GENERAL AGREEMENT

ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Interim Committee on Government Procurement

QUESTIONNAIRE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
IN GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

Response by Japan

The attached communication contains the replies from the delegation of Japan to the questionnaire on Information Technology in Government Procurement contained in document GPA/IC/W/4/Rev.1, dated 16 September 1994.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

Replies received from Japan

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?

With a view to establishing an electronic database which would list information on government procurement published in Kanpō, the Japanese official gazette, including that of the entities covered by the Agreement presently in force and/or under Annexes 1 and 3 of the newly-signed Agreement, the Government of Japan took a step in October 1994 so that entities should begin to use common formats for public notices on government procurement to be published in the official gazette from January 1995.

Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) is currently developing a system for the database utilizing government procurement information to be provided in the common formats. It is planned that the database should be ready at the end of March 1995.

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

It is envisaged that the database would list such information as procuring entities, subject matter of contract, places where tender documentation will be obtained, schedule of explanatory meetings on tender, contract award information and qualification for participating in tendering procedures.

It is supposed that domestic and foreign suppliers should be the main users of the database.

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?

Since the database is currently under development, details of infrastructure/hardware-software and its options/standards of the database are not available.

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

Since the database is currently under development, information on the method of access to the database is not available.

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?

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

   (i)   What is the name of this database?

         The name of the database under development is not available.

   (ii)   How long has the database been operational and how many suppliers use the database?

         It is planned that the database should be ready at the end of March 1995.

   (iii)   Is a fee charged to suppliers using this system? If so, how much, and what is included in the fee?

         It is currently considered that no fee would be charged to those using the database.

   (iv)   Can suppliers obtain tender documentation electronically? If so, how?

         The database, which will be based on information to be published in the official gazette, will not contain tender documentation.

   (v)   How is information on the database organized?

         JETRO will put information, which will be received from the Printing Bureau of Ministry of Finance, in the database.

   (vi)   Does the database offer any other features?

         No information is currently available.

   (vii)   What is the approximate number of procurement opportunities listed on the database annually?

         The database, which is planned to be ready at the end of March 1995, will contain government procurement information to be published in the official gazette.

   (viii)   Is the system managed by the government or a private company?

         The database will be managed by JETRO, a government-related entity, based on an arrangement among ministries and agencies.