

Open Contracting Scoping Study

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Open Contracting Scoping Study: Liberia Country Report

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Abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
ALCC	Association of Liberian Construction Contractors
BOO	Build/Refurbish/Modernize-Own-Operate
BOOT	Build/Refurbish/Modernize-Own-Operate-Transfer
BOT	Build/Refurbish/Modernize-Operate-Transfer
BTO	Build/Refurbish/Modernize-Transfer-Operate
CARP	Complaints, Appeals and Review Panel
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organizations
DPs	Development Partners
FCO	UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office
GIR	Global Integrity Report
GoL	Government of Liberia
IAA	Internal Audit Agency
ICB	International Competitive Bidding
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ITBs	Invitations to Bid
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NCB	National Competitive Bidding
NTGL	National Transitional Government of Liberia
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PE	Procuring Entity
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Performance Measurement
PPC Act	Public Procurement and Concessions Act
PPCC	Public Procurement and Concessions Commission
PU	Procurement Unit
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary¹

Since the end of Liberia's civil war (1989-2003), Liberia has enjoyed peace and stability, including two successive free and transparent presidential elections. The post-war period has allowed for strengthening of institutions and systems for the Government of Liberia (GoL), including in the public procurement sector. Following a procurement needs assessment undertaken by the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) in conjunction with the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank (WB), the government formed the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC).

There are few partnerships between stakeholders in Liberian procurement. In 2016, the World Bank (WB) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) consulted with the PPCC on making procurement more transparent and [open](#). Open forums have taken place between the Association of Liberian Construction Contractors (ALCC), the PPCC, and international partners. These informed the development of the [PPCC implementation manual](#), aimed at helping private entities comply with the Public Procurement and Concessions Act (PPC Act) regulations and guidelines. Since the amendment of the PPC Act in 2010, transparency in public contracting has been increasing and procurement processes are mainly coordinated and regulated by the central procurement body, the PPCC. One senior official stated that there has been a positive change in public procurement in Liberia, accelerated with the arrival of the PPCC's Executive Director Dorbor Jallah in 2014: "It is an interesting time in Liberia, the PPCC had advanced in the use of electronic media for transparency. In theory all major procurement are published online and going through the PPCC. The PPCC wants to be doing more to go deeper and they want to go digital."

The disclosure of procurement data is not standard practice and capacity gaps persist. Information that is available is fragmented through different information channels (websites and newspapers), published in closed formats, released in untimely manner, and incomplete. There is no unified procurement data management and disclosure system. The government also faces challenges for evaluating the implementation of procurement contracts. Civil society organizations (CSOs), media, and citizens lack the necessary technical capacity to understand data on procurement to ensure effective monitoring. There is a lack of funding to conduct efficient monitoring and evaluation of public procurement processes, the lack of a web-based systems and internet connectivity has undermined capacity growth. Despite these challenges, the PPCC [website](#) along with an e-procurement [platform](#), launched in July 2016, remain Liberia's main sources of public procurement data.

Recommendations Overview

Institutional Arrangement

Increase independence of the procurement authority. There is no internal, independent check on the procurement process because the Chairman of the PPCC is a presidential appointee. In many countries, political independence of the procurement sector is guaranteed by the creation of an independent committee whose members represent various stakeholder groups. ***Assuring the independence of the PPCC would increase public trust and potentially reduce concerns that the procurement process is politically motivated.***

¹ This report was prepared with input and writing by Luther Jeke.

Create an inclusive and independent Complaints, Appeals and Review Panel (CARP) at the PPCC. Poor use of the complaint mechanism within the PPCC indicates a lack of trust in the implementation of the system. Representatives from all key procurement stakeholders should form part of the CARP of the PPCC to ensure checks and balances. Current membership of the CARP does not reflect key cross sectoral procurement stakeholders in Liberia. The members of the CARP are currently appointed by the President. ***An independent commission with representatives from GoL, CSOs and the private sector should appoint the members of the CARP.***

Increase the technical capacities of procurement units (PUs). While the PPCC has lead numerous training focused on procurement processes, this effort needs to be continued and reinforced. Knowledge of procurement systems and laws is usually limited to one person within the PUs. ***The development of an easy-to-understand tutorial could be useful for staff that might not have the proficiency to directly understand the PPC act and regulations.*** This training should also provide basic data management plans and skills building tools.

Legal Framework for Procurement

Amendment to the PPC Act to include mandatory disclosure of procurement data. The PPCC Act of 2010 allows procuring entities to decide the method of publication of procurement notices and awards, allowing either newspaper or online. Procurement plans are published by PPCC on their own initiative, without a legal mandate. No implementation data is published in Liberia. The majority of procurement data are in PDFs, leading to difficulty in any efforts to systematically use data for analysis or anti-corruption monitoring. Some procuring entities decide to publish this information in the E-mansion Website. It would be recommended to have a public website that centralized by legal mandate all Tender Notices and Contract Awards. ***The PPC Act should be amended to include the mandatory disclosure of procurement data in open format at each of the procurement stages: planning, tender, awards, contracts and implementation.***

Provide methods for international companies to participate in National Competitive Bidding (NCB). As in other countries in the region, there is an opportunity to enhance competition by reviewing the law on NCB to explore how international companies could participate in local procurement. ***Facilitating local affiliates of international companies, or establishing a budget threshold that can be subcontracted to an international partner for NCB, could allow local firms to benefit from international expertise and experience, while preserving their ability to compete and win public contracts.***

Policy Context

Inclusion of open contracting into Liberia's Open Government Partnership (OGP) commitments. Key political leaders, including the President and Executive Director of the PPCC, should make a clear commitment to transparency in public procurement. Key strategic governance documents, such as [PPC Act, 2010](#), the [PFM Act, 2009](#) of Liberia should include transparent public contracting as an objective feeding into wider objectives, such as increasing value for money, fairness and integrity of public spending. ***This can be done by including open contracting into Liberia's OGP commitments.***

Improve hiring practices to ensure that the PPCC and PEs have staff with the necessary skill set. Policies should require hiring staff with skill to handle procurement and promote training for existing staff.

Timely reporting of data by national and sub-national procuring entities. Procuring entity (PE) data reporting is consistently delayed. This particularly difficult for subnational procuring entities facing

problems of internet connectivity. Strengthening internet and information and communication technology (ICT) facilities at sub-national levels will enhance the timely submission and publication of data reporting.

Technical Assessment

Conduct a detailed technical assessment for an e-procurement system. GoL, with the leadership of the PPCC should *partner with a well qualified IT company to conduct an in-depth analysis of the existing systems*, and map an integrated system that would allow the digitization of i) all procurement documents and, ii) data exchanges between PPCC, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), and PEs. E-Procurement would facilitate access to open and machine-readable procurement information, ideally in OCDS format. This would translate to managing and releasing procurement data with an objective to unify systems and standardize data across institutions.

The PPCC created an in-house “PPCC e-Procurement Platform” that includes a vendor registry, has public procurements plans for all PEs, and procurement policies. This was done with very limited budget and limited staff capacity. The executive director of the PPCC has a clear idea about the e-Procurement Platform they wish to build but lacks financial resources. *AfDB has been discussing the possibilities of funding an e-procurement system in Liberia, which other development partners (DPs) could partner to support.* The development of this system should be accompanied by standardization of data, such as OCDS, as this is harder to implement once the system is running.

Develop a comprehensive procurement data management plan. An e-procurement system should be accompanied by training and should include a data management plan. PPCC should lead this, as they are legally mandated to develop rules, instructions, regulations and related documentation. The plan should be integrated into the PPC Act where data collection, use, and publication roles and responsibilities should be stated. PPCC’s leadership will also help prevent development of independent, fractured internal procurement management systems among PEs. To facilitate data quality, monitoring, and analysis, unique identifiers for each contract should be maintained throughout the procurement process.

Design and implement unique Identifiers Creating unique identifiers for each procurement activity (from planning to implementation) would enable the PPCC to gain valuable insight from powerful data analytics on corruption risk, value for money, efficiency, and other key issues. *Creating an interagency team consisting of members from the Ministry of Economy, the PPCC and the General Secretariat to facilitate agreement on a unique identification system and the technical needs of each agency and ministry to ensure proper implementation. Ideally, this system should be initiated through the IFMIS chart of accounts, then reused by other systems across government.*

Development of a unified data standard. In line with its mandate for rules, regulations, and instruction, PPCC should *assume the leadership role to develop a standardization of the data standards or PEs by creating a guideline for reporting data in line with OCDS.*

User Engagement

Reinforce the CARP. Since 2013, only one new complaint has been uploaded into this PPCC’s website. Further evaluation is necessary to determine if complaints and appeals are filed through other mechanisms. *PPCC should digitize all complaints made to the CARP. This should be accompanied by a public guide to explain to citizens and vendors what mechanism are available for filing complaints.* This will also increase trust in the system.

Encourage and increase efforts being made by the PPCC vendor registry. The PPCC has created an online vendor registry that allows for identification of vendors that comply with the requirements for the non-objection for contract award. This effort should be scaled, increasing the number of vendors by including and informing the private sector of this registry. Maintaining a vendor registry requires the PPCC and vendors to collaborate. In addition, the PPCC should continue to train PEs to incorporate the vendor registry into their awarding process.

Gather feedback of key procurement stakeholders regarding their contracting data needs to inform priorities in planning data disclosure efforts. This can be done by organizing multi-stakeholder forums-events or holding an online consultation. Such mechanism could become constant and regular channel of communication between data providers and users. It is important that stakeholders are present: procuring entities, the PPCC, international organizations, CSO's, journalist and citizens.

Stakeholder Identification

Increase CSOs' level of understanding of public procurement process and procurement data. Journalists have played a key role in identifying procurement processes, requiring detailed knowledge of the legal system to investigate compliance with national regulations. Journalists mentioned feeling often lost when trying to understand the procurement processes in Liberia. *Training journalists and CSO's on public procurement skills through conducting specialized research, analyzing procurement data, creating easy to understand visuals, and identifying alarms, would foster greater accountability in procurement.*

Encourage publishing of tenders through non-web based channels. Given the common lack of IT infrastructure among CSOs and citizens, GoL *and key infomediaries (e.g. more technically savvy CSOs) should identify offline methods for disseminating information on procurement.* These should be designed based on prior successes using SMS, billboards, and other methods to distribute information on the national budget.

Broader Public Financial Management Environment

Ensure interoperability between financial systems and procurement systems. To prepare for interoperability, the PPCC and MFDP should actively ensure that systems and classifications are structured with interoperability with IFMIS in mind. Focus on ensuring similar classifications (e.g. organizational or administrative identifiers) are used in procurement data, should be a top priority.

Make data about vendor payment available to the public in an accessible format. MFDP, the PPCC, and all PEs should make available data sets on vendor payment information in one central repository. This information should ultimately be linked to the e-procurement system to ensure full coverage of the procurement cycle.

2. Purpose, Methodology & Field Visit Information

Purpose

This scoping study, supported by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), aims to gauge the state of openness of public procurement processes in Liberia, understand the capacities and interests of key procurement actors, and identify opportunities for procurement reform and adoption of open contracting principles.

Open contracting refers to a set of [global principles](#) aimed at improving procurement data disclosure and recognizing the importance of public participation in the contracting process. Open contracting also promotes the publication of procurement data in open and structured formats that enable public use. Procurement data must thus be “technically” open (e.g. machine readable, free of proprietary software requirements, etc.) and “legally” open (e.g. published in the public domain or in accordance with copyleft principles). Open contracting also refers to the participation of citizens in the procurement process, including the creation and implementation of accountability and redress mechanisms that build trust between citizens and government. Ultimately, open contracting aims to deliver value for money, create a more level playing field for business, reduce fraud and corruption, and improve service delivery.

Methodology

The [methodology](#) followed by this study, divided into 7 parts and accompanied by an [interview guide](#) and [annexes](#), seeks to:

- Document current levels of openness in public contracting in targeted polities;
- Identify and assess existing systems and data sources (including non-public) within government for collecting, analyzing, and sharing procurement data;
- Map key stakeholders and their capacities and enthusiasm for advancing open contracting; and,
- Provide recommendations on realistic targets and use cases for open contracting moving forward.

The seven sections of the methodology covered by this study are: 1) institutional arrangement, 2) legal framework, 3) policy context, 4) technical analysis, 5) user engagement, 6) stakeholder identification, 7) broader public financial management environment.

