TAXATION OF LLP

WIRC OF ICAI

11th October 2014

Presentation by:

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11th October, 2014



PART A – TAXATION OF LLPS

→ PART B – CONVERSION OF LLP

11th October, 2014

FEATURES – LLP

- → Body Corporate
- Own and separate identity Can acquire and own immovable property
- \rightarrow Can sue and be sued in its own name
- → Change in partners does not impact LLP's existence, rights or liabilities
- → Limited Liability of Partners
- Perpetual Succession
- Only with Profit Motive
- → LLP Agreement governs an LLP
- → No agency relationship between partners and LLP
- Registration of Charge <u>Not Direct</u> Declaration of Solvency Form 8 Open for public viewing

LLP PROVISIONS – FINANCE (NO.2) ACT, 2009

- LLP Act promulgated in 2008. Taxation of LLPs was not clarified in 2008
- Finance Act 2009 (FA 2009) made amendments to ITA for LLP.
- Definition u/s 2(23) of "Firm", "Partner" and "Partnership" amended to include LLP.
- → A "Limited Liability Partnership" and a general partnership will be accorded the same tax treatment (Excerpts from Explanatory Memorandum to Finance Bill No.2 of 2009. Reiterated also in CBDT Circular 5/2010 dated 3rd June 2010).
- All provisions of ITA applicable to firm and partners apply to LLP and its partners
- → General Tax Rate 30.9% lower than peak Corporate Tax Rate of 33.99%

 \rightarrow No double taxation – No DDT - Share of Profit – exempt u/s. 10(2A)

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CONSEQUENCES OF LLP BEING TREATED AS FIRM

- → S 184 Assessment as a firm when LLP is evidenced by instrument of LLP and individual share of partners are specified in the instrument.
- Submission of certified copy of instrument of LLP
 - In the year of creation and in every year where amendment is made
 - Implication under E-filing of tax returns ??
 - Non-submission of certified copy of partnership along with return of income is a procedural default which can be cured during the course of assessment proceedings *New Ajanta Road Lines v ITO [2002] 254 ITR (AT) 85 (Jab.)*
- LLP shall be assessed as AOP in case of failure to comply with provisions of Sec 184 or failure as mentioned in Sec 144
- In case of above non-compliance, interest, remuneration, salary paid to partners not deductible while computing income of LLP

PARTNER

- Eligibility : Individual, Company, another LLP (including Foreign Company/ LLP)
- Not Eligible persons not competent to contract Unsound mind, Undischarged insolvent, where application for adjudication for insolvency is pending
- → No limit on number of partners
- **Issue :** Can minor / HUF be a partner in LLP?
 - No provision for admitting minor to benefits unlike in S. 30 of Partnership Act
 - No specific provision for partner in representative capacity Guardian
 - Transfer / Assignment of rights in LLP to Minor / HUF S. 42 ??
 - General Circular No.13/2013 dated 29th July 2013 issued by MCA clarifies that HUF or its Karta cannot be partner in LLP

CAPITAL CONTRIBUTION

- $\rightarrow S. 32 \text{ of LLP Act}$
- Can be in cash/kind, tangible / intangible , movable / immovable
- Can be by way of promissory notes, contract for services performed or to be performed
- Contribution to be accounted & disclosed in books in prescribed manner
- Rule 23(2) Contribution in kind to be valued CA, Cost Accountant or approved valuer
- **Issue :** Capital contribution in kind Tax implications
 - S. 45(3) of ITA Capital gains at value credited in books
 - "Accounted and disclosed" in prescribed manner as per S. 32(2) of LLPA
 - Rule 23(2) prescribes valuation of contribution in kind by approved valuer
 - Would presume that accounting at such valuation
 - Will need to check s. 56(2)(viia) implications for shares

CAPITAL CONTRIBUTION

- Difficulty in valuation
 - The determination of the cost in terms of money may be difficult but is nonetheless of a money value and the best valuation possible must be made *A.R. Krishnamurthy v CIT [1989] 43 Taxman 30 (SC)*
 - Valuation is not an exact science. Mathematical certainty is not demanded, nor indeed is it possible - Viscount Simon in Gold Coast Selection Trust Ltd.
 v. Humphrey (Inspector of Taxes) [1949] 17 ITR (Suppl.) 19 (HL)

CAPITAL CONTRIBUTION

Issue: Contribution by way of contract for rendering services ?

