

# Professionalising the public procurement workforce

A review of current initiatives  
and challenges



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# **Professionalising the public procurement workforce**

A review of current initiatives and challenges



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This paper was authorised for publication by Elsa Pilichowski, Director, Public Governance Directorate.

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This policy paper describes the current state of play of the measures taken by countries to promote the professionalisation of the public procurement workforce. The paper focuses on the main elements of professionalising the public procurement workforce: i) assessing the current state of professionalisation, (ii) developing a professionalisation strategy, (iii) developing a competency model and a certification framework, (iv) developing capacity-building systems, (v) setting up incentive mechanisms, and (vi) promoting collaborative approaches with knowledge centres. The analysis is based on desk research and builds on data collected through the 2020 OECD Survey on Professionalisation and the 2018 OECD Survey on the Implementation of the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Public Procurement.

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# Executive Summary

Public procurement is increasingly recognised as a strategic instrument for achieving government policy goals aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), including promoting a circular and green economy, stimulating innovation, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and promoting ethical behaviour and responsible business conduct. Indeed, public procurement can be linked to over 80% of the total SDG indicator matrix. Public procurement was at the forefront of delivering essential public services during the global COVID-19 pandemic crisis by ensuring the functioning of key supply chains, and will play a key role during the post COVID-19 recovery phase.

These dynamic global trends make public procurement a more complex function than ever, requiring a more complex skillset for public procurement officials that implement public procurement procedures. The capacity of the public procurement workforce is a crucial element of a sound procurement system that delivers efficiency and value for money in the use of public funds. Therefore, professionalising the public procurement workforce has become a priority in countries' public procurement reforms. While major improvements have been witnessed in recent years, further actions are required.

This policy paper seeks to help procurement policymakers professionalise the public procurement workforce by providing good practices from OECD countries. The paper discusses the three main stages of professionalisation initiatives: i) assessing the current level of professionalisation, (ii) developing a professionalisation strategy, and (iii) implementing a professionalisation strategy. Implementing a professionalisation strategy can include various actions, such as developing a competency model and a certification framework, developing capacity-building systems, setting up incentive mechanisms, and/or promoting collaborative approaches with knowledge centres.

## Key findings and policy recommendations

### ***Stage 1: Assessing the level of professionalisation of the public procurement workforce***

Assessing the current level of professionalisation of the public procurement workforce should always be the first step in starting a professionalisation reform. This assessment has two different dimensions: (i) the current professionalisation system and (ii) the current level of capability of the public procurement workforce. It helps identify challenges and gaps, and serves as the basis for a strategy and/or action plan. In their assessments, countries can draw on frameworks such as the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Public Procurement and assessment tools such as the Supplementary Module on Professionalisation of the Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems (MAPS) and the European competency framework for public procurement professionals (ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup>).

### ***Stage 2: Establishing an effective professionalisation strategy***

It is essential to develop a professionalisation strategy and/or action plan to define initiatives and their targets within a specified timeline. Developing and implementing a strategy effectively involves the

following steps: (i) assessing the current level of professionalisation of the public procurement workforce, (ii) ensuring stakeholder engagement, (iii) drafting a strategy, and (iv) monitoring the implementation.

### ***Stage 3: Implementing a professionalisation strategy***

Countries could consider taking the following initiatives to implement their professionalisation strategy:

#### ***Developing a competency model and a certification framework***

Competency models and certification frameworks allow procurement officials to identify skills gaps and develop their skillsets. They can be used for recruitment, promotion, and training in the skills and competences relevant to the procurement workforce. However, establishing these mechanisms is not yet a common practice. As of 2020, less than half of OECD countries had introduced competency models (41%) and certification frameworks (35%) for the public procurement workforce. Tools such as the ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> competency matrix provide an excellent starting point.

#### ***Reinforcing capability-building systems***

Capability-building system can consist of methodological assistance tools (e.g. guidelines, manuals, standardised templates, a help desk, more direct support and advice to implementing actual procurement procedures), and practical training (on-the-job training, mentoring, and job swapping). The capability-building system should be aligned with competency models and certification frameworks.

When developing a capability-building system, countries may want to consider:

- Focusing on advanced topics such as contract award criteria and sustainable public procurement (green public procurement, innovation, SME development and social aspects) by avoiding a traditional focus on the legal aspects;
- Developing an introductory procurement programme to senior-level officials and decision makers to raise their awareness of the strategic role of public procurement; and
- Setting up a competence centre, in particular, for sustainable public procurement.

#### ***Setting up incentive mechanisms to attract and retain public procurement officials***

Motivating public procurement officials is crucial not only for maintaining high performance and productivity in public procurement, but also for attracting talented professionals. Incentive mechanisms play an important role in motivating public officers, and can be classified as financial (e.g., salaries) and non-financial (e.g., professional development including training courses and certification, performance management system, award system). To attract and retain talented professional within strict fiscal constraints, countries could:

- Establish a clear career path;
- Launch a recruitment programme to raise awareness of public procurement as a potential career option; and
- Develop further non-financial incentives such as a certification framework, a capability-building system, a performance management system, work-life balance, an excellence award system, and a professional network to foster professionalism in the field of public procurement.



***Promoting further collaboration with knowledge centres***

Recently, an increasing number of countries have recognised the role that knowledge centres can play in professionalisation. In 2020, 79% of the OECD countries adopted a collaborative approach with knowledge centres. This collaboration takes many forms across OECD countries: collaboration for developing training courses (62% in 2020), joint research (44% in 2020), and joint seminars or workshops (62% in 2020). Some countries have also collaborated with universities to cultivate future procurement specialists. These include offering courses or degree programmes in public procurement, thesis contests, and internship programmes.

# 1. Introduction: Increased expectations for public procurement require a more highly skilled procurement workforce

## 1.1. Public procurement has become an increasingly complex function, and demands a more highly skilled public procurement workforce

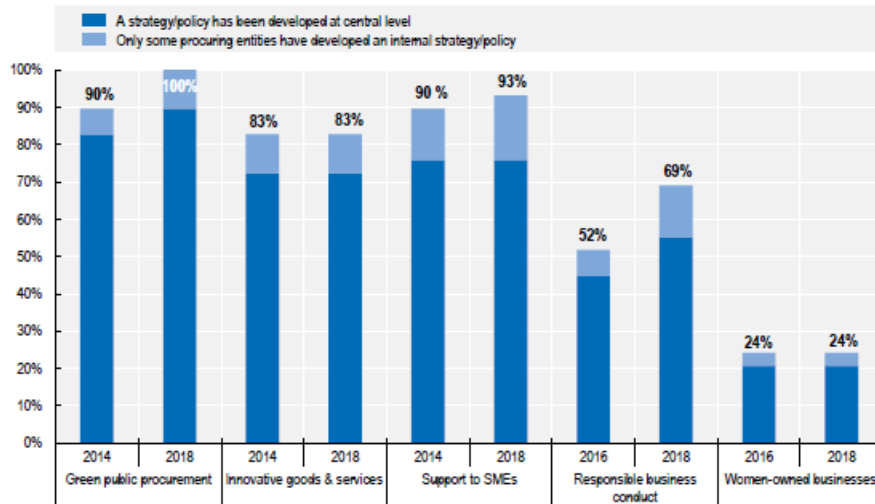
In 2019, public procurement accounted for 12.6% of GDP and 29.6% of total government expenditures in OECD countries (OECD, 2021<sup>[1]</sup>). Given this volume of public spending and strategic relevance, public procurement is a key governmental activity that impacts a country's economic and social development. During the global pandemic crisis that arose from the COVID-19 outbreak, public procurement was an important lever that delivered essential public services (e.g. vaccines and personal protective equipment) and enabled operations of critical infrastructure (OECD, 2020<sup>[2]</sup>).

Public procurement is increasingly recognised as a strategic instrument for achieving government policy goals, while achieving its primary objective of delivering goods and services in a timely, economical and efficient manner. Used strategically, public procurement can play an essential role in making economies more productive, public sectors more efficient, and institutions more trusted.

Countries are using public procurement to pursue broad policy objectives aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) such as promoting circular and green economy, stimulating innovation, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises' (SMEs), and promoting ethical behaviour and responsible business conduct. Indeed, the SDG target 12.7 calls for the implementation of sustainable public procurement policies and action plans (United Nations, 2015<sup>[3]</sup>). A recent study estimates that public procurement can be linked to over 80% of total SDG indicators (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2021<sup>[4]</sup>). Additionally, the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement (2015) calls upon countries to use public procurement to pursue different policy objectives while balancing them against the primary objectives (OECD, 2015<sup>[5]</sup>). Finally, the OECD Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (2019) calls on countries to make strategic use of public procurement to manage synergies and trade-offs and integrate sustainable development into sectoral policies (OECD, 2019<sup>[6]</sup>).

Figure 1.1 shows that all OECD countries have developed green public procurement policies at least at some level of the public sector and that the majority of the OECD countries has policies to support SMEs' access to public procurement. However, countries have made less progress in harnessing public procurement to stimulate innovation, promote responsible business conduct (RBC) and support social policies including gender equality, labour rights, minority groups, long-term unemployed people, and people with disabilities (OECD, 2019<sup>[7]</sup>).

**Figure 1.1. Development of public procurement strategies/policies to support different policy objectives across OECD countries, 2016 and 2018**



Source: (OECD, 2019<sup>[7]</sup>)

For example, Sweden recognised public procurement as a strategic policy tool by specifying the following elements as part of the seven policy objectives in the National Public Procurement Strategy adopted in 2017: (i) public procurement that drives innovation and promotes alternative solutions, (ii) public procurement that is environmentally responsible, and (iii) public procurement that contributes to a socially sustainable society (Ministry of Finance of Sweden, 2017<sup>[8]</sup>).

Ever-increasing expectations and constant fiscal pressures force public procurement systems to demonstrate an efficient, effective and timely use of taxpayers' money. Yet, a number of studies and research show that public procurement is significantly exposed to waste. Traditionally, waste is associated with corruption and estimated losses can range from 10% to 20% of total procurement expenditures (UNDP, 2021<sup>[9]</sup>). However, corruption is just one cause of inefficient public funds. Incompetence-driven inefficiency is one of the main causes of waste of government spending (Bandiera, Prat and Valletti, 2009<sup>[10]</sup>). A study of US Federal contracts found that *"a one standard deviation increase in competence reduces cost overruns by 29 percent and the number of days of delay by 23 percent. It also reduces by half the number of renegotiations. This implies that, if all federal bureaus were to obtain NASA's high level of competence (corresponding to the top 10 percent of the competence distribution), delays in contract execution would decline by 4.8 million days and cost overruns would drop by \$6.7 billion over the entire sample analysed"* (Decarolis et al., 2018<sup>[11]</sup>).

There are new demands being placed on the public procurement workforce to ensure that countries make the most of the post COVID-19 recovery. For example, the European Commission (EC) provides EU member states with the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) so as to help them mitigate the economic and social impact of the coronavirus pandemic and make European economies and societies more sustainable, resilient and better prepared for the green and digital transitions (European Commission, n.d.<sup>[12]</sup>). Sound public procurement will allow the RRF funds to be absorbed effectively and efficiently. In February 2022, for example, the EC and Croatia signed the operational arrangements of the recovery and resilience plan (RRP) which was submitted to the EC on 14 May 2021 to request the financial support of the RRF. This RRF operational arrangements requires Croatia to increase the capability of its public procurement workforce by providing training and methodological assistance on innovation procurement (C2.9.R3 Innovative procurement), which will help implement the RRF effectively and efficiently (European

Commission, 2022<sup>[13]</sup>). In addition, the current political situation in Europe requires the transition to cleaner energy while reducing imports of non-renewable energy resources.

These dynamic global trends make public procurement an increasingly complex function, demanding more skills from public procurement officials. They are expected to have not only technical knowledge and skills such as on the regulatory framework, market research and analysis, drafting tender documents, but also on project management and negotiation.

Indeed, the capacity of the public procurement workforce is a key element to ensure a sound procurement system to deliver efficiency and value for money. The OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability adopted in 2019 calls for the need for a professional, capable and responsive public service, underlining that it is a fundamental driver of citizens' trust in public institutions. This includes identifying and developing skills and competences and setting up human resource policies to attract and retain a skilled workforce and assess performance (OECD, 2019<sup>[14]</sup>).

Professionalising the public procurement workforce has increasingly been key to reforming the public procurement system since 2014. In 2014, the EU Directive 2014/24 on public procurement aimed at promoting the strategic use of public procurement and professionalising procurement management (European Commission, 2014<sup>[15]</sup>). The article in the 2<sup>nd</sup> issue of European Journal of Public Procurement Markets pointed out *"As was mentioned already in 2015 by Joachim Nunes de Almeida (Gustavo Piga and Tunde Tátrai, 2015<sup>[16]</sup>): the EC is developing a policy to promote professionalisation of public buyers. The policy will include inter alia professionalisation plans, promotion of defined training schemes, capacity building and exchange of best practice. Market intelligence, business skills and a focus on skills must become the heart of public purchasing. In short, public procurement needs to become a business skill - rather than an inefficient (at best) or corrupt (at worse) administrative endeavour"* (Maria Antonietta Coppola and Gustavo Piga, 2019<sup>[17]</sup>). The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement was also adopted in 2015. In addition to the principle on balance (strategic use of public procurement), the OECD Recommendation has a principle dedicated to the capacity of the public procurement workforce. It calls upon countries to develop a procurement workforce with the capacity to continually deliver value for money efficiently and effectively (OECD, 2015<sup>[5]</sup>) (see Box 1.1).

### Box 1.1. OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement: Capacity

IX. recommends countries to develop a procurement workforce with the capacity to continually deliver value for money efficiently and effectively.

i) Ensure that procurement officials meet high professional standards for knowledge, practical implementation and integrity by providing a dedicated and regularly updated set of tools, for example, sufficient staff in terms of numbers and skills, recognition of public procurement as a specific profession, certification and regular trainings, integrity standards for public procurement officials and the existence of a unit or team analysing public procurement information and monitoring the performance of the public procurement system.

ii) Provide attractive, competitive and merit-based career options for procurement officials, through the provision of clear means of advancement, protection from political interference in the procurement process and the promotion of national and international good practices in career development to enhance the performance of the procurement workforce.

iii) Promote collaborative approaches with knowledge centres such as universities, think tanks or policy centres to improve skills and competences of the procurement workforce. The expertise and pedagogical experience of knowledge centres should be enlisted as a valuable means of expanding

procurement knowledge and upholding a two-way channel between theory and practice, capable of boosting application of innovation to public procurement systems.

Source: (OECD, 2015<sup>[5]</sup>)

The European Commission (EC) has taken measures to professionalise public procurement. In October 2017, the EC adopted a Recommendation on the professionalisation of public procurement as one of the priorities of EU public procurement strategy (European Commission, 2017<sup>[18]</sup>). To complement this recommendation, in December 2020 the EC launched the European competency framework for public buyers (ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup>). ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> provides practical tools for professionalisation such as a competency matrix with 30 key competences for public buyers, a self-assessment tool, and a generic training curriculum (see Box 1.2). In 2022, the professionalisation of the public procurement workforce was selected by the EC as one of the twelve Flagship for Technical Support Projects of the year 2023 in the public governance agenda, based on the strong needs across Member States and the link to top EU priorities. It intends to: (i) reinforce capacities in the Member States to run public procurement procedures effectively, including in relation to investments provided under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), and (ii) enhance quality of public spending through increased use of strategic procurement methodologies, including innovation procurement and green procurement, and contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (European Commission, 2022<sup>[19]</sup>).

### Box 1.2. European competency framework for public procurement professionals

ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> is a tool designed by the EC to support the professionalisation of public procurement. ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> consists of three elements:

- Competency matrix, which defines 30 procurement-related and soft competences along four proficiency levels;
- Self-assessment tool that allows users to set targets for the different competences and assess their proficiency levels against them and identify any gaps;
- Generic training curriculum which lists all learning outcomes that public procurement professionals should know and be able to demonstrate after having attended a training for a certain proficiency level.

The Competency Matrix describes 30 competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that public procurement professionals should demonstrate in order to perform their job effectively and efficiently and carry out public procurement procedures that bring value for money. The competences are grouped in two main categories: procurement specific competences, and soft competences. The categories are then divided into six clusters, three per category:

- Procurement-specific competences (19 competences):
  - Horizontal: 9 competences applicable to all stages of the public procurement lifecycle
  - Pre-award: 6 competences required to perform all the tasks and activities taking place before the award of a public contract
  - Post-award: 4 competences necessary for the contract management after the award of a public contract.
- Soft competences (11 competences):

- Personal: 4 competences on behaviours, skills and attributes that public procurement professionals should possess, as well as the mind-set that they should display according to their job profile
- People: 3 competences enabling public procurement professionals to interact and cooperate with other professionals, and to do so in the most professional manner
- Performance: 4 competences public procurement professionals need to have in order to increase value for money in public procurement procedures

Each competence is described along four proficiency levels based on the breadth of knowledge and skills: Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, and Expert.

The ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> Self-Assessment Tool is composed of several key elements:

- A self-assessment questionnaire
- Templates for job profiles
- A calculation tool for computing individual and organisational assessment results.

The ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> Reference Training Curriculum lists all learning outcomes that public procurement professionals should know and be able to demonstrate after having attended a training for a certain proficiency level.

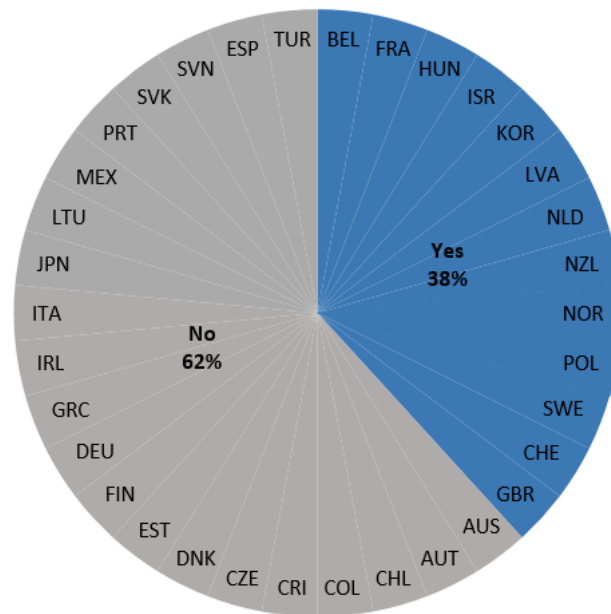
ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> is a quite flexible, voluntary and customisable tool. Getting value from ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> does not require using each and every component of the framework, nor does it require the use of each and every competence defined in the ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> Competency Matrix.

Source: (European Commission, 2020<sup>[20]</sup>)

## 1.2. Public procurement is increasingly recognised as a professional task, but further initiatives are required

In 2020, 38% of OECD countries recognised public procurement as a standalone profession, marking an increase from 32% of OECD countries in 2018 (OECD, 2021<sup>[1]</sup>). However, progress is still limited and requires further action.

Figure 1.2. Public procurement recognised as a standalone profession in OECD countries (2020)



Note: Data for Canada, Iceland, Luxembourg, and the United States are not available. Costa Rica is included as an OECD member as of May 2021. Among non-OECD members, Indonesia recognises public procurement as a professional task, while this is not the case in Peru and Morocco.

Source: 2020 OECD Survey on the Professionalisation on Public Procurement

According to the OECD Survey on the Professionalisation on Public Procurement 2020, for example, countries like Hungary, France and Latvia recognised public procurement as a stand-alone profession in the official document. Several non-OECD countries are also taking steps in the same direction, such as Indonesia (see Box 1.3).

