

**INFLUENCE OF SUPPLIER SELECTION ON THE PROCUREMENT  
PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SUGAR FIRMS IN KENYA: A SURVEY OF SELECTED  
SUGAR FIRMS IN KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Brief:** *Most public sugar firms in Kenya are underutilized in terms of capacity production, coupled with supply chain issues. This indicates a missing link of suppliers and procurement performance. The quality of produced goods, high prices of sugar products and other inputs into the production process with delayed lead times have been associated with procurement performance. But it is unclear the extent to which supplier selection is affecting the procurement performance in the sugar industry.*

**Aim of study:** *This study sought to evaluate influence of supplier selection on procurement performance of public sugar firms taking a survey of public sugar firms in Western Kenya. This study was guided by three specific objectives which were: to find out the influence of single sourcing on procurement performance, to establish the effect of request for quotation on procurement performance and to investigate the effect of bidding on procurement performance on public sugar firms.*

**Significance:** *This study is of importance to procurement personnel in the public sector as it will help them to develop procedures of best practices in the sector. While the Kenyan government has put in place reforms under the PPOA and PPDA, more needs to be done and this research offers new viewpoints and suggest solutions for improving supplier selection, evaluation, and procurement performance for Kenyan industries and these findings will be important for the Government in enhancing efficiency and transparency in industries that have so often been plagued by problems or wastage, corruption, and poor value for money in their procurement processes.*

**Methodology:** *The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population was 100 respondents from the 5 public sugar industries. Purposive sample selection was used thus a sample size of 30 respondents. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the data. Tables and other graphical presentations were used to present the data that was collected. Multiple regression and Content analysis method was applied to analyze the data.*

**Keywords:** *bidding, request for quotation, single sourcing, supplier selection*

## **PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN KENYA**

The Public Procurement System in Kenya has evolved from a crude system with no regulations to an orderly legally regulated procurement system. The Government's Procurement system was originally contained in the Supplies Manual of 1978, which was supplemented by circulars that were issued from time to time by the Treasury. The Director of Government Supply Services was responsible for ensuring the proper observance of the provisions of the Manual. The Manual created various tender boards for adjudication of tenders and their awards. Consequently the establishment of the Exchequer and Audit (Public Procurement) Regulations 2001 which created the Public Procurement Directorate (PPD) and the Public Procurement Complaints, Review and Appeals Board (PPCRAB).

The PPD and PPCRAB, though largely independent in carrying out their activities, had been operating as departments in the Ministry of Finance on which they relied for staff, facilities and funding. Since these institutional arrangements have a potential for undermining the impartiality of these bodies in the long run it was found necessary to create an oversight body whose existence was based on a law. The Public Procurement and Disposal Act, 2005 was thus enacted and it became operational on 1st January, 2007 with the gazetting of the Public Procurement and Disposal Regulations, 2006.

The Public Procurement and Disposal Act, 2005 created the Public Procurement Oversight Authority (PPOA), the Public Procurement Advisory Board (PPAB) and the continuance of the Public Procurement Complaints, Review and Appeals Board as the Public Procurement Administrative Review Board (PPARB). The PPAB and PPARB are autonomous bodies.

The Public Procurement Reform in Kenya was jointly initiated in 1997 by the Kenya Government and the World Bank. The procurement audits carried out on Kenya's public procurement system disclosed serious shortcomings ranging from inefficiency to lack of sound and transparent legal framework. The government decided to review and reform the existing procurement system with a view to enhancing efficiency, economy, accountability and transparency in public procurement. The Public Procurement Reform undertaken by Kenya is home grown and has also borrowed good practices from the rest of the World.

Public procurement sector is often the largest domestic market in Kenya. The government has the obligation to provide goods, works and services to meet a variety of citizen needs. The necessity for public procurement law as well as clearly defined procurement systems arises from the fact that, unlike the private sector, public procurement is a business within a national and political system, with some pillars of strengths (Alchian, 2006).

