

Methodology for Open Contracting Scoping Studies

October 2016

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Open contracting is an approach to improving public procurement through three core elements: (1) disclosure of open data, documents and information about the planning, procurement, and management of public contracts, (2) participation and use of contracting data by state and non-state actors, and (3) accountability and redress by governments agencies or contractors acting on the feedback that they receive from civil society and companies.

Publishing and using structured and standardized information about public contracting can help stakeholders to:

- Deliver better value for money for citizens,
- Create fairer competition and a level playing field for business, especially smaller firms,
- Drive demand for higher-quality goods, works, and services for citizens,
- Prevent or combat fraud and corruption, and
- Promote smarter analysis and better solutions for public problems.

Public access to open contracting data can build trust between government and citizens, and help to ensure that the trillions of dollars spent by governments annually results in better services, goods, and infrastructure projects.

Introduction to the open contracting scoping study methodology

A scoping study or assessment aims to gauge the state of openness of public procurement processes in a certain country, understand the key capacities and interests of key procurement actors, and identify opportunities for procurement reform and the adoption of open contracting principles. As such, this methodology seeks to:

- Document current levels of openness in public contracting in targeted polities;
- Identify and assess existing systems and data sources (including non-public) within government for collecting, analyzing, and sharing procurement data;
- Map key stakeholders and their capacities and enthusiasm for advancing open contracting; and,
- Provide recommendations on realistic targets and use cases for open contracting moving forward.

The methodology is composed of 7 sections, each of which is accompanied by an [Interview Guide](#) containing pertinent questions related to each section (the [annexes](#) contain tools that will assist researchers in data collection and require completion). These sections cover a range of issues that would provide insight into the potential for implementing open contracting intervention in a given polity. They include:

- 1) Institutional arrangement: the structure of the political institutions as they related to the procurement process;
- 2) Legal framework: the structure of laws around procurement and disclosure of information;

- 3) Policy context: the view of the government on information disclosure and open contracting;
- 4) Technical assessment: the procurement management systems, data collected during the procurement process and quality of that data;
- 5) User engagement: efforts and initiatives by the government and other stakeholders to engage with procurement data, including through monitoring or analysis, both in the present and past;
- 6) Stakeholder Identification: with subsections related to the government, civil society/media, private sector actors shaping the procurement landscape, their technical capacities, use cases and opportunities for collaboration;
- 7) Broader Public Financial Management Environment: the systems in place to manage public budgets and expenditures, the data collected and data disclosure.

The Methodology is designed to facilitate gathering of data using various qualitative and quantitative research methods, including: interviews (using the interview guide), review of law/regulation/policy documents, website reviews, and data analysis.

Methodology Contents

This methodology aims to guide researchers in their data collection and analysis of country procurement processes. It contains sections on the following:

- Understanding public procurement and public procurement terminology;
- Methodology design;
- Data collection & analysis;
- Country report structure;
- Description of analysis sections.

UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT & TERMINOLOGY

The term “public procurement” refers to the process through which public entities (governments, government agencies, sub-national governments, etc.) purchase goods and services. There are five phases in the procurement process:

1. **Planning:** Prior to seeking a supplier to provide a specific good or service, governments undertake a planning process to determine the goods or services needed. Planning includes drafting procurement plans, and may also include the conduct of various assessments (public needs, environmental, social impact, etc.) and outreach efforts (public hearings, site visits, etc.) aimed at understanding the nature of the intervention required.
2. **Tender:** The second phase of procurement is the issuance of a tender, often referred to as an invitation to bid (ITB). Governments are often required by law to publicize ITBs to ensure that potential tenderers, or bidders, have the opportunity to bid. While there are many different types of tender process (open, limited competitive, reverse-auction, etc.), the tender period is of fixed length. At the end of the tender phase is an evaluation period during which the procuring entity select a winning tenderer.
3. **Award:** Once a bidder has been selected, the procuring entity notifies the winning tenderer, now called the “supplier.” The procuring entity also notifies the losing tenderers that they have not been selected.
4. **Contract:** Once a supplier has been selected, the supplier and procuring entity sign a contract. Sometimes there is an opportunity for negotiation on the final goods and services to be provided and contract amount.
5. **Implementation:** Once a contract has been finalized, the implementation process begins. Depending on the size and scope of the contract, the supplier must oftentimes meet set milestones in order to receive payments, which are dispersed throughout the implementation period. At the end of implementation, an evaluation of the contracting period should take place.

