Public Procurement Review Software (goPRS)
A Corruption Prevention Tool for Public Procurement Regulatory Authorities

TACKLING CORRUPTION AT ITS SOURCE
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The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has successfully developed advanced solutions to help combat and fight the menace of corruption at the Information Technology level. For this particular case of Public Procurement, UNODC has designed goPRS to help unify international and national efforts to combat public procurement corruption. goPRS has also been developed in order to promote harmonization of international standards of public procurement and considers the provisions of the UNCITRAL Model Law, the Agreement on Government Procurement of the World Trade Organization (WTO), European Union directives (on government procurement and appeals procedures), the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the World Bank guidelines for procurement and consultants and other similar documents from international financial institutions.

International Response to Public Procurement Corruption

Efforts have also been made by several international organizations to help countries in updating, modernizing or elaborating instruments relating to public procurement. The aim is to ensure efficient, economic, transparent and fair procurement practices.

These efforts are as follows:

1. Model laws on procurement of goods, construction and services of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL);
2. The Plurilateral Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) of the World Trade Organization (WTO);
3. Procurement Procedures under the World Bank;
4. The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) initiated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC);
5. European Union Directives on Public Procurement;
6. Regional Arrangements, such as:
   b. Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Transparency Standards on Government Procurement
   c. The Integrity and Anti-Corruption Initiatives of the African Development Bank

Various international organizations recognize that a fully-integrated IT procurement review system will involve a lengthy reform program, most effectively implemented through a staged approach with different considerations for each stage in the procurement process.

A longer-term, but equally important potential benefit of IT is that it allows a more strategic approach to procurement, harnessing the data that IT can generate to allow the pursuit of goals and performance to be guided by information and analyses rather than by procedures alone. Benefits through internal transparency, integrity support and efficiency savings can be achieved. Internal transparency and traceability - meaning better records of each procurement process - gives the ability to monitor, evaluate and improve not only individual procurement procedures but overall system performance and trends.

“Each State Party shall, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system, take the necessary steps to establish appropriate systems of procurement, based on transparency, competition and objective criteria in decision-making, that are effective, inter alia, in preventing corruption.”

UNCAC, Article 9,
Public procurement and management of public finances
goPRS Suite of Software

goPRS is a suite of software packages comprising of goPRS Enterprise, goPRS Web, goPRS Intelligence, goPRS Learn, and goPRS eGP. goPRS enables centralized regulatory authorities to oversee and monitor procurement solicitations and contract awards carried out by decentralized ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) to ensure that government expenditures are within approved budget limits as planned and in accordance with the due process requirements of law. Through the early detection of irregularities and suspicious patterns or behaviors, goPRS assists regulatory bodies in the prevention and detection of public procurement corruption.

goPRS is designed specifically to:

- improve public procurement regulatory authorities internal review and monitoring of the procurement approval process;
- reduce opportunities for procurement fraud and corruption by decreasing human interaction and personal contacts between procurement staff and regulatory and oversight officials;
- improve regulatory bodies oversight on budget appropriations, expenditures, and projects completion;
- manage and publish procurement-related information (vendors database, prices lists, etc.) to assist bidders in preparing their best offers and governments in assessing them to obtain best value for money and savings which can be applied to other government needs.

goPRS Enterprise

goPRS Enterprise is designed for government systems that require mandatory prior review and approval of all contracts above a certain threshold by a centralized oversight authority.

Many countries have coupled decentralization of the procurement function with the creation of central authorities with oversight, monitoring, prevention and detection of corruption responsibilities. goPRS Enterprise is used by central authorities.

goPRS Enterprise enhances the ability of an oversight authority to monitor individual procurements and review specific contract awards which fall above prior review thresholds. goPRS Enterprise increases the efficiency of the
procurement process in terms of both time and money and ensures that each procurement action follows the principles of accountability, fairness, transparency, and equality. goPRS Enterprise integrates various useful tools. For example, goPRS Enterprise contains a commodity pricing register that creates a nationwide online catalogue with standard pricing. Procurement officials compare the catalogue prices against the prices submitted by bidders to determine their fairness and reasonableness. Through goPRS Enterprise, service providers are registered and included in a vendor database which is available online to procurement officials conducting due diligence inspection of bidders. The commodity pricing catalogue, vendor database, procuring entities database, and projects database are integrated into goPRS Enterprise and feed into the statistical analysis to show levels of due process compliance of procuring entities.

goPRS Web is a request collection software that allows procuring entities to submit requests for approval to the regulatory authority to undertake a procurement action.

The procurement processing function is handled by goPRS Web. In many countries, decentralization of the procurement processing function has resulted in inconsistent procedures and applications of the law. goPRS Web ensures that files submitted to the regulatory authority for approval are complete and comply with legal requirements. Standardization increases the efficiency of the procurement process in both time and money and ensures that each procurement complies with the law and follows the UNCITRAL Model Law and the principles of accountability, fairness, transparency and equality of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

goPRS Intelligence is an evidence-based tool that collects and analyzes data to detect suspicious actions and patterns that indicate possible corruption.

Different from anecdotal-based method, goPRS Intelligence is not to simply record procurement data but rather to produce information for analysis, management and decision-making to obtain greater value for money and to deter fraud and corruption.
goPRS Learn is an online learning platform that supports the learning and training of officials of procuring entities and regulatory authorities.

goPRS Learn provides online education opportunities to procurement officials and employees. goPRS Learn includes web-based training through virtual classrooms with asynchronous feedback of participants. With this online learning environment, there is a shift from teacher-directed lessons to include discussions that emphasize student participation on public procurement processes. During online class discussions, students share ideas, debate concepts to acquire better understanding and greater ownership of academic materials, and present different solutions and theories which they can then develop or choose to discard over time.

The goPRS Learn platform can be used by training centers such as the International Law Institute (ILI), the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), universities and regional and national public procurement institutions.

goPRS eGP is an electronic government procurement system hosted by the regulatory authority and used by registered procuring entities and vendors.

Electronic government procurement (eGP) refers to the conduct of procurement through ICT. goPRS eGP increases the speed, transparency and accountability of procurement processes. It improves efficiency and promotes effectiveness from beginning to end of the procurement process.

eGP provides comprehensive up-to-date data on expenditures and activities to be used as the basis for informed business decisions. eGP automatically ensures compliance with procedural and substantive standards and provides a simultaneous ready-for-audit record of all purchasing.

goPRS eGP identifies deviations and patterns of activities that indicate risks of fraud and corruption and decreases opportunities for collusion by reducing the number of human contacts. At the same time, goPRS eGP is sufficiently flexible to allow healthy innovation by both suppliers and procuring entities within the restrictions of the law.

goPRS eGP provides access to all information required by law to be disclosed to the public and registered suppliers and contractors, as well as useful information on standards and procedures, current procurement processes undertaken by different government agencies, and lists of suppliers, contractors, and consultants registered with the regulatory agency.

eGP provides the means for wide spread introduction of standard bidding documents including standard forms of contracts to establish uniformity in the bidding process. goPRS eGP is an advertising space for government agencies for requests of proposals, invitations for bids and requests for quotations.

The potential benefits of eGP include 1) transparency, participation and competition; 2) enhancement of administrative efficiency (time and costs); 3) process efficiencies; 4) support of integrity and prevention of corruption; and 5) a more strategic approach to procurement.
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