

Open Contracting Playbook

**A practical guide
to smarter, better procurement reform through
open data & stakeholder engagement**

DRAFT, November 2019



The Open Contracting Playbook

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open data & stakeholder
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Version 1.0, November 2019

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Introduction

Opening up public contracting to get better reforms that stick

Public contracting is probably the largest marketplace on earth, covering one in every three dollars spent by government; an [estimated](#) US\$9.5 trillion or 15% of global GDP.¹ It is the critical point where government budgets and public spending turn into vital goods, works, and services for citizens.

This market is on the brink of a major transformation as it moves from paper to data and from being a compliance-based chore to a digital service designed around users. Many public contracting practitioners can see the enormous potential of this market as a lever of economic and social reforms, but they don't have the right tools to succeed — we created this playbook for them.

The Open Contracting Partnership brings together open data and open government to make public contracting reforms more agile, more impactful and more durable.

We work in over 30 countries around the world supporting systemic reforms, helping innovations jump scale and fostering a culture of openness about the policies, teams, tools, data, and results needed to power change.

The results so far are impressive. These reforms have saved billions of dollars, increased efficiency and competition, busted cartels and significantly improved public services and public trust ([Box 1: Impact from open contracting](#)).

¹ Kenny, C. November 2014. Publish Government Contracts. Addressing Concerns and Easing Implementation. Center for Global Development, Washington DC.
<http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/publishing-government-contracts-report.pdf>. p. ix.

Box 1: Impact from open contracting

After the Maidan revolution in 2014, Ukraine put open contracting and the Open Contracting Data Standard at the heart of the country's new Prozorro e-procurement system. Under the principle "everyone sees everything", the new system led to major savings for the government (over US\$1 billion and counting) and significantly increased competition (with thousands of new suppliers now working with public entities). Over 80% of government contracts are now awarded to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and perceptions of corruption have more than halved. Automated red flags are embedded in the system, along with mass civic monitoring and feedback; over 50% of problems flagged have been fixed.

In [Bogotá, Colombia](#), the city's education secretary and the national public procurement ministry worked together to transform the provision of over 700,000 school meals delivered each day, turning it into the highest ranked school meal program in the country and breaking up a suspected US\$22 million price-fixing scheme for fruit. Notably, opening up the process has improved competition significantly by increasing the number of providers from 12 to 55 in the first year and adding 14 suppliers that had never done business with the city before.

In [Paraguay](#), open contracting data helped expose fraud and cronyism in the education sector, fueling a public scandal that led to the creation of a new ministerial team and better rules on value-for-money in basic goods and services. As the quality of public contracting information shared improved, the percentage of botched and failed tenders fell, from adjustments and amendments on 19% of all contracts in 2013 to just 3% in 2016. With consistent community pressure, the allocation of funds for school facilities in the city of Ciudad del Este has improved dramatically. Now, more than 80% of the most needy schools benefit, compared to fewer than 20% in 2015.

This playbook distills what we have learnt from the reformers on the frontline of these changes, breaking down the different tactics or ‘plays’ they have used. It explains how openness, participation and cooperation across government, business, and civil society helped sustain reforms and deepen their impact.

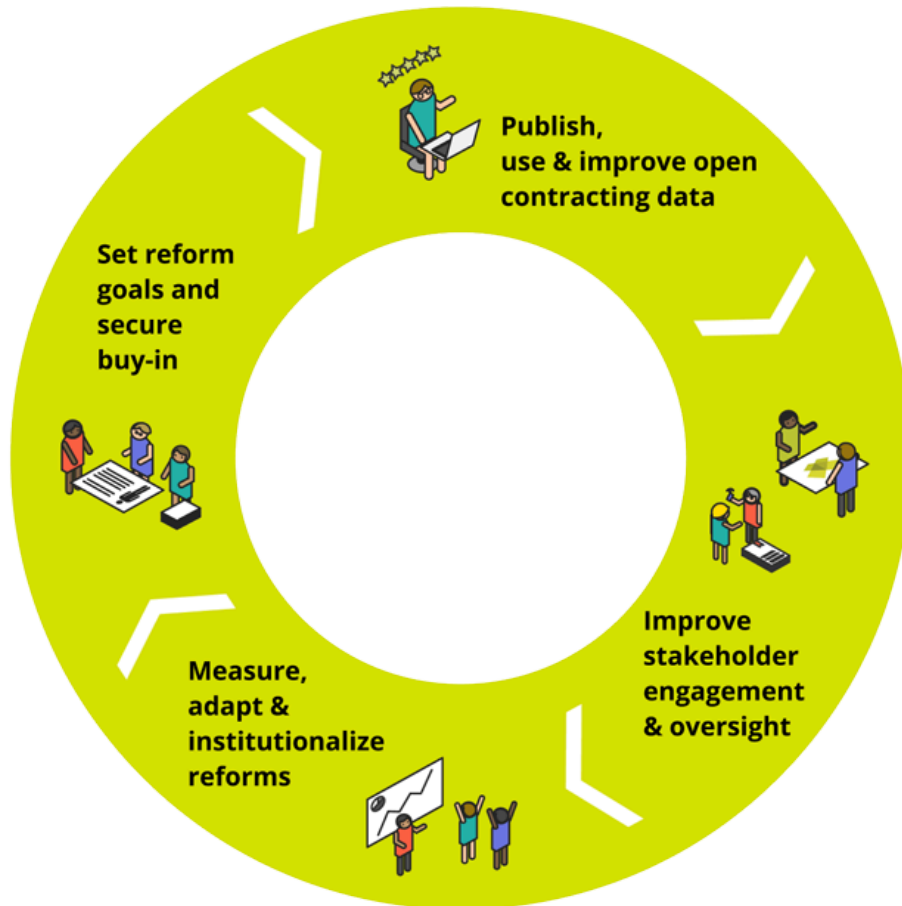
You don’t have to follow all the plays; they are for you to choose and adapt as you see fit. That said, we have tried to show how they build on or reinforce each other. And some of them are pretty foundational. If you don’t improve the quality of the data that you are collecting and sharing, you are unlikely to be able to measure the impact of your interventions but you can still improve individual procurements.

In each case, we give examples of how these plays have been used in practice and how they translate into concrete outputs (things you will produce) and outcomes (wider changes that occur because of what you produce).

The playbook is organized along four key components of open contracting:

1. Set reform goals and secure buy-in;
2. Publish, use and improve open contracting data;
3. Improve stakeholder engagement and oversight;
4. Measure, adapt and institutionalize reforms.

These components support each other. Think of them as ingredients when baking a cake: you need to mix them together rather than remaining separate. Stakeholder engagement (component 3) is central to setting effective goals (component 1) and improving data (component 2) will help you measure your progress throughout (component 4). So we emphasize testing and adapting throughout the playbook, refining and getting to ever more impact for your government spending.



We know that change is hard so this playbook also deals with the gritty reality of change management, changing incentives, winning political support in and outside government, and collaborating with the many stakeholders in public procurement. And, of course, reform teams need permission to make mistakes and recover quickly.

As ever, the OCP is here to help so don't hesitate to reach out to us at engage@open-contracting.org. You can also join the global community of open contracting innovators in over 50 countries through our [discussion mailing list](#).

We plan this to be a living document that we will update as we see ever more impact, evidence and examples of how openness makes public procurement smarter and better.

Now bring on the plays!

Component 1: Set reform goals and secure buy-in

Jump straight to the plays:

[Define your goal and a theory of change](#)

[Build a robust political mandate](#)

[Build a strong reform team](#)

[Conduct user research](#)

[Define use cases for information](#)

[Agree on key performance indicators](#)

[Component 1 Outputs, Outcomes & Resources](#)

Open contracting seeks to drive better results from procurement and public contracts. These results include improving the efficiency, effectiveness and integrity of the public contracting system. It can also include broader policy priorities such as improving sustainability or inclusion.

Ambitious public contracting practitioners may aspire to improve value for money, deliver services more promptly, or create a level playing field for all suppliers. But let's face it, entire procurement systems are often ill-designed to track, let alone achieve such goals, despite the huge amounts of money at stake. Frequently, e-procurement reforms simply transfer paper-based, compliance-driven systems online and lock government agencies into rigid proprietary software agreements with a single developer. We advocate for "open-by-design" digitization of procurement because it offers an opportunity to consider not only the end-to-end management of the procurement system, but also how that system supports the wider public financial management and effectiveness of government.

The same is true for individual contracting processes. A contract should be issued (or renewed) with a clear idea of what the buying government agency is trying to achieve by procuring certain goods, works or services.

So what's the most practical place to start? You should clearly articulate the problem you seek to solve. The ability to formulate a clear problem statement is an underrated but powerful management skill, as this [MIT Sloan management review article](#) explains. Our first set of plays considers how to do that, as well as how to co-design procurement reform goals with stakeholders, for example through user research, co-creation workshops, or market research, and how to secure political buy-in and resources to build a broader base of support.

Play: Define your goal and a theory of change

Effective problem statements set the stage to tackle reforms in a structured manner, allowing you to focus your efforts and scarce organizational resources on initiatives that deliver the highest value. They explain where you are now and where you want to be. You'll underpin your problem statement with a theory of change that lays out a strategic plan to achieve your reform goal and the steps you will take to navigate the complex and unpredictable factors influencing your interventions.

To serve as reform roadmaps, problem statements should:

- be as specific and actionable as possible;
- connect to a clear and specific goal that is also an organizational priority;
- explain the gap between where you are today and where you want to be;
- quantify the key variables to track progress, including the target, the current state, and the gap between the two;
- be sufficiently focused in scope to be actionable;
- and be as neutral as possible about possible solutions.

This problem-solving approach generates incentives to work on what is important, track your progress even when you lack precise measurements, avoid jumping too early to diagnoses or solutions, and break big problems down into smaller ones that can be more easily tackled.

We tend to think about five main impact categories in open contracting: 1. Improved market opportunity; 2. Increased internal efficiency; 3. Greater public integrity; 4. Value for money; and 5. Better quality goods, works, and services.

A stellar problem statement might be: "My project aims to work with the Ministries of Health and Planning so that all pregnant indigenous women living with HIV/AIDS have access to antiretroviral medicines. Antiretrovirals are currently not accessible to one in four pregnant women due to three main root causes, which my project will address: 1. poor planning and budgeting; 2. a monopoly of unregulated suppliers of medications; and 3. the expiration of antiretroviral drugs sitting in warehouses due to poor inventory systems and oversight." This problem statement stands out because it is specific, actionable, and precise.

The OCP is always happy to help you shape these: it really matters to us that reforms are action-oriented so that we can measure the impact of open contracting interventions to promote what works and determine how best we can help. You might find this [worksheet](#) helpful in developing the theory of change for your reform.

Once you have a clear problem statement, you can elaborate your theory of change of how you will get there. Which outcomes are you trying to achieve and how will they add up to the overall change? What activities will you undertake to reach these outcomes? Planning like this at the beginning of your reform journey will help you to choose the right entry points and priorities. We've included a sample theory of change framework in the [annex](#).

Change is never linear or easy so thinking through what the hurdles might be and how to check you are going in the right direction, and being prepared to pivot if things aren't working out is important.

[A great resource is the Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab's overview of results driven contracting strategies, a set of tools to align strategic procurements with policy priorities.](#) Dutch activist group Hivos has developed an [open contracting advocacy toolkit](#) that includes some good resources on how to build a solid theory of change (see page 54).

Example: With support from the [Harvard Government Performance Lab](#), the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) overhauled its approach to solicitation development, connecting spending on social services to improved client outcomes and tracking performance of service providers. The City developed a new, centralized process to develop solicitations, providing more resources to craft priority contracts and removing information silos between DFSS leadership and program staff. The department also invested in training department staff and service providers, in an effort to ensure the sustainability of the new system.

Play: Build a robust political mandate

Once you have a well-defined goal that is rooted in the needs of key stakeholders

and articulated in a sound theory of change, it will also be easier to secure political buy-in. We have seen over and over again that the most successful procurement reforms have robust political mandates and high-level political leadership that is sustained during the entire reform implementation. A robust mandate means a public commitment by one or more high-ranking public officials with the authority to make decisions, together with dedicated resources, such as an appropriate budget and capable team members.

