

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

The National Tender Board (NTB) was established in November, 1997 by a Cabinet decision following the Government's commitment to reform and good Governance. The Executive Secretary was appointed at the time the Institution was created. The Board of Directors was constituted later in February, 1999.

One of the first tasks the NTB undertook was to review the proposed structures to better realise the vision set in the NTB original business plan. The NTB Board of Directors adopted the vision to guide its operations as stipulated in the original business plan and subsequent procurement directives. The ultimate goal is to establish a modern public procurement system. At the same time the NTB set its sights on developing a sustainable public procurement system that ensures efficiency, transparency, economy, integrity, equity, and accountability. Plugging evasion of public procurement procedures is an important part of realising the NTB's vision and goals. The NTB was aware that the path towards achieving these goals was long and fraught with obstacles. The biggest challenges continue to be those with vested interests and lack of an institutional frame work for a sustainable and rational system of public procurement management.

In this year of 1999, the NTB reviewed also its operational procedures, recruited staff through open competition, screened prospective staff for ability and integrity prior to appointing them; and developed a further vision for NTB's future. All these were with intensive involvement of the NTB-Board of Directors, staff complement and highly professional support by a few local and international consultants.

NTB has been established as an Executive Agency with the responsibility of establishing a modern public procurement system on behalf of the Government of Rwanda, administering as well as enforcing procurement rules and regulations, providing advice to the government on public procurement affairs. The commitment by the Government to change and fund operations of the NTB provided a good base to meet these goals. The challenge to NTB was, therefore, to make good use of this opportunity and vindicate the expectations of the people and Government of Rwanda for public procurement system that is effective and free of corruption.

The NTB, on its part, promised to meet these expectations by first focusing on quick wins aimed at increasing compliance to procurement procedures in the short term. At the same time, NTB would embark on a longer term reform of the public procurement. Focus has been concentrated at cultivating a culture of discipline in implementing the public procurement procedures among the public institutions and ensuring fair treatment to all bidders.

The NTB would count on and expects to receive strong political support from the leadership of this Country in walking this tight rope.

I am pleased to say that the NTB recorded **232** tender processing requests and registered a substantial number of successfully processed tenders, during the year 1999. NTB processed monetisation and auctioning operations worth **3.402.775.970 Rwfs**, processed successfully **156** tender contracts worth **14.631.826.589 Rwfs** and **80.292.284 Rwfs** accrued from other peripheral services. Savings on common user items purchased by Government Institutions in accordance with public procurement procedures were well beyond the target of **8 %** and this was achieved at nearly half staff strength. Considering the annual budget allocated to NTB of **241.771.344 Rwfs**, the cost of the NTB operations was relatively low compared to the total value of operations. We can therefore, confidently say that NTB paid for its operations in the year through savings and other services.

In the course of the year covered by this report, NTB began the process of modernising the public procurement system. The Rwanda public procurement capacity building grant was negotiated with the World Bank and the Grant agreement was signed in April, 1999. The grant will lead to an effective and transparent procurement process, including a minimum number of qualified personnel. On behalf of the NTB, I wish to extend our gratitude to the World Bank.

I hasten to say that this success, modest as it is, would not have been possible without the commitment from Government and the new public-private partnership and engagement. The NTB benefited from the technical support and professional experience from various multilateral and bilateral donors and Institutions including the World Bank, the African development Bank and the International Monetary Fund. I wish to take this opportunity to thank them and others who have in one way or the other assisted us. We look forward to their continued support in the years to come.

Last but by no means least, I wish to congratulate the management and staff of the NTB for doing well with relatively limited resources and in an undefined institutional frame work due to lack of the Law establishing the NTB and the public procurement code, the instruments that will equip the NTB with the implementing authority. We do hope that with additional resources, which are likely to be availed in the next future and with a defined institutional and legal frame work, the performance of the NTB will significantly improve.

BERAHO Ignace
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
NATIONAL TENDER BOARD.

INTRODUCTION.

1. After the war and genocide of 1994, the Government of National Unity became increasingly committed to change the status quo that existed prior the 1994 holocaust to good Governance. It initiated a number of Economic Management Institutions(EMI) which are aimed at achieving economic stability and growth. One of these Economic Management Institutions was the NTB charged with organising the public procurement system.

