

# Women Entrepreneurs' Participation in Source Selection and Contract awards in Public Procurement in Kampala, Uganda

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2023.10502>

Received: 07 April 2023; Revised: 26 April 2023; Accepted: 01 May 2023; Published: 31 May 2023

**Abstract:** The participation of women entrepreneurs in public procurement has become a policy area of interest in developing countries. This is not an exemption for Uganda's case as pressure keeps mounting on the government for more transparent, inclusive and gender sensitive procurement processes. This paper investigated women entrepreneurs' participation in public procurement in Kampala, Uganda. The study adopted a cross-sectional design and used a mixed methods approach, in which 168 survey respondents and 12 key informants representing various associations and agencies responsible for procurement were reached. Findings revealed that the majority (88%) of the women entrepreneurs were knowledgeable about public procurement methods based on their marketing strategies and 60% were aware of solicitation mainly through newspapers. Another 72.2% admitted that they had participated in bidding processes. However, up to 88% were oblivious of public procurement quotas that can enhance their opportunities in public procurement. This study shows that whereas women entrepreneurs may be knowledgeable about source selection, they need to be sensitized about the existing quotas for women and other vulnerable groups and other empowering measures. Also, this study recommends increased representation of women on the contract awards committees to ensure that the reserved quotas are adhered to in the awarding of contracts.

## I. Introduction

The procurement process is always seen as a cycle made up of many processes which must be completed by the business and procuring unit in order to achieve its implementation. The application of public procurement core principles at every stage in the procurement process cycle helps to make the process easier for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to participate and win contracts. Therefore, any preferential procurement policies should be aligned with core procurement principles and other procurement objectives (ITC, 2014).

The public procurement process involves three phases; "acquisition planning and market research; source selection and contract award; and contract administration and close out" (e.g., ITC, 2014; Nelse, 2017; Schooner, 2008). By carefully structuring the rules that govern each of these phases, governments seek to achieve various policy objectives. For most procurement systems, those objectives include value for money, integrity, equal treatment and efficiency these objectives can and should include increased participation by women entrepreneurs in public procurement and in the economy more broadly. Due to international and domestic pressures, countries have taken important initiatives towards making public procurement more transparent and efficient to meet the international procurement guidelines. A number of legislations have been put in place, institutions need to be strengthened in East Africa since they still lack both technical and human resource capacities (Morrisson, 2006). There are arrays of obstacles in the process of public procurement reforms. The easiest and most possible means of reforming the public procurement process can be through the establishment of regulatory framework and a regulatory authority to enforce compliance and eradicate corruption in public procurement which is not an easy task though. Despite the shortcomings, progress made in Uganda and other many African countries in public procurement should be recognized (Agaba & Shipman, 2007).

A study to assess the extent by which existing legal frameworks are likely to support efficiency of public procurement systems in Africa, revealed progress in establishing framework agreements despite the limitations that still exist and that each country should enhance clearer rules and agreements applicable to their public procurement systems (Eyo, 2020).

Indeed, public procurement is one area that has been neglected academically despite the efforts by governments and procurement practitioners to improve public procurement practices. Public procurement is one of the key elements of a demand oriented innovation policy, and is seen to account for a major part of overall demand for goods and services. It has been seen as a significant instrument in advancing goals of innovations. In a bid to identify common efforts to improve public procurement practices, it was revealed that this cannot be achieved by a mere one element but a combination of policy making and management, procurement

regulations, authorization and appropriations and procurement function in operations (Edler & Georghiou, 2007; Thai, 2001; Uyarra & Flanagan, 2010).

Using public procurement to achieve social outcomes has become widespread globally, though information about its operation is still difficult and sketchy. Consequently, the role of public procurement has spread in the areas of social policy (McCrudden, 2004). Public procurement has undergone through major developments from a system without regulations to a system with public procurement and disposal act and procurement regulations in line with most countries procurement reform agendas (Rambøll, 2007). Recent years have continued to witness renewed interest by both academics and policy discussions to influence public procurement in introducing of new goods and services. Public procurement has been understood as acquiring of goods and services by government and its agencies and public sector organizations as an integral part of the policies. It has also been considered as a major tool for creating a lead market globally (Edler & Uyarra, 2013; Osborne & Brown, 2013).

