

Management from those in obanda (2012). the dimensions

[Business](#), [Accounting](#)



MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK.

The private sector wants more training for SMEs' on how to participate in public procurement and disposal activities. Procurement is about the private sector. We supply goods and services. But we do not understand what it takes to go through these processes? Do we know what it takes to win a bid? Not many of us understand these procedures (Badagawa Gideon cited by Rwothungeyo Billy 2015). Further, all activities undertaken by the Government require an efficient public procurement system that delivers quality goods, works and services in a timely manner and at an economical price. Value for money is key (Kiwauka Maria cited by Rwothungeyo Billy 2015).

To balance the provision of the needed training for SMEs and attainment of value for money in government procurement, we address dimensions within a supportive management framework that will achieve this dual objective. These dimensions are largely analytically derived from those in Obanda (2012). The dimensions are inextricably linked as articulated in the systems approach.

Professionalism A major scope for improving SMEs participation in public tenders is through increasing professionalism in procurement.

Professionalism can be defined as the status, methods, or standards within a career. Public procurement professionalism should be emphasized to enable SMEs access to public procurement contracts. Badagawa Gideon (2014) poses the following question: Why should it take so long to register property, start a business, connect electricity, secure a trade license, a

construction permit, pay taxes and move goods across borders? He then posits that the answer lies in the mindset of our civil servants.

Many of them have constituted themselves into another big barrier to investment and growth. The civil service must change their work culture. Hence with regard to the procurement process in procuring and disposal entities in Uganda, public procurement professionals need the requisite combination of skills and competencies to develop into a coordinated, well-equipped and informed profession. This entails keeping selection criteria proportionate, that SMEs who believe that the scope of a framework agreement precludes their involvement and that the bidding procedure is more complex and prolonged, are not deterred. Further, Public Procurement Officers should be able to make use of the possibility to conclude framework agreements with several economic operators and to organize mini-competitions for parties to the framework agreement as actual procurement needs arise.

Implementation A review of literature from the Procurement Innovation Group (2009) and Choi Jeong-Wook (2010) reveals that ensuring that payments are made on time is paramount. A provision to alleviate the financial burden of SMEs, by providing for a 30 days' payment deadline as a default, level of interest for late payments etc. would be beneficial in this regard. Ideally: Simplify the documents necessary for making payments for example use electronic tools; do not suspend payment without a valid reason; enhance the use of electronic payment; simplify controls; do not postpone payment until the end of the year. The adoption of the measures above would mitigate

the time-consuming paperwork which is among the most complaints voiced by SMEs.

As SMEs' normally do not have large and specialized administrative capacities, keeping administrative requirements to a minimum is essential. Training of stakeholders. The Procuring and Disposing Entities (PDE) are government ministries and other public bodies engaged in procurement and disposal activities. Each PDE should in the training include: an Accounting Officer, a Contracts Committee, Procurement and Disposal Unit Officers, User Departments and Evaluation Committees. Besides the Procurement Officers, the other stakeholders are not mandated to be professionals.

They however play crucial roles in the procurement process. They hence need to be trained into the formal tools and methods friendly to SMEs participation. The Evaluation Committee and Contracts Committee members particularly need to be conversant with the available formal scoring methods appropriate to offer an added advantage to SMEs as the former conducts the actual scoring while the latter approves the methods to be used.

Given the scenario in Uganda, this is a vital prerequisite. User departments can equally be trained to arrange their work in lots that are content wise and logically friendly to SMEs capacity. Linthorst and Telgen (2006) in an example offer that, content-wise road maintenance may be divided into three sets of tasks: major overhaul, regular maintenance and minor repairs. Meanwhile, a logical division may be into major thoroughways, minor roads

and residential areas. Training of the relevant stakeholders will hence stimulate an increase in the number of SMEs' accessing and winning contracts as more tenders will become SME compliant.

