

Procurement Process Optimization: A Quantitative Assessment of Alternative Procurement Strategies

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8110106>

Received: 03 October 2024; Accepted: 10 October 2024; Published: 07 December 2024

ABSTRACT

Procurement is a process of obtaining supplies, materials, services and other resources. Public procurement refers to the entities governed by departments, bureaus, government branches and instrumentalities. This paper focused to evaluate the efficacy of the procurement process of the Department of Agriculture RFO VII: Alternative Mode of Procurement. The study made use of the mixed method through survey as means of data collection. The descriptive survey method using a survey questionnaire was utilized to investigate the degree of effectiveness in terms of resource, procedure and budget utilization, level of awareness of the procurement official on the protocol and problems affecting the process. The study found out that DA RFO VII has many things to consider with regards to the enhancement of the procurement activity. There were deficiencies in the operational requirements, procurement procedures and measures to enhance the budget utilization that resulted to the challenges which hampered the agency from achieving a streamlined process.

Keywords: accountability, Alternative Mode of Procurement, awareness, budget utilization protocol, effectiveness, procedure, resources challenges,

INTRODUCTION

In relation to the other countries that comprise the United Nations (UN), the Philippines have created orders and regulations like Republic Act (RA) 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act of 2003 to guide government agencies in obtaining supplies, materials consulting services and for infrastructure projects. In order to improve efficacy, public entities are encouraged to use Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS). This portal acts as the central source of information during sourcing. (UNEP, 2013).

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is the lead office dedicated in promoting agricultural growth by providing services that would help the marginalized farmers increase their profit and way of living. Like the other public institutions, it has been operating through following the rules, orders and acts crafted by the government. In the case of procurement activities, the agency has to comply with the Procurement Law, RA 8184.

The Philippines is divided into seventeen (17) regions to serve and coordinate with the national agencies to fast tracked delivery of services. Like any other lead offices, DA coursed through its services to the regional branches instead of having provincial or city offices. However, even if regulatory requirements have been met, there are issues that indicate low performance of the agency in the procurement processes. It has been observed that the agency over several years has been faced with challenges such as delay in the acquisition of farm inputs, decreased number of suppliers, delay in payment of suppliers, and delays in project implementation. All these issues have been happening in the existence of Government Procurement Reform Act of 2003. Therefore, the problem would be on the actual procurement process effectiveness.

Hence, the Department of Budget and Finance and the policy board have issued orders and mechanism to reiterate the implementation of the (Executive Order No. 40, 2001 DBM, 2013a, Administrative Order No. 17, 2011). This initiative emphasizes the considerable reduction of money-spent lead by consistent and

efficient purchases (Ambat & Ycasiaco, 2008, and Bombay, 2011). These laws focus on improving accountability, efficacy and transparency effective sourcing, streamlined process, and monitoring.

Procurement law enhances the process of acquiring quality goods and increases the equitable chances of the companies in the market to bid for available invitations. The process of activity must be executed on an equitable basis and open to the general public. Policies and agreements within the institutions can be reiterated to reduce administrative work.

Accordingly, the extant literature emphasizes the importance of procurement skills in executing effective procurement activities. Insufficient procurement skills have been connected to procurement malpractices (Skipworth et al., 2020), unethical behavior (Israel et al., 2019), and a variety of issues in public sector procurement methods (Mothupi et al., 2022). Procurement practitioners must possess a variety of key abilities, including cost analysis, product understanding, and computer literacy (Munyimi, 2019). Henceforth, procurement professionals also need to have strong marketing skills, customer care management abilities, effective communication skills (Changalima & Ismail, 2019), and risk management competencies (Bag et al., 2021; Jama & Mohamud, Journal of Logistics, Informatics, and Service Science, Vol. 11 (2024) No. 1, pp. 119-135 al., 2021).

Notably, research has concentrated on measuring procurement abilities through staff competency assessments (Pettersen et al., 2020; Changalima et al., 2022). To improve procurement operations and boost overall performance, procurement firms must establish a competent workforce (Odongo & Kazungu, 2022). However, procurement encompasses more than just purchasing; some businesses have linked the role and responsibility for acquiring goods, supplies, and services to solely purchasing. Furthermore, procurement entails numerous stages, including identifying needs, sourcing, doing market research, selecting suppliers, contracting, obtaining product and/or service delivery, and monitoring and assessing supplier performance (Schütz et al., 2019; Mothupi et al., 2022).