Public procurement is critical in having a more inclusive economy and can promote gender equality if women-owned and women-led businesses are given the opportunity to participate (UN Women&Open Contracting Partnership, 2021). Thus, this study examined the participation of women entrepreneurs in one of the key processes, that is source selection and contract awards, using a case of women entrepreneurs in Kampala City, Uganda.

### **Acquisition, Planning**

Contracting activities always begin with the procurement planning phase. Procurement planning stage is a vital part of contract management since it determines the base for future successes or failures (Osman, et al, 2016). The procurement planning stage involves establishing and defining the procurement requirements, conducting market research, and developing requirements documents (Garrett, 2010). Garrett summarizes the first process; procurement planning is the process of identifying which business needs can be best met by procuring products or services outside the organization. This process involves determining whether to procure, how to procure, what to procure, and how much to procure (Garrett, 2010)

The vital objective for procurement planning is synchronized and combined act to achieve a need for goods, services or works in an opportune way and at a minimum procurement cost. Initial and accurate planning is important to avoid last minute, and ill-planned procurement, which is contrary to open, efficient and effective- and consequently transparent- procurement (IAPWG, 2006). In this addition, most potential savings in the procurement process are achieved by improvements in the planning stages. Even in situations where planning is difficult such as emergencies (IAPWG, 2006). According to working group (IAPWG, 2006), Proactive measures can be taken to ensure contingency planning and be better prepared to address upcoming procurement requests. Procurement planning clarifies what is needed and when it is needed to both user and buyer (IAPWG, 2006).

## **II. Methodology**

### **Research Paradigm**

According to Neuman, (2014), a scientific paradigm is ‘a whole system of thinking that includes basic assumptions, the important questions to be answered or puzzles to be solved, the research techniques to be used, and examples of what good scientific research is like’. Creswell, (2014), refers to paradigms as ‘worldviews’ or general philosophical orientations about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study.

Based on the previous chapters and the literature that was reviewed, this study was guided by the pragmatism research paradigm. As Creswell, (2014) notes, pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality and therefore relies on mixed methods research so as to draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions. This means that both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to investigate participation of women entrepreneurs in public procurement in Kampala, Uganda.

### **Research Approach**

This study employed a mixed methods approach, which uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Creswell, 2008, 2014). Statistics were used to measure the nature, behaviors and participation of women entrepreneurs in public procurement in Kampala, Uganda. The qualitative approach enabled the study to derive meaning and make sense of the problem by gathering data through for example key informant interviews and interpreting it for further understanding (e.g., Neuman, 2014).

### **Research Design**

This study employed a cross-sectional research design, which data was collected ‘at one point in time’ (Dikko, 2016, Creswell, 2014). This design also allowed the collection of data from different groups of people, using both quantitative methods, in particular the survey, for generalization and qualitative methods (key informant interviews) so as to reveal individuals subjective meanings of their experiences, expressed as words, images, or objects (Neuman, 2014) in as far as women’s participation in public procurement is concerned.

**Study Population and Sample**

This study’s population was composed of women owned enterprises in Kampala district. These companies were subdivided into two categories with a total of 321. The first category was composed of 71 fully owned businesses by women entrepreneurs, and the second category were 250 partially owned businesses by women entrepreneurs. This is according to the register of providers by public procurement and disposal of assets authority (PPDA) website. The participants involved were managers, owners, CEOs and any other top administrators that were in position to provide information, at least one of them representing their own company or business.

**III. Results**

This study examined women entrepreneurs’ participation in source selection and contract awards in public procurement in Uganda. Women entrepreneurs’ participation in source selection and contract awards in public procurement in Uganda for this particular study was looked at in six different perspectives which include; Public Procurement Strategies, Knowledge about Public Procurement Methods, Access to Public Procurement Information, Knowledge about Solicitation, Awareness about Public Procurement Quotas For Women Entrepreneurs in Uganda, Women Entrepreneurs’/Businesses’ Participation in bidding process in Public Procurement, and Contract Awarding to Women Entrepreneurs/Women-Owned Businesses. The survey results are presented alongside qualitative results according to the respective themes respectively.