While each legitimate contracting process enters into all 5 phases at some point in time, the phases may take on distinctive appearances depending on the country, the procuring entity, the contracting method, and multiple other factors. A partial consequence of the distinctiveness of procurement processes is the proliferation of the lexicon used in describing them. Even when describing the same process or actor, the terminology used may differ. For instance, a “supplier” may also be referred to as a “contractor” or a “tenderer” (even if the term “tenderer” may also refer to the entity that has issued the tender).

In discussing the procurement process, we request that all researchers adopt the terminology used in the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS), available [here](#). An annex with a description of each OCDS field has been provided.

METHODOLOGY DESIGN

The OC assessment methodology contains 7 sections and the [Interview Guide](#) includes more than 100 questions. Due to its size, researchers will be unable to ask all the questions to each participant. Rather, we anticipate that each participant will be able to respond to 2 or 3 sections of the methodology at most. In order to ensure that each section receives sufficient input, we have provided a list below indicating 1) a suggested number of responses that should be obtained to each section of the methodology, and 2) the profiles that researchers should target in gaining responses to each section. **Prior to undertaking any interviews, we recommend creating a list of potential target interviewees (see an example: [here](#)) along with the sections to which each interviewee should respond.** This will help ensure that researchers receive sufficient feedback for each section of the methodology from individuals with the appropriate profiles.

Section	No. of Interviews	Primary Target Groups
1. Institutional Arrangement	5+	Nat'l & sub-nat'l procurement agency staff (heads of services), other gov't agency staff (procurement policy board, key line ministries), legal professionals, CSO staff
2. Legal Framework	5+	Nat'l & sub-nat'l procurement agency staff (heads of services, technical staff), line ministry staff, legal professionals/procurement analysts
3. Policy Context	5+	Nat'l & sub-nat'l procurement agency staff (heads of services, agency communications officers), CSO leaders
4. Technical Assessment	7+	Data owners, ICT technical staff (nat'l & sub-nat'l), Data users (CSO technical staff, infomediaries)
5. User Engagement	10+	CSO staff, infomediaries, open data advocates
6a. Stakeholder Identification: Government	3+	Procurement analysts, CSO leaders
6b. Civil society/Networks Media	3+	Nat'l & sub-nat'l procurement agency policy staff
6c. Donors/International Orgs	3+	CSO staff, int'l org staff, donor staff
6d. Private sector	6+	Commerce ministry officials, chambers of commerce

7. Public Finance Management	3+	Ministry of Finance officials, CSO budget groups
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Because we will be requesting to review official government contracting data, we also recommend prioritizing meetings with data holders, hosting these meetings at the beginning of the research. In some instances, data holders may ask that we provide official letters requesting access to data, or they may refer the request to other individuals. In order to ensure timely access to this information, requests for data should be made in the early stages of the research period.

The final country reports, covered below, will contain writeups of findings related to each section of the methodology. Additionally, researchers are asked to provide an executive summary containing brief context and the essential findings of each section, and an overview of the country context. Additional information about all of the sections and expectations for the final report can be found below in *Country Report Structure*.

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

Teams are suggested to conduct interviews using the [Interview Guide](#) that accompanies this methodology. They are also suggested to use the forms provided in the [annexes](#) in order to collect relevant data.

In addition to gaining knowledge through interviews with key stakeholders, researchers are suggested to:

- Review the country's legal framework for public procurement;
- Review government websites containing contracting information, noting the types of information that are made available, their formats, and other issues related to data quality. Annex 2 is particularly useful for documenting this information;
- Analyze websites of civil society and private sector initiatives related to public procurement.
- Request, gather, and analyze contracting data that may *not* be currently public, with particular aim to identify possibilities and barriers to implementing the open contracting data standard (OCDS).

Notes on how to cite interviewees, websites and other resources are provided in the section that follows.

Importantly, research teams are encouraged to think outside the box. The methodology and interview guide have been devised to assist researchers to gain an accurate perspective on the nature and quality of the procurement process under scrutiny. However, researchers should use their own discretion while conducting data gathering and analysis, and consider lines of inquiry that go beyond the interview guide. For instance, if there is valuable data relevant to the contracting process on a government website (e.g. a registry of businesses), research teams should be sure to catalogue this information, whether or not it is specifically mentioned in the interview guide or annexes.

