

Factors influencing the choice of vendors include price, the warranty period, the reputation and reliability of the firm, the availability of parts and quality of the service arrangements. All equipment eventually fails and requires service, possibly resulting in costly down time at the post. The major point of purchasing the hardware locally rather than supplying it from Ottawa is to ensure that there is a local dealer who is committed to solving problems quickly and/or loaning substitute equipment in the event of serious problems.

The first substantial procurement from a new vendor and all procurements over \$50,000 Canadian must be pursuant to a competitive process involving three or more prospective vendors. Full adherence to the standards specified in this document must be mandatory criteria in the assessment of bids. The evaluation criteria should include all of the factors stated above, constituting a "best value for money" assessment.

Thus preference may be given to the current vendor in subsequent tenders if continuity would imply a higher quality of service arrangements.

Missions should ensure that the successful bidder has been in existence for some time, is solvent, and has adequate references from major and satisfied corporate customers. Alternatively, a firm which specializes in servicing equipment purchased from others may be selected for a separate service contract and that firm's views should be solicited to ensure that it has the expertise with and immediate access to parts for the particular equipment being purchased. This is essential if the mission is to consider procurement from Ottawa or through another mission that can obtain better prices, selection or speed of delivery.

Dealers may attempt to substitute brands of equipment of which they are particularly fond or for which they can obtain a better price. Missions should beware of departures from the standards and configurations set out in this document. If there are any doubts concerning whether or not the proposed equipment meets these standards, full technical specifications should be provided to MSS for review. No final commitments should be made to the dealer until MSS technical support personnel have reviewed the technical characteristics of the unit and confirmed that all supported software is able to run properly.

For computer equipment, software and specialized equipment (e.g. plotters and scanners) which are not covered by the standards, a detailed written report must be submitted to MSS by the organizational unit concerned. MSS will evaluate the