### Box 1.3. Recognition of public procurement as a professional task in OECD countries and Indonesia

#### Hungary

Hungary recognised public procurement as a professional task as early as in 2004. The currently applicable certification system for public procurement professionals was set up by the 2015 Public Procurement Law that introduced the category of “certified public procurement consultant” (in Hungarian: Felelős Akkreditált Közbeszerzési Szaktanácsadó, FAKSZ) as of 1 November 2015 (replacing the previous profession of “official public procurement consultants” introduced in 2004). Public procurement consultants seeking certification have to submit their application for being registered in the list of certified public procurement consultants to the Public Procurement Authority. There are strict conditions for the registration (including practical experience in public procurement, compulsory training on public procurement, higher education degree and insurance). The registration is subject to renewal in every two years. (The detailed rules of the certification system are regulated by the Government Decree No. 257/2018). The PPA publishes the registry of the certified public procurement consultants on its website. The certified public procurement consultants established their professional body which is entitled to delegate a person to the Council operating within the framework of the PPA.

### France

France formally added public procurement to its Inter-ministerial Directory of State Professions (Répertoire Interministériel des Métiers de l'Etat).

### Latvia

In Latvia, the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers ("Regulations on the Classification of Professions, basic tasks corresponding to the profession and basic qualification requirements") recognises the public procurement function as a profession since 2017, although there are no general professional standards applied to it.

### Indonesia

Indonesia recognises the public procurement function as a professional task. There are two types of procurement officials.

- Procurement Profession as a career (Professional Procurement Officials)
- Non-career Procurement Officials

Professional Procurement Officials have the status of civil servants.

The following are the elements that contributed to recognising the public procurement function:

- Certification schemes: Basic Level Certification, Level 1 - Level 4 Certification, Certification on Contract Management, Certification on Sourcing.
- Job profile for Procurement Officials, which consists of job description, job specification, job qualification/requirement.
- Two different competency standards. State Apparatus Competency Standard on Government Procurement for Professional Procurement Officials and National Procurement Competency Framework Standard designed for the non-career Procurement Officials.
- Establishment of Government Procurement Officials Association in 2016

Source: Responses to the OECD Survey on the Professionalisation on Public Procurement 2020

Elements that contribute to recognising public procurement as a profession include job classification in the legal framework, professionalisation strategy, competency model, certification framework, capacity-building systems, incentive mechanisms such as clear career path, and professional networks. For example, the United Kingdom developed the Commercial Career Framework for Commercial Professionals (CCF) to define roles and establish a clear career path and promotion for public procurement professionals (see Box 1.4).

### Box 1.4. Commercial Career Framework of the United Kingdom

In 2018, the Cabinet Office and the Government Commercial Function of the United Kingdom developed the Commercial Career Framework for Commercial Professionals (CCF) to define roles related to public procurement and establish a clear career path for public procurement professionals.

The CCF describes the fourteen roles related to public procurement each of which fall into one of the five job pillars: (i) Strategy & Policy Development (Commercial Strategy, Market Maker & Supplier Engagement, Commercial Risk and Assurance Specialist, Commercial Policy Advisor), (ii) Business Needs and Sourcing (Procurement Strategy, Data Analysis, Commercial Business Analysis), (iii)



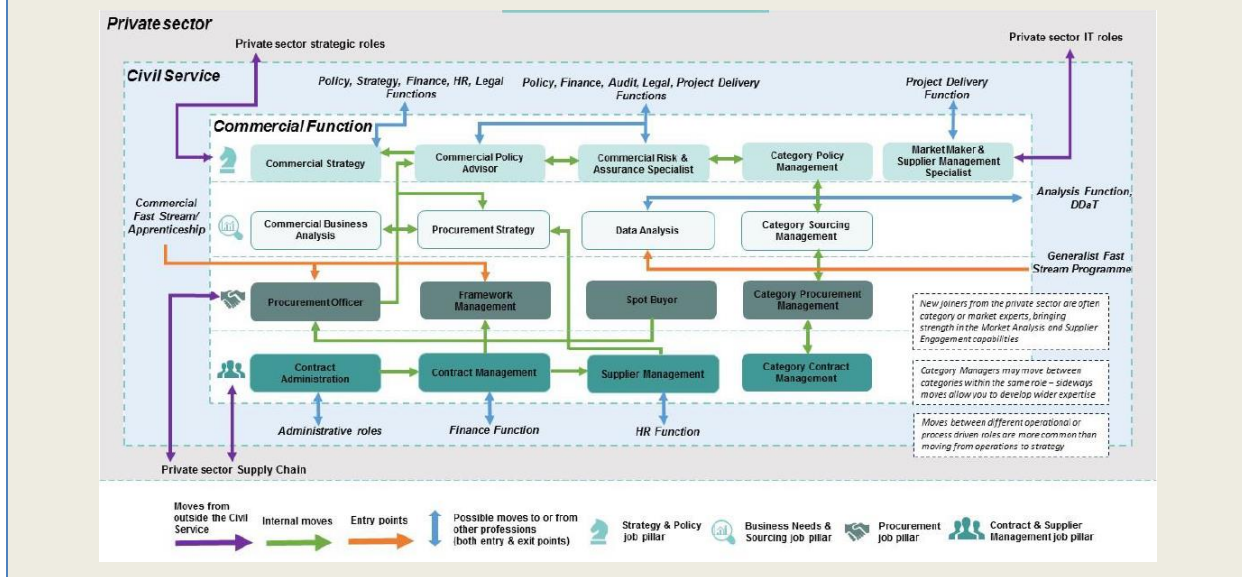
Procurement (Framework Management, Spot Buyer, Procurement Officer), (iv) Contract & Supplier Management (Contract Management, Contract Administration, Supplier Management), and (v) Cross Pillar (Category Management). It also describes the following seven levels of career progression in the following order: (i) Commercial Support, (ii) Associate Commercial Practitioner, (iii) Commercial Practitioner, (iv) Commercial Lead, (v) Associate Commercial Specialist, (vi) Commercial Specialist, and (vii) Senior Commercial Specialist (see Figure 1.3). It also defines 35 capabilities mapped to each role, with four levels of mastery of the capability (Awareness, Working, Practitioner and Expert levels) required for each of the seven levels of career progression.

Figure 1.3. 14 roles within 5 job pillars and 7 levels of career progression in the CCF

Job Pillars	Roles	Commercial Support	Associate Commercial Practitioner	Commercial Practitioner	Commercial Lead	Associate Commercial Specialist	Commercial Specialist	Senior Commercial Specialist
Strategy & Policy Development	Commercial Strategy	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
	Market Maker & Supplier Engagement		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
	Commercial Risk and Assurance Specialist	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
	Commercial Policy Advisor	◆	◆	◆	◆			
Business Needs & Sourcing	Procurement Strategy				◆	◆	◆	◆
	Data Analysis	◆	◆	◆	◆			
	Commercial Business Analysis	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		
Procurement	Framework Management	◆	◆	◆	◆			
	Spot Buyer	◆	◆	◆	◆			
	Procurement Officer	◆	◆	◆	◆			
Contract & Supplier Management	Contract Management	◆	◆	◆	◆			
	Contract Administration	◆	◆	◆	◆			
	Supplier Management	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
	Category Management	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

CCF also includes the Commercial Career Map. It maps the most common entry and exit points for public procurement officials, including moves within the profession, across functions within the Civil Service and in the private sector (see Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4. Commercial Career Map



The CCF helps individual procurement professionals to identify possible career paths and understand which capabilities they should develop to follow each of these paths, as well as how to tailor their development towards achieving their career aspirations.

Source: (Cabinet Office and Government Commercial Function, 2018<sup>[21]</sup>)

### 1.3. Purpose, structure and methodology of this report

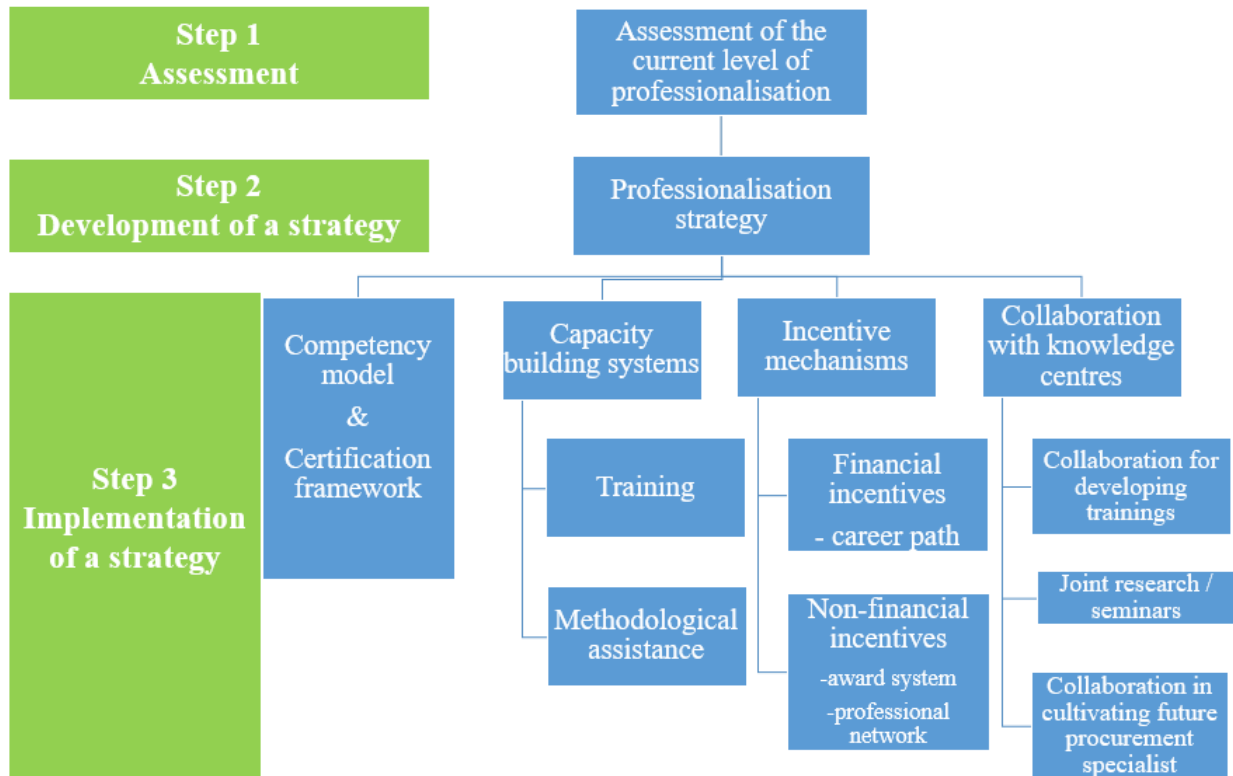
This policy paper describes the measures taken by countries to increasingly professionalise the public procurement workforce, focusing on practitioners who carry out public procurement procedures. The analysis is based on desk research built on the data collected through the 2018 OECD Survey on the Implementation of the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Public Procurement and the 2020 OECD Survey on Professionalisation, which aimed at providing an update to the status of professionalisation as of the end of 2020.

31 OECD countries responded to the 2018 survey in addition to two non-OECD countries (Morocco and Peru). 34 OECD countries responded to the 2020 survey in addition to three non-OECD countries (Indonesia, Morocco, and Peru). Respondents consisted of country delegates responsible for procurement policies at the central government level and senior officials in central purchasing bodies.

It elaborates on experiences and insights gained through public procurement reform projects financed by various donors such as the EC and several countries, helping reinforce the evidence based on OECD countries' practices and strategies.

The next chapters discuss the three main stages of professionalisation initiatives and the components required to professionalise public procurement: i) assessing the level of professionalisation, (ii) developing a professionalisation strategy, and (iii) implementing a professionalisation strategy. Different actions to implement the strategy can include developing a competency model and a certification framework, developing capacity-building systems, setting up incentive mechanisms to increase the attractiveness of public procurement as a profession, and/or promoting collaborative approaches with knowledge centres, some being complementary to each other (see Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5. Key elements to professionalise the public procurement workforce



## **2. Assessing the level of professionalisation of the public procurement workforce**

Assessing the current level of professionalisation of the public procurement workforce should always be the first step to advance the professionalisation. This assessment consists of two angles: (i) the system of professionalisation and (ii) the capability level of the public procurement workforce. The first dimension looks at framework conditions to see how well professionalisation enablers are in place in the national procurement system. The second approach makes a more bottom-up approach to analyse individual assessments of skills and competences. Both approaches help identify the strengths and weaknesses and serves as the basis to develop a strategy and/or action plan to promote professionalisation. This chapter provides an overview of country initiatives and the analytical tools they have used to carry out assessments from these two dimensions. The challenges and gaps identified in the assessment set the basis for developing a professionalisation strategy and specific initiatives to promote professionalisation such as developing a competency model and a certification framework, developing capacity-building systems, and setting up incentive mechanisms to increase the attractiveness of public procurement as a profession.

### **2.1. Assessing the current level of professionalisation: current system of professionalisation**

Multiple variables need to be assessed when looking at enablers that support professionalisation in public procurement. From how it is positioned within the civil service framework to human and financial resources needed for developing capacity-building activities, all these elements contribute to creating a robust framework that can facilitate effective professionalisation strategies.

In 2021, the Secretariat of the Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems (MAPS) officially launched a Supplementary Module on Professionalisation of Public Procurement. This module intends to help governments assess the current level of professionalisation of the public procurement workforce with four pillars that consist of 10 principal indicators and 21 sub-indicators (see Box 2.1).

### Box 2.1. MAPS Supplementary Module on Professionalisation of Public Procurement

The Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems (MAPS) is an international standard and the universal tool to evaluate any public procurement system anywhere in the world. In 2021, the MAPS Secretariat officially launched a Supplementary Module on Professionalisation of Public Procurement that allow governments, whether they are central or sub-national, to assess the current state of professionalisation of the public procurement workforce. This is the only MAPS supplementary module that can be used as a stand-alone module, without having to undertake a whole MAPS assessment. While MAPS core indicators consist of the following four pillars with 14 principal indicators and 55 sub-indicators, the supplementary module on professionalisation consists of the following 10 principal indicators and 21 sub-indicators:

- Pillar I. Legal, Regulatory, and Policy Framework (2 indicators / 5 sub-indicators)
- Pillar II. Institutional Framework and Management Capacity (3 indicators / 5 sub-indicators)
- Pillar III. Public Procurement Operations and Market Practices (3 indicators / 7 sub-indicators)
- Pillar IV. Accountability, Integrity and Transparency of the Public Procurement System (2 indicators / 4 sub-indicators)

Figure 2.1. Indicator system of MAPS Professionalisation Module

Pillar I – Legal, Regulatory, and Policy Framework	
1	<b>The legal framework includes appropriate regulations on public procurement professionalisation</b>
	1(a) - Rules on professionalisation 1(b) - Rules on private sector participation
2	<b>Implementing regulations and tools to support public procurement professionalisation</b>
	2(a) – Recognition of public procurement as a professional function 2(b) - Implementing regulations define the professionalisation policy 2(c) - Strategic and specialised procurement, horizontal policy objectives and international obligations
Pillar II – Institutional Framework and Management Capacity	
3	<b>Professionalisation is a key component of the public procurement system</b>
	3(a) – The professionalisation policy is part of a broader public procurement capacity-building strategy
4	<b>Professionalisation takes place in an environment of planning, monitoring and evaluation</b>
	4(a) – Professionalisation planning 4(b) – Public procurement information systems include data suitable for the efficient support of professionalisation 4(c) – Monitoring and evaluation of the professionalisation policy
5	<b>Professionalisation is based on sound principles and standards</b>
	5(a) – Professionalisation policy is based on sound principles and standards
Pillar III – Public Procurement Operations and Market Practices	
6	<b>The public procurement system has adequate financial mechanisms to finance the cost of education, training and certification of public procurement professionals</b>
	6(a) – Existence of adequate budgetary resources
7	<b>Public procurement is recognised as a professional career line in the country's public service</b>
	7(a) – Existence of a public procurement competency framework 7(b) – Existence of a career path of public procurement within the civil service 7(c) – The career path of public procurement is competitive compared to the rest of the civil service
8	<b>Market conditions favour the development of professionalisation</b>
	8(a) – Competitive professionalisation market 8(b) – Access to professionalisation assets 8(c) – Open and inclusive professionalisation market
Pillar IV – Accountability, Integrity and Transparency of the Public Procurement System	
9	<b>The professionalisation policy considers ethics and accountability</b>
	9(a) – Ethical considerations in the professionalisation policy 9(b) – Management for results and accountability
10	<b>The country has mechanisms that support professional integrity in public procurement</b>
	10(a) – Supplementary mechanisms for supporting professional integrity in place 10(b) – Implementation of mechanisms to sanction professionals for their unethical behaviour

Source: (MAPS Secretariat, 2021<sup>[22]</sup>)

Peru was the first country that used this professionalisation supplementary module to evaluate its system as part of the pilot project in 2019. Before this initiative, Peru had also undertaken two diagnoses of the capacity and knowledge gaps in the area of public procurement in 2010 and 2014, the second approach to be discussed in the next section 2.2 (see Box 2.2).

### Box 2.2. MAPS Supplementary Module on Professionalisation of Public Procurement in Peru

Peru was the first country that used and piloted a supplementary professionalisation module in 2019 to evaluate its system of professionalisation, with the leadership of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) and the Government Procurement Supervising Agency (OSCE) and the technical assistance provided by the Inter-American Development Bank.

Among the 21 sub-indicators of this supplementary module, Peru marked “comply with international best practices” for 3 sub-indicators, “minor gap” for 13 sub-indicators, “and “major gap” for 5 sub-indicators. The five sub-indicators were identified as “red flags” with significant opportunities for future improvement: (i) availability of sufficient financial resources, (ii) existence of career plan for public procurement within civil service, (iii) career plan is competitive compared with the rest of civil service, (iv) existence of mechanisms to support integrity in public procurement, and (v) implementation of mechanisms to sanction officials for anti-ethical behaviour.

Before this MAPS assessment, SERVIR (National Civil Service Authority) undertook two diagnoses of the capacity and knowledge gaps in the area of public procurement in 2010 and 2014. In 2014, SERVIR identified 6 158 public procurement practitioners, 78% of which participated in the evaluations.

The diagnosis was based on the scoring of a test of 30 questions. Then, the accuracy answer rate was used to classify the public procurement workforce into four categories:

- From 0% to 50%: Capacity building is needed for general and specific issues, in accordance with the functions of the public procurement staff (category 1)
- From 51% to 70%: Specific knowledge needs to be strengthened to carry out the functions of the public procurement staff (category 2)
- From 71% to 85%: Specific knowledge needs to be strengthened to advance the capabilities of the public procurement staff (category 3)
- From 86% to 100%: Optimal knowledge to carry out the functions of the public procurement staff (category 4).

The result reveals that the majority of the workforce (almost 40% out of 4 793 public procurement staff evaluated) needed specific knowledge to be strengthened to carry out their functions (category 2). Indeed, only 9.62% had enough knowledge to carry out their functions in an optimal way (category 4). In addition, the results showed that capabilities were stronger at national than at subnational level. This assessment also pointed out that the professionalisation in Peru was most needed at the beginning of the career: almost 50% of public procurement staff with less than one year of experience are not meeting the criteria.

Source: (MAPS Secretariat, 2019<sup>[23]</sup>) (OECD, 2017<sup>[24]</sup>)

Likewise, OECD worked with the Slovak Republic to develop a training action plan to support a strategy for improving procurement performance. For this purpose, a questionnaire was developed for the structured assessment of the existing training offering, its content and structure, and both trainers’ and trainees’ perspectives (OECD, 2017<sup>[25]</sup>) (see Box 2.3).