In suggesting steps forward on procurement reform, researchers should be sure to provide **discrete and actionable recommendations**, rather than broad guidance. Recommendations should be levied with a specific target audience in mind. For instance, while freedom of information laws are a valuable tool in efforts to increase access to procurement information, the recommendation to adopt such a law - although obvious in a context where such FOI is unavailable - may not be helpful to the report's target audiences. As a general rule, recommendations should be relevant and actionable by the institution or organization for which they are intended.

COUNTRY REPORT STRUCTURE

Each country report produced using the methodology should use the same format and structure. The structure includes an Executive Summary, a Recommendations Section, an assessment of the general country context, and assessments of each section included in the methodology. An additional document outfitted with appropriate formatting will be provided to ensure that all reports possess the same look and feel. The content of the reports should include the following:

1. **Executive Summary & Key Recommendations** - 3 pages maximum

This section summarizes the research report. Consequently, it is commonplace to write this section last. Readers of this section should have a strong sense of the report's findings without having to read the entirety of the report. This section should include the following:

1. A ½-¾ page summary of country overview and general assessment of country status with respect to open contracting.
2. 2-3 bullet points per report section (2.5 page maximum) capturing the opportunities and challenges to implementing open contracting reforms. Each bullet point may summarize the problem identified and the proposed resolution(s).

2. **Overview of the General Country Context** - 1-2 pages maximum

This section should describe the general country context and political institutions, focusing on issues that may affect the procurement process and contracting environment. While drafting this section of the report, authors should ask themselves whether or not all information shared is directly relevant to or potentially influential of a government's willingness to implement open contracting. Additional information on the contents of this section is provided below.

3. **Analysis Sections** - 3 pages per section (or subsection) **maximum** (including recommendations¹)

Each of the 7 analysis sections should aim to describe the challenges and opportunities to implementing open contracting based on the interview questions. At the end of each analysis section, authors should provide a list of recommendations, that outline the challenge identified and the suggested recommendation. Authors should aim for clarity in their writing, rather than for fluency, and should feel encouraged to use bullet points and tables when useful. For instance, a table may aid readers to understand which information categories are made publicly available and in which formats. Suggested tables, pulled from existing OCP resources, are included in the report outline.

4. **Annexes**

Researchers should complete the [annexes](#) provided along with this methodology and append them to the report. They should also provide a list of interviews conducted, noting the name of the interviewee, the interviewee's position and organizational affiliation, and date. Websites, laws and reports should also be documented using [MLA format](#).

¹ Each analysis section should be no more than 3 pages long, although the recommendations may spill over into a 4th page. The stakeholder mapping may be 3 pages per subsection.

DESCRIPTION OF ANALYSIS SECTIONS

Overview of the General Country Context

The General Country Context analysis aims to provide critical context for the discussion of open contracting within a given polity. This analysis, based on desk research and additional information gleaned through interviews, may also draw on - but not be limited to - the following discussion topics and information sources.

Data Gathering: Desk research, with support from interviews.

- Status of the political system, including recent political development. This can include a discussion of the government's trajectory with respect to core values associated with open contracting (transparency, accountability and respect for other democratic principles), using rankings on international indices (Open Data Barometer, Corruption Perceptions Index, Open Data Index, Freedom House Index, Global Right to Information Rating, etc.) and other supporting evidence,
- Potential influence of electoral politics on the contracting process, commitments to good governance or debate around procurement issues (or corruption in public market);
- High-profile discussions in the media about contracting-related issues, including high-level corruption cases;
- Participation of the polity in relevant international institutions or initiatives (e.g. Open Government Partnership, UN Convention Against Corruption, U.S.-Africa Partnership on Illicit Finance, etc.);

The key consideration for this section is to include only information that is directly relevant to the open contracting environment, rather than a lengthy overview of basic economic and social indicators.

1. Institutional Arrangement

By analyzing the arrangement and functioning of the government's procurement institutions, we hope to better understand the decision-making processes that lead to procurement outcomes and the opportunities available to conduct open contracting activities. Ultimately, this analysis aims to understand the institutional factors that may hinder or enable open contracting reform efforts.

