

AGREEMENT ON GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT*

PREAMBLE

2. The Parties shall inform their entities not covered by this Agreement and the regional and local governments and authorities within their territories of the objectives, principles and rules of this Agreement, in particular the rules on national treatment and non-discrimination, and draw their attention to the overall benefits of liberalization of government procurement.

Article II

National Treatment and Non-Discrimination

1. With respect to all laws, regulations, procedures and practices regarding government procurement covered by this Agreement, the Parties shall provide immediately and unconditionally to the products and suppliers of other Parties offering products originating within the customs territories (including free zones) of the Parties, treatment no less favourable than:

- (c) support industrial units so long as they are wholly or substantially dependent on government procurement;
- (d) encourage their economic development through regional or global arrangements among developing countries presented to the

adopted or applied with a view to creating obstacles to international trade nor have the effect of creating unnecessary obstacles to international trade.

2. Any technical specification prescribed by procurement entities shall, where appropriate:

(a) be in terms of performance rather than design; and

(b) be based on international standards, national technical regulations, or recognized national standards.

3. There shall be no requirement or reference to a particular trade mark or name, patent, design or type, specific origin or producer unless there is no sufficiently precise or intelligible way of describing the procurement requirements and provided that words such as "or equivalent" are included in the tenders.

Article V

Tendering Procedures

1. The Parties shall ensure that the tendering procedures of their entities are consistent with the provisions below. Open tendering procedures, for the purposes of this Agreement, are those procedures under which all interested suppliers may submit a tender. Selective tendering procedures, for the purposes of this Agreement, are those procedures under which, consistent with paragraph 7 and other relevant provisions of this Article, those suppliers invited to do so by the entity may submit a tender. Single tendering procedures, for the purposes of this Agreement, are those procedures where the entity contacts suppliers individually, only under the conditions specified in paragraph 15 below.

Qualification of suppliers

2. Entities, in the process of qualifying suppliers, shall not discriminate among foreign suppliers or between domestic and foreign suppliers. Qualification procedures shall be consistent with the following:

(a) any conditions for participation in tendering procedures shall be published in adequate time to enable interested suppliers to initiate and, to the extent that it is compatible with efficient operation of the

- (c) the process of, and the time required for, qualifying suppliers shall not be used in order to keep foreign suppliers off a suppliers' list or from being considered for a particular proposed purchase. Entities shall recognize as qualified suppliers such domestic or foreign suppliers who meet the conditions for participation in a particular proposed purchase. Suppliers requesting to participate in a particular proposed purchase who may not yet be qualified shall

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8. If after publication of a notice of a proposed purchase but before the time set for opening or receipt of tenders as specified in the notices or the tender documentation, it becomes necessary to amend or re-issue the notice, the amendment or the re-issued notice shall be given the same circulation as the original documents upon which the amendment is based. Any significant information given to one supplier with respect to a particular proposed purchase shall be given simultaneously to all other suppliers concerned in adequate time to permit the suppliers to consider such information and to respond to it.
9. (a) Any prescribed time-limit shall be adequate to allow foreign as well as domestic suppliers to prepare and submit tenders before the closing of the tendering procedures. In determining any such time-limit, entities shall, consistent with their own reasonable needs, take into account such factors as the complexity of the proposed purchase, the extent of sub-contracting anticipated, and the normal time for transmitting tenders by mail from foreign as well as domestic points.
- (b) Consistent with the entity's own reasonable needs, any delivery date shall take into account the normal time required for the transport of goods from the different points of supply.
10. (a) In open procedures, the period for the receipt of tenders shall in no case be less than thirty days from the date of publication referred to in paragraph 3 of this Article.
- (b) In selective procedures not involving the use of a permanent list of qualified suppliers, the period for submitting an application to be invited to tender shall in no case be less than thirty days from the date of publication referred to in paragraph 3; the period for receipt of tenders shall in no case be less than thirty days from the date of issuance of the invitation to tender.
- (c) In selective procedures involving the use of a permanent list of qualified suppliers, the period for receipt of tenders shall in no case be less than thirty days from the date of the initial issuance of invitations to tender. If the date of initial issuance of invitations to tender does not coincide with the date of the publication referred to in paragraph 3, there shall in no case be less than thirty days between those two dates.
- (d) The periods referred to in (a), (b) and (c) above may be reduced either where a state of urgency duly substantiated by the entity renders impracticable the periods in question or in the case of the second or subsequent publications dealing with contracts of a recurring nature within the meaning of paragraph 4 of this Article.