Presently, the agency looks into the current workforce and continues to streamline the procurement activities. Although some practices and policies have been initiated, there are still issues and concerns that need to be dealt with and need thorough monitoring and constant reforms. Having written laws, policies and procedures will warrant sustainable development and will oversee best practices that could be retained. In this regard, the protocol would still be followed even if there were changes in the management or work force. Moreover, the agency needs to have written protocol or manual documentation of its current practices that merit best practices.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to conduct a quantitative assessment of alternative procurement strategies with the aim of optimizing procurement processes to wit:

1. To assess the degree of effectiveness on the implementation of the Alternative Mode of Procurement process of the Department of Agriculture RFO VII in terms of:
 - a. General Resource
 - b. Procurement Process Procedure
 - c. Budget Utilization and Transparency
2. To determine the level of awareness of the procurement staff on the adoption of Alternative Mode of Procurement.
3. To identify the problems encountered with alternative modes of procurement.

Theoretical - Conceptual Framework

The aim of the seminar paper is to evaluate the other modes of procurement of the Department of Agriculture RFO VII. This is anchored on the theory of Osborne and Gaebler in a book reinventing the government. It is how the collaborative governance intends to transform the government sector. As what secretary of the DA

have been doing, we have to transform farmers into agripreneurs. The agency has to act collectively to provide services that would help them increase their profit.

Procurement is an act of obtaining supplies, materials, services and other resources by the procuring official of the organization. (GPRA, 2003, and GPPB, 2009). When we say public procurement, these are entities governed by departments, bureaus, agency branches and instrumentalities. To have a system in the process of purchasing, and to be clear, (GPRA, 2013) and the procurement law as stipulated in its revised IRR requires that process and forms to be used must be standardized. (GPPB, 2009).

Procurement Law and the board that regulates it provides standardized orders in the processes related to procurement in the government with the activity obtaining goods and services. The GPRA Revised IRR (20) and the policy board require interconnection between planning and budget utilization. Government agencies are required to initiate planning such as preparation of an Annual Procurement Plan (APP) where it shall be the basis of all procurement related activities.

The major requirement in all means of purchases is that the public should do it through competitive bidding, which is open to participation. As stipulated in the appendices of the GPRA, the minimum number of days to complete the activity is twenty-eight (28) and the maximum is one hundred seventy (170) from the pre-procurement conference up to the issuance of notice to proceed. (GPPB, 2017).

Under the conditions of the use of the other modes of procurement, the price and the responsiveness of the bidder are frequently taken into consideration during the process. In relation to the other countries, the price is considered the presiding limiting factor in awarding. It is followed by value for money which calculates the quality inherent to the specifications listed by the end user (UNEP, 2013). Hence, the other modes of obtaining required goods (limited source bidding, direct contracting, repeat order, shopping, negotiated procurement) are allowed in considerable instances to encourage lesser financial cost and administrative work (GPRA, 2003, and GPPB, 2017). These methods generally have less supplier involvement that the conditions inherent should be met before pursuing the activity. (GPRA, 2003, and GPPB, 2017). In all instances, the Procuring Entity shall ensure that the most advantageous price for the Government is obtained.

Drawing parallels to DA RFO VII, about the actual procurement activities and strategies, several aspects need to be revisited. Among these in particulars include; the resources needed to perform the activities, the knowledge of the personnel's involved, the procedure itself, the level of awareness of the procurement officials on the actual process protocol and the factors affecting the process. As noted by Deloitte (2013), it helps in giving the detailed picture of the procurement needs.