Data gathering: Review of relevant laws and regulations, government websites and interviews in conjunction with the questions in section 1 of the Interview Guide. We recommend conducting 5 interviews on this subject.

Key Issues to Explore:

- Who are the main government players with respect to public procurement?
- Is the system centralized or decentralized?
- Who rules the decision-making processes with respect to procurement & contract management and who should be targeted by open contracting advocates for advocacy initiatives?
- The existence of a centralized agency with sufficient legal and political weight, and competency to lead on open contracting issues. The existence of an agency with demonstrated potential to lead on matters of open contracting.
- There is a demonstrated track-record of inter-agency mechanisms coordinating open contracting related processes.
- The ICT capacity of key procurement agencies and understanding of open data by key civil servants who are/would be tasked with implementing open contracting reforms (or to effectively oversee an outsourced initiative to a local or international vendor).
- The existence of active support contract(s) for the maintenance and extension of existing platform(s) for collecting, analyzing, and sharing procurement data; the extent to which vendor(s) have the necessary skills to extend functionality (e.g. adding bulk export or API endpoints, creating analytics, etc.).
- How sub-national government entities report procurement data and whether or not they report through the same channels as central agencies.

2. Legal Framework for Procurement

The objective of the legal framework analysis is to understand the legal requirements for the contracting process and how legislation may encourage or prevent contracting reform and the adoption of open contracting principles. The central issue that this section seeks to unpack is: Is the legal framework conducive to open contracting? To assess this issue, researchers will need to determine whether or not the legal framework allows/requires contracting data to be legally “open” (including publicly shareable and mixable, for free), and whether or not procurement agencies must comply with requirements to proactively disclose procurement data. In the case that procurement data is subject to government copyright or fees, or disclosure requirements fail to require contracting data to be disclosed, are there opportunities under law to encourage greater openness? Which legal requirements must be revised to enable open contracting?

Data gathering: Please use section 2 of the Interview Guide along with analysis of legal documents and second-hand research. We recommend conducting 5 interviews on this subject.

Key Issues to Explore:

- Identifying laws and regulations governing procurement and the right of citizens to access information related to the 5 stages of the procurement process (planning, tender, award, contract, and implementation).
- The various procurement methods enabled under law (competitive, sole-source, auction, etc.) and information about the frequency of their use and incentives for procurement agency officials to use one (or more) over others.
- Differentiation between procurement methods for domestic and international procurement opportunities.
- The extent to which laws and regulations governing public procurement facilitate access by the public and clearly outline the process for the planning, procurement, and implementation of public contracts, including requirements related to disclosure of information and participation of stakeholders.
- Whether or not the law requires publication of essential information: including Procurement Plans, Tender Notices, Bidding Documents, Award Notices (including Winner, Price, Reasons and including Non-Competitively Awarded Contracts), Full Contracts including Technical Specifications, Implementation Details.
- Laws and regulations enabling or preventing citizen participation, in terms of consultation, observation, and monitoring, in the planning, procurement or implementation of public contracts.
- Related laws and legislation providing relevant information (preference for open formats) that could strengthen anti-corruption efforts, such as: business registries, asset declarations of public officials, blacklists of companies.
- Legal exceptions to normal procurement processes and transparency requirements, such as related to defense or oil.

3. Policy Context Analysis

The policy context analysis aims to understand the trajectory of government policies vis-a-vis open contracting. This analysis requires researchers to consider the context of open and transparent government, as well as the policy framework surrounding the procurement process. As such, the researchers will need to weigh statements by government officials voicing support for openness and transparency, and the extent to which these overtures are being pursued in practice. This analysis should provide an indication of the extent to which the government is supportive - in word and deed - of the open contracting agenda and identify policies that promote or inhibit its adoption.

Data gathering: Review of strategy and regulation documentation, government websites and press reports related. Please refer to section 3 of the Interview Guide for relevant interview questions. We recommend conducting 5 interviews on this subject.

