

COVID-19 emergency procurement data and transparency: An example from Paraguay

Short description of the solutions implemented by Paraguay:

The new National Emergency <u>law 6524/2020</u> establishes among its provisions, the following:

- Authorization of the use of two types of purchasing procedures to streamline government contracting processes: simplified direct contracting and contracting by way of exception with subsequent dissemination (Contratación por vía de la excepción con difusión posterior, in Spanish).
- All contracting processes related to COVID-19 must go through the Public Procurement Information Systems administered by the National Public Procurement Agency (DNCP);
- The creation of a specific financing body for the use of resources assigned for emergency processes. The financing agency has a dedicated budget line in Paraguay's general budget.

The DNCP added a specific field in its procurement system that identifies if a simplified direct contracting tender, or intent-to-bid, is associated with the COVID-19 emergency. In addition, all contracts related to a specific purchase must be marked as such in the public procurement system, and entities must report if the deliverables have been met in a timely manner.

The simplified direct contracting procedure is like a normal competitive process but with a shorter bidding time, typically ending within five days of the tender notice being advertised. The procuring entity must issue the call for proposals and also award and issue the contract via the DNCP's system to allow all the details about the process to be registered and published on the DNCP's <u>public portal</u> and its <u>open data portal</u> through an <u>API</u> in the <u>Open Contracting Data Standard</u> format.

The other procedure, "exception with subsequent dissemination" allows procuring entities to award a contract without first publishing detailed specifications and conditions. Before the award, the entities are only required to register and publish an "intention-to-buy by exception with subsequent dissemination" in the system, which contains basic information about the intended purchase and is labeled with the "COVID-19" tag.

After an intention-to-buy is issued, companies interested in submitting offers can directly contact the procuring entity to know more about the specifications of the contract. To make these contracts as competitive as possible, the DNCP has put a lot of effort into disseminating the intentions-to-buy, which are advertised through a mobile app, social networks and by mail to vendors who have signed up as sellers of COVID-19 related products and services.

After an "exception with subsequent dissemination" tender is awarded, the procuring entity uploads the data related to the successful award to the system, including the suppliers, amounts, the contract, the budget lines used to finance the contract, payments and finally, the follow-up to the implementation of the contract. All this information is also available on the public portal and on the open data portal in OCDS format.

Guide on how to access public procurement data related to COVID-19:

Contracting data related to COVID-19 can be publicly accessed via three channels: the public contracting portal, a mobile app, and API.

1. Public contracting portal

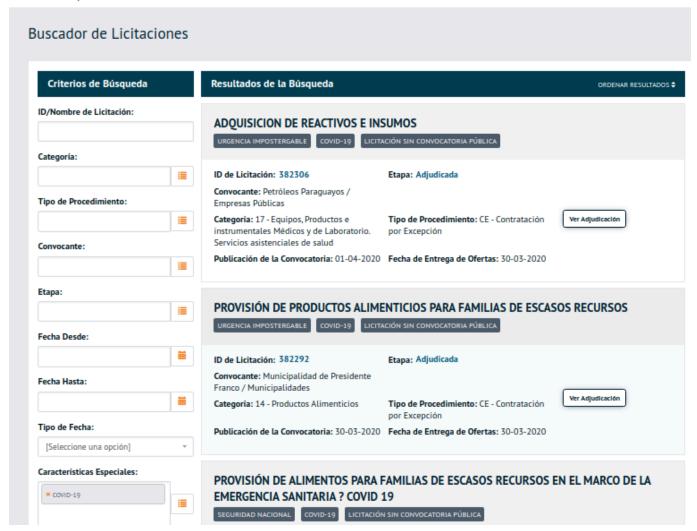
This portal can be accessed at https://contrataciones.gov.py. There is a special section on COVID-19 procurement and guides on searching the information at https://www.contrataciones.gov.py/dncp/covid-19.html



For a list of all intentions-to-buy by way of exception, choose "Licitaciones" from the main menu and select "Intenciones de Excepción con Difusión Posterior". Here you can see basic details about what the entities intend to buy, when, and their contact details. The processes are also marked with the "COVID-19" tag.



To see intentions-to-buy that have turned into tenders, go to "Licitaciones" and select "Buscador de Licitaciones" from the drop down menu. This will take you to the tender search engine. On the left, you'll see a list of filters. Click on "Criterios de Búsqueda Avanzada" to access the advanced filters and choose "COVID-19" for the field "Características Especiales".



