



Sybase

STATSCAN SYSTEM TO DEVELOP INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE IN UKRAINE

Sybase Inc. is patting itself on the back for landing an US\$800,000 contract to develop an IT infrastructure for Ukraine's Ministry of Statistics. If all goes according to plan in this notoriously unpredictable part of the world, the Emeryville, Calif.-based company expects to win US\$11.5 million in similar contracts before the year 2001.

The contracts - worth US\$35 million - are being awarded by the World Bank to help jumpstart the creation of IT infrastructure in the former Soviet Union. The money will go to pioneering services and procuring the necessary hardware and software to launch the dozens of new republics that have emerged into the information age.

"Sybase beat out Oracle and Informix (its two major competitors) to win this contract," says Mike Povlanko, sales director of Sybase Moscow. "It was a complicated, year-long tender process."

While this initial success bodes well for Sybase, there's no guarantee that future contracts will go its way. The company is hopeful, however, that Sybase's "open systems solution" will garner it a full third of the total World Bank allocation, says Povlanko.

The IT solution Sybase will implement in the Ukrainian Statistics Ministry is a census monitoring program modelled after a StatsCan

application installed by Sybase in 1986.

"The census dissemination system has allowed [StatsCan] to be more responsive; it lets us manage more information in more ways and manage it faster and more efficiently," says Ray Lackey, systems and database manager in the census operation division of Statistics Canada in Ottawa. Lackey says: "Before the new system was installed, a simple query could take anywhere from one to a dozen weeks. Now it takes a maximum of 48 hours and usually it's much quicker than that."

Sybase has relied on the goodwill of StatsCan to help demonstrate the system to its newest owners. Just before Christmas, 15 delegates from the Ukrainian Ministry spent two weeks training at StatsCan in Ottawa. "The response was excellent," says Guido Smit, President of Sybase Canada. Rather than being daunted by such an advanced system, the delegates were itching to learn everything about it, he says.

Despite the fact that a great many government partnerships with the private sector these days include some sort of royalty sharing clause, StatsCan is receiving no money for its part in the Ukrainian project.

As far as the finished product goes, Povlanko and Lackey agree it's unlikely the Ukrainian system will look exactly like its Canadian

counterpart once installed. "It's an evolutionary process," says Povlanko. "Just as StatsCan is always adding and upgrading its system to enhance system performance, so too will StatsUkraine."

Steve Graham, a consultant with IDC Canada, agrees Sybase has finagled a bit of a coup by being one of the first high-tech firms to get a foot in the door in this unchartered market. But he says it's difficult to see how the company can reasonably expect to capture a third of the \$35 million when most of the allocation will likely be eaten up by the massive requirements of creating infrastructure from scratch.

This will include laying down the basic plumbing and cabling, developing an IT strategy, acquiring databases and procuring all the applications that will run on top of them.

Another large expense Graham foresees is attracting companies that can provide all-important services to the huge project. Graham points out: "Service companies tend to favour low-risk opportunities, so you're going to have to dangle a pretty big carrot in front of them [to get them to participate]."

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Bubble Technology

OTTAWA FIRM'S DEVICE GIVES EARLY WARNING OF RADIATION

by Tom Spears, Ottawa Citizen

A Chalk River company has won a \$400,000 contract to provide radiation detectors that will help chart the dangers of Chernobyl. Bubble Technology Industries Inc. will send its unique bubble dosimeters - which measure how much radiation a worker has received - to Ukraine. It is also sending portable radiation detectors to find radiation in the environment around Chernobyl and to tell what kind of radiation it is.

The company draws its name from the gadgets it will send to Chernobyl - gadgets the size of fat pens filled with semi-solid, clear plastic.

"It's about the consistency of stiff Jell-O," says Rod Miller, the company's Operations Manager. When radiation passes through the detector, it creates bubbles in the plastic jelly, letting the person who wears the device see instantly what dose he or she has received.

Traditional dosimeters are badges worn for two or three months and then sent for analysis at a laboratory, Miller said. They don't show the wearer anything immediately.

"The drawback is that you don't know what's happening until you get the report back from the lab," he said. But a bubble dosimeter can give an instantly visible danger signal.

The contract is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Canada has promised to spend \$15 million helping Ukraine to clear up its radioactive mess, mainly in and near Chernobyl.

One nuclear reactor there exploded and burned in 1986, spewing radioactive smoke that travelled thousands of kilometres downwind. The area near the plant was the most contaminated.

"They still have a long way to go in identifying and characterizing the radiation at

Chernobyl," Miller said. Different types of radiation cause different amounts of damage, and last for very different periods of time. Miller says the value of the contract goes well beyond one sale of equipment by one company.

This is a significant opportunity to showcase Canadian technology around the world - he said.

In this case, it's through some countries in the former Soviet Union who are desperate for western technology I can't help but feel that anything that showcases Canadian technology will be of benefit to Canada." Canada is known internationally for top-quality nuclear technology, Miller said. Bubble Technology has 20 employees. It began as part of Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. but became a private company in 1988.