REPORT

PROFESSIONALISATION OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN EUROPE

Comparative Assessment across 32 European Countries

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FOREWORD

We are pleased to present this comparative report on the professionalisation of the public procurement sector across 32 European countries.

This report, written in just a few weeks by a small group of professionals, is the result of an extensive European collaborative network. Indeed, over the last twenty years, hundreds of experts have met with tens of thousands of public buyers across Europe, listening to them, training them and preparing them.

Daniele Ricciardi

President of ASSORUP

Content

Content

Acknowledgements
Executive Summary

1. Introduction

2. Dataset Sources

2.1 Geographic distribution
2.2 Professional roles
2.3 Types of organisations
2.4 Sectors of activity
2.5 Complete overview

3. Methodology: Classification and Scoring

3.1 Institutional indicators
3.2 Weighting model
3.3 Scoring
3.4 Use of interview data
3.5 Limitations

4. Procurement Expenditures and Professionalisation

4.1 Objective
4.2 Procurement expenditure as a share of GDP
4.3 Findings
4.4 Overall assessment

5. Conclusion

Annex A - Country Fiches

1. *Albania*
2. *Austria*
3. *Belgium*
4. *Bulgaria*
5. *Croatia*
6. *Cyprus*
7. *Czech Republic*
8. *Denmark*
9. *Estonia*
10. *Finland*
11. *France*
12. *Germany*
13. *Greece*
14. *Hungary*
15. *Ireland*
16. *Italy*
17. *Kosovo*
18. *Latvia*
19. *Lithuania*
20. *Luxembourg*
21. *Malta*
22. *Netherlands*
23. *North Macedonia*
24. *Norway*
25. *Poland*
26. *Portugal*
27. *Romania*
28. *Slovakia*
29. *Slovenia*
30. *Spain*
31. *Sweden*
32. *Ukraine*

Annex B - Questionnaire

Annex C - Infographic

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a comparative assessment of the professionalisation of public procurement officials across 32 European countries. It has been developed in a context where the professionalisation of the procurement workforce has become a strategic priority at European level. Over recent years, several initiatives have contributed to shaping this agenda: the **ProcurCompEU competency framework (2020)**[1], the **OECD's 2025 analysis on procurement workforce development**[2], and, most recently, the **European Committee of the Regions' Opinion on the Evaluation of the Public Procurement Directives (2026)**, which explicitly calls for a comprehensive EU strategy to strengthen the skills and capacity of public buyers (paragraph 32)[3].

This builds up on the own-initiative report on public procurement adopted by the European Parliament on 9 September 2025[4]. With regard to professionalisation, the report calls the Commission to further strengthen the professionalisation and training of procurement officials and suggests that the Commission increase funding for further training of contracting authorities to effectively implement the EU public procurement framework.

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this study is to **support European institutions and sector stakeholders in defining the content and guiding the implementation of the forthcoming revision of the EU Public Procurement Directives**, expected in 2026. By mapping the institutional features that underpin procurement professionalisation—legal role recognition, certification frameworks, mandatory training, incentive mechanisms, and ongoing reforms—the report offers evidence-based insights that can inform legislative design, capacity-building strategies, and implementation planning.

1 ProcurCompEU is the competency framework for public procurement professionals designed by the European Commission. It is an essential tool to support the professionalisation of public buyers. It is built around 30 competences.

2 In 2023 the OECD published a comprehensive analysis of the play of the measures taken by countries to promote the professionalisation of the public procurement workforce. The OECD work was built on data collected through the 2020 OECD Survey on Professionalisation and the 2018 OECD Survey on the Implementation of the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Public Procurement. OECD Public Governance Policy Papers - N°26 '*Professionalising the public procurement workforce - A review of current initiatives and challenges*' OECD (2023). This was followed by the recent OECD Public Governance Policy Paper on '*Professionalising public procurement through certification. A comparative study across selected countries'.* In its activities to support the professionalisation, the OECD also published in 2025 the '*Strategic Public Procurement and Professionalisation Initiatives in Estonia: Diagnostic Report'*, OECD Public Governance Reviews.

3 Opinion of the Committee of the Regions, Evaluation of public procurement directives (CDR-2298-2025), 4 March 2026. https://www.cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions/cdr-2298-2025

4 European Parliament resolution of 9 September 2025 on public procurement (2024/2103(INI)), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2025-0174_EN.html. See points 37 and 89.

The analysis draws on two complementary sources:

- a structured institutional dataset covering 32 countries;
- a response dataset of 79 procurement professionals from across Europe, collected through a questionnaire launched on 8 January 2026.

Concerning specifically the country profiles, these were validated and sometimes supplemented by renowned experts.

Mandatory training and legal role recognition emerge as the strongest drivers of maturity, followed by certification. Reform processes and incentives play a supportive but secondary role. On this basis, the results reveal significant disparities in professionalisation maturity. A small group of countries demonstrates a comprehensive and institutionalised approach, while others lack foundational elements such as legal recognition or mandatory training.

The report also compares professionalisation levels with procurement expenditure as a share of GDP, highlighting several mismatches between fiscal exposure and institutional capacity. Countries with high procurement expenditure but low professionalisation scores face heightened systemic risks and should be prioritised for institutional strengthening.

The final sections provide country profiles, policy recommendations, and an implementation roadmap designed to support EU institutions, national governments, procurement authorities, and professional associations in advancing a coherent and effective professionalisation strategy across Europe.

1. Introduction

1. INTRODUCTION

The professionalisation of public procurement has progressively emerged as a strategic priority across Europe. Over the past years, several institutional initiatives have highlighted the need to strengthen the skills, recognition, and the technical capacity of procurement officials.

