

AN APPRAISAL OF THE USE OF SOCIAL CRITERIA IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT. Socially responsible procurement is increasingly attracting public attention, but little is known about the use of social requirements in public procurement process in developing countries. This study explores the use of social criteria in public procurement in Nigeria. Data was collected from two websites being used for advertising public sector contract opportunities in Nigeria and by means of a questionnaire. Results show that public procurement is mostly used to promote a range of government policies and programmes. Based on the findings from this study, it cannot be concluded that a milestone has been reached in the use of public procurement to drive social benefits in Nigeria. The extent to which the findings of this study could be generalised is limited, because the findings are based on analysis of tender documents and a small-sized convenience sample of public procurement experts. A larger sample size may lead to improved accuracy or dissimilar results. Nevertheless, the research offers some baseline data against which future studies on social procurement can be conducted and evaluated.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the socially responsible procurement (SRP) framework has been used in improving social performance and

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ethical purchasing practices in the private sector (Carter, Kale, & Grimm, 2000). It is important to use social criteria in the supply chain because it helps suppliers develop responsible behaviours which could consequently have an impact on the reputation of the buying organisation (Bacallan, 2000).

The concept of social procurement is multifaceted. Different authors have described it as follows: sustainable public procurement (Walker & Preuss, 2008), sustainable supply chain (Carter & Rogers, 2008), and social benefits purchasing (Burkett, 2010). It has also been illustrated as the consideration of social factors in the procurement process (Wells, 2004), the utilisation of the procurement process and purchasing power to generate community impact (Mont & Leire, 2008), responsible procurement (Allen, 2006) and purchasing social responsibility (Carter, 2005). In recent years, SRP has been associated with corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes in the private sector. Most public organisations adopt this practice in order to achieve sustainable development objectives (Weiss & Thurbon, 2006). In other words, SRP enables public organisations to use their spending power to drive equality, fairness and social change (Drumwright, 1994; EFTA, 2007; Lobel, 2006).

Despite the lagging socio-economic status of Africa, there has been relatively little empirical research on the use of social factors in public procurement (Hanks et al., 2008). Brammer and Walker (2011) surveyed sustainable procurement practices within public procurement organisations in twenty nations. Their study found that the nature and degree of sustainable procurement practices vary across countries. Notwithstanding, the survey results cannot be generalised for the whole world, given that 96.1% of respondents in this study come from the United Kingdom, United States/Canada, Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. The countries represented by the remaining respondents include some in Africa.

Research relevant to the use of social factors in public procurement is often conducted using doctrinal methodology. Previous studies have reported that the framework of public procurement in various jurisdictions reflects certain social factors (Adjei, 2010; McCrudden, 2004; Wittig, 2003). While the results of these studies reveal the use of social criteria in public tendering, data were mostly collected from public procurement acts and regulations.

Given this shortcoming, it is important to broaden our approach to exploring social procurement and move beyond the doctrinal research.

This study explores the use of social criteria in public procurement in Nigeria. Data used for this study were collected from tender documents and a survey involving public procurement practitioners. It is important to note here that the Nigerian public procurement system is still in its early stages. Until 2007, there was no law regulating public procurement in Nigeria. Similarly, there is not currently a national policy on how to use public procurement to drive social outcomes. Even when there is no national policy on social procurement, some public bodies might have considered social factors in their purchases at one time or another. Thus we cannot assume that public procurers have not been using socially related criteria for evaluation of bids in Nigeria. Additionally, there are many reasons why social procurement can be suitable in the Nigerian context. Nigeria is the most populous African country, and the sixth largest exporter of crude oil (Garcia, Kohl, Ruengsorn & Zislin, 2006). Despite abundant human and natural resources, the country has a history of unemployment and poverty. At the same time, corruption has thrived in most aspects of public services (Akunyili, 2005; Kar & Curcio, 2011). Gender inequality is another social malady in Nigeria. There is discrimination against women in the areas of education and wages (World Bank, 2009; Oleyere, 2007).

The author has drawn on existing literature, content analysis of tender documents and the results of a short survey to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify the social criteria being used for evaluating public tenders in Nigeria, and
- To discuss the sorts of benefits (social value) that can be derived from using these social criteria.

The rest of this paper is structured includes (i) an overview of the literature on the concept of SRP, its dimensions and implementation barriers; (ii) the theoretical lenses that guide this study; (iii) the methodology adopted; (iv) findings and discussion; and (v) conclusion and implications of findings.

USING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT TO DRIVE SOCIAL VALUE

This section is a discussion of how procurement generates social value using certain forms of criteria. Public procurement accounts for a substantial proportion of both public expenditure and demand for goods and services in the developing countries. The value of public sector contracts in most developing countries is estimated to be about 13% of GDP (OECD, 2000; Trionfetti, 2000). By virtue of its spending power, the public sector has enormous potential to promote social justice and policies which will improve people's livelihood. The academic literature cites a number of studies on the importance of public procurement and its wider significance in terms of social and economic policy outcomes (OECD, 2003; McLean & McMillan, 2005). Once a public organisation has decided to conduct a procurement exercise, bids are sought from all interested parties (i.e individual or firms) willing to supply the required goods or services. Evaluation criteria are developed to assess all bids received against important factors, such as financial capability, technical competence and other requirements. This will enable the buyer to determine the most economically advantageous bid.

