



Webinar

e-Procurement assessment
of **Mauritius**

3 October 2024
16:00 Port Louis /
14:00 Paris



An aerial photograph of a tropical island, likely in the Maldives, featuring a prominent, dark, rocky peak (Dhoo Dhipu) rising from a lush green island. The surrounding waters are a vibrant turquoise, transitioning to deep blue further out, with white sandy beaches and coral reefs visible. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy clouds in the distance.

Submit your questions through the
[Zoom Q&A button](#)





Opening remarks

Mr. H. Rambhojun
OSK, Director
Procurement Policy Office





Opening remarks

Mr. Ashraf Ayad
Procurement Manager
African Development Bank





Findings and recommendations of the e-Procurement MAPS assessment

Mr. Amilcar Bilale

Team Leader
African Development Bank



Assessment of the Mauritius e-Procurement System (e-PS)

Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems



October 3rd, 2024





Context

Mauritius, an upper-middle-income country, aims to become a high-income country by 2030.

The government is committed to improving governance, efficiency, and transparency in public procurement.

The e-PS was launched in 2015 to streamline procurement processes and improve governance.





Overview of the assessment

01

Pillar I - Legal, Regulatory and Policy Framework

02

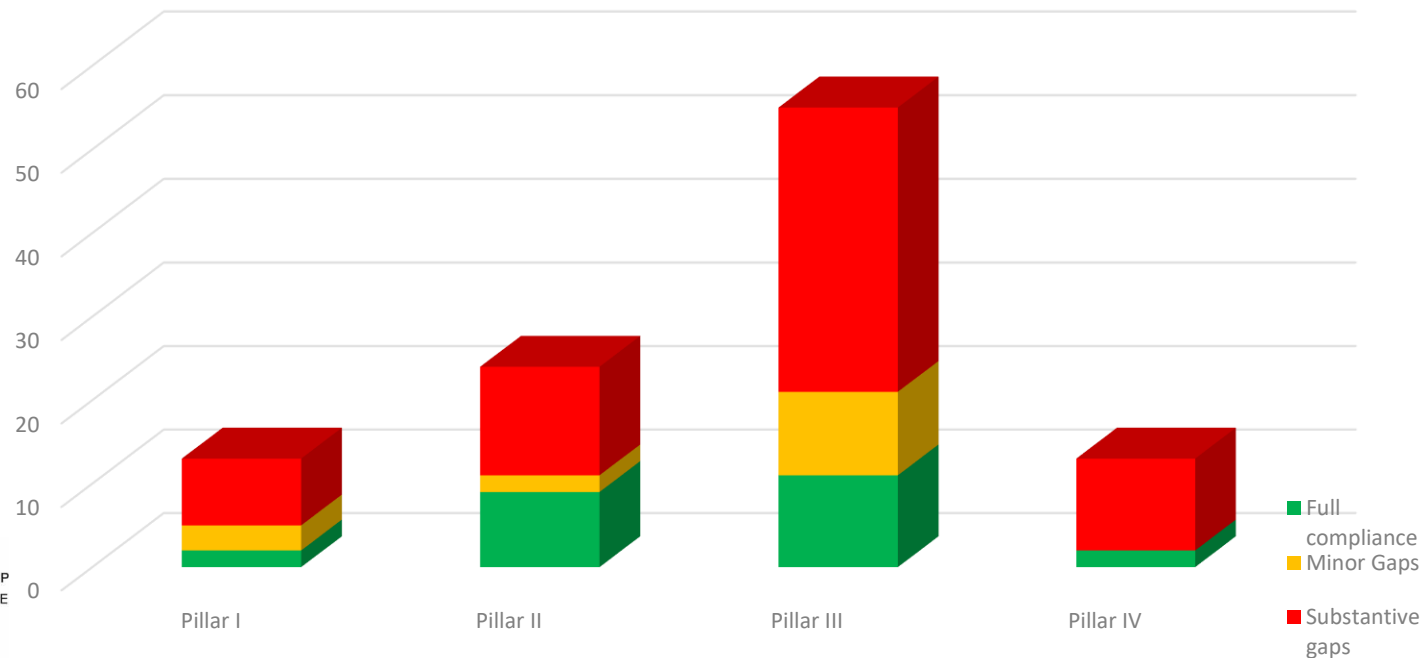
Pillar II - Institutional Framework and Management Capacity

03

Pillar III. Procurement Operations and Market Practices

04

Pillar IV - Accountability, Integrity and Transparency of the Public Procurement System (PPS)



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Pillar I: Findings and recommendations

• KEY STRENGTHS

Mandatory use of e-PS has facilitated adoption.