The Directives on Public Procurement do not directly regulate professionalisation, but they created the need for a more competent and effective procurement workforce. Skilled contracting authorities are essential for ensuring transparency, preventing corruption, and enabling the pursuit of strategic policy goals. Since the Directives entered into force, the Commission has taken numerous initiatives to strengthen professionalisation in public procurement [1], including issuing soft law (a Recommendation in 2017 encouraging Member States to develop and implement long-term professionalisation strategies[2]) followed in 2020 by an important tool, the ProcurCompEU competency framework. The recent rise in sectoral legislation impacting on public procurement has compounded the need for professionalisation[3].

The ProcurCompEU framework first provided a structured competency model for the European procurement workforce, establishing a common language and a shared reference for skills development. More recently, the OECD's December 2025 assessment on public procurement professionalisation reaffirmed the importance of investing in human capital, emphasising the link between professional competence, system performance, and public value. Furthermore, the evaluation Public procurement Directives published by the Commission in October 2025[4] refers explicitly to persisting challenges in the field of professionalisation despite the numerous measures taken by the Commission and Member States over the years. [5] This momentum has been further reinforced by the European Committee of the Regions, whose 2026 Draft Opinion on the Evaluation of the Public Procurement Directives explicitly calls, in paragraph 32, for a comprehensive EU-level strategy to professionalise public buyers, with particular attention to local and regional authorities.

It is within this evolving policy landscape that the present report has been developed. The study was promoted by ASSORUP – the Italian Association of Public Procurement Officials (RUPs), with the support of an interdisciplinary team of procurement specialists, legal experts, policy analysts, and researchers in public administration. The analysis focuses on the presence of five key elements—legal recognition, certification frameworks, mandatory training, incentive mechanisms, and ongoing reforms—and examines how these features contribute to the maturity of national procurement systems.

1 Commission Staff Working Document - Evaluation of Directive 2014/23/EU on Concessions, Directive 2014/24/EU on Public Procurement and Directive 2014/25/EU on Utilities. Brussels, 14.10.2025 SWD (2025) 332 final. Table 92 at page 242 provides a broad overview of the initiatives undertaken by the Commission related to professionalisation of public procurement over the last ten years.

2 Commission Recommendation (EU) 2017/1805 of 3 October 2017 on the professionalisation of public procurement - Building an architecture for the professionalisation of public procurement, OJ L 259, 7.10.2017, pp. 28-31, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2017/1805/o

3 W. Janssen & R. Caranta (eds), *Mandatory Sustainability Requirements in EU Public Procurement Law* (Oxford, Hart, 2023).

4 Commission Staff Working Document - Executive summary of the Evaluation of the Public Procurement Directives Staff Working Document Evaluation of Directive 2014/23/EU on Concessions, Directive 2014/24/EU on Public Procurement and Directive 2014/25/EU on Utilities, 14.10.2025, SWD (2025)333 final.

5 In this respect, the European Commission's evaluation of the Public Procurement Directives is particularly relevant since it included a wide and robust public consultation on the functioning of the Directives. Table 9 of the evaluation illustrates the replies to the statement "the directives increased the professionalisation of public buyers, by type of respondent" which received in total 685 replies. Although the overall replies are relatively positive but balanced (263 agree or strongly agree; 230 disagree or strongly disagree), the replies by public authorities (eventually including public buyers) are slightly less positive. For instance, the statement received 65 "agree" and 16 "strongly agree", and 67 "disagree" and 6 "strongly disagree".

The analysis is based on a structured questionnaire launched on 8 January 2026 [6], which collected 79 responses from professionals operating in 32 countries. The dataset reflects the views, assessments, and professional experiences of the respondents and of the authors of the report. It does not represent the official position of the organisations to which respondents may belong, nor does it imply institutional endorsement by public bodies, agencies, or companies mentioned in the dataset. However, many respondents were working in relevant bodies involved in public procurement (e.g. regulatory office, national Central Purchasing Body, procurement department of a large administration or utility, etc.). While a wider dissemination and response to the questionnaire would further enhance the robustness of the results - and therefore further research should be promoted, including semi-structured expert interviews - the answers collected already provide interesting and reliable information. Moreover, the country profiles referred to EU Member States were validated and sometimes supplemented by renowned experts to ensure enhanced accuracy. Therefore, the total number of participants in this study goes well beyond the replies to the questionnaire and goes well over 100 people.

The objective of the report is to provide an initial comparative assessment of the institutional features that support the professionalisation of public procurement officials across Europe. The report also integrates insights from the dataset, offering a multi-layered understanding of procurement practices across different administrative, organisational, and sectoral contexts.

6 The survey was open from 8 January to 31 March 2026. The survey has been promoted using different communication tools (webinars, mails and LinkedIn posts).

2. Dataset Sources

2. DATASET SOURCES

The study draws on a structured questionnaire dataset comprising **79 respondents** across the 32 countries included in the analysis. The geographical coverage of the survey is wide, including all the EU Member States and five other European[1] countries (Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Norway, and Ukraine). The dataset provides detailed information on each respondent's country of employment, professional role, organisational affiliation, and sector of activity. This diversity ensures that the perspectives captured reflect the operational, managerial, regulatory, and advisory dimensions of public procurement.

It is to be noted that the survey allows enriching and complement with extensive information the OECD studies on professionalisation of public procurement of 2023[2] and the more recent one on professionalisation of public procurement through certification of December 2025[3].

2.1 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Respondents are distributed across Europe, with representation from all countries included in the institutional assessment. The number of respondents per country varies, with larger clusters in Croatia, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Italy and the Netherlands. Fewer responses came from Austria, Denmark, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Sweden and Ireland.

2.2 PROFESSIONAL ROLES

The respondents represent a broad spectrum of procurement-related functions, including Procurement experts, Procurement managers, Heads of procurement departments, Representatives of national procurement agencies, Ministry officials, Academics, Review body representatives and Directors and senior administrators.

2.3 TYPES OF ORGANISATIONS

Respondents are affiliated with a wide range of institutions, including Central Purchasing Bodies, National public procurement agencies, Ministries, Regional and local governments, Hospitals and Health services, Public-owned companies, Universities and research centres, Oversight and review bodies.