Key Issues to Explore:

- Government pledges (as elaborated in strategic plans, international agreements, etc.) related to contracting, anti-corruption, transparency and open data.
- Public expressions of support for open contracting or open government data by key political leaders (prime minister/minister/president) as established via public statements found in the media, websites, interview records, etc. Public expressions of support for open contracting or open government data by key data owning agencies (e.g. Ministry of Finance, Office of the Public Procurement etc.).
- Recent track record of government in adopting the principles of ‘openness’ and good governance to other areas of government, including: combatting corruption, applying freedom of information laws, embarking on open data initiatives, etc. Conversely, efforts by government to reduce press freedom or the rights of speech and assembly may demonstrate a lack of real interest in open contracting.
- Key data-owning agencies have established policies for release of the information related to the: a. planning; b. procurement and c. implementation of all types of public contracts.
- Evidence of compliance with these policies, or the existence of an implementation roadmap.
- The existence of policies related to collection and validation of data at each stage, whether these policies relate to existing mechanisms (platforms and processes), and where responsibilities lies for collecting data, reporting and disclosure (with a single agency or with each procuring entity).
- The Government or agencies concerned have a track record of releasing information related to the: a. planning; b. procurement and c. implementation of all types of public contracts (e.g. government discloses information related to public contract, but not necessarily regularly, in full and systematically)

4. Technical Assessment

The technical assessment focuses on two key issues: 1) the technical systems that are used to manage

the procurement process, and 2) the characteristics of the data that the government collects through this process. Through assessing the systems in place, we hope to better understand the types of interventions that could aid the government in moving towards open contracting. For instance, if the government is operating an e-procurement system, the technical challenges to data collection differ from those faced by a government conducting procurement through paper-based systems.

Open contracting is, in essence, about the public release of contracting data in conformity with the definition of ‘[open](#).’ This means that data must be publicly available in a machine-readable format that is free, shareable and mixable by the public. In addition to gauging the “openness” of contracting data, the assessment seeks to understand the quality of the data, including its accuracy, timeliness and completeness. A key issue related to contracting data is whether or not the data is linked across the phases of the contracting process using stable identifiers, the absence of which can prevent the linkage of a tender with a contract. It is important to note that this assessment should include both public and non-public data, in order to determine the potential for opening contracting data that may currently be restricted.

Data Gathering: Review of public procurement website(s) and of internal government procurement data. For interview questions, please refer to section 4 of the Interview Guide. We recommend conducting 7 interviews on this subject. To obtain internal government procurement data, we suggest holding meetings with data holders at the beginning of the research phase. Note that this may require letters to the concerned authorities in support of researchers’ requests.

Key Issues to Explore:

Systems:

- Identification of all systems used in data collection, analysis, and sharing. This should result ideally in a diagram of existing systems and data flows.
- The types of systems in use for conducting procurement and contract management, including the proportion of procurement that is being conducted through electronic systems vs “offline” (e.g. procurement newsletters) systems. Whether or not information is being collected through transactional (e.g. e-procurement) systems or through manual reporting.
- Do existing system(s) provide functionality for bulk data export (e.g. to csv, xls(x) formats)? Are systems developed using a service-oriented architecture (e.g. do API endpoints for accessing data programmatically exist)?
- It is extremely valuable to understand the scope of the information that is being collected, along with the scope of the information that is being publicly exposed. This includes information from all 5 stages of the procurement process. The data fields that are available, along with the quality of the data contained therein, will have a strong impact on the utility of that data for use later on.
- The existence of unique identifiers throughout the contracting process (i.e. a single procurement plan should be connected to a tender, award, contract and implementation process via a single identifier), as well as the use of unique identifiers for such things as company identification and item identification.
- Whether related documents are also made available online at this stage;
- Whether the system maintains a revision history of any changes. If changes to the data would overwrite past data, answer No. If it is theoretically possible to extract past versions of

information from the system, answer Yes.

- Whether there are restrictions on access to data and documents at this stage. This might include restrictions due to registration requirements, or a requirement to pay for access to an API or to bid documents.

Data:

- The formats in which data is being collected, stored, and published, in particular, whether or not contracting data is being published online in an open and structured machine-readable format. How much is available as structured data (i.e. individual fields, as opposed to free-text);
- The extent to which public and internal data sets are timely, complete and accurate. Timeliness refers to whether or not data users (within the government, in private companies, or among the general public) are able to access the data within a timeframe that enables them to influence the process (by conducting monitoring activities, responding to the request for proposals, or however they choose to engage). Completeness refers to whether or not the government is collecting all useful information about the procurement process, whether or not all essential information is being provided to the public, and whether the information is limited in critical ways (e.g. data only from recent years or related to specific contracting methods are available). Accuracy refers to the existence of errors in the data set.
- Use of externally meaningful identifiers and classifications and whether or not they use government-specified classifications (e.g. item classifications, agency IDs). Are procurement IDs linked to IFMIS or other government public financial management (PFM) systems?
- Comparison of data (both published and non-public) with OCDS to determine the presence of key data elements.