Field Visit Information

To gather data for the study, a total of twenty-nine (29) respondents were interviewed from fifteen (15) entities, most of whom were government. The comprehensiveness of the study was validated through interviews with CSOs, media, international organizations, and private sector. Interviews were supplemented by data collection through desk research in online data portal and reports. In some cases, access to digital information was challenging due to limited ICT equipment. To accommodate time constraints of interview participants, questions were prioritized to ensure proper coverage of each topic included in this report. Respondents were interested in receiving the final outcome of the study.

3. Overview of the General Country Context

The government structure is based on the American republic model with three equal branches of government. In reality, the President of Liberia has significant power and influence in the Liberian politics. The period from 1989-2003 was marked by civil unrest, leading to 250,000 deaths and 600,000 displaced people. Since the end of the civil war a decade ago, Liberia has enjoyed peace and stability, which has led to the conduct of two successive free, fair and transparent democratic elections in 2005 and 2011 respectively and achieved significant economic progress. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is expected to remain in power until the next presidential election in October 2017.

The Liberian economy is predominantly natural resource driven. The two key commodities are rubber and iron ore. Liberia's economy struggled in 2015, with GDP growth of 0.3%, down from 0.7% in 2014.²The country is struggling to recover from the twin shocks of the Ebola crisis and the sharp decline in commodity prices, which has led to business closures - including of mines - and consequent job losses and reduced fiscal revenues. Substantial risks remain, which challenge the government's recovery efforts and plans to diversify the economy to mitigate the impact of such future shocks. The mining sector, which was one of the key drivers of economic growth, declined by 17%, followed by 1.1% decline in the agriculture sector.³

In 2003, NTGL, the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank (WB) undertook a procurement assessment that concluded the public procurement and concessions framework did not guarantee transparency, efficiency, equal opportunity to bidders or value for money. A reform process started which created the Public Procurement and Concession Commission. Since 2010, there has been a movement to increase the access to public procurement data and to improve the processes for public procurement and concessions. During interviews, it was often mentioned that the arrival of Mr. Jallah as Executive Director of the PPCC dynamized the public procurement sector and increased the level of compliance to the PPCC act.

² World Bank, www.worldbank.org/en/country/liberia/overview

³ Liberia Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan, www.medbox.org/roadmaps-action-plans-policies/republic-of-liberia-the-economic-stabilization-and-recovery-plan/toolboxes/preview

4. Institutional Arrangement

Liberia has a decentralized public procurement system where each procurement entity (PE) is in charge of conducting its own procurement through the procurement unit (PU). This system is regulated by four public institutions that form [Liberia's Integrity Forum](#): the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC), the Internal Audit Agency (IAA), the MFDP, and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The Forum was established in 2010 with the objective of promoting integrity standards in the public and private sectors through effective collaboration and coordination.

Procuring Entities

Section III of the Public Procurement and Concession Act of 2010 establishes that any entity using public funds is a PE and that every PE shall be responsible for their own procurement. Each PE has to establish a Procurement Committee, which is responsible for reviewing and approving procurement plans, ensuring that the lowest responsive bid is selected and give approval to the Bid Evaluation Panel for the procurement process. The Bid Evaluation Panel is responsible for the evaluation of bids and ensuring conformity with the published evaluation criteria as described in the bid documents. The Bid Evaluation Panel must submit evaluation reports and a recommendation for award to be considered by the Procurement Committee. In addition to the Procurement Committee and The Bid Evaluation Panel, each PE has a PU that is responsible for conducting procurement activities from planning through tender and award phases.

According to the PPC Act of 2010 and the Public procurement in Liberia conventionally covers the following stages :

The Procurement Process: From Planning to Delivery

Planning: Prior to seeking a supplier to provide a specific good or service, governments undertake a planning process to determine the goods or services needed. Planning includes drafting procurement plans, and may also include the conduct of various assessments (public needs, environmental, social impact, etc.) and outreach efforts (public hearings, site visits, etc.) aimed at understanding the nature of the intervention required.

Tender: The second phase of procurement is the issuance of a tender, often referred to as an ITB. Governments are often required by law to publicize ITBs to ensure that potential tenderers, or bidders, have the opportunity to bid. While there are many different types of tender processes (see above), the tender period is of fixed length. At the end of the tender phase is an evaluation period during which the PE select a winning tenderer.

Award: Once a bidder has been selected, the PE notifies the winning tenderer, now called the "supplier." The PE also notifies the losing tenderers that they have not been selected.

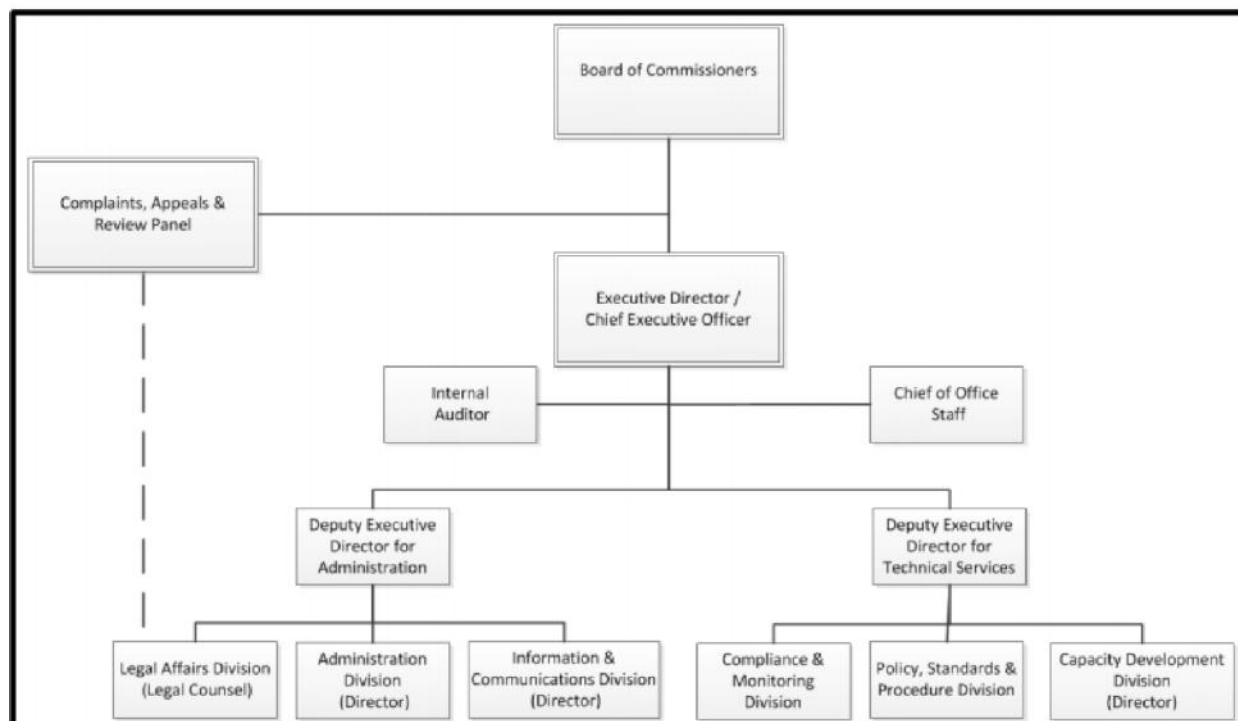
Contract: Once a supplier has been selected, the supplier and PE sign a contract, after any final negotiations have taken place. Although necessary, negotiation also provides an opportunity for corruption to enter the process.

Implementation: Once a contract has been finalized, the implementation process begins. Depending on the size and scope of the contract, the supplier must oftentimes meet set milestones in order to receive payments, which are dispersed throughout the implementation period. At the end of implementation, an evaluation of the contracting period should take place.

PUs face multiples challenges, particularly the lack of knowledge of its personnel. The PU should be staffed with persons trained and knowledgeable in procurement and tasked with carrying out, functions related to procurement. Nevertheless during interviews it was found that the often the PUs were headed by one person who knew procurement procedures, but was supported by personnel that were not familiar with the required regulations. Frequently, the most knowledgeable staff members are recent college graduates with degrees that included some training on procurement or related subject matter. The PPCC has focused its efforts on training members of PUs. Nevertheless, many personal lack sufficient training.

The Public Procurement and Concession Commission: The PPCC was established in 2010 through the Public Procurement and Concessions Act (PPC Act) with widespread authority over the procurement process. It is responsible for ensuring the economic and efficient use of public funds in all public procurements and concessions, and guaranteeing that these processes are conducted in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner.

The leadership of PPCC is vested in the Board of Commissioners (including a chairman and six other members) that oversees the Executive branch. The Executive Branch is headed by an Executive Director and the CARP, which is composed by five members. The Chairman of the PPCC and the members of the CARP are directly appointed by the President, and the PPCC's executive director is selected through a competitive hiring process driven by the PPCC's Board of Commissioners. This structure challenges the independency of the PPCC because there is no separation between the President and the procurement authority. Difficulties arising from the need to assuage political relationships did arise during interviews.



The main function of the PPCC are as follows:

- **Monitor compliance with this Act by all parties and persons to whom the Act applies.** The PPCC oversees all public procurement above the established thresholds. The PPCC monitors PE procurement plans. PE's are required to receive PPCC's "no objection" prior to awarding contracts above the thresholds (please see the Legal Framework for Procurement section of this report for more information on thresholds). Approval of procurement plans is often delayed due to the delays in the approval of the national budget, which is out of control of the PPCC. The mechanisms for issuing the required "no objection" letters for awarding above-threshold contracts are lacking. The PPCC has 14 days to issue an approval or rejection of the award. If no action is taken during these 14 days, the PE may proceed with the award (Section 31 of the PPC Act). This problem, combined with the other difficulty of paper-based letters simply getting lost, creates a broken system for PPCC monitoring compliance of procurement law.
- **Disseminate information related to this Act and information related thereto.** The PPCC efforts for disseminating important information and policies have been concentrated in providing trainings to PEs through a partnership with a USAID project called *Building Markets*. Both the PPCC and PEs expressed the need to secure more funding for skills building and training, particularly to PEs outside of Monrovia.
- **Inspect records to prevent corruption, as well as investigate and debar suppliers who have not fulfilled obligations.** PPCC lacks financial and staff resources to execute these inspections. PEs are frustrated with the lack of action taken by PPCC. This responsibility is not being executed to any extent.

- **Maintain an open, web-based, national database with procurement notices, invitations to bid (ITBs), contract award information above a specified threshold, complaints received, and outcomes of the procurement or Concession disputes.** The PPCC has a public portal (<http://www.ppcc.gov.lr/>) which partially gathers this information, as elaborated on in Technical Assessment section below. The first challenge is that there is no inter-institutional data management framework and the PPCC does not receive all ITBs or procurement notices. This makes centralizing information nearly impossible. Information that is available is in PDF format. The public portal does not meet the needs of the PPCC because of funding and IT resource gaps. The willingness to create the portal shows that the PPCC has enabled a more open and transparent contracting environment, but there is a lack of knowledge regarding the open contracting standards to make it effective.
- **Maintain and publish a list of suppliers, contractors, consultants, and prospective bidders who have been debarred from public procurement and communicate the list to procurement entities on a regular basis.** Over the past year the PPCC has developed an online vendor [registry](#) which is functioning but does not have a sustainability and data update plan.
- **Conduct independent reviews of complaints and appeals.** The Complaints, Appeals & Review Panel is responsible for executing this function of reviewing complaint and appeals. The members of the CARP are directly chosen by the President of Liberia, which puts into question their independence. The CARP is composed by 5 members: three licensed lawyers and two non-lawyers who have significant experience in the procurement or Concession process or in matters relating to the administration of procurement or Concession contracts. The PPC Act could be more precise around the profile of the CARP members in order to reflect the key cross sectoral procurement stakeholders in Liberia and guarantee a representation from the private sector, CSOs or other government agencies (Liberia Business Association, Association of Liberian Construction Contractors, Internal Audit Agency, etc). In addition, the fact that the CARP is part of the PPCC and under its Commissioners presents an independence problem if the subject of the complaint or appeals is the PPCC staff.
- **Develop rules, instructions, regulations and related documentation on public procurement and concessions procedures, including designing formats.** In implementation of this function, the PPCC has developed key policy documents and instructions, including the “PPCC Financial Management Policies & Procedures Manual,” “Amended Public Procurement and Concessions Act Regulations,” and “A Short Note on Framework Agreements & Advance Procurement”. This function of the PPCC, is an open door for the adoption of international standards and to create guidelines for PEs.

Internal Audit Agency (IAA): The IAA ensures legal compliance and supports improvements in by bringing a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, internal controls, and governance processes. The IAA reviews and verifies all PE's financial transactions. They ensure that contracting vendors are in compliance with the PPCC checklist where applicable, namely in the Article of Incorporation, Business Registration Certificate and Tax Clearance and Social Security Clearance.

Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP): The MFDP is involved during negotiations and signing of contracts over US \$250,000, which must be approved the MoJ (PPC Act 2010, Regulations 003). In addition, the MDFP requires a “non-objection” letter from the PPCC for all contracts that are above the threshold of US\$200,000 for Goods, US\$100,000 for Services and US\$400,000 for Works in

order to release funds. Linking the payment of contracts to the “non-objection” of the PPCC has allowed to insure the implementation of the PPC Act of 2010.

Ministry of Justice (MoJ): The MoJ is responsible for legal reviews of all concession bidding documents and concession agreements. Regarding public procurement, if there are any violations of the PPCC act from public officers, bidders or suppliers (Section 132 and 131 of the PPC Act) the MoJ can lead prosecutions. The MoJ is also responsible to attest any contract over \$250,000 USD after approval by MFDP.

Key Recommendations

Increase independence of the procurement authority. Because the Chairman of the PPCC is appointed by the President of Liberia, there is no independent check on the procurement process. In many countries, independence of the procurement sector is guaranteed by the creation of a committee whose members are selected through diverse means to select the head of the regulatory authority. ***Assuring the independence of the PPCC would increase public trust in the procurement process and potentially reduce concerns that the procurement process is tainted by politics.***

Create an inclusive and independent CARP at the PPCC. Poor use of the complaint mechanism within the PPCC indicates a lack of trust and a lack of reasonable expectation to have complaints redressed. Key stakeholders should be represented in the CARP of the PPCC to ensure checks and balances. Current membership of the CARP is not reflective of the key cross sectoral procurement stakeholders in Liberia. For example, the inclusion of the IAA on the CARP would help members to cross examine one another and provide expert opinion in cases relating to compliance which would ensure transparency and accountability in procurement processes. The members of the CARP are currently being appointed by the President. An independent commission with representatives from the GoL, CSOs and the private sector should appoint the members of the CARP.

Increase the technical capacities of PUs. The PPCC has lead numerous training focused on procurement processes, this effort needs to be continued and reinforced because there tends to be only one person that is knowledgeable on all of the processes. The development by PPCC (potentially with development partner support) of an easy-to-understand tutorial on Procurement Processes could also be useful for staff that might not have the proficiency to directly understand the PPC act and regulations. This training should also ensure that adequate data management plans and skills are in place.

5. Legal Framework for Procurement

A procurement needs assessment undertaken in 2003 by the NTGL in conjunction with the UN and the WB pointed out that the legal Framework for public procurement and concessions in Liberia found that procurement rules and procedures did not guarantee transparency, efficiency, equal opportunity to bidders or value for money. There was also no mechanism for procurement oversight or to deal with appeals and complaints. Contracts were often awarded politically without a competitive process and public entities were seldom held accountable for non-adherence to the approved budget for procurement expenditures. The reform of the public procurement system was clearly a priority for the government. The reform process was carried out through the PPC Act and the Procurement Regulations issued in 2010 underpin Liberia's public procurement framework. Some of the key elements comprised in the PPC Act to ensure transparency, accountability and competitiveness in all processes linked to public procurement of goods, services and works include:

- i) Mandatory professional training for public Procurement officials (Section 5)
- ii) Regulations addressing conflicts of interest (Section 13),
- iii) Strict formal limits for sole sourcing (Section 101) and advertised open competitive bidding as the default method of procurement (Section 46),
- iv) An independent administrative procurement Complaints body: the CARP, that allows unsuccessful bidders to challenge the PPCC decisions (Section 10),
- v) Sanctions, such as imprisonment for a maximum of five years, fines for up to US\$100,000 and suspensions from participating in public tender for companies found guilty of major violations.

Both the Global Integrity Report (GIR) and the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Performance Measurement (PEFA)⁴ framework point to deficiencies in public access to procurement Information (plans, bidding opportunities, contract awards, and data on resolution of procurement Complaints). Liberia scored 71 points out of 100 in GI's assessment of this dimension⁵. In accordance with the PPC Act, the PPCC has started publishing the procurement plans of the five largest spending ministries: finance, public works, health and social welfare, education and internal affairs. However, this has not happened systematically. Furthermore, while most ministries and agencies advertise contract opportunities that are for open competitive bidding, contract awards are rarely advertised.

Legislation

The Public Procurement and Concession Act of 2010 establishes the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC) with oversight responsibility to regulate and monitor all forms of public procurement and concessions practices in Liberia. The PPCC replaced the Contract and Monopolies Commission (CMC), which was mandated to monitor PEs' compliance with the Act of 2005 for all public procurement and awarding concessions. The PPCC is answerable to the National Legislature. The Act lays out reporting requirements to the legislature, stipulating that PPCC shall not later than one (1)

⁴ Liberia overview of public procurement, Anti-corruption Resource Center, www.u4.no, Page 3.

⁵ Liberia overview of public procurement, Anti-corruption Resource Center, www.u4.no

calendar month at the end of the fiscal year, submit to the Legislature and publish a written report which includes information related to the 5 stages of the Liberian government procurement processes: i) Planning, ii) Tender, iii) Award, iv) Contract, and v) Implementation. This annual report is produced in a timely manner and a hard copy is submitted to each member of the Legislature, but this report is not systematically made available to the public online as only the [2014 report](#) is available on the PPCC website.

The GoL has adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. Additional relevant legislation includes the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act of 2010, which recognizes access to information as a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution of Liberia. The FOI Act also states in section 1.3.2 that "*Access to information [...] refers to the right of the public to request, receive, review, reproduce and retain records and documents held by public bodies and private entities performing public functions or receiving public funding.*" This in itself supports the right of citizens to access information during the 5 stages of the procurement process.

Although the FOI Act was voted in 2010, the government has not been effective in responding to information requests. According to the report "*The System for Tracking and Monitoring Freedom of Information Requests in Liberia. Findings from a Year of Data Collection*"⁶ published by the Carter Center in August 2016, for the reporting period of September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016 there were 278 requests of information reported and entered into their system. Only around 15 percent, or 41 requests, were responded to with full or partial information. The percentage drops even lower when the period for responding is considered. Only 6 percent of the tracked requests were responded to within the timeframe allotted by law.

Procurement Methods

The procurement methods enabled under the PPC Act of 2010 are as follow:

National Competitive Bidding (NCB) includes procurement proceedings in which the PE decides that only domestic suppliers or contractors are eligible to submit bids.

The PPC Act of 2010 states that NCB shall be advertised for at least four (4) weeks to allow submission of bids in order to allow sufficient time for the invitation to reach candidates and to enable them to prepare and submit bids. Any Goods tender above the threshold of \$10,000USD, any Service tender above the threshold of \$30,000USD and any Works tender above the threshold of \$50,000USD have to be advertised in the media for four (4) weeks.

The NCB is complemented by the Small Business Empowerment Act (2014), which created the Bureau of Small Business Administration (SBA) of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, poised to assist, promote and foster the interests of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) by ensuring that they receive their fair share of procurement contracts for the provision of goods and services to the Government. So, in fulfillment of Part IV, Sec 3.1,(c) of the SBA Act of 2014, the SBA "shall ensure that, in respect of each fiscal year of the Government, at least 25% of all public procurement contracts shall be allocated and provided to Liberian-owned SMEs, of which at least 5% shall be allocated and provided to Women-owned MSMEs."

⁶ <https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/ati/ati-liberia-tracking-info-requests-092816.pdf>, Pages 7-10.

Request for Quotation (RFQ) includes procurement for readily available commercially standard goods, not specially manufactured to the particular specifications of the PE and the estimated value does not exceed the amount set in the Schedule.

International Competitive Bidding (ICB) may be used whenever open competitive bidding is used and effective competition cannot be obtained unless foreign firms are invited to bid. For all ICB procurement, the law requires:

- The ITB and bidding documents shall be in English
- The ITB shall be placed in a newspaper with adequate circulation to attract foreign competition as provided in this Act;
- At least six (6) weeks shall be allowed for submission of bids in order to allow sufficient time for the invitation to reach candidates and to enable them to prepare and submit the bids;
- Technical specifications shall, to the extent compatible with national requirements, be based on international standards or standards widely used in international trade and in particular shall conform to the provisions of this Act;
- Bidders shall be permitted to express their bids, as well as any security documents to be presented by them, in their respective domestic currencies, or in a currency widely used in international trade and stated in the bidding documents;
- General and special conditions of contract shall be of a kind generally used in international trade.

Request for Proposal (RFP) is used in request for proposals for the procurement of consultant services, subject only to the exceptions provided in sections 70 and 71 of the PPC Act.

Open Competitive Bidding may include a prequalification stage or the application of a post qualification procedure: When it is not feasible to define fully the technical or contractual aspects of the procurement to elicit competitive bids; and when, because of the complex nature of the goods, works or services to be procured, the PE wishes to consider various technical or contractual solutions, and to discuss with bidders the relative merits of those variants before deciding on the final technical or contractual specifications.

Restricted Bidding is used when goods, works or services are only available from a limited number of bidders; additionally, when the time and cost of considering a large number of bids is disproportionate to the estimated value of the procurement.

Sole-Source is when only one supplier has the exclusive right to manufacture the goods, carry out the works, or perform the services to be procured and no suitable alternative is available.

During an emergency that threatens public health, welfare, safety or security, or brings about an urgent need for preservation of critical services or programs the processes the PPC Act establishes that the process described above can be ignored. During interviews, members of PUs mentioned that they didn't follow the procurement process during the Ebola crisis. The system is not well-adapted to national emergencies and they had to act fast in order to respond to Ebola.

Common Practices

The most frequent procurement method being used by procuring entities is NCB. NCB is widely used by procuring entities because most procurement plans fall within the NCB threshold. International companies can register locally and also are allowed to bid through local partners. If an international company is not locally registered with the Liberia Business Registry, the law allows for that company's

local partner in Liberia to bid on their behalf in a NCB Process. To be compliant with the PPCC vendors registry for NBC, businesses need to prove, aside from having the necessary qualifications, that they pay taxes in Liberia and that they pay social security contributions for its employees on time. This limits the possibilities for Foreign business to participate in NBC.

Even though during the Fiscal Year of 2014/2015 the ICB only represented 1.79% of all procurements for Goods, Works & non-consulting Services according to the PPCC, it represents 33,84% of its monetary value. NCB only represents 25.33% of the monetary value for Goods, Works & non-Consulting Services. International Companies are able to bid in a minority of Public Procurement, but this contracts represent over a third of the national budget allocated to the procurement of Goods, Works & non-Consulting services.

Procurement Method for Goods, Works & non Consulting Services	Numbers of Plans		Value	
	Count	Percent	Amount	Percentage
ICB	23	1.79%	110,372,956	33.84%
NCB	506	39.29%	82,623,185	25.33%
RB	181	14.05%	110,932,418	34.01%
RFQ	496	38.51%	2,772,248	0.85%
Sole Source	82	6.36%	19,473,568	5.97%
Total	1,288	100.00%	326,174,375	100.00%

Source: Listing of Contract Packages on Approved Procurement Plan FY 2014/2015

Sector Spotlight: Extractives Concessions

Under the PPC Act of 2010 PART VI a concession is defined as *“a grant of an interest in a public asset by Government or its agency to a private sector entity for a specified period during which the asset may be operated, managed, utilized or improved by the private sector entity who pays fees or royalties under the condition that the Government retains its overall interest in the asset and that the asset will revert to the Government or agency at a determined time”*. Concession variants include:

- (a) **“Build/Refurbish/Modernize-Operate-Transfer (BOT)”**: Private entity financed program, handed over to government after a defined period of time.
- (b) **“Build/Refurbish/Modernize-Transfer-Operate (BTO)”**: Government-owned facility, built by private entity and leased to private entity for a defined period of time.
- (c) **“Build/Refurbish/Modernize-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT)”**: Facility is franchised to private entity.
- (d) **“Build/Refurbish/Modernize-Own-Operate (BOO)”**: Government either transfers ownership and responsibility for a public facility or contracts with a private entity to build, own and operate a new facility subject to terms and conditions laid down by the Government.
- (e) **“Joint Ventures”**: Government shares investment, profits, losses and/or control of the operations of a facility with the private entity.
- (f) **“Management Contract/Service Contract”**: Private entity is engaged as an agent of the Government/public entity, to perform a public function on behalf of the Government.
- (g) **“Outsourcing”**: Government contracts a private entity for the continuous provision of an otherwise public service paid for by the public entity.
- (h) **“Partial Privatization”**: The partial disposal of Government interest to a private entity other than through the Stock Exchange.