Procurement performance involves allocation of sufficient resources financial, personnel, time, and establishing a chain of command or organizational structure. It involves assigning responsibility of specific tasks or processes to specific individuals or groups. It also involves managing the process. This includes monitoring results, comparing to benchmarks and best practices, evaluating the efficacy and efficiency of the process, controlling for variances, and making adjustments to the process as necessary. Procurement performance is an on-going, never-ending, integrated process requiring continuous reassessment and reformation (Olson et al., 2005).

Procurement function is an important part of doing business in today's competitive environment. As a result of this development, procurement function has moved from product centered to a performance. This trend has called for the process to be evaluated in order to achieve the performance centeredness in the public sector. With this realization, many public institutions and for that matter governments in many countries have invested

substantial funds to restructure public sector procurement procedure to improve performance in terms of quality services and savings (Wan Lu, 2007).

Bidding is the process of up-front identification of top-quality suppliers able to compete for specific types of contract opportunities. Prequalified suppliers are those whose record of performance in the marketplace, whether commercial or governmental, demonstrates their ability to perform to consistently high standards of quality and reliability. The purpose of prequalification is to include only those bidders that appear to be capable of carrying out the project in an adequate manner. Typically, interested parties that respond to an initial notice are sent a short statement of information about the project and instructions or a questionnaire. These form the basis of a qualification submission that such parties must make to demonstrate their ability to implement the project or task given (Procurement Manual, 2007).

Bidding set out in the procurement Regulations and shall be followed for procurement and disposal of stores, services, construction/engineering works and other items as well as for revenue contracts, with the exception of the following for which separate procedures shall apply for example in the Procurement of stores, services and revenue contracts not exceeding the quotation limits specified in Stores Purchase Rule 220 (i.e. \$1.43 million for stores and services as well as revenue contracts, and \$7 million for services for construction and engineering works. (Stores & Procurement Regulations, 2017).

Sugar is produced globally and takes the form of white granules produced from sugarcane and sugar beet. Sugar is a widely traded basic commodity in the world, thus if the sugar sector is well managed, it can bring enormous returns to both developed and developing countries (Kenya Sugar Board, 2004). However, as a result of competition, competitive differentiation strategies must be crafted for sugar industry's competitiveness. Poor performance has been experienced by Sugar Companies in Kenya due to poor procurement procedures and this has the effect of demoralizing the workers. High labour turnover is costly, lowers productivity and morale and tends to get worse if not dealt with (Wesonga et al., 2011).

In Kenya, the sugar industry is a major contributor to the agricultural sector. The Kenya Sugar Industry Strategic plan (2010-2014) highlights that the sugar sector is the mainstay of the economy and supports livelihoods of at least twenty five percent of the Kenyan population. The subsector accounts for about fifteen percent of the agricultural GDP, is the dominant employer and source of livelihoods for most households in Western Kenya comprising Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western Provinces. The Kenyan sugar industry is protected by COMESA safeguard measures. The safeguards were first granted in 2004 and were to expire in February 2008. Kenya sought and was granted an additional four years of protection from March 2008 to February 2012. Sugar prices in Kenya need to drop by at least thirty nine percent to be in line with COMESA levels (The Kenya Sugar Industry Strategic plan (2010-2014).

Many challenges are facing the sugar sub-sector. These include low productivity, un-competitiveness, poor governance, corruption more so in the procurement department and weak policy and legal framework. The governance and management challenges are manifested in the way decisions are made and implemented by key actors on matters of sugar importation, privatization of sugar mills, negotiations on COMESA and other international agreements affecting the sub-sector. In addition, persistent political interference in the appointments of Chief Executives of mills, board members, Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) elections and other key auxiliary agencies associated with the sub-sector further compound the governance problems bedeviling the sub-sector (Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission, 2010).