11. If, in tendering procedures, an entity allows tenders to be submitted in several languages, one of those languages shall be one of the official languages of the GATT.

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procedure, on condition that such information does not give that supplier an advantage over its competitors in the procedure for the award of the contract.

Submission, receipt and opening of tenders and awarding of contracts

14. The submission, receipt and opening of tenders and awarding of contracts shall be consistent with the following:

- (a) tenders shall normally be submitted in writing directly or by mail. If tenders by telex, telegram or telecopy are permitted, the tender made thereby must include all the information necessary for the evaluation of the tender, in particular the definitive price proposed by the tenderer and a statement that the tenderer agrees to all the terms, conditions and provisions of the invitation to tender. The tender must be confirmed promptly by letter or by the despatch of a signed copy of the telex, telegram or telecopy. Tenders presented by telephone shall not be permitted. The content of the telex, telegram or telecopy shall prevail where there is a difference or conflict between that content and any documentation received after the time-limit; requests to participate in selective tendering procedures may be submitted by telex, telegram or telecopy;
- (b) the opportunities that may be given to tenderers to correct unintentional errors between the opening of tenders and the awarding of the contract shall not be permitted to give rise to any discriminatory practice;
- (c) a supplier shall not be penalized if a tender is received in the office designated in the tender documentation after the time specified because of delay due solely to mishandling on the part of the entity. Tenders may also be considered in other exceptional circumstances if the procedures of the entity concerned so provide;
- (d) all tenders solicited under open and selective procedures by entities shall be received and opened under procedures and conditions guaranteeing the regularity of the openings as well as the availability of information from the openings. The receipt and opening of tenders shall also be consistent with the national treatment and non-discrimination provisions of this Agreement. To this effect, and in connection with open procedures, entities shall establish provisions for the opening of tenders in the presence of either tenderers or their representatives, or an appropriate and impartial witness not connected with the procurement process. A report on the opening of tenders shall be drawn up in writing. This report shall remain with the entities concerned at the disposal of the government authorities responsible

for the entity in order that it may be used if required under the procedures of Articles VI and VII of this Agreement;

- (e) to be considered for award, a tender must, at the time of opening, conform to the essential requirements of the notices or tender documentation and be from suppliers which comply with the conditions for participation. If an entity has received a tender abnormally lower than other tenders submitted, it may enquire with the tenderer to ensure that it can comply with the conditions of participation and be capable of fulfilling the terms of the contract;
- (f) unless in the public interest an entity decides not to issue the contract, the entity shall make the award to the tenderer who has been determined to be fully capable of undertaking the contract and whose tender, whether for domestic or foreign products, is either the lowest tender or the tender which in terms of the specific evaluation criteria set forth in the notices or tender documentation is determined to be the most advantageous;
- (g) if it appears from evaluation that no one tender is obviously the most advantageous in terms of the specific evaluation criteria set forth in the notices or tender documentation, the entity shall, in any subsequent negotiations, give equal consideration and treatment to all tenders within the competitive range treatment to

with this Agreement, on condition, however, that the requirements of the initial tender are not substantially modified in the contract as awarded;

- (b) when, for works of art or for reasons connected with protection of exclusive rights, such as patents or copyrights, the products can be supplied only by a particular supplier and no reasonable alternative or substitute exists;
- (c) insofar as is strictly necessary when, for reasons of extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseeable by the entity, the products could not be obtained in time by means of open or selective tendering procedures;
- (d) for additional deliveries by the original supplier which are intended either as parts replacement for existing supplies or installations, or as the extension of existing supplies or installations where a change of supplier would compel the entity to purchase equipment not meeting requirements of interchangeability with already existing equipment;
- (e) when an entity purchases prototypes or a first product which are developed at its request in the course of, and for, a particular contract for research, experiment, study or original development. When such contracts have been fulfilled, subsequent purchases of products shall be subject to paragraphs 1-14 of this Article.¹

in the appropriate publications listed in Annex IV and in such a manner as to enable other Parties and suppliers to become acquainted with them. The Parties shall be prepared, upon request, to explain to any other Party their government procurement procedures. Entities shall be prepared, upon request, to explain to any supplier from a country which is a Party to this Agreement their procurement practices and procedures.