2.4 SECTORS OF ACTIVITY

The dataset covers respondents operating in multiple sectors, including General services and supplies for public administration, Health, Energy and utilities, ICT and digital services, Public works and construction, Defence and security, Environment, Education and research, Media, Transport, Review and oversight procedures and Climate-oriented innovation.

1 In addition, a regulatory body in Brazil filled in a questionnaire. The reply was not included in this analysis.
2 This comprehensive analysis from the OECD on professionalisation in public procurement is based on 2020 data.
3 This more recent work of the OECD drew on a survey of 15 countries only, highlighting practices, emerging trends, and lessons for governments considering similar approaches. In fact, the study only covers seven EU Member States (Austria, Croatia, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Slovak) plus four other European countries (Albania, Norway, Serbia and the United Kingdom). It also includes other OECD (Chile, Israel) and OECD accession countries (Brazil, Peru).

2.5 COUNTRY PROFILES

The information collected has been used to draft profiles on the state of play of professionalisation in each EU Member State and in the other European countries (Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Norway, Ukraine). These fiches have been sent for validation to the respondents and to several other key stakeholders (e.g. from the relevant regulatory body, an academic) in order to ensure that the information therein was accurate. As a result, almost all country fiches have been validated and verified by the procurement professionals and experts taking part in this exercise[4] .

4 In some cases, participating professionals have sent a commonly agreed revised version of the country fiche. The only country profile that has not been validated is that of Ukraine.

3.

Methodology: Classification and Scoring

3. AN OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

3.1 KEY INDICATORS

The questionnaire allowed to collect a rather wide set of information on professionalisation of public procurement in Europe. In the following section, the main results are presented for five main aspects: legal role, certification, mandatory training (the latter two being unified in the country fiches), incentives, and ongoing/planned reforms. Legal recognition is a foundational element that enables career paths, accountability, and resource allocation.

a. Legale Role

Legal recognition is a foundational element that enables career paths, accountability, and resource allocation.

Tab. 1 - Breakdown of countries by legal recognition

Countries	Yes	No
EU	Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden
Other European Countries	Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Ukraine	Norway

Table 1 above presents the presence/absence of the recognition in the national legal system of a specific legally recognized role for the public procurement buyers' profession. Such a legal role is present in 9 EU Member States, and in 4 other European countries. Consequently, it is not present in the remaining 18 Member States. Therefore, according to the survey carried out for this report, only one third of EU Member States legally recognize the specific professionality of public buyers.

Across EU countries, the definition of the public buyer role varies widely, with many Member States not having a legally defined, full-cycle procurement profession. In most countries responsibilities are typically distributed internally across departments or multidisciplinary teams rather than concentrated in a single professional role. A recurring pattern is that procurement tasks—planning, drafting tender documents, managing procedures, evaluating bids and contract execution—are handled by different units, often with a single point of contact identified for each procedure. Respondents in these countries frequently describe the model as "only partially effective" due to fragmentation and inconsistent professionalisation.

Non-EU countries taking part in the survey show more formalisation, though with varying maturity. For instance, Albania has a legally defined public buyer role with responsibilities covering the entire procurement cycle; Ukraine too has a very structured system. On the contrary Norway does not define the role in the law but assigns responsibilities internally, often to multidisciplinary teams, with formal appointment based on qualifications.

A clear divide emerges between countries with legally defined, centralised roles (e.g., Albania, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine) and those where procurement responsibilities are decentralised and organisation-dependent. Where the role is formalised, responsibilities typically span the full procurement cycle, appointments are formal, and delegation rules are clearly regulated. In decentralised systems, responsibilities are often shared, assigned ad hoc or linked to organisational position, leading to variability in effectiveness. Across all countries, the identification of a single point of contact is common, but the degree of professionalisation and clarity of responsibilities differs substantially.

b. Certification

A certification framework attest to the level of skills and competences acquired by public procurement officials. Its presence distinguishes advanced systems from intermediate ones. In this initial assessment of this important aspect, information collected referred to both voluntary and mandatory certification schemes being present or absent in the surveyed countries.

Tab. 2 - Breakdown of countries by certification for public procurement professionals

Countries	Mandatory	Partial/Voluntary	Absent
EU	Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Slovakia	Belgium, Bulgaria, Danmark, Germany, Greece, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania	Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden
Other European Countries	Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Ukraine	Norway	

The share of EU Member States that have included a mandatory certification was 19%, while a relatively large group including 9 EU Member States has some form of partial or voluntary certification scheme in place.

Across the countries analysed, certification systems for public procurement professionals vary widely in structure, obligation and national coordination. A few countries operate mandatory, formalised certification frameworks— such as Albania, Italy and Croatia, where participation in procurement procedures requires at least one certified official, supported by structured exams and periodic renewal requirements. In contrast, many EU Member States do not have a national certification system, relying

instead on optional training, internal organisational requirements or on-the-job experience. Even where certification exists, its structure differs significantly: some countries link certification to multi-level training paths, while others apply a single standard qualification without tiered progression.

Update and refresher obligations are equally uneven. Countries with formal certification often require periodic renewal or continuing education (e.g., Croatia's two- to three-year update cycle), whereas countries without certification frameworks typically have no mandatory refreshers at all. Overall, certification across the EU remains fragmented and inconsistent, with only a minority of Member States adopting compulsory, standardised systems, while most rely on decentralised or voluntary approaches that limit comparability and professionalisation across the Union.

c. Mandatory Training

Mandatory training ensures baseline competence and supports continuous development.

Tab. 3 - Breakdown of countries by training of public procurement professionals

Countries	Mandatory training
EU	Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia
Other European Countries	Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Ukraine

Across EU Member States, training for public procurement staff remains highly heterogeneous, with some countries operating structured, multi-level systems and others relying on non-structured or ad-hoc training, often provided by more or less established private service providers like CIPS. On the other hand, the absence of mandatory refreshers in many jurisdictions limits the long-term effectiveness of professional development.