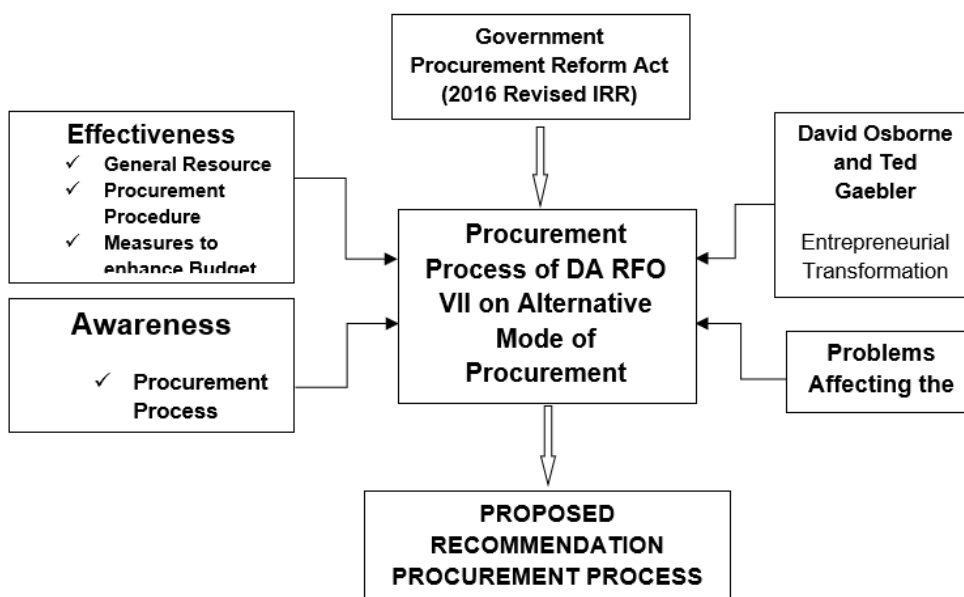


Figure 1 Schematic Diagram of the Theoretical Conceptual Framework of the Study

Despite outlined laws, regulations, rule and procedures for Alternative Mode of Procurement, there are still some problems such as insufficient manpower, lack of training or awareness on the processes which in effect give an unsatisfactory performance in terms of budget utilization of the agency. Therefore, it is from these factors the researcher needed to assess the actual process of purchasing using other modes of procurement in the Department of Agriculture RFO VII.

The study helped identify the functioning areas of performance that can be enhanced to make other modes of procurement effective. All of the gathered data were used, and issues and concerns were addressed in order to formulate a procurement protocol best suited to the needs of the institution.

Procurement Workflow

Public procurement is often seen as a secondary administrative task, lacking the political clout needed to address structural costs and contribute to development. It is a cross-cutting process used by government agencies to acquire products and services, addressing various needs such as competition, social goals, and value for money.

Technical and professional skills are required due to the nature of the goods and services being purchased. Public procurement places a fiduciary duty on public authorities and requires accountability and openness. "Procurement" is used for high-value products, while "purchasing" refers to the continuous supply of goods like office supplies. Public procurement is typically conducted in separate packages, with bidders submitting sealed bids and competing on price. The bidding mechanism, also known as tendering, is crucial for effective procurement.

Competitive Bidding

Good procurement follows principles of economy, efficiency, fairness, and transparency. A system that encourages qualified firms to compete on price while meeting quality objectives is most likely to satisfy these principles. Multilateral development banks and governments use a sealed-bid competitive procedure for most procurement. Bidding must be adequately advertised and bidders have sufficient time to prepare their bids. ADB requires advertising in ADB Business Opportunities and a national newspaper in the purchaser's country. Minimum bid preparation times range from 60 to 90 days, depending on complexity.

Three safeguards protect against anticompetitive behavior, including "wait and see" bids and bidder collusion. Bids must be sealed and kept sealed until the bid opening date. Bids must be backed by a bid security, typically worth around 2% of the contract's total value. The security is forfeited if a bidder changes or withdraws their offer after the bid closing date or if they place the lowest bid and fail to sign a contract.

A bidder can only participate in one bid and submit one bid, and cannot be connected to more than one joint venture. This prevents bidders from seeing the outcome of the auction and deciding which bid they wish to be affiliated with.

Qualification

Procurement is a crucial process that ensures only competent suppliers or contractors are awarded contracts. These must demonstrate their technological know-how, experience, and financial resources. The goods must also meet basic specifications. Bidders who cannot perform the task will not be given a contract, regardless of the price.

Prequalification is the process of qualifying bidders before bidding, while post qualification evaluates them concurrently. Bidders must demonstrate their technical know-how, financial resources, and experience with similar contracts. Products must meet certain standards, have been in production for a minimum time, and be produced in minimum quantities. They must also meet minimal technical requirements.

Other Procurement Methods (Alternative Mode of Procurement)

The most widely used method of competitive tendering is the one mentioned above. It makes up 80% of the procurement value on projects funded by the ADB. However, there are other situations in which buying products "off-the-shelf," through a limited tender, or through a negotiated contract is more acceptable. A noncompetitive mode of procurement may save time and money when expanding existing projects, acquiring more goods, or buying proprietary goods (like spare parts).