Corruption and mismanagement permeate nearly all the institutions connected to the sub-sector. Corruption is reported to be practiced in the appointment of Chief Executives of mills, the employment and promotion of

staff in the mills, loss/theft of sugar from factories, and the process of accessing loans from KSB among others. The networks of mega-corruption are reported to run deep in the sub-sector involving KSB officials, managers of mills, managers of out-grower institutions and senior public officials to gain advantage in the distribution of the Sugar Development Fund (SDF). Similarly, corruption and influence peddling are practiced in the issuance of licenses to new sugar factories in contravention of the guidelines in the Sugar Act 2001, and for the importation of duty free sugar into the country (Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission Report, 2010).

## **PUBLIC SUGAR FIRMS IN KENYA**

The sugar manufacturing companies in the Western Kenya Sugar belt has the following sugar companies; Mumias sugar company, Nzoia Sugar Company, Sony Sugar Company, Chemilil Sugar Company and Muhoroni Sugar Company. Mumias Sugar Company Limited is the largest sugar manufacturer in Kenya which produces about 250, 000 metric tonnes (42%) of the estimated 600, 000 metric tonnes annual national output. The company is located in Mumias town in Kakamega County, near the sugar plantations. Nzoia Sugar Company Ltd is also one of the key players in the Sugar Industry in Kenya. It's located in Bungoma County. It serves over 67, 000 farmers in the larger Bungoma, Kakamega, Malava and Lugari Districts. Muhoroni Sugar Company is in Kisumu County, Kenya which has an installed capacity of 2200 tons of cane crushed per day. It has 15,000 plus farmers who supply them with over 90% of the cane who have an excellent relationship with the company. South Nyanza Sugar Company Limited (Sony Sugar) was established in 1976 and is located in South Western Kenya in Migori County. The company serves over 25,000 cane farmers in ten districts within the cane growing zones of Homabay, Gucha, Transmara, Kuria, Migori, Uriri, Rongo, Kisii South, Ndhiwa and Awendo.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Most public sugar firms in Kenya are underutilized in terms of capacity production, coupled with supply chain issues. This indicates a missing link of suppliers and procurement performance. The quality of produced goods, high prices of sugar products and other inputs into the production process with delayed lead times have been associated with procurement performance. But it is unclear the extent to which supplier selection is affecting the procurement performance in the sugar industry.

Manyega (2015) study on effects of supplier selection on procurement performance in Kisii County revealed that prequalification supplier selection criteria influences lead time of goods and services in public institution. Performance of the Sugar Industry in Kenya has a steady rise in the domestic demand for sugar where the gap between sugar production and consumption has continued to increase making Kenya a net importer of sugar despite underutilized production capacity in the sugar firms. Majority of the studies have focused on the parastatals and public learning institutions with minimal focus on the sugar sector. Therefore this study seeks to establish the influence of supplier selection on the procurement performance of public sugar firms in Western Kenya.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To establish the influence of single sourcing on the procurement performance of selected sugar firms in Western Kenya
- ii. To establish the effect of request for quotation on the procurement performance of selected sugar firms in Western Kenya.

- iii. To determine the influence of bidding on the procurement performance of selected sugar firms in Western Kenya.

**RESEARCH GAPS**

The reviewed literature have acknowledged the importance of supplier selection in performance but over emphasized on its technical capability (Johnston, 2008) to improve procurement performance. Koech and Namusonge (2015) observed that procurement regulation compliance, supplier evaluation, professionalism and transparency affected procurement performance at the National Treasury. However, they did not look at the bidding practices in supplier selection influencing overall procurement performance.

Khadija, (2015) found that suppliers selection is affected by human capital, and leadership Whereas, Nyamongo et al., (2015) found out that buyer supplier relationship and supplier selection procedures, organizational capacity affect procurement Practices. However, the authors did not address the specific supplier selection methods such as bidding, collaboration that influence the procurement performance of an organization.

