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**SYMPOSIUM ON INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**

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## SYMPOSIUM INTRODUCTION

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According to an arrangement between the International Public Procurement Conference and the publisher of the *Journal of Public Procurement (JoPP)*, and based on the 7th International Public Procurement Conference Scientific Committee's (IPPC7) peer reviews process, eight best papers are to be published in two consecutive issues of *JoPP*. Spanning over a decade, this collaboration has benefited both the *JoPP* and the IPPC as

- *JoPP*'s publisher has sponsored the conference's Best Paper Awards program, which provides authors a good incentive to submit better quality papers;
- Having select best papers published in a well-respected journal is another incentive for researchers and practitioners to submit their research papers;
- IPPC has enhanced the quality of *JoPP* as only eight to nine best papers were selected from a good pool of 100-170 papers authored by authors from every corner of the world, and these papers cover a wide range of public procurement theories and best practices issues. In other words, about 6% to 10% submitted papers have been selected; and
- These selected papers are published in two consecutive special issues of *JoPP*, which are printed timely for distribution at the conference. This is a unique feature of IPPC, and not many

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professional conferences in the world offer participants this type of academic publications at the conference.

Once again, we are pleased to offer our readers the culmination of this very rigorous academic process. In addition, as co-chairs of IPPC7 and co-editors of this special issue of *JoPP*, we would like to thank the entire members of the IPPC7 Scientific Committee for their efforts in making sure that the integrity of the review process was maintained according to academic standards. As we know, there are few academic conferences which offer participants the opportunity not only to have their papers peer reviewed, but to provide them the opportunity to have the top conference papers published in a top ranked scholarly journal. Additionally the International Public Procurement Conference provides a peer reviewed (double-blind) process for its publications.

The symposium of IIPC7 is a forum for international scholars and practitioners in public procurement to further explore the current issues and practices of public procurement from different perspectives. It is our pleasures to introduce you to four great articles presented in the symposium. These four articles are written by authors from several countries and cover various contemporary and important issues in public procurement: from collusion in public procurement, the practices and policies of sustainable public procurement, public procurement reforms, to compliances issues in public procurement.

The symposium begins with an article which discusses an issue of collusion in public procurement. As we are all aware, collusion is one of big threats to the integrity in public procurement. Collusive behavior distorts prices and/or quality of goods and services by lowering the level of competition for the market.

In their article, *Collusion between Public Procurers and Suppliers in the Context of Japan's Public Procurement: The Role of the Risks of "Unsuccessful Procurement,"* Tanaka and Hayashi examine the economic forces which may lead to government-assisted or -facilitated bid-rigging (*kansei-dango*) in public procurement in Japan, and consider their implications. The authors argue that the risk of unsuccessful procurement resulting from the nature of procured goods may facilitate corruption in the Japanese context. This is the case especially when a public official may worry about situations where his/her procurement project which is characterized as "experience goods" will not be successfully executed. This study employs a simplified theoretical treatment on a most recent case regarding

bidding for snow-melting equipment works for Hokuriku Shinkansen. To conclude, this article offers some policy recommendations to minimize the practice of kansei-dango.

It is believed that public procurement also has a strategic role and can make a significant contribution to achieving sustainable development goals. Through Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP), governments are expected to deliver key policy objectives in the economic, social and environmental fields. This important issue is discussed by Prier, Schwerin, and McCue in their article "Implementation of Sustainable Public Procurement Practices and Policies: A Sorting Framework." This study uses a sorting framework to predict whether some organizations are systematically more likely to pursue SPP efforts than others. The study is motivated by facts that there are many impediments which prevent government agencies to pursue different and better public procurement practices, such as sustainable purchasing which requires some level of entrepreneurialism and risk taking. Empirical tests are carried out to see if there is SPP commitment sorting demonstrated by level of government or organizational complexity. The authors conduct a survey and invite 2,280 procurement practitioners across over 300 governments in the U.S to participate. By using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and other methods, the study concludes that agencies of various scope and reach tend to refrain from aggressively pursuing SPP efforts. For those organizations that employ SPP, these efforts also tend to be quite variable across and within levels of government and organization size. The study also confirms that SPP in the United States is the result of random and very cautious experimentation with little systematic pattern to SPP adoption.

As part of public sector and governance reforms, public procurement reform becomes an important tool for strengthening and supporting governance reforms and better public sector performance. Accordingly, public procurement reform is still an interesting subject to being studied by many scholars, including Harper, Calderon and Muñoz' "Elements of Public Procurement Reform and their Effect on Public Sector in LAC." Their study is to identify the elements of public procurement reforms and investigate the effect (outcomes and impacts) of the elements on the public sectors. The study is motivated by public procurement system reform process experienced by Latin America and the Caribbean between 2007 and 2013. To understand

the elements and their effect, the authors use PRODEV; an institutional evaluation multivariate tool developed and carried out by the Inter-American Development Bank. Then, the effects of the reforms on the development of public procurement systems were estimated using a panel model on a sample of countries. The study demonstrates that the establishment of public procurement agencies which are responsible for policy and monitoring is the most critical for the reform process. The authors also find evidence which support the hypothesis that creating these agencies had a positive effect on the perception of public sector performance.

Compliance to public procurement regulations appears to be an important issue especially in developing countries. Non-compliance practices could jeopardize the implementation of principles of public procurement. In "Compliance to Acts, Rules and Regulations: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa," Mbago, Ntayi and Muhwezi intend to predict factors that determine public procurement regulatory compliance. The authors use theories of legitimacy, deterrence, institutional and stewardship as a construct to develop and test an integrated compliance model. Using a cross-sectional survey and stratified random sampling, the authors collect 97 sampling data out of 129 procuring and disposing entities which are subject to the Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Authority Act (PPDA). The findings show that legitimacy and stewardship behavior are significant predictors of compliance to the PPDA Act, Rules and Regulations. On the contrary, whistle blowing behavior and deterrence mechanisms were not significant predictors of compliance. Based on these findings the authors suggest procuring and disposing entities to continue legitimizing the procurement law through stakeholders' participation and promote stewardship behaviors among public employees.

In general, the four papers in this symposium demonstrate the theoretical, empirical as well as practical and institutional analysis of public procurement, and provide an interesting cross-section of the types of papers. We do hope you enjoy reading these articles.