Transparency in the Procurement Process

Open bid proceedings should be used, to which equal access shall be provided to all eligible and qualified bidders without discrimination, subject only to the exceptions provided for the methods of Restricted Bidding, Request for Proposals, Request for Quotations and Sole Source. The invitation to bid, or an invitation to prequalify, shall be published in the Procurement Bulletin, Gazette, national print media of wide circulation and electronic media, when feasible, and, in the case of ICB, also in selected international media. Whenever feasible, and in accordance with the regulations, ITBs or to apply for prequalification shall be published on the internet and the publication of the invitation shall run at least for the period of time specified in the regulations. Procuring entities generally comply with publication requirements, and when PEs do not comply, the PPCC has the authority to annul the contract award and request legal compliance. The PPCC didn't have statistics regarding non compliance to publications requirements, but they did mention this is as an example of the work they do.

The Public Procurement Act of 2010 specifically mandates that contract awards (including the name and address of the supplier) shall be published when the estimated value of the contract is above US\$25,000 for goods, above US\$10,000 for services and in the case of contracts for the procurement of works above US\$50,000. Tender Notices and Contract Awards for procurement contracts above the thresholds should be published in the Procurement Bulletin, Gazette and any newspaper of wide national circulation. Although the law requires the preparation of procurement plans by all government procuring entities with a view to achieving maximum value for public expenditure, there are no legal provisions that demands their publication. In practice, the PPCC publishes all procurement plans by entity in PDF format. Tender Notices are not published by the PPCC, nor centralized in any website. PE publish them at their will in different newspapers. Contract awards aren't published in a centralized website either, but the PPCC published a report from 2010 to 2013 where the contract awards could be found within a report in PDF format.

Meanwhile, the FOI Act of 2010, guarantees the right of access to information, which can be used in cases where proactive disclosure is not required (e.g. procurement plans). The FOI law also applies to private entities that receive public resources and benefits, engage in public functions, and/or provide public services. Challenges with bureaucracy still exist, causing delays to the request and access to information regarding public procurement processes.

The National Code of Conduct Act of the Republic of Liberia, The PPC Act of 2010 and the Public Financial Management Law (PFM) of 2009 constitute legislations that strengthen anti-corruption efforts. For example, Section 10.1 of the National Code of Conduct Act requires every Public Official and Employee of Government involved in making decisions affecting contracting, tendering or procurement, and issuance of licenses of various types shall sign performance or financial bonds and shall in addition declare his or her income, assets and liabilities prior to taking office and thereafter.

Key Recommendations

Amendment to the PPC Act to include mandatory disclosure of procurement data

The PPC Act of 2010 leaves to the discretion of the PE the use of newspaper or website for the publication of Contract awards and tender notices, and no specification of machine-readable format (e.g. OCDS) is made. Regarding Procurement Plans, they are currently being published by PPCC on their own initiative. No implementation data is being published in Liberia. The majority of procurement data are in PDFs, leading to difficulty in any efforts to systematically use data for analysis or anti-corruption monitoring. Some Procuring Entities decide to publish this information in the E-mansion Website. It would be recommended to have a public website that centralized by legal mandate all Tender Notices and Contract Awards. *The PPC Act should be amended to include the mandatory disclosure of procurement data in open format at each of the procurement stages: planning, tender, awards, contracts and implementation.*

Provide methods for international companies to participate in National Competitive Bidding (NCB). As in other countries in the region, there is an opportunity to enhance competition by reviewing the law on NCB to explore how international companies could participate in local procurement. Facilitating local affiliates of international companies, or establishing a budget threshold (%) that can be allocated to an international partner (sub-contracted to a national firm) for NCB could allow local firms to benefit from international expertise and experience, while preserving their ability to compete and win public contracts.

6. Policy Context Analysis

Liberia has adopted a legal framework that focus on fighting corruption, although this is a significant advance, they still have a long road ahead in regards to transparency, including open contracting. The Freedom of Information Act from 2010 opens the doors for citizens to request information, but doesn't instaurate policies around the mandatory publication of data or the format of this publications. The implementation of the FOI has been limited, with a low number of information request and a low rate of government response. In the public procurement sector, the PPCC has shown leadership in the publication of procurement data, but the data available is scattered, incomplete and in close format. There is a need for improving the policies around data publication and around ensuring that published data is in an open format.

General Transparency and anti-corruption initiatives

GoL has made significant strides in adopting international best practices to curb corruption and ensure transparency and accountability in the public sector and the release of information to the public. Of particular importance are the Liberia Anti-Corruption Act (2008) the Freedom of Information Act (2010), the National Code of Conduct for Public officials and employees (2014) and the Liberia Extractive Industry Transparency Act (2009). These responded to the Needs Assessment conducted by the NTGL in 2003 in conjunction with the United Nations and World Bank, which determined that the policy, procedures and practices for awarding contracts under public procurement and concessions were not done with economy, efficiency and transparency. Based upon this assessment, the government decided that public procurement and concessions would be reformed in two phases: 1) to prepare interim public procurement policy & procedures and interim guidelines for awarding concessions by the NTGL, and 2) to prepare a comprehensive public procurement and concessions law.

Public expressions and declaration of support for open contracting and open government data by key have been made by the President, the head of the Public Procurement and Concession Commission and other procurement stakeholders.

- On January 16, 2006, during the Inauguration of the President of Liberia, she vowed to fight corruption head-on describing it as public enemy number one.⁷
- On October 31, 2014 the CEO of the PPCC vowed to fight corruption by bringing to justice those who will want to circumvent the procurement law and jeopardize the gains made in the fight against corruption.⁸ PPCC officials also mentioned during the interview that the next goal is to develop and roll out an e-procurement system across government that would ensure transparency and accountability.
- On June 30, 2013 the GoL, through the leadership of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism signed onto OGP and launched the Open Budget Initiative to ensure that a platform is created to provide regular budget update to all citizens via SMS and other associated technologies through English and various local languages. The Ministry of Finance abides by the

⁷ <http://www.easybib.com/reference/guide/mla/website>

⁸ http://www.pccc.gov.lr/2press.php?news_id=89&related=7&pg=sp

FOI Act of 2010 and releases data related to the budget and other financial transactions of the government upon receipt of a formal request to the MFDP.

The GoL in 2008 passed into law the Liberia Anti-Corruption Act which instituted an anti-corruption policy and a comprehensive strategy that outlines the preventative, educational and enforcement measures to be taken to combat corruption in Liberia and specifically provide for the establishment of an independent Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate and prosecute cases of corruption. The Liberian government passed into law the Freedom of Information Act (2010), strengthened by Article 15(c) of the Constitution of Liberia, which provides that no limitation shall be placed on the public right to be informed about the government and its functionaries. In practice, request of information are not always answered by the government, and when they are answered they don't respect the delays in time established by the FOI. According to the Carter center public officials, especially at the county level, are ignoring requests for public information. In many instances these situations involve requests for information related to public finance expenditures, which should be available automatically without official approval. In addition, the citizens of Liberia are not using this right as the number of request for information remain low⁹.

Transparency in Public Procurement

As stated in the PPC Act, 2010 section 39, sub-section 1 & 2, public procuring entities are mandated to publish procurement plans, tender notices and contract awards and related data through the local media, popular online sites and in the Procurement Bulletin. The Procurement Plan for example has a template that is used across the public sector which is issued by the PPCC. The PPCC now publishes all key government line ministries procurement plans, contract awards and the list of domestic vendors qualified to enter into government bids. These data, however, are not published in open, machine-readable formats, limiting their utility. In addition, sub-national government entities are not currently following procurement processes. This is due to their isolation, many rural areas in Liberia are hard to access through roads, especially during the rainy season and this areas often also lack the necessary communication structure to be able to be integrated into the public procurement system. Nevertheless, it is important to note that most of the procurement done by this entities is done through central agencies, which then channel the procured services or goods to them. The MFDE is currently running a pilot to integrate sub-national entities to the centralized financial system. This would open a door for the PPCC to enforce the compliance of this rural entities to the PPC Act regarding public procurement for all procurements that are not channel through central agencies.

There is no national policy on data collection and disclosure at each stage of the procurement process. From 2010-2013, the PPCC collected data on the contract award information and published it in PDF format on its website. The collected information is: PE, Contract Package, Contract Value/Cost, Method used, Contractor, date of Contract and Fiscal Year.

In July 2016, the PPCC launched its new "*e-procurement platform*", this website has a section where the PPCC intends to publish an updated list of complaints and opinions of the CARP. The Platform also includes a section called *Approved Plans* which should serve to upload all intents to award contracts that have been approved by the PPCC. The PPCC has a hard copy of all contracts that have been submitted to them for approval (no-objection). Nevertheless this section is empty as of December 2016. It is possible for the users to find information for contracts awarded during the 2014/2015 fiscal year in PDF format in

⁹ <https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/ati/ati-liberia-tracking-info-requests-092816.pdf>, Page 12. 2016.

the *Documents* section of the *PPCC e-procurement platform*. This document was published by the PPCC's Executive Director after being publicly accused for approving too many sole-source procurements. As a response, a document that collected all procurement methods for the 2014/2015 was published after the PPCC created an excel database with the relevant data. This report, which is called *Listing of Contract Packages on Approved Procurement Plans FY 2014/2015* was published in January in 2016 and the PPCC Director plan to publish a similar report in 2017 for the 2015/2016 fiscal year. This report contains less data than the reports published between 2010-2013. The report includes the following information for each contract approved by the PPCC during the 2015/2016 years: PE, Procurement Method, Total Value, Package and Justification (whether the PPCC approved the Sole source method).

Meanwhile, the PPC Act states in section 43 (1) that "The Procuring Entity shall preserve all documentation relating to the procurement proceedings in accordance with applicable rules concerning archiving of Government documentation, but at a minimum it shall be kept for a period of six (6) years following the date of final completion of the procurement contract, or from the date of rejection of all bids or cancellation of the proceeding, as the case may be." Additionally, the law states that the Procuring Entity shall prepare and maintain a summary report of all its procurement proceedings.

In Conclusion, the PPCC's *e-procurement platform* is a website with information that is out of date and in PDF format. The PPCC possess all contracts that they approve, this is enough to create a solid public procurement database, the problem is that this data is in hard copies and there is no systematization of the information contained in these contracts.

Key Recommendations

Inclusion of open contracting into Liberia's OGP commitments. Key political leaders including the President and the Executive Director of the PPCC should make a clear commitment to transparency in public contracting. Key strategic governance documents, such as [PPC Act, 2010](#), the [PFM Act, 2009](#) of Liberia should include transparent public contracting as an objective feeding into wider objectives, such as increasing value for money, fairness and integrity of public spending. ***This can be done by including open contracting into the commitments made by Liberia to the OGP.***

Improve hiring practices to ensure that the PPCC and PEs have staff with the necessary skill set. Policies should provide for hiring staff that has necessary technical skills to handle procurement processes. Acquiring adequate results in the implementation of public procurement processes will require trained technical staff in the field. ***This can be enforced by having policies that provide for hiring only qualified staff to handle procurement processes and by requiring a minimum number of hours per year of procurement training, something which is yet to have binding effects on the policy context of hiring procurement staffs in Liberia.***

Timely reporting of data by national and sub-national procuring entities. Reporting of procurement data by public procuring entities to PPCC is marked by delays. This is particularly associated with sub-national procuring entities faced with problems of internet connectivity to deliver soft copies of reports, combined with bad road conditions that hinder the delivery of hard copies. Henceforth, strengthening internet and ICT facilities at sub-national levels will enhance the timely submission and publication of procurement related reports.

7. Technical Assessment

Public procurement processes in Liberia are managed through a manual system based in hard copies within the PPCC and Procuring Entities. The publication of public procurement data online is done in PDF format and it is not available for all procurement stages. The need for the development of an online public procurement system arises as a need to improve the efficiency and transparency of public procurement in Liberia. Especially in a context when the Internal Audit Agency and the MFD have already developed online management systems.

The technical assessment section explains the technical systems that the Liberian government has deployed to manage procurement processes and the characteristic of the data the government collect through the system. It also takes a deeper look at the stride the government has made to adopt roll out an e-procurement platform and its attitude towards open contracting.

Public access to procurement data

The main source of public procurement data is the PPCC. The PPCC launched an “e-procurement platform” in July 2016. This name can be misleading as it is more a demonstration of what the PPCC aspires to than an accurate description of the current state of the platform. The e-procurement platform is a website which currently has:

1. A vendor registry;
2. All procurement plans by PE starting from FY 2015/2016 in PDF format;
3. All approved concession plans starting from FY 2015/2016 in PDF format;
4. An approved contracts section which is currently empty;
5. A complaints section which as of December 2016 one complain and the CARP ruling for this complaint in PDF format, and;
6. A documents section which has legal documents and reports in PDF format. Within this section, the PPCC has published a report on approved contracts during the 2014/2015 fiscal with data shown in the table below.