2. The Public procurement system in Rwanda had faced a complete breakdown. The legislation for public procurement dates back in 1959 (**Décret du 25 Février 1959-Arrête Royal du 26 Juin 1959 et Cahier Général des Charges, Royaume de Belgique, Ministère du Congo et Rwanda Urundi**) with various amendments, the latest being the "Arrête N° 13/02 by the Prime Minister issued on 29/7/1993. The situation was worsened by lack of a specialised executive agency to implement the procurement procedures, rules and guidelines. Thus one can justifiably assert that the Public Procurement System in Rwanda suffered several anomalies leading to real chaos.

3. The structural problems in the former public procurement were many but the major ones included the following: Lack of a modern institutional and legal framework that creates an environment for easy implementation of the public procurement procedures, rules and regulations; inadequate professional expertise resulting from lack of training; lack of procurement policies; lack of discipline and lack of good will resulting into lack of transparency, accountability, clear vision; and poor enforcement mechanisms of existing procurement regulations.

4. On the basis of the above anomalies as well as realising that the loss incurred by Government through improper procurement procedures was enormous, the Government decided to establish the National Tender Bord(NTB).

5. Whereas the NTB was created by a Cabinet decision in November, 1997, the Law establishing it and the public procurement code has not been accented to. However, the full support received from the Government has enabled the NTB to be operational even before these important legal instruments are put in place. The year of 1998 was a big challenge for the NTB. It was a year to demonstrate to the public the justification of its existence through operations while at the same time determined to the organisation of the institutional and legal framework in which it must operate.

6. The year 1998 exposed the realities linked with establishing a good public procurement system. The 1999 Action Plan was, therefore, dedicated to activities intended to the strengthening of public procurement capacity, reform and modernisation of the system.

7. The 1999 Action Plan covered but was not limited to the following:

- Improvement of overall performance;
- Improvement of the existing systems and procedures;

- Staffing and increasing performance;
- Strengthening of public procurement capacity;
- Development of a management information system and computerisation;
- Procurement education and assistance;
- Enhancement of confidence in the system;
- Plugging loopholes for evasion of public procurement procedures;
- Pressing for the enactment of the law establishing the NTB and the public procurement code;
- Acquiring premises and equipment;
- Preparation of procurement directives;
- Reducing Government loss by auctioning used-up and excess public property;
- Fighting corruption and misappropriation of the public properties;

POLICY OPERATIONS

Overall Performance

8. Following a year in operation, the top priority of the NTB was to improve the public procurement system and instil confidence in the public. The performance of the NTB can be measured in the following yard sticks; (i) the actual tenders processed in 1999, (ii) actual tenders processed in 1999 compared to the previous year 1998, (iii) the extent to which the 1999 action plan was realised. Apart from the procurement policy operations, the NTB had committed itself to meeting the following targets:

- 8% savings on the government expenditure on public procurement;
- Instilling confidence in the public, thus sale of bidding documents used as a yard stick to increase by 30 %;
- Registration of bidders for the year was expected to increase by 10%;
- Disposing off Government used-up and excess property expected to increase.

Table 1. Operational performance against targets

Activity	Realisation 1998	Target 1999 in (%)	Target 1999 (Number)	Actual Realisation	Performance in %
Tenders processed	- 180 requisitions - 130 processed successfully	30%	257 tenders 185 tenders	- 232 requisitions - 156 processed successfully.	90% 85%
Registration cards/fee	40.450.000 Rwfs	10%	44.495.000 Rwfs	34.300.000 Rwfs	77%
Bidding documents	56.065.033 Rwfs	30%	72.884.543 Rwfs	55.692.415 Rwfs	76%
Auctioning of Government vehicles	38.858.583 Rwfs	-	200.000.000 Rwfs	371.101.969 Rwfs	186%
Auctioning other public property	-	-	10.000.000 Rwfs	Office equipment distributed to local administration units.	Handed over to the Ministry of Local Government for distribution.
Saving Government expenditure on Procurement	Saved 23% in 1998	Expected to save 8% in 1999.	-	15%	188%

Saving Government Expenditure on Procurement

9. The target of 8% savings on government expenditure on procurements was greatly surpassed. From a sample of 70 items procured through NTB compared with the same items but procured outside NTB, the savings totalled 15%.