Social criteria, therefore, could be described as a yardstick for measuring the performances of bidders against social factors. According to the Scottish Procurement Directorate (2006, p. 31), social factors could be defined as "issues which impact on the society or parts of the society and cover a range of issues including equality issues (i.e. age, disability, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation), training issues, minimum labour standards and the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including black and minority ethnic enterprises and the third sector including social enterprises." Public organisations intending to embed social criteria in procurement often adopt the Global Reporting Initiative and International Labour Organization standards (Mont & Leire, 2008). On the other hand, public bodies and private firms operating in the UK might be more familiar with the British Standard for Sustainable Procurement (i.e. BS 8903). What is important here is that procuring organisations should be able to use certain standards or criteria to drive social value through procurement.

According to Wood and Leighton (2010, p.7), "social value refers to wider non-financial impacts of programmes, organisations and interventions, including the wellbeing of individuals and communities,

social capital and the environment. These are typically described as 'soft' outcomes, mainly because they are difficult to quantify and measure." As part of a bid specification, suppliers may be asked to provide evidence that new jobs will be created as a result of winning the contract. This method was used in Europe, where contractors of big construction works were required to describe how they will increase labour participation of the long term unemployed in the local community (McCrudden, 2004). Another value that public procurement could create is skills development (Koike & Inoki, 1990). A procuring entity may ask bidders to provide details of training programmes attended by their employees in the last three years. Other social values achievable through procurement include the following: promotion of fair wages, avoidance of child labour, promotion of fair working time, equal opportunity and treatment, and freedom of association at work place (ILO, 2008; GRI, 2006).

Furthermore, procurement has been seen as a tool to develop small and medium-sized enterprises and third sector organisations. Third sector companies include charities, social enterprises, voluntary organisations and other not-for-profit organisations (Burkett, 2010). It is believed that these organisations often find it difficult to compete against larger companies. In order to address this problem, the public sector may allow consortium bids from groups of small suppliers (McClelland, 2006). In addition, a certain number of contracts could be set aside for social enterprises and local businesses. Alternatively, firms seeking construction contracts or large infrastructure tenders can be directed to sub-contract aspects of their work to SMEs, local businesses, minority- owned enterprises and other social enterprise organisations (Smith & Hobbs, 2001), thus, offering opportunities for suppliers from different backgrounds to participate in public procurement. The outcome of this is a diversified supply base which offers opportunities for innovation (Communities and Local Government, 2010).

PAST AND PRESENT PRACTICES OF SOCIAL PROCUREMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

There is inadequate evidence regarding social considerations in public procurement. In an article written by Christopher McCrudden (2004), he called this idea "procurement linkage and described the history, and the current use of public procurement as a tool for social

development. According to the findings of this study, procurement has been used to promote equality and social justice at different levels in various countries. For instance, the Australian Government Procurement Statement stresses government's commitment to using procurement in enhancing indigenous employment. This policy applies to "high value projects undertaken in communities with significant low indigenous populations with limited employment and training opportunities" (Australian Government, 2009, p. 11, cited in McCrudden, 2004). In Belgium, a 1999 law aimed to encourage the use of social criteria in public tender. The regulation requires public organisations to seek approval before awarding any contracts in which value exceeds 30 million Belgian francs. No approval will be granted unless there is evidence that the contractor would recruit at least one unemployed person. On a similar note, public contracts were used as a tool to address discrimination against people with disabilities after World War I (House of Commons, 1926, cited in McCrudden, 2004).

Mostly, countries within the European Commission (EC) are required to use social clauses in public contracts. The EC directives state, "contracting authorities and contracting entities may be called upon to implement various aspects of social policy when awarding their contracts, as public procurement is a tool that can be used to influence significantly, the behaviour of economic operators. As examples of the pursuit of social policy objectives, one can mention legal obligations relating to employment protection and working conditions" (European Commission, 2000). McCrudden (2004) showed that some developing countries, notably Malaysia and South Africa, have used government contracting powers to address social problems. In Malaysia, about 30% of the annual value of works contracts were reserved for Malaysian *bumiputera* contractors (WTO, 1997). Public procurement was used as a tool to amend the damaging effects of inequality and institutional discrimination in post-apartheid South Africa. Today, the South African government follows a wide-ranging social policy that must be included in public contracts. These policies are embedded in public procurement to tackle issues relating to gender inequality and discrimination on the basis of race or disability (McCrudden, 2004). In Ghana, public authorities are required under section 37(2) of the Procurement Act, to spot opportunities for promoting SMEs (Adjei, 2010). In Botswana, the

public procurement law consist of clauses meant to promote gender equality.