Field Name	Description
Name of Entity	The name of the PE.
Procurement Method	The name of the procuring method that was used.
Total	The Total number of procurements contract that were approved by the PPCC for each PE.
Value	Total value of of each procurement method by Institution
Package	The type of the goods and services that were procured (i.e. Food items, stationery, legal services...) by contract.
Amount	The value of the Contract in USD.
Justification	For Sole Source procurements it indicates whether the procurement method was approved by the PPCC.

In addition to this e-procurement platform, the PPCC also has a [website](#) which has the following data:

1. Some procurement plans by PE for 2014-2015 in PDF format
2. Some Bids for 2006-2016 in PDF format.
3. Some contract award information for 2008-2013 in PDF format with fields described in the table below.

Field Name	Description
Entity	The name of the PE.
Contract Package	The type of the goods and services that were procured (i.e. Food items, stationery, legal services...).
Contract Value/Cost	The value of the Contract in USD.
Method used	The type of procurement method that was used.
Contractor	The name of the vendor or consultant to whom the contract was awarded.
Date of contract	The date in which the contract was signed.
Fiscal Year	The fiscal year to which the funds correspond.

Procuring entities also publish public procurement data, they publish their bids in newspapers of wide circulation and sometimes they use their own websites or the documents section of the [e-mansion](#) website.

Procurement data in Liberia is not open: is often incomplete, scattered through different websites and newspapers and the information that is available is in pdf format.

Key Data Categories			
The following information types are among those that procurement authorities made public online for January-June, 2016. (A = Always; S = Sometimes; N = Never)			
Planning	Online	Award (cont.)	Online
- Unique IDs for contracting process	N	- Award Amount	A
		- Reasons for award	N
- Procurement plans	A	- Complaints procedure	S
- Consultation documents	A	Contract	

Tender		- Contract documents	N
- Tender document	S	- Contract amount	S
- Bidding document	N	- Contract dates	S
- Bidder names	N	Implementation	
- Tender dates	S	- Milestones	N
- Bidder blacklist	N	- Payments	N
Award		- Evaluation results	N
- Supplier(s)	S	- Procurement process statistics	N

When citizens use the FOI act to request data, the PPCC provides the requested documents or data in hard copies, requesters are responsible for paying the price of the photocopies. However, the PPCC has envisioned the use of computers and tablets that would be used to access data from a portal at their offices in what they call a Data Center. Some of the public procurement data is available in an open, structured and machine readable format, for instance the data regarding the award decision dates and approval. But the data regarding the content of the award is in PDF.

The procurement system

The procurement process for procurement plan and contract award approval within the PPCC is done through hard copies. The procurement plans and awards submitted for no-objection enter the PPCC system but sometimes get lost as they don't have a tracking system. There is no e-procurement system in place and no tracking system to see where submissions stand in the approval process.

Procuring Entities have hard copy systems to track their procurement processes which they keep in binders. Some organization like the JFK Hospital have created procurement manuals to establish clear processes for procurement but this is not standard practice.

The PPCC Director expressed his wish to build an e-procurement system that is linked to other government entities, for instance the MFDP's IFMIS and the Liberia Revenue Authority's [Standard Integrated Government Tax Administration System \(SIGTAS\)](#). The integration of these system will generate a synchronized public e-procurement platform.

System of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning: Liberia launched its Integrated Financial Management Information System (FMIS) in 2011, an integrated Public Financial Management (PFM) system based on the [FreeBalance Accountability Suite](#). Operating as a computerized budget management and accounting system, the IFMIS automates key aspects of budget preparation, execution, accounting, reporting and human resource management in ministries and agencies. Data in the IFMIS is captured by classifications, functions and commitments. More than fifty (50) government ministries, agencies and commissions financial data processing are enabled by the IFMIS. The system is currently being piloted in four (4) counties: Grand Bassa, Nimba, Margibi, Bong, specifically within the Health and Education in coordination with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The MFDP intends to scale to additional four (4) counties by 2017/2018 fiscal year.

The Internal Audit System: The Internal Audit Agency (IAA) is rolling out for effective use the Pentana software¹⁰ which is an internal audit practice tool that enables full automation of internal auditing. The Pentana will ensure better documentation of the internal audit activities, adherence to the risk based internal auditing methodology, standardized reporting of internal audit results, and use of internal audit programs that are specific to the client entities but thorough in their application.

Key Recommendations

Conduct a detailed technical needs assessment for an e-procurement system implementation. The GoL, with the leadership of the PPCC should partner with a well qualified IT company to *conduct an in-depth analysis of the existing systems, and map an integrated system that would allow the digitization* i) of all the documents dealt with at PPCC, ii) of the exchanges of data between PPCC, MFDP (no objection for approval of payments to award winners) and Procuring Entities. The adoption of e-procurement would facilitate access to open and machine-readable procurement information, ideally in OCDS format. This would translate to managing and releasing procurement data with an objective to unify systems and standardize data across institutions.

The PPCC created an in-house “e-Procurement Platform” that includes a vendor registry, has public procurements plans for all procurement entities and public documentation (PPC Act, PPC Act regulation, Analysis on the structure of Procurement awards in Liberia). This was done with very limited budget and with staff that had limited capacities. The executive director of the PPCC has a clear idea about the e-Procurement Platform they wish to build but lack the financial capacities to fund it. ***The AfDB has been discussing the possibilities of funding an e-procurement system in Liberia, which other DPs could partner to support.*** The development of this system should be accompanied by a reflection around unified data, as this is harder to implement once the system is running. The OCDS would be a potential source for the unification of data and for ensuring data disclosure in an open format.

Develop a comprehensive procurement data management plan. Any e-procurement system should be accompanied with training in each of the organizations involved and should include a data management plan. This data management should be created by the PPCC as they have the mandate to develop rules, instructions, regulations and related documentation on public procurement and concessions public procurement and concessions procedures, including designing formats. The plan should be integrated into the PPC Act where roles and responsibilities of each stakeholders in terms of data collection, use and publication should be stated. This will also help avoid proliferation of independent, internal procurement management systems among Procuring Entities. To facilitate data quality, monitoring, and analysis, unique identifiers for each contract should be maintained throughout the procurement process.

Design and implement Unique Identifiers. Creating a unique identification for each contract process (from planning stage through implementation) would enable the PPCC to gain valuable insight into the procurement process and benefit from powerful data analytics on corruption risk, value for money, efficiency, and other key issues of importance to the Agency. ***Creating an interagency team consisting of members from the Ministry of Economy, the PPCC and the General Secretariat to facilitate agreement on a unique identification system and the technical needs of each agency and ministry to ensure proper implementation. Ideally, this system should be initiated through the IFMIS chart of accounts, then reused by other systems across government.***

¹⁰ <http://iaa.gov.lr/pages1.php?pgID=3>

Development of a unified data standard. One of the functions of the PPCC according to the PPC Act of 2013 is to develop rules, instructions, regulations and related documentation on public procurement and concessions procedures, including designing formats. ***The PPCC should assume the leadership role to develop a standardization of the data standards or PEs by creating a guideline for reporting data in line with OCDS.***

8. User Engagement

Since its creation in 2010, the PPCC has played a central role in the engagement of the different stakeholders in the Public Procurement sector. The main channel they have used for this is their Annual Public Procurement Forum¹¹ where they invite civil society, the private sector and international organizations. Moreover, they have worked with different organizations to involve the private sector in the creation of an online vendor registry. The efforts to engage users in public procurement are still limited.

Engagement of Civil Society

The PPCC has held annual brainstorming and review activities of the PPC Act relative to the implementation of the PPC Act of 2010, as well as to identify areas necessary for further action. The brainstorming sessions are part of PPCC's 2016 Public Procurement Forum organized primarily to create new opportunities for stocktaking of activities and sharing of experiences. The brainstorming session's specific objectives are to review the PPC Act to determine areas where amendments are necessary to ensure efficiency and enhance the effective achievement of its objectives. The sessions also seek to determine the efficiency of collaboration between stakeholders in the public and private sectors involved with procurement and determine avenues for strengthening capacity building of stakeholders. These sessions further seek to review procedures for compliance monitoring of procuring entities and the sanctions regime for non-compliance. In February 2008 the PPCC held its first Annual Procurement Forum which gave rise to the amendment and restatement of the PPC Act in 2010. The new law addressed some of the critical legal issues which previously presented difficulties in the implementation process. The Schedule of Thresholds was removed from the law, adjusted upward and placed into regulations. This action was necessary to allow changes in the Schedule of Thresholds on a time-to-time basis. Section 5(I) of the PPC Act mandates the Commission to hold an annual procurement forum on the status of the implementation of the Law.

For easy access and understanding of the National Budget the government uses the Open Budget Initiative, a customized program for information dissemination at the grassroots level in relation to county development and social development funds. For instance, the MFDP has organized town hall meetings, dramas and displayed electronic billboards at key community centers / town halls to inform citizens about the national budget and the government procurement processes¹².

A system introduced by the PPCC to provide price range and templates for procuring items for public agencies was made available.¹³ At the beginning of every fiscal year, since 2015/2016 the publication of approved procurement plans for public procuring entities have been moved to an online searchable database platform as part of the new e-procurement portal being developed by the Commission. In addition, the four weeks advertisement period usually enable procurement data users to prepare bid document and participate in the bidding process.

In 2010, the Coalition for Transparency and Accountability in Education (COTAE) embarked on a yearlong initiative with focus on the Liberian Education Sector. The exercise, which runs under the

¹¹ http://www.ppcc.gov.lr/2press.php?news_id=97&related=7&pg=sp

¹² http://www.cabri-sbo.org/uploads/files/Documents/liberia_2012_approval_external_citizens_budget_ministry_of_finance_ecowas_english_1.pdf, Page 26

¹³ www.ppcc.gov.lr/2content.php?main=27&related=27&pg=mp

theme: “Procuring the Best for Quality Education,” inquired into the sector’s procurement framework whether it is effective and sound and meets best standards. A countrywide undertaking sponsored by OSIWA, the project sought to tap into local strength by building local people’s capacity to ably engage and impact educational policy through advocacy and proactive monitoring.¹⁴ Although this project trained 75 persons around how to identify corruption in public procurement in the education sector, the overall objective of it was to identify corruption practices and to identify a set of recommendations to fight corruption. There was no evaluation of the implementation of this recommendations, not a follow up for the 75 persons who were trained.

Monitoring and evaluation of procurement efficiency, competitiveness, fairness, and disclosure are key priorities for procurement processes in Liberia. For instance, legal aspects relating to Monitoring and Evaluation are particularly important for all government projects where monitoring can viewed as a continuing function, enabling the GoL to use systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide status on the progress and achievement of objectives in the use of allocated funds. The evaluation of public projects should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both government and the public. Nevertheless, this monitoring and evaluation of procurement processes is not a reality in Liberia. During interviews there was a general discontent with the lack of evaluation of contract implementation in the procurement sector. Both the PPCC and Procuring entities mentioned there was a need to start monitoring the implementation of contracts and to create a black list of vendors. In addition to the Monitoring and Evaluation there is also a need to publish the results of this work in an open format.

Engagement of the Private Sector

The PPCC has created an online vendor registry that allows to identify which vendors comply with the requirements for obtaining the PPCC non objection for contract award. For the creation of this vendor registry, the PPCC seeked the support of the Building Markets project as they have created a business database by sector where they distribute public procurement opportunities through sms. The PPCC identified vendors for their registry through them. This effort should be reinforced to increase the number of vendors by informing the private sector of this registry.

Through the PPCC’s Annual Procurement Forum, the PPCC has also engaged with the private sector on a yearly base. In this forums they evaluate the implementation of the PPCC Act of 2010. For example the PPCC worked with Liberia Chamber of Commerce and the ALCC Contractor in the preparation and passage of the decent work bill into law and the Liberian Small Business Act.