- Contract for future services 5 years
- No remuneration to be paid
- Valued as per R. 23(2) Rs. 50 Lacs
- Partner implications -
 - \checkmark Is it a capital asset or personal obligation as a partner
 - ✓ Can it be a capital receipt
- LLP Implications
 - ✓ Can it pay interest yes deemed borrowing
 - Deduction to LLP pro rata allocation for 5 years seems difficult ?
 - ✓ Depreciation to LLP is it intangible right seems difficult ?

DESIGNATED PARTNER

- Atleast 2 individual DPs, one of whom should be Resident of India as per FEMA
- → Nominee of Co/ another LLP can be DP
- DP responsible for carrying out all compliance obligations & is liable to all penalties imposed
- Designated partner v/s Working partner

Issue: Remuneration to non working partner – who is a DP

- Working partner defined in S. 40(b) Expl. 4
- Needs to be an individual
- One who is actively involved in conduct of affairs of LLP
- Being a DP Onerous responsibility
- Merely agreeing to be a DP may not fit the requirement of being a working partner

TRANSFER OF PARTNERS RIGHTS

- Assignment / transfer of partner's interest S. 42:
 - To share profits and losses;
 - To receive distribution in accordance with LLP Agreement
 - Both can be separately assigned in part or whole
 - Such a transfer does not cause the disassociation of the partner
 - Cannot be regarded as dissolution of LLP
 - Assignee / Transferee
 - \checkmark does not become partner implications under ITA s. 40(b)
 - Does not gets right of management in the LLP
- Can be used to transfer right to receive profits to Minor/HUF for tax and under LLP Act
- Can be assigned for a stated consideration
- Since rights are granted by the LLP Act, cannot be abrogated by contract between parties

TRANSFER OF PARTNER's RIGHTS

<u>Issue</u>: Whether retirement of partner is "assignment"?

- Retirement of partner
- Surplus received on revaluation of assets
- Mohanbhai Pamabhai 165ITR 166(SC) surplus is not taxable
- N. A. Mody 162 ITR 420 (Bom) assignment of rights taxable as Capital Gains
- Assignment / Transfer u/s. 42 is specific and cannot be presumed
- Needs to be to a partner / other person cannot be other LLP / other partners
- Hence unless LLP Agreement provides for assignment specifically such assignment cannot be presumed
- Ensure due care in drafting of the LLP Retirement Agreement

TRANSFER OF PARTNERS RIGHTS

Issue: Tax implications for Transfer of Right of Partner?

- Nature of rights of a partner "capital asset" or personal privilege
- By virtue of S. 42 separately assignable hence can be "capital asset" u/s. 2(14)
- What is the cost of such right
- Can it capital contribution see deeming provision u/s. 49(2AAA) conversion
- Can we apply BC Srinivasa Shetty 21 CTR (SC) 138 good arguable case
- Can it be regarded as right to carry on business S. 55(1)(b)/55(1)(a) which deems
 COA & COI as NIL seems no

CHANGE IN CONSTITUTION OF LLP

- S. 79 does not apply to LLP; however S. 78 applies on retirement or death of a partner
- S. 78 to ITA Restriction for carry forward and set off of losses in case of change in constitution of firm on <u>retirement</u> or <u>death</u> of partner
- → Implications:
 - Firm not entitled to carry forward and set off loss proportionate to share of the retired or deceased partner exceeding his share of profits in the previous year
- Restriction not applicable to unabsorbed depreciation or change in constitution due to admission of partner or change in PSR
- → No provision for protection of losses in case of inheritance (as contained in S. 79)

INTEREST ON PARTNERS CAPITAL

- **S**. 36(1)(iii):
 - Capital Contribution of partners are capital borrowed for the purposes of business or profession and for allowance of deduction of interest payments, requirement of S. 36(1)(iii) need to be fulfilled *Munjal Sales Corp v CIT [2008] 298 ITR 298 (SC)*
- \rightarrow S. 40(b)(iv): Restriction on payment of interest to partners
- → "Representative capacity" Explanation 1, 2 and 4 of S. 40(b) of ITA
- \rightarrow S. 40(b) v S. 40A(2):
 - No disallowance u/s 40A(2) is warranted if the conditions as specified in S. 40(b) are complied with. (CIT v. Great City Manufacturing Co. (2013) 351 ITR 156 (All) (HC); Chhajed Steel Corp. V/s Asst. CIT (2001) 77 ITD 419 (Ahmedabad Tribunal)

