

Tenth International Research Study IRSP10 (2024-2025) on Public Procurement

Public Summary Report

INTRODUCTION

The International Research Study of Public Procurement ([IRSP](#)) is a long-established network of eminent multi-national procurement executives and researchers, who are endeavoring to develop new knowledge in support of the procurement profession. Approximately every two years, senior practitioners from countries and international organisations are invited to assemble and exchange ideas and visions relating to public procurement. The concept of IRSP was founded in 2003, by emeritus Professors, Jan Telgen, Christine Harland and Guy Callendar. The current IRSP organizing team are listed in Appendix 1 (page 5), with members representing all corners of the world, bringing their own research knowledge and expertise to the international workshops. Table 1 provides the main topics addressed by each of the previous nine IRSP studies.

YEAR	THEME
IRSP1 (2003)	Explored what is known about public procurement and what are the Major Issues facing this field.
IRSP2 (2005)	Examined Similarities and Differences Across Categories of Spend in public procurement in health, defense, education, and local government.
IRSP3 (2007)	Examined how to build Capacity and Capability in public procurement.
IRSP4 (2009)	In the wake of the Financial Crisis , this study explored the role of public procurement in designing and delivering economic stimulus packages.
IRSP5 (2011)	Focused on the Engagement of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in public procurement contracts and how to improve their involvement.
IRSP6 (2015)	Examined evidence of Community Benefits policies and implementation of community benefits clauses (social, economic, and environmental).
IRSP7 (2017)	Investigated different approaches to Collaborative Public Procurement (CPP) by going beyond basic joint procurement or centralised public procurement, to examine experiences of, and the possibilities arising from, effective collaboration.
IRSP8 (2019)	Explored how Public Procurement engages in Innovation initiatives, the connections between innovation policy makers, the implementer, the role of Public Procurement, the level of engagement with suppliers and the overall impact on implementation of innovation policy.
IRSP9 (2022)	Delayed by one year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the ninth study explored the role of public procurement in a crisis . The pandemic period highlighted the need to be better prepared for future crises, and the role that public procurement should play.

Table 1: Summary of previous IRSP studies

IRSP is not-for-profit, and the research relies on participation fees and sponsorship from professional institutes. The academic time is supported by the various organizing team member universities (refer to Appendix 1). The long-standing professional body sponsor for

IRSP is [NIGP](#) - The Institute for Public Procurement. We are also grateful for financial contributions previously received by many other professional bodies and institutes worldwide ([CIPS](#), [NEVI](#), [IPSERA](#), [Welsh Government](#), [Cardiff University](#), [Politecnico de Milano](#)).

IRSP10 The Context

Public procurement offers value far beyond cost savings and compliance with regulation. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) embrace environmental and societal priorities as well as economic. As a result, we face an increasingly complex, interconnected, dynamically changing world of government and governance. During the pandemic the switch to online resources happened almost overnight. However, the speed at which countries globally were forced into lockdown, and with demand far exceeding supply, governments and other organizations procured digital tools and platforms that were available rather than fully understanding what was required. The contribution and capability of procurement was being stretched to its limits, playing an ever-greater role in delivering public value and creating opportunities for the grand challenges ahead.



It is now argued that public procurement opportunities to address societal challenges lie in emerging technologies, which raises many questions. For example, how might Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Internet of Things, smart contracts, blockchain, and broader digitalisation be a part of public procurement's future? How / or what stage is a country's understanding, exploring and harnessing digital tools and technologies? What might the future for public procurement look like? What role will public procurement play in this new era enabled by these technologies?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The tenth international study focused on **how emerging technologies are being used to strengthen public procurement for greater impact on societal challenges.**

All participants were asked to consider TWO overarching questions:

- How does public procurement contribute to addressing pressing societal challenges (SDGs)?
- In this context, how are emerging technologies being deployed to strengthen PP capability?

METHOD

Attendance at an IRSPSP workshop is always by invitation only. We invite carefully selected, senior practitioners in public procurement (CPO, Head of Department or equivalent status) and we normally invite only one or two people from each country.

