

Evaluating the Implementation of Public Procurement Principles at Tendering Stage: SME Contractors' Perspective

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Abstract : Purpose: Principles of public procurement are the foundation of good public procurement, representing best practices in delivering public services by the government and its organs. They provide guidance in the public procurement cycle to achieve the best value for public resources. Tendering stage in the procurement cycle is the most critical, as tendering information is made available to bidders. The paper evaluates the implementation of public procurement principles at the tendering stage. Design/Methodology/Approach: The research was conducted by using qualitative methods with 18 SME contractors in Lusaka as the sample. The samples are business owners and managers of purposively selected SME contractors. The collected data was analysed using thematic and content analysis. Findings: The findings indicate inconsistency in accessing information critical for tendering success by bidders. Further, the findings suggest that adjustments to technical specifications are made to suit certain preferred bidders by procuring officials. Research Limitations/Implications: The interviews were limited to SME contractors registered with the national council for construction and involved in public sector construction works in Lusaka, Zambia. Practical Implications: Implementing principles of public procurement at the tendering stage creates equal, open, and fair competition for the bidders in cost terms to deliver standardised and quality works to the public sector. Original/Value: The findings reveal how principles of public procurement play a critical role in enhancing the efficient performance of the procurement cycle at the tendering stage.

Keywords : evaluating, implementation, public procurement principles, tendering stage, SME contractors

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