Monetisation

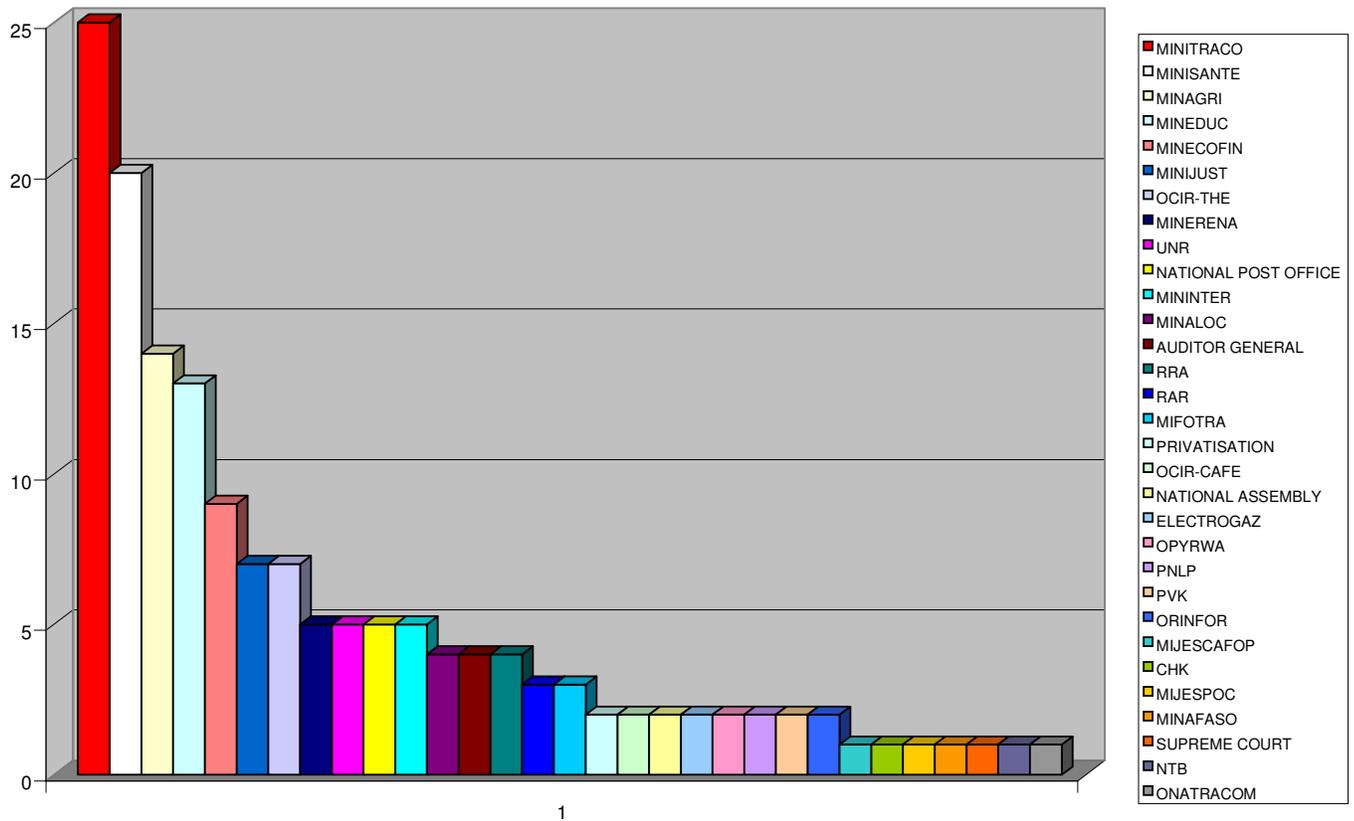
10. During the year, monetisation took the form of selling food items and fertilisers. Monetisation program is a new aid facility. Food items are monetised and the proceedings utilised in accordance with the aid agreement. The operation requires sophisticated marketing analysis and techniques. During the year, monetisation fetched **3.031.674.001Rwfs**. The monetised items included the United States of America food aid which is expected to fetch 10 Million US\$ at the end of the operation and fertilisers from OCIR-CAFE which fetched only 79.900.000 Rwfs.