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OTHER TAX ADVANTAGES

- → Deemed dividend S. 2(22)(a) to 2(22)(e) Not Applicable to LLPs
- → No MAT based on Book Profits AMT u/s. 115JC based on Adjusted Total Income
- **Expl. to S. 73** share trading loss deemed as speculation Loss <u>does not apply to LLP</u>
- → S. 2(24)(iv) Benefit/perquisite of director/ specified person does not apply to LLP
- Share of Profit not subject to MAT in the hands of Company partner exempt u/s.
 10(2A) See CBDT circular 8/2014 dt. 31.3.2014

TAX DISADVANTAGES

- → LLP may not qualify for certain deductions :
 - S. 35D Amortization of <u>certain</u> preliminary expenses
 - S. 35DD expenditure in respect of amalgamation / demerger
 - S. 35(2AB) weighted deduction for Scientific Research and Development
 - Tax neutrality on amalgamation / demerger S. 47(vi), (via), (vib), (vid), (vii)
 - S. 80-IA(4)(i) deduction on profits of infrastructure projects
- Entitled for deduction at lower rate
 - S. 80-IB Residual Period Firm @ 25% vs. Company @ 30%
- No similar provision like those in S. 10AA(5), 80IB(12) for claiming deduction for the balance period in case amalgamation or demerger

ALTERNATE MINIMUM TAX

- → AMT S. 115JC & S. 115JD
 - Rate 20.9605 % or 19.055%
 - Adjusted Total Income = Net Taxable Income + Deduction under part C of Chap VI

A + deduction u/s. 10AA (SEZ Units) + deduction u/s 35AD (net of notional depreciation otherwise allowed)

- Not like MAT for companies which is on **Book Profits**
- Credit of amount allowed to be c/f. for 10 Assessment Years. No interest S. 115JD
- Credit limited to excess of normal tax over AMT liability

RESTRUCTURING OF LLPs

- LLP Act detailed framework for Compromise or arrangements of LLPs similar to S. 391 – S. 394 in case of companies
- Types
 - Merger of 2 or more LLPs
 - Compromise or arrangement between LLP and partners
 - LLP Converted into Firm <u>- considered later</u>
 - LLP Converted to Company <u>- considered later</u>
 - Compromise or arrangements with creditors
 - Demerger of LLP

LLP RESTRUCTURING - TAXATION

- → No provisions / neutrality on taxation aspects like S. 47 exemptions
- Taxation of such compromise / arrangement <u>untested</u> under normal provisions
- Merger / Demerger of LLP
 - Capital Gains to LLP Yes
 - Whether Capital Gains / taxation for partners debatable but possible
- Arrangements between LLP and Partners
 - S. 45(4) implications in case of distribution "or otherwise" wide enough to cover
- \rightarrow If company converted u/s. 47(xiiib) and restructuring before completion of 5 years
 - withdrawal of exemption provision if failure to fulfill conditions S. 47A(4)



TAXATION OF CONVERSION OF OR TO LLP

LLP CONVERSION

→ Firm to LLP

- Private Limited Company (PLC) to LLP
- → Unlisted Public Company (UPC) to LLP
- → LLP to Company
- \rightarrow LLP to Firm

MODES OF CONVERSION TO LLP

- Under the LLP Act
 - Firm to LLP S. 55 read with 2nd Schedule
 - Private Limited Company to LLP S. 56 read with 3rd Schedule
 - Unlisted Public Company to LLP S. 57 read with 4th Schedule
 - ✓ Compliant with provisions of S. 47(xiiib)
 - ✓ Does not comply with S. 47(xiiib)

OR

- Other Modes
 - Commence business in LLP and close down business in Firm / Company
 - Full or partial transfer of assets / business to LLP