Barriers to Implementing SRP

The potential barriers which may hinder implementation of sustainable procurement practices have been noted in the literature (Walker, Di Sisto, & McBain. 2008; SPN, 2007; Jonk, 2005; Bouwer et al., 2005). According to Mont and Leire (2008), most social procurement initiatives are inhibited by lack of legislation and top management commitment. This notion was supported by Maignan, Hillebrand, and McAlister (2002), who stated that top management are habitually hesitant to make resources available for implementing social procurement policy. Equally, Erridge and Greer (2002) found that governmental culture is one of the factors that inhibit social procurement. Cost has been seen as a major barrier to using social criteria in procurement. Most organisations believe that social considerations in procurement reduce the ability to realise cost savings (Maignan, Hillebrand, & McAlister, 2002). It is believed that the process of implementing SRP could lead to inequality and hinder competition among suppliers (Munoz, 2009). It may be difficult to implement SRP effectively if procurement officers do not have the appropriate skills for integrating social clauses into procurement (Vassallo et al., 2008). Therefore, lack of expertise and knowledge of implementing SRP is another challenge. Similar to lack of expertise in social procurement is lack of awareness and preparedness by suppliers. According to Mont and Leire (2008), adequate information is key for suppliers regarding compliance with social criteria used in procurement. Suppliers often find it difficult to comprehend why social requirements are integrated into service specifications (Welford & Frost, 2006). Thus, it is important to provide training programmes to boost suppliers' understanding of social issues in procurement.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE USE OF SOCIAL CRITERIA IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

One of the major theoretical lenses used to view public procurement is classical economics (CE). CE theory assumes that free markets can regulate themselves without any external interventions (; Sen, 1995; Samuelson, 1993). It also suggests that economic

interests (i.e costs and profits) are the most important driving force behind procurement transactions (Erridge, 2005; 2007). However, government policy does not focus on efficiency only; different social values such as equity, employment generation, legitimacy or justice might be included as an objective of public policy (Ringeling, 2004). In light of the variations in policy priorities amongst countries, different reasons motivate the use of social criteria in public procurement. Consequently, this author will use theories of institution and institutional change to explain the use of social criteria in public procurement process.

In past decades, institutional theories have been used consistently in the fields of sociology (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Khalil, 1995), economics and political science (Olsen & Peters, 1996; Brunsson & Olsen, 1993). Different components of institutional theory focus on how the elements of social structure are created through regulations and standards which tend to directly or indirectly influence social behaviour (Scott, 2004). They offer multifaceted views regarding how organisations are influenced by changes and pressures in their environments. These pressures could arise internally (within the organisation itself) and/or externally from the government. Therefore, the author found institutional theories useful in this research, because it can explain the use of non-cost criterion in public procurement. Particularly used is New Institutional Economics (NIE), which describes the circumstances under which economic agents will achieve successful collaboration in both the economic or social circumstances (Nabli & Nugent, 1989; Zucker, 1987). This explains why organisations belonging to different sectors could have similar operation standards, working processes and professional ratification due to adopting certain legitimate elements (Scott, 1995).

Efficient resources allocation and the minimisation of transactional cost play an extremely important role in shaping contract award decisions in procurement (Stiglitz, 2000). Typically, a buyer in the public sector sources goods and services at the lowest price, as competition is one of the central points of public purchases. However, there are other costs or benefits which are usually not captured in the pricing structure of procurement exercise. These constitute what is called externality. According to Buchanan and Stubblebine (1962), externality is part of the cost of institutional change. Negative externalities occur in procurement when the

contracting body keeps awarding contracts to organizations that pollute the environment, engage in workplace discrimination practices, or companies who refuse to pay taxes. These issues could be addressed by asking bidders to comply with certain policies and requirements. In most public procurement projects, the project board/team decides which criteria should be used to evaluate bidders' capabilities. In NIE perspective, the procurement project team could be equated to human actors (North, 2005). It is believed that human actors are limited by time, cognitive knowledge and information that confine their ability to assess decision alternatives (Simon, 1957). In other words, given their imperfect knowledge of all relevant information, human actors in public procurement might not apply the most appropriate social criteria in awarding contracts. Hence, decisions are made subject to self-maximization with bounded rationality (Brousseau & Glachant, 2002). Brousseau and Glachant's position explains NIE's view on how organisations leverage rational choice to select the alternatives that maximize their self-interests (Eggertsson, 1990). This assumption links NIE with the rational choice model of neoclassical economics (Williamson, 2008).

Another concept of NEI that can explain how public procurement can be used to stimulate responsible business practices in the private sector is "coercive isomorphism" (DiMaggio, & Powell, 1983). This concept occurs when the government imposes compulsory criteria (e.g. social, economical and environment) on private organisations bidding for public contracts. Therefore, private organisations must meet these criteria in order to survive (Dacin, 1997; Scott, 1995). Sooner or later, organisations that depend largely on government contracts will internalise the social/economical/environmental objectives that are entrenched in the public procurement process.. This will enable them to win more contracts, generate consistent revenue and earn legitimacy (Dacin, 1997; Scott, 1995; Deephouse, 1996) in the institutional environment. In effect, the public sector sets a number of general principles for the internalisation of external social cost. This is done by implementing a new tradition (i.e. SRP) which challenges existing institutional practices and the institutionalised ideology of public purchases.