Use of electronic means of communication, including for conclusion of contracts, with the Electronic Transaction Act 2000 (ETA).

The Data Protection Act provides a robust framework for the collection, storage, and use of personal data.

• KEY GAPS / AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Legal Framework Misalignment: The existing Public Procurement Act (PPA) and Regulations (PPR) are not fully aligned with the e-PS.

Absence of strategic planning: The lack of a comprehensive e-procurement strategy and roadmap.

No requirement for information to be published in accessible browser or open data format.

• KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Undertake a **critical review** of the PPA, PPR, Public Procurement (Electronic Bidding System) Regulations 2015 and other procurement legal framework documents.

Develop an e-Procurement Strategy: Create a comprehensive strategy with a clear roadmap, resource allocation, and plans for rollout, training, sustainability, and system enhancements.

Mandate the disclosure of listed comprehensive procurement information in an easily accessible commonly used browser/interface ideally in **open data format**.

Pillar II: Findings and recommendations

• KEY STRENGTHS

There is good coordination between the Procurement Policy Office (PPO) and the Central Informatics Bureau (CIB).

Staff working in the e-PS unit are skilled and knowledgeable about the e-PS.

The PPO organizes **training programs on the use of the e-procurement** system annually for suppliers, public body users, and auditor in accordance with its mandate.

• KEY GAPS / AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

There is **no evidence of robust coordination mechanisms between the PPO and public bodies**, including the Central Procurement Board (CPB), budgetary and treasury authorities, audit institutions.

The PPO e-PS unit is under-resourced and risk of vendor lock in is high.

Manuals and resources materials are not updated regularly.

• KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Continuously improve the e-Procurement ecosystem by **establishing formal, robust coordination mechanisms and communication channels with public bodies** to facilitate regular interaction and joint working.

Vacant positions in the e-PS unit be filled and a **dedicated business continuity technical team under the PPO** be formed to ensure knowledge transfer and avoid a vendor-lock situation.

All manuals and resources should be reviewed and updated in a regular basis to ensure their reliability and authenticity for all users and stakeholders.

Pillar III: Findings and recommendations

• KEY STRENGTHS

The e-PS allows bidders to communicate with public bodies through their user dashboard. The e-PS maintains a Supplier register in its database.

The e-PS is designed to comply with the requirements of the PPA and the PPR. Bidders can only modify their Bids before the bid submission deadline.

The existence of the government's interoperability framework **InfoHighway**.

Bids are encrypted and the e-PS uses digital certificates/signatures to authenticate Public Buyers and Suppliers and minimize the risk of fraud or repudiation of their actions.



• KEY GAPS / AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Selective Use and Offline Processes: The e-PS is underutilized, particularly for high-value procurements. Most of the public bodies carry out the evaluation process and awarding process outside the e-PS. Annual Procurement Plans (APP) and multi-year annual procurement plans are not created in the e-PS.

There is no automated exchange of data and documents with any external systems. The system is not interfaced with any external e-services, such as the budget, treasury/payment, tax, business registrar, invoice, and banks for bid securities.

The e-PS does not store and disclose data in a machine-readable open data format.

• KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Address Non-Compliance: Conduct a high-level policy review to understand the reasons for selective e-PS use and implement measures to ensure mandatory compliance.

The use of [InfoHighway](#) should be leveraged to **facilitate data sharing among public bodies**. An integration plan should be prepared, approved, and implemented by the PPO to integrate the e-PS with all other systems.

Implement Open Contracting Data Standards (OCDS): Adopt OCDS for data storage and publication, promoting transparency and enabling data analysis.





Pillar IV: Findings and recommendations

• KEY STRENGTHS

Internal auditors can get access, upon request, to all the documents, content and processes of specific bids on a read-only basis. A few Ministries and departments have carried out **internal audit using the e-PS data.**

The e-PS allows users to search all IFBs for goods, works, services, and non-consulting services using the open competitive bidding procedures from the search functions on the homepage of the system.