**Public Procurement Strategies**

Under this section, respondents were asked about whether their organization had participated in market research to determine the most suitable strategy in public procurement; whether they had any knowledge about public procurement method and contract type; whether they have ever participated in any bidding process and whether they won. Results are presented in table 1:-

Table 1: Showing Whether Organization Ever Made Any Efforts to Determine the Most Suitable Strategy to Participate in Public Procurement

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	105	62.5
	No	63	37.5
	Total	168	100.0

Source: Primary Data 2021

Results in table 1 indicated that 105 respondents representing 62.5% have ever done marketing strategy to determine the most suitable strategy to participate in public procurement, while 63 respondents who represented 37.5% indicated that their businesses had not made any efforts to determine the most suitable strategy to participate in public procurement.

Respondents were also asked about the strategy that they had taken to participate in public procurement and results are presented in figure 1:-

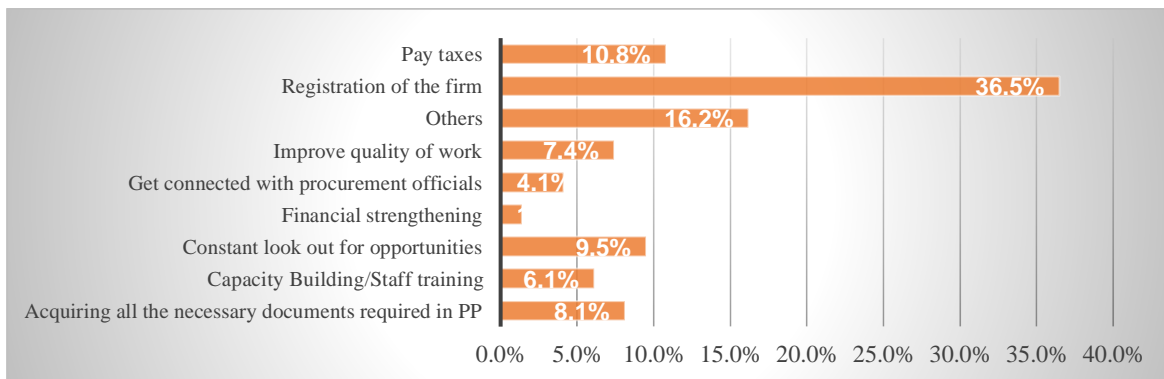


Figure 1: Strategies taken by Women entrepreneurs to Participate in Public Procurement in Uganda

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Results in figure 1 revealed that of those organization ever made any efforts to determine the most suitable strategy to participate in public procurement, majority of them (36.5%) had participated in registration of their firms as a strategy to participate in public

procurement. 16.2% of the companies had participated in other strategies in general though they were not classified. These were followed by paying taxes, constant look out for opportunities, acquiring all the necessary required documents in public procurement, improvement in the quality of work, capacity building/staff training, getting connected with public procurement officials and financial strengthening as represented by 10.8%, 9.5%, 8.1%, 7.4%, 6.1%, 4.1% and 1.4% respectively. This implies that as much of the enterprises have tried to register as a strategy to participate in public procurement, women enterprises have done less to strengthen their financial base so as to participate in public procurement in Uganda.

**Knowledge about Public Procurement Methods**

Respondents were required to confirm whether they had any knowledge about public procurement methods and results are presented in figure 2.

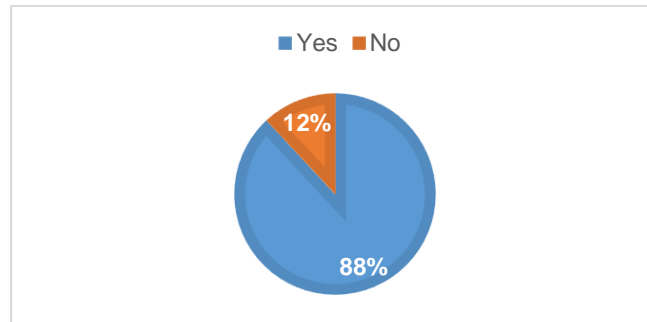


Figure 2: Pie Chart Showing Knowledge about Public Procurement Methods

Source: Primary Data (2023)

