

June 2010. U.S. Position.
IDB – “Guide for Acceptance of the Use of Country Procurement Systems”
[revised version, document GN-2538-6]

The U.S. abstained on June 16, 2010 on the revised version of the IDB’s “Guide for Acceptance of the Use of Country Procurement Systems”.

As we have emphasized repeatedly in the IDB Board since December, we believe that given the complexity of the proposed changes and the need for heightened transparency whenever considering procurement issues, this document requires a public comment period prior to Board approval. We are deeply disappointed then that the IDB did not release the document for public comment, particularly in the light of the priority IDB Governors have placed on improving disclosure and transparency, reflected in the “Cancun Declaration” and accompanying overview framework.

We strongly support assistance to strengthen the procurement capacity of the public sector in IDB borrowing countries.

We believe the amendments to the validation guide as a result of U.S. comments have improved the document. We particularly value drafting changes that provide clarity regarding ongoing requirements with respect to international competitive bidding, international short listing of consultants, mandatory use of the Bank’s standard bidding documents, and the maintenance of key provisions of the Bank’s existing procurement policy and consultant policy.

However, this lengthy, complex document would benefit from public review. Such a review is consistent with an institution that truly values transparency in practice, not just as an aspirational, theoretical goal.

IDB Management’s response that such a review would have unduly delayed the adoption of the new policy is entirely unpersuasive in light of the length of time that management took to release the draft guide to the IDB Executive Board.

Despite the IDB Board’s failure to agree to a public comment period prior to IDB Board approval of the Guide on June 16, 2010, we are pleased the IDB has put the validation guide and strategy document on the IDB website, in both English and Spanish, so that they are available to the public. We call on the IDB to consider the comments received and incorporate them as appropriate. We urged the IDB Board to insist on a public comment period before proceeding with changing the Bank’s procurement policy and consultant policy.