• KEY GAPS / AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Missing features: The system does not provide a dedicated tool for External control/audit. Challenges and appeals cannot be lodged or conducted through e-PS.

Limited Stakeholder Engagement: Civil society is not actively engaged by government to facilitate the monitoring and improvement of public procurement.

Cumbersome System Design: The system's design and processes are complex and not user-friendly.

• KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

More features development: The e-PS should develop a dedicated tool for the external auditors, facilitating auditors to use the e-PS for financial and procurement audit. The e-PS Challenge and Appeal module should be activated and tested.

A formal forum should be established for dialogue between the government and the CSOs to improve the e-Procurement ecosystem.

Conduct a Critical Review of the e-PS: Evaluate the system's design, functionality, and user experience to identify areas for improvement and simplification.



Conclusion

The e-PS in Mauritius has the potential to significantly transform public procurement

Addressing the identified gaps and implementing the recommended improvements will enable the government to leverage the full benefits of e-procurement

This will lead to greater transparency, efficiency, and accountability in the procurement process, contributing to the country's development goals.



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Lessons learned

Data Collection Challenges:

The e-PS may not capture all necessary data for a comprehensive assessment. It's crucial to ensure data availability and quality before conducting the assessment.

Report Drafting:

The standard report format could be streamlined to reduce repetition, particularly in presenting gaps and recommendations.

Technical Communication:

Presenting technical findings in a clear and concise manner for non-experts is essential for effective communication and understanding.

Expertise Blend:

For supplementary modules requiring specialized expertise, ensure assessors also possess sufficient knowledge of the MAPS methodology for compliant reporting.

Module-Specific Methodology:

The module-specific methodology provided valuable guidance for analyzing individual criteria, aiding in a focused assessment.

Timing of Assessment:

Conduct the e-Procurement Module in conjunction with or shortly after a core assessment to ensure practical implementation concerns are adequately addressed.





Findings and recommendations of the e-Procurement MAPS assessment

Ms. Genevieve Angoran
Senior Procurement Information System
Officer
African Development Bank





The way forward

Mr. Bhagwansing Dabeesing
Board Member
Procurement Policy Office



Methodology for Assessing e-Procurement System

B. Dabeesing (Ex- Member of Procurement Policy Office)

Head

Project Monitoring and Contract Administration Unit

3 Oct 2024





Context

1

Prepare e-Procurement strategy and roadmap

...

Training and capacity building, sustainability plan, communication and system enhancement

2

Reasons for non-use of e-procurement system (e-PS) and remedial actions

...

Offline evaluation and award, non-use of available and activated modules of e-PS, non-publication of annual procurement plan

3

Engagement between Procurement Policy Office (PPO) and stakeholders

...

Engagement with private sector organisations and Civil Society Organisation (CSO)

4

Roll out Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS)

...

The use of procurement data analysis adjusted for the differing needs of all stakeholders





The 4 Pillars

**Pillar
1**

Legal, Regulatory, and Policy Framework

**Pillar
2**

Institutional Framework and Management Capacity

**Pillar
3**

Procurement Operations and Market Practices

**Pillar
4**

Accountability, Integrity and Transparency of the Public Procurement System



Pillar I: Legal, Regulatory and Policy Framework

High Risk Factors

- Poor alignment between legal and regulatory framework and e-PS
- Non-application of the PPA to procurement subject to exempt organisation provisions
- No requirement for information to be published in accessible browser or open data format
- e-SBDs not fully aligned with e-PS workflows and there are too many templates
- No e-Procurement strategy or roadmap
- Data on climate change not captured



Pillar I: Legal, Regulatory and Policy Framework

Suggestions for improvement

- **Scope and use of personal data**
- The PPA and PPR do not specifically address the scope and permitted use of personal data because the collection, processing, use, transfer, disclosure of, and right of access to personal data is governed by specialised legislation, the Data Protection Act 2017 (“DPA”).
- *To provide further clarity, the Government must consider including specific reference to DPA requirements in the PPA.*



Pillar II: Institutional Framework and Management Capacity

High Risk Factors

- No evidence of robust coordination mechanisms between the PPO and public bodies, including the Central Procurement Board (CPB)
- No evidence of robust coordination mechanisms between the PPO and budgetary and treasury authorities
- No evidence of robust coordination mechanisms between the PPO and audit institutions & PPO and Independent Review Panel
- The PPO e-PS unit is under resourced and risk of vendor lock in is high
- No clearly documented business model for e-PS
- No business continuity team and strategy for development and to minimize vendor lock in
- Adoption of e-Procurement is limited and selective despite requirements for mandatory use.





