



Investigating reasons for direct awarding in Colombia



Public Procurement Principle: **Access**



Procurement Stage: **Post-award**



Audience: **Policy makers**

Description

Colombia undertook a major public procurement reform in the early 2010s. Part of this effort was the creation of a dedicated public procurement authority that led the reforms in the following years. Part of the challenges was a very high number of direct awards (comparable to Kazakhstan's single source procurements), while the law identified open tenders as the standard method.

Colombia's measures to address this challenge were built on a rigorous analysis of the direct awards to identify the reasons behind the high number of direct awards. Quantitative analysis revealed that the direct awards were mostly to purchase defence-related items and to hire personnel.

Further investigations revealed systemic reasons for hiring personnel through the public procurement system: restrictive human resource policies made it impossible to hire additional civil servants, notwithstanding a great need.

While this insight certainly does not correspond to the norm across all countries, it highlights the importance of evidence-based policy making. Any effort to tackle the issue that disregarded HR policies would fail in really reducing the number of direct awards.

Source: OECD (2019), [Public Procurement in Kazakhstan: Reforming for Efficiency](#), OECD Publishing, Paris