METHODS

Primary data for this study were sourced mainly from websites and a survey of public procurement practitioners in Nigeria. This study adopts a two-staged approach. Qualitative data were collected from procurement documents in the first stage, and an exploratory survey was conducted to determine the opinion of procurement experts on the results of documents analysis. This enabled the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data in this study (Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003, p. 6). In the first stage of data collection, the author sampled EOI documents from the major website being used for advertising public tenders in Nigeria. These include www.nigeriafederaltenders.gov.ng and www.tenders.nigeriang.com. Since the intention was to collect evidence from recent procurement practices, calls for expressions of interest (EOI) published before October 2011 were excluded. As a result, only EOI published between October 2011 and September 2012 were taken from the websites for analysis. The contents of the EOI documents were examined using the content analysis method. This method enables “*a subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns*” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1278). This method also enabled this author to pay attention to the themes relating to social criteria which were used at the pre-qualification stage of public procurement projects. First, the author downloaded the (EOI) documents from the data bases and examined relevant information from them. This was followed by careful reading, logical coding and categorisation of data collected from the (EOI) documents. The literature review provided an analytical stance for synthesis of data in the context of social value.

The second phase of data collection was a survey using the questionnaire. This method helped this author paraphrase the results of the document analysis into questionnaire format). This in effect enabled the gathering of responses in an objective way and standardisation of the questions. The questionnaire – piloted with 4 procurement experts so as to improve its usability, consistency and reliability–was later modified using the feedback from pilot participants. Survey participants were recruited through purposive sampling as suggested by Jankowicz (2005). This method was used to seek the views of people whose knowledge, experience and views are worth gathering for the purpose of this research. Firstly, this author contacted procurement experts working in the Ministries,

Department and Agencies (MDAs) that are listed in Table 1 (see appendix). These are MDAs that published the calls for EOI documents that were analyzed in the first phase of this study. It was difficult to access all the procurement practitioners in these MDAs considering the lack of database for public procurement experts in Nigeria. Snowballing strategy was later used to contact procurement experts in other public organisations in Nigeria. This approach helped navigate from one participant to another in administering the questionnaire (Kalton & Anderson, 1986). Eventually, 60 public procurement experts received a copy of the questionnaire by email. It is believed that this sample size is adequate for achieving noteworthy results. Saunders et al. (2003) recommended using a sample size greater than 30 for statistical analysis.

TABLE 1
Demographics of Survey Respondents

Variable	Response	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	41	91.1%
	Female	5	8.9%
Employment status	Officers	20	44.4%
	Manager	16	35.6%
	Senior manager	17	15.6%
	Director	2	4.4%
Have you ever led a procurement project within the public sector?	Yes	30	66.7%
	No	13	28.9%
	Not Yet	2	4.4%

Participants were asked to return the questionnaire within four (4) weeks. Those who did not return the questionnaire within this time limit were contacted and given another one week to reply. This action helped in increasing response rate to questionnaires. Of the 60 questionnaires administered, forty five (45) were returned, a response rate of 75%. In analysing questionnaire results, descriptive statistics and simple percentages was used to make a preliminary comparison of responses and ranking (Arul, 1989). Consequently, the questionnaires aided the ratings and further analysis of the data obtained from content analysis (in phase one).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The documents analysed in this study were obtained from calls for expression of interest published by various MDAs in Nigeria between October 2011 and September 2012. A total of 62 documents were analysed, with 28 of them falling under construction tenders. While 16 documents fall under services tenders, 12 documents were classified as consulting services tenders. Only a few EOI documents (6) could be categorised as project services tenders. The implication of these results is that construction tenders constitute the greatest share of the public contracts in Nigeria. Construction tenders offer considerable scope for driving social value through procurement (McCrudden, 2004).

Linking Social Criteria in Public Procurement to Social Value

This section highlights the different social criteria being used by public procurement officers to evaluate bidders in Nigeria. Table 2 presents the frequency of occurrence of social criteria, observed in the EOI documents with their corresponding benefits (i.e. social value). Social value in this context can be classified into the following six categories: 1. skills development, 2. employee's welfare, 3. job creation, 4. Community development, 5. anti-corruption and 6. civic responsibility.