2. Entities shall, upon request by any supplier, promptly provide pertinent information concerning the reasons why that supplier's application to qualify for the suppliers' list was rejected, or why that supplier was not invited or admitted to tender.

3. Entities shall promptly, and in no case later than seven working days from the date of the award of a contract, inform the unsuccessful tenderers by written communication or publication that a contract has been awarded.

4. Upon request by an unsuccessful tenderer, the purchasing entity shall promptly provide that tenderer with pertinent information concerning the reasons why the tender was not selected, including information on the

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8. Confidential information provided to any Party which would impede law enforcement or otherwise be contrary to the public interest or would prejudice the legitimate commercial interest of particular enterprises, public or private, or might prejudice fair competition between suppliers, shall not be revealed without formal authorization from the party providing the information.

9. The Parties shall collect and provide to the Committee on an annual basis statistics on their purchases. Such reports shall contain the following information with respect to contracts awarded by all procurement entities covered under this Agreement:

- (a) global statistics on estimated value of contracts awarded, both above and below the threshold value;
- (b) statistics on number and total value of contracts awarded above the threshold value, broken down by entities, categories of products and either nationality of the winning tenderer or country of origin of the product, according to a recognized trade or other appropriate classification system;
- (c) statistics on the total number and value of contracts awarded under each of the cases of Article V, paragraph 15.

Article VII

Enforcement of Obligations

Institutions

1. There shall be established under this Agreement a Committee on Government Procurement (referred to in this Agreement as "the Committee") composed of representatives from each of the Parties. This Committee shall elect its own Chairman and shall meet as necessary but not less than once a year for the purpose of affording Parties the opportunity to consult on any matters relating to the operation of this Agreement or the furtherance of its objectives, and to carry out such other responsibilities as may be assigned to it by the Parties.

2. The Committee may establish *ad hoc* panels in the manner and for the purposes set out in paragraph 8 of this Article and working parties or other subsidiary bodies which shall carry out such functions as may be given to them by the Committee.

Consultations

3. Each Party shall afford sympathetic consideration to, and shall afford adequate opportunity for consultations regarding, representations made by another Party with respect to any matter affecting the operation of this Agreement.

4. If any Party considers that any benefit accruing to it, directly or indirectly, under this Agreement is being nullified or impaired, or that the achievement of any objective of this Agreement is being impeded, by another Party or Parties, it may, with a view to reaching a mutually satisfactory resolution of the matter, request in writing consultations with the Party or Parties in question. Each Party shall afford sympathetic consideration to any request from another Party for consultations. The Parties concerned shall initiate requested consultations promptly.

5. The Parties engaged in consultations on a particular matter affecting the operation of this Agreement shall provide information concerning the matter subject to the provisions of Article VI, paragraph 8, and attempt to conclude such consultations within a reasonably short period of time.

Dispute settlement

6. If no mutually satisfactory solution has been reached as a result of consultations under paragraph 4 between the Parties concerned, the Committee shall meet at the request of any party to the dispute within thirty days of receipt of such a request to investigate the matter, with a view to facilitating a mutually satisfactory solution.

7. If no mutually satisfactory solution has been reached after detailed examination by the Committee under paragraph 6 within three months, the Committee shall, at the request of any party to the dispute establish a panel to:

- (a) examine the matter;
- (b) consult regularly with the parties to the dispute and give full opportunity for them to develop a mutually satisfactory solution;
- (c) make a statement concerning the facts of the matter as they relate to application of this Agreement and make such findings as will assist the Committee in making recommendations or giving rulings on the matter.

