

Review of Tools and Evidence Base in Public Procurement Outcomes

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Abstract: *The review focuses on assessing public procurement reforms globally, particularly their impact on value for money and fair access. While procurement systems channel about 15% of global GDP, the evidence base on the effectiveness of various interventions is lacking. This review addresses that gap by analyzing academic and policy sources on procurement reforms such as e-procurement, framework agreements, and transparency mechanisms. The methodological approach includes structured searches and expert consultations.*

Key findings indicate that e-procurement tools, such as e-auction and e-notification, increase competition and transparency, reducing prices by up to 17% in certain contexts. However, implementation barriers and high administrative costs often hinder these benefits. Framework agreements and centralized procurement show promise in reducing prices for standardized goods, though the evidence is limited. Civil society monitoring during contract execution demonstrates mixed results, with successes depending on local engagement.

Overall, the review highlights the need for further research, especially in underexplored areas like framework agreements and civil society monitoring. The implications suggest a stronger focus on systematic evaluation and collaboration between governments, civil society, and development institutions to enhance procurement outcomes globally.

This review offers practical guidance for policy interventions aimed at maximizing public procurement efficiency and ensuring broader access, emphasizing the need for a robust evidence base.

Keywords: *standardized goods, civil society monitoring, civil society, procurement outcomes.*

Аннотация: *Обзор посвящен оценке реформ в сфере государственных закупок в глобальном масштабе, в частности их влияния на соотношение цены и качества и справедливый доступ. Хотя системы закупок направляют около 15 % мирового ВВП, доказательная база по эффективности различных мер отсутствует. Данный обзор устраняет этот пробел, анализируя научные и политические источники по реформам закупок, таким как электронные закупки, рамочные соглашения и механизмы прозрачности. Методологический подход включает структурированный поиск и консультации с экспертами.*

Основные выводы показывают, что инструменты электронных закупок, такие как электронный аукцион и электронное уведомление, повышают конкуренцию и прозрачность, снижая цены до 17 % в определенных условиях. Однако барьеры на пути

внедрения и высокие административные расходы часто препятствуют получению этих преимуществ. Рамочные соглашения и централизованные закупки обещают снизить цены на стандартизированные товары, хотя фактические данные ограничены. Мониторинг гражданского общества в ходе исполнения контрактов демонстрирует неоднозначные результаты, причем успехи зависят от вовлеченности местного населения.

В целом обзор подчеркивает необходимость дальнейших исследований, особенно в таких малоизученных областях, как рамочные соглашения и мониторинг гражданского общества. В связи с этим предлагается уделять больше внимания систематической оценке и сотрудничеству между правительствами, гражданским обществом и институтами развития для улучшения результатов закупок в глобальном масштабе.

Данный обзор предлагает практическое руководство для политических мер, направленных на максимальное повышение эффективности государственных закупок и обеспечение более широкого доступа, подчеркивая необходимость наличия надежной доказательной базы.

Ключевые слова: стандартизированные товары, мониторинг гражданского общества, гражданское общество, результаты закупок.

Introduction

Public procurement plays a crucial role in economic development, accounting for a significant portion of government spending (Ambe, 2019). However, developing countries face numerous challenges in implementing effective procurement systems. These include limited recognition of procurement's strategic importance, unethical behavior, poor supplier performance, and inadequate regulatory environments (Tukuta & Saruchera, 2015). In South Africa, despite reforms aimed at using procurement for socio-economic development, implementation remains inadequate (Ambe, 2019; Fourie & Malan, 2020). Systemic corruption in public procurement is a particular concern in developing countries, often stemming from institutional weaknesses and lack of accountability (Williams-Elegbe, 2018). To address these issues, countries need to focus on professionalizing procurement, enforcing ethics and good governance, and recognizing procurement's strategic importance (Ambe, 2019; Fourie & Malan, 2020). Additionally, studying successful anti-corruption initiatives from other countries may provide valuable insights for improving procurement systems in developing nations (Williams-Elegbe, 2018). In Uzbekistan, public procurement reforms have aimed to modernize the system and align it with international standards. These reforms are particularly relevant given Uzbekistan's substantial public spending on procurement. The theoretical basis for this research draws on governance and economic efficiency, emphasizing "value for money" and the role of transparency in reducing corruption and improving outcomes.