Skills Development

Suppliers interested in public contracts were asked to present evidence of payment of training contributions to the Industrial Training Fund. This was a compulsory prequalification requirement in 23 of the 62 EOI documents that were analysed in this study. The Industrial Training Fund (ITF) was established by Decree 47 of 1971 as Amended in the 2011 ITF Act (ITF Act, 2011).The purpose of ITF is to help develop the skills of the local workforce and to raise training awareness within the Nigerian economy. Capacity building and human capital development is essential for enhancing business procedures, institutional growth, and national development (Anyanwu, 2002). The advent of the ITF Reimbursement Scheme promotes a culture of training and re-training of employees in Nigeria. ITF will help in making skilled manpower available to meet present and future needs of Nigerian business organisations (Anyanwu, 2002). In

TABLE 2
Frequency of Social Criteria in the EOI Documents

Quantity of EOI Documents	Social Criteria Discovered	Social Value
23	- <i>Bidders shall provide evidence of compliance with The Industrial Training Fund (ITF)</i>	Skills development
51	- <i>Bidders shall provide evidence of participation in contributory pension schemes</i> - <i>Bidders shall provide evidence of participation in Employees Compensation scheme (NSITF)</i>	Employee's welfare
7	- <i>Bidders shall provide assurance that they would employ technicians from the local community</i> - <i>Bidders shall provide assurance that they would employ new university graduates</i>	Job creation
4	- <i>Bidders shall provide evidence that they have good knowledge of the peculiarities of the local environment wherein the proposed contract will be implemented.</i> - <i>Bidders shall provide evidence of language affinity and effective community liaison plans</i>	Community development
12	- <i>Bidders shall provide sworn affidavit that none of their Principals/Associates was an ex-convict</i>	Anti-corruption
59	- <i>Bidders shall provide evidence of tax payments</i> - <i>Bidders shall provide their Tax Clearance Certificate (TCC) for the past three (3) years</i>	Civic Responsibility

addition, the scheme offers a levy of at least 60% to be compensated to regular levy contributors who meet set requirements for claiming reimbursement (ITF Act, 2011). In the literature, public procurement process have been used to drive skills and training of contractor's workforces (Koike & Inoki, 1990). By asking suppliers to provide details of employee training, an opportunity to increase productivity and skill development in Nigeria has been created.

Employee's Welfare

Fifty one out of the 63 EOI documents require bidders to either prove evidence of their participation in contributory pension schemes or to provide proof of compliance with the Employees Compensation Act of 2011 and remittances to Nigerian Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF). It is important to note that both private and public sector organisations in Nigeria have been known for non-payment/late payment of employees' pension and gratuity (Owei, 2004). This Pension Law specifies registration and up to date remittance of employee Pension Fund contributions for businesses having a staff size of five and above (Ajiboye, 2011). In relation to employee compensation, the government made it compulsory for employers and employees in the private sector to quickly register as members of the NSITF once they commence operations (Rufai, 2003). This is an important requirement since poor compensation plans can easily reduce employee morale and result in general dissatisfaction. According to Frey and Stutzer (2003) employee compensation has a positive impact on workers' productivity and company performance. Manzoor (2012) opined that organisations must think about setting up employee pension plans and special allowances to motivate their workers. Since bidders may be asked to verify their employee compensation and pension plans, there are prospects for improving the wellbeing of workers in most companies in Nigeria. This is an important consideration due to the large number of companies who do business with the government, thus ensuring compliance with these criteria.

Job Creation

Some of the evaluation criteria in the EOI documents relates to job creation. While this was only used as prequalification criterion in 7 EOI documents, the evidence demonstrates that the public procurement process can be considered as a tool to stimulate job

creation in Nigeria. For example, two of the EOI documents require bidders to provide a letter of assurance that they would employ technicians and university graduates from the local community in the execution of the contract. It is important to bear in mind that youth unemployment is one of the key challenges facing the Nigerian economy (Omoruyi & Osunde, 2004). While many countries have begun to focus their attention on youth empowerment and employment generation (Worth, 2003), a significant number of Nigerian youths have not experienced employment (Oyebade, 2003). When youths are not employed, there is risk that they may become frustrated and involve themselves in criminal activities (Ibrahim, 2006). Previous studies have shown that government can use public procurement to deal with the problems of unemployment (The Australian Government, 2009; Bovaird, 2006; McCrudden, 2004). Public procurement could supplement other existing policies to promote job creation in Nigeria.

Community Development

Other social criterion that emerged from the analysis of EOI documents was related to community development. It was pointed out in 4 of the 62 call for EOI documents, that prospective bidders must have a good knowledge of the peculiarities of the local environment. This was a condition for pre-qualifying bidders for certain works in the Niger Delta area ,where there is a protracted history of violent clashes over ecological issues and self-indulgence of the oil companies (Omeje, 2006; Reno, 2005). Some of the advertisements requesting expressions of interest for contracts in the Niger Delta asked bidders to provide evidence of language affinity, effective community liaison proposals, and details on prospective local employment figures. In addition to the above, there have been cases where bidders were required to show proof of social accountability and community relation. This implies that there would be as much scope as ever to use public procurement to promote a strong local economy, support minority groups, and promote benefit-sharing with indigenous peoples in Nigeria.