8. In order to facilitate the constitution of panels, the Chairman of the Committee shall maintain an informal indicative list of governmental officials experienced in the field of trade relations. This list may also include persons other than governmental officials. In this connection, each Party shall be invited to indicate at the beginning of every year to the Chairman of the Committee the name(s) of the one or two persons whom the Parties would be willing to make available for such work. When a panel is established under paragraph 7, the Chairman, within seven days, shall propose to the parties to the dispute the composition of the panel consisting of three or five

members and preferably government officials. The parties directly concerned shall react within seven working days to nominations of panel members by the Chairman and shall not oppose nominations except for compelling reasons.

Citizens of countries whose governments are parties to a dispute shall not be eligible for membership of the panel concerned with that dispute. Panel members shall serve in their individual capacities and not as governmental representatives nor as representatives of any organization. Governments or organizations shall therefore not give them instructions with regard to matters before a panel.

9. Each panel shall develop its own procedures. All Parties, having a substantial interest in the matter and having notified this to the Committee, shall have an opportunity to be heard. Each panel may consult with and seek information from any source it deems appropriate. Before a panel seeks such information from a source within the jurisdiction of a Party it shall inform the government of that Party. Any Party shall respond promptly and fully to any request by a panel for such information as the panel considers necessary and appropriate. Confidential information provided to the panel shall not be revealed without formal authorization from the government or person providing the information. Where such information is requested from the panel but release of such information by the panel is not authorized, a non-confidential summary of the information, authorized by the government or person providing the information, will be provided.

Where a mutually satisfactory solution to a dispute cannot be found or where the dispute relates to an interpretation of this Agreement, the panel should first submit the descriptive part of its report to the Parties concerned, and should subsequently submit to the parties to the dispute its conclusions, or an outline thereof, a reasonable period of time before they are circulated to the Committee. Where an interpretation of this Agreement is not involved and where a bilateral settlement of the matter has been found, the report of the panel may be confined to a brief description of the case and to reporting that a solution had been reached.

10. The time required by panels will vary with the particular case. Panels should aim to deliver their findings, and where appropriate, recommendations, to the Committee without undue delay, taking into account the obligation of the Committee to ensure prompt settlement in cases of urgency, normally within a period of four months from the date the panel was established.

Enforcement

11. After the examination is complete or after the report of a panel, working party or other subsidiary body is presented to the Committee, the Committee shall give

the matter prompt consideration. With respect to these reports, the Committee shall take appropriate action normally within thirty days of receipt of the report unless extended by the Committee, including:

- (a) a statement concerning the facts of the matter;
- (b) recommendations to one or more Parties; and/or
- (c) any other ruling which it deems appropriate.

Any recommendations by the Committee shall aim at the positive resolution of the matter on the basis of the operative provisions of this Agreement and its objectives set out in the Preamble.

12. If a Party to which recommendations are addressed considers itself unable to implement them, it should promptly furnish reasons in writing to the Committee. In that event, the Committee shall consider what further action may be appropriate.

13. The Committee shall keep under surveillance any matter on which it has made recommendations or given rulings.

Balance of rights and obligations

14. If the Committee's recommendations are not accepted by a party, or parties, to the dispute, and if the Committee considers that the circumstances are serious enough to justify such action, it may authorize a Party or Parties to

*Article IX**Final Provisions*1. *Acceptance and accession*

- (a) This Agreement shall be open for acceptance by signature or otherwise, by governments contracting parties to the GATT and by the European Economic Community whose agreed lists of entities are contained in Annex I.
- (b) Any government contracting party to the GATT not a Party to this Agreement may accede to it on terms to be agreed between that government and the Parties. Accession shall take place by the deposit with Director-General to the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the GATT of an instrument of accession with states the terms so agreed.
- (c) This Agreement shall be open for acceptance by signature or otherwise by governments having provisionally acceded to the GATT, on terms related to the effective application of rights and obligations under this Agreement, which take into account rights and obligations in the instruments providing for their provisional accession, and whose agreed lists of entities are contained in Annex I.
- (d) This Agreement shall be open to accession by any other government on terms, related to the effective application of rights and obligations under this Agreement, to be agreed between that government and the Parties, by the deposit with the Director-General to the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the GATT of an instrument of accession which states the terms so agreed.
- (e) In regard to acceptance, the provisions of Article XXVI:5 (a) and (b) of the General Agreement would be applicable.