Getting a strong mandate requires developing a vision and a plan that others will support and endorse. It means understanding how your goal intersects with the motivations of others, particularly those with significant political or social influence. It also requires collaboration to advocate for the reform so that decision-makers are willing to throw their clout, human resources, and budgets behind it.

In most governments, it will involve preparing a document making the case for change and explaining the resources and budget that will be needed. These decision memos tend to be private, of course, but OCP is happy to offer advice and feedback on framing them.

Example: Here is a good example of [a government leader making the case for open contracting](#) (from the UK). The output from that was a [government decision memo from the Open Standards Board](#).

Other good places to look for resources on government reform are [Princeton's Innovation for Successful Societies](#) and [Harvard's Center for International Development](#).

Winning political support also means safeguarding against vested interests who might oppose your reforms and those who are simply satisfied with a business-as-usual approach. Hivos has an [Open Contracting Advocacy Toolkit](#) (page 36) that includes a helpful “power-will” matrix to map stakeholders according to their power and will to bring about change.

Example: When the ProZorro team set out to overhaul Ukraine’s entire public procurement system, the country had been losing about US\$2 billion each year due to corruption and inefficiency in public procurement. The team set a very clear goal: the new system should be completely transparent

and based on the principle "[everyone sees everything](#)". A high-level political champion was vital: they had that in Maksym Nefyodov, the Deputy Minister of Economic Development who became the face of the initiative and its public relations campaign. The ProZorro team worked closely with the private sector and civil society to build a collaborative group with its own brand and public identity. They went on to develop a new open-source e-procurement system and made all the data and documents available to everyone. Having permission to experiment outside the government before the system was scaled up and formally adopted allowed the team to prove the concept and build long-term alliances. They faced multiple challenges and vested interests, but moving fast and being agile meant that those interests were not able to mobilize effectively to slow things down. [The full story is detailed here.](#)

It is not yet common for procurement reforms to embrace risk. So getting support from senior executives and from political sponsors to make bold moves and take chances is vital (as is having a risk matrix to track and manage them). The International Association for Contract & Commercial Management (IACCM) has some great guidance on [how to manage risks in contracting in more collaborative ways.](#)

[*Jump to further resources on building mandates*](#)

Play: Build a strong reform team

The most successful reforms are led by a strong project team that includes at least four roles (one person can play more than one role):

1. A high-level **decision-maker** with the ability to champion cross-departmental reforms;
2. A **domain expert** who understands the procurement system and its bottlenecks;
3. A **technical data lead** with strong programming skills and familiarity with data standards;
4. A **strong project manager** to ensure the project moves forward on schedule.

It can also be really helpful to have a **user researcher** who brings the user perspective to the project (this person could be a representative of civil society or

business brought in to advise the project). The UK's [Government Digital Service](#) and the [Government of Ontario](#) also have useful advice on how to set up reform teams.

Play: Conduct user research

Identify and map key institutions and actors in the procurement ecosystem, and determine their goals, problems and needs. It does take time to engage and involve others but the benefits are huge. Public officials, vendors and the community will know whether public contracting currently addresses their needs and what could be much better. Engaging with them will not only help to identify the right goals, it is also the first step to create a partnership with your key stakeholders to achieve those goals and get to impact faster and make sure that reforms stick (more on this later). Changing the system is hard, so it helps to have allies who can approach problems from a variety of angles, contribute different skill sets and offer strength in numbers when advocating for reform. Having a well-defined goal that is supported by a broad base of key stakeholders and articulated in a sound theory of change also helps to secure political buy-in and resources.

There are several different ways to do user research to co-design reform goals (see some potential methodologies [here](#)). At their heart, they involve working with people who are the beneficiaries of or stakeholders in your reform. This includes vendors, sub-contractors, civil society organizations, community groups, government workers and others. You can hold a series of consultations with these stakeholders, organize design workshops or conduct surveys or interviews. We have some helpful guidance and worksheets to get started [here](#).

Example: In the Kyrgyz Republic, the reform team surveyed small and medium-sized businesses to understand what barriers they were facing to bid on public contracts. Lack of transparency, direct award of lower value contracts, and complex bidding procedures were notable complaints. Engaging with companies in this way improves government's understanding of the market and can help identify ways to increase competition.

In [Chile](#) and Colombia, consultations by the central purchasing bodies are carried out and announced online to achieve the greatest outreach. These consultations focus on understanding what the market has to offer in order to design better procurement processes. Before bid submission, comments and questions may be addressed to the agencies, which publish their

answers online for every interested supplier to see. This allows for increased transparency, improved tender documents and specifications in line with what the market can offer and ultimately a level playing field.

[The City of Philadelphia](#) engaged community members to understand how it could improve food purchasing for children and other people who rely on the government for meals. Together with the Sunlight Foundation and us, they interviewed food recipients, kitchen workers and vendors to understand pain points and articulate reform goals. They started with a human-centered design challenge: How might we use contracting to improve the quality of food that is delivered by the city to vulnerable populations?

[*Jump to further user research resources*](#)

Play: Define use cases for information

Thinking through who will do what with different items of information (a so-called use case) helps you to prioritize which specific items of information and/or data that you need to collect to make the case for change and to test that you are going in the right direction. It will also identify what other publication features are important, such as where data might come from, how it can be combined with other sources to add insight, and how it should be shared.

The Government of Ontario has some good guidance on how to [understand users and their needs](#) and [turning user research into actionable insights](#). The UK's Government Digital Service (GDS) tips on how to [develop user stories](#) are helpful too. You can even create user personas that represent a stakeholder which provides insights into each user group's goals, challenges, capacities, and needs. You can then begin to group and organize groups by their unique wants and needs and see their needs, goals and how they interact with contracting processes, systems or data.

[We also have specific guidance on how to work with stakeholders to develop specific use cases for public contracting data](#). Articulating clear use cases keeps open contracting reforms focused on larger outcome goals and key performance indicators, which makes each step along the way easier and more impactful, from easier to check data collection, processing and publication, to data use for decision making against larger outcome goals and key performance indicators. We have

[developed further guidance](#) on how those use cases can be translated into priority requirements for open contracting data publication. The U.S.-based Sunlight Foundation has resources on [open data use cases for cities](#) too.

Example: [The City of Austin](#) worked with the Sunlight Foundation to use contracting to improve the city's homeless services. Together, they first developed user personas to understand different users of homelessness services and then what specific contracting data and information individuals experiencing homelessness need. This exercise made clear that the city needed a more centralized system of non-sensitive data about the community to better coordinate services. They also realized that service providers, contract administrators, and city staff need a shared understanding of active city contracts and contract performance to improve shared contract outcomes.

[Jump to further use case resources](#)

Play: Agree on key performance indicators

To measure progress against the established goals and use cases, define metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs). The OCP has developed [guidance](#) on how to translate outcome goals into KPIs that can be calculated using the OCDS.

Examples: Ukraine has KPIs such as savings, number of bidders, bidders per tender, complete vs. cancelled and unsuccessful procedures, and competitive vs. non-competitive procedures. Ukraine publishes these KPIs on its [public business intelligence tool](#).

A mayor has the policy goal of awarding 15% of city contracts to minority or women-owned businesses (component 1). After consulting vendors and local business associations, the city begins to publish information in user-friendly ways about upcoming opportunities and who is winning them (component 2). Companies can use the information to learn about upcoming opportunities and prepare better bids, thereby potentially increasing the number and quality of bids that are being submitted (component 3). Furthermore, now both city officials and local vendors can track if the city is reaching its policy goal (component 3). If the city is achieving its goal, it might set its target higher, or if it falls short, it might use quantitative and

qualitative insights (from internal analysis or research by stakeholders) to make course corrections (component 4).

[*Jump to further KPI resources*](#)

Here are some of the outputs and outcomes that you can expect to have after these plays.

Component 1 Outputs

- A **well-defined goal and problem statement** underpinned with a theory of change as to how activities will make that happen
- Articulation of **use cases** and **key performance indicators**
- **Meetings and consultations** with key stakeholders

Component 1 Outcomes

- **Robust mandate** with a clear reform vision, action plan, implementation budget and team
- **Understanding of user needs, information gaps and key stakeholders to involve**

Component 1 Resources

Robust mandate

- OCP's [primer](#) for key facts, case studies and impact numbers
- [Hivos Open Contracting Advocacy Toolkit](#), including a “power-will” matrix (page 36)
- [Open Contracting Assessment Methodology](#)
- A [paper](#) from 2013 outlines some comparative legal provisions for open contracting
- [Implementing Innovation](#) manual by our partners at Reboot
- [Blog: How we successfully pushed for more transparent public procurement rules in Spain](#)

User Research

- A [primer on user research](#) for procurement reforms with a [worksheet](#) to develop your own research plan
- [Step-by-step guide on conducting user research to define reform solutions](#)

(see data user interviews)

- [Design for a research framework template](#)
- Sunlight's [tactical engagement guide](#) on defining goals through stakeholder interviews
- UK's Government Digital Service [tools and advice for user research](#)

Use Cases

- OCP [guidance](#) on working with stakeholders to develop goals or use cases
- OCP [guidance](#) on translating use cases into priority requirements for open contracting data

KPIs

- [OCP guidance on establishing key performance indicators](#)
- [Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab guidance](#) and case stories on outcome-driven procurement strategies and measuring results.

Component 2:

Publish, use and improve open contracting data

Jump straight to the plays:

[Digitize paper-based systems](#)

[Implement the Open Contracting Data Standard \(OCDS\)](#)

[Change regulations to enable open data](#)

[Publish planning and post-award information](#)

[Invest in procurement analytics and business intelligence](#)

[Use red flag detection](#)

[Develop agile tech tools](#)

[Create incentives for data use](#)

[Component 2 Outputs, Outcomes & Resources](#)

Public procurement data is one of the most valuable datasets in government: it covers transactions for a huge market, who is buying from whom, when and for what prices. It reveals trends and information in how public money is spent, levels of competition, underserved markets, inefficiencies, and so on.

To measure any procurement reform or to attain your goals, you must be able to understand what is happening in the marketplace. Most procurement systems, unfortunately, are not centralized, with data in different documents, systems, and ministries, which fails to enable clear oversight on what is happening. Many electronic government procurement (e-GP) systems are set up for compliance and managing specific transactions rather than enabling market surveillance and analysis.

This component of an open contracting reform will help you determine what information you need to know, survey what information exists and where, and then make a plan to collect and share all the information you need to attain your goals. If you don't already have the information, you need to make a plan to improve the completeness, structure, quality and timeliness of your information until it does help you measure the things that matter. [Box 2](#) explains why open data is better data and creates more impact.

Of course, improving data and information alone are a start, not an end in themselves. People using and acting upon information is what makes all the difference. This is why we focus on setting goals and indicators in [component 1](#), as

your team can use data to monitor progress and see what is working and what isn't. Government officials, companies and civil society can use the data about planning, award, and implementation for analysis and monitoring. They can then review reform successes, detect and rapidly respond to problems, and make further improvements to performance (we will talk more about this under [component 3](#)). Now let's look at the plays to get you good quality, timely open data...

Box 2: Why open data is better data

There are several benefits from openly sharing government contract information:

- Improved competition: You will have to give suppliers fair and equal access to your data if you want to improve competition and allow innovation.
- Improved planning: Sharing information on upcoming procurement plans not only gives businesses time to plan ahead themselves, but it can also allow pre-market solicitation of ideas as to what to buy, allowing government to shape procurement to better meet users' needs (see [component 3](#)).
- Improved accountability: [An academic analysis of 3.5 million procurement records in the EU](#) shows that collecting information knowing that it will be published has an effect on behavior even before it's released and that sharing more information about public contracts results in reduced risks of single bids (which are much more expensive). Also, sharing in public allows other actors like CSOs or think tanks to track the money and the results from that spending better themselves, feeding back their insights and advice. This can occasionally be embarrassing for government officials if there is misspending but it's also necessary for public trust and ultimately improves efficiency.
- Improved integrity: it deters dodgy awards and helps detect collusion because all the relevant details of the procurement process are recorded and out in the open for public scrutiny. There is [strong evidence from a survey of thousands of businesses worldwide by the World Bank](#) that an open and transparent process both deters malfeasance and encourages increased competition which in turn leads to more eyes on each contract award.
- Innovation: Open data plays a support role in communicating effectively with the marketplace and allows you to leverage that for market research and consultation, vendor surveys or user surveys etc. These can propose and test innovation.