As per this study’s findings in figure 2, it was revealed that 88% of the women who participated in this study had knowledge about public procurement methods while, 12% did not have knowledge about public procurement methods. This study went ahead to ask about the procurement methods that the women entrepreneurs in Kampala know and results are presented in figure 3:

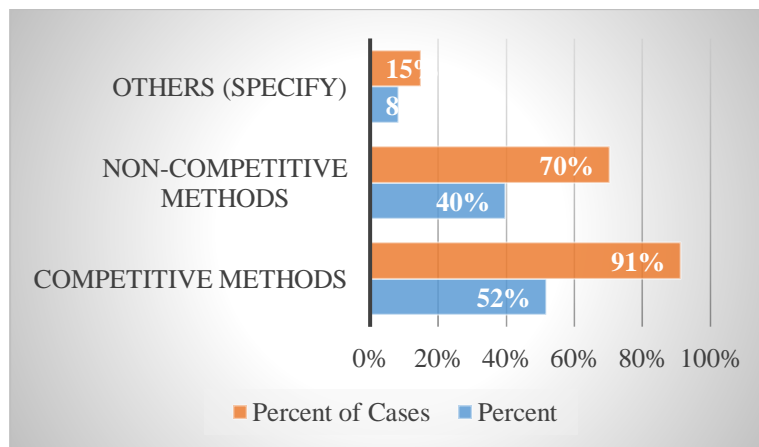


Figure 3: Showing Procurement Methods that women entrepreneurs know

Source: Primary Data

As per the findings in figure 3, it was revealed that 52% of the respondents know about competitive procurement methods, 40% knew non-competitive procurement methods while 8% knew about other procurement methods other than competitive and non-competitive procurement methods. The other procurement methods included “A technical staff who’s well versed with procurement methods knows, Detailed on the bid document, Following the procedures required, Just in sequence procurement, Open bidding process, Prequalification, Process of procurement, Request for quotation, Single System participation in public procurement”.

**Access to Public Procurement Information**

Respondents were asked on whether they have access to public procurement information and results are presented in the figure 4.

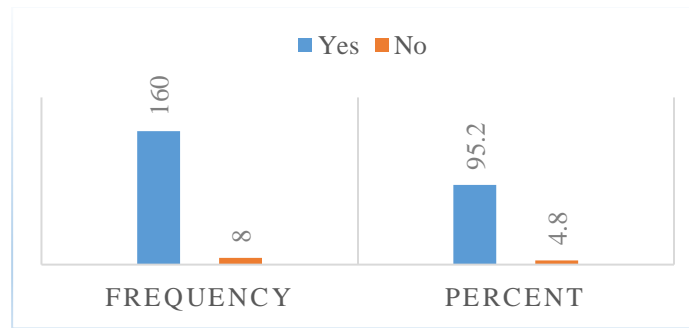


Figure 4: Showing how many entrepreneurs have access to public procurement information

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Results revealed that 160 respondents who represented 95.2% of the respondents in this study had access to public procurement information. 8 respondents who represented 4.8% of the respondents had no access to public procurement information in Kampala district, Uganda. Further, respondents were asked about which publication advertisements do they usually have access to and results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Showing Publication Advertisement that Women Entrepreneurs Usually Have Access

Publication Advertisement	Responses	
	N	Percent
Newspapers	158	39.7%
Television	46	11.6%
Radio	5	1.3%
Magazine	32	8.0%
Online adverts/social media e.g. Facebook, twitter, etc.	102	25.6%
Noticeboard	35	8.8%
Others (specify)	20	5.0%
Total	398	100.0%

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Results from table 2 revealed that most women entrepreneurs had access to most of the publication advertisements from newspapers which represented 39.7% with 158 of the respondents agreeing to that fact. This implied that 98.8% of the respondents easily have access to newspapers. This was followed by Online adverts/social media e.g. Facebook and twitter which represented 25.6% and accordingly, 102 respondents in this study had access to Online adverts/social media e.g. Facebook and twitter. This means that 63.8% of the participants in this study can easily access information on public procurement through online advertisements. These were followed by television (11.6%), notice boards (8.8%), magazines (8%), others (5%) and radio (1.3%). 20 respondents in this study revealed that they easily access procurement information through other means which included; Alert from friends or colleagues, Connection from business partners in same field of law society, Connection from our fellow business partners in the community, From clients, Get calls from fellow business partners, Hired a person for updates, If pre-qualified in an organization they contact u directly, Insiders in ministries, Once in a while mails, People calling us for more information, Received calls from the community, Sister companies in the same line of transport, Social groups, Sometimes you get information from the fellow business partners who Access it before we access and Websites.