### Box 2.3. Assessing the training system through the gap analysis of training needs in Slovakia

The OECD conducted a targeted training gap analysis exercise featuring detailed discussions with key individuals in the Slovak Republic. The analysis was not restricted to the capability gaps of the workforce – it also explored the effectiveness of the institution’s entire training programme, including the employees who were targeted, the training methods used, and how applicable the training content was for the areas in greatest need of development. A gap analysis was conducted using a questionnaire that sought to capture the current training situation. The questionnaire focused on three dimensions, each identified as being significant in determining the capability of the procurement workforce. Sample questions have been provided for each of the three dimensions below:

- Characteristics of the procurement workforce:
  - Is the procurement workforce clearly identified?
  - How is the workforce composed?
  - What is the typology of the public procurement workforce in terms of professional experience?
- The performance of the procurement system:
  - What is the share of procurement operations subject to open tender?
  - How many instances are there of irregularities leading to financial corrections?
  - What are the main grounds for challenges and complaints?
  - Which policy objectives are most frequently implemented (green procurement, innovation, support to SMEs, etc.)?
- The training system in place:
  - Are there eligibility criteria for training participants?
  - How visible are training opportunities to staff members?
  - Are training courses structured according to seniority or according to different roles in the procurement life cycle?
  - What subjects are currently included in the training curriculum?
  - What types of delivery models are available (in-class, e-learning, distance learning) and are classes a mix of theory and practice?
  - What is the frequency of trainings and are there mandatory hours/events for staff to attend?
  - Is feedback collected from training participants?

This analysis enabled a thorough assessment of the existing training options, their content and structure, and perceptions from both trainers and trainees. Fifty responses were gathered from trainers and participants, allowing for the identification of areas in greatest need of focus. Thirty-five individuals from 20 different entities were interviewed to discuss responses in more detail and investigate further training needs.

Source: (OECD, 2017<sup>[25]</sup>)

## 2.2. Assessing the current level of professionalisation: capability level of the public procurement workforce

Beyond assessing the robustness of the enablers necessary to guide and effectively implement professionalisation initiatives in public procurement, countries are also developing strategies based on an evaluation of concrete skills and competences. Aggregated results of such an assessment could help form professionalisation strategies that would best respond to the needs of procurement practice.

The heterogeneity of the procurement function, however, might prove challenging to carry out a standardised assessment that would identify strengths and weaknesses for public procurement practitioners, irrespective of their specific roles in the procurement cycle. Two main strategies have been designed to tackle this issue.

First, some countries have considered the procurement function as a whole and evaluated procurement maturity of public organisations without looking into individual skills and knowledge. For example, New Zealand developed the Procurement Capability Index to assess organisational capability of government agencies (see Box 2.4).

### Box 2.4. Procurement Capability Index in New Zealand

New Zealand established a Procurement Capability Index (CPI), a self-assessment tool that measures agencies' procurement capability. All agencies that are subject to the Government Procurement Rules must submit their PCI assessment to New Zealand Government Procurement (NZGP) by 1 October each fiscal year.

The PCI takes an agency-wide view of procurement capability and covers the complete cycle of procurement across eight categories: (i) strategy and outcomes; (ii) commercial and social outcomes; (iii) governance and assurance; (iv) risks and benefits; (v) planning and sourcing; (vi) managing for results; (vii) people strategy; and (viii) building capability.

For example, "building capability" has two indexes: capability building activities and knowledge sharing. These indexes will be evaluated against the elements such as the availability of an induction programme and a procurement basic course, workforce development plan for developing skills of procurement officials, knowledge sharing of good practices between procurement officials followed by publishing them internally and externally.

PCI self-assessment allows agencies to (i) understand their strengths and identify opportunities for improvement across all the procurement activities; (ii) monitor development of procurement maturity; and (iii) equip a senior leadership team with an evidence-supported assessment of agency's procurement capability.

NZGP also prepared user-friendly guides and Procurement Capability Index self-assessment tool in a spreadsheet to help agencies carry out a self-assessment.

The annual PCI submission from each agency enables NZGP to grasp a snapshot of procurement capability across mandated agencies. This information is useful for NZGP to identify capability improvement initiatives across government and offer targeted support to agencies.

Source: (New Zealand Government Procurement and Property, n.d.<sup>[26]</sup>)



Other countries, like Peru (see Box 2.2), embarked into a self-assessment of individual skills and knowledge of procurement practitioners. Given the heterogeneity of the procurement function, this approach requires a structured and scalable assessment tool so that respondents could be identified according to their role in the public procurement cycle.

ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> provides a self-assessment tool with the survey questionnaire that allows users to assess individual and/or organisational proficiency levels of competences and identify any gaps between the current level of each individual and the target level expected by their entities. ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> helps countries evaluate individual and organisational maturity in public procurement, which will facilitate the development of a competency model, certification framework, job profiles, and training programmes. The OECD and the European Commission decided to apply ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> to on-going professionalisation initiatives across OECD countries and to draw lessons from its implementation (see Box 2.5).

### Box 2.5. Lessons learnt from the implementation of the European Competency Framework for Public Procurement Professionals

To provide concrete support to professionalisation initiatives, the European Commission developed a competency framework, the European Competency Framework for Public Procurement Professionals (ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup>), as a tool for public administrations, contracting authorities and procurement officials to raise their skills and competency level in the field of procurement.

At the end of 2020, the OECD and the European Commission engaged in a project where ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> was implemented in concrete contexts as a tool for developing a structured assessment of procurement skills and competences, identifying gaps and setting a common vision for procurement capabilities. The project involved the active participation of six countries and institutions from Italy, New Zealand, Chile, Ireland, Iceland and Costa Rica under the following three use cases:

- Use case 1 (Training and development blueprint): Italy and New Zealand
- Use case 2 (Basis for national certification scheme): Chile
- Use case 3 (Organisational use to measure its maturity): Iceland, Ireland, and Costa Rica

In all six pilots, using the structured approach offered by ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> to assess skills and knowledge has helped inform capacity-building strategies. In many instances, initial findings stemming from the analysis of the results would need to be confirmed in larger scale exercises, but the pilot implementation already provided useful insights.

First, it helps steering the conversation on expected skills and knowledge. By looking at individual competences, project implementers need to identify those that are critical to effectively fulfil a specific procurement role.

It also provides opportunities to implement a more forward-looking approach to capacity-building activities. Indeed, alongside those that are critical for a specific procurement role, using the competency matrix could help look at more aspirational competences.

Last, this type of exercise could also offer the possibility of extending the assessment of skills and knowledge of stakeholders, beyond procurement professionals, who actively contribute to the effectiveness of the procurement ecosystem.

Source: (OECD, Forthcoming<sup>[27]</sup>)

In fact, countries have been using ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> to develop self-assessment tools. For example, Finland, as part of the National Public Procurement Strategy 2020, developed a self-assessment tool of public

procurement competences in 2022. Finland adopted the 30 competences of the ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> but adapted their wordings and descriptions to the context of Finland (e.g., terminology, national regulations etc). The country intends to collect the information on the competences of the public procurement workforce at national level (Ministry of Finance of Finland, n.d.<sup>[28]</sup>).

Ideally, countries could also benefit from establishing a basic profile database of the public procurement workforce in the registration system, as part of the assessment exercise. In addition to the number of public procurement officials, it is useful to identify the basic background of each one, such as academic background, years of professional experience and area of responsibility related to procurement (tender preparation, tender evaluation, contract management, control, etc). For example, Hungary mandates the publication of accredited public procurement professionals in the Electronic Procurement System (EKR). Currently, more than 1 000 public procurement professionals are registered in the system. The registration system will allow policy makers to get a clearer picture on the current individual and organisational levels of public procurement.

# 3. Establishing an effective professionalisation strategy

It is essential to develop a professionalisation strategy and/or action plan to define activities and their targets within a specified timeline, like the case of Slovenia, Italy, Finland and Lithuania. This chapter shows elements and steps that countries could consider while preparing a professionalisation strategy: (i) assessing the current level of professionalisation of the public procurement workforce, (ii) ensuring stakeholder engagement, (iii) drafting a strategy, and (iv) monitoring the implementation.

Figure 3.1. Steps and elements for an effective professionalisation strategy



Source: Adaptation from (OECD, 2016<sup>[29]</sup>)

## 3.1. Assessing the level of professionalisation of the public procurement workforce

Assessing the level of professionalisation of the public procurement workforce helps identifying key issues and challenges and sets the basis for professionalisation strategy. As already discussed in the Chapter 2, the assessment consists of two angles: (i) the current system of professionalisation and (ii) the current capability level of the public procurement workforce. A public entity (e.g., ministry, public procurement authority) in charge of professionalisation could lead this assessment process, but it could also consider the possibility of engaging key stakeholders (to be discussed further in the next section 3.2) from the beginning of this stage. Key stakeholders could include, but are not limited to, public entities that have a role in the public procurement system (e.g., ministries, public procurement authority, Central Purchasing Bodies – CPBs, etc.) as well as contracting authorities that could provide their feedback on the current professionalisation system and/or participate in the individual capability assessment exercise. This

assessment can be also used as key output to define professionalisation initiatives such as developing a competency model and a certification framework, developing capacity-building systems, setting up incentive mechanisms to increase the attractiveness of public procurement as a profession, and/or promoting collaborative approaches with knowledge centres.

### 3.2. Engaging stakeholders

It is critical to identify the stakeholders and consider their engagement during the process of developing and implementing a strategy, as they might have different views and conflicting interests. The OECD Recommendation on Public Procurement calls upon countries to invite stakeholders to participate in public procurement reform. This participation process ensures that the reform gains strong political and social support through shared understanding between the government and stakeholders (see Box 3.1).

#### Box 3.1 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement: Participation

VI. RECOMMENDS that Adherents foster transparent and effective stakeholder participation.

To this end, Adherents should:

Develop and follow a standard process when formulating changes to the public procurement system. Such standard process should promote public consultations, invite the comments of the private sector and civil society, ensure the publication of the results of the consultation phase and explain the options chosen, all in a transparent manner.

Engage in transparent and regular dialogues with suppliers and business associations to present public procurement objectives and to assure a correct understanding of markets. Effective communication should be conducted to provide potential vendors with a better understanding of the country's needs, and government buyers with information to develop more realistic and effective tender specifications by better understanding market capabilities. Such interactions should be subject to due fairness, transparency and integrity safeguards, which vary depending on whether an active procurement process is ongoing. Such interactions should also be adapted to ensure that foreign companies participating in tenders receive transparent and effective information.

Provide opportunities for direct involvement of relevant external stakeholders in the procurement system with a view to increase transparency and integrity while assuring an adequate level of scrutiny, provided that confidentiality, equal treatment and other legal obligations in the procurement process are maintained.

Source: (OECD, 2015<sup>[5]</sup>)

Stakeholder engagement shall be carried out internally within the leading entity and externally through a mapping exercise. In the case of developing a professionalisation strategy of the public procurement workforce, key external stakeholders would be, but are not limited to, the following entities, although it is subject to the context of each country:

- Public entities (e.g., ministries or public procurement authority) in charge of the overall public procurement policy / system
- Public entities in charge of the civil service system
- Public entities in charge of providing public procurement officials with training
- Public entities related to thematic issues of procurement (ministries related to environment, SME development, labour social affairs, innovation, and digitalisation, sustainable development policy, anti-corruption authority, competition authority, audit authorities etc)

- Contracting authorities (providing their feedbacks on the current professionalisation system and/or participate in the individual capability assessment exercise)
- Private sector (economic operator / training provider etc)
- Civil society and knowledge centres

The leading authority could consider setting up a multi-stakeholder taskforce as part of this process. This process will contribute to setting up a vision and goals, clarifying roles of each stakeholder, and ensuring political and financial commitment.

In Italy, the Control Room of Public Contracts (Cabina di regia dei contratti pubblici) set up a working group on November 9, 2021 to prepare a professionalisation strategy and training plan of public procurement. It consisted of the eight key stakeholders organisations from central and subnational level: National School of Administration (SNA) as a lead partner, National Anti-corruption Authority (ANAC), Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Mobility (MIMS), Unit for Rationalization and Regulation Improvement (PCM-DAGL), Conference of Regions and Autonomous Provinces, National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), UPI (Union of Italian Provinces), and CONSIP (Central Purchasing Body of Italy) (Cabina di Regia, 2021<sup>[30]</sup>). The working group contributed to finalising the professionalisation strategy, which was published in 2021.

The federal government of Mexico also established a multi-stakeholder taskforce to develop a strategy and set up a vision for the public procurement reform, in this case, on e-procurement (see Box 3.2).

### Box 3.2. Stakeholder engagement through establishing a multi-stakeholder group for the e-procurement reform in Mexico

In 2018, the Ministry of Public Administration (Secretaría de la Función Pública, SFP) of the Federal Government of Mexico convened a multi-stakeholder group for the reform of its e-Procurement system, CompraNet. This multi-stakeholder group included representatives from the public sector, business, and civil society, and worked towards the development of a shared vision statement regarding e-procurement in Mexico. The vision statement also aimed at guiding the future development of e-procurement tools in Mexico, including at the subnational level.

The Plural Working Group consisted of six subgroups: information disclosure, interaction with suppliers, competition and capacity building, efficiency and effectiveness, management of complaints and integrity and trust in the tool. Each subgroup was represented by a wide range of stakeholders, including the public sector, civil society, and businesses, and worked on specific key issues and themes, as Table 3.1 illustrates.

Table 3.1. Subgroup topics of the Plural Working Group for CompraNet reform

Topic	Key issue	Participants	Themes covered
1. Information disclosure	CompraNet discloses all information relevant for users	Journalists, civil society organisations (CSOs), suppliers, National Institute on Transparency, Freedom of Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI), businesses (chambers of commerce), SFP	Availability, accessibility, opportunity, usefulness, accuracy of information
2. Interaction with suppliers	Streamlining the tools for engaging suppliers through e procurement	Businesses (chambers of commerce)	Functionality enhancements, transparency, anti-corruption, statistics, professionalisation
3. Competition and capacity-building	Encourage the use of electronic means throughout the public procurement cycle	Public servants, contractors and suppliers	Robustness of platform, reducing participation costs, reducing administrative costs, limiting direct contact between participants

4. Efficiency and effectiveness	Alternative solutions and measures to improve the platform	Civil society organisations (CSOs)	Analysis of applicable regulations, background of CompraNet, practical operation of the platform, accessibility of processes and results
5. Management of complaints	Processing of complaints focused on creating confidence and credibility in the business sector	Public servants and businesses (chambers of commerce)	Analysis of current process flow, diagnosis of options to improve SÍDEC (SFP's complaint system, Sistema Integral de Denuncias Ciudadanas) and CompraNet (best practices), technological update proposal
6. Integrity and trust in the tool	Identify actions that increase trust in CompraNet, ensuring accurate and timely information	Civil society organisations (CSOs)	Integrity of the information contained in CompraNet, trust in processes related to CompraNet, mechanisms and actions external to CompraNet that affect its reliability and integrity

The establishment of the Plural Working Group was indispensable to set up a shared vision statement for Mexico's e-procurement system. In this vision, the Plural Working Group recognised the opportunities provided by digital technology to enable a fully transactional system that supports the whole public procurement cycle, from planning through tendering and award, to payment and contract management, as well as subsequent monitoring and auditing. The vision statement mentioned the twelve principles, such as Transactional, Transparent, Interconnected, User-friendly, which capture the goals and ambitions of all stakeholders involved in the public procurement process.

Source: (OECD, 2018<sup>[31]</sup>)

### 3.3. Drafting the content of the strategy

Once the assessment is carried out and the stakeholder engagement mechanism is established, a leading entity or a multi-stakeholder taskforce can start drafting a professionalisation strategy. It could be a stand-alone or part of the public procurement strategy, as long as it includes the elements such as:

- Background / Context
- Key challenges and gaps identified
- Vision / objective
- Implementation period
- Leading entity and key stakeholders (roles and responsibilities)
- Alignment with other sectoral and national sustainable development strategies
- Financial resources

The assessment of the level of professionalisation and the identification of stakeholders provide essential inputs to define professionalisation strategy. The strategy could start by describing the background, context and key challenges / gaps identified, which help setting up an overall vision and objectives. The strategy should clearly mention its timeline, the leading entity to implement it, financial resources, and monitoring mechanism.

Specific activities to implement the professionalisation strategy can include developing a competency model and a certification framework, developing capacity-building systems, setting up incentive mechanisms to increase the attractiveness of public procurement as a profession, and/or promoting collaborative approaches with knowledge centres. (Each element will be discussed in the Chapters 4-7)

For example, the professionalisation strategy of Italy describes three lines of actions: (i) training plans (e.g., competence matrix of Italian public procurement professionals, community of practices), (ii) specialised

assistance (e.g., technical assistance by Consip, help desk by ANAC), (iii) operational guides (ANAC video library, manuals, standardised documents, FAQs classified by topic) (Cabina di Regia, 2021<sup>[30]</sup>).

Slovenia described activities in the priority areas in its action plan for professionalisation (see Box 3.3).

### Box 3.3. Action plan to improve the public procurement system and professionalisation in Slovenia

In 2018, the Directorate for Public Procurement within the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia prepared an Action Plan to improve the system and professionalisation in public procurement. Slovenia recognised the low level of professionalisation of public procurement as a big challenge.

This Action Plan specifies the following five priority areas:

- Raising the competency level and encouraging civil servants to improve the quality of public procurement;
- Assisting contracting authorities and economic operators to ensure greater legal certainty, quality and cost-effectiveness of public procurement;
- Promoting strategic public procurement;
- Promoting joint public procurement;
- Developing smart tools to support procurement processes such as e-procurement

As part of the first priority area to define the knowledge, skills and competences that public procurement officials should have, the Directorate for Public Procurement developed a competency model for the public procurement workforce in Slovenia by adjusting the competency matrix of ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> to the context of Slovenia. This framework includes the three-level competency matrix for the six job profiles: (i) procurement support officer, (ii) stand-alone public buyer for smaller value contracts, (iii) stand-alone public buyer for higher value contracts, (iv) category specialist, (v) contract manager, and (vi) department manager. In July 2022, the Directorate for Public Procurement published a manual for the assessment of competences in the field of public procurement, which provides the detailed information on the developed competency model. Currently, Slovenia has been working to establish a Public Procurement Academy to provide training modules for the four job profiles (standalone public buyer for smaller value contracts, standalone public buyer for higher value contracts, category specialist, and contract manager). As of July 2022, a Public Procurement Academy will start to provide training from January 2023. This current initiative of establishing a Public Procurement Academy will set up the basis to establish a certification framework in the future.

The Action Plan also targets the establishment of awards for excellence to recognise innovation and good practices in the field of public procurement such as green and socially responsible public procurement and the fight against corruption. It also aims at supporting the development of initial training at the graduate and postgraduate level and other initial vocational training. It intends to provide guidelines, standardised forms and tools (e.g., tender documents, criteria for green public procurement), frequently asked questions and answers, collection of good practices, help desk, the online platforms and professional networks.

Source: (Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, 2018<sup>[32]</sup>); (Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, 2022<sup>[33]</sup>) and information provided by the Directorate for Public Procurement within the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia

The strategy could be accompanied by the annex of the action plan table that summarises key initiatives to be taken, responsible parties, key performance indicators, and timeframe. The Ministry of Economy and Innovation of Lithuania, for example, prepared an action plan for the professionalisation of the public

procurement workforce (2019-2022) in close collaboration with the Public Procurement Office. The action plan aimed at developing training programmes for the public procurement workforce, methodological tools, and solutions to motivate contracting authorities and procurement specialists to conduct procurement more efficiently. This action plan was prepared in the table format that lists measures/activities, responsible institutions, implementation deadline, and result (progress) for the five key areas, as shown in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2. Lithuania’s action plan of professionalisation (2019-2022), extract**

	Measures / activities	Responsible authorities	Implementation deadline	Results / Progress
I. Strengthen the capacities of the public procurement workforce (Preparation of certification framework)				
1	Develop and publish recommended training programs for procurement specialists in line with the recommendations of the OECD	PPO, MoEI, MoE (*)	December 31, 2021	In 2021 PPO in cooperation with MoEI and MoE prepared and published the requirements for the certification framework (CF) and the training programme, which are divided into separate 20 modules. The modules are accompanied by methodological information, lists of legal acts, training records, and relevant case law that procurement specialists need to know. All the specified information is published on the website of the PPO (January 3, 2022). CF to be launched on 1 July 2022.
2	Prepare and publish training materials for procurement specialists	PPO, MoEI, MoE (*)	December 31, 2021	
3	Develop distance learning training modules according to procurement training programs	PPO (*)	December 31, 2021	
II. Develop methodological and support tools to reduce the administrative burden of public procurement or facilitate the sharing of know-how				
III. Improve the motivation system for contracting authorities and procurement specialists				
IV. Raise awareness of other agents/entities participating in procurement				
V. Evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the public procurement professionalisation plan				

Note: PPO: Public Procurement Office, MoEI: Ministry of Innovation and Economy, MoE: Ministry of Environment. Full description was extracted only for *I. Strengthen the capacities of the public procurement workforce*

Source: (Ministry of Economy and Innovation of the Government of Lithuania, 2019<sup>[34]</sup>)

In addition to the elements available in the Lithuania’s action plan table, countries could also benefit from including some columns on the elements such as priority level (low, middle, high etc), key performance indicators (baseline and target), and more detailed roles of stakeholders for each activity and the measurement in accordance with the RACI methodology (see Box 3.4).