Play: Digitize paper-based systems

The sheer size and scale of public procurement markets and the number of transactions involved means that there is a huge efficiency gain from digitization, shifting the focus of information from documents on paper to data. Done right, digitizing procurement systems can also significantly lower transaction costs for both buyer and vendors, allow for faster, more efficient decision making, saving time and money and reduce the duration of and friction in the contracting process. Existing paper-based contracting methods shouldn't be taken online; instead, the entire process should be redesigned as a user-friendly digital service that is open-by-design with a focus on making the process simple and efficient.

When thinking about future functionalities you will have to consider and balance all users' needs: policymakers need to have fast and free access to reliable data; buyers must be able to quickly sign a contract without additional bureaucracy; bidders want to find more opportunities, easily submit their offers and be fairly evaluated; society needs to be sure that the system is accountable and delivers value for money, and so on. Your system has to cover all contracting processes and publish structured information in an open data format if you want that information to be accessible and useful, so training, support and a standardized schema are vital (see [next play](#)). [The OCP has drafted guidance on eGP projects with these key points in mind, including how to specify these needs in any Requests For Proposals.](#)

Example: Ukraine's ProZorro is a hybrid public-private electronic [open source](#) system. The "hybrid" part means that while all transactions take place in the central public database, any number of certified private marketplaces can work with the end users, upload tender documentation and support the tendering process. Transparent certification requirements and the open source approach allows the privately-owned commercial marketplaces to compete with each other, motivating them to provide ever better services for both the government contracting entities and the potential suppliers. An open data standard was embedded in the system as a way of standardizing information flows to allow more advanced tools to be built, such as a [business intelligence system](#) to oversee interactions in the marketplace.

Box 3: The Open Contracting Data Standard

The [Open Contracting Data Standard \(OCDS\)](#), is a free, non-proprietary open data standard for public contracting, being implemented [around the world](#).

The OCDS enables disclosure of data and documents at all stages of the contracting process by defining a common data model. The Data Standard is free and openly licensed. It was created to support organizations to increase contracting transparency, and allow deeper analysis of contracting data by a wide range of users. It is the only international open standard for the publication of procurement and contracting information.

The OCDS provides:

- A set of recommended data fields and documents to disclose;
- A common structured data model;
- An approach to regular publication of information on all contracting processes;
- Guidance and tools to support implementation; and
- A free global [helpdesk](#) that can assess data quality and suggest improvements.

At the heart of the OCDS is the idea that it should be possible to follow a contracting process from planning and tender, through to award and implementation. The data made available at each stage described in the diagram below ([joined up contracting data](#)) should be usable by, and useful to, key stakeholders, including businesses, citizens and government itself.






Because the standard provides guidance on both *what* to publish and *how* to publish, it is possible for the standardized data to be compared and analyzed more easily. Therefore, if publication of procurement information follows the OCDS, then it will be possible for visualization and analysis tools [like these](#) to be adapted and reused (reducing costs and promoting innovation).

The Data Standard is not an e-procurement solution or information management system itself, rather it is a useful way to model and publish the data from such systems for visualization, monitoring, and analysis.

The OCDS is being implemented by national and subnational governments all over the world, including Australia, Colombia, Chile, France, the UK, Zambia, Scotland, Buenos Aires, and [others](#). The EU is also aligning with the OCDS in their procurement notice publication system and promoting contract registers for member states. The open contracting principles are endorsed by the G7 and G20; they are embedded into the internationally accepted OECD [Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems](#), and are recommended as a transformational reform by the Open Government Partnership.

We have also developed [guidance](#) on how to use the OCDS to meet the disclosure requirements of international legal frameworks, such as those of the [European Union](#) and the [Agreement on Government Procurement](#).

Joined up contracting data

				
Planning	Tender	Award	Contract	Implementation
<i>Including:</i>	<i>Including:</i>	<i>Including:</i>	<i>Including:</i>	<i>Including:</i>
Budgets Project plans Procurement plans Market studies Public hearing info	Tender notices Specifications Line items Values Enquiries	Details of award Bidder information Bid evaluation Values	Final details Signed contract Amendments Values	Payments Progress updates Location Extensions Amendments Completion or termination info
Enabling:	Enabling:	Enabling:	Enabling:	Enabling:
Strategic planning Market research Setting priorities Access to market	Competitive tendering Cross-border procurement Red flag analysis Transparent feedback mechanisms	Efficient supplier management Efficient complaints mechanism Links to beneficial ownership data Red flag analysis Trade / cross border analysis	Cost analysis Understanding what government buys Trade / cross border procurement analysis	Results-based contracting Implementation monitoring Transparent contract management Red flag analysis

Play: Implement the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS)

Implementing the Open Contracting Data Standard is an important play to accelerate and scale the impact of your reforms. The Standard provides guidance on what information to publish about all stages of the public contracting process and how to publish that information as open data to get the maximum utility for monitoring and analysis.

The OCDS was crafted for four specific user needs, underpinned by a field-by-field analysis of how the data can be used to support those needs. They are:

- delivering better value for money, saving government money and time;
- building a fairer business environment and a level playing field for suppliers;
- improving public integrity by deterring fraud and corruption; and
- tracking and improving service delivery.

The OCDS is also extensible, which means that you can add information that is important to other important objectives (such as inclusion, environment or trade). For example, we have worked with the EU and the WTO GPA to develop [extensions](#) to OCDS important to their requirements for cross-border sharing of opportunities.

The process of implementing the OCDS involves identifying reform goals for data use, mapping existing systems and data to the standard, and choosing a publication architecture that will best meet the needs of your users. The OCDS can also be used to help design new electronic procurement and information management systems. OCP offers a free global helpdesk, detailed documentation, templates and tools to support implementation. The Standard itself is also openly licensed with a transparent and no-cost governance process.

Implementing the OCDS will help you to understand the current constraints of your IT infrastructure and data management for reaching your intended goals. For example, you might have a policy goal to improve the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in public procurement. If you do not currently collect data on whether SMEs are winning contracts, or even have a definition of what constitutes an SME, you can't prove if SME participation is improving. That gap can help you to advocate for better data collection and to work with key stakeholders to create an approach to collect and share those data. In the case of SMEs, that might be with ministries, local Chambers of Commerce, business associations, entrepreneurs, and so on.

Standardizing and publishing data also helps you to monitor and improve data quality over time. The OCDS community and OCP are developing tools and guidance to help publishers to improve data completeness, coherence, timeliness and usability.

One of the other [advantages](#) of publishing OCDS data is that there is a vibrant growing global community of OCDS publishers and users. This means that rather than designing bespoke and expensive methodologies and tools for data visualization and use, you can benefit from reusing tools and methodologies developed by the growing community. For example, here you can see how [OCDS can be used by any member of the World Trade Organization General Agreement on Procurement to calculate GPA statistics](#) and here you can see how [OCDS data can be used to calculate quantitative indicators for the Methodology for Assessment of Procurement Systems](#). OCP maintains a [directory of OCDS tools](#).

Many global bodies have recommended and endorsed the OCDS, including the G7, the G20, OECD, the European Commission, the World Bank, and the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development. [Box 3](#) goes deeper into what the OCDS is and how it can add value to your reforms.

Examples: Implementing the OCDS was a core part of Ukraine's ProZorro and DoZorro procurement reforms, which have resulted in significant government savings, increased business confidence, and increased participation of civil society in procurement monitoring.

OCDS data has allowed [the Krygyz Republic, a more recent OCDS publisher](#), to develop an internal government business intelligence tool, while making it easier for civil society to reuse the structured and simplified contracting data for their own tools, including a tender alert app for businesses.

You can see which governments are publishing OCDS data on our worldwide map: <http://open-contracting.org/worldwide>

[Jump to further resources on OCDS publication](#) and [automating reporting](#)

Play: Change regulations to enable open data

Publishing more and better information will also likely require adjustments to the procurement laws and regulations to mandate the timely publication of the information and clearly specify what, if any information will be withheld from publication. It may require shifting the default from routinely classifying contracting information as confidential unless proven otherwise, to publishing it by default and providing a detailed justification when information that is legitimately sensitive is not disclosed (we provide guidance on navigating this issue in the [Mythbusting Confidentiality](#) report; more on this in [component 4](#)). Showing how changes to regulations will contribute to the policy goals identified in component 1 will help you to secure buy-in for them. For examples of legislation related to the disclosure of public contracting information, see [Box 6](#).

Example: Procurement experts from both government and civil society contributed to writing Afghanistan's new Freedom of Information (FOI) law and added as many data fields related to the OCDS as possible. [Independent Right to Know experts now rank Afghanistan's FOI as the best in the world.](#)

Play: Publish planning and post-award information

Publication of planning and post-award information is particularly important. Governments tend to focus most of their procurement teams' time and effort on the solicitation and award stages of the procurement process. This is also true when they intend to open up their procurement. Planning is often overlooked, but provides the most crucial opportunities for obtaining better results from procurement. When timely information is published about the process for deciding what to contract, when and how (such as budgets, feasibility studies, and related projects), all stakeholders can gain a more accurate understanding of the project's real needs and what solutions suppliers might provide to address them. It can minimize the negative impact of projects on communities, greatly improve procurement outcomes through better tender documents, and promote competition in the private sector. The moment at which you release the information is important too; a detailed [academic study of over 3.5 million procurements from Europe](#) shows that publishing information in the call for tenders has a significant effect on improving competition and reducing corruption risks, while releasing it after a contract is awarded does not.

Example: In Colombia, procuring entities must publish procurement plans detailing what they intend to contract each year. When a new procurement is set to start, the entity must disclose tender notices along with draft tender documents. All questions and comments from any stakeholder must be answered and published online for anyone to see, along with the final tender document. This has allowed potential suppliers and groups of citizens to actively participate in tenders and propose changes to projects and tender documents. The public disclosure of comments and answers has allowed authorities to identify and investigate bid-rigging, such as a [US\\$22 million scheme exposed](#) in a tender to supply fruit for Bogota's school meals program in 2016.

Governments have also used post-award contracting data very effectively for better contract management. Many public officers think that they've done the job when a contract is signed. But contract implementation, the stage where actual goods and services are delivered, is the main phase for monitoring that results are attained and that both financial and physical progress are being made.

Example: Paraguay's Ministry of Finance has published OCDS data for the implementation phase of the contracting cycle. Researchers used this information to estimate the [cost of delayed payments](#) to the economy, conservatively valued at US\$142 million. (The theoretical framework of the study assumes that companies anticipate late payment and increase their prices to compensate.) The government is considering a re-engineering of several stages of the payment process to cut these times, which would benefit both public entities and contractors, and if service delivery improves, citizens more generally.