Pillar II: Institutional Framework and Management Capacity

Suggestions for improvement

Assignment of responsibility to PPO

- The legal and regulatory framework could be amended to explicitly assign to the PPO, the responsibility for regulating and setting standards for the operation, implementation, and continuous improvement of the e-Procurement ecosystem.

Enhanced user feedback

- PPO to consider an online public procurement discussion forum and suggestion boxes to further assist in effectively gathering feedback from e-PS users and potentially capture a wider range of user experiences and suggestions, leading to a more comprehensive set of feedback for improving the e-PS.



Pillar III: Procurement Operations and Market Practices

High Risk Factors

- Annual Procurement Plans not prepared and published through e-PS.
- e-PS does not support the planning of individual procurements.
- e-PS does not provide linkage between planned procurements and procurement processes.
- There are redundant encryption requirements, two stage bidding is not supported by e-PS and efficiency of bid security submission is sub-optimal
- Evaluation and award is generally carried out off line
- The system is not interfaced with any external e-services
- e-PS is not browser-independent and cannot process transactions through mobile devices
- Banks are not interfaced with e-PS
- Data is not published promptly and does not provide an accurate picture





Pillar III: Procurement Operations and Market Practices

Suggestions for improvement

Messaging users of e-PS

- Consider including a message on the e-PS system for users to check the spam folder if emails are not received in their inbox. It may also be appropriate to consider enabling SMS alerts and provide for users to opt into SMS alerts.

Check field validation in forms

- Review all e-PS forms to ensure that there is field-level validation to control the data consistency in all cases.

Facilitating decision making

- The e-PS should be structured to provide a comprehensive search tool with compound filter facility.





Pillar III: Procurement Operations and Market Practices

Suggestions for improvement

Monitoring single sign on

- Regular monitoring, updates, and security assessments should be performed to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the Single Sign-on (SSO) infrastructure.

Bid submission processes require improvement

- To provide necessary certainty, amend the operation of the system to ensure that bid submission is closed automatically at the stipulated bid closing time. To streamline bid submission, remove the additional process requiring bidders to decrypt their bid, re-encrypt it and re-submit it to the e-PS after the bid closing.

Audit log

- The audit log should be isolated from the same production database to avoid unauthorized access and damage.





Pillar IV: Accountability, Integrity and Transparency of the Public Procurement System

High Risk Factors

- There is no formal forum for open dialogue with the private sector on e-PS
- Systemic constraints inhibit private sector access
- Civil society is not actively engaged by government to facilitate the monitoring and improvement of public procurement
- No comprehensive search tool to facilitate engagement by citizens/civil society
- No data on citizen involvement in accessing data
- Complaints and appeals cannot be lodged or conducted through e-PS



Pillar IV: Accountability, Integrity and Transparency of the Public Procurement System

Suggestions for improvement

Register of suppliers

- Enhance the register of suppliers with information about the SME status, classification from Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB)/Construction Industry Authority (CIA), geotags, and other credentials.
- The PPO should develop a comprehensive outreach campaign to register local and foreign bidders in the e-PS, including by mobilizing public bodies and use of social media.



Action initiated

- The PPO has already prepared a Project file and submitted to the Project Implementation and Management Unit (PIMU) for assessment.
- The project will then be recommended for financing.



An aerial photograph of a tropical island, likely in the Pacific. The island features a large, dark, rocky mountain peak with some green vegetation on its slopes. The island is surrounded by a shallow lagoon with vibrant turquoise water, showing various coral reef formations. The outer edge of the lagoon is marked by white sandbars and waves breaking against the deep blue ocean. In the background, other islands and mountains are visible under a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds.

Q&A and closing remarks


Jeppe Groot
MAPS Secretariat





Read the e-Procurement report at:
www.mapsinitiative.org/assessments

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