### Box 3.4. RACI methodology

The RACI methodology is used to identify the actors that play roles in implementing the proposals. RACI enables the understanding of the roles and responsibilities required for various tasks, processes and assignments. The following criteria are used:

- R = Responsible - the individual who carries out the work.
- A = Accountable - the individual who holds the ultimate accountability for the work being carried out and/or decision making.
- C = Consulted - individuals who should be informed and referred to prior to decision making or task completion.
- I = Informed - individuals who should be informed once decisions are taken or upon work completion.

Source: (Jose Maria Delos Santos, 2018<sup>[35]</sup>)



### 3.4. Monitoring & Evaluation

It is essential to implement monitoring and evaluation (M&E) during the implementation of the strategy and at the end of the implementation. M&E is a process undertaken to understand whether goals were fulfilled against targets, and how they can be improved. M&E allows for systematic learning from past and current activities. Data gathered through M&E allows good practices to be replicated and mistakes and poor outcomes to be prevented. M&E also allows to measure impact of strategies and activities to make better informed decisions (The Stuart Low Trust, 2020<sup>[36]</sup>).

It is essential to carry out M&E of the strategy in accordance with the defined timeline, considering its implementation for multiple years (e.g., 4 years for Lithuania). Progress shall be monitored on an ongoing basis with short intervals, while the evaluation of the strategy should be conducted at the end of (sometimes in the middle of) specific milestones and/or at the end of the strategy implementation. In Italy, the Working Group is required to monitor regularly (at least quarterly) the progress on the achievement of the milestones, and the Control Room of Public Contracts (Cabina di regia dei contratti pubblici) can suggest that the central and territorial public bodies take further corrective measures. In Lithuania, although the action plan requires the evaluation at the end of the strategy implementation period (December 2022), the implementation progress of each activity is monitored during the implementation for its regular update.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) subject to M&E depend on specific activities defined in the strategy, but shall consist of the qualitative and quantitative indicators. In the case of the activity to develop training courses, potential indicators could be, but are not limited to, the development of training courses (qualitative), the number of participants in training (quantitative), and course satisfaction / evaluation survey (quantitative). In the case of the certification framework, they could include the development of the certification framework (qualitative), the number of certified officials (quantitative), and the success rate (quantitative). For example, Finland set up the three KPIs for the M&E of the professionalisation goal of its first National Public Procurement Strategy (see Box 3.5).

#### Box 3.5. National Public Procurement Strategy of Finland

In 2020, Finland launched its first national public procurement strategy 2020 which has been implemented since September 2019. The strategy was prepared with the vision that Finland will be a European leader in the 2020s in public procurement management, skills, knowledge, innovation, economic, environmental and social responsibility to achieve effective procurement. The strategy consists of eight common goals/pillars (strategic leadership, competence, knowledge management and impact, well-functioning procurement, innovations, economic sustainability, social sustainability, and ecological sustainability) with the 25 objectives.

One of the eight common goals is dedicated to competence (the professionalisation to promote procurement skills), and recognised as the forefront of this strategy. The goal of competence is to ensure professional competence and continuously develop skills with the following four objectives:

- Map the standard of procurement skills at both the national and contracting entity level
- Maintain and develop procurement skills at both the strategic and operative level
- Provide more training on public procurement
- Ensure effective and high-quality research in procurement issues

The strategy was prepared through the extensive stakeholder consultation (public sector including contracting authorities, private sector, and knowledge centres etc). Thematic groups were set up for each of the eight goals to design and launch concrete actions to contribute to achieving the objectives of the public procurement strategy. Procurement skills development theme group will be in charge of the goal of competence.

The strategy evaluates & monitors its outcomes and impacts systematically based on 27 indicators aligned with the eight goals, three of which is dedicated to the goal of competence:

- Level of strategic and operational procurement skills at organisational level
- Number of training modules on public procurement
- Relevance and focus of the training provided to procurement officials working in different roles at strategic and operational level

The Public Procurement Advisory Unit provides contracting authorities with methodological assistance related to public procurement. As part of its duties, it provides a wide range of advisory services, guidance, and training.

Source: (Ministry of Finance of Finland, 2020<sup>[37]</sup>)

The monitoring result shall be made available to the public through the regular monitoring report. Ideally, a leading entity could also consider uploading video on its website and receiving feedback from the public on the implementation, like the case of ChileCompra (see Box 3.6). This process enhances accountability, transparency, and stakeholder engagement during the implementation of the strategy.

### Box 3.6. Cuenta Pública (Public Talking) of ChileCompra

ChileCompra, a central purchasing body and public procurement authority of Chile, uploads a video of “Cuenta Pública (Public Talking)” each year to disclose the achievements made in the previous year and the challenges for the upcoming year.

Cuenta Pública has been required since 2011 in accordance with Article 72 of Law No. 20500 on citizen participation in public management (Ministerio Secretaría General de Gobierno de Chile, 2011<sup>[38]</sup>) to promote citizen participation through providing opportunities for dialogue and exchange of opinions with citizens.

The video of Cuenta Pública 2021 lasts 30 minutes and was uploaded on May 12, 2022. In the video, the director of ChileCompra explains the key achievements made by ChileCompra in 2021 and the challenges for 2022 in the public procurement field, including professionalising the public procurement workforce in Chile.

As part of the citizen participation mechanism, feedback was welcomed from the public through the website of Cuenta Pública until May 28, 2022. ChileCompra received 32 questions and comments by the specified deadline, and published the answers to these questions on its website by the deadline June 10, 2022.

Source: (ChileCompra, 2022<sup>[39]</sup>)

# 4. Competency model and certification framework

Public procurement is a multidisciplinary process that requires specific skills and competences. They include not only technical skills (market analysis, preparation of tender and contract documents, tender evaluation, contract management, etc.) but also soft skills (communication, negotiation, project management, etc.), which are more precisely known as cognitive, social and behavioural competences (OECD, 2021<sup>[40]</sup>). These skills and competences have to be clearly defined to ensure the sound and effective functioning of the public procurement system.

Against this background, developing a competency model and a certification framework is an effective measure to recognise public procurement as a professional task and reinforce the skills and competences of the public procurement workforce. A competency model maps critical skills and their capability levels which are required for the overall strategic direction of an organisation. A certification framework certifies the level of skills and competences acquired by public procurement officials. Therefore, it is closely linked to a competency model. These mechanisms allow procurement officials to identify their skill gaps and can be used for human resource management purposes: recruitment, promotion and training on the skills and competences. Indeed, the ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> Reference Training Curriculum lists all learning outcomes that public procurement professionals should know and be able to demonstrate after attending a training for a certain proficiency level of each competency (European Commission, 2020<sup>[41]</sup>).

Recently, countries have been increasingly introducing these mechanisms for the public procurement workforce, but progress is still limited. As of 2020, 41% of OECD countries had introduced a competency model for the public procurement workforce, compared to 30% in 2018 (OECD, 2021<sup>[1]</sup>). It is worth mentioning that the majority of OECD countries have a standard competency framework for senior public servants in the central administration, according to the OECD Survey 2020 on Public Service Leadership and Capability (OECD, 2021<sup>[40]</sup>). 35% of OECD countries put in place a certification framework for the public procurement workforce in comparison with 20% in 2018 (OECD, 2021<sup>[1]</sup>) (see Table 4.1).

This chapter provides an overview of the initiatives taken by countries in developing a competency model and a certification framework for the public procurement workforce.

Table 4.1. Competency model and certification framework, 2018 and 2020

	Competency model		Certification framework	
	2018	2020	2018	2020
Australia	○	○	○	○
Austria	○	●	○	●
Belgium	○	○	○	○
Canada	●	..	●	..
Chile	●	●	●	●
Colombia	..	●	..	○
Costa Rica	○	○	○	○
Czech Republic	..	○	..	●
Denmark	○	○	○	○
Estonia	○	○	○	○
Finland	○	○	○	○
France	●	●	●	●
Germany	○	○	○	○
Greece	○	○	●	○
Hungary	○	○	○	○
Iceland	●	..	○	..
Ireland	..	○	..	●
Israel	○	●	○	●
Italy	..	○	..	○
Japan	●	●	○	○
Korea	○	○	○	○
Latvia	○	○	○	○
Lithuania	○	○	○	○
Mexico	○	○	○	○
Netherlands	●	●	○	○
New Zealand	●	●	●	●
Norway	○	○	●	●
Poland	○	○	○	○
Portugal	●	●	○	●
Slovak Republic	●	●	○	●
Slovenia	○	●	○	○
Spain	○	○	○	○
Sweden	○	○	○	○
Switzerland	..	●	..	●
Türkiye	○	●	○	○
United Kingdom	..	●	..	●
<b>OECD Total</b>				
● Yes	9	14	6	12
○ Not	21	20	24	22
% of ● (Yes)	30%	41%	20%	35%
".." No information	6	2	6	2
Indonesia	..	●	..	●
Morocco	○	○	○	○
Peru	●	●	●	●

Note: Data for Colombia, Czech Republic, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States are not available for 2018. Data for Canada, Iceland, Luxembourg, and the United States are not available for 2020. Costa Rica is included as an OECD member as of May 2021. Lithuania launched its national certification framework in July 2022.

Source: 2018 OECD Survey on the Implementation of the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Public Procurement and 2020 OECD Survey on the Professionalisation on Public Procurement

## 4.1. Competency model

A competency model maps critical skills and their capability levels. Competency models differ across countries. They can be structured by level, job profile/position, or a combination of both elements. In Chile, for example, ChileCompra set up four levels (basic, intermediate, advanced, and expert) for the competency model of the public procurement workforce.

Some countries specified job profiles without multiple levels. In France, the Inter-Ministerial Directory of State Professions (Répertoire Interministériel des Métiers de l'Etat) included various positions that belong to the job family of public procurement and specified competences required for each job profile (see Box 4.1). Hansel, the national Central Purchasing Body in Finland, introduced a competency model of public procurement in 2013. It defines four different procurement roles: key account manager, procurement specialist, legal counsel (lawyer) and sourcing consultant (European Commission, 2020<sup>[41]</sup>).

The Directorate for Public Procurement of Slovenia developed a competency model by adapting the ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> competency matrix to its local context. It consists of a three-level competency matrix for six job profiles: (i) procurement support officer, (ii) stand-alone public buyer for smaller value contracts, (iii) stand-alone public buyer for higher value contracts, (iv) category specialist, (v) contract manager, and (vi) department manager. In July 2022, the Directorate for Public Procurement published a manual to assess competences in the field of public procurement, which provides detailed information on the competency model (Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, 2022<sup>[33]</sup>). As previously mentioned, ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> provides a competency matrix that includes 30 competences and their proficiency descriptions for each of four levels (basic, intermediate, advanced, and expert).

### Box 4.1. Job profiles in France

France included the public procurement in its Inter-ministerial Directory of State Professions (RIME: Répertoire Interministériel des Métiers de l'Etat). The job family of public procurement consists of various job positions and profiles: buyer (acheteur), procurement manager (responsable achat), procurement expert adviser (conseiller en ingénierie d'achat), official in charge of drafting contract documents (rédacteur de la commande publique), and official in charge of supply and contract management (approvisionnementneur).

Each job profile has the same format: definition of the position, key activities, competences (skills and knowledge), requirement in terms of management skills, and key targets in the medium term.

The following illustrate a few elements from the job profile of the buyer (acheteur):

- Definition: Carrying out procurement of any kind to meet the qualitative and quantitative needs of services and contributing to procurement performance
- Key activities:
  - Analysing, negotiating and selecting offers
  - Developing or participating in the development of procurement strategies and implementing them
  - Conducting business intelligence, in particular, by analysing supplier markets
  - Measuring purchasing performance
  - Defining the right needs
  - Managing procurement projects (schedule, resources, risks, etc.) and monitoring contract execution
  - Promoting the markets available to users and measuring their satisfaction

- Skills and knowledge (list a few of them): market analysis, public procurement law, environment and sustainable development, control, negotiation, teamwork, leadership, sense of innovation and creativity, project management.
- Key targets in the medium-term:
  - Acceleration of the implementation of the public procurement policy within public entities
  - Deployment of the professional social network and the procurement information system
  - Development of public procurement for innovation
  - Development of management control in the purchasing field
  - Promotion of RBC procurement
  - Strengthening e-procurement procedures

Job profiles used for recruiting procurement officials need to be aligned with the ones defined in the RIME.

Source: (Ministère de la Transformation et de la Fonction Publiques, n.d.<sup>[42]</sup>)

## 4.2. Certification framework

A certification framework certifies the levels of skills and competences acquired. It is closely linked to a competency model. A certification framework allows public procurement officers to improve their knowledge and skills through targeted training on the competences required under the certification framework. Thus, it may greatly contribute to recognising public procurement as a professional task, which will lead to increasing the motivation of the workforce.

The system of the certification framework differs across countries. Table 4.2 compares some typical characteristics of the certification framework of five countries: Chile, Croatia, Serbia, Lithuania and Peru. More than one level is available for certification in Chile (four levels) and Peru (three levels), while Croatia, Serbia and Lithuania certify one level. A certificate can be obtained after completing training courses and/or passing an exam. It is mandatory to complete training courses before taking an exam in Chile and Croatia, while candidates are allowed to take an exam without completing training in Serbia, Lithuania, and Peru. Recertification is required in a few years (2-3 years, 5 years for Lithuania) after obtaining the certification. Chile, Lithuania and Peru require the successful performance in an exam again, while Croatia requires the completion of a 32-hour training. A certification framework is used as a mandatory requirement to work on specific tasks such as access to the e-procurement system (Chile), and being an evaluation committee member (Croatia, Serbia and Lithuania).

Table 4.2. Certification framework of Chile, Croatia, Serbia, Lithuania, and Peru

	Chile	Croatia	Serbia	Lithuania	Peru
<b>Owner</b>	ChileCompra	Directorate for Public Procurement System (DPPS)	Public Procurement Office	Public Procurement Office	OSCE
<b>Start year</b>	2007 (version 3.0 since 2019)	2012	2008	2022	2013 (latest version since 2017)
<b>Level</b>	4 levels (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, Expert)	1 level	1 level	1 level	3 levels (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced) 1 level in 2013
<b>Examination to obtain certification</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Mandatory completion of training</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
<b>Necessary to work on public procurement?</b>	Yes  Access to e-procurement system	Public Procurement Committee must include at least one certified procurement practitioner for above-threshold public procurement procedures (EUR 26 000 for services and goods or EUR 66 000 for public works)	At least one certified public procurement officer needs to be employed at a contracting authority whose total value of public procurements in annual planning exceeds 175 000 EUR	At least one certified official needs to be the member of evaluation committee at contracting authorities	Yes  Required to work on public procurement at public entities
<b>Content of exam</b>	30 questions including multiple-choice questions and scenario-based open-ended questions	50 questions (135 minutes)	55 questions on PP theory and practice (180 minutes)	50 close-ended (single or multiple-choice) questions, (120 minutes)	73 multiple-choice questions (120 minutes)
<b>Conditions for certification</b>	Obtaining 60% 40%: training course grade 60%: exam	35 (70%) of the 50 questions	Minimum 75% (75 out of 100 points)	Minimum 80% (40 out of 50 questions)	Basic: 30 to 42 Intermediate: 43 to 57 Advanced: 58 to 73 (Maximum possible point is 73)
<b>Assistance to exam preparation</b>	ChileCompra provides training and material	50-hour training courses (private or public providers)	PPO developed a manual to prepare for exams	PPO provides a list of modules (20) on the PPO website (**)	OSCE provides optional training courses
<b>Validity of CF</b>	3 years	3 years	Information is not available	5 years	2 years
<b>Renewal conditions</b>	Pass the exam again	Complete 32-hour training	Information is not available	Pass the exam again	Pass the exam again
<b>To whom is the CF open</b>	Anyone interested	Anyone interested	Anyone interested (*)	Anyone interested	Anyone interested (*)

Note: (\*) Some conditions are required to apply for the certification such as an academic degree (Serbia and Peru), years of professional experiences (Peru), and years of experience in public procurement (Peru), (\*\*) Each of these modules are accompanied by supporting material, freely accessible on the PPOs website (legislation, training and methodological material (guidelines, recordings of training, etc.)

Source: (Organismo Supervisor de las Contrataciones del Estado (OSCE) de Peru, n.d.<sup>[43]</sup>), (Public Procurement Office of Serbia, 2020<sup>[44]</sup>), (European Commission, 2020<sup>[41]</sup>), (Public Procurement Office of Lithuania, 2022<sup>[45]</sup>), (Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia, 2017<sup>[46]</sup>)

Since its introduction in 2007, ChileCompra has been updating the certification framework (see Box 4.2). ChileCompra digitalised the certification process in 2020, so that candidates can take training modules and an exam online (ChileCompra, n.d.<sup>[47]</sup>).

### Box 4.2. Evolution of the certification framework in Chile and ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> pilot project

ChileCompra established the certification framework for the public procurement workforce in 2006. The necessity of developing a certification framework arose from the requirement by Article 5a of Decree 250, or the regulations of the Public Procurement Law (No. 19886) approved in 2004: it required all the public procurement officers to be accredited to have access to the e-procurement system. This requirement remains unchanged until now.

The certification was based on job profiles because different access rights were required depending on job profiles. It started with two profiles (procurement operator and supervisor) in version 1 (2006), and then extended to four profiles (procurement operator, supervisor, lawyer, and auditor) in version 2 (2019) to grant different access rights to each job profile. Candidates were required to pass an exam.

The current version 3 launched in 2019 introduced a proficiency-based certification with four proficiency levels (basic, intermediate, advanced, and expert), making a transition from a traditional profile-based certification system. Completing training courses is mandatory since the introduction of version 3. Candidates are required to obtain a grade equal to or greater than 60%, which is calculated by the formula: (Grade obtained in courses) \* 40% + (Exam grade) \* 60%. In order to take the exam, candidates must have obtained a grade equal to or greater than 60% in the training courses. Successful completion rate in 2020 was high: 91% with 6 445 successful candidates (basic), 96% (intermediate) with 4 130, 97% (advanced) with 1 394, and 96% (expert) with 421. The certificate is valid for a period of three years since the launch of the certification framework in 2007. Renewal requires passing an exam.