PROCUREMENT POLICY OPERATIONS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

Tenders Processed

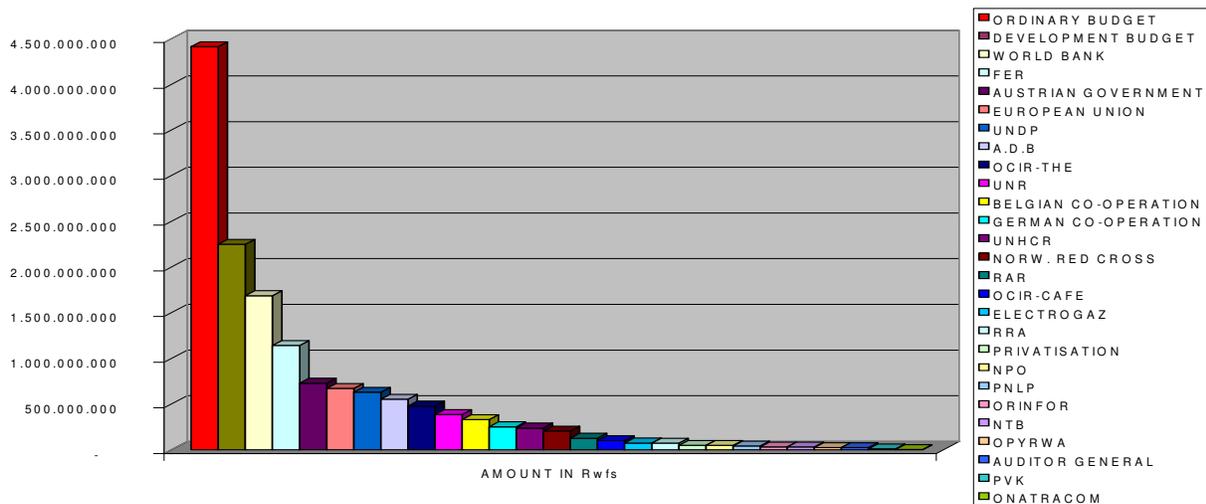
11. During 1999, 156 tenders were successfully processed compared to 130 processed in 1998. 1999 saw a reduction in the volume of tenders for works indicating less investment in the Infrastructure sector.

Graph 1. Tenders Awarded per Client; year 1999



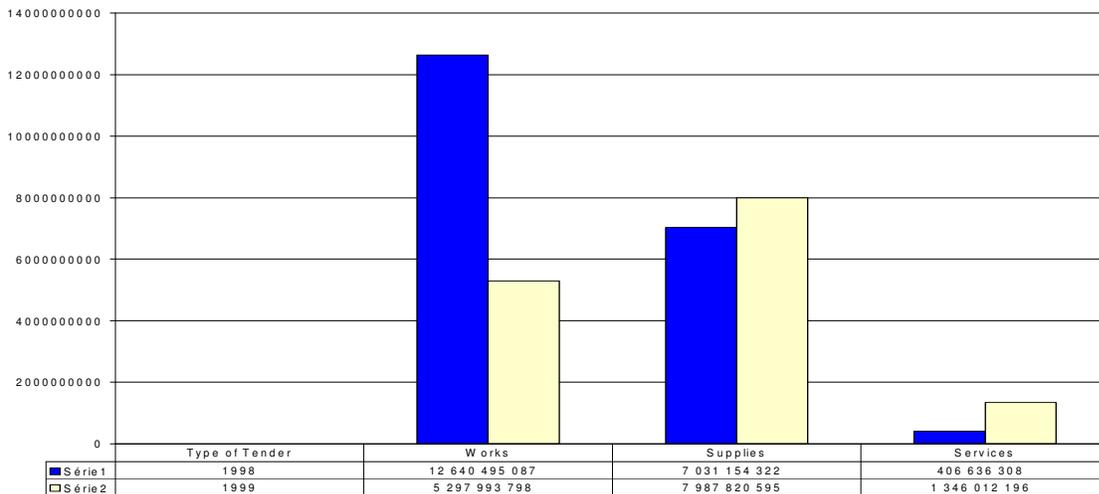
The graph reflects continued resistance by Government institutions to respect public procurement procedures. Considering the operational budget which is allocated for procurement, the volume of procurements processed through the NTB is too small compared to what the Institutions spend on procurement in general.

Graph II. Awarded Tenders per Source of Finance; 1999



The year saw less external funding from multilateral and bi-lateral donors. The monetary value of tenders per source of finance indicates that much procurement was done for consumables and less was injected in infrastructure.