Training programmes[1] across the countries analysed consistently cover core areas such as procurement planning, national and EU legislation, tender management, bid evaluation, integrity and anti-corruption, contract execution, digital procurement and strategic approaches (green, social, innovation), and are delivered through a wide mix of modalities—including in-person courses, synchronous online sessions, e-learning platforms and, in some cases, on-the-job training—reflecting a broad but uneven landscape of professional development opportunities.

Across the countries analysed, training systems range from structured multi-level models (e.g., Albania, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Netherlands, and several non-EU countries such as Kosovo and North Macedonia) to non-structured or single-level systems (e.g., Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Romania), while update or refresher requirements vary widely: some countries impose mandatory periodic refreshers (Croatia, Albania), others make updates optional (Austria, Belgium, Denmark), and several have no refresher obligations at all.

Among the non-EU countries included in the document the trend is toward more structured and formalised training systems, often linked to broader professionalisation reforms. Overall, non-EU countries tend to adopt more centralised and compulsory training models, whereas EU Member States display a more heterogeneous landscape with varying degrees of obligation and presence of a

1 An interesting case study on the impact of training on the professionalisation of public buyers can be found in Piga, G., Antonietta Coppola, M. (2019), 'The Impact of Professionalization in Public Procurement', *European Journal of Public Procurement Markets.*

standardised system.

A competency model maps critical skills and their capability levels which are required for the overall strategic direction of an organisation. Over the last few years a number of Member States have been using the ProcurCompEU competency matrix or other competency models, sometimes adapting it to their local context (for instance, this is the case of Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Malta, Slovenia, and Spain also at regional level), or in pilots (e.g. Ireland, Italy).

d. Incentives

Incentives support retention and performance but are not foundational. They can contribute to motivate staff and reward performance.

Tab. 4 - Breakdown of countries which have structural (full or partial) incentives for public procurement professionals

Countries	Incentives system for public procurement
EU	Greece, Italy, Malta

Across the countries reviewed, procurement-specific incentive frameworks are largely absent. Most EU Member States do not provide financial or non-financial incentives linked to procurement performance. In several European states incentives exist, although they tend to be organisation-specific, not performance-based and not regularly disbursed. Respondents across countries consistently describe the current incentive systems as inadequate or only partially adequate, and reforms in this area are rare. In some cases, existing incentives mechanism are horizontal, i.e. applied to the whole public service (e.g. Germany).

Non-EU countries also show very limited development of incentive mechanisms, in some cases foreseen by law incentives but in fact not operational.

The cross-country picture shows a systemic gap: while many jurisdictions invest in training, certification and professionalisation, incentives remain the least developed pillar of procurement workforce policy. Even where accountability and sanctions frameworks are strengthened, positive incentives are absent. Discussions on incentives appear in some national strategies (e.g., Czech Republic), but concrete mechanisms are not implemented. The prevailing model across Europe is therefore one of responsibility without reward, with incentives neither used to attract talent nor to recognise high-quality procurement performance. This specific topic will deserve being further analysed in a more granular way, investigating how legal recognition, if given, or formation translates in more favourable treatments for those public servants engaged in public procurement. This is in line with sub-indicator 8(b) of the OECD MAPS according to which "Remuneration and career progression should reflect the particular professional status, and appointments and promotions should be competitive and based on qualifications and professional certification"[2].

e. Ongoing Reforms

Ongoing reforms in public procurement across EU and other European states, highlight how countries are modernising their systems to strengthen professionalisation, transparency, and efficiency.

2 https://www.mapsinitiative.org/content/dam/maps-initiative/en/maps-methodology/main-methodology-documents/maps-main-methodology.pdf

Tab. 5 - Breakdown of countries by ongoing or planned reforms with impact on public procurement professionalisation

Countries	Ongoing/implementing	Planned/debated
EU	Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovenia,	France, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal, Slovakia
Other European Countries	Albania, Kosovo, Norway, Ukraine	

Several countries are advancing or preparing reforms to implement the national professionalisation agenda. For instance, Poland's new framework is about to enter into force (July 2026), introducing competency-based certification and training standards.

Overall, the section shows that reform momentum is uneven: while several countries are advancing structured professionalisation and competency-based approaches, others remain at early stages or rely on incremental improvements. This diversity reflects differing administrative capacities and priorities but collectively signals a trend toward more skilled, accountable, and modern procurement systems.

The special importance of training corresponds to sub-indicator 8(a) of the 2025 OECD MAPS[3]. "The purpose of this sub-indicator is to verify the existence of permanent and relevant training programmes for new and existing staff in government procurement. These programmes are essential for maintaining the supply of qualified procurement staff to procuring entities. Another objective is to assess the existence and quality of advisory services on procurement matters for public entities, potential suppliers and the general public." Concerning legal recognition, the reference is to sub-indicator 8(b) – Recognition of procurement as a profession. According to the OECD MAPS, "Public procurement is often performed by civil servants of varying educational and professional backgrounds. Ideally, procurement officers are considered specialised professionals, rather than officials with a purely administrative function. The purpose of this sub-indicator is to determine whether procurement is recognised as a profession in the country's public service. This includes designating specific functions for procurement positions at various professional and management levels". Certification and incentives are instead just one component of training and of legal recognition. While for sure important, being specific parts of a larger indicator that is considered in its main component, these aspects are weighted less[4]. Reform processes play a supportive but secondary role[5].

3 https://www.mapsinitiative.org/content/dam/maps-initiative/en/maps-methodology/main-methodology-documents/maps-main-methodology.pdf

4 On the relevance of incentives see D. Klingler and S.L. Schooner, 'Promoting Sustainable Public Procurement Through Economic Policy Tools: From Moral Suasion to Nudging' 2023 *European Journal of Public Procurement Markets*, 4(4), 67-79 (2023).