Table 4.3. Evolution of the certification framework in Chile

	Version 1	Version 2	Version 3
Start	2006	April, 2019	June, 2019
Level	2 profiles (operator and supervisor)	4 profiles (operator and supervisor, lawyer, auditor)	4 competency levels (basic, intermediate, lawyer, auditor)
Examination	Yes	Yes	Yes (digitalised)
Mandatory training	No	Yes	Yes (digitalised)
Necessary to work on PP	Yes (Access to e-procurement system)		
Content of exam	60 multiple-choice and true/false questions	30 multiple-choice questions	30 questions including multiple-choice questions and scenario-based open-ended questions
Minimum passing score	60%	60%	60%
Allocation of score	Exam: 100%	Exam: 100%	Training course grade: 40% Exam: 60%
Assistance to exam preparation	Not available	ChileCompra provides training and material	ChileCompra provides training and material
Validity of CF	3 years	3 years	3 years
Renewal conditions	Pass the exam	Pass the exam	Pass the exam

ChileCompra will launch version 4 in 2022 by updating the competences, and collaborated with the OECD under the EC-financed pilot project of ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup>. Version 4 will include 17 competences including three new competences: sustainable public procurement, tender documentation (with emphasis on contract award criteria), and performance orientation.



**Table 4.4. 17 competences defined in the draft competency matrix**

#	Competence of Chile
1	Regulatory framework of public procurement
2	Ethics and integrity in public service
3	E-procurement system (Mercado Público)
4	Lifecycle
5	Annual procurement planning
6	Definition of requirement and needs
7	Draft of tender documents
8	Strategic Alliance
9	Procurement strategy
11	Evaluation of price quotation and tender
10	Definition of procurement category and market
12	Contract and types of contract
13	Sustainable public procurement (Inclusive and social procurement)
14	Monitoring and payment
15	Data analysis for efficiency
16	Results and orientation towards efficiency in public procurement
17	Audit and risk management in public procurement

ChileCompra and the OECD prepared the survey to assess the current capability level of the public procurement workforce in these 17 competences. ChileCompra and the OECD invited selected 100 public procurement officials of 15 contracting authorities to the webinar held on November 26, 2021 to launch the survey. The result of this self-assessment exercise contributed to achieving two main objectives: (i) helping identify priorities for the development and reinforcement of training courses of 17 competences linked with the certification framework and (ii) obtaining the feedbacks on the draft competency matrix including the new competences to be included in the future. This pilot project showed the great potential of ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> in revamping the competency matrix linked to a national certification framework.

Source: (ChileCompra, 2021<sup>[48]</sup>), Information provided by ChileCompra

During the EC-funded technical support project for Lithuania, the OECD proposed a draft national certification framework of the public procurement workforce (see Box 4.3). The government of Lithuania launched its first-ever national certification framework of the public procurement workforce in July 2022 in accordance with the OECD draft proposal (see also Table 4.2).

### Box 4.3. Establishing a certification framework and training programmes in Lithuania

The OECD worked with the government of Lithuania under the Structural Reform and Support Services (SRSS) from the European Commission. In this project, the OECD proposed a detailed outline of the certification framework and professionalisation strategy tools, built upon a comprehensive assessment of the challenges with the key stakeholders and close discussion with the Ministry of the Economy and Innovation (MoEI) and the Public Procurement Office (PPO) of Lithuania.

The proposed certification framework consisted of two levels: basic and advanced. Candidates will be required to complete in total 60-hour courses (42 hours and 18 hours for each level) on 19 procurement topics such as the public procurement law, market analysis, technical specifications, award criteria, integrity in public procurement and strategic procurement (green public procurement, SMEs, innovation, and socially responsible public procurement). The OECD also proposed tools to promote the professionalisation strategy. These tools include e-learning, degree programmes, self-support tools (manuals, guidelines and standardised templates), a one-stop shop procurement portal for the community of practice, an award system exclusively for public procurement professionals and practical training (On-the-job training, job-swapping, mentorship and internship programmes).

As part of the key delivery of this project, the OECD provided two one-week Training of Trainers (ToT) programmes to build capabilities for the future trainers who will provide the training sessions required under the proposed certification framework. To deliver the ToT programmes, the OECD developed training materials that cover 11 procurement courses out of the total 19 courses required in the proposed certification framework. This corresponds to 31 hours, which accounts for approximately half of the total 60 hours required to complete both levels.

Government of Lithuania approved the Public Procurement Professional Development Plan prepared by the MoEI in 2019. It aimed at developing training programs for procurement specialists, useful methodological tools, and seeking solutions to motivate procurement specialists to conduct procurement more efficiently (see also Table 3.2).

As part of this plan, the MoEI and the PPO started to work on establishing a national certification framework, based on the OECD draft proposal. As a result of the intensive collaboration among these institutions, Lithuania developed a one-level national certification framework by integrating the two levels proposed by the OECD into one level.

The government of Lithuania launched its first-ever national certification framework of the public procurement workforce in July 2022. It is worth mentioning that Lithuania digitalised the certification processes such as signing up for and taking the exam online.

Source: (OECD, 2019<sup>[49]</sup>)

Establishing a competency model and a certification framework has not been a common practice yet in the world despite the recent upward trend. As of 2020, 41% of the OECD countries had introduced a competency model, while the same indicator was 35% for a certification framework (OECD, 2021<sup>[11]</sup>). However, the launch of ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> as well as the flagship professionalisation reform projects are expected to drive momentum over the coming years.

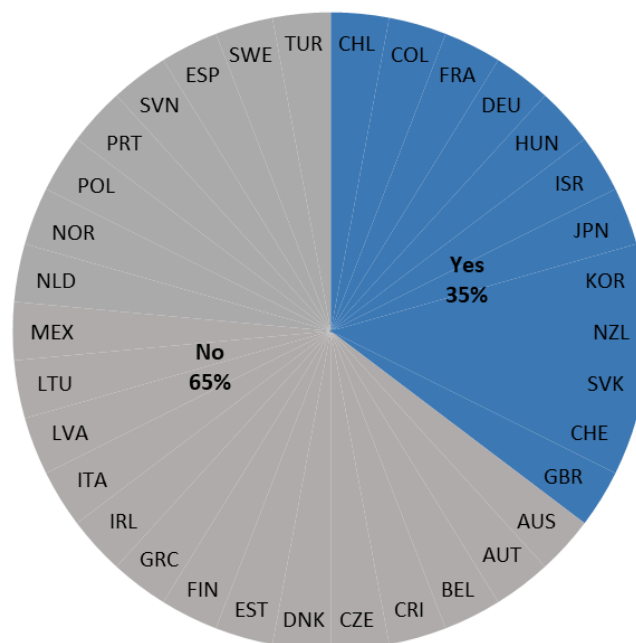
# 5. Capability-building systems

Supporting a learning culture in the civil service will ensure that skills are reinforced and regularly updated. It allows public officers to keep up with the fast-changing nature of work. This implies making investments in learning opportunities for civil servants including the public procurement workforce (OECD, 2017<sup>[50]</sup>). This chapter details initiatives that countries have taken to reinforce the capability of the public procurement workforce through capability-building systems such as the provision of training courses and methodological assistance.

## 5.1. Training courses: Public procurement officers need more training opportunities for advanced topics such as strategic procurement and contract award criteria

Reinforcing the capability of the public procurement workforce requires an adequate training system. To reinforce capability, some countries have introduced mandatory training. In 2020, 35% of the OECD countries make it mandatory for public procurement officers to take certain training (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. Introduction of mandatory training systems in OECD countries (2020)



Note: Data for Canada, Iceland, Luxembourg, and the United States are not available for 2020. Costa Rica is included as an OECD member as of May 2021. Among non-OECD members, Indonesia and Morocco adopt a mandatory training system, while this is not the case in Peru.

Source: 2020 OECD Survey on the Professionalisation on Public Procurement

ChileCompra provides mandatory training aligned with the certification framework as part of the requirements for public procurement officials to access its e-procurement system. In 2019, New Zealand Government Procurement and Property launched a new online training platform for government procurement and property professionals, Hīkina (Learning for Government Procurement and Property) to help build public sector knowledge in procurement and property. Hīkina provides a wide range of procurement topics including government procurement rules, the procurement life cycle, early market engagement, debriefing suppliers, social services procurement, and contract management (Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment of New Zealand, 2019<sup>[51]</sup>). In Malta, the Department of Contracts (DoC), through the Institute for the Public Services (IPS), provides a series of training opportunities of public procurement, some of which are mandatory for being a member of the Tender Evaluation Committee (TEC) (see Box 5.1).

### Box 5.1. Public procurement training in Malta

In Malta, the Department of Contracts (DoC), through the Institute for the Public Services (IPS), provides a series of training opportunities of public procurement.

Table 5.1. Public procurement training courses in Malta

Course name	Duration	Mandatory for whom
Procurement by Contracting Authorities (introductory level)	8 hours	Optional
Continuous Development Award in Public Procurement Regulations (intermediate)	25 hours	Chairman and secretary of the TEC (*)
Public Procurement in Practice - A follow up programme (advanced)	24 hours	Optional
Electronic Public Procurement	12 hours	Chairman and secretary of the TEC
Evaluators Training for e-Tenders	4 hours	All TEC members
Introduction to Green Public Procurement	5 hours	GPP officer
Using Best Price Quality Ratio (BPQR) as Award Criteria in Public Procurement	4 hours	Optional

Note: A Tender Evaluation Committee (TEC) shall be composed of a minimum of five persons: a Chairman, a Secretary and three or an odd number of evaluators.

*Procurement by Contracting Authorities* is an introductory course. This course offers a general overview of procurement procedures. It delves into the basic principles of public procurement, procedures to follow, the various thresholds applicable, estimates, types of tendering procedures, selection criteria, technical specifications and terms of reference, adjudication of tenders, implementation of the contract and compliance.

*Continuous Development Award in Public Procurement Regulations* is an intermediate course. It consists of the modules: Procurement and Planning, Procurement Procedures and Award Criteria, ESPD (Exclusion Criteria/Blacklisting/ Selection Criteria), The Evaluation Process and Compliance, Modifications and Post-Contracting Issues. Completing the introductory course was a prerequisite to register for this intermediate-level course, but currently it is not required anymore.

*Public Procurement in Practice - A follow up programme* is an advanced-level course. Participants need to have successfully completed the intermediate-level course at least one year ago to be eligible for this course. It consists of various modules: Concessions, Competitive Dialogues and Innovation Partnerships, Compilation of a procurement document, Award Criteria preparation, Evaluation Process in practice, Application of Modifications, and Fraud and Corruption.

OECD has been working with DoC under the ongoing DG REFORM project to develop training materials to reinforce the components of the topics including legislation, contract award criteria / life cycle costing, innovation, negotiation, conflict resolution / mediation, and risk management (accompanied by a risk management template).

Source: Prepared based on the information available in (The Institute for the Public Services, n.d.<sup>[52]</sup>) and provided by the DoC

It does not necessarily imply, however, that countries without mandatory training systems do not provide public procurement officials with training. In fact, many countries offer optional training. For example, *Bundesbeschaffung GmbH* (Austrian Federal Procurement Agency, BBG) established the in-house Public Procurement Academy to promote theoretical and practical knowledge specific to centralised public procurement. BBG staff are trained to ensure quality, value for money, and fairness throughout the procurement process from the preparation of calls for tender and needs assessments, the application of market knowledge, to contract management. In Poland, the Public Procurement Office (PPO) offers a wide variety of optional and free training opportunities, although contracting authorities are responsible for determining the training requirements for their public procurement officials. Currently, the Polish PPO has been implementing the project "Professionalisation of staff in public procurement" since July 2020 up to the end of 2022 to improve the capability of the public procurement workforce (see Box 5.2).

### Box 5.2. The project “Professionalisation of staff in public procurement” in Poland

This project implemented by the PPO of Poland aims at professionalising public procurement by supporting public officials involved in the process of preparation, awarding, supervision and control of public procurement at the public administration (central and local governments) as well as at control and audit institutions in Poland.

As part of this project activities, 1 963 public procurement officials will participate in all of the following training modules:

- Open electronic training on the PPO website
- Two-day training courses on the public procurement process
- Two-day training courses on sustainable public procurement (green public procurement and socially responsible procurement)

Some conferences and seminars are also planned in this project. In 2020, the following training activities were implemented:

- Two online conferences on the new Public Procurement Law for contracting authorities and control institutions.
- Two online training courses on sustainable public procurement.

Source: Information provided by the Public Procurement Office of Poland.

Although many countries provide training on public procurement, public procurement officers need more training opportunities for advanced topics. Indeed, many countries including France, Germany, and Portugal recognise that traditionally public procurement training has focused on legal and procedural aspects rather than emerging and advanced topics such as the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) criteria and strategic (sustainable) procurement (including the knowledge on the SDG agenda), in particular public procurement for innovation (European Commission, 2020<sup>[41]</sup>). This issue is also echoed by the findings of OECD reviews for countries like Lithuania and the Slovak Republic (OECD, 2019<sup>[49]</sup>).

While countries have been including these advanced topics in training curricula, further efforts are required to improve the capability in certain areas. For example, the use of MEAT criteria, which could be closely interconnected with increasing the uptake of strategic procurement, is still limited in many countries. On average, the usage of MEAT reaches 42% in EU countries (European Commission, 2021<sup>[53]</sup>). However, ten countries marked 20% or below while 20% or more is considered as a satisfactory level in the Single Market Scoreboard (European Commission, n.d.<sup>[54]</sup>). The use of MEAT criteria in public procurement procedures is also a challenge for the EU accession countries in the Western Balkans such as Serbia (6% in 2020) (Public Procurement Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2021<sup>[55]</sup>) and Albania (1.7% in 2019, 2.18% in 2020 and 5.9% in 2020) (Public Procurement Agency of the Republic of Albania, 2022<sup>[56]</sup>). In 2019, OECD SIGMA developed guidelines for choosing the most economically advantageous tender for Serbia under an EU-funded project, in order to promote the use of the MEAT criteria by the contracting authorities in Serbia (OECD SIGMA, 2019<sup>[57]</sup>). Croatia, which records the highest share of using the MEAT criteria (95% on average) among the EU Member States (European Commission, n.d.<sup>[54]</sup>), prepared the detailed manuals on the use of MEAT criteria in 2017 (Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia, 2017<sup>[58]</sup>). The use of innovation procurement is also limited. The total amount of R&D procurement of the surveyed 27 EU countries amounted to EUR 12.2 billion in 2018, which corresponds to 0.54% of total public procurement or 0.09% of GDP (European Commission, 2021<sup>[53]</sup>).

Therefore, countries can take further initiatives to strengthen the capability on these topics. For example, Spain developed a training programme that includes modules such as the calculation of life-cycle cost by aligning them with the expert level of the ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> competency matrix (see Box 5.3).

### Box 5.3. Expert-level training initiative in Spain

From February to April 2022, the Spanish Ministry of Finance and Civil Service, along with the Spanish Fiscal Studies Institute, developed the High Specialisation in Public Procurement Course, a training initiative based on ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup>.

30 high-level civil servants from the Ministry of Finance, all of them already experts on public procurement and with a lot of experience in this field, have taken part in the course. These participants were selected by the Fiscal Studies Institute as the first promotion of this brand-new training course which was designed in accordance with the ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> competency matrix. The designers of the course did not take into account those competences and skills of ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> that high civil servants already had (such as team leadership, communication, planning, negotiation, adaptability, etc.) and focused on those specific to public procurement and also on the highest level (expert) of any of the competences depicted in the matrix. This way, the program covered public procurement in a broad sense from a practical perspective, avoiding the exclusively legal perspective from other courses and including, for the first time, topics that often were not taken into consideration (international trends, public procurement and competition, accountability in public procurement, criminal implications, market analysis, technical specifications, emergency public procurement, tenderer perspective, life cycle cost calculation etc).

The first edition of the High Specialisation in Public Procurement Course is considered as a successful experience and obtained the support of both the OECD and the European Commission in its closing session.

The Spanish Ministry of Finance and Civil Service is working with the Fiscal Studies Institute to prepare the next edition of the High Specialisation Course. After evaluation and improvement of the program, future goals are to: increase the number of courses per year and in different training institutions, increase the number of participants and invite them from the private sector, collaborate with universities, provide courses in the Autonomous Regions and Local Entities. Ultimately, the goal is to work together

with human resources planning to create a certification on public procurement specialisation for civil servants and another one for private specialists.

Source: Information provided by the Ministry of Finance and Civil Service of Spain

The training courses on these topics can also be complemented by practical training sessions and well-organised methodological assistance (manuals, standardised templates, a help desk, more direct support to the actual procurement procedure), which will be discussed in the next sections (see Sections 5.2 and 5.3). It is also worth considering the possibility of clearly mentioning these advanced topics in the competency model and the certification framework (see Chapter 4. ).

These advanced training courses are essential for the majority of the public procurement workforce who carry out public procurement procedures, but the provision of public procurement training to senior-level officials could be also further promoted. The OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability adopted in 2019 defines senior-level public servants as public servants who take decisions and exert influence at the highest hierarchical levels of the public service, and calls for developing the leadership capabilities of current and potential senior-level public servants (OECD, 2019<sup>[14]</sup>). Under the context of public procurement, the senior management such as the president, director-general, CEO or any other board member of executive bodies in contracting authorities, plays key role and exerts strong leadership in promoting the strategic position of public procurement within each organisation. They need to be aware of the role of public procurement as strategic tools for efficient public spending as well as the contribution to the SDG agenda. Discussions among the OECD and some countries identify that the lack of senior management's understanding on the strategic role of public procurement might prevent the use of strategic procurement. Therefore, the provision of the introductory procurement training courses to the senior-level officials could be further promoted to increase their awareness of the strategic role of public procurement.

## 5.2. Practical training

Public procurement is a practical task which requires not only technical expertise and knowledge but also practical experience. The knowledge and skills acquired through training courses could be further reinforced with practical training systems such as on-the-job training and job swapping. An empirical study also found that having a supervisor or co-worker with strong public service values was associated with higher levels of public service motivation (Vandenabeele, 2011<sup>[59]</sup>). Indeed, supervisors play key role on reinforcing the capability of their staff.

**Table 5.2. Summary of practical training sessions**

	On-the-job training	Mentoring	Job swapping (**)
Description	One-on-one training where an experienced staff transfers his skills and knowledge to a less experienced worker by working for the same project	Mentors provide mentees with advice in their professional development and daily work	Inter-exchange programme of the staff who work for different units inside the same entity and/or for different agencies for a certain period of time
Main target	Newcomers (*)	Newcomers (*)	Every level of procurement staff
Purpose	An experienced staff transfers his skills and knowledge to a less experienced worker.	An experienced person (mentor) provides support and guidance to a less experienced person (mentee) in an effort to help him develop and reach his potential.	Provide procurement experts with the opportunity to share their experiences and learn at different working areas
Remarks	Trainer and trainees work	Mentor and mentee do not necessarily work for	The inter-exchange of the staff

together for the same task at the same work place on a daily basis	the same organisation nor at the same work place. This will be an alternative or supplemental option to on-the-job training, because the trainer of on-the-job training can act as a mentor.	among various entities such as the public procurement authority, control entities, contracting authorities (small and large) is an option as long as it is beneficial to the exchanged staff.
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Note: \* Newcomers refer to not only the newcomers that entered the organisation but also anyone who assume new tasks. In addition, these practical training mechanisms should be available to all the staff throughout their careers. \*\* It can be also called as temporary mobility/secondments.

These initiatives on practical training sessions could be taken at organisational and/or inter-organisational level. The cases of New Zealand and Finland provide insights on mentoring programmes (see Box 5.4).

### Box 5.4. Mentoring Programmes in New Zealand and Finland

#### New Zealand

New Zealand Government Procurement officially launched a mentoring programme in 2015 after a pilot period in 2014. This programme aims at raising individual procurement capability across government, and providing a mechanism for procurement practitioners to enhance their work-related skills, procurement knowledge and professional networks.

Both mentors (public & private sectors) and learners (public sector) must be volunteers. The application form for the learner includes current experience, preference on the background of the mentor (specific agency, etc.), and goals of skill development. The mentor is required to describe his/her current experience, preference on the background of the learner, and strong competency area in which to assist the learner. New Zealand Government Procurement reviews applications to match learners with the best mentor who possesses the knowledge and skills matching the learner's needs. The mentor needs to attend a mentoring workshop before being assigned a learner. The mentor and the learner sign the mentoring agreement which specifies how often they meet, how they contact each other, and focus topics for the initial meeting. The mentoring relationship lasts 12 months with the possibility of extension. They are contacted at the 3 month and 12 month point to gain feedback on how the relationship is going.