FIRM TO LLP – TAX IMPLICATIONS

- Both "Firm" and "LLP" different entities under normal law–but same entity for taxation
- Reliance on para 5.6 of CBDT explanatory Circular 5/2010 dated 3rd June, 2010
 - No tax implications if rights & obligations of partners remain same
 - No transfer of assets/ liabilities after conversion
 - No legal backing of this Circular & hence may not bind Assessee
- → Under Second Schedule registration as an LLP leads to dissolution of firm
- \rightarrow Whether implications under section 45(4) of ITA
- → Texspin Engg. & Mfg. Works 263 ITR 345 (Bom):
 - Statutory vesting is not distribution u/s. 45(4)
 - For "transfer" u/s. 2(47) there need to be 2 parties
 - No consideration accruing to the **'transferor firm'** even if there is transfer
- → Leads to statutory vesting of assets from Firm to LLP
 - Old case laws in context of Part IX Conversion under Co. Act still relevant
- Hence no taxation

CONVERSION – TAX IMPLICATIONS

- Valuation of stock in trade whether ALA Firm applies [1991] 189 ITR 285 (SC)
 - Refer also Sakthi Trading Co. [2001] 250 ITR 871 (SC)
 - No need to value at market value since business continued
- → No step up in asset basis (for depreciation etc.) for new LLP
- → Will need independent clause in the LLP agreement for remuneration and interest
- → Tax benefits u/s. 80IA , 80IB, 80IC, 10A etc. should continue for unexpired period Board's letter F. No. 15/5/63 dated 12.5.1963,
 - Chetak Enterprises (P) Ltd 325 ITR 405 (Rajasthan HC)
 - Tech Books Electronics Services P Ltd. 100 ITD 125 (Del)
 - Kumaran Systems (P) Ltd 106 TTJ 484 (Chennai)

CONVERSION – TAX IMPLICATIONS

- S. 43B benefit of deduction if Firm's liability paid by LLP
- Similar disallowances u/s. 40(a)(ia), 40(a) LLP Should get benefit
- Deduction for firm's bad debts if written off by LLP Veerbhadra Rao... 155 ITR 152 (SC)
- AMT paid by Firm u/s. 115JC, whether credit would be available to LLP
- S. 115JD(1) credit for tax paid by a person shall be allowed to him
 - Does it mean same person or different person
 - In case of losses the term used is "assessee"
 - Firm and LLP both assessed in same category of person
 - Seems a good case
- Carry forward of losses of the firm to the LLP may be tricky see. S. 78(2) but certainly an good arguable case

COMPANY TO LLP - TAXATION

- Tax neutrality introduced by way of s. 47(xiiib) of ITA
 - No "transfer" for transferor company
 - No "transfer" for the shareholders
 - Conversion as per S 56 / 57 of LLP Act
- \rightarrow Conditions under proviso to S. 47(xiiib) to be fulfilled
- Carry forward of losses and unabsorbed depreciation of Company s. 72A(6A)
 - Becomes accumulated losses and unabsorbed depreciation of the LLP
 - Of the year in which the conversion takes place -
 - Possible to argue that a fresh lease of life
 - Violation of 47(xiiib) –loss / depreciation adjusted by LLP taxable in LLP
- Section 79 may not have applicability in respect of losses of predecessor company ??
- → Depreciation on assets to LLP as per WDV of Company Expl. 2C to S. 43(6)
 - No step up in WDV same WDV to continue
- \rightarrow Cost of other non depreciable assets cost to previous owner company s. 49(iii)(e)

COMPANY TO LLP - TAXATION

- Cost of rights of partner under section 42 of the LLP Act on such conversion
 - Cost of the shares of the predecessor company s. 49(2AAA)
 - Only if rights as a partner in the LLP separately assigned under section 42
 - Accumulated profits or reserves credited to the partners account not eligible as cost
- → Carry forward MAT credit of company will not transfer to LLP S. 115 JAA(7)
- \rightarrow Violation of conditions S. 47A(4)
 - Profit not charged to company will become capital gains for LLP
 - Profit not charged to shareholder– will become income for shareholder
 - Provision similar to that for conversion of firm S. 47(xiii) additional coverage for shareholders