Engagement through the CARP

As part of feedback redress mechanisms, complaints can be filed during awards of bids. This is enshrined in the PPC Act of 2010 provided for under PART VIII – COMPLAINTS AND REVIEW PROCESS Right to Review. Complaints can be filed by any bidder who has suffered, any person who has grounds to believe that he, she, or the entity he or she represents has been prevented from becoming a bidder in violation of the PPCC Act. The law provides substantial room to manoeuvre for citizens, the public sector and CSO’s to make complaints to the CARP. Unfortunately, the PPCC website has registered only 1 complaint since 2013.¹⁵

¹⁴ www.tiliberia.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Lifting_Education_Through_Accountability_print1.pdf

¹⁵ <http://ppcc.gov.lr/2content.php?sub=132&related=25&third=132&pg=sp>

Key Recommendations

Reinforce the CARP. Currently the PPCC website has a complaint section called “CARP”. *Since 2013, only one new complaint has been uploaded into this PPCC’s website.* It would be necessary to evaluate if this is the only Complaint that the CARP has received (and if so, if this is indicative of challenges in lodging complaints through the system). *PPCC should automatically upload into the website all complaints made to the CARP. This should be accompanied with a public guide that explain to citizens and vendors what mechanism are available to them if they wish to make a complaint about a public procurement process.* This will also increase the citizens trust in the system and reinforce their determination to make complaints.

Encourage and increase efforts being made by the PPCC Vendor Registry. The PPCC has created an online vendor registry that allows for identification of which vendors comply with the requirements for obtaining the PPCC non objection for contract award. This effort should be reinforced to increase the number of vendors by informing the private sector of this registry. *Maintaining a vendor registry requires for the PPCC and vendors to work hand in hand to update information in a timely manner. In addition, the PPCC should continue to train Procuring Entities so that they always check the vendor registry information before making an award decision.*

Gather feedback of key procurement stakeholders regarding their contracting data needs to inform priorities in planning data disclosure efforts. This can be done by organizing multi-stakeholder forums-events or holding an online consultation. Such mechanism could become constant and regular channel of communication between data providers and users. It is important that stakeholders are present: procuring entities, the PPCC, international organizations, CSO’s, journalist and citizens.

9. Stakeholder Identification

Liberia's public procurement is centralized around the PPCC. Outside of the PPCC, international organizations have shown commitment to the strengthening and evaluation of the public procurement sector through the funding of reports, forums, surveys and the latest discussions around the creation of an e-procurement platform. The main stakeholder in the private sector are the vendors that apply to bids or are interested in applying to bids. Among CSO's and media outlets, the barriers that exist for the understanding and the access to procurement data limit the work they can do regarding public procurement. Nevertheless, the corruption scandals like the tampering of procurement laws by politicians to favor Sable Mining¹⁶ that have caught the public eye during 2016 have created an interest from civil society and mass media around public procurement.

Key government procurement actors

The GoL, through the leadership of the PPCC has started walking the long road towards openness in contracting. The availability procurement plans, contract reports, and other relevant information regarding tenders, bid documents as well as efforts to develop an e-procurement system further validate small progress in the attitudes of openness of primary government agencies (the PPCC and MFDP). But, there are limited actions to guarantee the openness of procurement data outside of the PPCC. The data that the PPCC releases is not complete, nor in an open format.

The PPCC is the motor of the public procurement sector and Liberia as they regulate procurement and concessions as well as publish procurement and concession data. The MFDP plays a key role in public development as their systems requires the PPCC's "no-objection" letter to release fund above a certain threshold. Finally, the Internal Audit Agency(IAA), plays the role of a cop who is always reviewing that the PUs follow the correct procurement procedures.

Key civil society/media procurement actors:

Civil society/media stakeholders in the last decade have performed in a proactive way by engaging government and international partners to conform to international best practices of contracting. For instance, the goal of the Green Advocate "Rights and Business Initiative" is to ensure environmental and social sustainability of natural resources contracts and concessions. This organization has centered their efforts in asking for more transparency in concession contracts, specially in the mining sector. In the past, large amounts of Liberia's resources (natural and financial) have been lost through procurement, concession, contract and licensing practices. Additionally, many Liberian government contracts have not met internationally accepted standards, including natural resources management through a grant of large scale industrial contractual rights to multinational companies with very little benefit trickling down to the people.

The organization **Building Markets** leads the efforts to bring together small and medium businesses with public procurement opportunities. They have created a business database by sector and they distribute public procurement opportunities through SMS. The PPCC worked jointly with this organization to create the Vendor Registry that is currently in the PPCC e-procurement platform.

¹⁶ <http://frontpageafricaonline.com/index.php/politics/2810-criminal-court-c-to-hear-tyler-s-motion-for-disclosure-of-evidence>

The **Frontpage Africa** newspaper has made public denunciations around corruption in the public procurement system. They specialize in investigative journalism and have been able to identify instances where public procurement processes haven't been followed. They have manifested their interest in analyzing public procurement data, but feel they lack the necessary knowledge to understand the procurement processes and vocabulary particular to this sector. They regret the lack of open procurement data, as all information is in PDF format.

Public Procurement corruption cases in Liberian media in 2016

Aminata and Sons. During the period of 2011-2012, the Government of Japan donated a consignment of oil valued up to US\$13 million to the GoL as part of its bilateral assistance program. The product was wrongfully given to Aminata & Sons without the MOC and LPRC observing the PPCC Law that calls for a bidding process of which the two public entities did not exercise due diligence¹⁷.

Sable Mining Company. Employees of this company are accused of bribing government officials to change the PPCC Law to avoid any bidding process to enable them obtain the approval for mining of the Wologizi Mountain in Lofa County¹⁸. Global Witness reports that the company paid over US\$900,000 to change the PPCC Law.

Liberia Free Zone Authority. The General Auditing Commission reviewed 05 sample vouchers selected from the MFDP for transactions of goods and services amounting to US\$53,488.00 show that the amounts were expended by LIFZA using the single source procurement method without evidence of approval from the PPCC. There is a call for the dissolution of the LIFZA¹⁹.

Moreover, the [Green Advocates](#), founded in 2001 by a group of progressive law school graduates to advocate for strong environmental laws, working to enforce existing laws, and empowering citizens to participate in environmental decision-making. Among its specific thematic areas, the Green Advocates is keen on protecting against environmental degradation, illegal natural and resource exploitation. They have campaigned for increasing transparency in public procurement and concessions in the mining sector. They have also demanded the publication and public access to concession documents, ensuring executive implementation and enforcement of concessions and contract terms, ensuring legislative oversight of the contract and concession implementation process.

The international non-profit **Global Witness** focuses on research and supports journalistic investigation to uncover links between demand for natural resources, corruption, armed conflict and environmental destruction. In Liberia, they have focused their efforts in development of the investigation skills and methodologies of journalists. As public procurement and concessions are vulnerable to corruption and can be linked to environmental destruction, they lead investigation and support investigations around

¹⁷<http://frontpageafricaonline.com/index.php/business/2700-siaka-toure-of-aminata-sons-let-off-corruption-hook-by-court>

¹⁸<http://frontpageafricaonline.com/index.php/news/2643-supreme-court-denies-andrew-grove-petition-for-writ-of-certiorari>

¹⁹<http://frontpageafricaonline.com/index.php/news/2419-gac-report-calls-for-dissolution-of-liberia-free-zone-authority>

public procurement. In Liberia, they have uncovered in alliance with FrontPage Africa several corruption scandals centered around public procurement and concessions.

Capacity needs for both government and civil society/media commonly include: i) lack of adequate technical capacity to understand data on procurement to ensure the monitoring of anti-corruption and cost and value for money, ii) lack of funding and logistics to conduct an efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation of public procurement processes, and iii) the unavailability of web-based IT Systems and Internet connectivity has undermined the capacity of key stakeholders in research, data collection, disclosure, analysis and use for monitoring of public contracts.

Key International Organizations/Development Procurement Actors

The study found existing partnership and engagement between the primary government stakeholders and international organization. For instance, The World Bank and the AfDB have had several consultations with the PPCC on making the procurement processes more transparent and open. The ADB is currently funding the creation of e-procurement platforms in West Africa. In Liberia they are interested in working with the PPCC to create this platform. The project is still under discussion, as of November 2016 they AfDB had requested the Executive Director of the PPCC to evaluate the current procurement system in Liberia.

- **World Bank** - The World Bank Group Liberia currently supports infrastructural development and [capacity development for procurement and financial management](#) and has immensely supported the PPCC in procurement reforms in Liberia. For example, they have benchmarked²⁰ public procurement in Liberia regarding the Procurement Life Cycle, the Complaints and Reporting Mechanisms and Public-Private Partnerships Procurement.
- **International Monetary Fund** - The IMF's primary purpose is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system—the system of exchange rates and international payments that enables countries (and their citizens) to transact with each other. The Fund's mandate was updated in 2012 to include all macroeconomic and financial sector issues that bear on global stability. With respect to public procurement in Liberia, the IMF supports infrastructural, financial and procurement policies reforms, for instance, their support to the MFDP's IFMIS. They have also published reports in which they include an analysis the state of public procurement in Liberia²¹.
- **African Development Bank** - is a multilateral development finance institution established to contribute to the economic development and social progress of African countries. Capacity development and compliance in procurement processes and reform are supported by the AfDB through the Internal Revenue Agency (IAA). They have demonstrated openness in procurement by advertising bids in timely manner from 2010 to present, as well as participating in open forums on procurement reforms hosted by the PPCC and other stakeholders. During 2016, they have started a dialogue with the Government of Liberia to potentially develop an eprocurement platform.
- **United States Agency for International Development** - is the United States Government agency which is primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid. Through their Governance and Economic Management Support Project (USAID-GEMS) they have funded a **Pricing Guide**, which is available to all government entities, and reviews a list of commonly used items,

²⁰ <http://bpp.worldbank.org/data/exploreconomies/liberia/2017>

²¹ <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2012/cr12273.pdf>

including an average price index. This is serving as an easy reference for procurement divisions, as pricing guidelines can help them more easily negotiate for a better deal. The PPCC's **Vendor Registry** was funded by them and included the training and then registering private sector vendors eligible to provide goods and services for government procurements. Finally, **Framework Agreements** establishes an arrangement between government entities and providers on the terms under which specific purchases can be made. By setting up an agreement at the beginning of the fiscal year, government entities can make purchases throughout the year against these agreements, facilitating purchases at all times in the budget cycle, which was previously impossible to do before the budget approval (which is often not delayed and not approved on time).²²

Key Private Sector Procurement Actors

The study found that open partnership and engagement exists amongst the private sector groups, the government and other international partners and stakeholders. These engagements have led to the formulation of strategic documents aimed at regulating and holding public entities and even private entities implementing public projects to be more accountable in their procurement decisions by following the PPC Act regulations and guidelines. For instance, private sector groups like the Liberia Chamber of Commerce have continuously engaged and partnered with the GoL's Integrity Forum which consists of the Public Procurement and Concession Commission, the General Auditing Commission, Internal Auditing Agency, and the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission. However, there remains a need for more tangible engagement and partnership between the private sector groups and civil society. There was a high degree of consultation between the Liberia Chamber of Commerce and the National Legislature during preparation and passage of the decent work bill into law and the Liberia Small Business Act.

About a dozen open house discussions have taken place between the ALCC, the PPCC and international partners which is eventually building the trust among key actors.

- **Association of Liberian Construction Contractors (ALCC)** - The ALCC, established in 1970 by a group of Liberian contractors currently has 300 member organizations. The key function of the ALCC is to advocate on its members behalf in the areas of public procurement and also to build their capacity. The ALCC is faced with the challenge of access to ICT systems and trained technical personnel, data collection, analysis and usage for helping its members to make sound business and procurement decisions. The ALCC has pushed for transparency and accountability in the Liberian procurement processes, for example, the ALCC in 2013 alarmed that government was exercising limited due diligence on companies when contracts are awarded on these companies' capacities to pre-finance projects. Advocacies by the ALCC also led to the creation of the [Contractors Classification and Certification System \(CCCS\)](#) at the Ministry of Public Works.
- **Building Markets** - works across sectors and with both large and small companies to support local businesses, strengthen supply chains, and ensure monies spent in Liberia stay in Liberia. Building Markets partners with the public and privates and international agencies to enhance and increase their local procurement. Over the last five years, Building Market has succeeded in the establishment of: *Online Supplier Directory*, *Tender Distribution Services*, *Training of SMEs in*

²² http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00K7FR.pdf

Market Research, Business Matchmaking and Advocacy. Building Markets has consistently advocated for the proactive publication rather than reactive publication because it levels the playing field among local bidders, maximizes the information in the public domain, and reduces the transaction costs involved in obtaining and providing information under the FOI Act, 2010 or similar request.

- **Liberia Chambers of Commerce** - The Liberia Chamber of Commerce (LCC) with the objectives of promoting Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and International Trade of Liberia, the undertaking by arbitration of the settlement of disputes arising out of commerce, industry, and agriculture in Liberia, and international trade, etc. It is known as the most representative business association and authoritative voice of the private sector, and the lead advocate for reforms that contribute to the creation of an enabling and conducive environment for commerce, industry, trade and agriculture. The Liberia Chamber was a key advocated for the passage of the Small Business Act, 2014 and subsequent creation of the Liberia Small Business Administration which mandates every government entity to allocate at least 25% of its budget to Liberian owned businesses. The LCC has demonstrated consistent interest in open contracting by making procurement plans of various ministries and agencies on the PPCC website and local newspapers to its members before they bid.