5 See F. Schotanus and R. Nicolas, 'Coercive, Mimetic and Normative Influences on the Uptake of Sustainable Public Procurement: An Institutional Perspective' in W. Janssen and R. Caranta (eds.), *Mandatory Sustainability Requirements in EU Public Procurement Law* (Oxford, Hart 2023).

3.2 LIMITATIONS

The dataset captures the presence of institutional features, not their depth or actual performance. The questionnaire response varies from country to country, and the analysis does not try to infer missing information beyond what is explicitly present. Many relevant aspects and issues related to the professionalisation of public buyers have not been addressed in the survey [6] and therefore the results presented simply provide an initial overview of the professionalisation landscape in Europe and call for further, more articulated research covering a wider sample of respondents and the use of qualitative research methods such as expert interviews.

3.3 DISCLAIMER ON COUNTRIES' CLASSIFICATION

The classification of countries presented in the previous section 3.1 is the result of applying a set of institutional indicators designed to capture the presence or absence of key conditions that support the professionalisation of public buyers. **It should not be interpreted as a definitive or exhaustive assessment of the overall performance, quality, or effectiveness of national procurement systems.** Rather, it reflects the specific institutional dimensions examined in this study—legal recognition, mandatory training, certification, incentives, and ongoing reforms—based on the information available at the time of analysis and therefore mainly on the response to the questionnaire. More granular analysis and/or a more populated data set might change the assessment of this or that country. For instance, the OECD MAPS evaluation of sub-indicators 8(a) and 8(b) for Greece seems less optimistic than what transpires from the answers to our questionnaire.[7] The contrary might also turn out to be true. For instance, under sub-indicator 8(a) of the OECD MAPS, "The assessment should include verification of advisory services or help desks that offer advice to public or private sector parties on application and interpretation of policy and rules". This might be very relevant for countries like the Netherlands or Sweden having robust support institutions.

The primary purpose of this report is to **raise awareness among competent European institutions and sector stakeholders** and to encourage them to **verify and assess the exact status of play of professionalisation in each country**. As indicated in the OECD MAPS, managerial and technical capacities need to be "adequate to undertake efficient and transparent public procurement processes". **Achieving efficiency is obviously in the interest of each Member State, but this requires enhancing the professionalisation of public buyers**[8].

The results of this research highlight structural differences across Europe, often linked to diverse administrative traditions, institutional frameworks, and the uneven availability of training and capacity-building opportunities for procurement managers. These factors contribute to the **heterogeneous application of EU procurement rules**, as also noted in the European Commission's assessment of the 2014 Directives

6 The potential variables to be considered are many, although some of them are primarily set in a different context than public procurement itself. For instance, this is the case salary levels (which affect the retention of staff working in public procurement), for civil servants.

7 https://www.mapsinitiative.org/content/dam/maps-initiative/en/assessments/greece/maps-assessment-greece-main-report.pdf at p. 17.

8 F. Decarolis, L.M. Giuffrida, E. Iossa, V. Mollisi, G. Spagnolo, 'Bureaucratic competence and procurement outcomes' J. Law Econ. Organ., 36(3) (2020) pp. 537-597.

4.

Procurement Expenditures and Professionalisation

4. PROCUREMENT EXPENDITURES AND PROFESSIONALISATION

4.1 OBJECTIVE

This chapter explores the relationship between the institutional maturity of procurement professionalisation - which has been assessed in section 3.1 - and the macroeconomic weight of public procurement in selected European countries. Public procurement represents a substantial share of national GDP, and countries with higher procurement exposure have a correspondingly greater potential to benefit from structured, system-level professionalisation.

The analysis assesses whether institutional capacity seen in the previous chapter is aligned with the scale of procurement activity and identifies opportunities for strengthening capability where procurement expenditure is particularly significant. The analysis carried out in the following section is purely indicative and clearly does not allow capturing all relevant dimensions of the problem. Nonetheless, it is interesting to give a first look at how the economic and institutional maturity relate together.

4.2 PROCUREMENT EXPENDITURE AS A SHARE OF GDP

Public procurement expenditure varies considerably across Europe. According to consolidated data from the European Commission (Public Procurement Indicators[1]) and the OECD *Government at a Glance* dataset [2], public procurement typically ranges between 12% and 20% of national GDP, with several countries consistently positioned at the upper end of this spectrum.

The table below reports the approximate procurement expenditure/GDP ratio for countries with higher procurement exposure, together with their professionalisation scores from this study:

Country	**Procurement (% of GDP)**		
Netherlands	**~20.5%**	**Austria**	**~15.5%**
Finland	**~19.6%**	**Belgium**	**~15.4%**
Germany	**~18.5%**	**Croatia**	**~15.0%**
Sweden	**~17.4%**	**Estonia**	**~14.9%**
France	**~16.2%**	**Norway**	**~14.9%**

Source: OECD, *Government at a Glance – Public Procurement Data*

1 Public Procurement Indicators 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/60615
2 OECD, Government procurement spending as share of GDP, 2024

4.3 FINDINGS

Across Europe, several countries combine **high procurement expenditure** with **early-stage or limited institutionalisation of professionalisation frameworks**. Rather than indicating a structural weakness, this configuration highlights a **significant opportunity**: where procurement accounts for 15–20% of GDP, even modest advances in professionalisation can generate substantial improvements in efficiency, consistency, and value creation.

Countries such as the **Netherlands, Finland, Germany, Sweden, France, and Belgium**—all characterised by high procurement exposure—are therefore particularly well positioned to benefit from the introduction or expansion of formal professionalisation measures. The scale of their procurement activity means that investments in training, role recognition, certification, or incentives could have a high systemic return.