- Condition 1 All assets and liabilities of Co. before conversion become A / L of LLP
 - Since automatic statutory vesting will be fulfilled
 - Not possible to have a situation of non transfer –
 - If required transfer before conversion check implications
- **Condition 2** All shareholders of Co. before conversion become partners:
 - Their **capital contribution (CC)** and **profit sharing ratios (PSR)**
 - Are in proportion of shareholding before conversion
 - In view of 3rd and 4th Schedule to LLPA not possible to have non shareholders as partners at time of conversion
 - can add non shareholders as partners subsequently subject to minimum 50% profit-sharing to shareholder partners for 5 years from conversion
 - If shares held in name of minor or through HUF how to fulfill
 - ✓ Since no representative capacity is permissible in LLP can be road block
 - $\checkmark May need to transfer to other persons prior to conversion$
 - Check S. 56(2)(vii) / (viia) implications

- **Issue** Where company has both preference and equity shares how to fulfill:
 - ✓ <u>Alt 1</u>
 - Take profit sharing ratios as per Equity shareholding
 - Total <u>capital contribution</u> as per both Equity and Preference
 - Seems more equitable but not backed by law hence could be debatable
 - ✓ Alt 2
 - Aggregate both Equity and Preference take PSR on aggregate proportion
 - Take CC on both aggregate of nominal value of Equity and Preference
 - Seems compliant with law but can be inequitable hence some litigation
 - ✓ Alt 3
 - Equalize proportion for both Equity and Preference
 - Shareholders proportion is same Equity and Preference
 - Seems safest

Condition 3 -

- Shareholders do not receive any consideration / benefit
 - Directly or indirectly
 - ✓ Other than by way of PSR and CC
- <u>Issue</u> Where consideration / benefit should be at time of conversion
 - ✓ Should be at time of conversion
 - ✓ However wordings are tricky hence safer view till period of 5 years –better
- Issue payment of remuneration or interest does it violate
 - If interest / remuneration is part of LLP Agreement on conversion can create difficulty
 - ✓ If subsequent good arguable case but safer view better
- Issue provision of mobile, car etc. to partner does it violate
 - \checkmark Can be regarded as benefit can create difficulty

- Condition 4 The <u>aggregate</u> profit sharing ratio of shareholders <u>shall not be < 50%</u> at any time during 5 years from date of conversion
 - Ratio is to be maintained on an aggregate basis or individual basis aggregate
 - Internal changes amongst partners not to impact condition
 - LLP needs to be continue no merger / other reorganisation of the LLP permissible
 - LLP not to be converted into a company
 - Tax Implications on the Change in Profit sharing ratio due to involuntary events like death or winding up/merger of a company-partner
 - ✓ No exception created like in s. 79
 - ✓ Old decisions mischief rule of interpretation
 - ✓ Good arguable case

- Condition 5 The total sales, turnover or gross receipts in business of Co. shall not exceed Rs. 60 lacs in the 3 preceding PYs.
 - Aggregate Sales etc. if > Rs. 60 lacs disqualified for S. 47(xiiib) conversion
 - Total sales etc. 'in business' Hence Non Business Receipts not to be considered
 - Where Co. has been in existence for less than 3 years only for post incorporation period
 - Total sales etc. can exceed Rs. 60 lacs in the year of conversion
 - Criteria of Rs 60 lacs is too small needs upward revision
 - Interpretation made by the courts in the context of S. 44AB would be relevant

Whether following includible in Total sales etc.

- Receipt of exempt dividend received by Investment Co.
 - ✓ CBDT Circular 1 dated 6.4.2011 Circular Explaining Amendment to Finance Act, 2010
 - the total sales, turnover or gross receipts in business of the company [which are taxable under the head "Profits and gains of the business or profession"] do not exceed sixty lakh rupees in any of the three preceeding previous years
 - Only amounts that are taxable under the head profits and gains of business to be considered. Hence – good argument – exlcude exempt income
- Capital Gains on sale of Shares etc. held as investments & Share of Profit from a Firm / LLP
 - ✓ not to be included based on above CBDT circular
- Reimbursement towards packing, freight etc.
 - ✓ If reimbursement on actuals not part of turnover, receipts, etc.