Other creative ways to get low prices include the "reverse auction," which requires all bidders to submit a series of offers that decrease in value until all but one of them withdraw from the competition, and a variety of mechanisms that combine competitive tendering with negotiation, negotiating a lower price after bid evaluation. While the internet and online bidding have made some of these methods more popular, ADB and the multilateral development banks do not accept them.

Negotiation reduces transparency, and in the long run, bidders typically overstate initial offers in expectation of having to negotiate down. Negotiations on ADB-financed projects are limited to extraordinary conditions in order to avoid rebidding in cases when bids significantly exceed the estimate or only one offer is received. Procurement of professional services has particular criteria. By definition, selection must be based, to some extent, on the professional qualifications and expertise of firms and important personnel. As a result, price is only used in part of the selection process, and in certain circumstances, it is not even considered. Except for consultant recruiting, ADB does not have a separate service procurement mechanism.

A quality and cost-based system (QCBS) has recently been implemented for businesses. When reviewing offers, QCBS gives 20% weight to cost and 80% to qualifications. Cost is not a consideration in the hiring of individual consultants or, in extreme cases, firms.

Research Gaps

During the paper's conceptualization, certain common challenges and gaps in the execution of Republic Act No. 9184, also known as the Government Procurement Reform Act in the Philippines, for alternate modalities of procurement were identified. That's why the writers wrote this study.

Inadequate training provided to procurement professionals regarding the provisions of RA 9184 may result in uneven implementation and adherence. Inadequate systems for observing and assessing procurement-related activities could lead to corruption and inefficiencies. Innovation and competition may be hampered by the under engagement of qualified suppliers, particularly small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), can restrict competition and innovation. Difficulty in keeping up with updates and amendments to procurement laws can result in non-compliance. Inadequate assessment and management of procurement risks can lead to project delays and budget overruns. Limited funding can affect the quality of goods and services procured, influencing project outcomes.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Design:

This study made use of the mixed method which aimed to assess the efficacy of procurement activities of the Department of Agriculture RFO VII through survey as a means of collecting data. In addition, mixed methods allow researchers to use the strength of one method of research to counterbalance the other method's weaknesses, thereby incorporating the concept of complementation. The researcher utilized the descriptive survey method using a survey questionnaire to look into the effectiveness of the process itself, the awareness of the procurement official on the protocol and problems affecting the process. Descriptive research is a design to help shed some light on current issues through a process of data collection that would enable the researcher to describe the state of affairs more completely that was possible without employing this method (Dudovskiy,

2017). Descriptive research described and interpreted answers from the given questions that revealed conditions, got factual information and practices on the problem at hand. The data on the profile, professional background and financial activities as well as proposed measures of the respondents were gathered in this study.

Population:

The persons of interest in this research were the employees of Department of Agriculture RFO VII who are designated to the function and decision making of procurement activities. The total targeted population of the study was thirty-one procurement personnel pertinent to the procurement process. This translated to a response rate of 100% response rate.

Sample and sampling techniques

The researcher used purposive sampling as method in choosing the target population of the study, all designated procurement personnel who were pertinent to the process were properly represented. This included the Bids and Awards Committee, Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat, End User or Program Coordinators, Technical Working Group, Budget and Finance Staff, Inspector, Canvasser, Liaison Officer and Procurement Staff.

Definition of Terms:

Procurement, refers to methodical process of obtaining products, services, or labor from outside sources. In order to obtain goods or services, one must first identify their needs, then locate possible suppliers, request proposals, assess offers, choose the best supplier, negotiate contracts, place orders, pay invoices, and oversee the quality and delivery of the acquired goods.

The procurement process, it refers to the series of processes taken in order to efficiently obtain products, services, or works from vendors. This process consists of identifying a need, specifying requirements, researching potential suppliers, deciding on a sourcing strategy, submitting proposals, evaluating and selecting suppliers, negotiating contracts, placing orders, fulfilling and delivering, inspecting and quality checking, processing invoices, and evaluating supplier performance to inform future procurement decisions.

Alternative mode of procurement, refers to non-traditional or non-competitive methods of procuring goods, services, or works when regular public bidding or competitive procurement processes are not feasible. These approaches are typically permitted under certain conditions in order to speed the procurement process, provide flexibility, and solve urgent or special requirements. The basic goal remains to promote transparency, accountability, and efficiency in procurement while adjusting to changing circumstances.

