

**GENERAL AGREEMENT
ON TARIFFS AND TRADE**

RESTRICTED
GPA/IC/W/4
14 September 1994

(94-1844)

Interim Committee on Government Procurement

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Note from the Secretariat

At its meeting of 29 June 1994, the Interim Committee invited the Secretariat to prepare, in consultation with interested delegations, a common format for the presentation of information allowing for an exchange of information among delegations on developments in the area of information technology used in government procurement. It was agreed that the Interim Committee would undertake this exchange of views at its next meeting on the basis of information provided by delegations.

Delegations are invited to provide in writing information on the basis of the questions below to the Secretariat (Annet Blank, room 3016) by 17 October 1994, for distribution to the Members of the Interim Committee. Delegations are also invited to come prepared for a discussion at the next meeting of the Interim Committee which is likely to take place early November 1994.

1. Could delegations give a brief description of any steps taken or planned to introduce information technology (electronic commerce) into public procurement? If so, does this cover contracts which are covered under the Agreement presently in force, or under the newly signed Agreement? At all levels of government? In the event that delegations are not considering introducing information technology into public procurement, could they explain the reasons?

Example of information technology in public procurement: an electronic database which lists government procurement opportunities.

2. What function(s) would information technology serve in such systems and who will be the users?

Examples of functions: management of procedures, notification of tenders, exchange of tender information, distribution of tender documentation, added value services, including technical assistance to users, surveillance.

Examples of users: contracting entities, suppliers (SME's in particular), supervisory authorities.

3. Could delegations describe the technical aspects of the systems in use or planned? In particular as regards infrastructure/hardware-software and its options/standards?

4. Could delegations describe any limitations affecting access to information available in a system? How wide is potential access to interested suppliers? What are the access possibilities for suppliers

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of other signatory countries? What possible obstacles to access might arise for suppliers in other signatory countries?

For example, in the event that an electronic database is available, how can suppliers (both domestic and foreign) access the database?

5. Has any thought been given to the question of interaction between electronic tendering and the obligations concerning publication and time-limits imposed by the Agreement?

6. For those delegations who use a database which lists government procurement opportunities:

- (i) - What is the name of this database?
- (ii) - How long has the database been operational and how many suppliers use the database?
- (iii) - Is a fee charged to suppliers using this system? If so, how much, and what is included in the fee?
- (iv) - Can suppliers obtain tender documentation electronically? If so, how?
- (v) - How is information on the database organized?
- (vi) - Does the database offer any other features?
- (vii) - What is the approximate number of procurement opportunities listed on the database annually?
- (viii) - Is the system managed by the government or a private company?