Graph III. Amount of Tenders per Sector, Comparing 1998 with 1999



Out of 232 procurement requisitions, 156 requisitions were processed successfully compared to 130 tenders processed in 1998. Among uncompleted 46 tenders, some were under processing by the end of the year, while others were completed without a contract being entered into.

Table II. Status of Uncompleted Tenders as of 31/12/1999.

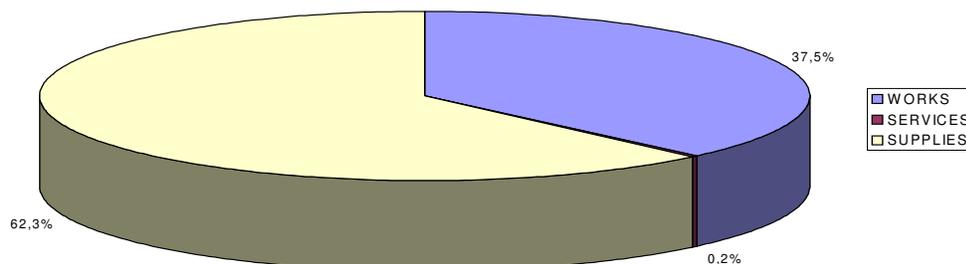
Status	Number
Tenders on bidding documents preparation stage.	4
Tenders on preparation of offers stage-yet to be opened.	17
Tenders where no bidder submitted an offer.	3
Tenders on evaluation stage.	7
Tenders where all bidders did not conform.	3
Tenders awaiting non-objection from donors.	15
Tenders cancelled.	6
Tenders under pre-qualification stage	1
Tender where user body is hesitant to make a choice.	1
Tenders pending completion of technical studies.	1
Tenders returned to user bodies to incorporate changes.	2
Tenders awaiting Minister's approval.	4
Tenders on contract stage.	3
Tenders with no funding	6
Tenders stopped due to change in policy.	3
TOTAL	76

Whereas the volume of tenders processed increased, the monetary value decreased. This could be explained by the following i) less spending on infrastructure, ii) resistance to respecting procurement procedures thus, less significant tenders in value were processed through the NTB.

Normal Procurement Procedures Exemptions

12. During the year, NTB granted visas for exempting users from using the normal procedures to procure various goods, works and services amounting to **1.439.820.427 Rwfs**. The exemptions were granted mainly due to emergencies caused by lack of planning by users, and sole source for certain items. Lack of procurement planning remains a major obstacle to the implementation of the procurement procedures as decisions have to be taken haphazardly to avert crises. From time to time, the Government has paid exorbitantly due to poor planning.

Graph IV. Procurement visas; 1999



Procurement Audit and Investigations

13. NTB carried out an audit and investigations related to procurement procedures evasion and fraud in various Government Institutions. The findings on most internal tender commissions showed lack of organisation and transparency in procurement operations and steps will be taken to address the problem.

Legal Services

14. Apart from providing legal services to the NTB, incidents of challenges to tender award decisions were attended to. Throughout the year, only 3 (three) challenges were registered. No challenge of tender award decision culminated into a court case.

Information Strategy

15. The NTB called for the technical proposals for public procurement capacity building. One of the components of the capacity building is reviewing the existing systems and procedures with a view to developing a strategy on Information Technology (IT) using consultants funded by the World Bank.

Procurement Education and Public Relations

16. Towards the end of the year, the NTB embarked on a vigorous procurement education campaign so as to enable the users of NTB services comply with the requirements of public procurement procedures, rules and regulations. Efforts in this area will be intensified in the near future. In addition, NTB will ensure that all procurement procedures, rules and guidelines are consolidated, printed and made available to the public and users at their convenience. NTB has begun to improve the quality of services to users of its services by addressing complaints and inquiries more promptly. A suggestion box has been introduced so as to know how the public wants the NTB to serve it better.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Computerisation

17. A small scale local area network has been set up and tested in a bid to evaluate needs of internal communication and possibly extend the project in the future. Efforts are being concentrated to replacing the predominantly manual system procedures with the computerised system.