This study revealed that radios are the least accessed when it comes to getting information on public procurement.

**Knowledge about Solicitation**

Regarding solicitation, respondents were asked on whether they receive evaluation responses to solicitation and results are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Showing Knowledge about Solicitation

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	100	59.5
No	68	40.5

While 40.5% revealed that they had no knowledge about solicitation. Having asked the respondents about whether they had knowledge about solicitation, the researcher went ahead to establish the evaluation criteria known to them to determine acceptability. Results are presented below in table 4.

Table 4: Showing Evaluation Criteria known to determine acceptability

Evaluation criteria	Responses	
	N	Percent
Inspection	75	28.4%
Testing	31	11.7%
Quality	50	18.9%
Workmanship	61	23.1%
Deliver and suitability	38	14.4%
Others (specify)	9	3.4%
Total	264	100.0%

Source: Primary Data (2023)

In table 4, findings indicate that majority of the respondents in this study had knowledge about quality as a criteria used to determine acceptability, this was represented by 75 responses (28.4%); the others category is the was the least known criteria used to determine acceptability, this indicated that apart from the criteria mentioned by this study, little was known to determine acceptability (3.4%). The other criteria known to be used to determine acceptability was “Criteria is given in the bids, Eligibility criteria, Evaluation based on formality, Experience, Financial capacity, Lowest bidder, Prices, Qualification, Technical and financial capacity, hiring consultancy services, Technical evaluation, financial evaluation, eligibility”.

Table 4: Showing Source Selection Method Participated in by Women Entrepreneurs

Source selection method participated in	N	Percent
Competitive sealed bidding	84	31.7%
Recurring procurement	17	6.4%
Requests for qualifications	75	28.3%
Competitive sealed proposals	48	18.1%
Small purchases	8	3.0%
Sole source procurement	11	4.2%
Emergency procurement	2	0.8%
Waiver of bids or proposal	4	1.5%
Exempt services	3	1.1%
Investments or insurance	3	1.1%
Others (specify)	10	3.8%
Total	265	100.0%

Source: Primary Data (2023)

As per the results in table 5, competitive sealed bidding is the most source selection method that most respondents had participated in with a frequency of 84 which represented 31.7%, this followed by requests for qualifications, competitive sealed proposals and recurring procurement with 28.3%, 18.1% and 6.4% respectively. The rest of the selection methods scored less than 5%. Emergency procurement was the list participated in source selection method with a 0.8% response rate. Other bidding methods that the respondents had participated in included “International bidding, open bidding, Open domestic bidding, open international bidding Prequalification and Referrals. These represented 3.8% respectively”.

Table 5: Awareness about the legal terms and conditions of invitation for bids performance in public procurement

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	155	92.3
No	13	7.7
Total	168	100

Source: Primary Data (2023)

This study’s findings show that 92.3% of the respondents (155) were aware about the legal terms and conditions of invitation for bids performance in public procurement. Only 13 respondents representing 7.7% were not aware of the legal terms and conditions of invitation for bids performance in public procurement.

Table 6: Showing awareness of the financial conditions and terms for bids in public procurement

	Response	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	158	94.0
	No	10	6.0
	Total	168	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2023)

According to this study’s findings, majority of the respondents were aware of the financial conditions and terms for public bids in public procurement, this was revealed by 158 respondents (94%), compared to 10 respondents (6.0%) who were not aware of the financial conditions and terms in public procurement bids. To further investigate this, the study investigated the financial conditions and terms known to the respondents during bids in public procurement. Results are presented in the table 8:-

Table 7: Showing awareness of the financial conditions and terms for bids in public procurement

Responses	N	Percent
Audited books of accounts	143	35.9%
Bank statement	135	33.9%
Annual turnover of company	101	25.4%
Others (specify)	19	4.8%
Total	398	100.0%

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Results in table 8 indicated that 143 respondents were aware about Audited books of accounts (35.9%), 135 were aware about the requirement for Bank statement (33.9%); 101 were also aware about the requirement of Annual turnover of company (25.4%) for bids to public procurement. 19 of the respondents were aware of other financial conditions and terms for bids in public procurement and they included the following “Also stated in the bid document, Bank Guarantee, Bid security, Bid security guarantee, Performance security guarantee, Depends on bid requirements, Financial bid declaration form, How competitive is your firm, Line of credit, Payment after 30days, Performance guarantee, and Previous contracts”. This represented 4.8% of the respondents in this study.