Previous studies have not shown how some of the supplier selection procedures can influence procurement performance. Previous studies have been preoccupied with, bid invitation, bid evaluation, Jeptepkeny, (2015),supplier evaluation criteria Kipkemboi, (2015), good governance (Hui etal., 2011) and cost reduction (Johnston, 2008). This study therefore sought to bridge this gap by studying the influence of supplier selection on the procurement performance of sugar firms in western Kenya.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a survey design method in determining the supplier selection procedures among public sugar firms in Western Kenya. This method was considered to be the most suitable research method for the study since the objective of the study was to seek answers from specific questions from a large number of respondents. The target population composed of 100 procurement staff, from five public sugar industries in Western Kenya, namely; Mumias sugar company, Sony Sugar Company, Chemil Sugar Company, Nzoia Sugar Company and Muhoroni sugar industry. Stratified random sampling and Purposive sampling was used to select the sample because the population was heterogeneous. This was to ensure expert judgment to select cases that would best enable to answer the research question and meet the research objective. The main tool for data collection was a structured questionnaire, which consisted of both open and close ended questions.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Supplier Selection**

The research sought to know the most commonly used procedure in the industry and table 4.4 below shows the findings.

*Table 1: commonly used procedure*

Procedure	frequency	percentage %
Single sourcing	3	11.1
Bidding	18	66.7
Request for quotation	6	22.2
Total	27	100

From the table 1 above, it shows that many industries use the bidding procedure which was at a percentage of 66.7%, request for quotation at 22.2% and single sourcing at 11.1%. This depicts that most industries use the bidding procedure in which they gave the implications on its own. Also the researcher was able to find out the single sourcing procedure and the request for quotation how they are rated in the different industries.

### Bidding

**Table 2: influence of choice of bidding**

<b>Extent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Very great extent	4	14.8
Great extent	16	59.3
Moderate extent	5	18.5
Little	2	.7.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>

The study sought to determine the extent to which choice of bidding supplier selection criteria influence procurement performance, from the findings, most of the respondents as shown by 59.3 % indicated to a great extent, 14.8% of the respondents indicated to a very great extent 18.5 % of the respondents indicated to moderate extent whereas 7.4% of the respondents indicated to a little extent. This is an indication that choice of bidding selection criteria influence procurement performance in public sugar industries to a great extent, the finding above concurs with the study findings by Lysons et al., (2006), that negotiated bids allow the terms of the contract to be negotiated with one or more suppliers without prior publication of a tender notice, but the negotiation procedure is only available in certain defined circumstances such as where, because bids were irregular or unacceptable, no suitable supplier has been found by open or restricted tender procedures, Where such procedures have resulted in no tender being received, Where the required product is manufactured purely for research and development or experimental purposes, where, for technical or artistic reasons, or the existence or exclusive rights, there is only one supplier. In public purchasing, procedures are usually codified within standing orders that usually prescribe a cash limit above which tenders must be invited, the forms of contracts to be used and to whom and under what circumstances responsibility for the evaluation of bids may be delegated, such as to senior officers. Open bidding procedure begins with the issuing of a public advertisement inviting tenders, then bid documents are issued to those responding to the document normally includes a letter of invitation and instruction to bids, a pricing document, specification and or schedule of rates, contract conditions and a pre-addressed bid return label.

### 4.6 Single Sourcing

**Table 3: Influence of choice of single sourcing supplier selection criteria on procurement performance**

<b>Extent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very great extent	6	22.2
Great extent	16	59.3
Moderate extent	3	11.1
Little	2	7.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>

The study sought to determine the extent to which choice of single sourcing supplier selection criteria influence procurement performance, from the findings, it was established that most of the respondents as shown by 59.3% indicated to a great extent, 22.2% of the respondents indicated to a very great extent 11.1 % of the