Anti-Corruption

Corruption is a typical issue in public procurement practices (Bose, 2004). Recent studies have been devoted to curbing corruption through public procurement practices (Bibhas, 2003;

Compte, Lambert-Mogiliansky, & Verdier 2005). Similarly, data analysed in this study indicate that anti-corruption clauses are used to pre-qualify bidders in Nigeria. Bidders were asked to submit a sworn affidavit that none of their principals/associates was an ex-convict or had been bankrupt, in 12 of the 62 EOI reviewed by the author. This was a mandatory requirement for the exclusion of bidders who have been convicted of corruption or other criminal offences from participating in the procurement process. A very similar approach is obtainable in public procurement in other jurisdictions. For example in the United Kingdom, under the Bribery Act and Regulation 23(1) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006, "contracting authorities are empowered to disqualify an economic operator if they are aware that the economic operator or its directors or any other person who has powers of decision or control of the economic operator, has been convicted of offences such as bribery, corruption, fraud and money laundering" (McNaught, 2011, p. 11). Likewise, procuring entities in Nigeria use specific evaluation criteria to deter corrupt and criminal behaviour among bidders.

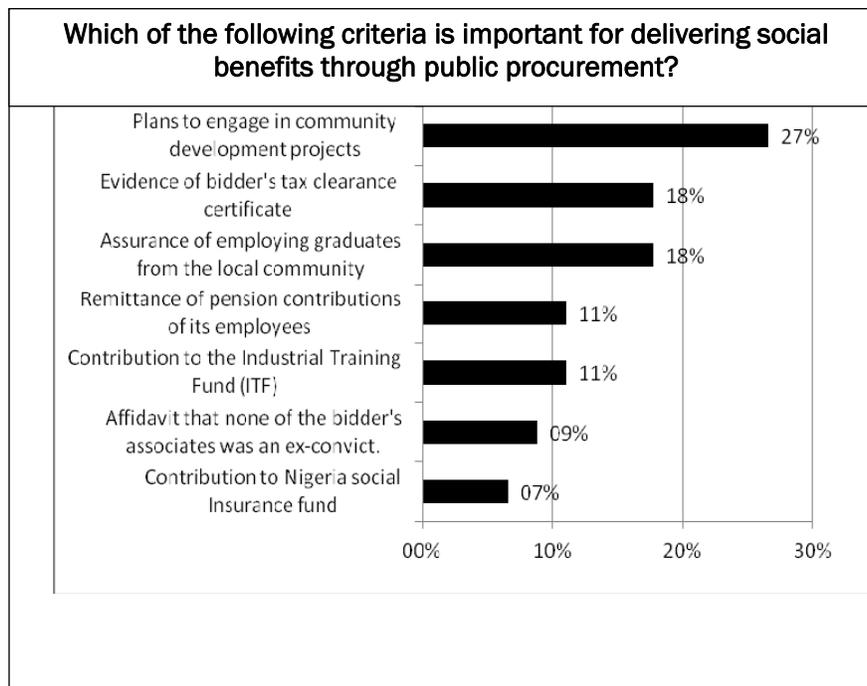
Civic Responsibility

Taxation is perceived as an important revenue generating instrument and a distinct tool for improving the economy of a nation (Lyme & Oats, 2010). Scholars have argued that paying corporate tax is one way of fulfilling the corporation's CSR obligations (Williams, 2007). Similarly, contractors are obliged by law to pay taxes irrespective of the sources in which the income is received and this practice has been termed "civil responsibility" (Williams, 2007). In this study, majority (59) of the analysed EOI documents required bidders to provide evidence of tax payments. In actual fact, bidders were asked to provide Tax Clearance Certificate (TCC) for the past three (3) years to support their expression of interest. In recent times, corporate tax compliance level has declined in Nigeria (Popoola, 2009). It is therefore not surprising to see that, evidence of tax payments is a key criterion for evaluating public sector bids in Nigeria. Nightingale (2002, p. 6) asserted that "no one really likes paying taxes, yet they are inevitable for the provision of social welfare." As contracting bodies continue to use evidence of tax compliance as a criterion for tender evaluation, public procurement offers an opportunity to influence tax compliance attitude in corporations.

Perception on Criteria for Driving Social Value in Public Procurement

Figure 1 shows the most important criteria for driving social value through public procurement as perceived by public procurement experts in Nigeria. While previously analysed EOI documents reveal that “evidence of bidder’s tax clearance certificate” was the most frequently used social criterion, the survey respondents consider this criterion to be the second most important as regards delivering social benefits through public procurement. In the same way, in most of the analysed EOI documents, criteria pertaining to bidder's plan to engage in community development projects and assurance that the bidders will employ graduates were rarely used, but the survey respondents perceived these criteria to be very important for delivering social benefits.

