



Capacity

Purpose of the Checklist

- To guide and support public procurement practitioners in reviewing, developing and updating their procurement framework, according to the 12 principles of the Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement.
- To encourage self-assessment and providing a starting-point for implementing the Recommendation.
- To provide more detailed information and guidance for each of the 12 principles as well as actions that can be taken to improve the strategic use of public procurement.

Public Procurement
Principle: **Capacity**

Procurement Stage:
All phases

Audience: **Policy Maker,
Procuring Entity, Private
Sector, Civil Society**

Description

Capacity can be strengthened by following proposed steps below, while also improving other closely-linked principles (please refer to the box below). Suggestions and comments on the content and format of the Checklist can be sent to: public.procurement@oecd.org.

Main linkages between capacity and other principles of the Recommendation

- Integrity: More capable procurement officers are better able to comply with procedures and ensure that they are applied fairly and effectively to avoid corruption.
- Access: A trained public procurement workforce can ensure the delivery of clear and integrated tender documentation, standardised where possible.
- Balance: An adequate capacity of the procurement workforce can support secondary policy objectives.
- Efficiency: A procurement workforce with adequate capacity ensures an efficient and effective delivery of value for money.
- E-procurement: The public procurement workforce and potential bidders/suppliers need to know how to use e-procurement systems and tools.
- Evaluation: Designating specific evaluation units or teams to analyse public procurement information and monitor performance in the public procurement system boosts capacity.
- Risk management: Risk management strategies, related implementation plans and measures set up to deal with the identified risks need to be known and understood among the procurement workforce in order to be used.
- Accountability: Internal control and external controls need to be coordinated, sufficiently resourced and integrated to be effective.

(A) High professional standards for knowledge, practical implementation and integrity

Ensure that procurement officials meet high professional standards for knowledge, practical implementation and integrity by providing a dedicated and regularly updated set of tools, for example, sufficient staff in terms of numbers and skills, recognition of public procurement as a specific profession, certification and regular trainings, integrity standards for public procurement officials and the existence of a unit or team analysing public procurement information and monitoring the performance of the public procurement system.

A.1 Adherents should develop a public procurement capacity strategy and action plan. This could take following issues into account:

- Building a sustainable procurement workforce is a long-term effort. The strategy needs to tackle both immediate and long-term issues,
- The strategy should aim to improve individual capabilities as well as the institution's capacities in the area of public procurement,
- The strategy is a planning exercise. It involves the development of a step-by-step roadmap with prioritized objectives and expected outputs,
- Building a sustainable procurement workforce mobilises time and resources. The strategy should be complemented by an action plan for implementation, including a budget,
- The development of a procurement capacity strategy should be inclusive. All relevant stakeholders should be gathered, in the framework of a task force or a steering committee,
- The strategy needs to be well integrated with other measures aimed at developing the capacities of key actors involved in public procurement.

A.2 Adherents should develop a competency framework, job profiles and a certification system tailored to public procurement. This can include:

- Determining the specific functions, skills and competencies critical to achieving the agencies' missions and goals related to public procurement,
- Ensuring that the competencies cover legal knowledge (e.g. administrative and competition law, managing legal disputes), and professional, technical and personal effectiveness skills, e.g. negotiation, risk management, teamwork, communication, leadership and the management of people, project and large resources, as well as integrity and information technology,
- Developing job profiles which combine a statement about what is expected from a job with a view of what the job holder must bring in terms of skills, experience, behaviours and other attributes to do the job well,
- Ensuring that job profiles are defining threshold levels of knowledge and practice requirements,
- Developing and undertaking regular developments to refresh knowledge and build new skills to ensure that procurement officials meet high professional standards for knowledge.

A.3 Adherents should have a unit or team that covers the capacity development needs of the public procurement workforce. This team could be in charge of:

- Identifying current training needs and weaknesses of the public procurement workforce,
- Undertaking evaluations that cover bottlenecks, skills, knowledge, structures, ways of working of specific staff categories and in specific geographical locations,
- Developing guidelines for the procurement of training of civil servants, in particular procurement officials (see bullet C1),
- Developing a certification system for the public procurement workforce and overseeing the implementation by public procurement entities (see bullet A3),
- Developing and implementing specific training programmes for the public procurement workforce (see bullet A4).