Statistical Analysis

The data on the personal profile, degree of effectiveness in terms of resource, procedure and budget accountability, level of awareness of designated personnel and factors affecting the process were presented in tabular forms. A descriptive analysis was employed to summarize the data accordingly. After that, the data were discussed, analyzed and interpreted to find out whether or not this has answered the specific questions being identified. Finally, giving of conclusions and recommendations were made for the improvement of the problem being identified.

FINDINGS

Based on the data gathered during the study, results analysis and interpretations of data to answer specific objectives of the study. Then, it is followed by the corresponding implications and justifications of the claim from related literatures.

Degree of Effectiveness on Alternative Mode of Procurement of DA RFO VII

The respondents were asked to rate the statements related to General Resource Assessment, Procurement Procedure and Measures to Enhance Budget utilization and accountability.

Table 3. Degree of Effectiveness on Alternative Mode of Procurement of DA VII in Resource Assessment

Particulars	Mean	Description
<i>I. Government procurement is undertaken in accordance with the Annual Procurement Plan (APP).</i>	4.91	<i>Very Effective</i>
<i>II. The Annual Procurement Plan is updated for inclusion of individual Project Procurement Management Plan (PPMP).</i>	3.83	<i>Effective</i>
<i>III. The PPMP contained types of contract to employ extension/size of contract scopes/package and the procurement method to be adopted.</i>	2.72	<i>Uncertain</i>
<i>IV. Website is available that provides up to date procurement information accessible to all required in RA 9184 known as the Procurement Reform Act.</i>	3.71	<i>Effective</i>
<i>V. Procurement officials of the agency are qualified.</i>	3.26	<i>Uncertain</i>
<i>VI. Respective procurement processes is sufficiently staffed</i>	3.22	<i>Uncertain</i>
<i>VII. Procurement staffs are provided with procurement protocol as part of their job description</i>	3.21	<i>Uncertain</i>
<i>VIII. There is a Procurement Training Program on all the personnel involved in procurement process</i>	2.98	<i>Uncertain</i>
Average Mean	3.48	<i>Effective</i>

LEGEND

Descriptive Interpretation	Scale
Very Effective	4.21 – 5.00
Effective	3.41 – 4.20
Uncertain	2.61 – 3.40
Slightly Effective	1.81 – 2.60
Not Effective	1.00 – 1.80

It could be gleaned in Table 3 that government procurement was undertaken in line with Annual Procurement Plan (APP) under the resource assessment with mean of 4.91. This implies that the Department of Agriculture is very effective in the devising the Annual Procurement Plan as defined in the revised IRR of RA 9184.

Hence, in terms of the Annual Procurement Plan the Department of Agriculture is EFFECTIVE with a mean of 3.83 and 3.71, in updating for the inclusion of individual PPMP as well as the availability on website to provides up to date procurement information accessible that required in RA 9184, respectively.

The Department of Agriculture's Alternative Mode of Procurement (RFO VII) in Resource Assessment is effective, as the agency has dedicated resources such as time for planning, qualified personnel, and electronic systems to control the process. However, the agency is uncertain about staffing patterns, qualifications of designated procurement officials, dissemination of procurement protocol, and procurement training programs.

The PPMP contains all the required information for procurement activities to go smoothly, but the procurement method was not part of the planning during the preparation process. Strategic procurement is crucial for acquiring many suppliers, and the agency must create a strategy that enhances supplier involvement and carefully assesses their qualifications. Delloite (2016) supports this emphasis, stating that although planned practices are in place, they are hindered by a lack of awareness on the purchasing process. Hauler (2013) asserts that procurement performance relies on the field's players, with knowledgeable and competent staff

enhancing efficiency. Gershon's (2004) view on public procurement emphasizes efficacy as intelligent use of resources for better services. To be effective, agencies should focus on enhancing processes and utilizing resources, such as manpower, to improve quality, lower prices, and provide services and additional outputs.

Degree of Effectiveness on Alternative Mode of Procurement of DA VII in Procedure Assessment

Among the five Majority procedure assessment as shown in Table 4 below, indicates that there were two of the particulars are effective in terms of that the agencies transparency and fair rules for bidders and in informing the designated officials of the set procurement procedures with a weighted mean of 3.66 and 3.44, respectively.