FIGURE 1
Important Criteria for Delivering Social Value through Public Procurement (N=45)



CONCLUSION

An enormous body of literature has emerged on the use of social criteria in the public procurement process. This paper provides empirical evidence on the types of social criteria used in evaluating public tenders in Nigeria. Analysis beyond the scope of this paper shows that procurement regulations determine the scope and types of tender evaluation criteria (Hendry & Vasilind, 2005). These findings suggest that public procurement is being used to promote a range of government policies and programmes in Nigeria: occupational pension, employee compensation, industrial training and corporate tax compliance. While the majority of social criteria used in evaluating public tenders in Nigeria emanate from the Public Procurement Act (PPA) 2007, public procurers use other social criteria (i.e. evidence of bidder's plan to engage in community development projects and "assurance that the bidder will employ graduates") autonomously to evaluate tenders.

Considering the frequency usage of each criterion, it can be said that public procurement is used to look out for government's self – interest more than for the social good. To be exact, almost all the tender documents required bidders to provide evidence of tax payments while the criteria related to job creation were used for evaluation in only seven of the tenders analysed. These findings support the NIE view based on the freedom of choice assumption in the rational choice model (Miller, 2005). In addition, findings from this study show that public procurement has not been used effectively to drive job creation in Nigeria, considering the fact that unemployment is a critical economic and social problem in Nigeria. Currently, Nigeria is embarking on employment generation through entrepreneurship development, the graduate internship scheme and the participation of the private sector. A mixture of policy interventions, together with the use of social criteria in public procurement could offer better potential for employment generation.

At a time when the standard of living is declining and youth unemployment is rising in Nigeria, there is a need to explore all policy options in order to stimulate job creation. A national policy on social procurement could be considered in this context. Besides, there is a significant disconnect between Nigeria's socio-economic potential and actual performance. Not too long ago, Nigeria ranked 156 of 169 countries on the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2011). The

federal government should leverage existing procurement policy to improve her socio-economic outlook. Given the above, much cannot be said at this stage as to whether a milestone has been reached in delivering social benefits through public procurement in Nigeria. Nevertheless, public procurement can have a direct influence on businesses that rely on government contracts in Nigeria, if social criteria are increasingly being used for any contract awarded by public bodies. That way, the government could influence how companies pursue their CSR programmes.

The study contributes to growing debates on sustainable public procurement. It offers some baseline data against which future studies on socially responsible procurement could be conducted and evaluated. However, the study is limited by several factors: it is based on a small sized convenience sample of EOI documents and public procurement experts in Nigeria. A larger sample size may lead to improved accuracy or dissimilar results. Future research should work to increase the validity of this study using different sources of information.

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APPENDIX 1
Calls for Expressions of Interest (EOI) Documents between
October 2011 - September 2012*

No.	Tenders Headings	Ministries, Departments, and Agency	Category/Types
1.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification/Expression Of Interest For The Procurement Of Projects And Services Under 2012 Appropriation	Niger Delta Basin Development Authority	Construction
2.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification To Tender For 2012 Capital Projects Exercise	National Information Technology Development Agency	Construction
3.	Pre-Qualification For The Approved 2011 Tetfund Project	The Federal University Of Technology, Akure	Construction
4.	Tender: Invitation For Submission Of Technical And Commercial Bids For 2012 Capital Projects	Nigerian Building And Road Research Institute	Construction
5.	Construction Of Projects At Niger Delta Development Commission	Niger Delta Development Commission (Nddc)	Construction
6.	Invitation To Pre-Qualification And Tender	The Federal University Of Technology, Akure	Construction

APPENDIX 1 (Continued)

No.	Tenders Headings	Ministries, Departments, and Agency	Category/ Types
7.	Pre-Qualification For 2012 Fiscal Year	Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company	Construction
8.	FBJIOKF	Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company	Construction
9.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification To Tender	The Federal Polytechnic	Construction
10.	Request For Proposal For Consultancy Services	Agricultural And Rural Management Training Institute	Construction
11.	Procurement Planning Committee	Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic	Construction
12.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification Of Interested Companies For Consultancy Contractual Services; 2012 Capital Projects	University Of Uyo	Construction
13.	Invitation For Submission Of Bid	Michael Okpara University Of Agriculture	Construction
14.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification And Tenders For The Execution Of 2012 Capital Projects	University Of Uyo Teaching Hospital	Construction
15.	Advertisement: Invitation For Technical And Financial Bids	Federal Medical Centre	Construction
16.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification/Expression Of Interest	University Of Port Harcourt	Construction

APPENDIX 1 (Continued)

No.	Tenders Headings	Ministries, Departments, and Agency	Category/ Types
17.	Invitation To Pre-Qualification/Tender Foer The Execution Of Year 2009/2010/2011 (Merged) TETFund Normal Intervention Projects	Federal University Of Technology, Minna	Construction
18.	Invitation To Tender For The Execution Of 2012 Capital Projects For The Defence Headquarters	Defence Headquarters	Construction
19.	Invitation To Tender	Federal Ministry Of Water Resources	Construction
20.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification And Tender For The Implementation Of 2012 Capital Project	Federal Ministry Of Education	Construction
21.	Invitation For Prequalification Of Contractors For The Execution Of TETFund Special Intervention Project In Nine (9) New Federal Universities	Federal Ministry Of Education	Construction
22.	Invitation For Prequalification	Federal Ministry Of Education	Construction
23.	Invitation To Tender	Federal University Of Technology	Construction
24.	Invitation To Tender For The Execution Of 2012 Capital Projects For The Defence Headquarters	Defence Headquarters	Construction
25.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification	Federal Polytechnic, Oko	Construction