5. User Engagement

The user engagement analysis aims highlight government efforts to engage citizens in the procurement process. The [International Association for Public Participation's Spectrum of Public Participation](#) highlights 5 different levels of public engagement. By understanding the opportunities for user engagement that governments are creating, we can gain a better sense of their dedication to fostering genuine participation. User engagement may include nurturing use of an e-procurement portal by private companies or use of contracting data by citizens or other stakeholders. It may also refer to any number of activities, including off-line events that seek to introduce the public to the procurement process and online tools, such as commenting features or complaint systems.

Data gathering: Review of websites and interviews using section 5 of the Interview Guide. We recommend conducting 5 interviews on this subject.

Key Issues to Explore:

- There is a clear guidance or program being implemented by procuring entities and oversight authorities to engage with citizens and the private sector in contracting related matters.
- There is evidence of disclosed information being used by the government, private sector, and civil society for policy making, business development, and advocacy.
- There are feedback/redress mechanisms in place for matters related to public contracting.
- There are existing methods, requirements, and incentives for government use of data on public contracting (e.g. annual procurement reviews, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, or other targets), and evidence of compliance with these requirements.

Use Cases

- Various groups have different needs with respect to data use. **Understanding how these groups would use procurement data if readily available remains an open question** that would have a potentially **critical impact** on the priorities of government and citizens with respect to data release and presentation. One of the ways that this study can provide value to our collective understanding of contracting processes is by **pinpointing use cases** and revealing the real needs of various entities.

Below please find a non-exclusive list of potential use cases for each of the groups that would require further unpacking.

List of key Government use cases for procurement data:

- Monitoring and evaluation of procurement efficiency, competitiveness, fairness, and disclosure
- Detection of fraud or collusion
- Engagement of public in procurement process/increased transparency
- Identification of key suppliers and monitoring quality of service delivery
- Increased participation of target supplier groups (e.g. SMEs, International Bidding)
- Systems modernization and meeting thresholds of international trade agreements/other international norms
- Integration of procurement data in broader PFM environment

List of key use cases for CSOs/networks/infomediaries/media:

- Detection of fraud or collusion
- Monitoring of costs and value for money
- Monitoring of geographic and sectoral allocation of procurement activities
- Identification of key suppliers and monitoring quality of service delivery
- Advocacy for enhanced rights or access to information

List of key use cases for international organizations/donor agencies:

- Comparative studies of openness in procurement, integrity system/good governance analyses/anti-corruption modeling.
- Investor intelligence analyses to aid business to target investment
- Supporting government reform efforts on procurement, civil society advocacy, infomediary and media efforts to address corruption

List of key use cases for private sector use cases

- Research on government thematic priorities and purchasing patterns
- Increased access to public contracting opportunities
- Monitoring of fairness in procurement process
- Detection of fraud or collusion in procurement process
- Identification of potential partner organizations
- Identification of priority procuring entities for bidding

6. Stakeholder Identification

This section aims to **identify key stakeholders** with respect to public contracting. While all citizens are stakeholders in public procurement, this section seeks to **describe organized stakeholders** and better **understand how they use - or desire to use - contracting information**. This section focuses on four key groups:

1. **Government stakeholders:** To include key individuals/agencies/bureaucracies/parties that are for/neutral/against procurement reform. A key difference between this section and previous sections (institutional arrangement, policy context, etc.) that identify government decision-makers is the importance here of identifying elements that may be neutral to or against procurement reform. Any system possesses institutional stakeholders in favor of the status quo. This section provides an opportunity to describe these interest groups.
2. **Civil society/Networks/Media:** To include all organized actors within the civil society and media sector with a specific interest in procurement data.
3. **International organizations/Donor agencies:** This includes international entities, such as the World Bank, that conduct research on procurement related issues or support contracting reform initiatives.
4. **Private Sector:** To include all private sector engagement on procurement, including subscription services for businesses to better target government contracts. Organized groups representing the private sector, including chambers of commerce and trade organizations, should be included in the civil society section.