Key Recommendations

Increase civil society's level of understanding of public procurement process and procurement data.

Journalists have played a key role in identifying procurement processes, requiring scrutiny of the legal system to investigate their compliance with national regulations. Journalists mentioned feeling lost when trying to understand the procurement processes in Liberia. By training journalists and CSO's on Public Procurement the procurement system of Liberia could be fortified.

Encourage the sharing of tenders through non-web based channels. Given the common lack of IT infrastructure among civil society and citizens, the government and key infomediaries (e.g. more technically savvy CSOs) should identify offline methods for disseminating information on procurement. These should be designed based on prior successes in using SMS, billboards, and other methods to distribute information on the national budget.

10. Broader Public Financial Management Environment

The MFDP uses a stand-alone “Budget Management System” to plan and manage the national budget. Budget planning, approval and execution are captured in a Microsoft Access-powered Budget Management System.

The Integrated Management Information Systems (IFMIS)

The Public Financial M Law mandates the Comptroller and Accountant General of the Republic to put in place appropriate systems to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of the taxpayers’ money. As mandated in the PFM Law, the Integrated Financial Management Information Systems (IFMIS) Project for Liberia was rolled out in 2009 to improve the efficiency of the Government's accounting system through the provision and installation of a computerized financial management information system in the MFDP and through strengthening manual accounting systems in line ministries and counties. The post-election political and administrative transition at the Ministry of Finance (the implementing agency) had created an implementation decision vacuum that resulted to delays in the finalization of the procurement activities that were already included as part of the remaining commitments under the project.

The IFMIS is a system developed by FreeBalance in which budget data is captured. The IFMIS data is captured by classifications, functions and commitments. Over fifty (50) government ministries, agencies and commissions are currently connected to the IFMIS system. The MFDP plans to scale and roll out the IFMIS system across all government, ministries, agencies, and commissions during the next budget year. In the interim, the Ministry of Finance is still faced with some challenges of manual data collection and processing, as plans are underway to digitize all budget related data collection and management processes in the next couple of years.

The key functions of the module currently deployed in IFMIS include:

- Procurement Platform: the system requires a “no objection” letter from the PPCC to approve purchase orders for public procurement contracts above the thresholds determined by the PPC Act of 2010. This is including in the system through a checkbox that need to be ticked when the controller has seen a hard copy of the “no objection” letter.
- Expenditure Platform: to track procuring entities and government expenditure as whole.
- Budget Platform: to establish the budget planning and preparation of each government entity.
- Reporting Platform: to create different reports by allotment, commitments and actual expenditures.

Users can run different report queries based on their need.

Data currently captured in the IFMIS system focus on allocation by ministry, allocation by sector/topic, allocation by Province, and actual expenditures. However, annual procurement plans, procurement methods, procurement IDs, projects are currently not captured by the system.

Reports the system currently generates for the government include: budget proposal, approved budget, budget execution by function, budget execution by sector, and budget execution by Ministry and by counties. While the Fiscal Outing Report (quarterly + annual) looks at the generated revenue against the expenditure, and is accessible to the public.

By enhancing planning and monitoring processes, IFMIS data is used for feedback and to improve the budget planning process. It is used to look at trends in government expenditures on a multi-year level.

Sub-nationally, the GoL's IFMIS system is currently being piloted in four (4) counties: Grand Bassa, Nimba, Margibi, Bong.

Budget Process

Budget Preparation and Approval: The Liberian government's fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th. The Government for many years operated a single year budget until the multiyear system was introduced in 2013 through the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). Budget literature suggests that along with the 2009 Public Financial Management Law, the MTEF has significantly enhanced the national budget process with three main objectives: spending what the public sector can afford, allocating resources in line with national priorities, and to ensuring that resources are used as efficiently as possible. The MFDP and all government spending entities are involved with the budget preparation, execution and reporting stages. The planning and preparation of the National Budget begins with the preparation of the budget framework paper which is presided over by the Minister of Finance and Development. The fiscal framework paper is based on estimates for the fiscal year and for the two subsequent years, which take into account the economic and development policies that are consistent with the Government's declared medium-term economic and fiscal objectives. After the preparation of the budget framework paper, the President shall submit the Proposed Budget and accompanying documents to the Legislature no later than 2 months before the start of the fiscal year. The preparation of the National Budget shall conform to the process and time table set forth in the PFM Act of 2009, which will be further supplemented by a detailed cycle established in a published annual budget calendar in the regulations accompanying the Act. The budget preparation cycle shall consist of two phases, the first concentrating on the preparation of a budget framework paper and the budget circular, and the second concentrating on the preparation of the detailed annual budget that addresses the policies and priorities set out in the budget framework paper. Procurement plans are submitted as part of the budget preparation process, and can't be approved until the National Budget has been approved.

The Legislature's review and approval of the Proposed Budget is conducted in accordance with the rules and procedures set forth in the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia. The Proposed Budget is made available to the public immediately following its submission to the Legislature.

Budget Execution: The Minister of Finance and Development Planning has the responsibility under the PFM Act for the overall management of the execution of the budget, whereas ministers of individual spending ministries, and other heads of budgetary institutions and agencies, are responsible for the execution of their budgets in accordance with the PFM Act. The budget is reviewed by a joint Ways and Means Committee comprising members from both chambers of the legislature, before being voted in plenary session.

Budget Reporting: It is a general responsibility under the Public Financial Management (PFM) Act of 2009, for all government officials handling public financial transactions to ensure that financial information is reported in a timely, comprehensive, and accurate manner, in the manner under its regulations, and in instructions issued by the Minister.

Each Spending Entity is required, where applicable, to provide a monthly report on revenues and a quarterly expenditures performance report to the Minister in the terms, format and within the timeframe determined by regulations under the PFM Act. As stated in Section 35.2 of the PFM Act, all spending entities shall further submit to the Minister on a quarterly basis the accounts of the spending

agency comprising i) a statement on cash flow a statement on revenue and expenditures from the Consolidated Fund, ii) a balance sheet showing assets and liabilities as at the end of the quarter, and iii) such other details as may be prescribed in regulations which is issued under the PFM Act. Based on the information received from each Spending Entity, the Minister shall produce a consolidated quarterly report comparing budget execution and revenue collections to the estimates contained in the National Budget. This report shall be available to the President, the Legislature and the general public within forty five (45) days of the end of the quarter.

One of the greatest challenges in post-conflict Liberia has been to restore public confidence in the government's financial management system. In order to build public trust, the government has put in place new fiscal policies, laws and governance institutions to address past weaknesses and build a stable foundation for future economic development, with assistance from development partners. Key to these reforms has been the new Public Financial Management Law that was passed in 2009 and underpinned the government's efforts to rebuild credible systems for prudent and efficient management of public finances.

The chart of account classifications

Administrative/ organizational	Fund source	Program	Functions of Government	Economic (or Natural account)	Government Financial Statistics ²³	Counties / districts
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Key Recommendations

Ensure interoperability between financial systems and procurement systems. To prepare for interoperability in the procurement system, the PPCC and MFDP need to actively engage in a process of ensuring that their systems and classifications are structured with interoperability with IFMIS in mind. Focus on reviewing program classification, funding source, administrative / organizational, and county / district classifications in the chart of accounts, ensuring that similar classifications (e.g. organization identifiers) are used in procurement data, should be a top priority.

Make data about vendor payment available to the public in an easy to read format. The MFDP, the PPCC and all procuring entities should make available data sets on vendor payment information in one central repository. This information should ultimately be linked to the e-procurement system to ensure full coverage of the procurement cycle.

²³ The GoL has been GFS compliant since 2011. The GoL in fact transitioned to IMF GFS since 2014

Annex 1: List of Interviewees			
Name	Position	Organization / Institution	Meeting Date
Sunday T. Sippy, Jr.	Procurement Specialist	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	10/17/2016
Johansen Q. Dahn	Coordinator of Programs	Building Markets	10/17/2016
Franklin R. Dolo	Business Analyst	Building Markets	10/17/2016
Al-Varney Rogers	Journalist/ Reporter	Frontpage Africa	10/18/2016
Telewoda Kennedy	Procurement Manager	JFK Medical Center	10/18/2016
Archiebald S. Abban	Procurement Director	Ministry of Transport	10/18/2016
Mulbah Kornemea	Procurement Manager	Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment	10/18/2016
Amb. Belgrove and Robertetta Rose	Embassador and Prosperity Program Officer	Embassy UK	10/19/2016
Henrique G. Zayzay	Program Assistant	Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs	10/19/2016
James Dorbor Jallah	CEO	PPCC	10/19/2016
Saye Maye Cole	Director for Project Implementation Unit	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning	10/19/2016
Lysander B. Wokpeh	Director of Policy	PPCC	10/19/2016
Nathan Bangu	Communication Director	PPCC	10/20/2016
Tennie Johnson	Procurement Specialist	Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE)	10/20/2016
Banda Augustin Ngege	Principal Procurement Officer	African Development Bank	10/20/2016
Omilford Nyan	Procurement Director	Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy	10/20/2016
Andrew Jallah	Head, Quality Assurance	Internal Audit Agency	10/20/2016
Herbert Soper	Deputy Coordinator, Public Financial Reform Coordination Unit	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning	10/20/2016
P. Fulton Blason	Assistant Director, Domestic Economy	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning	10/21/2016
Prince Korvah	Director, Admin Support Services	Ministry of Commerce and Industry	10/21/2016
Isaac Adjei	Deputy Secretary	Liberia Chamber of Commerce	10/21/2016
Foday Kamara	President	Association of Liberian Construction Contractors (ALCC)	10/21/2016
Toby Maxwell Davies	Economist, Economic Management	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning	10/21/2016
Naomi C. Walker	Director of Communication and Change	Internal Audit Agency	10/21/2016
Romeo Gbarteah	Director for Fiscal Decentralization	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning	10/21/2016
Prince Light	Director of Financial Reporting and Reconciliation	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning	10/21/2016
Karboi Johnson	Legal Analyst	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	11/3/2016
Victor K. Harris	IFMIS Administrator	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning	11/5/2016

Agencies & Systems: Public Procurement & Concessions Commission							http://www.pccc.gov.lr/				
DATA CATEGORY		INFO IS:	Complete	Collected	Public	Online	Published as Open Data	Published in Bulk/API	Timely	Proactively Published	Notes
Planning											
	Procurement Plans (plans de passation)	Every year	Always	Always	Always	Always	Never	Never	Unknown	Proactive	
	Budgets	NA	Always	Always	Always	Always	Never	Never	Unknown	Proactive	
	Project identifiers & approvals	NA	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Never	Never	Unknown	Proactive	
	Consultation docs	NA	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Never	Never	Unknown	Upon Request	
	Other data types										
	Notes/URLs										
Tender											
	Tender Identifier	Every year	Always	Sometimes			Never	Never	Unknown		You need to be a registered vendor to access them
	Tender document	Every year	Always	Sometimes			Never	Never	Unknown		http://www.pccc.gov.lr/2content.php?main=22&related=22&pg=mp
	Bidding documents	Every year	Always	Sometimes			Never	Never	Unknown		
	Names of bidders	NA	Never	Never			Never	Never	Unknown		
	Tender dates	Yes	Always				Never	Never	Unknown		
	Other data types	NA		Never			Never	Never	Unknown		
	Evaluation dates	NA	Never	Never							They should be available starting july 2016 but no information has been uploaded
	Award identifier	Yes	Always	Sometimes							
	Award winner	NA	Always	Always							
	Reasons for award	NA	Never	Never							
	Other data types										
	Notes/URLs										
Contract											
	Info on winning suppliers	Every year									They should be available starting july 2016 but no information has been uploaded
	Supplier identifier	NA									
	Contract amount	Yes									
	Contract dates	Yes									
	Other data types										
	Notes/URLs										
Implementation											