[*Jump to further resources of planning and post-award publication*](#)

Play: Invest in procurement analytics and business intelligence

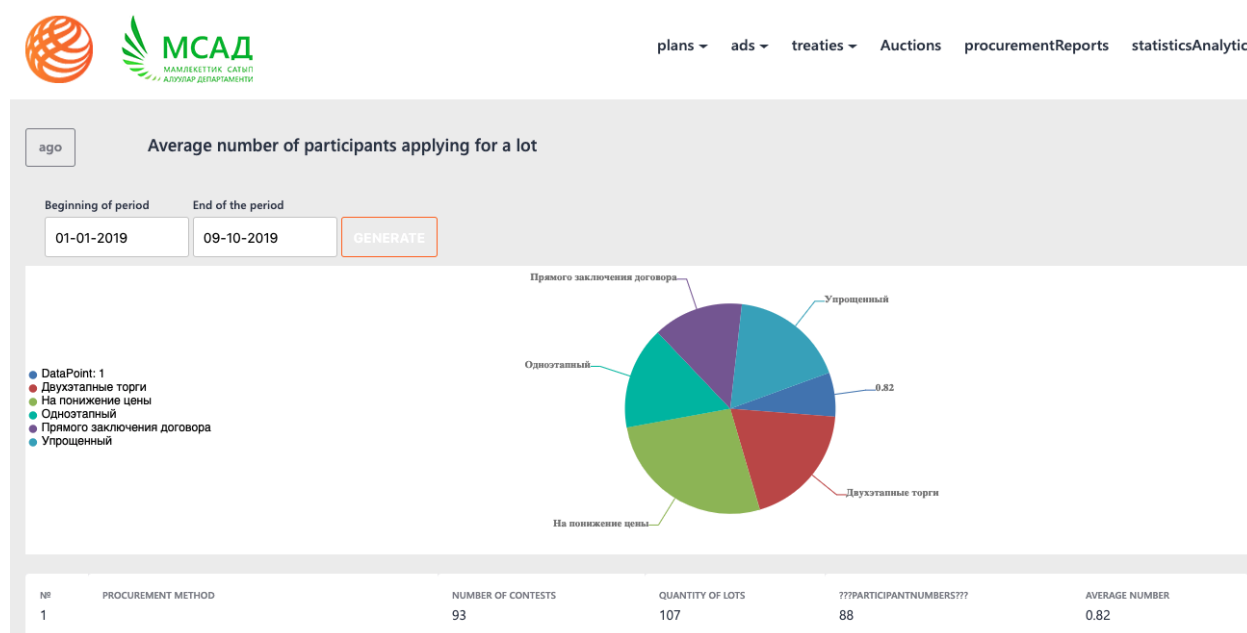
A [variety of tools and approaches](#) for procurement data analysis have been developed in different countries. Many of them focus on providing better business intelligence to the market. Companies begin to participate more and perform better if they have full information about upcoming contract expirations, awards, winning bids, and so on. To ultimately improve vendor participation and performance, other reforms and approaches are likely also needed, such as easy

request for proposal (RFP) processes, active contract management and prompt payments. We will elaborate on these solutions in [component 3](#).

Examples: The Kyrgyz Republic has a public [analytics module](#) based on OCDS data that generates interactive reports such as the average number of participants applying for a lot and total price and bidders for tenders per month. This is complemented by an internal [business intelligence tool](#) that is used by authorities for public finance monitoring.

The [Paraguay visualizations platform](#) includes an interactive map of tenders and distribution of contracts by volume per procuring entity which make it easier for vendors to identify interesting tenders as well as for residents to see what contracts are being awarded (or not) in their locality as part of contracting monitoring efforts.

Zambia introduced several standardized [monitoring reports](#) when it adopted the OCDS as part of a new electronic procurement system.



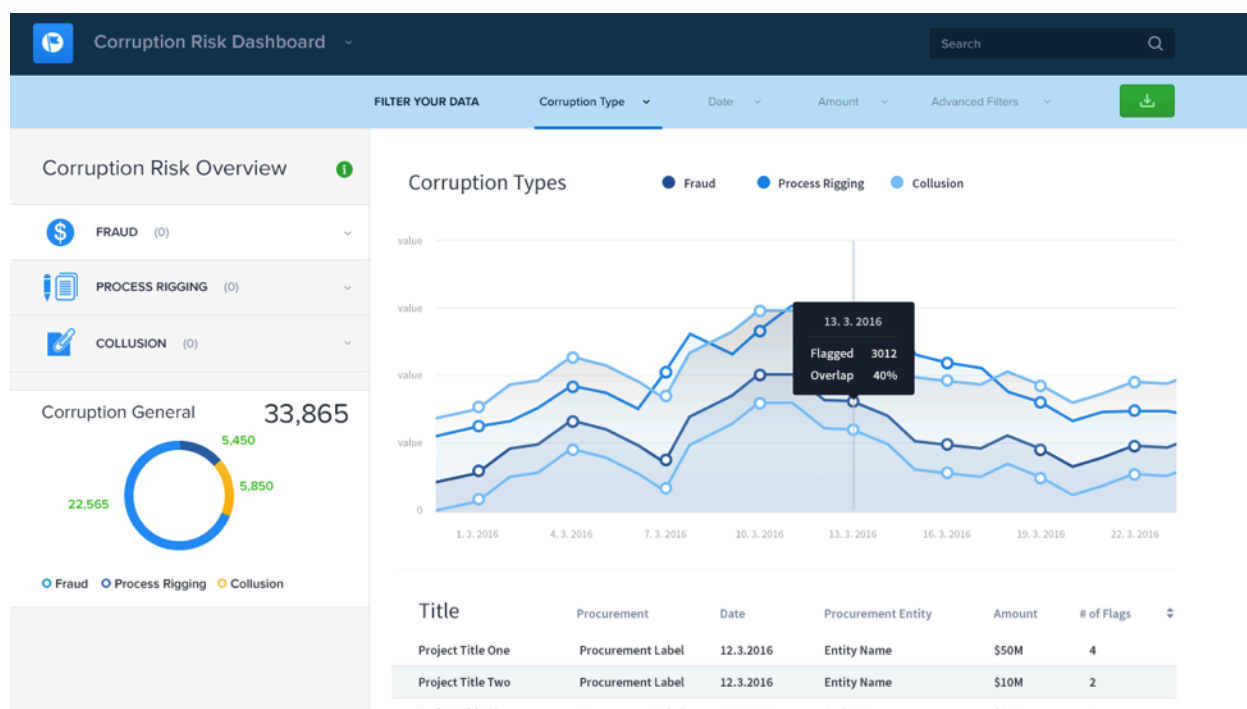
A sample interactive report based on OCDS data from the [Kyrgyz Republic's official procurement platform](#)



Sample analytics from the Kyrgyz internal business intelligence tool

Play: Use red flag detection

Another use case for procurement data is to automate raising a “red flag” when an anomalous pattern is detected in a procurement (such as an unusual price, bidding period or pattern, or lots of complaints). These serve as a starting point for further investigation and redress. Several countries have developed analytical tools to identify high risk procurements and we have published a [detailed paper](#) looking at lessons, key metrics and data fields used. Of course, in each case, the algorithms used should be adapted to local conditions.



Existing red flags tools include:

- TI Ukraine's Dozorro Risk Indicators tool: risk.dozorro.org
- Development Gateway's [Corruption Risk Dashboard](#)
- [RedFlags.eu](#) run by K-Monitor in Hungary
- The Albanian Institute of Science's [red flag tool](#)
- The [African Maths Initiative](#)'s red flags statistical package (R-Instat)

Example: In [Chile](#), civil society organizations and government agencies are working together in a public-private working group to monitor corruption and red flags in procurement. One of their projects is [a tool for detecting risky procurement, which is being developed by the NGO Observatorio Fiscal in collaboration with the public purchasing body, ChileCompra. We have guidance on how to design and implement red flags and risk detection methodologies for contracting.](#)

Play: Develop agile tech tools

We are big believers in building minimum viable products based on user research and then reiterating them quickly and often. The UK's Government Digital Service has some [helpful tips on how to do this best.](#)

As we mentioned earlier, keep engaging the users of your system. Involving users throughout the whole reform process helps to ensure uptake of your new data tools and improve their usability.

Examples: If government officers complain that the same data must be entered in multiple systems, a one-time data entry principle would improve everyone's experience of the procurement process.

The Ministry of Finance in Mexico developed the budget transparency portal [Transparencia Presupuestaria](#). They tested with users, then redesigned and built out the service based on user feedback before scaling it across multiple agencies.

In Ukraine, the government relies on a trusted NGO partner to develop prototypes of new products, with donors providing the venture capital. This "start-up" model allows them to test innovative approaches and to scale them up, if they deliver benefits, without the danger of institutional criticism and accusations of wasting public resources from a big bang failure.

Play: Create incentives for data use

The number one beneficiary of the data created should be the government itself. It is not enough to publish for the good of external actors (important though that is). Government personnel must collect and use their own data and see value from it. This is probably the most important feedback loop in the whole of the open contracting process. It creates an incentive for the publisher to improve the system's usability and data quality for all users.

The best incentive for government officers to use data is if it makes their jobs easier, but sometimes mandating adoption of a new system will be necessary if voluntary uptake is slow.

Examples: The UK's Government Commercial Function Contracts and Spend Insight Engine (CaSIE) tool aggregates data on all central government contracts and departmental spend, with data refreshed daily via API from existing databases like Contracts Finder. More than 1,000 staff have access to the platform, according to the head of the project. It provides powerful visualizations of key commercial data that allow individual departments to understand and track information on contracts and suppliers in their

departments and across government. Departments also use CaSIE to inform strategies to address key policy areas, such as tackling modern slavery in government supply chains.

After Uganda upgraded its e-procurement portal with open contracting, central government and district staff reported that compliance improved and procurement processes became more efficient and transparent. For example, timelines and automated notifications of delays help officers to track processes; the list of blacklisted suppliers helps them evaluate proposals; and bid notices can be printed by providers, rather than collected in person after being prepared manually.

Investing in data use will also build up the ecosystem of companies, journalists, civic technologists and academics who engage in analysis.

Examples: People with different needs will be most likely to use open contracting data if it's presented to them in ways that are conducive to their aims and capabilities. In the UK and Kyrgyz Republic, [OpenOpps](#) and [Tenderbot](#) respectively are working with open data to provide services to the private sector (to alert them to tender opportunities and promote market access).

Montreal has built different data interfaces for the public and for specialists. Their data visualization portal is designed to be easily navigated by the average citizen. Users can see aggregate spending, zoom in on specific contracts and departments, and explore individual projects. The city also has a more traditional portal designed to cater for specialist audiences who need more power and are less interested in aggregated data visualization. Features of this portal include complex search parameters, table-based displays, and documented APIs.

In Albania, the non-profit Albanian Institute of Science opened up municipal-level data on procurement and exposed cases of fraud involving the building of a new tourist centre. With pressure from the media, the contract was eventually cancelled.

In Kosovo, a civil society-driven platform helped identify the regional spread of buyers, suppliers, general spending trends, and potential corruption risks

in procurement. The Municipality of Gjakova used this data to boost local economic development and create an environment for innovation.

[Jump to further resources on data use](#)

Here are some outputs and outcomes that you can expect to have after these plays.

Component 2 Outputs

- Completed [mapping template](#) (that maps existing systems and data to the OCDS) or [TORs](#) for new electronic procurement system development incorporating OCDS requirements
- Completed [publication plan](#) with scope of implementation, including which agencies will be required to publish, for which procurements, for which contracting information (covering all stages from planning to close of the contract), and a publication timeline
- New or amended legal or regulatory changes that make regular and timely publication (as agreed in the publication plan)
- Number of capacitation sessions on data use, both for internal and external users
- Number of tools or features developed to facilitate data use
- # of procurement analytic or business intelligence tools
- # of published monitoring or research reports against KPIs or contracting goals (government or non-government)
- # of instances of data use by the private sector, government, researchers, media or civil society organizations

Component 2 Outcomes

- Mandatory, regular publication of OCDS data covering X procurement agencies
- % coverage of published data that covers key features, key information and agreed scope and timeliness
- Publication by X agencies across the five stages as measured by % of contract processes
- Regular use of published data for analysis & actions that track progress and help achieve the performance goals
- Increased capacity of government and external user to use data
- Published OCDS data measurably improves in its quality and completeness
- Emergence of new organizations that can provide support to governments or other stakeholders on data use and open contracting

Component 2 Resources

OCDS Publication

- [Open Contracting Data Standard Documentation](#)
- [OCDS for Public Private Partnerships](#)
- [Open Contracting for Infrastructure Data Standards Toolkit](#)
- [eGP OCDS Guidance](#)
- [OCDS 7 steps implementation guidelines](#) including assessment template, mapping template, implementation plan template, publication policy template, API guidance and more
- [OCDS Helpdesk](#)
- [Open Contracting Principles](#)
- [OCDS Extensions Explorer](#)
- [OCDS Extensions for linking budget and spending data](#)
- [Guidance for including the OCDS in electronic government procurement systems](#)

Automating compliance and international treaty reporting

- [OCDS for the European Union](#)
- [OCDS for the Agreement on Government Procurement](#)

Publishing Planning and Post-Award Information

- [Mythbusting report](#)
- [CGD principles of commercial confidentiality](#)
- [OECD Guidelines on Procurement](#)
- [Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems](#)

Data use

- [Methodology for Assessing OCDS Data Quality](#) & [Draft OCDS Data Quality Checks](#)
- [Tools Directory](#)
- [OCP Data Use & Progress Stories](#)
- [How to use OCDS data guidance](#) (in progress)
- [OCDS Kingfisher](#) & [Flatten tool](#)
- [Open Contracting: What works for American cities](#)

Component 3: Improve stakeholder engagement and oversight to achieve goals

Jump straight to the plays:

[Set 1: Monitor & improve the entire contracting system](#)

[Embed monitoring across the entire procurement system](#)

[Establish complaints and oversight mechanisms](#)

[Set 2: Monitor & improve specific contracting processes](#)

[Engage vendors in pre-market consultations](#)

[Make contracts simple](#)

[Adopt active contract management strategies](#)

[Get feedback on specific contracting processes or stages](#)

[Use integrity pacts](#)

[Component 3 Outputs, Outcomes & Resources](#)

This might be the most crucial component of an open contracting reform. It goes beyond technical developments to explore the tactics that can help you reach the best vendors and leverage the knowledge and support of industry experts, local communities and other key actors who can help to improve oversight and to drive your reform goals.