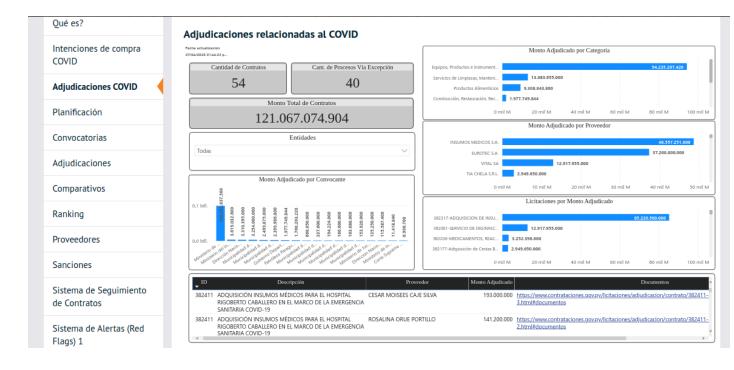
Here we can see the list of tenders related to COVID-19 and all their details.

For statistics related to intentions-to-buy by way of exception, the DNCP has a dashboard with aggregated information. To access it, select "Informaciones" from the main menu, then "Sistema de Información Estadística (SIE)", and choose "Intenciones de Compra COVID" from the menu bar on the left.



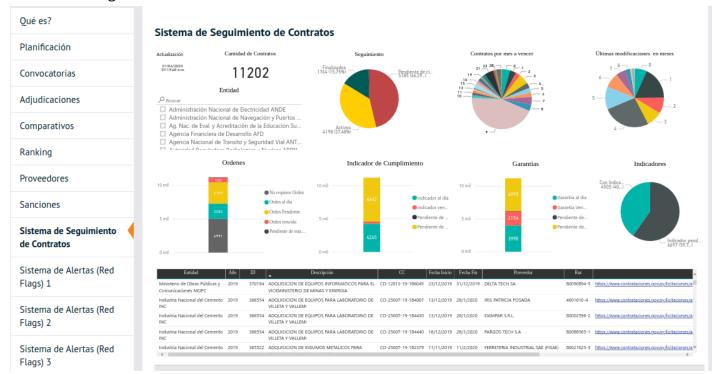
Here you can see information such as the number of intentions-to-buy made in total, by category, state and entity, and a list of all intentions-to-buy.

Another dashboard is available with statistics on COVID-19 related awards, which can be accessed by going to "Informaciones"->"Sistema de Información Estadística (SIE)", and selecting "Adjudicaciones COVID".



Here you can see both the list of awards and statistics on amounts by category, supplier, buyer, among others.

To access the dashboard for monitoring contracts and their compliance, from the main menu, select "Informaciones"->"Sistema de Información Estadística (SIE)", and choose the option "Sistema de Seguimiento de Contratos".



This dashboard allows you to track the implementation of contracts taking into account certain compliance indicators, including the execution of purchase orders.

2) COVID-19 notification mobile app

To enhance citizen oversight, the DNCP also launched a mobile app which sends notifications about everything the State acquires during the current health emergency. The app, "DNCP notificaciones", is available for free on Google Play and the App Store. It allows users to choose from three categories, including "Nuevas Convocatorias Publicadas COVID-19" which notifies users about coronavirus-related tenders, "Nuevas Intenciones de Excepciones sin Difusión" which informs subscribers about new intentions-to-buy related to the health emergency, and new awards.

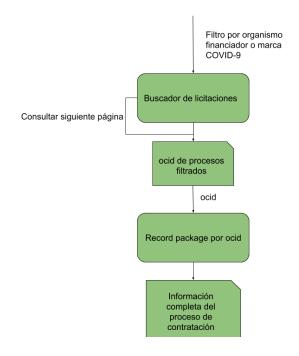
3) API for data in the OCDS format

To make the data easily reusable, the DNCP has also made an API service available. The documentation can be accessed at https://contrataciones.gov.py/datos/api/v3/doc/

The API uses the Open Contracting Data Standard format. This standard enables the disclosure of data and documents at all stages of the contracting process (planning, tender, awards, contracts and physical and financial implementation of the contract) by defining a common data model. It was created to help organizations increase procurement transparency and enable deeper analysis of procurement data by a wide range of users.

In the OCDS, each contracting process is identified by an Open Contracting ID (ocid) that is globally unique. With this identifier, you can obtain information from the API on the complete contracting process with its status to date (in the compiledRelease field, in what the standard defines as a record package).

The API offers several useful services, but there are two that we need in order to find COVID-19 related processes:



Search for intentions-to-buy by way of exception with subsequent dissemination: with this search engine you can search and visualize data on all the exceptional intentions-to-buy issued, and with the **rationale = covid-19** filter all those that are within the framework of the current emergency.