Annex 3: Priority Recommendations List

Theme	Recommendation	Text	Difficulty Level	Priority Level	Financial Burden	Lead Stakeholder	Other Stakeholder Involvement	Monitoring & Sustainability	Additional Resources/ Initiatives
Strengthening Procurement System Framework	Increase independence of the procurement authority	There is no internal, independent check on the procurement process because the Chairman of the PPCC is a presidential appointee. In many countries, political independence of the procurement sector is guaranteed by the creation of an independent committee whose members represent various stakeholder groups. Assuring the independence of the PPCC would increase public trust and potentially reduce concerns that the procurement process is tainted by politics.	High - The president of Liberia has the power to appoint and dismiss cabinet members	High	Low	The President and the National Legislature	Civil society advocacy	<i>The Independence of the PPCC is passed into law</i>	Independence of procurement decision making from political bodies is recognized as essential in UNCITRAL Model Law on Public Procurement
Strengthening Procurement System Framework	Create an inclusive and independent Complaints, Appeals and Review Panel (CARP) at the PPCC	Poor use of the complaint mechanism within the PPCC indicates a lack of trust in the implementation of the system. Representatives from all key procurement stakeholders should form part of the CARP of the PPCC to ensure checks and balances. Current membership of the CARP does not reflect key cross sectoral procurement stakeholders in Liberia. The members of the CARP are currently appointed by the President. An independent commission with representatives from GoL, CSOs and the private sector should appoint the members of the CARP.	Low - The CARP is already functional, the law needs to be amended to make it inclusive	Low	Low	The President and the National Legislature	Civil society advocacy	An inclusive CARP system with representatives from all key procurement stakeholders is established	Inclusivity and feedback are key components of the Open Contracting Principles: http://www.open-contracting.org/get-started/global-principles/
Increasing Technical Capacities	Increase the technical capacities of procurement units (PUs).	While the PPCC has lead numerous training focused on procurement processes, this effort needs to be continued and reinforced. Knowledge of procurement systems and laws is usually limited to one person within the PUs. The development of an easy-to-understand tutorial could be useful for staff that might not have the proficiency to directly understand the PPC act and regulations. This training should also provide basic data management plans and skills building tools.	Medium - It is sometimes difficult to get the cooperation of the PEs to make staff available for training	High	High	PPCC	Procuring entities financial support	Both physical and virtual training environments are set up by the PPCC	The World Bank, EBRD and others support training initiatives that may provide collaboration opportunities
Increase Data Availability & Use	Amendment to the PPC Act to include mandatory disclosure of procurement data.	The PPCC Act of 2010 allows procuring entities to decide the method of publication of procurement notices and awards, allowing either newspaper or online. Procurement plans are published by PPCC on their own initiative, without a legal mandate. No implementation data is published in Liberia. The majority of procurement data are in PDFs, leading to difficulty in any efforts to systematically use data for analysis or anti-corruption monitoring. Some procuring entities decide to publish this information in the E-mansion Website. It would be recommended to have a public website that centralized by legal mandate all Tender Notices and Contract Awards. The PPC Act should be amended to include the mandatory disclosure of procurement data in open format at each of the procurement stages: planning, tender, awards, contracts and implementation.	High - It is difficult to have procuring entities comply when there's no legal clause mandating them to do	Medium	Medium	The National Legislature and the President	Commitment of the PPCC and Procuring entities	A centralized public website that has all Tender Notices and Contract Awards is mandated by law and published	Open Contracting Principles & OCDS provide insight into how to publish procurement data
Strengthening Procurement System Framework	Provide methods for international companies to participate in National Competitive Bidding (NCB)	As in other countries in the region, there is an opportunity to enhance competition by reviewing the law on NCB to explore how international companies could participate in local procurement. Facilitating local affiliates of international companies, or establishing a budget threshold that can be subcontracted to an international partner for NCB, could allow local firms to benefit from international expertise and experience, while preserving their ability to compete and win public contracts.	Medium - Requires amending law to include a clause for international firms to bid in NCB if the benefits are properly communicated to local firms	Medium	Medium	PPCC	Amendment to the law by the National Legislature and the President	International firms are allowed by law to participate in NCB	UNCITRAL Model Law on Public Procurement
Increasing Open Contracting Commitment	Inclusion of open contracting into Liberia's Open Government Partnership (OGP) commitments.	Key political leaders, including the President and Executive Director of the PPCC, should make a clear commitment to transparency in public procurement. Key strategic governance documents, such as PPC Act, 2010, thePFM Act, 2009 of Liberia should include transparent public contracting as an objective feeding into wider objectives, such as increasing value for money, fairness and integrity of public spending. This can be done by including open contracting into Liberia's OGP commitments.	Low - by lobbying with key OGP stakeholders, open contracting can be added to Liberia's commitments	High	Low	PPCC	The President's political will	Liberia's OGP commitment is amended and includes open contracting	OGP
Increasing Technical Capacities	Improve hiring practices to ensure that the PPCC and PEs have staff with the necessary skill set	Policies should require hiring staff with skill to handle procurement and promote training for existing staff.	Medium - Most times it is difficult to get the requisite expertise locally	Medium	High	PPCC	Civil Service Agency involvement to ensure competent, professional and motivated individuals are hired	A policy is developed by the PPCC where only qualified procurement staff can handle procurement matters.	

Increase Data Availability & Use	Timely reporting of data by national and sub-national procuring entities.	Procuring entity (PE) data reporting is consistently delayed. This particularly difficult for subnational procuring entities facing problems of internet connectivity. Strengthening internet and information and communication technology (ICT) facilities at sub-national levels will enhance the timely submission and publication of data reporting.	Medium - It is most times difficult to get the cooperation of Procuring Entities but can be done if there's a legal clause in the PPCC Act	High	High	PPCC	Compliance of the Procuring Entities	Government national and sub-national procurement units are equipped with trained staff, good internet connectivity and ICT facilities to report procurement data in a timely fashion.	Reviewing reporting tools developed by other West African countries can help provide ideas for improving data sharing in Liberia.
Benefiting from Technology to Enhance Procurement	Conduct a detailed technical assessment for an e-procurement system.	GoL, with the leadership of the PPCC should partner with a well qualified IT company to conduct an in-depth analysis of the existing systems, and map an integrated system that would allow the digitization of i) all procurement documents and, ii) data exchanges between PPCC, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDPP), and PEs. E-Procurement would facilitate access to open and machine-readable procurement information, ideally in OCDS format. This would translate to managing and releasing procurement data with an objective to unify systems and standardize data across institutions.	Medium - The PPCC needs to find the Finance to implement this	Medium	High	PPCC	Compliance of all Government Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs)	The PPCC and MFDPP roll out a centralized procurement system across all government Ministries, Agencies and Commission backed by the PPCC Act to ensure usage	World Bank e-Procurement Toolkit: http://eprocurementtoolkit.org/
Increase Data Availability & Use	Develop a comprehensive procurement data management plan	An e-procurement system should be accompanied by training and should include a data management plan. PPCC should lead this, as they are legally mandated to develop rules, instructions, regulations and related documentation. The plan should be integrated into the PPC Act where data collection, use, and publication roles and responsibilities should be stated. PPCC's leadership will also help prevent development of independent, fractured internal procurement management systems among PEs. To facilitate data quality, monitoring, and analysis, unique identifiers for each contract should be maintained throughout the procurement process.	High - The PPCC Act needs to be amended to include a mandate for data quality	High	Medium	PPCC	Procuring Entities' cooperation	All PEs procurement units are trained and equipped with necessary ICT facilities to report quality procurement data on-time.	OCDS, UNCITRAL Model Law on Public Procurement
Benefiting from Technology to Enhance Procurement	Design and implement unique Identifiers	Creating unique identifiers for each procurement activity (from planning to implementation) would enable the PPCC to gain valuable insight from powerful data analytics on corruption risk, value for money, efficiency, and other key issues. Creating an interagency team consisting of members from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, the PPCC and the Internal Audit Agency to facilitate agreement on a unique identification system and the technical needs of each agency and ministry to ensure proper implementation. Ideally, this system should be initiated through the IFMIS chart of accounts, then reused by other systems across government.	High - unique identifiers will allow systems across gov to speak to one another	High	Low	PPCC and MFDPP	Collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning	The PPCC and MFDPP develop and roll out unique identifiers of procurement activity (planning to implementation which is being used by all government MACs.	OCDS
Benefiting from Technology to Enhance Procurement	Development of a unified data standard.	In line with its mandate for rules, regulations, and instruction, PPCC should assume the leadership role to develop a standardization of the data standards or PEs by creating a guideline for reporting data in line with OCDS.	Medium - The PPCC will have to get the cooperation of MFDPP and other key stakeholders which will take some effort and time	Medium	Low	PPCC	Procuring Entities' cooperation	Guidelines and data standards are developed by the PPCC in line with OCDS and are used by all government MACs	OCDS
Benefiting from Technology to Enhance Procurement	Reinforce the CARP	Since 2013, only one new complaint has been uploaded into the PPCC's website. Further evaluation is necessary to determine if complaints and appeals are filed through other mechanisms. PPCC should digitize all complaints made to the CARP. This should be accompanied by a public guide to explain to citizens and vendors what mechanism are available for filing complaints. This will also increase trust in the system.	High - The PPCC law needs to be amended to make this possible.	Low	Medium	PPCC		A citizen guide to filling public procurement complaints is developed and disseminated and citizens's trust in the system is increased	World Bank Benchmarking Public Procurement
Engaging Key Procurement Stakeholders	Encourage and increase efforts being made by the PPCC vendor registry.	The PPCC has created an online vendor registry that allows for identification of vendors that comply with the requirements for the non-objection for contract award. This effort should be scaled, increasing the number of vendors by including and informing the private sector of this registry. Maintaining a vendor registry requires the PPCC and vendors to collaborate. In addition, the PPCC should continue to train PEs to incorporate the vendor registry into their awarding process.	Low - The PPCC can build upon the current VR system	High	Medium	PPCC	Procuring Entities and MFDPP cooperation to only do business with certified vendors from the PPCC VR system	All PEs use the PPCC VR system as the basis of award public contracts	OpenCorporates, OGP
Engaging Key Procurement Stakeholders	Gather feedback of key procurement stakeholders regarding their contracting data needs to inform priorities in planning data disclosure efforts	This can be done by organizing multi-stakeholder forums-events or holding an online consultation. Such mechanism could become constant and regular channel of communication between data providers and users. It is important that stakeholders are present: procuring entities, the PPCC, international organizations, CSO's, journalist and citizens.	Medium - It will require a consensus from relevant actors	Medium	Low	PPCC	Procuring entities, CSO's, Journalists, International organizations and citizens involvement	CSOs and citizens are aware of procurement best practices and have the capacity to ensure transparency and accountability in the system	OGP, Nigeria stakeholders group (see Nigeria report or synthesis report from this project)

Engaging Key Procurement Stakeholders	Increase CSOs' level of understanding of public procurement process and procurement data.	Journalists have played a key role in identifying procurement processes, requiring detailed knowledge of the legal system to investigate compliance with national regulations. Journalists mentioned feeling often lost when trying to understand the procurement processes in Liberia. Training journalists and CSOs on public procurement skills through conducting specialized research, analyzing procurement data, creating easy to understand visuals, and identifying alarms, would foster greater accountability in procurement.	Low - It wouldn't require much efforts to get Journalist and CSOs to be trained	High	Low	PPCC	Journalists and CSO's should avail themselves for training	Regular specialized training are conducted by PPCC for Journalists and CSOs on public procurement research, data analysis and fraud detection to foster accountability	OGP
Increase Data Availability & Use	Encourage publishing of tenders through non-web based channels	Given the common lack of IT infrastructure among CSOs and citizens, GoL and key infomediaries (e.g. more technically savvy CSOs) should identify offline methods for disseminating information on procurement. These should be designed based on prior successes using SMS, billboards, and other methods to distribute information on the national budget.	Low - Can build upon previous efforts and scale	Medium	Medium	PPCC and MFDP	CSOs, Citizens, Procuring Entities and Infomediaries involvement	SMS, billboards and other offline methods are used by the PPCC and other infomediaries to disseminate information on the national budget	
Benefiting from Technology to Enhance Procurement	Ensure interoperability between financial systems and procurement systems.	To prepare for interoperability, the PPCC and MFDP should actively ensure that systems and classifications are structured with interoperability with IFMIS in mind. Focus on ensuring similar classifications (e.g. organizational or administrative identifiers) are used in procurement data, should be a top priority.	High - It will need the political will to mandate all MACs to use a unified system	High	High	PPCC	Collaboration of the MFDP	A centralized and structured procurement and financial system is used by the PPCC and MFDP	
Increase Data Availability & Use	Make data about vendor payment available to the public in an accessible format	MFDP, the PPCC, and all PEs should make available data sets on vendor payment information in one central repository. This information should ultimately be linked to the e-procurement system to ensure full coverage of the procurement cycle.	High - it is a bit difficult to get all MACs to comply	High	High	PPCC	Collaboration with the MFDP and Procuring Entities	All MACs are mandated by law to make data sets on vendor payment information available to the government's central procurement data repository	Open Contracting Principles