Improving data is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Unless feedback loops (and power and accountability) change, so there is an avenue to both use and respond to the new information, it is hard to see how any real impact can be had.

Open contracting reforms with real sustained impact have been embedded either in larger public financial management reforms and/or accompanied by a package of interventions that help achieve the reform goals. For example, in Ukraine the ProZorro public procurement reforms involved a range of change strategies, including the introduction of an e-procurement system, legal reforms, feedback and complaints mechanisms for citizens, a sustained business outreach and education campaign, as well as a branding and social media strategy. The sum of all of these interventions led to [impressive measurable results](#) (as mentioned [earlier](#)). Multistakeholder working groups and open data were crucial parts of the plan but the wider reforms helped open up avenues of adoption, use, feedback and accountability. The new system gathered support and scaled because there was a critical mass of buy-in and support from stakeholders. As users were engaged with the new system and saw it working better for them, so they became advocates and

had a stake in defending progress. Government users explicitly had a host of tools supporting them, including business intelligence analytics, much more effective channels to talk to the marketplace, and multiple new platforms focused on engaging bidders and providing them with new services.

Say the goal is to increase the participation of women-owned businesses in the marketplace, it is not enough to publish and analyze data about contracts. Request For Proposal (RFP) processes must also be inclusive and simplified, agencies need to reach out more actively to women-entrepreneurs which will involve public communications, award criteria for contracts may need to be modified, appropriate data “tags” need to be tracked in the system and frontline government agencies awarding contracts will also need to be engaged and should be able to give feedback to vendors and vice versa.

Stakeholder engagement and promoting feedback from the marketplace and other stakeholders may seem challenging and discomfoting. But any successful public contracting effort will require sharing information with potential suppliers; it takes two to make a market. Opening up your contracting information and seeking out a wide range of stakeholders will improve competition and improve your chances of reaching vendors with the best solutions for your needs. It will also give you insights into the market, what is working and what isn't. The sheer size of the market and the volume of information will require you to use innovative digital solutions (and a willingness to let the market develop its own solutions you mightn't have even considered). It is simply not possible to do this with traditional procurement systems that are closed by default and geared towards compliance.

Public procurement markets suffer from substantial information gaps. Governments often ignore the best solution for their needs and vendors lack critical input to develop efficient solutions. Any procurement process will share sensitive data with the marketplace and civic actors will already be looking at that and drawing conclusions. Our plays suggest how to harness and channel that scrutiny to get to better results by involving stakeholders and integrating feedback.

Plays in this area can be about a systemic change or can involve a particular set of contracts or a high profile and potentially high risk procurement process. So we are introducing two set of plays here. The first set focuses on how to monitor and improve the entire contracting system and the second focuses on making specific contracting processes more effective. Over time, of course, specific monitoring and

engagement programs can be scaled, especially as they tend to lead to measurably better outcomes.

Set 1: Monitor & improve the entire contracting system

Play: Embed monitoring across the entire procurement system

Open contracting data allows you to monitor each and every step of contracting process. Was the demand for the procurement justified? How was the project designed? Is the estimated value fair? Were there any problems with bid submission, award or signing the contract? And how about contract implementation? Are there any notable trends or recurring patterns? Having access to data allows users to conduct analysis on their own and add additional structured information if needed. This “many eyes” principle, with support and training, can add huge value to tracking and delivering public contracts.

Examples: In Ukraine, citizens and business can report violations or good practices across the procurement cycle through the online platform [DoZorro](#). The platform collects structured feedback to help buyers perform better, bidders to be treated equally and citizens to get value for money. As of September 2019, more than 1,370,000 citizens have visited DoZorro and recorded 31,000 feedback reports since 2016. Feedback is then channeled to buyers and their managing organizations to consider in their future work. Reports are also analyzed by 24 civil society organizations from different regions of Ukraine — members of a DoZorro community that regularly meets and trains new users. They look for possible violations and prepare complaints to regulatory authorities and law enforcement if any wrongdoing is identified. So far, they have reported about 21,000 violations. Around 30 percent of these cases have been resolved, including over 1,200 cases in which vendors were changed as a result of feedback. Some 59 criminal charges and 198 sanctions have been issued. Thanks to use of the OCDS, civil society organizations can also use [risk indicators](#) and [business intelligence and other monitoring tools](#) to target their monitoring on the greatest risk areas.

CoST programs engage a multistakeholder group to monitor infrastructure projects including all aspects of their planning, procurement and implementation. [In Honduras](#), the local CoST multistakeholder group carried out an assurance process (which highlights the accuracy and completeness

of infrastructure data) on a sample of General Roads Directorate projects. It revealed that 60% of the projects were based on outdated designs. Some designs were over 14 years old. The assurance process showed how this was leading to excessive cost overruns, ranging from 157% to 197%, and time delays of 18 to 60 months. The government has since introduced new policies that require all projects to provide up-to-date designs before construction can start. It has also implemented the Open Contracting for Infrastructure Data Standard, which allows various actors to use infrastructure project and contracting data more easily.

In Seoul, project monitoring is supported by its [One-PMIS](#) (Project Manager Information System). One-PMIS supports real-time monitoring at a number of levels: contractors and subcontractors can monitor their payments online, construction workers can ensure their payments are properly made, and citizens can monitor projects through the online platform to check progress. This tool shares public data and information about public projects, including photos and webcam streams in real time. Surveys have shown that citizens have greater trust in public projects, project managers report better outcomes and corruption in the implementation phase has decreased.

[*Jump to further resources on monitoring the procurement system*](#)

Play: Establish complaints and oversight mechanisms

For all your monitoring to lead to actual impact, it is important to have a mechanism in place for someone to act upon it and take corrective action. This corrective action could relate to a particular procurement (like cancelation) or it could lead to a policy change that would have wider impact to prevent the problem from occurring or improve a particular situation. In the absence of an effective complaints mechanism, the only recourse is likely to be the courts (which can be lengthy, expensive, and completely stall the procurement – negatively impacting service delivery). In fact, civil servants can be most resistant to transparency in contexts where there is no effective complaints mechanism, for fear of complaints leading to legal action and negative career and personal consequences for themselves.

Example: [A World Bank survey of 34,000 companies in 88 countries](#) found that competition was higher and kickbacks were fewer and smaller in places where transparent procurement, independent complaint procedures and

external auditing are in place. Country studies also show that openness combined with monitoring works.

In many places, a complaints mechanism is available to unsuccessful bidders. Ideally, the mechanism would be open to both bidders as well as citizens. In some cases, even an anonymous mechanism is useful.

Examples: An individual interested in participating in procurement or a tenderer in Georgia can file online complaints if there has been a violation of the law. Such complaints can put a tender on hold for up to 10 days, until a dispute review board has discussed the complaint and decided how to proceed. Making a complaint costs 2% of the estimated procurement value, but not less than 100 GEL and not more than 500 GEL (from around US\$33 up to \$170). Complaints related to tender announcements and to the terms of the tender are free. All complaints and decisions are [published online](#).

In the UK, anyone can submit complaints related to public contracting anonymously through the [Public Procurement Review Service](#), which then conducts an investigation and publishes their findings.

Establishing an efficient and effective consultation monitoring and complaints mechanism will probably require changes to legislation. We talk more about this in [component 4](#) on institutionalizing reforms, in which [Box 5](#) gives several specific examples.

Set 2: Monitor & improve specific contracting processes

Play: Engage vendors in pre-market consultations

Procurement is often seen as the process to tender and award public contracts but the planning process is vital to unlocking innovation and working out how a public need can best be met.

The market engagement process is too often an echo-chamber into the past. Previous suppliers will predominantly receive notifications from procurement systems. Arduous upfront registration and certification requirements, even those designed to give disadvantaged or social enterprises a leg up, add yet another barrier to discovering business opportunities. Remove this friction and proactively

engaging the marketplace before a tender is launched achieves much better outcomes.

Suppliers, especially new ones, need enough time to participate. Citymart, a US procurement innovation specialist, found that [less than 40% of procurement opportunities](#) that are designed to be “innovative”, i.e. open to new ideas and small business, are available for 28 days or more, which is the absolute minimum time a small business or startup needs to find partners for a bid.

Only [60% of US municipal governments](#) (and many less internationally) use procurement platforms that have free registration for suppliers and offer easy access to vital public information. Free platforms save suppliers from spending hours sifting through irrelevant information, paying \$50-150 to download a scope of works, or spending \$100-1,000 for a monthly subscription fee to access information or receive notifications.

UK law firm [Bates Braithwaite Wells has a very readable and informative guide on how to innovate in the commissioning process and engaging the marketplace](#). Their advice is very clear: “most of the opportunities to ensure innovation and change are only available at the commissioning stage beforehand – the stage where you make strategic choices around what you are trying to achieve, the outcomes you are trying to secure. It is vital that the commissioning process has begun a long time before the advertisement and that commissioning has also directly informed the procurement process itself.” And it is perfectly possible to work innovatively and to solicit ideas from the marketplace whilst respecting the principles of transparency and non-discrimination.

Reaching out to the vendor community through vendor conferences, phone calls, surveys, and focus groups helps to write better Requests For Proposals that vendors will respond to.

Examples: Communicating with the vendor community can help match citizen needs with marketplace capabilities. With support from the [HKS Government Performance Lab](#), the City of Denver used a Request for Information to develop a [supportive housing model](#) for the City’s growing homeless population. Collecting vendor feedback allowed the city to develop an outcomes-based funding model aimed at breaking the homelessness-jail cycle. By working closely with service providers and using administrative

data, the City developed a contracting model that rewarded housing stability and reduced the number of jail-bed days for people that encountered the criminal justice system most frequently. Interim [results](#) from a randomized controlled trial show a better targeting of program resources and higher housing stability among program participants (with 85% of participants retaining their housing).

By working with innovation specialists, Dublin [engaged over 1,200 vendors and awarded a last mile logistics contract to Passel](#), a startup from Australia that had never worked with government before and incorporated in Dublin to launch operations. Similarly, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) found 30 local small businesses (including 10 minority- and women-owned business enterprises) for their bike share request for proposal, or short RFP – 90% reported they would have never found out about the opportunity otherwise.

[Jump to further resources on vendor engagement](#)

Play: Make contracts simple

Contracts should be simple and accessible, as should any milestones and performance measures therein. [The IACCM offers extensive guidance on contract design and simplification](#) and a [contract design library](#). Simplifying and making contracts useful is vital to support their monitoring and use. It can also greatly reduce transaction costs on all sides.

It is often surprising how unnecessarily complex procurement contracts are, even for simple goods and services ([one lawyer reflects on why that is here](#)). Research by the IACCM looking at the five basic contract templates used by the Canadian federal government showed that government officials defaulted to using the most complex template almost all of the time. The practice of long and difficult contracts is rarely questioned, yet simplification is in everyone's interests.

Example: A group working on the [UK's Digital Marketplace program](#) found that the average UK IT contract took nine hours to read without bathroom breaks! They were able to reduce it to three hours with a summary of the key terms at the front without losing anything of value.

The [“500 word lawyer” lays out her 10 essentials for simpler construction contracts here](#).

There are even great examples of [visual contracts](#) showing the key performance measures, which have been used by some of the largest companies in the world.

