

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

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Abstract: *Public procurement represents one of the largest areas of government expenditure and is highly vulnerable to corruption. Despite the widespread introduction of anti-corruption policies, many countries continue to face significant obstacles in ensuring transparent and accountable procurement processes. This paper examines the core challenges in implementing anti-corruption measures in public procurement systems, analyzing institutional, legal, and technological barriers. The study also explores international best practices and provides recommendations to improve governance and minimize corruption risks.*

Keywords: *public procurement, corruption, anti-corruption measures, transparency, governance, accountability, institutional reform.*

INTRODUCTION

Public procurement accounts for a substantial portion of national budgets, making it a prime target for corrupt practices such as bribery, bid-rigging, kickbacks, and favoritism. Corruption in procurement not only leads to financial loss and inefficiency but also erodes public trust and hampers sustainable development.

Governments around the world have introduced numerous anti-corruption frameworks, including legislative reforms, digital procurement systems, and independent oversight mechanisms. However, the implementation of these measures often encounters systemic, political, and administrative challenges. This paper investigates these challenges and outlines strategic approaches to address them.

Methodology. This study employs a qualitative research design, drawing from:

- A review of academic literature and policy reports on public procurement and corruption;
- Comparative analysis of international case studies;
- Examination of global anti-corruption frameworks such as those by the OECD, UNODC, and Transparency International.

The goal is to identify common implementation bottlenecks and synthesize practical lessons for policymakers and practitioners.

Results and Discussion

1. Institutional Weaknesses

One of the most significant challenges is weak institutional capacity. In many countries, procurement agencies lack autonomy, face political interference, and

operate under inefficient bureaucratic structures. These conditions create opportunities for manipulation and undermine efforts to enforce compliance.

2. Legal and Regulatory Gaps

Even when anti-corruption laws exist, inconsistent enforcement, vague procurement guidelines, and loopholes in legislation diminish their effectiveness. In some contexts, legal protections for whistleblowers are insufficient, discouraging the reporting of corrupt practices.

3. Lack of Transparency and Accountability

Opaque procurement procedures—such as closed bidding processes and limited public access to procurement data—make it difficult to detect irregularities. Without transparency, civil society and media cannot perform oversight functions effectively.

4. Technological Barriers

Digital procurement systems (e-procurement) are a powerful tool against corruption, yet their implementation often faces resistance. High initial costs, lack of ICT infrastructure, and limited digital literacy among procurement officials contribute to underutilization of such tools.

5. Cultural and Political Resistance

In environments where corruption is systemic, anti-corruption initiatives are often seen as threats to entrenched interests. Resistance from within the system, coupled with a lack of political will, remains a major barrier to meaningful reform.

International Best Practices

- South Korea's KONEPS System: Offers a fully integrated e-procurement platform, enhancing transparency and reducing face-to-face interactions between buyers and suppliers.

- Ukraine's ProZorro: An award-winning open-source procurement system that allows public monitoring of procurement activities in real time.

- ChileCompra: Promotes SME participation and uses accessible technology to foster competition and transparency.

These examples demonstrate the importance of political commitment, stakeholder engagement, and digital innovation in combating procurement-related corruption.

Conclusion

While anti-corruption measures in public procurement have advanced in many countries, the implementation phase continues to be plagued by institutional, legal, technological, and political challenges. Addressing these issues requires a multi-pronged strategy involving:

- Strengthening institutional capacity and independence;
- Closing legal loopholes and enhancing enforcement mechanisms;
- Promoting transparency through open data initiatives;
- Investing in digital infrastructure and e-procurement;

- Cultivating a culture of integrity through ethics training and civic engagement.

Reforming public procurement is not only a legal obligation but also a strategic imperative for sustainable governance and economic development.

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