Example

https://contrataciones.gov.py/datos/api/v3/doc/search/procurementIntentions?rationale=covid-19

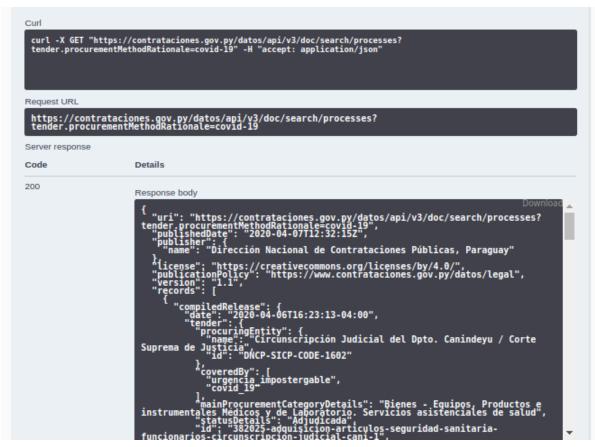
Search for processes: With this search engine, filters can be made for any field of the standard and returns a minimum version of the contracting processes, in addition to Open Contracting ID (ocid), in order to later obtain complete information on the contracting process, in another service, through the "OCID" obtained. It is located in the "search"->"processes"

The filters that can be used to find the tenders are:

• tender.procurementMethodRationale = "covid-19"

With this filter, all the tenders by exception that are part of the emergency are identified. Example:

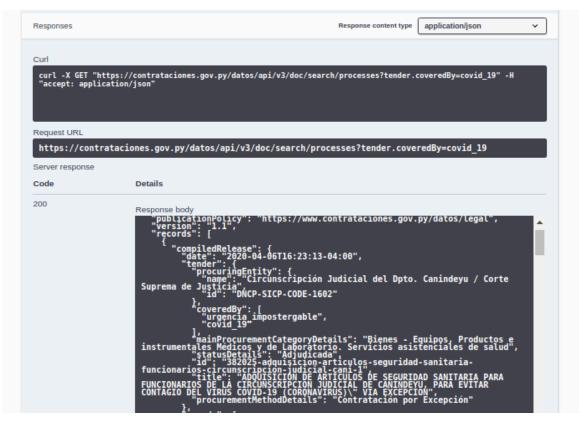
https://contrataciones.gov.py/datos/api/v3/doc/search/processes?tender.procurementMethodR ationale=covid-19



• tender.coveredBy = "covid_19"

This filter searches for all the traditional tenders that are part of the emergency. Example :

https://contrataciones.gov.py/datos/api/v3/doc/search/processes?tender.coveredBy=covid 19



contracts.implementation.financialProgress.breakdown.classifications.financiado r=817

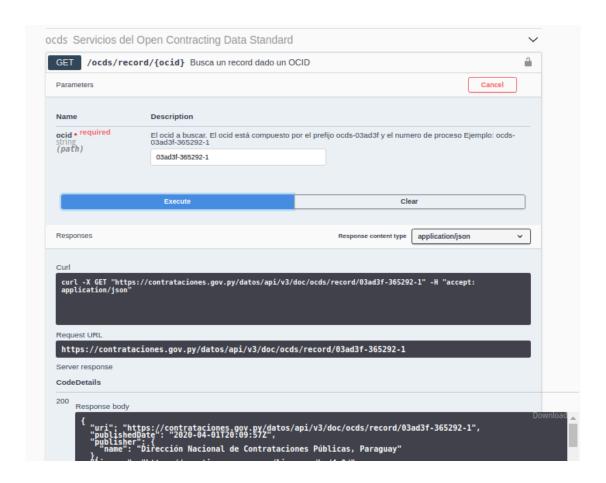
This search, instead of searching by tag, searches for the "Organismo Financiador" field of the budget line that will be used to make payments to the contract. In the event of an emergency, the body with code 817 was created for this purpose.

It is worth mentioning that the service returns the data in a paginated way, of 10 processes per page, and with the parameters of "pagination.total_pages" we can go to the following pages until bringing all the results.

OCID Record Package: once the search engine returns the processes that have the indicated filters, we can use the ocid field to consult the OCID record package service and bring the complete information of the process with all its stages in OCDS format. This service is found under the "ocds" section.

Example https://contrataciones.gov.py/datos/api/v3/doc/ocds/record/03ad3f-365292-1

As this service returns the complete information in the state in which it is up to date of the consultation, we can have the information of all the information related to the process, its tender data, awarded amounts, dates, payments and budget lines used.



A guide on how to analyze this data can be found on the blog <u>Monitoring COVID-19 emergency</u> <u>procurement with data</u>

If you have any questions, please contact Yohanna Lisnichuk (ylisnichuk@cds.com.py) of the Open Contracting Partnership Helpdesk for Latin America or data@open-contracting.org.