Play: Adopt active contract management strategies

Just as the procurement process doesn’t start with the tender, so the process doesn’t end with the award. We have also seen powerful outcomes from results-based contracting that emphasizes vendor performance management throughout the entire procurement process.

Results-driven contracting implies that Requests For Proposals or solicitations specify goals and desired outcomes and put those front and center in the solicitation document. Aligning the tender award criteria and the procurement vehicle with contract goals helps ensure that the solicitation document is structured to advance the government’s priorities. For example, social and environmental criteria, when applied fairly and with clear guidelines, are important tools to advance policy priorities. Similarly, best value procurement policies to score proposals based on quality or experience instead of price only, allow governments to choose the right contractor to improve service delivery.

Once you have included clear outcomes in the solicitation document, you should establish a system to track progress toward stated goals. [Active contract management](#) involves holding high-frequency, data-oriented performance meetings with vendors to detect and rapidly respond to problems, celebrate successes, and make consistent improvements to contract performance. This approach empowers contract managers and vendors to identify opportunities to reengineer service delivery systems.

This play is especially powerful if the government involves feedback from users of a service in those vendor performance meetings. We discuss this approach more in the [next play](#).

Example: The Municipality of Santiago, Chile issued outcomes-oriented solicitations that provided for its most important parks maintenance contracts. The solicitations provided operational flexibility for vendors and

dropped onerous requirements, reducing contract costs by 24%. To maintain quality in service delivery, the City developed key outcome metrics (cleanliness, grass quality, irrigation, accessibility, and outdoor furniture) and implemented a mobile application to collect performance data consistently during inspection routines. Armed with the data, the Parks & Gardens department hold meetings with vendors to identify trends and solve specific operational challenges.

[Jump to further resources on vendor engagement](#)

Play: Get feedback on specific contracting processes or stages

Integrating feedback on planning, awards, tenders and contract delivery is absolutely key to unlocking better value and outcomes from public contracts. There is extensive economic literature on the [principal-agent problem](#) where one actor (the principal) needs to rely on another (the agent) who is interested in maximizing his or her benefits. This is a perfect description of public procurement. Embedding feedback from beneficiaries and other civil actors helps redress this balance by closing information asymmetries and monitoring costs.

This play describes how to integrate feedback from users on particular contracting processes at different stages of the procurement cycle. You don't have to change anything in response to feedback but you should listen and understand where it has come from.

Planning: As mentioned, the planning process is vital to unlocking innovation and working out how a public need can best be met. A lone government official might not understand all the needs of the potential beneficiaries, know which procurement procedures might work best, or have all of the options at market when drafting technical specifications for new road works. There are formal and informal strategies governments can use to communicate with key stakeholders, including the vendor community and final beneficiaries ([see Box 4](#)). Informal channels, such as conducting a vendor survey, can help governments understand the marketplace and obtain candid feedback from vendors. On the other hand, having consultations and doing market research is key to ensuring value for money. Introducing consultation is considered a more formal strategy as it will likely involve a change to the regulatory framework to specify the situations where consultation is required or allowed, the methods available (online, in person), and how

comments (and the changes that they produce) should be documented and published.

In the planning and pre-bidding phase, public hearings or consultations in needs assessments, feasibility studies and environmental and social impact assessments have been found to be particularly relevant for contracts affecting significant land use or delivery of services, so that the contracting process ultimately delivers to public concerns.

Box 4: Strategies to collect early feedback for solicitation development

<i>Informal</i>	<i>Formal</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vendor conferences• Surveys• Focus groups with final beneficiaries• Open Contracting Data / information releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request for Information (RFI) or Market Consultation• Pre-bid meetings• Feedback post award

Example: With regard to monitoring, [OECD member countries](#) increasingly recognize that they must invest in lowering barriers to engage the “willing but unable,” and make engagement attractive to the “able but unwilling.”

Tendering & award process: During the competition itself, the primary goal is for the decision-making process that determines the winning bid to apply the evaluation criteria fairly. Some countries have introduced civil society observers into the process to ensure the integrity of the procedure (more on that in the next play about [integrity pacts](#)). But, in cases where there is less transparency (publication of evaluation criteria and justification for the award is not possible), the audience for disclosure can be customized according to the information’s degree of secrecy.

Examples: For [sensitive defence procurement](#) in South Korea, certain information is presented to the entire National Assembly and more sensitive details are presented only to a subset of high-clearance-holding officials

(other procurement is extremely transparent with detailed information published for public monitoring).

UK law firm Bates Braithwaite Wells offers guidance on engaging [service users in the award decision](#), noting that their specific role should be clear and well communicated, the service users should be representative and not inclined to favour a particular bidder.

Implementation: Stakeholders, including coalitions oriented towards the “common good,” can also be engaged for monitoring of contract implementation.

Examples: In Paraguay, students from Ciudad del Este monitored how royalties from a hydroelectric dam were allocated to schools in their region. Using [open contracting data with collective action](#), they helped neglected schools chase funding for crucial repairs, leading to a dramatically fairer distribution of funds for school facilities. In 2017, 80% of the most needy schools received funding, compared to less than 20% in 2015.

In Afghanistan, a civil society organization ran a community monitoring program to track the performance of roads sector contractors in the 2000s. Monitors received technical training. Semi-formal procurement monitoring boards were also established, and informal strategies to publicly shame and incentivize corrective action by government and contractors were implemented. The combination of these elements [resulted in dramatically superior road quality](#), studied over a four year period in a randomized controlled trial (which is considered a particularly robust scientific method for assessing an intervention’s effectiveness).

In Peru, a [randomized controlled trial by Columbia University](#) looked at the impact of transparency and monitoring of contracts on the procurement process of infrastructure projects. It found that municipalities subject to monitoring spent 51% less than comparable districts under less scrutiny.

[Jump to further resources on feedback on contracting processes](#)

Play: Use integrity pacts

An [integrity pact](#) is a contract between a contracting authority and economic operators bidding for public contracts that they will abstain from corrupt practices

and will conduct a transparent procurement process. To ensure accountability and legitimacy, an integrity pact includes a separate contract with a civil society organization which monitors that all parties comply with their commitments. Integrity pacts were developed as a tool by Transparency International in the 1990s, and have been applied in more than 15 countries and 300 separate situations.

Examples: Since 2002, Transparency International's local chapter in Mexico has implemented pacts in over 100 contracts worth US\$30 billion. It has also emphasized the use of independent monitors, dubbed "social witnesses," and since 2004 the country's Public Administration Authority has made social witnesses mandatory for public contracts above a certain threshold.

In Pakistan, Transparency International partnered with the government in a US\$1 billion government water project in the early 2000s. They implemented an integrity pact that involved civil society in monitoring the bid evaluation, award decision process, and the implementation of the contract. The pact also required public disclosure of the award decision, including the major elements of the evaluation and the reasons for the selection of the successful bidder. The project was completed ahead of schedule and under budget.

Here are some outputs and outcomes that you can expect to have after these plays.

Component 3 Outputs

- Feedback mechanisms between government and external stakeholders like vendors and citizens including consultation, complaints mechanisms, monitoring, and oversight
- Legal and regulatory policies that grant vendors/citizens the right to complain or monitor
- Other norms incorporating feedback into individual contracting processes and/or overall public policy
- Documentation of how, where, and when interested stakeholders can engage with government and results therefrom
- Improved RFP templates and processes
- Analyses of the effects of incorporating feedback into public contracting processes

Component 3 Outcomes

- Policy changes made to address issues raised by analysis, user feedback and monitoring
- Improved trust and collaboration between government, buyers and civil society
- Measurable improvement on agreed KPIs (including increased public integrity, market opportunity, internal efficiency, improved quality of public goods and services)

This might include

- Increased number of bidders per tender
- Increased number of unique suppliers per buyer
- % tenders awarded by means of competitive procedures or best value procedures
- Lower % overrun of contracts that exceed budget
- Increased % of contracts completed on time

Component 3 Resources

Feedback on contracting processes

- Establishing [feedback mechanisms](#) for open contracting
- CSO Monitoring Checklist from TI USA ([Excel sheet of monitoring assistant with list of questions](#))
- [Guide to Monitoring Public Procurement in South Africa; by International Budget Partnership](#)
- [OECD Procurement Toolbox](#)
- [Citizen Monitoring of Roads in Zambia](#)
- [Citizen Monitoring of Roads in Ghana](#)
- [Road Watch Philippines Bantay Lansangan](#)
- [Procurement Watch Inc Philippines - Bantay Eskuwela: Operational Guidelines, School Furniture](#)
- [Training of CSO procurement observers in Mongolia: Asian Development Bank](#)
 - [Lecture 3.2 Presentation on CSO Monitoring](#)
 - [Lecture 3.3 Presentation on CSOs as Bid Evaluation Members](#)
 - [Templates for CSO bid observers](#)
- [A Guide to Monitoring School Construction Building](#)
- [Classroom Construction Monitoring](#)
- [Education Delivery of Goods Monitoring - G's Watch Textbook Count](#)
- [Integrity Watch Afghanistan - Community-Based Monitoring Toolkit](#)

- [DevelopmentCheck](#)
- [The art of the possible in public procurement by](#) Bates Wells Braithwaite, HCT Group, E3M
- [IACCM Contract Design Pattern Library](#)

Monitoring the entire procurement system

- [Open Contracting in IT Procurement](#)

Vendor engagement & performance management

- Guidance from the Government Performance Lab on outcome-based [contracting, vendor engagement and performance management](#)

Component 4:

Measure, adapt and institutionalize reforms

Jump straight to the plays:

[Institutionalize reforms to embed open contracting in public policy](#)

[Establish a multistakeholder or inter-agency working group](#)

[Have a \(simple\) monitoring, evaluation & learning \(MEL\) plan](#)

[Use strategic communications to build support](#)

[Component 4 Outputs, Outcomes & Resources](#)

Change is hard and progress is never linear. There will be setbacks and challenges so it is important to be agile, to have permission to experiment, measure and adapt your reforms.

It takes time and care for new processes and regulations to stick and for a culture of openness and trust to evolve. As stakeholders engage and see the benefits of that effort, incentives change and coalitions for reform can be built that can overcome vested interests and help embed better ways of working and better results. That's when reforms can be institutionalized.

This component covers this dynamic to help you understand if your reforms are moving in the right direction. Constantly evaluating your progress, openly sharing your challenges, and celebrating your results will also help you to build trust in the reform's effectiveness.

Showcasing your reform efforts is an opportunity to gain recognition as a pioneer in digital transformation of government too. In this very new field, we've only just begun to understand what best practices look like and how they operate. Through OCP, you can join a worldwide collaborative network of reformers who are tackling similar issues and connect with practitioners who are interested in exploring what works and why. You can also take advantage of the opportunity to connect with other practitioners and share knowledge, materials, tools, and other resources for learning.

Of course, evaluating and adapting your plays should be integrated throughout the entire reform process rather than left to the end. You've already set the foundation

for evaluation in the first component, where, together with your key stakeholders, you set goals and built a theory of change and devised indicators to track your performance. Now, it's time to actively measure progress against those goals and shift course where needed to achieve your desired results.

Play: Institutionalize reforms to embed open contracting in public policy

Policies that make publication mandatory and that include learning and feedback methods like consultation, complaints mechanisms, monitoring, and oversight are crucial cornerstones for open contracting.

These learning mechanisms should be integrated into existing or new public policies, such as laws, regulations, decrees, or city charters, to sustain your mandate and reform effort. Measuring results in a standardized way can build confidence that you are moving in the right direction and shape even more impactful policies going forward. You may need to change laws, rules, and procedures as part of the reform process to support disclosure and use of information. Ideally, these changes can occur during rather than after an open contracting intervention to allow for continuous improvement in systems.

Example: When Ukraine reformed their public procurement system in 2014-5, they redesigned the public procurement legislation and regulations to support the new system, including transparency, open data, and public oversight, and have subsequently updated legislation and regulations to introduce new requirements for auditors and controllers as well. They have coupled this with internal and external-facing analyses of performance to measure how well they are doing and identify opportunities for creating even more positive change.

[Box 5](#) contains several examples institutionalizing citizen engagement in the public contracting process from Colombia, Mexico, Mongolia and the Philippines.

