

CCK on the spot over award of Sh20 billion contract

BY TIMES REPORTER

THE Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) has been put under the spotlight over how it conducted search for a company to offer over Sh. 20 billion mobile phone number portability services.

And officials from some of the seven companies which applied for the 15-year contract yesterday urged the CCK management to cancel their plans to open tenders for short-listed three but whose selection, they claimed, was conducted unethically. Speaking to Business Times, officials of the companies who

asked not to be named, said the tendering and selection process was marred with irregularities with the companies fronted by some senior officials at the Ministry of Information being favoured yet they did not merit.

They said the selection of the lead company slated for tomorrow should be halted. They called on the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission to step in and launch investigations into the alleged scandal.

And a cross-section of CCK workers also expressed their outrage over the manner in which the selection and short-listing was done.

They said the process was manipulated by ministers and other top officials in the Government which saw their preferred companies short-listed.

"Even during the tendering and short-listing day, all members of the technical sub-committee on the tender committee were sacked the same morning and replaced by laymen," said an employee.

"The whole process should be cancelled and conducted afresh and we urge the KACC to intervene so that the Wednesday function does not take place," added the employee. Under the lucrative contract,

the successful company will offer mobile phone services where subscribers will no longer have to change their lines when switching service providers.

If, for instance, one wants to call on Zain, YU or Orange from his or her Safaricom line, what they only need to do is top up with credit from the preferred service provider and they get talking. This is in contrast with currently when there are different lines for different mobile phone firms.

The winning company is to be paid 25 million US Dollars (about Ksh. 2 billion) per year for fifteen years.