Table 4. Degree of Effectiveness on Alternative Mode of Procurement of DA VII in Procedure Assessment

Particulars	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1. Procurement activities are simple and timely.	2.72	Uncertain
2. Procurement procedure/ process are fully monitored	2.74	Uncertain
3. All are aware of the set procurement procedures	3.44	Effective
4. Selection criteria are pre-disclose to bidders to forbid the procuring entity in changing them once the process has started.	3.36	Uncertain
5. The agency applies fair and transparent rules for selection of bidders.	3.66	Effective
Average Mean	3.18	Uncertain

LEGEND

<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>	<i>Scale</i>
Very Effective	4.21 – 5.00
Effective	3.41 – 4.20
Uncertain	2.61 – 3.40
Slightly Effective	1.81 – 2.60
Not Effective	1.00 – 1.80

The DA RFO VII was found to be effective in defining functions for receiving and paying parties, ensuring quantities are accurate, and consistently implementing RA 9184 governing orders. The agency also imposed punitive sanctions on procurement officials who failed to fulfill their duties. However, the degree of effectiveness was uncertain due to the lack of a clear protocol for ensuring quality goods are procured at the lowest price, receiving goods in good order, and annual assessment of procurement activities.

Additionally, the agency's head's approach to procurement procedures was not fully followed and monitored. The respondents' perception of the procurement protocol was that it needs improvement and strict monitoring.

Nichols and Hault (1999) and Senge (1990) highlight the issue of preconceived ideas in procurement, which are often hindered by the current culture and mental models. These models include price-based decisions, excessive policies and orders, lack of understanding of end user requirements, and inadequate monitoring of purchases. Some procurement officials may prioritize suppliers based on personal preference over meeting specifications.

Degree of Effectiveness on Alternative Mode of Procurement of DA VII in Budget Utilization and Accountability

The scope of procurement can also be extended to the financial accomplishment of the public entity. The financial part of this study refers to budget utilization and accountability.

The Table 5 shown below indicates the Degree of Effectiveness on Alternative Mode of Procurement of DA RFO VII in Budget Utilization and Accountability. It was observed that out of eight (8) indicators, five (5) were generally effective especially on strong implementation of the orders of IRR 2016 of RA 9184 and also that DA RVII procurement, receiving, and paying functions are not performed by the same employee. This means that the Agency was effective in imposing penalties on officials who fail to comply with the procurement activities.

Table 5: Degree of Effectiveness on Alternative Mode of Procurement of DA RFO VII in Budget Utilization and Accountability

Particulars	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1. <i>The procurement, receiving, and paying functions are not performed by the same person</i>	3.69	<i>Effective</i>
2. <i>Procurement give assurance that quantities ordered correspond with quantities invoiced and received.</i>	3.68	<i>Effective</i>
3. <i>Procurement give assurance that goods of satisfactory quality are acquired at the lowest price.</i>	3.02	<i>Uncertain</i>
4. <i>Procurement give assurance that all goods have been received in good order.</i>	3.55	<i>Effective</i>
5. <i>Procurement activities of the agency is assessed annually.</i>	3.12	<i>Uncertain</i>
1. <i>There is a regular procurement audits and monitoring for compliance with procurement activities of the agency.</i>	2.74	<i>Uncertain</i>
2. <i>Strong or consistent enforcement of the prevailing rules and regulations of IRR 2016 (RA 9184)</i>	3.91	<i>Effective</i>
3. <i>There is a punitive sanction to officials who fail to comply with the procurement activities</i>	3.63	<i>Effective</i>
Average Mean	3.42	Moderately Effective

LEGEND

<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>	<i>Scale</i>
Very Effective	4.21 – 5.00
Effective	3.41 – 4.20
Uncertain	2.61 – 3.40
Slightly Effective	1.81 – 2.60
Not Effective	1.00 – 1.80

The agency's procurement activities were not regularly audited and monitored, indicating a lack of a tracking system for compliance with agency rules. The effectiveness of budget utilization was measured by various factors, indicating strong financial management. A high budget spender should prioritize procurement as an important function, while a budget-spending organization should view it as a significant part of its operations.

Governance plays a crucial role in reporting, measuring, and controlling procurement activity. However, there can be discrepancies between the achievements of the finance department and those of procurement officials, as these aspects may not be properly aligned. Buvik (2002) emphasizes the importance of governance in arranging procurement activities to reduce transaction costs and increase institutional assets. Gershon (2004) emphasizes the need for well-built financial control in institutions to efficiently use resources and deliver major programs. Designating a finance representative to oversee process arrangements can verify alignment and ensure efficacy, which can be related to credibility.