APPENDIX 1 (Continued)

No.	Tenders Headings	Ministries, Departments, and Agency	Category/ Types
26.	2012 Invitation For Pre- Qualification To Tender	National Industrial Court Of Nigeria	Construction
27.	General Procurement Notice For The Execution Of 2012 Capital And Recurrent Projects	Federal Government Of Nigeria	Construction
28.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification Of Contractors For University Project	University Of Ilorin, Nigeria	Construction
29.	Request For Expressions Of Interest From Consultants For Agricultural Credit Programme Consultancy Services At Niger Delta Development Commission	Niger Delta Development Commission	Consulting Services
30.	Invitation To Tender For The Procurement Of Broadband Initiatives Across The Niger Delta Region At Niger Delta Development Commission	Niger Delta Development Commission	Consulting Services
31.	Expression Of Interest For Provision Of Consultancy Services For Physical Projects Under Its 2012 Capital Projects	Central Bank Of Nigeria	Consulting Services
32.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification To Tender For Capital Projects In The Institution	The Nigeria French Language Village	Consulting Services
33.	Expression Of Interest For The 2012 Anti-Corruption Scoping Survey	Technical Unit On Governance And Anti- Corruption Reforms	Consulting Services

APPENDIX 1 (Continued)

No.	Tenders Headings	Ministries, Departments, and Agency	Category/Types
34.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification Of Contractors And Expression Of Interest For The 2012 Capital Project	National Space Research And Development Agency	Consulting Services
35.	Invitation To Tender	Independent National Electoral Commission	Consulting Services
36.	Invitation For Expression Of Interest On Procurement Of Drugs, Reagents And Medical Equipment	Federal Airports Authority Of Nigeria	Consulting Services
37.	General Procurement Notice For 2012 Capital And Recurrent Projects	Nigerian Railway Corporation	Consulting Services
38.	Invitation For Submission Of Technical And Financial Bids For Mdgs Projects (Works) Under The 2012 Appropriation	Federal Government Of Nigeria Presidency	Consulting Services
39.	Invitation To Tender For Procurement/Rehabilitation And Construction Works In Respect Of 2012 Capital Budget	Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital	Consulting Services
40.	Invitation For Pre-qualification Of Contractors/Suppliers For The 2012 Capital Projects	Ahmadu Bello University	Consulting Services
41.	Invitation To Tender	Abuja Electricity Distribution Company	Project Services
42.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification Of Contractors For Tertiary Education	Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic	Project Services

APPENDIX 1 (Continued)

No.	Tenders Headings	Ministries, Departments, and Agency	Category/ Types
43.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification	Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic	Project Services
44.	Open Invitation For Pre- Qualification And Tender Execution Of 2012 Capital Projects	The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro	Project Services
45.	Invitation For Financial Bidding	National Open University Of Nigeria	Project Services
46.	Expression Of Interest For The Provision Of Interest For The Provision Of Insurance Cover For The Agency's Assets	Federal Roads Maintenance Agency	Project Services
47.	Invitation To Tender	Economic & Financial Crimes Commission	Supplies
48.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification To Tender	Nnamdi Azikiwe University	Supplies
49.	Advertisement For Expression Of Interest as Consultants	Federal Medical Centre	Supplies
50.	A. Consultancy; Request For Submission Of Expression Of Interest	Agricultural And Rural Management Training Institute	Supplies
51.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification Of Contractors For Capital Projects	Joint Admissions And Matriculation Board	Supplies
52.	Invitation To Tender	Federal Capital Development Authority	Supplies
53.	Invitation To Tender For Projects Under The 2012 Foreign Capital Budget Appropriations	Kaduna Electricity Distribution Company	Supplies

APPENDIX 1 (Continued)

No.	Tenders Headings	Ministries, Departments, and Agency	Category/ Types
54.	Invitation For Tender	Standards Organisation Of Nigeria	Supplies
55.	Invitation To Tender	Federal Ministry Of Justice	Supplies
56.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification And Tender Notice	Federal Institute Of Industrial Research, Oshodi	Supplies
57.	Invitation To Tender	Federal Ministry Of Health	Supplies
58.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification of Contractors	University Of Benin	Supplies
59.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification	Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority	Supplies
60.	Pre-Qualification	Energy Commission Of Nigeria	Supplies
61.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification For 2012 Capital Budget	Nigerian Communications Satellite (Nigcomsat)	Supplies
62.	Invitation For Pre-Qualification	National Board For Technical Education	Supplies

* Source: www.nigeriafederaltenders.gov.ng; www.tenders.nigeriang.com.