An increased involvement of SMEs into public procurement will result into higher competition for public contracts, leading to better value for money. Information Ensuring easy access to all relevant information on business opportunities in public procurement is of key importance for SMEs. In Uganda, it is apparent that after newspapers, established relationships are very important in terms of accessing contracts.

According to the Commonwealth (2010) findings, 38% of the respondents stated that opportunities were communicated through either direct invitation from the buyer or through some form of personal contact. Logically, established relationships represent a barrier for those SMEs who are not currently engaged with the public sector. Most empirical studies on the impact of ICTs have found a positive correlation between the use of ICT and corporate performance (UNCTAD in Okello-Obura and Matovu 2011). The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is vital given that the whole country is covered by the mobile telecommunication network and hence has internet potential. Particularly develop websites that may be helpful to SMEs by enabling cheap and quick communication, e. g. downloading the contract documents and any supplementary documents without incurring copying or mailing costs. Adopting this would enable publication of public procurement notices online; multi-functional search engines; direct downloading of contract notices and

accompanying documentation; electronic tendering facility enabling entities receive bids electronically in conformity with the PPDA regulations.

However, Okello-Obura and Matovu (2011) pose the following pertinent questions: Which language to use? Do you have translation services? What are the changing needs of SMEs? Do the SMEs have the information search and retrieval skills? Are they competent in ICTs usage? What of the availability of the computing resources? These are the challenges that befall this intervention that need to be addressed. All in all, it boils down to the provision of information in the right form to the right user using the right means as advanced by Okello-Obura and Matovu (2011). The Procurement and Disposal Units (PDUs) should be the local desks that help SMEs to increase their involvement in public procurement contracts. They should help SMEs familiarize themselves with their respective websites. Instituting an independent national public procurement training and information center would provide personalized assistance to SMEs which would be very helpful in tendering for public contracts.

One of the major barriers of Ugandan SMEs access to procurement contracts identified was that, no feedback was made available about previous unsuccessful tenders. Giving feedback to SMEs is essential. In order to prepare for future bids, it is very helpful for a tenderer to see which aspects of the bid were considered strong by the procuring entity. This is provided for in the PPDA Act being a principle of transparency.

We envisage that the adoption of this management framework may: Spur government agencies to consolidate the development a National Public Procurement Policy that specifically addresses challenges to SMEs access to public procurement contracts.? Strengthen the coordination, harmonization and monitoring of on-going efforts to professionalize procurement officers.? Vitalize national commitment and actions for increased attention to procurement officers' professionalization as a means of accelerating social welfare for SMEs, youths and other vulnerable groups.

? Improve national capacity for procurement management as well as support institutions, systems and structures to respond to the issues of SMEs, youths and other marginalized groups. PREREQUISITES TO FACILITATE SMES A2PPCS. A public procurement policy and legislative provisions are important to enable SMEs A2PPCs. This would significantly improve the socio-economic empowerment of the marginalized groups and ensure inclusive growth of SMEs e. g.

30% of low cost procurements should be reserved for SMEs. The current legislative framework does not explicitly compel or provide for public entities to incorporate SMEs in their procurement plans. Support from the political leadership at both national and local level is crucial in this regard. Proactive risk management is vital. It is important to consider the risk that any short-term interruption in the policy may pose to the beneficiaries. Hence, continuous capacity building and complimentary actions should be taken to facilitate SMEs to other commercial channels where additional long-term

and profitable relationships can be established. There is a need for an independent national publicprocurement training and information center.

This wouldamong others provide the crucial research into innovativeprocurement practices and the continuous development of procurement professionals e. g. provide procurement officerswith help in drawing up SME compliant tenders.

CONCLUSIONThis paper has shown that the costs of facilitating SMEsA2PPCs and integrating SMEs into the supplier selectionpractice may be enormous. It should however, be undertakengiven the socio-economic context of developing countries andthe benefits for sustainable and inclusive growth of SMEs.