respondents indicated to moderate extent whereas 7.4% of the respondents indicated to a little extent. This is an indication that choice of single sourcing supplier selection criteria influence procurement performance in public sugar industries in Western Kenya to a great extent, the finding above concurs with the study findings by Handfield and Bachtel (2001), that a single source purchase is one where there are multiple sources of supply, but for specific reasons the item or service must be purchased from a specified vendor. An order will not be placed without proper documentation, including a written quotation from the awarded vendor. The competitive bidding requirement can be waived for an equipment purchase or services with an aggregate value when the product or service is available from only one non-contract supplier, thereby exempting the purchase from the otherwise required competitive bid policy of the public industries. Many public corporations publish quite stringent regulations that must be adhered to before single sourcing is authorized. With small companies, single sourcing is quite common though it has an inherent weakness of running a business. It is rarely cost effective to purchase the same small set of product requirements from more than one vendor. Combined with the fact that small orders are not particularly important to a large vendor, this puts the small company at a disadvantage in any purchaser/vendor relationship, in this situation, it is imperative that the small company has an excellent supplier relationship and takes on more vendors as soon as the company has expanded enough to make this a viable proposition.

**Request for quotation**

*Table 4: Extent request for quotation affect procurement performance*

<b>Extent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very great extent	9	33.3
Great extent	12	44.4
Moderate extent	3	11.1
little extent	3	11.1
No extent	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>

Request for quotation recorded a high extent of 44.4% of use by sugar industries. This is in agreement with Walter (2003) who concluded that request for quotation is a very common method in public procurement. However this contradicts Helena (2010) who concluded that direct procurement is a very common method in public procurement. Low Value Procurement and Request for quotation were used on average by the entities, for Low Value Procurement and for Request for Proposal. Negotiated procurement methods, Direct Procurement and specialized task were used to a small extent.

**Supplier Selection verses Procurement Performance**

*Table 5: Extent supplier selection methods compliment procurement performance*

<b>Extent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very great extent	9	33.3
Great extent	12	44.4
Moderate extent	3	11.1
little extent	3	11.1
No extent	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>

The study sought to determine the extent to which supplier selection methods compliment procurement performance in public industries in Kenya, from the findings, most of the respondents as shown by 44.4%

indicated to a great extent, 33.3% of the respondents indicated to a very great extent 11.11 % of the respondents indicated to moderate extent, 11.1% of the respondents indicated to a little extent whereas 3.8% of the respondents indicated no extent. This is an indication that choice supplier selection methods compliment procurement performance in public industries in Kenya to a great extent, the finding above concurs with the study findings by Olson *et al.*, (2005), that procurement performance involves allocation of sufficient resources financial, personnel, time, and establishing a chain of command or organizational structure. This includes monitoring results, comparing to benchmarks and best practices, evaluating the efficacy and efficiency of the process, controlling for variances, and making adjustments to the process as necessary. Procurement performance is an on-going, never-ending, integrated process requiring continuous reassessment and reformation.

## **SUMMARY**

The study was undertaken with the aim of investigating the effect of supplier selection procedures on the procurement performance in Kenya. The study findings revealed majority of the industries considered evaluation based on the quality of the supplier services, financial position of the supplier as well as the flexibility of the supplier during supplier evaluation. Other considerations made were supplier efficiency in procurement performance , price/cost charged by the supplier, constitution and the PPOA guidelines, information sharing between the organization and supplier, supplier technical capability, supplier profile, ability of the supplier to share confidential information, experience of the supplier in offering certain services/products as well as compliance with procurement procedures.

The study findings established major challenges that affected the effectiveness of the procurement evaluation process. These included; incompetence by procurement officers, corruption, and ignorance of guidelines provided by the PPOA, as well as inefficiencies in procurement processes. Lack of incentives, pressure of implementing PPOA and PPDA guidelines, cost of implementing procurement systems as well as maintaining procurement system greatly affects supplier selection process. Other challenges included lack of management support, lack of expertise in evaluation among supply chain staffs, inadequate transparency from suppliers as well as lack of clear goals towards procurement.