A.4 Adherents should develop and implement public procurement training on a regular basis. In order to achieve this end, adherents could consider:

- Designing training curriculums that cover the specific needs of the public procurement entities and suppliers and that take into account the multi-disciplinary nature of the public procurement function,
- Implementing sufficient formal and on-the-job training programs,
- Improving accessibility to training opportunities by:
 - Advertising training opportunities and ensuring that training offers are reaching public procurement entities at national and sub-national level
 - Financing or co-financing training for procurement officials
 - Making use of learning methods such as e-learning, m-learning, blended-learning
- Certifying training institutions and trainers to ensure the quality of public procurement trainings,
- Adjusting the training program based on feedback from the public procurement entities.

A.5 Adherents should provide central advisory services or help desks to reply to questions, in particular by public procurement entities. These advisory services or help desks could:

- Giving advice or counselling on public procurement policy or rules for both public/private sector parties, suppliers and the general public,
- Maintaining a database or info-sharing system for providing relevant public procurement information,
- Providing good practices/benchmarks of public procurement,
- Granting access to networks of public procurement experts.

A.6 Adherents should ensure that public procurement entities meet high integrity standards from the procurement workforce to handle ethical dilemmas. In order to achieve this end, adherents could consider:

- Fostering the culture of integrity across the organisation,
- Providing guideline on required integrity standards in the form of a code of conduct,
- Raising awareness of the public procurement workforce on integrity standards and regulation of lobbying,
- Establishing clear segregation of duties to prevent conflict between public and private interests,
- Ensuring an appropriate degree of independence to prevent political interference.

(B) Attractive, competitive and merit-based career options for procurement officials

Provide attractive, competitive and merit-based career options for procurement officials, through the provision of clear means of advancement, protection from political interference in the procurement process and the promotion of national and international good practices in career development to enhance the performance of the procurement workforce.

B.1 Adherents should provide attractive career options for procurement officials. In order to achieve this end, adherents could consider:

- Recognising public procurement as a strategic function beyond its administrative function,
- Recognising public procurement as a specific function with procurement positions defined at different professional and hierarchical levels with job descriptions and the required qualifications and competencies specified,
- Create career paths for procurement officials which take into account possibilities for vertical and horizontal mobility (see bullet B2),
- Encouraging exchanges between different public institutions and between the public and private sectors to cross-fertilise talent and commercial know-how as long as there is adequate framework for preventing conflict of interest situations,
- Providing adequate salaries in the framework of a transparent pay system,
- Certification of the skills of the public procurement workforce, including on-the-job experience and continuous training.

B.2 Adherents should provide competitive and merit-based career options for procurement officials, through the provision of clear means of advancement and international good practices in career development to enhance the performance of the procurement workforce. In order to achieve this end, adherents could consider:

- Making sure that the specific competency framework and job profiles are used in the recruitment process and in the human resource management,
- Making sure that appointments and promotion systems are competitive and based on performance and/or certification,
- Undertaking performance evaluations of staff on a regular and consistent basis.

(C) Collaborative approaches with knowledge centres

Promote collaborative approaches with knowledge centres such as universities, think tanks or policy centres to improve skills and competences of the procurement workforce. The expertise and pedagogical experience of knowledge centres should be enlisted as a valuable means of expanding procurement knowledge and upholding a two-way channel between theory and practice, capable of boosting application of innovation to public procurement systems.

C.1 Adherents should improve capacity of the public procurement entities through collaborative approaches with knowledge centres such as universities (e.g. school of engineers, law schools or business schools), think tanks or policy centres. This can include:

- Developing and implementing training or certification programmes through the education programmes offered at the professional/specialised training institutions or universities that deliver initial or fundamental training,
- Conducting joint research and communicating on the results (on innovative approaches to public procurement for example),
- Hosting joint seminars and workshops on public procurement.