Two complementary dynamics emerge:

- **Opportunity for strategic enhancement:** High procurement volumes create a strong rationale for developing or strengthening professionalisation frameworks. Improvements in capability can translate into measurable performance gains across large segments of public expenditure.
- **Potential for greater visibility of existing practices:** Some countries may already rely on internal, decentralised, or sector-specific professionalisation mechanisms. Strengthening formal, system-level structures would help consolidate these practices and make them more visible, comparable, and scalable.

Even after the 2018 OECD MAPS country report, with a procurement expenditure close to 15% of GDP Norway shows partial formalisation to date, suggesting considerable room for strategic development and system-level consolidation.[3]

4.4 OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The comparison reveals a clear pattern, that is countries with high procurement exposure but low professionalisation should be prioritised for institutional strengthening, particularly in the areas of:

- legal recognition of procurement roles
- mandatory training frameworks
- certification pathways
- structured reform governance.

Conversely, countries that combine significant procurement expenditure with stronger institutional foundations demonstrate greater resilience and capacity to manage procurement risks effectively.

3 https://www.mapsinitiative.org/content/dam/maps-initiative/en/assessments/norway/maps-assessment-norway-main-report.pdf

5.
Conclusion

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study resonate strongly with the conclusions emerging from the European Commission's recent assessment of the 2014 Public Procurement Directives, which highlighted the persistent fragmentation and uneven application of EU rules across Member States. This heterogeneity is not merely the result of different administrative traditions but is closely linked to structural disparities in institutional frameworks, the absence of formal role recognition, and the uneven availability of training and professional development for procurement managers. Countries with stronger institutional foundations and mandatory training regimes tend to apply EU rules more consistently and effectively, while others struggle with capacity constraints that undermine both compliance and performance.

The recent evaluation of the Public Procurement Directives carried out by the European Commission highlighted the existence of *"limited competency models and certification frameworks, insufficient training opportunities in advanced procurement topics, low attractiveness of the profession"*. At the same time, *"the increasing complexity of procurement, linked to the alignment with broader strategic policy goals and geopolitical and technological challenges, has only reinforced the needs for a highly skilled procurement workforce and administrative capacity"*. The own-initiative report on public procurement recently adopted by the European Parliament also called to enhance professionalisation to improve the implementation of the EU framework.

Recognising public procurement as a standalone job and creating a certification scheme could improve the standing of public procurement as a competitive and attractive career choice and help retain talented and motivated professionals. On the contrary, the absence of a legal framework at European level on the professionalisation of public buyers contributes to the current situation in which public procurement is still often seen as an administrative function carried out by non-specialised staff while public procurement becomes increasingly complex. This situation generates significant "passive" waste in public procurement [1]. The volume represented by public procurement (15% of the EU GDP) calls for systems that manage public funds efficiently while fostering sustainable and resilient societies. As acknowledged by the OECD, *"strengthening the capacity of the public procurement workforce is therefore critical to achieving efficiency and value for money, making professionalisation a central priority in procurement reforms worldwide"* .

In this context, the forthcoming revision of the EU Public Procurement Directive represents a decisive opportunity for advancing the level of professionalisation of the public procurement workforce. While many initiatives have been taken over the years to improve the professionalisation of public buyers, these essentially included guidance documents, training, support to improved competence, and soft law.

As already emphasised by the **European Committee of the Regions in paragraph 32 of its 2026 Draft Opinion**, the Union would greatly benefit from the establishment of a **common European framework for the professionalisation of public buyers**, capable of supporting Member States while respecting administrative diversity and subsidiarity. Such a framework—built on shared competencies, minimum training standards, and clear institutional recognition—would not only enhance the coherence and quality of procurement practices across Europe, but also strengthen the resilience, transparency, and strategic value of public procurement as a whole.

1 OECD (2023), op. cit. footnote 2, refers to significant studies highlighting different forms of waste (e.g. corruption, incompetence, etc.)

The calls for simplification and flexibility in the preparation of the forthcoming reform cannot be heeded without a much enhanced professionalisation of procurement officials[2].

This report contributes to that objective by offering evidence-based insights and comparative analysis to support **EU institutions, national governments, and sector stakeholders** in shaping both the content and the implementation of the new EU legal framework for public procurement. A more professional, better trained, and institutionally recognised procurement workforce is essential to ensure that the next generation of EU procurement rules delivers on its promise of efficiency, fairness, innovation, and public value.

2 See J. Beuve and S. Saussier. 'Contracting with Public Authorities: Recent Developments' *Handbook of New Institutional Economics* 2025 651-672.

Annex A
Country Fiches

Albania

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Albania has a legally defined public buyer role, established by national legislation through the Public Procurement Law and the Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 285/2021, as amended. The role is identified at organisational level and is a dedicated professional function, formally appointed by the responsible manager through direct administrative appointment. Responsibilities include procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents and managing the tender procedure. Delegation of responsibilities is not permitted. In the absence of an individual role, responsibilities are divided by procurement phase and managed by multidisciplinary teams. A single point of contact is identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents consider the current model partially effective.

2. Training and Certification

Albania has mandatory certification for procurement staff (responsible person or dedicated structure), delivered through centralised national training provided by the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA) in cooperation with the Public Procurement Agency. Training and certification are structured across multiple levels (basic, intermediate, advanced, and expert) and cover procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender management, bid evaluation, legality and anti-corruption, contract execution, digital procurement, project management and green, social or innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously and through e-learning. Updates are periodic or optional depending on the level. A final exam is required. Albania is implementing a national certification system, currently in transition, and certification has become mandatory (as provided by Article 75/1 of DCM 285/2021 as amended), once the person is appointed as public buyer. Recent reforms include updated curricula, joint guidelines between APP, DAP and ASPA, training of trainers and the establishment of a certified national network of procurement professionals. The annual training budget ranges from unknown to €500–€2,000. Respondents consider the training system partially adequate.