Procurement and Bidders Database

18. The procurement and bidders database has been established. 621 business companies registered with NTB since its inception, and out of these, 261 have valid registration cards. A data base for procurement operations is in use. Information on

tendering proceedings status can now be got on spot. Under the World Bank grant for strengthening public procurement capacity whose implementation commenced in the third semester of 1999, a more developed Management Information System(MIS) to monitor and analyse data will be in place by the first quarter of the year 2000.

FINANCE, INVENTORY AND ASSETS MANAGEMENT

Financial Inputs

19. The National Tender Board operated a very stringent budget of **241.771.344 Rwfs** for the year 1999. The target for saving Government expenditure on procurement by 8 % was greatly surpassed. Monetisation of food items, agricultural inputs , and auctioning of used up and excess vehicles fetched **3.402.775.970 Rwfs**. Bidding documents and registration cards fetched **80.292.284 Rwfs**.

Budgetary Execution

20. During 1999, NTB operated two budgetary components: i) the operational budget worth 150.916.838 Rwfs and the salary budget worth 90.854.506 Rwfs. Disbursements from the treasury topped 100% for the operational budget and only 81.700.036 Rwfs on the salary budget was disbursed. On the salary budget, 64.989.791 Rwfs was utilised being 80% of the total salary disbursements. This left a balance which was transferred to compliment the operational budget which was not sufficient. Failure to execute the whole salary budget was due the following reasons: i) NTB staff was paid on the task force basis for the first two months of the year. The present salary scales were approved by Cabinet in March, 1999. ii) Throughout the year, NTB did not recruit to its full capacity.

Operational Budget Execution

21. During the year, NTB relocated from congested premises to its present premises. Rehabilitating and equipping the new premises took 51 % of the operational budget. During the year, other budgetary lines under the operational budget component that took significant portions of the budget were: i) advertisements and announcements, ii) communication, iii) technical assistance, and iv) office supplies. These budgetary lines are an obligation for the NTB top perform to expectations of the public. Using wide advertisement and quick communication (fax, telex, and International courier services like DHL) is one of the major yardsticks for measuring a transparent procurement system.

As a normal practice in procurement operations, bidding documents were sold to cover the production costs including postage costs. However, fees accrued from the sale of bidding documents are deposited to the National Treasury. Major expenses of the operational budget were therefore, paid for indirectly through the sale of bidding documents.

HUMAN RESOURCE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Personnel Training and Career Development

22. Career development and training in public procurement remains NTB's priority to ensure efficiency and professionalism. A senior staff underwent a one month training of trainers in international Procurement at the International Law Institute in WASHINGTON D.C. The trainee from the International Law Institute conducted a three weeks in-house training for the NTB staff. Two professional staff attended a three weeks intensive seminar in procurement at the World Bank sponsored training in DAKAR-Senegal. Including three staff members who underwent intensive public procurement training in 1998, it brought a total number of 6 (Six) professional staff who have undergone intensive procurement training and are now procurement specialists. Under the Public Procurement Capacity Building project which is being implemented, training of NTB personnel and key personnel handling procurement in user departments will be central. The beneficiaries of these intensive public procurement training seminars will play an important role in training the procurement personnel for the user departments.

Pro-active and Participatory Management

23. All efforts have been made to make NTB staff participate in all issues that concern the Institution in general and themselves in particular making the NTB a dynamic place of work. Regular meetings are held as follows: Management Team Meeting(MTM) is held every Thursday of the week, the Heads of Departments(HOD) meeting is held every Monday of the week, a Training Meeting for Staff (TMS) is held every Friday of the week and a General Staff Meeting(GSM) held every last Friday of the month. Policy, Administrative and Operational issues are discussed in these meetings and resolutions adopted on consensus basis. As a result of these meetings, every staff member feels important and part of the Institution, sharing the same vision, objectives and culture.

NTB Staff Needs

24. The NTB staff profile was reviewed and the staff compliment strengthened. A corporate culture which emphasises efficiency and integrity on the part of the staff is being built. Staff training has been and will continue to be given the attention it deserves.

Table III. Illustration of the NTB's staff status.

Category	Available Staff	Required Staff	Need
Professionals	17	31	14
Technical support staff	15	16	1
Auxiliary staff	8	11	3
TOTAL	40	58	18

Deficiency in staff numbers has been translated into long hours of work. On average, NTB staff puts in more two extra hours of work per day.

INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING

Systems and Procedures

25. Although the basic operational systems and procedures were developed during the year 1998, they had to be reviewed and fine-tuned. During the year, from the 1998 experience, NTB put in place revised public procurement procedures directives, reviewed staff regulations including staff code of conduct and a management information reporting system. The stores manual and assets management manual are being worked on.

Staffing

26. In accordance with the NTB recruitment proposal, existing staff were employed afresh through competition while new entrants came on merit and after completing the staff screening exercise. In employing the staff, NTB took into consideration several factors including qualifications, work performance, integrity and the potential for development. For better services to the public and to ensure integrity, new staff identity cards were issued and NTB ensured fast and firm action on information received on staff misconduct. All staff are required to put on staff identity cards(badges) while on duty.

Buildings/Premises

27. The National Tender Board relocated from congested premises to the newly acquired premises on the basement and ground floor of the building housing the Ministry of Health headquarters(formerly “Caisse d’Epargne du Rwanda”). This was an earnest step in improving the work environment and the image of the NTB, and custody of the documents.

Valuation of Assets

28. The NTB commenced the process to undertake valuation of its premises and assets. The assignment also included the preparation of fixed assets register. The NTB also undertook to determine the value and lifespan of its assets like vehicles for the purpose of including these in the balance sheet and enhancing a culture of inventory and assets management by individual public authorities.

Strengthening the Public Procurement Policy Management

29. Having realised that there was substantial evasion of the public procurement procedures and directives by various public institutions due to weaknesses in the institutional and legal framework the NTB operates in, NTB enhanced measures to plug loopholes in the system. This took the form of continued sensitisation of the public institutions the need to embrace and apply public procurement procedures in force, continued pressure for the enactment of the law establishing the NTB and the public procurement code/decreed. The NTB was also concerned with the public's confidence in the security and confidentiality of their bids before opening. New envelopes sealing techniques that cannot be tampered with were introduced. Whereas the NTB was

successful in ensuring bidders confidence in the security of their bids before opening, enforcing the public institutions to respect the public procurement procedures remained a dilemma.

Harmonisation of Public Procurement Procedures

30. Realising that the fundamental principles of a good procurement system are universally the same, the NTB continued with its former commitment to respect donor procurement procedures for donor funded procurement operations. A meeting point has been reached between the major donor procurement procedures and the National procedures. On a continuous basis, consultations have been going on to make sure National procedures and Donor procedures remain in harmony.

Review of the NTB Structure and Procedures

31. The year 1998 was instrumental in demonstrating the realities of organisational needs of a good procurement Institution. During 1999, focus has been put on reviewing the existing structure and procedures to cater for the expectations of the public and users. In reviewing the structure, decentralisation took centre stage. Public Institutions were instructed to form internal tender commissions which will benefit from the vigorous training program in the near future. The decentralisation of the procurement activities will have to be commensurate with the internal tender commission's capacity to handle procurement operations.

PROCUREMENT REFORM AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

32. The NTB prepared a procurement reform and capacity building programme. The programme is aimed at increasing capacity to handle and manage the public procurement system, increasing compliance to the public procurement procedures by public authorities and improving generally the efficiency, transparency, economy and accountability of the system.

33. The need for procurement reform and capacity building translated into a comprehensive project which won funding from the World Bank worth 375.600 US\$. The project agreement was signed in April, 1999 and the major components financed included the following:

Component 1: Revision of the old procurement legislation (code, decree, guidelines), and preparation of standard bidding and contract documents.

Component 2: Improving institutional frame work of the NTB and this would comprise the following: i) revision or preparation of legal framework for establishment of the NTB; ii) setting-up of a management information system to monitor and analyse procurement data; iii) creation of a procurement library at NTB, and iv) establishment of a capacity to issue a weekly newsletter on business opportunities.

Component 3: Building the capacity of NTB staff and users of NTB services which will include i) assessment of skills NTB and key staff in ministries handling procurement; ii) specialised training for NTB staff and training of trainers; and iii) delivery of on the job training for NTB staff and users based in various Ministries.

34. The implementation of the project is underway and expected to run up to May, 2000. As part of this implementation, 3 (three) NTB professional staff underwent an intensive procurement training program in WASHINGTON D.C and DAKAR. The trainee from WASHINGTON D.C on his return, conducted a two weeks intensive training for the NTB professional staff. The aim of this is to create a professional staff that will impart procurement expertise to personnel handling procurement in user departments without engaging foreign consultants who are always expensive to hire.