Summary of the Degree of Effectiveness on Alternative Mode of Procurement

The summary Table 6 revealed was the Department of Agriculture RFO VII was effective on the overall degree of effectiveness on Alternative Mode of Procurement. It indicated that it is so effective in terms of resources and budget Utilization and accountability, but uncertain in terms of assessment of procedures. This implied that there are still factors affecting procurement effectiveness. Further, the agency needs to look into the procurement procedure and how to streamline the process to attain effectiveness.

As stressed by Seashore and Yuchtman (1967), the efficacy of every institutions is measured on its ability to utilize the available resources to deliver services. This definition of effectiveness plays a vital role in optimizing the organizational practices which relates to the interaction of internal and external potential.

Table 6. Summary of the Degree of Effectiveness on Alternative Mode of Procurement

Particulars	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1. Resource Assessment	3.48	Effective
2. Procedure Assessment	3.18	Uncertain
3. Budget Utilization and Accountability	3.42	Moderately Effective
Average Mean	3.37	Effective

LEGEND

Descriptive Interpretation	Scale
Very Effective	4.21 – 5.00
Effective	3.41 – 4.20
Uncertain	2.61 – 3.40
Slightly Effective	1.81 – 2.60
Not Effective	1.00 – 1.80

Level of awareness on Alternative Mode of Procurement in the Department of Agriculture RFO VII

Awareness of a procurement staff of DA-RFO VII is the degree of one's consciousness of information regarding alternative mode of procurement. This involves the procurement procedure and he supporting documents needed in support to the mode of procurement. To interpret this, the scale below is used:

Table 7. Level of awareness on Alternative Mode of Procurement in DA-RFO VII Procurement Mode

Particulars	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
I. Limited Source Bidding is otherwise known as Selective Bidding.	2.69	Moderately Aware
II. Limited Source Bidding is a method of procurement that involves direct invitation to bid by the Procuring entity.	2.42	Slightly aware
III. Limited Source Bidding is from a set of pre-selected suppliers/ consultants with known experience and proven capability relative to the requirements of a particular contract.	2.89	Moderately aware
IV. Direct Contracting is otherwise known as Single Source Procurement.	3.02	Moderately Aware
V. Direct Contracting is a method of procurement that does not require elaborate Bidding Documents.	2.92	Moderately Aware
VI. Direct Contracting simply asked the suppliers to submit a price quotation or a pro-forma invoice together with the conditions of sale which offer maybe accepted immediately or after some negotiations.	2.55	Moderately Aware

<i>VII. Repeat Order involves a Direct Procurement of Goods from previous winning bidder.</i>	2.45	<i>Slightly aware</i>
<i>VIII. Repeat Order is done whenever there is a need to replenish goods procured under a contract previously awarded through Competitive Bidding.</i>	2.33	<i>Slightly aware</i>
<i>IX. Shopping is a method of procurement where the procuring entity simply requests for the submission of price quotations from the suppliers.</i>	2.65	<i>Moderately Aware</i>
<i>X. Shopping is a method of procurement for readily available off-day-shelf goods or ordinary regular equipment to be procured directly from suppliers of known qualification.</i>	2.72	<i>Moderately Aware</i>
<i>XI. Negotiated Procurement is a method of procurement that may be resorted under extraordinary circumstances provided for in Section 53 of the GPRA and other instances that shall be specified in the IRR.</i>	2.32	<i>Slightly aware</i>
<i>XII. Negotiated Procurement is also a method of procurement whereby the procuring entity directly negotiates a contract with a technically, legally and financially capable supplier, contractor or consultant.</i>	2.55	<i>Moderately Aware</i>
<i>Average Mean</i>	2.63	<i>Moderately Aware</i>

LEGEND

Descriptive Interpretation	Scale
<i>Fully Aware</i>	3.25 – 4.00
<i>Moderately Aware</i>	2.51 – 3.25
<i>Slightly Aware</i>	1.76 – 2.50
<i>Not Aware</i>	1.00 – 1.75

As shown in Table 7 that there were responses with a weighted mean ranging from 2.51-3.5 under level of awareness employees on the Alternative Mode of Procurement in the Department of Agriculture RFO VII. This means that the respondents were moderately aware of some of the conditions inherent to the use of the different modes of procurement and when to use them.

There were also responses with a weighted mean of 1.76-2.50. This implied that the designated procurement personnel are slightly aware of the conditions on the use of other methods of purchasing.

