As experienced as they may be, DFAIT officials must remember to be selective in the information distributed to companies. Information overload, when time is of essence, is unproductive. In this case, the Guidelines, Standard Bidding Documents, Procurement Notices were correctly provided and contained the key information.

For the company, keeping DFAIT officials informed about the success favours continued co-operation for future assistance, and indirectly benefits other Canadian companies.

4.7   CASE STUDY 7 – IT TRAINING AND PROCUREMENT

4.7.1 Background

In late Fall 1997, the Ministry of Communications of a small Latin American country went to bid with a sizeable contract to redesign and overhaul different sectors of the state communications network. This involved a combination of sophisticated telecommunications equipment (the telephone system had to be entirely remodeled) including communication to internet via state of the art information technology. There would also require an after sales service schedule and considerable amounts of training.

A large Canadian telecommunications company was informed by on site partners of the bid and they sent bidding documents to Canada. The Embassy was informed of the impending bid and began to prepare meetings for the inevitable site visits from Canada. During the run up to the bid, the Embassy provided valuable market intelligence through its contacts with the Ministry.

In the Summer of 1998, amidst strong European and American competition, the Canadian bid was chosen. The contract itself contained no mention of education hardware-computers, wiring of schools and training. The Canadian company won the bid based on its innovative technological proposal and the only weakness of the bid was on the training side. Parallel to this event, this same Latin American country had just completed negotiations with the Inter-American Development Bank to modernise their educational system and infrastructure and make it more responsive to labour market demands. Let us quickly look at what was being proposed in the Terms of Reference (TORS):