35. The expected outcome of the project would be an effective and transparent procurement process, including a minimum number of qualified personnel. This will accelerate the implementation, and improve quality and efficiency of investment programs. It will also create a better environment for the participation of emerging local contractors.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

36. The problems encountered are both institutional and operational. Institutionally, the Law establishing the NTB has not been enacted. Policy instruments have not been put in place notably standard bidding documents and contract documents with the definitive implementing procedures. The public procurement code has not been finalised. These important policy documents erodes the NTB of the capacity and authority to realise its objectives.

Operationally, most Government Ministries, Parastatals and projects continued to demonstrate resistance to the implementation of public procurement procedures. This resistance is facilitated by lack of an enforcing statutory mechanism. The 1999 Annual Budget was 171 Billion Francs. It is without doubt that between 50% and 70% is spent on procurement. Considering that NTB has processed tenders only worth **14.631.826.589 Rwf**s is a clear manifestation that more effort and support from Government must be dedicated to compelling the Government Institutions to respect procurement procedures. Autonomous and semi-Autonomous public institutions continue to hide behind the statutory mechanisms that created them to evade public procurement procedures.

37. Poor planning continued to be one of the major problems faced by the NTB. In many cases, procurement requisitions came as crises. This forced the NTB sometimes to adopt procedures not commensurate with the items to be procured. The result of these crises caused by poor planning were unrealistic accusations of delays and complaints from bidders.

38. Staff remuneration: Staff remuneration is one of the major factors that ensure efficiency of staff. During the official recruitment, it became evident that NTB could not recruit very qualified personnel due to low remuneration rates. Considering the nature of

work and the sensitivity of the Institution, the present remuneration rates are still considerably low.

THE WAY FORWARD

Policy Implementation

39. The National Tender Board is determined to improve the public procurement system by taking several measures. First, is to ensure that Government enacts the Law establishing the NTB, the public procurement code and the implementing procurement directives, the policy instruments that sets the implementation parameters. Second, to ensure that the procurement regulations are respected and if not, corrective action is taken. Third, as a matter of urgency, to address the problems which were inherited from lack of a procurement policy. Fourth, to improve voluntary respect for procurement procedures, Fifth, to plug all the loopholes linked with evasion of procurement procedures. Sixth, building capacity for the NTB staff and personnel handling procurement in user Institutions, and improving capacity of the business community to understand procurement procedures.

Services to the Public

40. The NTB has started to improve the quality of services by addressing complaints and inquiries from the bidders and other users of NTB services more promptly. Steps have been taken to cut down delays in handling procurement operations.

Compliance to Procurement Procedures

41. The level of compliance to procurement procedures is not satisfactory and therefore, NTB has embarked on a vigorous procurement education campaign so to enable the user institutions comply with the requirements of procurement laws and regulations. In addition, NTB with the assistance of the Government will ensure that the procurement law, code and implementing directives are printed and made available to users of NTB services at their convenience.

Procurement Reform

42. The implementation of the procurement reform program will be intensified. NTB will also build and maintain a closer working relationship with all the stake holders with a view of ensuring the success of the program and to improve the public perception of the procurement system.

Capacity Building

43. The NTB will give adequate attention to measures on institution building and redressing gradually the problems and weaknesses inherited from the previous procurement system. Several studies aimed at laying a strong and sustainable foundation for the NTB will continue to be carried out.

CONCLUSION

The performance of the NTB during 1999 was encouraging. However, a lot remains to be done to compel the Government Institutions respect public procurement procedures, putting in place the institutional and legal frame work that ensures an effective system that meets the expectations of the Government, the Rwandese people in general, user public authorities and other stakeholders.

The NTB has a very challenging responsibility and the only way of justifying its creation and existence is to that it attains its objectives. The NTB is confident that the steps currently being taken including those on reform and capacity building, will enable us to meet the challenges ahead of us.

On behalf of Management I would like to take this opportunity to thank Government, the World Bank and the public at large for the support they have given to NTB during 1999. I would also like to express our gratitude to the Board of Directors for their invaluable contribution during the year. Finally, I wish to thank all the staff of NTB for their commitment and dedication and I call upon them to redouble their efforts in order to meet the expectations of our stakeholders.