[Box 6](#) contains examples of legal measures for disclosing public contracting information using Freedom of Information legislation, public procurement laws and regulations, sector-specific laws and regulations (covering particular industries or contracting vehicles including the extractives sector and public-private partnerships), public financial management laws and regulations and even in constitutional safeguards

Box 5: Sample legal measures for citizen participation in public contracting

Colombia: [Law 850 of 2003](#) allows citizens' oversight organizations to supervise public management, especially in relation to awarding and implementing public contracts. Such organizations can oversee the whole contractual process, from resource allocation to the implementation and technical quality of the contracted goods or services. Once the invitation to bid is published, any person may comment on the documented requirements that the bidders must fulfill, the need that the entity wants to satisfy, the structure of the process, and all aspects of the future contract. The public entity must answer these comments and publish the answers on SECOP (the publicly-available online contracting data system run by the public procurement agency).

Mexico: The Law on Procurement, Leases and Services by the Public Sector ([LAASSP](#)) and the Law on Public Works and Related Services ([LOPSRM](#)) require the involvement of "social witnesses" in public bidding exceeding certain value thresholds. The function of these individuals and civil society organizations is to propose strategies for improving transparency, impartiality and compliance with the legal framework in contracting process and to report any improper or illegal acts they observe. At the end of their participation, social witnesses are required to issue a public statement on the procurement proceedings, on Compranet (www.compranet.gob.mx). During the procurement process, social witnesses are also required to issue an alert if they detect any alleged irregularities.

Mongolia: In [Mongolia](#), the Public Procurement Law was amended in June 2011 to include a new formal role for civil society and professional organizations in bid evaluation and contract monitoring, stating that "Private and specialized non government organizations can be selected ... to perform monitoring, evaluation and auditing of customer's activity, contract performance and quality progress and execution." In 2013, the Ministry of Finance requested the Mongolian Public Procurement Partnership's support in coordinating CSO procurement monitoring efforts that are required under the amended procurement law.

Philippines: The [2003 Philippines Procurement Law](#) allows citizen participation in all stages of the procurement process, including pre-bid conference, opening of bids, bid evaluation, post-qualification and award of contract. Observers may also monitor contract implementation. And, in the extractives sector, although there is currently a moratorium on new mining operations, the [Philippines Mining Law](#) requires a "multi-partite monitoring team" to be operational before the mining

project can receive an environmental compliance certificate. This body is to be composed of representatives of the national government, affected communities, indigenous communities, an environmental civil society organization, and the project proponent.

Box 6: Sample legal measures for disclosing public contracting information

Freedom of Information Acts: In most countries, Freedom of Information (FOI) acts not only give citizens the right to request information, they also oblige public authorities to disclose information. In [the UK](#) and [Australia](#), public authorities proactively publish information based on model publication schemes, which commit authorities to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The [Right to Information Act](#) in Bangladesh requires government procurement entities to proactively disclose information regarding procurement planning, processes and decisions (i.e. award notification, implementation, etc.) and to provide information about these upon requests from citizens. Other examples include Indonesia's FOI act ([Law No. 14/2008 on the Transparency of Public Information](#)) and India's [Right to Information Act](#).

Public procurement laws and regulations: Although Vietnam and Zambia don't have an FOI law, but their public procurement laws require the government to publish contracting information. Colombia's public procurement laws and the Mexican Law on Procurement, Leases and Services by the Public Sector (LAASSP) and Law on Public Works and Related Services (LOPSRM) provide similar requirements for disclosing contracting information.

Sector-specific laws and regulations: In Brazil, the Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) Law and associated decrees provide legal backing for disclosing contracting information on PPPs. The Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Act, the Petroleum Act of Timor Leste, and the Petroleum Act of South Sudan provide legal backing for disclosing contracting information related to the [extractive industries sector](#).

Public financial management laws and regulations: In South Africa, the Municipal Finance Management Act (No. 56 of 2003) requires disclosure of certain government contracts. In Kenya, the County Governments Act legislates disclosure of procurement information.

The constitution: Transparency in public contracting is enshrined in the constitution in countries such as the Philippines, Mexico and South Africa. In Ghana, the right to information is constitutionally guaranteed, and civil society groups [successfully used](#) this constitutional right to gain access to contracting information via the court system.

Regional legislation: [EU procurement legislation](#), for example, requires EU Member States to disclose certain contracting information in the Official Journal of the European Union. Similarly, the EU Directive on Reuse of Public Sector Information requires EU Member States to have a process through which citizens can request public sector information, and limits exemptions for disclosure.

Legislation applicable to private companies: The [majority of FOI acts](#) specifically state that they cover state-owned enterprises. In most jurisdictions, where private companies provide public goods, services, or infrastructure, information held by those companies with regard to those public goods, services, or infrastructure is subject to FOI legislation (and other legislation requiring disclosure of public contracting information). The [South African Promotion of Access to Information Act](#) specifically permits access to records held by private bodies carrying out public functions, and the Supreme Court of Appeal ruled that requirements for transparency and disclosure apply to any entities that enter into commercial agreements of a public character with the state. In India, the [Central Information Commission](#) said that the FOI act should extend to PPPs in which the government holds a substantial stake.

Play: Establish a multistakeholder or inter-agency working group

Your reform team should be supported by a multistakeholder or inter-agency working group or committee to keep key actors across departments informed and onboard. It should also review progress on the reform plan, discuss lessons and help to coordinate any pivots that are needed to get to impact. Sometimes these have been informal and sometimes formally constituted, sometimes they have

been a result of institutionalizing reforms, sometimes they have preceded institutionalization, the main thing is that they signal the government's openness and willingness to improve and generate external brainpower to aid reforms and get to impact faster.

They work best when integrated into the business flow of the government unit that convenes them. That way, stakeholders can have a reasonable expectation that the government will take their insights into account regularly and the inputs fit smoothly into government decision making.

We have documented how countries like [Ukraine](#), [the UK](#) and [Uganda](#) have formed these strategic partnerships.

The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab recommends a similar approach to elevate the procurement function within government. [Strategic Procurement Systems](#) are a multistakeholder approach to manage high-priority solicitations and contracts to meet specific goals and jurisdiction-wide strategic objectives. This approach often involves enhancing inter-agency structures to improve coordination when developing strategic solicitations and improving communications between key actors. As such, it helps develop organizational capacities to structure procurement effectively.

Play: Have a (simple) monitoring, evaluation & learning (MEL) plan

Gathering persuasive, quantifiable evidence will help demonstrate to policymakers and the public at large that your reform efforts are making a difference. Data on performance improvements and impacts of frontline services will also help you build a powerful argument when seeking additional resources and political support.

This is where a simple and targeted [MEL plan](#) is so valuable. There's no need for these plans to be complex: it is far better to track a few indicators in a robust manner than do lots of things poorly when it comes to crafting a MEL plan. It should be guided by the program's goal and theory of change (developed in [component 1](#)) and will help you track the progress of the reform against key outcomes, such as goal articulation, legal reforms, data publication, data use, or citizen participation.

Selecting the right indicators to put into your MEL framework is key to ensuring you are measuring reliable metrics that truly represent the state of your public procurement system. We maintain two master lists of indicators mapped to the

OCDS to help you find the right things to measure: 1. A list that [contains indicators](#) across all five main impact goals; and 2. a list specific to [public integrity indicators](#).

After selecting indicators, it's crucial to see if the necessary data fields for calculation (which both lists contain) are available and of high quality in your local dataset. If not, it's best to switch out for proxy indicators that rely on data fields that are available. Running these data availability and quality checks has the added benefit of identifying exactly what priority data fields are missing from the local dataset. Demonstrating what you could calculate given more or better data is a solid strategy for advocating for improvements in data publication practices.

We strongly recommend calculating baselines, or the values of indicators at the present, at the beginning of the reform. Even though it is foundational, it often gets missed. Baselines are a critically important tool that helps measure the true pre-post effects of open contracting programs. If done robustly, these types of analyses can demonstrate the magnitude of the effects of open contracting, which can be used as a quantitative and fact-based argument for continuing or expanding efforts.

We have helped many cities and countries develop robust MEL frameworks against which to track progress towards impact.

Examples: We worked with the government of Colombia to select their key indicators for monitoring and evaluation, before carrying out the calculations. This was part of a larger effort to critically analyze how well public procurement was working and where the government could make positive changes. We co-developed the key indicators list with government, a process during which we also collaborated with external partners from CSOs, the private sector, and academia. We then began planning how we'd do each calculation, field by field. After, we made a list of all the fields needed for all indicators and assessed if these data were public and in what database they could be found. The next step was to work with the OCDS Helpdesk to check the quality and consistency of the information contained within these data fields to ensure that the final calculation would be reliable. This exercise helped get full clarity on what indicators were most important, ensuring that all selected indicators were feasible to calculate, and identifying how the results of these calculations could influence public policy in Colombia.

Another example is the [MEL framework for Nepal](#). Last modified in 2017, this framework develops out not only the needed indicators and their calculation methodologies, but also the right contextual and methodological information so that these results could be placed into proper context. The selected indicators represent a mix of quantitative, data-based indicators and qualitative indicators including reviews of regulations and policies. This framework stands out because it shows that data, alone, won't tell the whole story: qualitative contextual information, such as citizen trust, is key for understanding what these hard numerical results actually mean in a given local context.

Beyond the OCP, the [Scottish Government has published its work plan and progress indicators for its open contracting reforms](#).

It is easy to get lost in the daily reform grind of advocacy, technical changes, and stakeholder engagement so it is important to take time out and reflect on your MEL plan to know what is working and what's not and then to course correct. As the [UK's Government Digital Service's Design Principles](#) say "iteration reduces risk, makes big failures unlikely, and turns small failures into lessons." This [blog from Feedback Lab](#) covers how to course correct elegantly.

[*Jump to further resources on monitoring, evaluation & learning*](#)

Play: Use strategic communications to build support

We have also seen the power of documenting – and actively communicating – progress and challenges continuously throughout open contracting activities. Particularly in the early stages of the reform, demonstrating wins can placate sceptics and build support for the program among key actors and the public. Sharing your story in a compelling way builds upon all the other plays in this book. It involves identifying your key audiences and considering their interests and knowledge level, documenting progress in a standardized way throughout the reform process, and shaping a narrative through combining quantitative data analysis and qualitative contextual information garnered through conversations with local stakeholders to put those results into context. Changing hearts and minds through storytelling requires an acute sense of the human-level impacts of the work and the ability to prove the importance of open contracting in generating those social changes through robust data and information analysis. The stories

most likely to build support for future work provide both hard evidence as well as real-life examples of how open contracting can improve citizens' lives everywhere.

Being a member of the OCP community gives you the chance to share your story globally with fellow practitioners. We celebrate stories not just of huge impacts, but also stories of progress towards eventual impact and discussions of lessons learned along the way. In fact, for many members of our community, stories about challenges, setbacks and experience gained are some of the most valuable. We encourage you to share not just the wins, but also the struggles. Providing an honest view of how challenging open contracting work is at the ground level is invaluable for identifying opportunities to improve or pivot program plans and receive advice and support from others in the field.

The UK's Government Digital Service shares some social media tips [here](#). Hivos also has some practical resources [here](#). The World Bank published a [toolkit for strategic reform communication](#) that includes a case study on procurement reforms in the Philippines.

Example: The Ukraine ProZorro team explains their progress and impact on their website and through traditional and social media channels. They regularly publish short summaries reporting on KPIs, narrative case studies in accessible language, explanatory videos and project updates. This approach has also helped the ProZorro team to create awareness of their efforts in the international community, and secure funding from the Luminate Foundation and bilateral and multilateral donors. They have been recognized as global leaders in innovation, receiving several prestigious prizes, such as the Open Government Partnership Award.

Sharing what works is an important part of the impact documentation process. External sharing of lessons learned, particularly in terms of how you overcame challenges, creates a space for others to learn from your example. It's also a great chance to give credit to all of the individuals and organizations that played a role in creating fairer, more demand-driven procurement for all.