Condition 6

- No amount paid to the partners, directly or indirectly,
- out of balance of accumulated profits in the accounts as on the date of conversion;
- for a period of 3 years from the date of conversion
- Term "Accumulated Profits" not defined in the S. 47(xiiib). Used in the provisions of sec 2(22) deemed dividend.
- Accumulated profits as per the books of accounts and not taxable profits
- To ensure "accumulated profits" are not withdrawn
 - Transfer to separate account in LLP
 - provide separate clause in the LLP agreement for non-withdrawal / nondistribution
- The restriction is on withdrawal of accumulated profits and not of capital balance capital balance i.e. share capital transferred to capital account can be withdrawn

- **Condition 6**
 - Whether following form part of the accumulated profits:-
 - ✓ Statutory Reserves like SEZ Reserves yes
 - Debenture Redemption Reserves yes
 - ✓ Capital Reserves yes if realized
 - ✓ Revaluation Reserves no
 - ✓ Share Premium no
 - If accumulated profits capitalized as bonus shares, credited as capital contribution and withdrawal out of the same within 3 years – Does it violate the Condition 6
 - Once capitalized Bonus shares are not part of "accumulated profits"
 - ✓ Good arguable case
 - ✓ However exercise extreme caution

NON COMPLIANT CONVERSION

- → Where conversion does not fulfill conditions of S. 47(xiiib)
- **For Company:**
 - Statutory Vesting
 - Transfer involves 2 parties ... transferor and transferee
 - Reliance on Part IX related decisions of statutory vesting not a transfer
 - CIT vs. Texspin Engg. & Mfg. Works (2003) 263 ITR 345 (Bom)
 - Rita Mechanical Works 344 ITR 544 (P&H)
 - Gulabdas Printers 4 ITR (Trib) 264 (Ahd)
 - Well Pack Packaging 78 TTJ 448 (Ahd)
 - Umicore Finance Luxembourg, In Re(2010) 323 ITR 25
 - Good case Still not taxable as capital gains
 - However unabsorbed depreciation or unabsorbed loss will lapse

NON COMPLIANT CONVERSION

For Shareholders:

Whether any CG Implications??

Conversion leads to extinguishment of rights in shares ... Covered by Grace Collis
 248 ITR 323 – [SC]- Hence Transfer u/s 2(47)

What is consideration on transfer?

- ✓ Sunil Sidharthbhai 156 ITR 509 (SC) consideration credited to partners capital account is not what finally comes to him
- ✓ However new section 50D where consideration "not ascertainable" or "cannot be determined"
 - take FMV of asset transferred i.e. shares
- ✓ Hence potential taxation in hands of shareholder
- ✓ Recent case law - Aravali Polymers LLP Kol ITAT I .T.A. No. 718/Kol / 2014
 - Contravention of conditions Capital Gains to be computed on book value of assets transferred & not on market value – discuss

CONVERSION – OTHER MODES

- Commence new business in LLP and close business of company
 - Transfer of goodwill / other benefits / registrations difficult
 - If accompanied by transfer of assets –check capital gains / stamp duty / other implications
 - For Immovable Property S. 50C Implications
 - Land and Building Developer S. 43CA Implications
 - GAAR Provisions still not applicable post GAAR additional complications

CONVERSION – OTHER MODES

- Set up new LLP transfer business to LLP
 - Transfer of goodwill / other benefits / registrations not automatic
 - Check capital gains / stamp duty / other implications
 - Can be at Book Value except for Immovable Property S. 50C, Land and Building – Developer – S. 43CA Implications
 - Capital Gains only at value realised

CONVERSION – LLP TO FIRM

- → No specific provision under LLP Act for reverse conversion
- → Will need to either dissolve
 - S. 45(4) implications
- Transfer business to a new Firm
 - Capital gains implications, S. 50C etc.
 - Stamp Duty Implications
- Law and practice not developed

CONVERSION – LLP TO COMPANY

- Part IX of the Companies Act, 1956
 - Wide enough to register both registered and unregistered "company"
 - Would include LLP
 - However MCA / Registrar are not approving such registration
 - Worth pursuing
- Transfer / Sale of business from LLP to Company
 - Would invite capital gains / tax implications
 - Would involve stamp duty implications







THANK YOU

11th October, 2014