Brookes et al. (2007) emphasize the importance of effective communication within a team for procurement officials to achieve effectiveness. They suggest that procurement officials should be well-informed about the conditions of obtaining supplies, materials, and consultancy services. Hult and Nichols (1999) suggest that employees should be aware of agency rules and mechanisms. The team should create an environment that encourages idea sharing and openness, leading to end user flexibility and a sense of commitment to acquiring what they need.

Level of awareness on the Step by Step Procedure of Alternative Mode of Procurement in the Department of Agriculture RFO VII

In order to measure the familiarization of personnel on the DA procurement process, the respondents were asked to number the statements from one (1) start of the process to thirteen (13) ends of the process. Statements included the step-by-step procedure on Alternative Mode of Procurement. The Table 8 shows that only 58.06 % of the respondents knew the process well and 41.94% were unfamiliar with the process flow. This implied that designated procurement officials are not totally knowledgeable on the step-by-step process of obtaining needed supplies, materials and services.

Kraljic (1983) emphasized the importance of prompt and precise information for strategic supply supervision. However, many officials in institutions receive incomplete information about agency business plans and

objectives, which can hinder their ability to perform tasks and time requirements effectively. Dryonks et al. (2010) found that procuring entities often lack a team viewpoint and may overlook employee issues. Fawcett et al. (2008) suggested that enhancing teamwork and collaboration could help, rather than focusing on information and measurement systems. Employees trained to work as a team can cooperate effectively, leading to cost savings and better output.

Table 8. Level of awareness on the Step by Step Procedure of Alternative Mode of Procurement

Indicators	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
<i>Familiar</i>	18	58.06	58.06	58.06
<i>Unfamiliar</i>	13	41.94	41.94	100
TOTAL	31	100	100	

Problems encountered on Alternative Mode of Procurement at the Department of Agriculture RFO VII

Respondents were asked to check as many as they can on the enumerated problems shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Problems Affecting Alternative Mode of Procurement

Challenges	Frequency (N)	Rank
<i>Inadequate measures for monitoring and evaluation of the procurement policy</i>	27	1
<i>Lack of specialized program/ regular training of procurement personnel</i>	24	2
<i>Inadequate knowledge and skills of procurement personnel</i>	22	3
<i>Problem of non-compliance on the procurement protocol</i>	18	4
<i>Few suppliers acquire bid documents</i>	14	5
<i>Lack of accountability and transparency in procurement of goods and services</i>	12	6
<i>Lack of record keeping</i>	10	7
<i>Lack of written procedures for acceptance, inspection of goods and services</i>	9	8
<i>Lack of Top management support</i>	5	9
<i>Lack of appropriate bidding or incorrect utilization of the limited bidding process</i>	4	10

The responses showed that significant portion of the respondents have agreed that the major challenge affecting procurement process was the lack of monitoring and evaluation inherent to procurement policies which ranked first with a frequency of 27. The 2nd rank was the ‘Lack of specialized program/ regular training of procurement personnel’ which has a frequency of 24. Another important challenge to investigate was the ‘Inadequate knowledge and skills of procurement personnel’ which has a frequency of 22.

All the other statements have frequency below half of the total number of respondents which means that those challenges were insignificant. This implied that the agency had unforeseen factors that affected the effectiveness of its process. Smith and Conway (1993) identified seven key factors for effective procurement: focused team efforts, expertise evolution, corporate supervision, a well-built control system, collaborative governance, a comprehensive procurement strategy, and coordination among team members. Trent and Monczka (1994) emphasized the importance of key organizational manpower, effective team leadership, active supplier participation, and higher levels of decision-making authority for successful sourcing.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The Department of Agriculture RFO VII needs to enhance the acquisition process by addressing operational requirements, procurement procedures, and budget utilization measures. Procurement officials lack awareness

on the step-by-step process, inadequate evaluation and monitoring measures, and specialized personnel training. Despite top management's efforts, internal and external issues need to be addressed.

Recommendations

Based on findings the Department of Agriculture RFO VII Procurement Process Improvement will be to:

1. Conduct training for staff to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills.
2. Orient newly designated personnel on procurement policies and protocols.
3. Re-orient existing employees, especially with new procedure reforms.
4. Establish a mechanism to assess flow and document requirements.
5. Distribute written policies and procedures to all personnel.
6. Adopt a process protocol outlining policies, conditions, procurement flow, responsible authorities, and process descriptions.
7. Regularly monitor and implement the protocol.
8. Regularly assess the manual for reforms to ensure compliance.
9. Replicate the study in other government agencies to validate findings.

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