3. Incentives

Albania does not have an implemented procurement-specific incentive framework. National legislation, including Law no. 162/2020 as amended, foresees the possibility of financial incentives for public buyers, but these provisions are not yet operational. Financial incentives are therefore not provided, not defined and not linked to performance criteria, and incentives are not disbursed regularly. Respondents consider the current incentive framework inadequate, and discussions on reforms are ongoing but without concrete measures.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Albania is undergoing significant reforms to professionalise public procurement, including the introduction of mandatory certification, updated legal frameworks, revised training curricula, inter-institutional cooperation and the creation of a certified national network of procurement professionals. No concrete reforms on incentives have been implemented yet.

Austria

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Even if the definition of the contracting authority provides a clearly identifiable entity responsible for the procurement procedure as a whole, Austria does not have a legally defined public buyer role responsible for managing the entire procurement cycle. Responsibilities are allocated across the organisation and may be divided by procurement phase, with planning, award and execution possibly handled by different units, but this depends very much on the size of the entity. In the absence of an individual role, central purchasing bodies manage the main phases of the procurement cycle. A single point of contact is not identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents do not consider the current model fully effective.

2. Training and Certification

Austria has a central training institution for the federal civil service, the "Verwaltungsakademie des Bundes". It provides a broad and systematically structured training portfolio aligned with the needs of public administration. Public procurement is covered both in specialised seminars and within broader training programmes. This contributes significantly to the continuous upskilling and professionalisation of procurement staff. More generally, Austria has mandatory training for procurement staff, delivered through self-training using official materials and training provided by international organisations, including CIPS. Training is structured across multiple levels (basic, intermediate, advanced) and covers procurement planning, EU procurement legislation, tender management, bid evaluation, legality and anti-corruption, contract execution, digital procurement and green, social or innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously and through e-learning. Updates are optional. A final exam is required. The annual training budget is not known. Respondents consider the training system adequate, although no national reforms or initiatives are reported.

3. Incentives

Austria does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No specific financial or non-financial incentives are provided, no performance-linked mechanisms exist and no regular disbursement is foreseen. Respondents are not aware of any reforms or initiatives to introduce or update incentive regulation.

4. Ongoing Reforms

No reforms or initiatives are reported specifically concerning the public buyer role, professionalisation, training or incentives. However, the BVergG 2026 reform introduces several elements that indirectly function as performance- and quality-oriented steering mechanisms. Most notably, the strengthened best bidder principle increases the importance of qualitative, sustainable and innovation-related award criteria relative to purely price-based decisions. In addition, the reform promotes more strategic and efficiency-oriented procurement, combined with the attempt of simplification of procedures and further digitalisation. These measures aim to enhance administrative efficiency and foster a more outcome- and quality-oriented procurement practice. This has yet to be translated into changes directly affecting the professionalisation of public buyers.

Belgium

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Belgium does not have a legally defined public buyer role responsible for managing the entire procurement cycle. Responsibilities are allocated within organisations and typically assigned to a project manager, while central purchasing bodies manage the main phases of the procurement cycle when no individual role is appointed. A single point of contact is identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents consider the current model only partially effective.

2. Training and Certification

Belgium provides specific training for procurement staff, delivered through national agencies, central purchasing bodies, universities, accredited external providers and self-training using official materials. Training is optional and structured at a single standard level. Topics include procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender management, legality and anti-corruption, contract execution, digital procurement, project management and green, social or innovation procurement. Training is delivered mainly through university master courses. Updates are optional, and a final exam is required. The annual training budget is less than €500. Respondents consider the training system partially adequate, and reforms are underway through federal initiatives and the EU Critical Medicines Act.

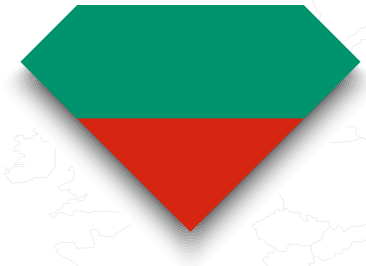
3. Incentives

Belgium does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, no performance-linked mechanisms exist, and no regular disbursement is foreseen. There is no regulatory framework on incentives in procurement, and respondents do not consider the current situation adequate. No reforms or initiatives are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Reforms are underway at federal and EU level, particularly linked to the Critical Medicines Act, which influence procurement practices but do not introduce a formalised public buyer role or incentive system.

Bulgaria



1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Bulgaria maintains a clear legal framework for the management of the public procurement cycle, established in the Public Procurement Act (PPA) and its implementing regulation, the Rules on Implementation of the Public Procurement Act (RIPPA). Contracting authorities (CAs) bear overall responsibility for the proper forecasting, planning, conduct, completion, and reporting on the outcomes of public procurement (Art. 5(1) PPA). The status of a CA is assigned to a specific natural person – the head or statutory representative, as defined in Art. 5(2) and (3) PPA – rather than to the organisation itself. The delegation of mentioned CA's powers is permitted only to specifically designated officials: those legally entitled to substitute for the CA under a statutory, administrative, or other constitutive act; those exercising the administrative management of the organisation; or those heading a distinct organisational unit (territorial, functional, or specialised) within the authority's structure (Art. 7(1) PPA).

CAs with an annual budget of 5 BGN m (~€ 2.6m) or more are required to adopt and publish Internal Procurement Rules (Art. 244 PPA). As prescribed by Art. 140(1) RIPPA, the rules at least cover the entire procurement lifecycle: from needs forecasting and planning to contract award, and appeals handling. The rules must also include provisions on documentation of all procurement cycle stages and publication of information on the Buyer's Profile in the Official Procurement Register. These rules are instrumental to public procurement professionalisation: they must explicitly designate the officers responsible for the procurement cycle, establish the oversight of their work, and ensure the provision of introductory and ongoing professional training for those officers. To ensure expert-level execution, CAs may also outsource specific tasks within the procurement cycle to external procurement experts (Art. 140(2) RIPPA).

