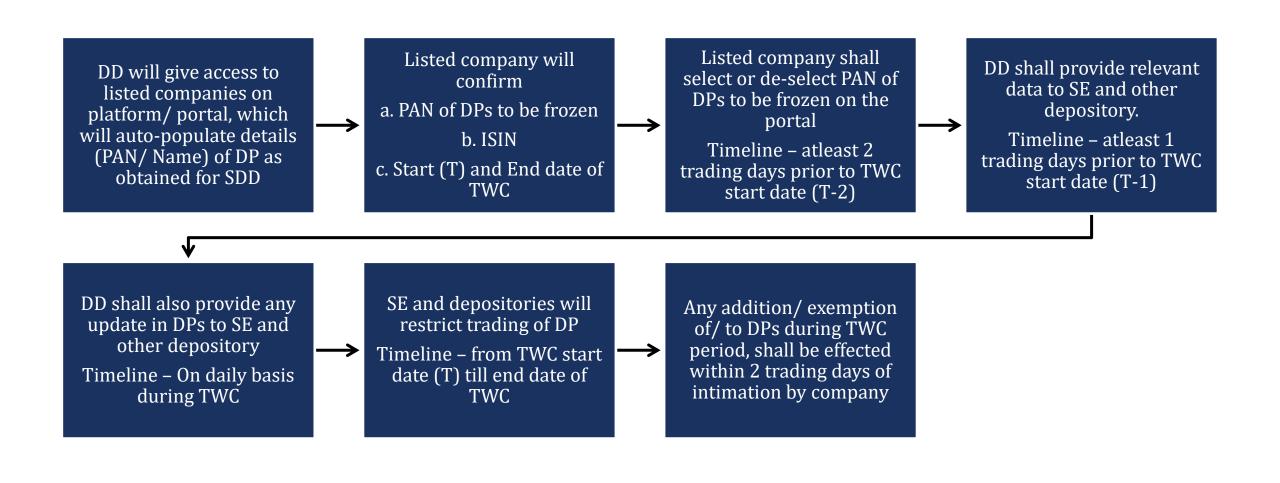
Order of AO

https://www.sebi.gov.in/enforcement/orders/jul-2020/adjudication-order-in-respect-of-b-renganathan-in-the-matter-of-edelweiss-financial-services-ltd- 47075.html

Freezing PAN at security level during trading window closure

- Introduced vide <u>SEBI circular dated August 05, 2022</u>
- Applicability
 - w.e.f. quarter ending September 30, 2022
 - to financial results of listed entity that is or was a part of Nifty 50 or Sensex from quarter ending September 30, 2022.
- Will commence on 1st day immediately following the end of quarter (for e.g. Oct 1, Jan 1, April 1 and July 1) and end on 48 hours post disclosure of financial results.
- Restriction on trading shall be for
 - on-market transactions, off-market transfers, creation of pledge
 - in equity shares and equity derivatives contracts (i.e. Futures and Options) of
 - listed entity that is or was a part of Nifty 50 or Sensex from quarter ending September 30, 2022.
- Compliance officer and DPs to continue to comply with obligations under PIT Regulations.

Process of freezing PAN at security level



Pre-clearance and Contra-trade

Concept

Pre-clearance of trade

Pre-clearance

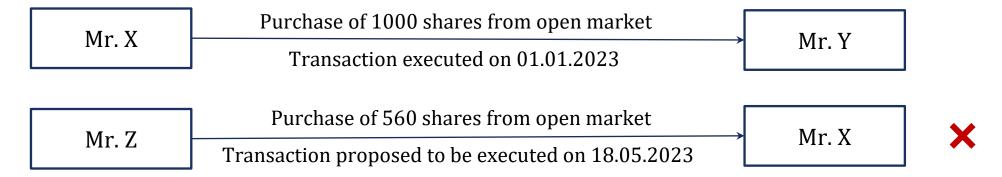
- DPs and their immediate relatives cannot trade when the trading window is closed.
- When trading window is open, trade by DPs shall be subject to pre-clearance by compliance officer.
- Company may develop its own threshold for pre-clearance (extrade of 1000 equity shares or trade of Rs. 50,000 or more shall require pre-clearance)
- Compliance officer has to seek declarations, before grating preclearance that person is not in possession of UPSI.
- Also has to analyse whether such declaration can be capable of being rendered inaccurate.

