

1.8 Chapter 13: Government Procurement

Canadian companies are increasingly aware of opportunities that exist in the U.S. government market and are better positioning themselves to compete. In April 1989, the Canadian Government Business Opportunities (GBO) became the official publication for all notices of proposed procurements of the Canadian Government covered by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the FTA. Issued on a daily basis since April, 1990, the GBO now lists a number of U.S. government procurement opportunities under GATT and the FTA that are open to Canadian suppliers.

Supply and Services Canada introduced the use of electronic bulletin boards for advertising procurement notices on a pilot basis in late 1989. This system named the Procurement Opportunities Board (POB) is now fully operational and includes notices for procurements under the GATT and the FTA.

As a result of the FTA, the Procurement Review Board came into existence on January 1, 1989. A similar mechanism is already available to Canadian companies in the USA through the General Accounting Office and the General Services Administration Board of Contract Appeals. From January, 1989 to November, 1990 the Canadian Board has handled twenty-eight complaints of which eight have resulted in full investigation and determination, with seven cases decided in favour of the complainant.

The FTA was instrumental in persuading the U.S. Small Business Administration to allow Canadian-owned companies operating in the United States to maintain their eligibility for U.S. Government procurements under the Small Business Set-Aside Program.

The exchange of procurement statistics, provided for in Article 1306, is due to take place in 1991.

1.9 Chapter 14: Services

The FTA provides a framework for liberalizing trade in specific services through a national treatment approach and promises to improve the environment for services trade between Canada and the USA. While most commercial services are covered, the exceptions from FTA coverage are transportation, basic telecommunications (such as telephone service), medical services, lawyers, child care, and government-provided health, education and social services.

A Services Working Group was established on November 30, 1989, to identify opportunities for increased liberalization in trade in the service industries. The Group met in May, 1990 and developed a consensus on a work plan to ensure the effective implementation of the Chapter.