

Finance Act, 2012, (Central)

Section 59 - Insertion of New Section 144ba

After section 144B of the Income-tax Act, the following section shall be inserted with effect from the 1st day of April, 2014, namely:--

"144BA. Reference to Commissioner in certain cases.--

- (1) If, the Assessing Officer, at any stage of the assessment or reassessment proceedings before him having regard to the material and evidence available, considers that it is necessary to declare an arrangement as an impermissible avoidance arrangement and to determine the consequence of such an arrangement within the meaning of Chapter X-A, then, he may make a reference to the Commissioner in this regard.
- (2) The Commissioner shall, on receipt of a reference under sub-section (1), if he is of the opinion that the provisions of Chapter X-A are required to be invoked, issue a notice to the assessee, setting out the reasons and basis of such an opinion, for submitting objections, if any, and providing an opportunity of being heard to the assessee within such period, not exceeding sixty days, as may be specified in the notice.
- (3) If the assessee does not furnish any objection to the notice within the time specified in the notice issued under sub-section (2), the Commissioner shall issue such directions as it deems fit in respect of declaration of the arrangement to be an impermissible avoidance arrangement.
- (4) In case the assessee objects to the proposed action, and the Commissioner, after hearing the assessee in the matter, is not satisfied by the explanation of the assessee, then, he shall make a reference in the matter to the Approving Panel for the purpose of declaration of the arrangement as an impermissible avoidance arrangement.
- (5) If the Commissioner is satisfied, after having heard the assessee that the provisions of Chapter X-A are not to be invoked, he shall by an order in writing communicate the same to the Assessing Officer with a copy to the assessee.
- (6) The Approving Panel, on receipt of reference from the Commissioner under sub-section (4) shall issue such directions, as it deems fit, in respect of the declaration of the arrangement as an impermissible avoidance arrangement in accordance with the provisions of Chapter X-A including specifying the previous year or years to which such declaration of an arrangement as an impermissible avoidance arrangement shall apply.

(7) No direction under sub-section (6) shall be issued unless an opportunity of being heard is given to the assessee and the Assessing Officer on such directions which are prejudicial to the interest of the assessee or the interest of the revenue, as the case may be.

(8) The Approving Panel may, before issuing any direction under sub-section (6),--

(i) if it is of the opinion that any further inquiry in the matter is necessary, direct the Commissioner to make such further inquiry or cause to make such further inquiry to be made by any other income-tax authority and furnish a report containing the results of such inquiry to it; or

(ii) call for and examine such records related to the matter as it deems fit; or

(iii) require the assessee to furnish such document and evidence as it may so direct.

(9) If the members of the Approving Panel differ in opinion on any point, the point shall be decided according to the opinion of the majority of the members.

(10) Every direction, issued by the Approving Panel under sub-section (6) or the Commissioner under sub-section (3), shall be binding on the Assessing Officer and the Assessing Officer on receipt of the directions shall proceed to complete the proceedings referred to in sub-section (1) in accordance with the directions and provisions of Chapter X-A.

(11) If any direction issued under sub-section (6) specifies that declaration of the arrangement as impermissible avoidance arrangement is applicable for any previous year to which the proceeding referred to in sub-section (1) pertains, then, the Assessing Officer while completing any assessment or reassessment proceedings of the assessment year relevant to such other previous year shall do so in accordance with such directions and the provisions of Chapter X-A and it shall not be necessary for him to seek fresh direction on the issue for the relevant assessment year.

(12) No order of assessment or reassessment shall be passed by the Assessing Officer without the prior approval of the Commissioner if any tax consequences have been determined in the order under the provisions of Chapter X-A pursuant to a direction issued under sub-section (6) or sub-section (3) declaring the arrangement as impermissible avoidance arrangement.

(13) No direction under sub-section (6) shall be issued after a period of six months from the end of the month in which the reference under sub-section (4) was received by the Approving Panel.

(14) The Board shall, for the purposes of this section constitute an Approving Panel consisting of not less than three members, being-

(i) income tax authorities not below the rank of Commissioner; and

(ii) an officer of the Indian Legal Service not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India.

(15) The Board may make rules for the purposes of the efficient functioning of the Approving Panel and expeditious disposal of the references received under sub-section (4).".

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