Data gathering: Interviews with stakeholders and review of news articles and contracting materials produced by stakeholder groups. We recommend conducting 3 interviews on this subject.

Key Issues to Explore:

In analyzing these groups, the researchers are asked to focus on the following core issues:

- The potential for collaboration between the various actors. In many countries, groups with an interest in open contracting are often fractured by traditional views on the interests or roles of other groups. For instance, government may view civil society as a competitive force to be blocked, rather than an ally to be engaged. Researchers should aim to assess how the various actors understand and perceive one another, and identify opportunities for building bridges among them based on shared interests.
- Resources and technical capacity. The extent to which various actors may be able to harness the financial resources and technical capacity to move towards open contracting is a key issue. If government ICT teams are not capable of developing the appropriate software systems, they will need to be able to obtain sufficient resources and managerial capability to implement tools developed by external firms. Even if contracting data is provided in an open format, researchers should aim to understand which actors have the capacity to use technology to process this data and publish it in publicly consumable pieces.

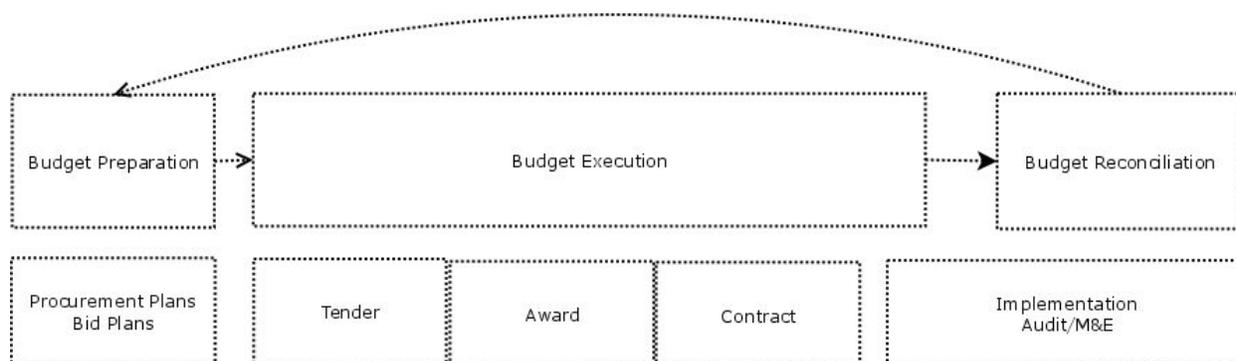
7. Broader Public Financial Management Environment

How governments procure goods and services is interlinked with the broader public financial management environment. How governments track the budgeting process and evaluate government expenses is integral to their use and understanding of procurement data, as well as the availability of high quality spending data to the public. While a deep analysis of public finance management is beyond the scope of this study, having a basic understanding of the nature of the public financial management system can help provide valuable context to the country studies, and have dramatic impacts on the types of interventions needed to meet open contracting standards.

Data gathering: Interviews with key government stakeholders. We recommend conducting 3 interviews on this subject.

Key Issues to Explore:

- The systems in use for budget planning, approval and execution, as well as the main actors involved in making decisions related to these processes.
- Overview of the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) used by the government, including general legal framework, the types of data that are captured and the key functions of the IFMIS.
- The types of reports and outputs generated by the IFMIS.
- The information disclosed publicly and to audit authorities by the IFMIS.
- Use of the IFMIS on local and provincial levels of government; how local governments plan, execute and report on budgets.
- Budget Chart of Accounts structure² and classifications



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

² See <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B5H0H7Hn2HOdVU11ZVVfMEVZY0E> for background on CoA

The Open Contracting Assessment methodology is a living document, which was originally developed by the [World Bank](#) and [GIZ](#) in 2014. [The Open Contracting Partnership](#) has since collaborated with both [Hivos](#) and [Development Gateway](#) to improve and adapt the methodology based on our learnings. The current version of this methodology was produced by OCP and Development Gateway in October 2016.

As this methodology is a living document, the Open Contracting Partnership will continue to iterate and improve on it with our partners. We would love to hear about it if you use this methodology in your country! Please get in touch with us if you have any recommendations for improvement, or to share your findings or reports with us. You can write to us at engage@open-contracting.org.

Published examples of past assessment reports can be found [here](#).