2. *Reservations*

Reservations may not be entered in respect of any of the provisions of this Agreement.

3. *Entry into force*

This Agreement shall enter into force on 1 January 1981 for the governments¹ which have accepted or acceded to it by that date. For each other government, it shall

¹For the purpose of this Agreement, the term "government" is deemed to include the competent authorities of the European Economic Community.

enter into force on the thirtieth day following the date of its acceptance or accession to this Agreement.

4. *National legislation*

(a) Each government accepting or acceding to this Agreement shall ensure, not later than the date of entry into force of this Agreement for it, the conformity of its laws, regulations and administrative procedures, and the rules, procedures and practices applied by the entities contained in its list annexed hereto, with the provisions of this Agreement.

(b) Each Party shall inform the Committee of any changes in its laws and regulations relevant to this Agreement and in the administration of such laws and regulations.

5. *Rectifications or modifications*

(a) Rectifications of a purely formal nature and minor amendments relating to Annexes I-IV to this Agreement shall be notified to the Committee and shall become effective provided there is no objection within thirty days to such rectifications or amendments.

(b) Any modifications to lists of entities other than those referred to in sub-paragraph (a) may be made only in exceptional circumstances. In such cases, a Party proposing to modify its list of entities shall notify the Chairman of the Committee who shall promptly convene a meeting of the Committee. The Parties shall consider the proposed modification and consequent compensatory adjustments, with a view to maintaining a comparable level of mutually agreed coverage provided in this Agreement prior to such modification. In the event of agreement not being reached on any modification taken or proposed, the matter may be pursued in accordance with the provisions contained in Article VII of this Agreement, taking into account the need to maintain the balance of rights and obligations at the highest possible level.

6. *Reviews and negotiations*

(a) The Committee shall review annually the implementation and operation of this Agreement taking into account the objectives thereof. The Committee shall annually inform the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the GATT of developments during the periods covered by such reviews.

(b) Not later than the end of the third year from the entry into force of this Agreement and periodically thereafter, the Parties thereto shall undertake

further negotiations, with a view to broadening and improving this Agreement on the basis of mutual reciprocity, having regard to the provisions of Article III relating to developing countries. In this connection, the Committee shall, at an early stage, explore the possibilities of expanding the coverage of this Agreement to include service contracts.

7. *Amendments*

The Parties may amend this Agreement having regard, *inter alia*, to the experience gained in its implementation. Such an amendment, once the Parties have concurred in accordance with the procedures established by the Committee, shall not come into force for any Party until it has been accepted by such Party.

8. *Withdrawal*

Any Party may withdraw from this Agreement. The withdrawal shall take effect upon the expiration of sixty days from the day on which written notice of withdrawal is received by the Director-General to the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the GATT. Any Party may upon such notification request an immediate meeting of the Committee.

9. *Non-application of this Agreement between particular Parties*

This Agreement shall not apply as between any two Parties if either of

13. *Registration*

This Agreement shall be registered in accordance with the provisions of Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Done at Geneva this twelfth day of April nineteen hundred and seventy-nine in a single copy, in the English, French and Spanish languages, each text being authentic, except as otherwise specified with respect to the lists of entities annexed hereto.

NOTES

Article I, paragraph 1

Having regard to general policy considerations relating to tied aid, including the objective of developing countries with respect to the untying of such aid, this Agreement does not apply to procurement made in furtherance of tied aid to developing countries so long as it is practised by Parties.

Article V, paragraph 14 (h)

Having regard to the general policy considerations of developing countries in relation to government procurement, it is noted that under the provisions of paragraph 14 (h) of Article V, developing countries may require incorporation of domestic content, offset procurement, or transfer of technology as criteria for award of contracts. It is noted that suppliers from one Party shall not be favoured over suppliers from any other Party.