With regard to procurement performance, the study findings indicated that best practices in supplier evaluation results to reduction in product and material costs as well as enhanced quality of output. Findings also revealed that with efficiency supplier evaluation, an organization encounters a decreased rate of return inwards, reduced supplier quality problems, elimination of wasteful steps in production process, supplier flexibility, efficiency in supply chain management, transparency in procurement about winning bids and prices, as well leads to procurement function working in compliance with procurement procedures. Supplier evaluation as well gives the choice to use specific contract strategy inspired by the need to deliver value for money by Procurement.

The study findings on the influence of supplier selection procedures on procurement performance revealed that evaluation based on the quality of the Supplier services greatly influences procurement performance. As well, selection based on the financial position of the Supplier was also reported to have a great and very great extent of influence to the procurement performance. Findings also revealed that selection based on the flexibility of the supplier greatly affect procurement performance. Further, supplier efficiency evaluation criteria were found to have a great effect on procurement performance. Evaluation based on price/cost charged by the supplier criteria as well was reported to have a great effect on procurement performance. Other evaluation criteria used were constitution and the PPOA guidelines criteria, ability of the supplier to share information with the organization, Supplier technical capability as well as supplier profile which were found to have a great effect



on procurement performance. Findings further revealed that the ability/willingness of the supplier to share confidential information, selection based on the experience of the supplier in offering certain services/products and compliance with procurement procedures greatly affects procurement performance.

Conducting a regression test, the study findings revealed that the selection criteria used (quality of the Supplier services, Financial position of the Supplier, flexibility of the supplier, Supplier efficiency in delivery and service, price/cost charged by the supplier, Constitution and the PPOA guidelines, Information sharing, Supplier technical capability, Supplier profile, Ability/willingness to share confidential information, Supplier experience, and Compliance with procurement procedures) of the procurement performance. All these criteria were found to have a positive relationship with procurement performance of the organizations.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings, the study established that request for quotation is positively significant to influence procurement performance thus the study concludes that request for quotation had a positive influence on procurement performance in public sugar industries.

The study established it is useful to consider request for quotation because it involve resource and cost commitments in establishing and maintaining a robust and effective system, challenges with specifying and gathering meaningful and relevant information, data integrity, scorecards that do not get at the root causes of supplier problems, and subjective or inconsistent scoring which may result in inaccurate assessment.

The study revealed that bidding procedure begins with the issuing of a public advertisement inviting bids, then bid documents are issued to those responding to the document normally includes a letter of invitation and instruction to tenders, a pricing document, specification and or schedule of rates, contract conditions and a pre-addressed tender return label having a positive influence on procurement performance in public sugar industries in Western Kenya. The study ascertained that procurement performance includes monitoring results, comparing to benchmarks and best practices, evaluating the efficacy and efficiency of the process, controlling for variances, and making adjustments to the process as necessary thus it is an on-going, never-ending, integrated process requiring continuous reassessment and reformation.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study recommends that the management on public industries should consider adopting bidding and request for quotation as supplier selection methods during procurement process. This will allow the management to create a comprehensive understanding that can be leveraged to influence stakeholders and create better decisions in ensuring effective procurement performance.

The study also recommends that it is very crucial that the industries don't under rate single sourcing supplier selection when conducting a procurement process since this will help the organization to gather valuable information that will provide valuable insights in the performance of procurement and the necessary input to find effective suppliers that will facilitate timely delivery of orders.

The study recommends that the management keeps on monitoring as well as re-assessing the whole process of procurement. This will help to identify whether the adopted counteractive supplier selection methods are making any acceptable difference.

The study recommends that the management keeps on adopting new supplier selection approaches since they are particularly critical for public industries because of the role they play in relation to well performance of the whole procurement process.

### **Suggestion for Further Research**

This research had intended to determine the effects of supplier selection on procurement performance of public sugar industries taking a survey study of public sugar industries in Kenya. Other researcher may focus on the relationship between procurement process and financial performance in public sugar industries in Kenya, study the effectiveness of the procurement systems as well as the supplier selection and evaluation criteria used. Also, a study should be undertaken to investigate the supplier evaluation criteria and procurement performance of the sugar industries in Kenya.

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