**Awareness about Public Procurement Quarters for Women Entrepreneurs in Uganda**

This study further investigated whether respondents were aware of the requirement that: “A third of the Public Procurement bids should be reserved for women entrepreneurs/women-owned businesses” and what kind of contracts are reserved for women entrepreneurs/women-owned businesses. Results are presented in table 9 and 10.

Table 8: Showing awareness of the requirement that: A third of the Public Procurement bids should be reserved for women entrepreneurs/women-owned businesses

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	21	12.5
	No	147	87.5
	Total	168	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Results in table 9 revealed that 147 respondents who represented 87.5% of the respondents were not aware of the public procurement quotas (A third of the Public Procurement bids should be reserved for women entrepreneurs/women-owned businesses); Only 21 respondents in this study were aware about the public procurement quotas which represented 12.5% of the participants in this study.

To further understand women entrepreneurs’ awareness about public procurement in Kampala, key informants were probed and results of the interviews are presented below.

**Researcher: Are women entrepreneurs aware about public procurement opportunities in Kampala? If yes, how do they get to know about these opportunities?**

Responses...

**Interviewee 1:** *When you advertise, people are supposed to read and know that this is a public thing and that they can go and participate. At time we know these enterprises and once you advertise you send a message encouraging them to participate. But the problem is that at time even when you tell them, you realize that they do not have the requirements. But if they do have the requirements, they can team up with those who have the requirements. These advertisements are posted everywhere on websites, newspapers and noticeboards.*

**Interviewee 2:** *Some women are aware about procurement opportunities, but majority are not aware of these opportunities,. Some see it in the newspapers and we are going to be saying that this is reserved for women. But now the challenge is, women businesses are not speaking according to what government needs. They are doing something, government is buying differently. So if we can tune them to enterprise towards what government wants, I think it will be better. But what I am sure of, government has really sensitized, especially in defense; those women supply, the widows, women of the soldiers’ ... they have really been there in government.*

**Interviewee 3:** *I think they are aware. These opportunities are always everywhere in newspapers and also by social networking. But most of them come to know through their networking like social media platforms.*

**Interviewee 4:** *Women are aware because there are usually advertisements in newspapers for which women have access to, there are also women councils and noticeboards where these women can actually access information about the opportunities for public procurement. So they are aware. But maybe they are limited by capacity to participate, depending on the list of the requirement.*

**Interviewee 6:** *Yes, that is also a bit sensitive. This information has not yet gone to every woman because, you can see like our project we approach like sixty women in ach district, we have gone to fourteen districts, but those are not the only women there. Those are just a few and this information, given the background of what women go through, some information cannot come to them in that manner, and they need more of sensitizing to know when or where exactly. One time we were in the field and a woman testified and said that noticeboards in that area are a no go zone and yet the district uses the noticeboards to pin out information that they want to channel out. Yet the district will not go to a radio and say that there opportunities, for them it will be a document on the noticeboard yet very few people will access the noticeboard.*



*At the same time, some of the women are proactive, they actually have may be someone at the district who can tip them off, and there are also business women who have specialized in looking out for some of these information, but not everyone is like that, even when they are able to do it, sometimes because they don't know, they end up missing out.*

According to the transcripts obtained from the key informants in this study, it was revealed that women entrepreneurs are aware about public procurement opportunities in Kampala, Uganda. Though according to Interviewees 2 and 6, it is not that all the women are aware, instead a few of the women entrepreneurs are aware about the procurement opportunities. The ones who are aware come to know about these opportunities through friends, newspapers and noticeboards. Nonetheless, key informant interviews also revealed that a few women entrepreneurs are aware about the public procurement opportunities.