#### Finland

Finland launched its first Mentoring Programme for Public Procurement Professionals in October 2022 to promote skills and competence in public procurement. This idea was proposed by the thematic working group to develop procurement competence in Finland. It will be implemented for six months (October 2022 – April 2023). Each mentor will have two or three mentees at maximum. To match mentors and mentees, various elements were considered such as their background, professional experiences and objectives. A kick-off meeting was held in Helsinki in November 2022. It is recommended that the (face-to-face or virtual) individual meetings be held every month from December 2022 to April 2023. In addition, the mentoring process includes an interim online meeting of the entire group in January 2023. The final meeting is scheduled in Helsinki in April 2023. This first mentoring programme in Finland organisations attracted participants from both public and private sectors.

Source: Information provided by New Zealand Government Procurement and the Ministry of Finance of Finland



### 5.3. Methodological assistance

Methodological assistance constitutes a key pillar to strengthen the capacity-building systems of the public procurement workforce. It is a useful tool to support public procurement officials to undertake their daily tasks effectively, and complements training courses. Many countries have developed tools such as manuals and guidelines, standardised templates, and help desks. Recently, more direct support and advice is also provided to help contracting authorities to carry out actual complex procurement procedures.

#### 5.3.1. Guidelines and manuals

Guidelines and manuals provide practical information on specific procedures and topics. International experiences show that there is a wide variety of topics for these methodological documents: guidelines on how to set contract award criteria; how to evaluate offers; how to use e-procurement platforms; how to implement strategic procurement and how to prevent corruption and bid-rigging (European Commission, n.d.<sup>[60]</sup>). For example, the OECD SIGMA prepared comprehensive training manuals that cover the whole cycle of public procurement (see Box 5.5).

#### Box 5.5. SIGMA Public Procurement Training Manual

SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) is a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Union. SIGMA supports the EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood policies, whose aim is to unite beneficiaries around a common project by stimulating political and socio-economic reforms. Its key objective is to strengthen the foundations for improved public governance including public procurement system. SIGMA has been working with partner countries (currently 18 countries including Ukraine and Türkiye) in MENA, Western Balkans, and South Caucasus on strengthening their public governance systems and public administration capacities since 1992.

The SIGMA Public Procurement Training Manual was first published in 2010. In 2015, the training Manual was updated to reflect the changes that the 2014 EU Directives on public procurement introduced. It contains 7 modules and aims at upgrading the operational performance and professionalism of users:

- Module A: Introduction and principles
- Module B: Organisation at the level of contracting authorities
- Module C: Preparation of procurement
- Module D: Public procurement law - scope of application
- Module E: Conducting the procurement process
- Module F: Review and remedies - combating corruption
- Module G: Contract management

Source: (OECD SIGMA, 2014<sup>[61]</sup>)

In particular, public procurement officials are increasingly required to use public procurement to achieve broader policy objectives such as environmental considerations, facilitating SMEs development, promoting RBC, and innovation. To support these efforts, the EC published useful guidelines and manuals such as *Buying Green* (2016) (European Commission, 2016<sup>[62]</sup>), *EU GPP criteria* (European Commission, n.d.<sup>[63]</sup>), *LCC tools* (European Commission, n.d.<sup>[64]</sup>), *Buying social* (2021) (European Commission, 2021<sup>[65]</sup>), and *Guidance on Innovation Procurement* (2021) (European Commission, 2021<sup>[66]</sup>). The European Assistance For Innovation Procurement (EAFIP), an initiative financed by the EC, developed an innovation

procurement toolkit with three modules for policy makers, public procurers and legal staff on why and how to implement Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) and Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions (PPI) (European Assistance for Innovation Procurement (eafip), n.d.<sup>[67]</sup>).

Countries like Costa Rica and Poland developed user-friendly guidelines on strategic procurement such as green public procurement, socially responsible procurement, public procurement for innovation, by enriching them with practical examples and visual images. (see Box 5.6).

### Box 5.6. Guidelines and manuals on strategic procurement in Costa Rica and Poland

#### Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, the General Directorate of Asset Management and Public Procurement (Dirección General de Administración de Bienes y Contratación Administrativa, DGABCA) of the Ministry of Finance (Ministerio de Hacienda) developed user-friendly guidelines and manuals to promote the strategic use of procurement and align with the National Policy of Sustainable Public Procurement.

In 2015, DGABCA issued the Technical Guidelines for the Application of Sustainable Criteria in Public Procurement and Guidelines for its Implementation with the support of the European Commission and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). These technical guidelines cover dimensions of strategic procurement such as green public procurement, SMEs development, innovation and social responsibility.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of these technical guidelines, DGABCA also developed the following manuals:

- **Practical Guide for Sustainable Procurement in the Public Sector:**  
This guide explains how to incorporate environmental considerations into each step of the procurement cycle and provides specific examples for each product and service category of green public procurement.
- **Guide on Social Criteria in Public Procurement Processes in Costa Rica:**  
This guide explains how to integrate social considerations into each step of the procurement cycle and provides the templates of the actual clauses to be incorporated in tender / contract documents.

In 2022, the Sustainable Public Procurement Guide was issued. It demonstrates standardised environmental, social and economic clauses, as well as the recommendations on the promotion of SMEs, the participation of women in business and gender equality in public procurement.

#### Poland

The Public Procurement Office of Poland published a book *Public Procurement of Innovation*. This publication describes the concept of public procurement for innovation, and demonstrates actual good practices from a wide range of contracting authorities in Poland:

- Central government administration: the National Center for Research and Development, GovTech Poland, the National Center for Agricultural Support
- Local government entity: Regional Water and Sewage Management Center S.A. in Tychy
- Academic sector: SOLARIS National Synchrotron Radiation Center of the Jagiellonian University.

Source: (Ministerio de Hacienda, n.d.<sup>[68]</sup>), (Public Procurement Office of Poland, 2020<sup>[69]</sup>)

Currently, the OECD is working with the government of the Slovak Republic and Croatia to prepare manuals related to the use of MEAT criteria (Slovak Republic) and innovation procurement (Croatia) (see Box 5.7).

### Box 5.7. OECD's work in elaborating manuals with the Slovak Republic and Croatia

#### Slovak Republic

The use of MEAT criteria in public procurement procedures is relatively limited in Slovak Republic: it represented 15.6% of public procurement procedures and 13.8% of the total procurement volume on average between 2016 and 2020. The OECD short survey shows that the lack of guidelines and tools is the biggest challenge in using the MEAT criteria, followed by the unclear legal framework and the perception that using MEAT criteria is risky. To alleviate these bottlenecks, the OECD is working with the Public Procurement Office of the Slovak Republic to develop guidelines and templates related to (i) using MEAT criteria, (ii) market consultations to define MEAT criteria, and (iii) combining the use of MEAT criteria with broader policy objectives.

#### Croatia

The uptake of innovation procurement is still limited in Croatia. In 2020, two procedures related to innovation procurement were carried out in the country, according to the Statistical Annual Report on Public Procurement of Croatia for 2020. These two individual procedures accounted for only 0.01% (approximately EUR 700 000) of the total procurement volume. Innovation Partnership was not used at all. Under the EC-financed technical support project, the OECD will develop a practical and user-friendly manual that will help Croatian contracting authorities plan and implement procedures related to innovation procurement such as competitive procedure with negotiations, competitive dialogue, and innovation partnerships. The manual will also include checklist(s) on how to plan and implement innovation procurement. This project also consists of various components to increase the uptake of innovation procurement in Croatia:

- Capacity-building workshops and development of training modules
- ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> self-assessment survey for trainers and some selected contracting authorities
- Analysis of current state of play of innovation procurement in Croatia
- Proposal on establishing a monitoring and evaluation system for innovation procurement

Source: (OECD, 2019<sup>[70]</sup>)

### 5.3.2. Standardised templates

Standardised templates are ready-to-use forms that contracting authorities can use to facilitate their work. Such templates usually include, but are not limited to, tender notices, tender documents, contract documents and tender evaluation formats. They help contracting authorities save time and avoid errors. They also contribute to assuring the quality of procurement procedures and decrease the administrative burdens of economic operators who prepare bid proposals. For example, Ireland developed not only standardised templates but also friendly guidelines on how to use them (see Box 5.8).

### Box 5.8. Guidelines and standardised templates in Ireland

Ireland developed standardised templates of tender and contract documents for goods, services and public works. These are also accompanied with user guides. There are ten forms of standardised contract documents for public works, each of which is appropriate for different circumstances, such as Public Works Contract for Building Works designed by the Employer and Public Works Contract for Civil Engineering Works designed by the Contractor.

These documents provide further opportunities to help professionalise, streamline and standardise the procurement function of contracting authorities in Ireland. They are also useful for economic operators by allowing them to understand better the public procurement system of Ireland.

Ireland also developed Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services and Public Procurement Guidelines for Construction to help procurement officers implement their daily tasks in accordance with the National Public Procurement Policy Framework. These guidelines provide a friendly explanation about the regulatory framework of public procurement by using visual charts.

Source: (Office of Government Procurement, n.d.[71])

### 5.3.3. Guidance through help desks

A help desk is a contact point centre to assist contracting authorities and/or economic operators in clarifying their inquiries related to their daily tasks of public procurement. It is an efficient tool to provide quick and tailor-made information. This function is essential because public procurement regulations are complex and can be modified frequently. A help desk can contribute to ensuring legal compliance and solving recurrent issues of daily procurement tasks, such as the choice of procedure and award criteria. In general, inquiries go through a call centre and/or a mailbox (European Commission, n.d.[72]). Many countries set up a help-desk to answer inquiries related to public procurement (see Box 5.9).

### Box 5.9. Help desks in France, Lithuania and Colombia

#### France

The Ministry of Finance (Minefi) operates a call centre and e-mail inbox (CIJAP) with ten staff members who answer inquiries from contracting authorities, in particular, local contracting authorities. In 2014, 86% of the questions were answered on the spot. Most of the questions not answered on the spot are responded in writing within 48 hours. In the case where the question requires a more detailed legal interpretation, the inquiry is forwarded to a specialised Unit “Advice to buyers” of the Directorate for Legal Affairs of the Minefi. This unit generally produces written answers within 45 days. The call centre has been in high demand, dealing with 35 000 inquiries per year.

#### Lithuania

The Public Procurement Office of Lithuania (PPO) set up a help desk not only to contracting authorities, but also to economic operators. Currently, the help desk receives questions only through email to ensure consistency and accuracy on the quality of answers. Regardless of the high volume of questions received through e-mail (2 000 requests / month on average), PPO maintains the speed of answer: 33% of the requests are answered within 1 hour, 17% in 1-8 hours, 11% (8-24 hours), and the rest 39% in more than 24 hours.

### Colombia

Colombia Compra Eficiente administers a help desk operated by 30 people. They handle on average 25 000 requests each month through three channels: phone call, chat, and e-mail.

Source: (OECD, 2019<sup>[49]</sup>) and (European Commission and PWC, 2016<sup>[73]</sup>), (OECD, 2018<sup>[31]</sup>)

#### **5.3.4. Direct support and advice to the implementation of the actual procurement procedure**

Recently, there have been initiatives of more direct support and advice on implementing the actual complex procurement procedure, in addition to manuals, templates, and help desks. For example, the Region of Puglia in Italy provides direct support to pre-commercial procurement procedure throughout the entire process, under an EC-financed pilot project with the support of the OECD (see Box 5.10). The competence centres of sustainable public procurement also play a key role (see Section 6.3.3).

#### **Box 5.10. Collaboration and institutional learning on innovation procurement in the Region of Puglia in Italy**

Over 2015-2019, the Region of Puglia conducted two Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) procedures in the field of water management in its capacity as contracting authority. The two PCP cover the “Reduction of sludge in urban wastewater” and the “Detection of water leaks in water distribution networks”. The end user of PCPs is Acquedotto Pugliese S.p.A., i.e. the regional network operator.

While some experience with PCP was already available in the Region, it is not a routine operation. Acquedotto Pugliese, the end-user, was also new to this kind of procedure. As such, the Region requested the technical assistance to the in-house company InnovaPuglia, which has a double mandate as the innovation agency and the regional CPB.

InnovaPuglia provided its support to the PCP procedures throughout the entire process, from the preparation and market consultation stages, to the phases of feasibility study, technical design and prototype development. In particular during the early phases of the PCP, i.e. the market consultation phase, it provided critical input on the analysis of technological readiness of different technology options. It continued advising the Region and Acquedotto Pugliese until the conclusion of the procedure, including through supporting the analysis of the results achieved.

The experience of collaboration among the three institutions active in the PCP, i.e. the Region of Puglia, InnovaPuglia and Acquedotto Pugliese, allowed for institutional learning from the more experienced peers, with the long-term goal to have innovation procurement firmly established in the toolbox of several public entities.

Source: (OECD, 2022<sup>[74]</sup>) and the information provided by the Region of Puglia

# 6. Incentive mechanisms: Motivating public procurement officials

The motivation of public servants including public procurement officials is a crucial factor not only for maintaining the high performance and productivity of the public sector, but also for attracting talented professionals. The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement calls upon countries to provide attractive, competitive and merit-based career options for procurement officials, in order to motivate them and enhance their performance (OECD, 2015<sup>[5]</sup>). Many countries are facing challenges in motivating public procurement officials due to fiscal constraints arising from the economic recession of the COVID-19 crisis or the rigidity of their public employment frameworks. It is also challenging to attract and retain qualified procurement officials due to the usual income discrepancy between the public procurement specialists and those who work in the private sector. These elements increase the turnover rate of the public procurement workforce. This chapter overviews potential incentive mechanisms to motivate and retain public procurement officials.

## 6.1. Overview of incentive mechanisms to increase motivation

The motivation of public servants including public procurement officials is crucial not only for maintaining the high performance and productivity of the public sector but also for attracting talented professionals. There are many definitions of motivation: *“the ability of people, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives”* (UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, 2014<sup>[75]</sup>), or *“the internal and external forces that influence individual’s degree of willingness and choice to engage in a certain specified behaviour and action”* (Mitchell, 1982<sup>[76]</sup>).

Motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something that one enjoys. It pushes people to act for satisfaction that is gained from the act itself, because it brings them pleasure, a sense of personal satisfaction or reward, or because it complies with their own values such as community service and ethical fairness. For public servants, the intrinsic motivation arises from elements such as the attraction to public policy making; commitment to public interest and civic duty; self-sacrifice; and compassion. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to doing something to receive a particular outcome. It compels people to act for a reward that is separate from the act itself (OECD, 2017<sup>[77]</sup>). It includes rewards (salaries, promotions, discretion, superior work assignment, etc.), recognition, constructive feedback, professional growth, working environment etc. (Van Wart, 2008<sup>[78]</sup>). Some of them could be also related to intrinsic motivation. Some forms of extrinsic motivation are shown to increase intrinsic motivation and creativity; these are reward and recognition for creative ideas, well-defined project goals, and frequent constructive feedback (OECD, 2017<sup>[77]</sup>). The most typical example of extrinsic motivation is financial remuneration for services provided.

Incentive structures play a key role in motivating public officers: they are used to attract and retain qualified staff and motivate them to perform better. Incentive mechanisms harness the principles of extrinsic

motivation to increase motivation. Incentives can be classified as financial (e.g. wages, performance-linked bonuses, pensions, allowances) and non-financial (e.g., professional development including training courses and certification, work recognition and award, working conditions) (UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, 2014<sup>[75]</sup>). Table 6.1 lists the typology of incentives:

**Table 6.1. Typology of Incentives**

Types of incentives	Specific Incentives
1. Financial Incentives	
1.1 Payment	Wages / Salaries Performance-linked bonus / Promotion Stock Option
1.2 Other direct financial benefits	Pensions Insurance Clothing / Accommodation allowance Travel allowance Child care allowance
2. Non-Financial Incentives	Professional development - Training and Certification Recognition / Award Constructive Feedback Working environments Holidays /sabbatical leave Flexible working hours

Source: Prepared based upon the (UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, 2014<sup>[75]</sup>) and (Ulleberg, Unesco. and International Institute for Educational Planning., 2009<sup>[79]</sup>).

## 6.2. Financial incentives: Increasing salaries is always a challenge under the fiscal constraint, but countries have been working to set up a clear career path

Financial incentives represent the principal type of incentives used to reward civil servants, mainly through salaries and monetary allowances. Financial incentives such as the salaries communicate the value of public servants. Therefore, the salaries for similar terms of reference should be comparable both within and outside the public entity. However, increasing salaries represents a major challenge in many countries due to limited resources. The data from the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) in the United Kingdom show dual dimensional challenges in salaries related to procurement workstream: vertical dimension (the public sector versus private sector) and horizontal dimension (procurement officials versus other civil servants or sectors in the public sector).

The UK average salary for procurement professionals (including private, public, and non-profit sectors) amounted to GBP47 435 in 2021. 60% of procurement professionals in the public sector received a pay rise compared with 51% in the private sector. However, the average salary of procurement professionals remains higher in the private sector (GBP49 945) and the non-profit sector (GBP43 417) than the public sector (GBP43 382) (Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) and Hays, 2021<sup>[80]</sup>).

Eligibility for a performance-linked bonus in the public sector (25%) was considerably lower when compared with the private sector (68%), implying that the public sector still tends to be more reluctant to adopt a performance-linked bonus than the private sector (Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) and Hays, 2021<sup>[80]</sup>).

Salary gaps can be also observed within the public sector. The article issued by the CIPS shows that procurement professionals were paid less in 2019 than many other professions in the civil service. A median salary of procurement officials amounted to GBP 35 820, ranking 17 out of 29 professions in the

civil service, although it was much higher than the civil service average (GBP 27 080) but much lower than civil servants in legal (GBP 53 580) and economics (GBP 53 580) roles (Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS), 2019<sup>[81]</sup>). CIPS survey data also show that the average annual salary gaps of public procurement professionals are identified among different sectors: Central/Federal Government (average annual salary: GBP 48 742), health sector (GBP 43 043), defence (GBP 41 259), Local/City Council (GBP 41 137), and Education (GBP 37 233) (Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) and Hays, 2021<sup>[80]</sup>).

73% of the procurement professionals surveyed by the CIPS consider the salary as an important factor when considering a new job. However, this factor is followed closely by job security (71%), the content of the work (68%), career progression opportunities (67%), and training and development programme (65%). It implies that other factors such as career progression and training programme will also greatly contribute to attracting motivated procurement officials to the public sector (Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) and Hays, 2021<sup>[80]</sup>).

Under the strict fiscal constraints where increasing salaries is not an easy option, introducing a promotion system through a clear career path is one of the most common financial and non-financial incentives that countries have adopted, rather than just increasing a salary. Setting up a clear career path can increase financial incentives because it can facilitate a promotion system which will be accompanied by a salary increase. It can also contribute to promoting non-financial incentives through career development. Some countries like France and the United Kingdom have established a career path for public procurement officials. In France, the addition of public procurement to its Inter-ministerial Directory of State Professions (RIME: Répertoire Interministériel des Métiers de l'Etat) contributed to establishing a clear career path for public procurement officials through dedicated training and certification schemes for each job profile. Job profiles prepared for recruiting procurement officials need to be aligned with the ones defined in the RIME (see Box 4.1). The United Kingdom developed the Commercial Career Framework for Commercial Professionals (CCF) to establish a clear career path and promotion for public procurement professionals (see Box 1.4).