Stage 1 of the IRSPSP10 research took place **in person through case studies**. A three-day workshop was held in August 2024, in Charlotte, US, where senior representatives from ten countries or regions (Netherlands, Washington, South Carolina, Albania, Utah, India, Hungary, Nigeria, Belgium, and South Africa) presented case studies which addressed the research questions.

Stage 2 of IRSPSP10 took place in January 2025, with a three-hour **online focus group**, attracting senior representatives from a further 9 countries (England, Croatia, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Kazakhstan, Germany, Bulgaria, Jordan). Participants were invited to share their insights on the drivers and barriers for successful implementation of the digitalisation of procurement. Based on each participant sharing their experiences and insights, the group was asked to pick out the most relevant and least relevant factors.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In Person Workshop

Participants identified fifteen different emerging technologies, and these were discussed as part of their case study presentations.

These further critical factors were identified:

- The need to **address inefficiencies and streamline processes** for improving productivity.
- Ensure there are **change management plans in place** that consider backup options and the high risk of failure.
- Change management must include **backup plans** to ensure public services continue despite digital interventions.
- **Prioritize and map out key stakeholder** needs for each digital project.
- The **availability of data does not necessarily lead to better decisions**, and there is a risk of manipulation from the back end.
- There was a view that **current changes might be on par with significant historical shifts** like the advent of the Internet or the transition from horses to cars.
- The need for **transferring knowledge** and planning for these changes is emphasized.
- **Different stakeholders have varying expectations** and needs from digital procurement processes, which may conflict and require prioritization.

.....

Online Focus Group Discussions

The online focus group discussions identified relevant factors as:

- **Change management strategies and stakeholder collaboration are critical factors** for successful technology adoption.
- **The impact of regulations, appeal processes, and alignment between national and local frameworks** was highlighted as highly relevant.
- **Cybersecurity, data quality, and compliance** were considered as major concerns that need to be properly addressed.
- **Supply market capacity and readiness**, especially SMEs, to engage with new procurement technologies was noted by online participants as a key factor.

Less or irrelevant factors identified:

- Some participants felt that factors like political interference and corruption may be less relevant in their specific contexts, where strong governance and legislation already address these issues.
- The absence of alignment between central and local government procurement frameworks was seen as less of an issue in some countries, where local authorities were more innovative than the central government.

Overall, the relevance of each factor can vary significantly depending on two factors:

- Regulatory environment
- Maturity of the procurement system.

Participants further emphasized the need to consider the local context when evaluating the importance of the different policy and non-policy factors.

Appendix 1 - IRSP10 RESEARCH TEAM

Dr Andrea Patrucco, PhD, is Assistant Professor in Supply Chain Management at Florida International University College of Business, in the United States.	Professor Jane Lynch, PhD, leads the Centre of Public Value Procurement at Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University.	Professor Tunde Tatrai, PhD, is Professor at Corvinus University of Budapest in Budapest, Hungary.
		
Rick Grimm, CPPO, CPPB, FCIPS, has served the NIGP: The Institute for Public Procurement as its Chief Executive Officer since 1998.	Esmee Peters is a PhD candidate in public and healthcare procurement at the University of Twente, the Netherlands	Professor Louise Knight, PhD, FCIPS co-founded the European Lab on Innovative Purchasing and Supply (EL-IPS), University of Twente.
		
Ana-Maria Dimand, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Askew School of Public Administration and Policy, at Florida State University and a Global Research Affiliate with the Sustainable Purchasing Research Initiative at Arizona State University.	Barbara Allen, PhD, is Associate Professor of Public Management and Policy and Deputy Head of School at the School of Government Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.	Petra Ferk PhD, is an Associate Professor for Public Administration at the Graduate School of Government and European Studies, Slovenia.
		

More research outputs will be shared publicly in due course. If you would like to know more about IRSP, please visit our website [IRSP | International Research Study of Public Procurement](https://www.irspp.org) or email: enquiries@irspp.org