Example: We have supported Ukraine, Colombia, and Paraguay to share the results of their hard work in robust [impact stories](#). These in-depth investigations provide a stage to display how they combined hard data analysis with contextual information about local realities and needs to show how open contracting changed lives in their local communities. Impact

stories pinpoint who the key change agents for reforms were and explore how they worked across stakeholder groups to improve their citizens' quality of life. Colombia for example, showcases its leadership at the global level through the story of how they attacked a price fixing scheme through better public policy, data analysis, and goal-driven open contracting. This resulted in local champions ensuring better school meals to hungry children across the city. We also help many global leaders share their successes in the form of [progress stories](#), which can be thought of as stories of stepping stones towards eventual impact. In these progress stories, actors across the world focus on the concrete plays governments and others made at every step of the journey from data publication to course correction and what initial results they have seen.

[*Jump to further resources on learning and storytelling*](#)

Here are some outputs and outcomes that you can expect to have after these plays.

Component 4 Outputs

- Collaboration agreements (e.g. MoU) between government and non-government actors and/or multistakeholder or inter-agency working group
- Legal measures for disclosing public contracting information
- New or improved laws and policies
- Other norms that institutionalize citizen engagement in the public contracting process
- MEL plan & progress reports
- Impact and progress stories
- Strategy & reflection meetings

Component 4 Outcomes

- Implementation of reform aligns with goal, theory of change, budget and timeline
- Results and learnings showcased at conferences, lectures and other events
- Reform model replicated by other actors

Component 4 Resources

MEL plans

- [Open contracting MEL framework from Nepal](#)
- Use case indicators [mapped to OCDS](#)
- Red flag indicators [mapped to OCDS](#)
- [Results Framework](#)

Other resources

- [OCP's learning insights](#)
- [Open contracting impact & progress stories](#)
- OCP [Theory of Change](#)

Conclusion & next steps

Transforming public contracting is hard work. It takes time, willpower and a strategic approach. But you are not alone. From goal setting through open data, embedding feedback to iterating and institutionalization, we hope this playbook gives you the tools and lessons to navigate common challenges and deliver outstanding results.

We envisage that this document will become a roadmap for modernizing public procurement and solving real problems to make stakeholders' lives easier, from those in government, to vendors and citizens who benefit from the public contracting system. We will keep adding to the playbook to bring in the best, most salient lessons from the frontline to help you get to more impact, faster.

As ever, we are only an email away if you have any specific questions. You can get us directly on engage@open-contracting.org. A full list of resources and services that we can help you with is available [here](#).

You are now ready to join the cutting edge of procurement reforms worldwide. Good luck and remember that **#TheFutureIsOpen!**

Annex:

Open Contracting Project Results Framework

This theory of change describes how open contracting can achieve sustainable impacts. It describes the intermediate outcomes that we'd hope to see en route. This annex expands on the components listed in this document by suggesting additional outputs and outcomes and providing sample indicators.

Long term, sustainable impact (4+ years)

Any of the below intervention areas and its related activities, outputs, and outcomes can map to the following types of long-term, sustainable impact that **improve the quality of life of citizens**:

- Culture of procurement shifts from closed to open
- Increased accountability
- Deeper engagement between sectors and functioning feedback loops
- Increased level of trust in public contracting system
- Increased public integrity
- Increased market opportunity
- Increased internal efficiency
- Increased value for money
- Improved quality of public goods, works, and services

Sample Indicators

A full menu of impact-oriented indicators can be found [here](#)². Below are sample key indicators per key impact type, all calculable with core OCDS fields.

Impact Type	Sample indicators
Public integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of tenders with linked procurement plans • % of contracts that do not have amendments • Mean number of contract amendments per tender per buyer
Market opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mean number of bidders per tender • Mean number of unique suppliers per buyer • % tenders awarded by means of competitive procedures
Internal efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of contracts which are canceled • Mean number of days from tender close to award decision • Mean number of days from evaluation of bid documents to start of implementation
Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of contracts that exceed budget • Mean % overrun of contracts that exceed budget

² All indicators in the table are included in the OCDS mapping, along with a list of OCDS fields needed to calculate, a rationale, and additional context. As with the indicators listed below in the ToC, calculability depends completely on data coverage, so you should complete a full coverage analysis before selecting final indicators.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of contracts completed on time • Mean price variation of same item across all awards
Quality of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of contracts that publish contract financial implementation details • % of contracts that publish contract physical implementation details

Component ³	Key Activities	Key Outputs (<1 year)	Key Intermediate Outcomes (1-3 years)	Key Sample Indicators (Note: Calculability depends completely on data coverage, so you should complete a full coverage analysis before selecting final indicators)
Component 1: Identify goals and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate open contracting (OC) benefits beyond transparency • Create spaces for cross-sectoral feedback around goals and needs • Define goals and develop publication plans around those goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed problem statements and goal-oriented intervention plans • Solution mappings that include designation of responsibilities and tentative timeline • Publication plans oriented around problem solving and user needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress against intervention plan • Progress against solution mapping 	<p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of detailed problem statements • Development of solution mappings • Articulation of use cases and KPIs • Development of publication plans <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % progress against solution mappings • % progress against publication plan

³ Cross-sectoral engagement and feedback loops, wherein stakeholders across sectors engage with one another from the very first steps of policy creation, through data publication, through data use, all the way through policy changes resulting from data use, are considered a required part of each intervention area.

Component 1: Build political mandate and reform team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate OC into larger reforms and agendas • Connect technical implementers and policy makers so that the policies and implementation are realistic, sustainable, and impactful • Build political coalitions to generate momentum and overcome challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements of support for OC by policy makers • Plans for incorporating OC into larger reforms and agenda • New or improved spaces for communication between policy and technical teams • Plans for new or improved coalitions between policy makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-level normative statements supporting open contracting • Robust or light mandates (such as National Action Plans) around open contracting • Mandatory publication • Defense of right to monitor • Improved communication and trust between policy and technical teams • New coalitions or improved trust between policy makers 	<p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements of support of OC by policy makers • Plans for incorporating OC into larger reforms and agenda • Meetings and consultations with key stakeholders • Collaboration agreements (e.g. MoU) between government and non-government actors <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy ask in national or international fora • Robust or light mandates to OC • New or improved policies, such as those that make publication mandatory and defend right to monitor • Partnerships across sectors for reform design and implementation • % of survey respondents who note improved trust and communication between policy and technical teams • Number of new coalitions formed • % of respondents to survey who note improved trust in coalitions
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Component 2: Improve disclosure of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve understanding of technical aspects of data publication • Improve data quality, including linked data • Create spaces for implementers and users to communicate goals and needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacitation sessions on data publication • Increased resources towards publishing data • System outlines and field mapping templates • Plans on technical revisions that include designation of responsibilities and tentative timeline • New or improved spaces for communication between publishers and end users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial or continued publication of data • Progress against publication plan and in the quality of data, based on Helpdesk methodology • Improved timeliness of data • Increased fitness of data for end user goals and need • Improved user-friendliness of existing technical data, portals, and tools • Improved communication and trust between publishers and end users 	<p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of capacitation sessions on publication • % increase in resources committed to publication • Number of publication plans and field mapping templates developed • Number of plans on technical revisions developed • Number of legal changes that mandate regular and timely publication • Development of new or improved spaces for communication between publishers and users <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of publishers of OC data • Number of instances of use of published data for tracking progress and meeting goals • % of all contracting process available in open format • % savings from improved efficiency or automatization • % improvement in data quality score • % of time saved through easier accessibility of data, through APIs, bulk downloads, or other mechanisms • % decrease in mean days of public publishing of data • % of respondents to survey who note improved usefulness of data • % of respondents to survey who note improved user-friendliness of data and tools
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Component 2: Increase use of data

- Increase capacity of end users to use data for goal-oriented analysis
- Identify potentially impactful initiatives and provide them the support and resources they need to develop and scale their projects
- Create feedback spaces for joint analysis and interpretation of results between publishers and users

- Capacitation sessions on data use
- Data use- and goal-oriented project plans that include designation of responsibilities and tentative timeline
- New or improved spaces for collaboration between publishers and end users to analyze data and co-design solutions
- Development of cross-sectoral data use and feedback project plans

- Increased capacity of internal and external user to use data
- Increased use of data or data tools across sectors
- New organisations that can provide support to governments or other stakeholders on open contracting
- Organizations receive new funding to work on OC
- Improved collaboration and trust between publishers and end users on data use and feedback mechanisms
- Progress on cross-sectoral data use and feedback projects

Outputs

- Number of capacitation sessions on data use
- Number of data use- and goal-oriented project plans developed
- Number of new or improved spaces for collaboration between publishers and end users

Outcomes

- % of survey respondents who note knowledge gain and increased empowerment in using data
- % increase in data downloads or visits to data site
- Number of new tools or features developed to facilitate data use, including procurement analytic or BI tools
- Number of published KPIs reports
- % increase in users of data or data tools
- Number of new projects that are using data
- Number of new organisations that can provide support to governments or other stakeholders on open contracting
- % of survey respondent who note improved trust and collaboration between publishers and users
- % progress against cross-sectoral project plans

Component 3: Improve stakeholder engagement and oversight of public contracting to achieve goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacitate governments in how to form feedback loops and take corrective action • Change the culture of data analysis in government for learning and for taking corrective action • Create spaces for cross-sectoral collaboration for change mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacitation sessions on creating feedback loops and taking corrective action • Plans on change mechanisms for corrective action that include designation of responsibilities and tentative timeline • New or improved spaces for cross-sectoral collaboration on change mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity of governments to take corrective actions • Progress against plans on change mechanisms • Successful checking and processing of complaints • Successful resolution of complaints • Improved collaboration and trust between publishers and end users on change mechanisms and corrective action • Early signs of progress towards stated goals, such as reduced entry costs, increased accountability, or lower administrative burden, among others 	<p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of capacitation sessions on feedback loops • Number of plans on change mechanisms for corrective action developed • Number of new or improved RFPs developed • Number of new or improved feedback mechanisms <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of respondents to survey who note knowledge gain and increased empowerment on corrective action • % progress against plans on change mechanisms • Number of complaints submitted • % of complaints checked and processed • % of complaints successfully resolved • Number of new or improved feedback mechanisms • Number of policy changes made to address issues raised by analysis, user feedback and monitoring • % of survey respondents who note improved trust and collaboration between publishers and users in change mechanisms
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Component 4: Measure, adapt and institutionalize reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacitate governments on Theory of Change (ToC) creation, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL), and indicator monitoring • Develop MEL frameworks and calculation plans • Connect MEL teams and policy makers so that the policies and implementation are realistic, sustainable, and impactful • Create local and global peer learning and sharing spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacitation sessions on ToC creation, MEL, and indicator monitoring • Goal-oriented MEL frameworks that include timeline and designation of responsibilities • New or improved spaces for communication between MEL and policy teams • New or improved spaces for local and global peer learning and sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity of governments to develop ToCs, MEL frameworks, and indicators • Progress against MEL and indicator calculation plans, including calculation of baselines or midlines • Improved practices and processes in implementation due to iteration and learning • Early signs of progress towards stated goals • Learning reports to inform the implementation of OC in other countries • Progress and impact stories shared globally • Increased learning and collaboration within global community 	<p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of capacitation sessions on ToC creation, MEL, and indicator monitoring • Number of goal-oriented MEL frameworks and plans created • Number of MEL progress reports developed • Number of strategy and reflection meetings • Number of progress and impact stories shared • Number of new or improved spaces for collaboration between MEL and policy teams • Development of new or improved spaces for local and global peer learning and sharing <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of survey respondents who note knowledge gain and increased empowerment on ToCs, MEL, and indicators • % progress against MEL and indicator calculation plans, including calculation of baselines and/or midlines • % progress against metrics related to impact goals • % of survey respondents who note improved learning and collaboration within global community • Number of results and learnings documents showcased at conferences, lectures and other events • Number of reform models replicated by other actors
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About the Open Contracting Partnership

The Open Contracting Partnership is a silo-busting collaboration across governments, businesses, civil society, and technologists to open up and transform government contracting worldwide. We bring open data and open government together to make public contracting fair and effective. Spun out of the World Bank in 2015, we are now an independent not-for-profit working in over 30 countries around the world. We help make reforms stick and innovations jump scale, and foster a culture of openness about the policies, teams, tools, data, and results needed to deliver impact.

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