Table 9: Showing What Kind of Contracts Are Reserved For Women Entrepreneurs / Women-Owned Businesses

Responses	N	Percent
Stationery e.g. papers, notebooks, files, staplers, etc.	11	28.90%
Cleaning services	3	7.90%
ICTs e.g. computers, phones, tablets, etc.	8	21.10%
Furniture	1	2.60%
Others (specify)	15	39.50%
Total	38	100.00%

Source: Primary Data (2023)

From table 10, results revealed that of the 21 participants who knew about the public procurement quotas for women, 11 (28.9%) were being reserved contracts in Stationery e.g. papers, notebooks, files, staplers, etc.; 8 (21.2%) were in ICTs e.g. computers, phones, tablets, etc.; 3 (7.9%) were in cleaning services; while 1 (2.60%) was reserved contracts in furniture. 15 respondents (39.5%) revealed that contracts that are reserved for women entrepreneurs/women-owned businesses included “*Auditing of accounts, Architecture and planning, Civil engineering, Construction and manufacturing, Construction, engineering, Development and human, Internal auditing of the company, Plumbing engineering, Projects of lower prices quotation, Sales and construction consultants and Supply of animal feeds and poultry*”.

**Women Entrepreneurs’/Businesses’ Participation in bidding process in Public Procurement**

Under this, the study investigated the participation of women entrepreneurs or businesses in bidding process in Public Procurement in Uganda and results are presented in the tables below:-

Table 10: Showing Women Entrepreneurs/Women-Owned Businesses Participation in Bidding

Has this business ever participated in any bidding process?			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	133	79.2
	No	35	20.8
	Total	168	100.0
If Yes, did you win/have you ever won the bidding?			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	104	61.9
	No	29	17.3
	Total	133	79.2
Missin g	System	35	20.8
Total		168	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Results in table 11 revealed that 133 participants in this study (72.2%) had participated in a bidding process in public procurement. Of the ones that had ever participated in bidding process, 104 participated had ever won a bidding. The remaining 29 out of the 133 who had never won a bid had an explanation as to why they think they have never won the bid. The reasons included “*Company is new, Competition was stiff, Corruption, Don't know why, Financial, Insufficient documents and Lack of experience*”.

**Contract Awarding to Women Entrepreneurs/Women-Owned Businesses**

This study also investigated the contracts awarded to Women Entrepreneurs/Women-Owned Businesses and results are presented in table 4.35 below:-

Table 11: Showing Contract Awarded to Women Entrepreneurs/Women-Owned Businesses in the last three years

Responses	N	Percent
Producing raw material (mining, fishing, Agric, etc.)	8	6.50%
Manufacturing (construction, utilities like electricity, etc.)	28	22.60%
Sales (specify)	16	12.90%
Services (specify)	46	37.10%
Quaternary (knowledge economy, education, research and development)	14	11.30%
Others (specify)	12	9.70%
Total	124	100.00%

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Results indicate that 124 participants in this study had ever been awarded contracts in the last three years. Majority 46 respondents (37.1%) had been awarded contracts in services; 28 respondents (22.6%) had been awarded contracts in Manufacturing (construction, utilities like electricity, etc.); 16, 14, 12 and 8 (12.9%, 11.3%, 9.7% and 6.5%) had been awarded contracts in Sales, Quaternary (knowledge economy, education, research and development), Others and Producing raw material (mining, fishing, Agriculture, etc.) respectively. The other categories included “*Clothing and textiles, Entertainment, General supply, Hospital supplies, furniture, Knitting services and tailoring, Papers and paper products, promotional materials and brand items, Printing services, stationary, uniforms, masks, Security equipment, Supply of cleaning materials, small office equipment, Animal feeds, IT equipment, Tailoring of uniforms and gowns*”.

To further ascertain women entrepreneurs’ participation in source selection, key informants were asked to give their opinion about how women entrepreneurs are selected to participate in public procurement and whether there are deliberate efforts to select women entrepreneurs in public procurement. Results are presented according to the respective interviewees below:-

**Researcher: How are women entrepreneurs selected to participate in public procurement? Are there deliberate efforts made to select women entrepreneurs? What are these efforts and who spearheads them?**

Response...

