COMMUNIQUÉ
Regional Workshop
Promoting e-Procurement to mitigate corruption risks in Africa

Lusaka, July 2026

On 30 June and 1 July, 12 leading African public procurement regulatory authorities and anti-corruption bodies from Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Open Contracting Partnership, and Open Ownership met and declared a shared, ambitious vision: to transform public procurement into a catalyst for economic innovation, inclusion, and public trust through digital public procurement (e-GP) and open data. This was made possible through grants provided by the Governments of Denmark and Norway, as well as the Chandler Foundation.

Common Challenges and a Shared Vision

Public procurement is over a third of our public spending and is one of the largest drivers of economic activity in our countries. e-procurement is one of the 10 best investments to achieve the sustainable development goals. While at different stages of our e-GP journey, there is a shared vision for digital systems that:

- Are as user-friendly as possible, moving beyond digitizing paper to creating systems that ask for data once and use it many times.
- Support SMEs, minority-owned businesses including women-owned enterprises, and local enterprises to compete on equal terms, with simple, accessible processes, fair evaluation criteria, and prompt payment.
- Publish high-quality, standardized data, including through the use of Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) to measure market efficiency, fairness, inclusion and to bolster public trust.
- Facilitate the systematic use of beneficial ownership data to detect and deter corruption, flag collusion, conflicts of interest and bid-rigging before they take hold.
- Leverage data to understand and shape the market, giving government buyers, suppliers and economic operators alike the business intelligence they need to plan and participate effectively in procurement.

Our Commitments

Drawing on the UNODC's Non-Binding Guidelines on the Adoption and Use of Technologies to Combat Corruption in Public Procurement and the Open Contracting Principles of OCP, the countries are committed to accelerating the transition to full-scale digital transformation, and pledge to treat the transition not merely as a technical upgrade, but as a strategic commitment to accountable governance. Specifically, the agencies committed to:

Building digital infrastructure:

- Invest nationally in e-GP systems that are modular and scalable, interoperable with other systems[1], that grow with the country needs backed by local technology resources and locally owned solutions wherever possible. It is recognised that countries are at different stages, and commit to approaches that our own starting point while working towards common standards.

- Prioritise systems that lower barriers to participation in tenders, including mobile-accessible platforms and simplified registration, so that small businesses across our countries can engage with public procurement.

Opening up the data:

- Publish structured, OCDS-compliant data across the full procurement cycle, linking it to budget and beneficial ownership registers to ensure verifiable spending.

- Use that data actively to build market intelligence, analyse supplier markets, spot patterns and anomalies, and inform smarter buying, and make it openly available for civil society, businesses, and researchers to do the same.

- Link procurement data to beneficial ownership registers, budget systems, and delivery data so that the full picture of public spending is visible and verifiable.

Strengthening competition and inclusion:

- Set and track measurable targets for SME and minority-owned business participation in public tenders, using open procurement data to monitor progress and identify barriers.

- Use beneficial ownership information to strengthen supplier due diligence and verify participation by SMEs, minority-owned businesses and local enterprises, helping to prevent fronting, false declarations and hidden concentration of contracts.

- Establish or strengthen supplier development programmes that build the capacity of local businesses, particularly those led by women and young people — to compete.

Building accountability and oversight:

- Establish or strengthen independent oversight mechanisms, including parliamentary scrutiny, audit institutions, and civil society monitoring, empowered with access to open contracting data.

- Meet to share our progress, lessons and best practices.

---

[1] Including company registers, beneficial ownership registers, tax systems and budget platforms.

The multilateral development banks, bilateral donors, and the UN system are called upon to align their support with these commitments, investing in nationally owned digital infrastructure, local technical capacity, and the open data ecosystems to make reforms sustainable. The agencies further urge the alignment towards the MDB Guidelines on Public Procurement of national procurement systems, with a view to increase the number of procurements undertaken nationally.

The private sector is called upon to engage transparently with open procurement processes, support interoperability and open standards to avoid vendor lock-in, provide reliable beneficial ownership information as required, and to compete fairly.

The civil society, media and researchers are called upon to use the published data to scrutinise decisions, surface patterns, and strengthen the delivery of vital public investments.

Together, and from wherever we are starting, we can make public money work for the public good.