Recruitment policy can attract and retain capable procurement staff. The EC study shows that practices for the recruitment of public procurement professionals vary significantly due to the specific characteristics of the public employment (European Commission, 2020<sup>[41]</sup>). Broadly defined, public employment refers to the staff employed by a public institution or corporation. Public employees include not only civil servants but also employees whose status is regulated by private law and temporary staff. Civil servants are government employees with a specific and more protected public law status with unilateral appointment. Contractual staff (here called public employees) are government employees whose employment contracts are based on private law with employment conditions more similar or identical to private sector employment (European Commission, 2018<sup>[82]</sup>).

Recruitment practices highly depend on the degree of centralisation of human resource management and on the type of employment of public procurement professionals (civil servants or public employees). In many cases, recruitment is decentralised to each contracting authority to select their own staff that meet their needs. In the case of civil servants, the public entities need to comply with specific regulations of civil servants such as remuneration and requirement (passing the exam, academic degree such as bachelor or even master's degree etc), allowing less flexibility to the recruitment procedure. On the other hand, there is more flexibility in the case of recruiting public employee (European Commission, 2020<sup>[41]</sup>). For example, some CPBs, to name a few, the Federal Procurement Agency (BBG) in Austria, Consip (Italy), and Hansel (Finland), have the legal status of a non-profit limited company owned by the state and/or its related authorities. These CPBs have more flexibility in their recruitment processes such as setting their own financial remunerations and using their own competency framework etc., compared with the ones at public institutions.



While challenges still remain in order to gain a more accurate picture of the recruitment system of the public procurement workforce across countries, establishing a recruitment programme and a career website greatly contributes to attracting a capable public procurement workforce through raising awareness of the impact of public procurement as well as of public procurement as a potential career. The OECD survey on Public Service Leadership and Capability (2020) shows that communication campaigns are the practice which is by far the most used by the OECD countries to attract applicants to senior-level positions from outside the public service (OECD, 2021<sup>[40]</sup>). Raising awareness of the impact of public procurement contributes to enhancing the intrinsic motivation that will arise from the attraction and commitment to the mission and the impact that public procurement has in reaching the SDGs such as on the environment.

The example of Canada provides insights on recruiting motivated federal procurement officials through a career website for procurement, which provides clear information on the professional development programme as well as on the career path by linking the salary increase with the completion of the development programme (see Box 6.1).

### Box 6.1. Recruiting federal procurement officials with clear promotion criteria in Canada

The Government of Canada is hiring close to 1 000 motivated professionals interested in a career in public procurement in the next two years, as of January 2022. For this purpose, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat set up the website of “careers in public procurement” to facilitate recruiting processes.

The website lists useful information such as the competences and skills required to start a professional career in public procurement, training and development programmes, clear career paths and information on salaries and benefits, and the video interview in which the staff talks about the dynamics of public procurement work:

#### Competences and skills

- a) Core competences that apply to all federal government jobs: demonstrating integrity and respect, showing initiative and being action-oriented, thinking things through working and effectively with others
- b) Functional competences which are specific to a particular community or type of work. For procurement specialists, functional competences are: acquisition, assessment and planning, and managing contracts and contract close-out
- c) Technical competences which are must-have skills to do the work, based on the nature of a particular job. For procurement specialists, business acumen, data analytics, negotiations, project management and risk management

#### Training and development programmes

Whether the candidate is a post-secondary student or graduate, a private sector professional, a public servant in another profession, or a procurement officer in another level of government, the federal government has many programs to help him or her jumpstart or advance their career in public procurement. For example, a post-secondary student or graduate can start their career in procurement by applying to one of these following work programs:

- Public Services and Procurement Canada’s (PSPC’s) Intern Officer Development Program: a three-year program offered through PSPC in collaboration with Global Affairs Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency

- **Material Acquisition and Support Officer Development Program:** a two-year program offered through National Defence

Professionals will receive training, mentoring and rotational placements to gain experience in a variety of professional positions.

### **Salaries and benefits**

Public procurement professionals are classified into Purchasing and Supply (PG) group under federal government civil service. The entry level annual salary for a PG is up to CAD 65 000. Salary of over CAD 75 000 will be guaranteed once the training programme is successfully completed the program. Management positions earn up to CAD 110 000.

In addition, procurement officials are entitled to many benefits such as: an attractive pension plan, health care and dental benefits, a minimum of three weeks (15 working days) of paid vacation and other paid leave, possible flexible work arrangements such as teleworking and compressed workweeks

Source: (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2022<sup>[83]</sup>)

Scotland established the Procurement People of Tomorrow programme (PPoT) to tackle the challenges in attracting, recruiting and retaining talent in the public procurement. The programme focuses on cultivating young professionals (see also Section 7.3 for more initiative to cultivate future procurement specialists) through providing the information on career in public procurement and communicating the mission and impact of public procurement in the society (see Box 6.2).

### **Box 6.2. Procurement People of Tomorrow programme (PPoT) in Scotland**

Procurement People of Tomorrow programme (PPoT) is a Scottish Government and Academia-led initiative to build and sustain public procurement talent pool, supported by the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply and public and private sectors. It focuses on engaging with young people to build their skills and promote procurement as a career choice of young people.

- **Procurement Modern Apprenticeship:** A Modern Apprenticeship is a job which lets people aged over 16 earn a wage and gain an industry-recognised qualification. Procurement is one of over 80 modern apprenticeship frameworks. Procurement Modern Apprenticeship aims at raising the awareness of procurement as a viable career option
- **Procurement People of Tomorrow charter:** Organisations can sign the agreement document to signal their commitment towards new entrants in procurement. There were PPoT twelve commitment menu such as hiring a Procurement Modern Apprentice, providing a paid internship and participating in career or awareness-raising events at schools.
- **Guidance documents on public procurement career for young people**

The following guidance documents were prepared to inform young people of the impact of public procurement and career in public procurement:

- **Procurement schools pack (2019):** designed for secondary school students
- **Procurement Higher and Further Education pack (2020):** designed for graduates with an interest in entering the procurement profession. Information includes what procurement is, the power of procurement, relationship of procurement with daily life, procurement job titles, roles and estimated salary ranges, necessary skills, and training courses

- Procurement career case studies (2016): Case studies telling the stories of new entrants to procurement in the public sector

Students can find more about public procurement and its career opportunities. Career advisors or teachers can use these guidance documents to highlight public procurement as a career choice.

- Awareness-raising video  
The following videos are uploaded in the programme website to raise awareness of public procurement as a career option.
  - Make an impact. Build a career in procurement
  - Looking for a career? – Modern Apprenticeship in Procurement: Why procurement as a career choice?, What do you enjoy about procurement (social, environmental, economic changes), Skills learnt through the programme, What advice would you give to young people considering a career in procurement?

Young procurement staff that completed the Modern Apprenticeship in Procurement and currently continues their career of procurement talks about the impact that people can make through public procurement and what a career in procurement would be like. They communicate that the impact made in procurement is much more wide ranging now in the agenda such as climate change and human rights.

Source: (Scottish Procurement and Property Directorate, 2018<sup>[84]</sup>)

### 6.3. Non-financial incentives such as award systems can also motivate the public procurement workforce

Some countries have introduced non-financial incentives. As already discussed in the previous chapters, developing a certification framework and structured capability-building initiatives could contribute to motivating public procurement officers through professional development and to increased professional recognition. For example, one case study shows that staff that attends a capacity-building program usually remains in the same company and continues working in the procurement function holding the same job position (Maria Antonietta Coppola and Gustavo Piga, 2019<sup>[17]</sup>). Packages related to work-life balance such as holidays and flexible working conditions also represent non-financial incentives. In addition, establishing mechanisms such as performance management system (constructive feedbacks), an excellence award system or professional networks could play a role in motivating public procurement officials and increasing the sense of professionalism.

#### 6.3.1. Performance management system

Establishing a performance management system is essential to ensure that the workforce has regular constructive feedbacks on their performance (Gerson, 2020<sup>[85]</sup>). It can increase the motivation of the public procurement workforce through the performance assessments that can be used not only for the promotion/salary increase and/or performance-linked bonus but also for discussing professional development and training opportunities.

The EC study shows that it is not a common practice yet to set up specific procurement targets for performance assessments. The performance measurement system is used more for providing constructive feedbacks for professional development (European Commission, 2020<sup>[41]</sup>).

The number of procurement procedures was a typical target in the rare case where specific procurement targets were set (e.g., Flemish Region in Belgium). Other targets such as implementing sustainable and

innovation public procurement are not common. Guidance on innovation procurement published by the EC proposes setting innovation procurement as an objective in the yearly career objectives of procurement officials or managers and providing improved promotion opportunities for public buyers that successfully implement innovation procurements (European Commission, 2021<sup>[66]</sup>). Risk aversion to new and emerging procurement schemes is identified as one of the challenges in increasing the uptake of sustainable and innovation public procurement (OECD, 2019<sup>[7]</sup>). Therefore, it will be important to set up the performance management mechanism to encourage the use of public procurement for different policy objectives. It is worth mentioning that the recognition through excellence award systems discussed in the next section 6.3.2 contributes to motivating and rewarding public procurement officials, while the performance management system for public procurement officials has much opportunity for improvement.

There are still few cases of a performance-related bonus based on the performance assessment of the public procurement workforce. As one example, permanent employees of Hansel (CPB in Finland) are eligible for an incentive system with a performance-related pay of up to 15% of the annual salary based on customer satisfaction and individual performance (European Commission, 2020<sup>[41]</sup>). As already shown in the section 6.2, the practice of providing performance-linked bonus is considerably lower in the public sector (25%) when compared with the private sector (68%) (Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) and Hays, 2021<sup>[80]</sup>).

Establishing and strengthening the performance management system for the public procurement workforce could be a professionalisation initiative that more countries could take in the future to motivate the public procurement workforce.

### **6.3.2. Recognition through excellence award systems**

It is worth noting that recognition is an effective way to motivate public servants through acknowledging good behaviours or actions with no or little cost, but it is underutilised (Van Wart, 2008<sup>[78]</sup>). Empirical studies also demonstrate that recognitions are strong motivators in the public sector (Anderfuhren-Biget et al., 2010<sup>[86]</sup>). Recognition consists of both informal and formal intangible incentives that show appreciation and acknowledge achievements. As an example of informal recognition, a supervisor can offer a good word, a short written comment on a submitted paper, a celebration toast, or even just a warm handshake. It creates an increased sense of self-esteem. A formal recognition can be a certificate/award, or trophies.

Recently, countries like Slovenia and New Zealand introduced an excellence award system in the field of public procurement. The New Zealand Procurement Excellence Awards are effective tools to raise the profile and awareness of procurement in the country through the formal recognition of achievements (see Box 6.3).

#### **Box 6.3. New Zealand Procurement Excellence Awards**

The New Zealand Procurement Excellence Forum was formed in 2014 to lift the capability of procurement practitioners in New Zealand. The Forum brings together like-minded and committed procurement professionals, from across the public and private sectors, who consider the procurement profession as a developing specialisation, and are willing to share their knowledge with each other for the purpose of further enhancing the recognition of the procurement profession in New Zealand. The current main initiatives of the Forum consist of the two pillars: Championing Procurement Excellence to deliver successful outcomes for New Zealand and Fostering People and Capability.

As a part of this initiative, the Forum started the annual award event in 2016, New Zealand Procurement Excellence Awards. This award was established to raise the profile and awareness of procurement, or what great procurement looks like and how it can contribute to better outcomes for New Zealand, across both private and public sectors. The founders thought that it was possible only through sharing great

stories of achievement across many organisations in both the public and private sectors, inspiring others to raise the bar, and to make sure that organisations achieve more than just good practice and compliance.

The New Zealand Procurement Excellence Awards are the foremost recognition of industry-leading procurement practice in New Zealand. There are five competitive categories that have been established to recognise New Zealand's finest:

- Young Procurement Professional of the Year (30 years old or under)
- Procurement Professional of the Year
- Most Effective Teaming of the Year
- Social or Environmental Impact of the Year
- Most Innovative Project of the Year

The application must be related to activities and initiatives of procurement. The judging criteria are disclosed for each award category. The overall Supreme Winner will be selected from the category winners to recognise the highest achievement of the year in the procurement field in the country. The prize of the winner, for example for 2016, includes not only the award certificate and trophy but also a paid trip to any procurement conference anywhere in the world.

The New Zealand Procurement Excellence Awards contribute not only to knowledge sharing among procurement professionals, but also to enhancing the motivation and incentives of public procurement experts in New Zealand, thus lifting the recognition of procurement as a professional task.

Source: (Ernst & Young - New Zealand, n.d.<sup>[87]</sup>)

In addition, ICLEI, a global network of more than 2 500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development, established the Procura+ Awards to recognise outstanding sustainable, circular and innovation procurement and tender procedures across Europe (see Box 6.4).

#### Box 6.4. Procura+ Awards

The Procura+ Awards draw attention to sustainable, circular and innovation procurement and tender procedures, and give visibility to the most dynamic, forward-looking and innovative public authorities and their initiatives. The winners of the Procura+ Awards have strong potential for replication and scaling-up and are excellent sources of inspiration for any public authority using procurement instruments to purchase cutting edge solutions.

The Procura+ Awards recognise outstanding achievements in four categories:

- Sustainable Procurement of the Year - Recognising the outstanding environmental, social and economic impacts of procurement
- Innovation Procurement of the Year - Recognising the outstanding innovation of procurement and the public authority as a launch customer
- Circular Procurement of the Year - Recognising outstanding circular economy applications in the public authority's procurement
- Procurement Initiative of the Year - Recognising outstanding programmes, policies, actions, guidance and tools that contribute towards strategic, sustainable, circular and innovation procurement

Source: (ICLEI Europe, n.d.<sup>[88]</sup>)

### 6.3.3. Professional network

Establishing professional networks or a community of practice also contributes to motivating public procurement officials, facilitating networking and the exchange of ideas, and increasing the sense of professionalism.

A community of practice is a shared platform in which practitioners can exchange knowledge and experience, ask questions, or share documentation. The interaction through the community of practice allows to identify and implement good practices, avoid common errors, and thus deliver better value for money. The following are examples of activities related to communities of practice:

- Setting up a discussion forum to exchange information and ask questions to other practitioners
- Issuing a regular newsletter about any developments concerning the legal framework, methodological guidance, best practices or practical advice
- Holding regular conferences or events

PIANOO of the Netherlands is a well-known example in the area of a community of practice (see Box 6.5).

#### Box 6.5. Community of practice in the Netherlands

The Public Procurement Expertise Centre (PIANOO) of the Ministry of Economic Affairs (later replaced by the Procurement Forum) functions as the tool for community of practice for public procurement practitioner, and has been considered as one of the most relevant tools for community building. The PIANOO community includes 1 600 professionals in public sector procurement. The PIANOO-desk is a discussion platform, which allows public procurement professionals and contracting authorities to exchange experience, ask questions, discuss, share files, collaborate on documents, and plan projects. The PIANOO-desk was slightly moderated: In case the moderators find that the posted questions have not been answered, they tried to find members of the community who could possibly answer, or as a last option, they answered by themselves. The intention was to avoid the situation in which the community expects that “PIANOO has all the answers”.

The Forum contains approximately 80 sub-communities organised according to specific procurement topics. Furthermore, PIANOO intends to increase interactions between procurement professionals and experts by organising annual conferences on public procurement and meetings that promote exchange of knowledge, experience and good practices.

PIANOO also operates a one-stop shop that centralises information related to procurement in the Netherlands. It was established in 2005 as a knowledge network for public procurement practitioners where they could share, discuss, exchange ideas and solve issues related to their daily work. The PIANOO website has been recognised as the principal platform for obtaining reliable and up-to-date information. Many online materials can be downloaded from the platform. The services of PIANOO also include a biweekly procurement e-newsletter, weekly legal review and interpretation, model templates and online tools. On average, the one-stop shop experiences 50 000 visits and 13 500 downloads per month.

Source: (European Commission and PWC, 2016<sup>[73]</sup>) and the information provided by the Netherlands.

Establishing the professional network will be beneficial for each specific topic such as technical specifications and green procurement, because the members of the network will contribute to increasing the sense of professionalism of public procurement practitioners. Recently, countries like Denmark, Finland and Germany established professional networks and competence centres of specific public procurement topics such as public procurement for innovation and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (see Box 6.6).

Under the initiative of the EC, Procure2Innovate project financed by the EC supports competency centres for innovation procurement in 10 European Union countries: five already established ones in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, and five new ones to be established in Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Portugal (Procure2Innovate, n.d.<sup>[89]</sup>).

### Box 6.6. Professional networks and competence centres in Denmark, Finland and Germany

#### Denmark

The Danish Agency for Modernisation and the Competition and Consumer Authority launched an advisory unit to disseminate knowledge and tools, as well as to provide consultancy services, templates and training for contracting authorities. As part of this initiative, the Advisory Unit hosts professional networks for experienced procurement lawyers as well as for contract managers. In addition, a new mentoring scheme as well as a Corporate Social Responsibility network for public procurement professionals were being established as of 2020.

#### Finland

The Finnish government set a target of public procurement for innovation at 10 % of total procurement to increase competitiveness of the country. In March 2018, the Finnish Competence Centre for Sustainable and Innovative Procurement (KEINO) was established as a joint initiative of eight founding members from both the public and private sector, including the CPBs Hansel and Kuntahankinnat. Additional members of the consortium are Motiva Ltd, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (FLRA), VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland Ltd, the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation Business Finland and the Finnish Environment Institute SYKE. KEINO serves as a network-based competence centre to support innovation procurement in Finland.

KEINO's three main objectives are:

- Increasing the number of innovative public procurement procedures in Finland
- Promoting public procurement as a strategic tool to reach wider societal objectives
- Fostering the dissemination of information and peer learning across contracting authorities

To reach these goals, KEINO supports the development of procurement competence in Finland through advisory services, events and networking meetings. It promotes peer learning among procurement professionals and it fosters closer collaboration and international networks on sustainable and innovative procurement topics. In addition, KEINO offers specific capacity building measures to public procurement professionals in the area of innovative procurement, such as issuing guidelines, disseminating best practises and case studies, and providing templates and tools.

#### Germany

Germany has two competence centres on public procurement at the federal level: the Competence Centre for Sustainable Procurement (Kompetenzstelle für nachhaltige Beschaffung, KNB) and the Competence Centre for Innovative Procurement (Kompetenzzentrum innovative Beschaffung, KOINNO). Both centres provide contracting authorities with training, networking opportunities, help desk, best practices, manuals and templates.

The KNB was established in 2012 within the Federal Procurement Office of the Ministry of the Interior (Beschaffungsamt des Bundesministeriums des Innern, BeschA). The KNB aims at providing all contracting authorities at all administrative levels with targeted information and training on sustainable procurement. It uses a variety of channels and techniques for disseminating information and building

knowledge related to sustainable procurement: helpdesk (telephone and email), training courses, manuals and newsletters.

The KOINNO was established in 2013 by the Association of Materials Management, Purchasing and Logistics (BME) on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMW). KOINNO's objective is to increase public procurement of innovative goods and services in Germany, and, by doing so, trigger innovation and increased competitiveness in the German economy. The KOINNO's success is most visible in its advisory role for contracting authorities. The KOINNO was involved in several technically complex projects. For example, the KOINNO provided support to help Saxony's state police to introduce an e-mobility concept for its fleet. KOINNO also awards German public buyers with the "Innovation creates advantage" prize under the auspices of the BMW.

Both the KNB and KOINNO co-ordinate their work to learn from successes and challenges.

Source: (European Commission, 2020<sup>[41]</sup>), (OECD, 2019<sup>[90]</sup>)

The Centro Region of Portugal (the CCDR-C) established a community of practice to facilitate knowledge sharing on circular procurement among contracting authorities in the region, under the EC-financed pilot project with the support of the OECD (see Box 6.7).