Points to ponder:

- Is pre-clearance required in case of off-market transfer of securities?
- Is pre-clearance required for exercise of ESOPs?
- Is pre-clearance required for cashless option of ESOP wherein employees avail sell-all/sell to cover option involving market sale of shares acquired under ESOP?



Concept of contra-trade



- DPs cannot execute contra trade or opposite transaction for next 6 months.
- Exception: trades pursuant to exercise of stock options
- Compliance officer may grant relaxation from strict application of contra trade restriction (subject to the condition that it is not against the provisions of the Regulations.

Points to ponder:

- Whether the contra trade restrictions are applicable only to DPs only or also on their immediate relatives?
- Does contra trade restrictions apply on Share wise or Date wise?
- Whether the contra trade restrictions also apply to sale of shares acquired through exercise of ESOPs?
- Whether the contra trade restrictions is applicable in case of buy back offers, open offers, rights issues, FPOs etc by listed companies?
- In case shares are acquired pursuant to any corporate action such as rights issue/FPO, whether the contra trade restrictions would apply if such shares are sold before completion of 6 months from the date of acquisition?

Penal provisions

Powers of SEBI

- **Regulation 11 of the Regulations:** Issue directions through guidance notes and circulars for interpretation and application of the Regulations.
- Section 11 of SEBI Act, 1992:
 - **Provide measures** for prohibiting insider trading in securities [Sec 11(2)(g)]
- Where SEBI has reasonable grounds to believe that any listed company or a company intending to get listed has been indulging in insider trading, it may -
 - Undertake inspection of any book, register, document, record of such company [Sec. 11(2A)]
 - Impound and retain the proceeds or securities which is under investigation [Sec. 11(4)(d)]
 - Attach bank accounts or other property of any person involved in violation of the Regulations [Sec. 11(4)(e)]
 - Direct any person not to dispose of or alienate an asset forming part of investigation [Sec. 11(4)(e)]

Penalties under SEBI Act, 1992 for violation of the Regulations

Section	Violation	Penalty amount	
Section 15A(b)	Failure to file return or furnish the information, books or other documents within the time specified in the regulations or furnishing or filing false, incorrect or incomplete information, return, report, books or other documents	 Minimum: Rs. 1 lakh Where failure continues Maximum: Rs. 1 lakh per day subject to Rs. 1 crore 	
Section 15G	Dealing in securities of the company while in possession of UPSI	 Minimum: Rs. 10 lakhs, Maximum: Rs. 25 crores or 3 times the amount of profits made out of insider trading, whichever is higher 	
	Communication of UPSI		
	Counselling or procuring of UPSI		
Section 15HB	Non-compliance of any provision of this Act, the rules or the regulations made or directions issued by the Board thereunder for which no separate penalty has been provided	Minimum Rs. 1 lakh,Maximum Rs. 1 crore	

Informant mechanism under the Regulations

- A dedicated reporting window for any person who observes an unethical behaviour; actual or suspected violation of insider trading cases;
- Processes in place that encourage:
 - timely, safe and open reporting of alleged violation; and
 - consistent and timely institutional response;
- Policies in place that:
 - incentivize informant protection;
 - encourage ethical and lawful conduct; and
 - provide adequate safeguards against victimization of informant.
- **Obligation on the Company:** The Code of Conduct should provide provisions to ensure the safeguards against victimization of informant

Our Resources on the subject

- FAQs on Structured Digital Database
- FAQs on Insider Trading Framework for Mutual Funds
- Structured Digital Database: some emerging concerns
- Guide to Compliance Certificate for Structured Digital Database
- <u>Discussion on Structured Digital Database</u>
- FAQs on PIT Regulations
- Requirements under PIT Regulations corporate employees perspective
- Resource Centre on PIT Regulations