

Use of Country Procurement Systems  
Consultations in Ghana  
November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007

The World Bank organized consultations via video conferences in Accra, on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007 with members of the Governments, Private Sectors, Civil societies and Development Partners of four different countries, namely Ghana, Nigeria, Gambia and Sierra Leone (see attached list of participants). The main objective of these consultations was to present the Methodology for the Use of Country Procurement Systems to seek feedback and comments from the participants. The discussions that took place between the World Bank representatives and the participants have been summarized around the six issues posted on the website.

**1. The World Bank has proposed a detailed methodology for a procurement country system piloting program in 8-10 countries. What remaining questions need to be addressed or clarified about this program?**

The participants wanted more clarifications on the selection of pilot countries the kind of professional and financial support that the Bank would give them during the piloting process. Some thought that the pilots should include both middle income and low income countries for lessons to be meaningful.

*After explaining the selection process, the Bank explained that initially a few countries between 8 to 10 will be targeted to allow the Bank to closely monitor their implementation. The selection of the pilot countries will depend on the levels of achievement in procurement standards and will be for Bank-financed projects only.*

The participants thought that that this initiative should be done in harmonization with other development partners/aid agencies.

*The Bank pointed out that the Bank has defined a methodology in line with the risk it is willing to take. The Bank explained that the assessment for selecting pilot countries for the use of country systems will be solely for projects financed by the Bank. As each development partner will have to define its own risks and set its own standards, it is very unlikely that there will be an agreement on the risks.*

Some participants cited many examples of various areas that needed to be strengthened in their respective countries and wanted to know how the Bank could assist them in strengthening their national procurement systems.

*The Bank explained that it will continue to provide technical and financial assistance to all countries interested and committed in improving their systems. Countries that have expressed an interest in the use of country systems and that do not pass the test at this point will benefit from a strengthened capacity development assistance program, hopefully in close collaboration with other donors.*

Some participants wanted to know why pilot countries should advertise in UNDP if the countries pass the equivalence test which includes sub-indicators regarding advertising procedures that have to be satisfied.

*The Bank explained that the UNDP is free of charge, works very well and is subscribed by a large number of bidders internationally and this requirement is only for World Bank financed projects.*

- 2. The OECD/DAC benchmarking index provides for scoring of 54 sub-indicators on a 0-3 scale with a score of 3 representing best practice. 30 of 54 sub-indicators in the OECD/DAC tool have been identified as critical and require achieving the highest score of 3 for 22 of the sub-indicators or a score of 2 with an agreed action plan for 8 of the sub-indicators. Is this achievement level appropriate and if not, why?**

The participants thought that the standards are set too high and not many countries will be able to reach them. They proposed that the critical and non critical sub-indicators be revisited to ensure that there are enough countries in the pilot program.

*The Bank explained that the proposed methodology will be revised by taking into consideration comments made during the consultations.*

The participants thought that this assessment should be done jointly with the countries (for ownership) and other development partners (for harmonization) and that not all the sub-indicators are relevant to each country. Those who have already used the tool shared the difficulties they experienced and suggested that the OECD/DAC tool be modified taking into account their suggestions.

*The Bank explained that the proposed methodology will be revised by taking into consideration comments made during the consultations. It went on to explain that: (i) it has always encouraged joint OECD/DAC assessments with the countries and other development partners, and (ii) even though, at this stage there will not be any change in the OECD/DAC benchmarking tool, there is a separate exercise where lessons learned from its application will be used to improve it. The Bank encouraged all participants, specially the OECD/DAC pilot countries, to send us their suggestions separately in writing.*

- 3. Under this proposal, not all procurement would be included in these pilots. Should the Bank include complex, high value procurement such as those [e.g. highway construction, power generation equipment, information technology] now cleared by the Operations Procurement Review Committee (OPRC) in the use of pilot country procurement systems?**

*The participants did not have any specific comments on the above.*

- 4. Is the proposed handling of the Selection of Consultants in the pilots satisfactory? If not, how can this be strengthened?**

*The participants did not have any specific comments on the above.*

- 5. Are the proposed performance based measures sufficient to address transparency, access to information and governance and anticorruption issues (GAC) that have been raised with regard to the pilots of country systems in procurement?**

Some participants thought that sub-indicators on anti-corruption issues have to be strengthened as ethical standards and professional standards are not at the levels they should be. They expressed concerns that not enough emphasis is being put on performance indicators specially those measuring corruption and that the piloting is focused too much on the quality of the system i.e. procedures and compliance and not impact.

**6. Do you have other suggestions that will strengthen the World Bank Group's efforts to help countries improve their procurement systems and help us learn from these pilots?**

Some participants thought that while the quality of the procurement systems is necessary and important to select pilot countries it is not sufficient. They recommended more focus on performance and contract execution.

*The Bank explained that the selection of the pilot countries will be based on a methodology that takes into consideration, not only the results of the OEDC/DAC but also results from other assessments (which in most cases would have already been done e.g. CPAR, CFAA or other diagnostic tools measuring the PFM system of the country - PEFA) and performance at the implementing agencies' level. The Bank asked participants to send in their comments on the choice of the performance indicators in the proposed methodology.*

**Overall Conclusion**

The countries thought that the methodology is generally good but that the level of achievement for being considered as a pilot country is lowered to be more realistic and performance based. They wanted to see more technical and financial assistance from the Bank in procurement capacity building efforts and harmonization among donors – wanted more donors to get involved in this initiative.

**WORLD BANK  
STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATIONS  
Use of Country System**

Ghana - November 8, 2007

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