### Box 6.7. Community of practice on circular procurement in the Centro Region of Portugal

In the Centro Region of Portugal, the CCDR-C, the deconcentrated regional branch of Portugal's National Administration, responsible for environment, land use, urban planning and regional development, launched the Centro Green Deal for Circular Public Procurement on 8 April 2019, adapting a European good example on circular procurement to the specificities of the Centro Region. The Centro Green Deal project is closely linked with the implementation of Centro's Regional Agenda for Circular Economy that defined Circular Public Procurement as a key priority area. The Centro Green Deal gathers five inter-municipal communities, three municipalities, two polytechnic schools, one university and one hospital (Signatories) from the Region who have ambition to build a local circular economy, through amongst others, changing current public procurement practices to sustainable and circular practices.

Each Signatory to the Centro Green Deal committed to (i) launch at least two public procurement tenders, in line with the principles of circular economy, by the end of the Centro Green Deal project and (ii) share all the knowledge acquired during this process, contributing to ensure a collaborative learning network. To implement their commitments, Signatories launched circular tenders in various fields, such as provision of school meals, purchase of electric vehicle for healthcare service delivery, renting and maintenance service of uniforms (specialist working, professional clothes), and purchase of reusable and recyclable materials.

As the concept of the circular economy was new for most actors in the Region, CCDR-C created a network of entities in the Region (Centro Green Deal Network) and built a community of practice, providing information and capacity-building opportunities for contracting authorities in the Region. The network brought together contracting authorities participating in the Centro Green Deal and it was a safe space for the Signatories to share experience and learn from each other how to implement circular procurement.

The OECD provided support to CCDR-C as project promoter and stakeholders from the Centro Region that are signatories to the Centro Green Deal in reaching their goals on circular procurement. The OECD support included capacity building on how to apply circular economy principles in public



procurement in general, and specifically in (school) food procurement (as a purchasing category chosen for the purpose of the collaboration). The main topics the pilot action focused on were (i) the preparatory stage of the public procurement, with special attention to market engagement, and (ii) the evaluation framework. A combined approach of knowledge transfer from the Netherlands, the UK and Denmark good practices and practical support from the OECD enabled the Region to raise its capacity and bring in circularity in its procurement strategy.

Source: (OECD, 2022<sup>[74]</sup>)

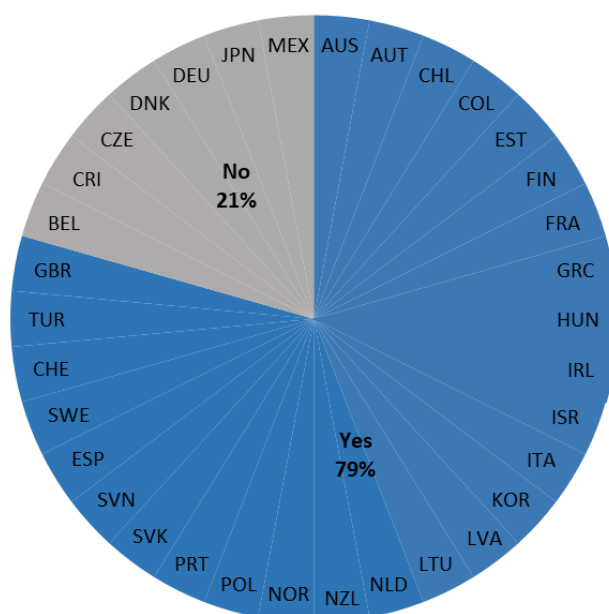
Incentive structures play a crucial role in motivating public procurement officers. Countries will benefit from establishing a clear career path and promotion system as part of financial incentives as well as adopting some non-financial incentive schemes such as a certification framework, a capability-building system, performance management system, an excellence award system exclusively for public procurement officers, and a professional network.

# 7. Collaboration with knowledge centres

Recently, an increasing number of countries have recognised the role that knowledge centres such as universities, think tanks or policy centres can play in promoting the professionalisation. The principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development, which were developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations on 2 July 2018, also restate the importance of working jointly with non-state actors to address problems of common interest (Committee of Experts on Public Administration of the United Nations, 2018<sup>[91]</sup>). Indeed, knowledge centres are equipped with specialised expertise in public administration including public procurement.

The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement recognises the importance of these interactions, calling upon countries to promote collaborative approaches with knowledge centres to improve skills and competences (OECD, 2015<sup>[5]</sup>). In 2020, 79% of OECD countries had adopted a certain collaborative approach with knowledge centres, compared with 74% in 2018 (see Figure 7.1).

**Figure 7.1. Collaborative approaches with knowledge centres to improve the capability of the public procurement workforce (2020)**



Note: Data for Canada, Iceland, Luxembourg, and the United States are not available. Costa Rica is included as an OECD member as of May 2021.

Source: 2020 OECD Survey on the Professionalisation on Public Procurement

Table 7.1 shows more details by type of collaborative approach.

**Table 7.1. Types of collaborative approaches with knowledge centres to improve capability of public procurement workforce (2020)**

	Professional/ specialised training institutions		Joint Research Programmes		Joint seminars and workshops	
	2018	2020	2018	2020	2018	2020
Australia	○	○	○	○	●	●
Austria	○	●	○	●	●	●
Belgium	○	○	○	○	○	○
Chile	●	○	○	○	●	○
Colombia	..	●	..	○	..	●
Costa Rica	○	○	○	○	○	○
Czech Republic	..	○	..	○	..	○
Denmark	○	○	○	○	○	○
Estonia	○	○	●	●	○	○
Finland	●	●	○	●	●	●
France	○	●	○	●	○	●
Germany	○	○	○	○	○	○
Greece	○	●	●	●	●	●
Hungary	●	●	●	○	●	●
Ireland	○	○	○	○	●	●
Israel	○	●	●	●	○	○
Italy	..	●	..	●	..	●
Japan	○	○	○	○	○	○
Korea	○	●	○	●	○	○
Latvia	●	●	○	○	●	●
Lithuania	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mexico	○	○	○	○	●	○
Netherlands	●	●	●	●	●	●
New Zealand	●	●	○	○	●	●
Norway	●	●	○	●	○	●
Poland	●	●	○	●	●	●
Portugal	○	●	●	○	●	○
Slovak Republic	●	●	●	●	●	●
Slovenia	●	●	●	●	●	●
Spain	○	○	○	○	●	●
Sweden	○	○	●	●	●	●
Switzerland	..	●	..	○	..	●
Türkiye	●	●	○	○	○	●
United Kingdom	..	●	..	●	..	●
<b>OECD Total</b>						
● Yes	12	20	10	15	19	21
○ Not	19	14	21	19	12	13
% of ● (Yes)	39%	59%	32%	44%	61%	62%
".." No information	5	2	5	2	5	2
Indonesia	..	●	..	●	..	●
Morocco	○	○	○	●	●	●
Peru	○	○	○	●	○	●

Note: Data for Colombia, Czech Republic, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States are not available for 2018. Data for Canada, Iceland, Luxembourg, and the United States are not available for 2020. Costa Rica is included as an OECD member as of May 2021. The government of Lithuania collaborated with Mykolo Romerio University to launch the master programme on public procurement in September 2021.

Source: 2020 OECD Survey on the Professionalisation on Public Procurement

The following sections of this chapter overview each type of collaborative approaches that countries have been taking.

## 7.1. Collaboration for developing training courses

Developing and/or providing training programmes has been increasingly used as one of the most common collaborative approaches with knowledge centres. In 2020, 62% of OECD countries had collaborated with knowledge centres on this kind of initiatives, a remarkable increase from 39% in 2018.

For example, the Italian National Anti-Corruption Authority (Autorità Nazionale AntiCorruzione, Anac) collaborates with the National School for Public Administration (SNA) and universities to administer courses for managers and civil servants of public administrations on public procurement and anti-corruption. The master programme at Turin University aims at promoting the relevance of the correct and strategic use of procurement tools (as framework agreements, dynamic purchasing systems, e-Procurement) and organisational models (cooperative purchasing, joint procurement and central purchasing bodies activity) provided by EU Directives 2014 on public procurement (Interreg Europe, 2020<sup>[92]</sup>). At the end of the course, the participants can obtain a diploma of expert in public procurement. More recently, the Institute for Innovation and Transparency of Public Contracts and Environmental Compatibility (ITACA), responsible for training and professionalisation across Italian regions, cooperated with the network of regional CPBs to further develop the training system in Italy (see Box 7.1).

### Box 7.1. Implementing ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> in Italy to develop a training curricula

Italy's EUR 191.5 billion Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) contains measures to reform the public procurement legislative framework and to encourage the professionalisation of contracting authorities. As a consequence, a professionalisation strategy has been adopted in December 2021, and features a number of activities, including gathering an understanding of the procurement-related competences by applying ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup>.

With the support of the OECD, ITACA and the network of regional CPBs decided to pilot the use of ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> for three key purposes. First, they gathered a comprehensive view of the skills and competences within Italy's most specialised procurement bodies. This insight can be helpful in the overall professionalisation context in Italy, whereby a large audience of buyers will undergo a series of professionalisation activities. Second, the results from ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> are meant to better tailor the training offer for regional CPBs, either to be provided by ITACA or as part of training activities by the single regional CPBs. Third, the first experience with ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> in a pilot context can pave the way for mainstreaming its use more widely at national level.

In line with the National Professionalisation Strategy, the ambition of ITACA is to establish ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup>, once adapted to the Italian context, as a strategic tool for professionalisation of procurement in Italy, accessible to individual buyers or contracting authorities to better address professionalisation gaps.

The analysis of the 200 responses to the survey carried out in April 2022 provided ITACA with preliminary insights into areas where greater professionalisation is needed, and where training efforts could be concentrated in to ensure that the potential for using procurement strategically is achieved.

Source: (OECD, Forthcoming<sup>[27]</sup>)

In Latvia, the Procurement Monitoring Bureau cooperates with the State Administration School and the State Chancellery in providing training seminars about public procurement. They also collaborate in developing the competency matrix aligned with ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup>.

BBG, one of the CPBs in Austria, developed a European Training Programme for CPBs in collaboration with WU Executive Academy (University Vienna) (see Box 7.2).

### Box 7.2. Collaboration in developing a training programme in Austria

The Austrian Federal Procurement Agency (BBG), one of the Central Purchasing Bodies (CPB) in Austria, collaborated with the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU) to develop a comprehensive training programme, called Public Procurement Excellence Programme (PPE), dedicated to train experts of CPBs. This is a joint project funded by the EC as a result of the competitive open tender procedures in the Public Procurement Excellence Programme.

This programme offers a unique combination of an academic and a practical approach. The goal is to provide state-of-the-art knowledge, tools and methods for modern public procurement, including policy objectives like SME-friendly, green and innovative procurement. PPE 2021 contains the following 32-day modules:

Table 7.2. Modules of Public Procurement Excellence Programme 2021

No	Module	Duration (day)
1	Efficient Tools for Centralised Public Procurement	1
2	Introduction to Public Procurement	1
3	Characteristics of Centralised Public Procurement	1
4	Legal Framework of Public Procurement	1
5	International Organisations and Public Procurement	1
6	Consequences of Corruption in Public Procurement	1
7	Introduction to Innovation Management	1
8	E-Procurement and Digitisation in Public Procurement	1
9	Strategic Purchasing and Supply Chain Management	0.5
10	Business Economics for Public Procurement	2
11	Performance Management	0.5
12	Efficient Tools for Centralised Public Procurement	1
13	Effective Tender & Contract Strategies	2
14	Professional Management of the Tendering Phase	1
15	Project and Process Management	2
16	Importance of Socio-Political Objectives in Public Procurement	0.5
17	Inclusion of SMEs in Public Procurement	1
18	Public Procurement Promoting Innovation	1
19	Sustainable Public Procurement in Practice	1
20	Contract and Supplier Management	1.5
21	Convincing Communication & Presentations	1.5
22	Negotiations in Public Procurement	1.5
23	Establishment of a Sustainable Alumni Network	0.5
24	Focus: Management 4.0	0.5
25	Presentation of Business Projects	0.5
26	Closing Conference & Graduation	0.5

These modules are complemented with two additional modules: Agile Leadership (3 days) and Business project (2 days). The participants can obtain a degree of Certified Public Procurement Expert.

Source: (Austrian Federal Procurement Agency (BBG), 2021<sup>[93]</sup>)

## 7.2. Joint research / Joint seminars

Carrying out a joint research programme on public procurement is another typical collaborative approach with knowledge centres. In 2020, 44% of OECD countries collaborated with knowledge centres on this kind of initiative, an increase from 32% in 2018. For example, the Korea Institute of Procurement (KIP), an institution dedicated to research in public procurement policies, suggests policy measures on procurement and provides relevant information to the Korea's Public Procurement Service (PPS). The Public Procurement Office of Poland formed a joint-research consortium with the Jagiellonian University and the University of Gdańsk to apply for the GOSPOSTRATEG competition organised by the National Center for Research and Development. The project is designed to create an interdisciplinary in-depth analysis of the Polish public procurement system in 2017–2021 and to develop recommendations for its reforms to increase effectiveness and efficiency.

In 2020, 62% of OECD countries collaborated with knowledge centres to organise joint seminars and workshops on public procurement, maintaining the same level as in 2018 (61%). For example, the Public Procurement Office of Poland organised seminars and conferences such as "Today and tomorrow of public procurement" and "Professionalisation of public procurement" in cooperation with universities.

## 7.3. Collaboration in cultivating future procurement specialists

Some countries have been collaborating with universities on initiatives to encourage future procurement specialists, although it is less frequent than the two approaches mentioned earlier. These initiatives include, but are not limited to, offering courses or degree programmes in public procurement, thesis contests, and internship programmes. They will contribute to increasing awareness of public procurement as a professional task among young people.

### **7.3.1. Courses and degree programmes at universities**

Developing courses and degree programmes at university are increasingly recognised practices of collaboration with knowledge centres. Its availability not only cultivates young generations who are interested in working in the field of public procurement, but also contributes to enhancing the sense of professionalism among the public procurement community. For example, in Norway, the Norwegian Agency for Public and Financial Management (DFØ) provided inputs to a pilot course on green public procurement at Kristiania University College (Høyskolen Kristiania) in Oslo. In Lithuania, the Ministry of Economy and Innovation and the Public Procurement Office collaborated with Mykolas Romeris University to launch its first-ever master programme in public procurement in September 2021. They provided advice on the curriculum. CPO LT, the largest central purchasing body in Lithuania, grants scholarship to some of the students enrolled in this master programme (5 students in 2022 and 10 students in 2021). Universities in countries such as Italy, Finland and Poland established a master's degree programme in public procurement (see Box 7.3).

### Box 7.3. Master degrees in public procurement in Italy, Poland and Finland

#### Tor Vergata University of Rome in Italy

Tor Vergata University of Rome in Italy offers the International Master in Public Procurement Management (IMPPM) degree. The programme is characterised by its interdisciplinary content and it targets purchasers with relevant experience in procurement as well as students interested in preparing for a career in procurement. Classroom lectures are held from the end of February to July in Rome, Italy, followed by distance-learning, a mandatory professional internship (at least 500 hours) in a company or institution, and a final dissertation. The programme covers modules (30 hours for each) for various procurement topics: (i) Negotiation and Team Building, (ii) Economics of Procurement, (iii) Legal Background, (iv) Competition and Procurement, (v) Planning and Management of Procurement Operations, (vi) Strategic Procurement and Quality Management, (vii) Contract Complaints and Disputes, (viii) Integrity and Anticorruption in Public Procurement, (ix) Sustainable Procurement, (x) Emerging Issues in Procurement, (xi) IFI's Procurement Procedures, (xii) Law and Economics of Public and Private Partnership, and (xiii) E-Procurement.

#### Metropolia Business School in Finland

Metropolia Business School in Finland offers the Master of Business Administration in Procurement. The duration of the programme is two years, and it is organised fully online. Students learn how to analyse and develop the procurement function to serve the goals and strategies. The overall goal is to learn about driving value through the supply chain to the end customer, how procurement can be turned into a strategic function and utilize technology as an enabler of effective supply management, how sustainability and collaboration are at the core of procurement and learn how to sell the business case of procurement to the rest of the organisation. Modules focus on six areas: (i) Procurement Strategy, (ii) Collaboration and Influencing Skills, (iii) Procurement Performance Management, (iv) Procurement Innovation, (v) Procurement Technology, and (vi) Sustainability, in addition to elective topics such as Project Management, Circular Economy, Service Design, and Quality Management.

#### Master's degree programmes in Poland

The Public Procurement Office of Poland signed an agreement with twelve Polish universities on the establishment and administration of postgraduate studies in the field of public procurement. These programmes teach curriculums of public procurement that are approved by the PPO.

Source: (Tor Vergata University of Rome, n.d.<sup>[94]</sup>), (Metropolia Business School, n.d.<sup>[95]</sup>), (Public Procurement Office of Poland, n.d.<sup>[96]</sup>)

### 7.3.2. Thesis contests

Countries like Israel, Norway, and Poland organise public procurement thesis contests for students to encourage future procurement leaders. In Poland, the competition for the best master's thesis in public procurement is organised with the Public Procurement Office, the Regional Audit Chamber in Krakow and the Faculty of Law and Administration of the Jagiellonian University. Israel established a thesis competition project called EconM and the Procurement Academy of Norway organises the competition of the best master's thesis(s) in the field of public procurement (see Box 7.4).

### Box 7.4. Thesis contests in public procurement in Israel and Norway

#### Israel

Israel established a project called EconM in cooperation between the Government Procurement Administration (GPA) and the academia, by targeting master students in economics. Students receive a list of suggested topics from the GPA for their seminary or thesis. Participation is voluntary, and the GPA provides assistance to the students that chose to participate.

#### Norway

The Procurement Academy, established by Norwegian Agency for Public Management and eGovernment (Difi) in 2017, organises the competition for the best master's thesis in the field of public procurement. Master students are encouraged to write a master's thesis on topics related to public procurement such as:

- Use of weighting models
- Effects of competition restrictions
- Purchasing-related issues
- Norwegian and international competition law
- Purchasing innovation

Candidates can obtain support and guidance while writing a thesis. The awarding ceremony takes place at the Procurement Academy's annual R&D day for public procurement.

Source: (Procurement Academy of Norway, 2020<sup>[97]</sup>), Response from Israel to the OECD Survey on the Professionalisation on Public Procurement 2020

### 7.3.3. Internship programmes

Some countries established internship programmes related to public procurement. Internships allow students and recent graduates to gain relevant skills and experience. It is expected to contribute to developing future procurement leaders and increasing the awareness of public procurement as a professional task among young people.

For example, Israel and Lithuania have been closely collaborating with universities to implement an internship programme. Israel's programme is called EconB. Students enrolled in a bachelor's degree in economics are offered two-day internships at the GPA to be engaged in research projects. They receive academic credits from this programme. In Lithuania, the Ministry of the Economy and Innovation had a discussion with universities and high schools on their willingness to improve capacities of the public procurement workforce. CPO LT, the largest and most experienced CPB of Lithuania, offers opportunities for students to gain work experience in the field of public procurement and to grant scholarships for the best students. In Norway, the Procurement Academy has been trying to launch a pilot scheme of internship where the business community can provide internships for students who are studying in the field of public procurement. The Procurement Graduate Programme of New Zealand is a well-known example that started in 2014 (see Box 7.5).



### Box 7.5. Procurement Graduate Programme in New Zealand

The Procurement Graduate Programme in New Zealand aims at developing future procurement leaders in the country. During the 2-year development programme, interns will be placed at 3-4 different government agencies in New Zealand, which allow them not only to work on interesting and high-value procurement across different sectors (ICT, infrastructure, health, etc) but also to gain a wide network of experienced procurement professionals. The Programme assists interns in improving professional skills through mentoring, networking events and training.

The Programme is open to a recent graduate or a student in the final year of study. Since its starting in 2014, 34 interns completed the Programmes as of 2018. The Programme contributes to narrowing down the shortage of procurement officials in the public sector, creating a structured pathway into the profession for graduates, and raising procurement's profile as a viable career option amongst university students

Source: (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, n.d.<sup>[98]</sup>) and information provided by New Zealand Government Procurement

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