

ProcurComp^{EU} implementation in Malta

Project leader



The **Department of Contracts (DoC)** of the Government of Malta is the Maltese Central Government Authority, responsible for drafting procurement legislation and policy, preparing guidelines and instructions, collecting statistical data and preparing annual monitoring reports on the functioning of the procurement system. In addition, the DoC supervises all contracting authorities through the regulation and administration of the procurement procedures as laid down in the applicable Public Procurement Regulations. Last, the DoC carries out about 350 procurement procedures yearly, with the support of 32 employees.

Website: <https://contracts.gov.mt/en/Pages/Home-DepartmentOfContracts.aspx>

Context and objectives of the provided support



Context: The DoC is committed to the professionalisation of public buyers in Malta, which is necessary to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and economic (value for money) performance of public procurement operations. During the past few years, the Department of Contracts has embarked on the development and implementation of a Public Procurement Professionalisation strategy. The DoC also contributed to the development of the European Competency Framework for Public Procurement Professionals (ProcurComp^{EU}).



Objective: The DoC received support from the European Commission to implement an organisational assessment. The goal of the assessment was two-fold: first, to assess how their staff members' level of knowledge and skills meet their current policy and organisational goals; and second - to prepare for an organisational gap analysis at the level of other central and local contracting authorities.

Target and timeline



Target group: Public buyers in the DoC including the senior management (24 out of 25 – 96% – public buyers participated in the organisational assessment); and further roll out to all contracting authorities.

Duration of the intervention: 6 May 2020 until 7 July 2020.

Actions



- 1. Review of the competency matrix:** Review of the competences, proficiency target levels, and job profiles selected by the Department of Contracts.
- 2. Review of the job profiles:** Review of the job descriptions, and associated proficiency target levels.
- 3. Creation of the Self-Assessment Tool:** Development of the self-assessment questionnaire, and the survey file on EUSurvey.
- 4. Organisational assessment:** Implementation of the self-assessment questionnaire and collection and analysis of the results.
- 5. Review of the training curriculum:** Alignment of the training topics and learning topics with ProcurComp^{EU}.
- 6. Communication activities:** Dissemination of the results to the staff participants, and high level presentation of the next steps in terms of capacity-building activities.

Implementation



Workshops were organised to review the DoC competency matrix and job profiles, with a view to ensure that they were in line with the reality on the ground and the ProcurComp^{EU} approach.

Based on these, the DoC developed their Self-Assessment questionnaire on EUSurvey. The DoC included a description of the proficiency levels and competencies in the survey in order to facilitate participants' understanding of the questions. Once reviewed, the survey was distributed to the DoC's staff for a duration of three weeks, to allow sufficient time for the participants to fill it out. In addition to identifying a contact point to provide ad-hoc support to the participants, the DoC organised three (weekly) workshops to address emerging questions about the interpretation of the questions and competencies or any technical issues. The DoC then collected the results by using the ProcurComp^{EU} calculation spreadsheet and analysed the results at the job profile and organisational levels.

Last, a webinar was organised to present the results of the organisational assessment to the DoC staff, with a view to highlight where the main competency gaps and training needs are, and inform them about the next steps in terms of capacity-building activities. In doing so, the DoC demonstrated the direct tangible benefits for the participants, resulting from their participation in the organisational assessment.

Results and impact

- ➔ The organisational assessment provided the DoC with an overview of the competency gaps at the individual, job profile and organisational levels. DoC is now better equipped to identify the capacity building activities necessary to improve the organisation's performance in the future.
- ➔ Based on the organisational assessment results, its resources (both in terms of human and financial capital), and strategic priorities, the DoC is able to prioritise the trainings that can deliver most impact by targeting priority competence areas for the organisation.
- ➔ The experience with adapting and testing the ProcurComp^{EU} tools has developed the DoC's capacities to run organisational assessments and will pave the way for the roll-out of this exercise at the level of contracting authorities.
- ➔ By playing an active role in the development of ProcurComp^{EU} and implementing the organisational assessment, the DoC has demonstrated its leadership and commitment to the professionalisation of public buyers in Malta. This will strengthen its legitimacy and credibility when rolling out the organisational assessment at the level of contracting authorities.

Next steps

- ➔ The DoC plans to develop a capacity-building action roadmap by identifying the key actions, potential sources of funding and its overall timeline of implementation. The Roadmap will be the basis for implementing capacity building activities that can most effectively address the priority competency gaps identified in the assessment.
- ➔ The DoC, in its role of Central Government Authority for Public Procurement, intends to carry out organisational assessments at the level of Ministerial Procurement Units. Next, it will also support these units in rolling out the organisational assessment to contracting authorities in their domains.

Lessons learnt

- ➔ To be successful, the organisational assessment requires a high level of engagement and ownership from the participants. The DoC ensured this by focusing their communication about the initiative on clarifying its objectives, explaining how the results will be used and demonstrating the benefits of participation for its staff members.
- ➔ Providing continuous support to the participants throughout the implementation of the self-assessment questionnaire was a key success factor. The DoC appointed a single point of contact for support and organised weekly workshops to address emerging questions. This also helped ensure a common understanding of the competences and proficiency levels and improved the consistency of responses from individual participants.
- ➔ The DoC set proficiency level targets that reflected their medium-to-long term policy and strategy goals rather than only the needs at present. The assessment results thus showed clearly several areas with substantial gaps between the current and targeted proficiency levels and will serve as a robust basis for creating the roadmap for capacity building activities.

Where to find ProcurComp^{EU}?

ProcurComp^{EU} is available in all official EU languages on the website of the European Commission:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/public-procurement/support-tools-public-buyers_en

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