**Interviewee 2:** *Through reservation schemes. Yes, they are there but the implementation is not as pronounced. Some institutions do it, others do not care.*

**Interviewee 4:** *No. The PPDA is silent about women affirmative action. There is equity in that men and women can participate in public procurement equally. So I can say that there is no action on that.*

**Interviewee 6:** *okay, how they are selected may not speak to the exact factor on how some of them get the information or how they get to participate. For example in our case the project is looking out for the members, there are some districts that do not have the full membership in that kind of way, because not every member is actually capable of appreciating that kind of information about public procurement. But in this case if any woman belongs to a certain group, most of these groups are the ones that recommend their members to now partake in some of these opportunities that come. Or even when you ask from the district level like; do you have women groups that are able to appreciate this kind of information,*

*that's when you get to see from those, including the membership that we have and then you send in a message, for those that are actually looking out for opportunities, they take up.*

Results from the key informants indicated that ....women are selected to participate in public procurement through reservation schemes and women groups. Despite that, to some key informants like Interviewee 2 and 3, they revealed that there were no deliberate effort to select women entrepreneurs to participate in public procurement as some government agencies seemed not to even care and some were not even aware about the participation of women in public procurement.

### **Summary of the Results**

105 respondents representing 62.5% have ever done marketing strategy to determine the most suitable strategy to participate in public procurement, of those organization ever made any efforts to determine the most suitable strategy to participate in public procurement, majority of them (36.5%) had participated in registration of their firms as a strategy to participate in public procurement.

88% of the women who participated in this study had knowledge about public procurement methods. 52% of the respondents know about competitive procurement methods, 40% knew non-competitive procurement methods.

160 respondents who represented 95.2% of the respondents in this study had access to public procurement information. Most women entrepreneurs had access to most of the publication advertisements from newspapers which represented 39.7% with 158 of the respondents agreeing to that fact.

100 respondents had knowledge about solicitation, this indicated a 59.5%; while 68 respondents who represented 40.5% revealed that they had no knowledge about solicitation. Majority of the respondents in this study had knowledge about quality as a criteria used to determine acceptability.

92.3% of the respondents (155) were aware about the legal terms and conditions of invitation for bids performance in public procurement. Equally, majority of the respondents were aware of the financial conditions and terms for public bids in public procurement, this was revealed by 158 respondents (94%).

147 respondents who represented 87.5% of the respondents were not aware of the public procurement quotas..

133 participants in this study (72.2%) had participated in a bidding process in public procurement. Of the ones that had ever participated in bidding process, 104 participated had ever won a bidding. Majority 46 respondents (37.1%) had been awarded contracts in services.

### **IV. Discussion**

Contract administration plays an important role after the post award phase (Garrett, 2010). Generally, women entrepreneurs according to this study participate in contract administration in public procurement. This was through receiving the payments in time as per the contract, completion of projects in the stipulated time, contract signing and being monitored by the awarding agency through observing our output, by talking and following up with the staff. The findings of this study demonstrate that indeed, due diligence in administration of contracts helps to avoid surprises when the contract is completed, as also noted by Hidaka& Owen, 2015).

This implies that, contracts in Uganda that have been awarded to women entrepreneurs allow them to participate in contract administration through the various way.

### **V. Conclusions**

The fourth objective sought to analyze Women Entrepreneurs' Participation in Source Selection and Contract Awards in Public Procurement and this concludes that:-

- i. Women entrepreneurs participate in source selection in public procurement. This was indicated through marketing strategies that were done by women enterprises to determine suitable strategies to participate in public procurement; knowledge about public procurement and procurement methods; access to public procurement information through newspapers and knowledge about solicitation.
- ii. Most women entrepreneurs do not have knowledge about public procurement quarters as stipulated in the PPDA Act.
- iii. Regarding participation in contract awards, some women entrepreneurs have been awarded public procurement contracts, though most of the women enterprises have never been awarded a contract despite their role towards GDP and contribution to government revenue through paying taxes.

## Recommendations

According to this study's findings, more efforts should be made to sensitize women enterprises about the existing quarters for the women and other vulnerable groups in Uganda.

Also, this study recommends for more representation of women on the contract awards committees to ensure that the reserved quotas are being managed properly when it is time to awards contracts.

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