Recent studies have examined public sector reforms and procurement practices in Central Asia and Uzbekistan. Knox (2018) highlights the challenges developing countries face in implementing public management reforms and suggests an outcomes-based approach. In Uzbekistan, efforts to improve e-governance and public procurement systems have been identified, with recommendations for aligning practices with international standards (Radjabov, 2020). Fazekas & Blum (2021) review various procurement tools globally, noting that centralized procurement and framework agreements yield the highest savings, often exceeding 50%. However, they emphasize the need for more research on e-procurement and transparency initiatives. Sunnatillaeva (2024) focuses on competition policy in Uzbekistan, outlining a three-stage approach to developing competition laws and recent efforts to strengthen the independence of the competition authority. The study suggests areas for improvement, including enhancing transparency and adopting economic tools for assessing market abuse. The objective of this research is to provide a

comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of Uzbekistan's procurement reforms. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on Central Asia, a region often overlooked in procurement research. The findings are expected to contribute valuable insights into the effectiveness of procurement reforms in developing countries.

Methods and Methodology

This study employed a systematic review methodology to assess the impact of public procurement reforms on value for money and open access. The process began with defining key policy interventions, categorizing them into those that target specific phases of the procurement process (such as e-procurement or framework agreements) and those with broader implications for the entire system. A structured search strategy was then implemented, involving keyword-based searches in academic and policy databases, focusing on terms like "e-procurement," "value for money," and "impact." In addition to academic publications, expert consultations and widely cited policy documents were incorporated to ensure a comprehensive evaluation.

Following the search, the studies were screened for relevance and methodological rigor. Studies utilizing high-quality empirical methods, including randomized controlled trials (RCTs), natural experiments, and large-N observational studies, were prioritized. Large-N studies, particularly those analyzing extensive datasets, were preferred for their reliability in generating robust results. Observational studies were also included where relevant, though they were considered less reliable for establishing causality.

To ensure a balanced analysis, the review included studies from both developed and developing countries, thus providing a broad geographical and contextual perspective. Finally, the data from the selected studies were synthesized, focusing on the impacts of interventions in terms of cost savings, efficiency, and transparency. The systematic review approach allowed for the identification of existing gaps in the literature and suggested areas where further research is needed.

Results and Discussion

The systematic review of public procurement reforms revealed key findings, particularly in the areas of e-procurement systems and framework agreements. E-procurement tools, such as e-notification and e-auction, were shown to increase competition by attracting a larger number of bidders, including non-local participants. This heightened competition resulted in significant price reductions, ranging from 5% to 17%. However, the success of these tools varied based on the administrative and technological capacity of the implementing country. In regions where staff lacked adequate training or technological infrastructure, the benefits of e-procurement were significantly limited. Additionally, while individual e-procurement tools demonstrated positive outcomes, there is a notable lack of research on the synergistic effects of combining tools like e-invoicing, e-payment, and e-contract monitoring.

Framework agreements, which involve long-term agreements with suppliers based on upfront negotiations, provided substantial cost savings for governments. Price reductions ranged between 34% and 78%, particularly for standardized goods such as office supplies and electricity. Despite these savings, framework agreements were found to be inflexible, posing challenges when market demand fluctuates. This inflexibility can create risks for suppliers, as they face uncertainty regarding quantities and delivery times.



Source: <https://kissflow.com/hubfs/procurement-process-stages.webp>

A significant gap in the literature was identified regarding the impact of these procurement reforms in developing economies. While reforms like e-procurement have been well-studied in developed countries, little is known about their long-term effectiveness in less mature economies where institutional capacity, corruption, and resource constraints are greater. Furthermore, the review highlighted that the contract execution phase, a critical point where mismanagement often occurs, is underexplored in current studies. While e-procurement tools have been effective in improving the bidding and award stages, their potential to enhance contract execution remains largely untested.

The findings of this review suggest the need for further empirical studies, particularly in developing countries, to better understand how procurement reforms can be optimized for environments with lower administrative capacity and higher corruption risks. Future research should also focus on exploring the combined impact of various e-procurement tools, especially during the contract execution phase, where inefficiencies tend to arise. In terms of theoretical implications, there is a need for a deeper analysis on how digital tools can transform procurement workflows while balancing transparency and flexibility. Additionally, more comprehensive frameworks should be developed to evaluate the long-term impact of procurement reforms, particularly in less developed economies where challenges differ significantly from those in more established systems.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while public procurement reforms have shown promise in increasing efficiency and reducing costs, the complexities of implementing these reforms in diverse contexts highlight the need for continued research and tailored solutions. Addressing the gaps in the current literature will be crucial for ensuring that procurement systems in both developed and developing countries can fully realize the potential benefits of these reforms.

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