CAs with an annual budget exceeding 20 BGN m (~ € 10.23m) and an average of more than 20 procurement procedures per year over the preceding three years are additionally required to establish a dedicated internal procurement unit (Art. 245 PPA). The size and composition of such units are to be determined by the volume and complexity of procurement managed. In practice, responsibilities for the management of the procurement cycle are either distributed across different departments or handled by the designated internal procurement unit. In smaller organisations, a single procurement professional – a specific designated official – may carry the role individually. A single point of contact is generally identified for each procurement procedure, and the allocation of tasks varies by organisation type and size.
Respondents observe that, while the legal framework provides a solid foundation aligned with EU standards and the acquis, practical implementation and effectiveness varies considerably across CAs, reflecting differences in institutional size, administrative capacity, and the volume of procurement activity – an area identified as offering scope for further development.

2. Training and Certification

Bulgaria has in operation a structured training system for procurement professionals, although it is not yet formally tiered or uniform at a national level. As mandated by Art. 140(1), point 8 of the RIPPA, training is a compulsory element of every CA's Internal Procurement Rules, which must provide for both introductory and continuing training for their procurement officials.

Training is delivered – both in-person and online – by a diverse range of providers, including the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) (the primary body responsible for the training of civil servants), the Public Procurement Agency (PPA), central purchasing bodies, and managing authorities of EU programmes. Universities also play a role through dedicated programmes – notably a master's degree programme
in public procurement management – alongside international organisations and private training providers.
Core training topics and competencies include procurement planning and needs assessment, national and EU procurement legislation, bid evaluation and award criteria, anti-corruption, integrity and legality, digital tools – notably the Centralised Automated Information System for Electronic Public Procurement (CAIS EPP), and strategic procurement (green, social, and innovative solutions).

Bulgaria

For officials responsible for the implementation of EU-funded projects, the IPA's "Academy for EU Funds" project (co-funded under the Technical Assistance Programme 2021–2027) plays a prominent role, offering structured modules – including a dedicated public procurement programme – and e-learning resources. Training budgets vary considerably across contracting authorities, reflecting differences in institutional resources, the size of the procurement function, and the specific development needs of individual officials. Training for civil servants within the IPA framework is provided free of charge.

At present, there is no formal unified national certification or examination system for public procurement officials, and skills are primarily acquired through on-the-job experience combined with the aforementioned training channels. Although procurement has not yet been recognised as a standalone regulated profession, the role of "Public Procurement Expert" is formally established within Bulgaria's National Classification of Professions and Occupations. Respondents indicate that while the current system is broad and covers key competencies, a more structured and formalised approach could strengthen professional development.

3. Incentives

Bulgaria does not currently have a dedicated national framework providing positive financial or non-financial incentives specifically linked to public procurement performance. While no specific reforms to introduce such schemes have been reported, the accountability and sanctions regime has undergone significant reinforcement.

The 2023 amendments to the PPA (State Gazette No. 88/2023, in force from 22 December 2023) established a permanent Expert Advisory Council under the Minister of Finance, composed of representatives from the Ministry of Finance, the PPA, the State Financial Inspection Agency, and the Audit of EU Funds Executive Agency, tasked with coordinating oversight and ensuring a more consistent approach to procurement policy.

Respondents observe that while the reinforced accountability and sanctions regime represents a meaningful step toward ensuring compliance, the current framework remains focused predominantly on risk and liability. The absence of positive performance-based recognition for procurement professionals is noted as an area where further policy development could contribute to a more balanced framework.

4. Ongoing Reforms

No specific legislative reforms are currently underway to formally redefine the role of public procurement officials or to introduce a dedicated positive incentive scheme for procurement professionals. Bulgaria nevertheless continues to strengthen overall capacity through digitalisation – centred on the mandatory and continuously evolving CAIS EPP platform – as well as through the improvement of various forms of ex-ante and ex-post control over procurement activities, delivered both internally by CAs and externally by the PPA and various audit and oversight bodies.

The community of public procurement professionals is a vital, yet largely unregulated, component of Bulgaria's procurement system. There is currently no single national professional organisation – whether statutory or voluntary – representing the sector as a whole. Instead, the landscape consists of various sub-communities formed on territorial, institutional, or functional lines. These informal networks facilitate essential knowledge transfer, peer support, and the exchange of best practices, serving as a crucial vehicle for professional expertise in the absence of a more formalised structure.

A prominent example is the Network of Public Procurement Experts operating in the field of EU funds (ESIF/EFSU), coordinated by the IPA under the "Academy for EU Funds" project. This network provides a structured platform for experts across managing authorities, intermediate bodies, and beneficiaries. Through its dedicated training strands and e-learning modules, the Academy fosters a specialised environment for peer learning and the dissemination of high-quality procurement standards.

Croatia

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Croatia does not have a nationally defined public buyer role, although several respondents refer to national regulations and guidelines that establish training and participation requirements. In practice, the role is defined at organisational level, and responsibilities are generally shared across departments or assigned on a case-by-case basis. Typical responsibilities include procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure, bid evaluation, contract execution management and monitoring, and in some cases project team coordination. Appointment is usually linked to the organisational position, made case by case, or based on qualification and certification criteria. Delegation of responsibilities is generally not permitted, although some organisations allow it. A single point of contact is often identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents assess the effectiveness of the current model as partial.

2. Training and Certification

Croatia has mandatory training for procurement staff, delivered through centralised national training, accredited external professional courses and international organisations. A national certification system exists and is widely applied, requiring at least one certified person to participate in each procurement procedure. Training may be structured as a single standard level or across multiple levels depending on the provider. Topics include procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and anti-corruption, contract execution management, digital procurement, project management and green, social or innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously and through e-learning. Updates are periodic, typically every two to three years or through a points-based system. A final exam is required. Annual training budgets vary significantly, ranging from no dedicated budget to €5,000 depending on the organisation. Respondents consider the training system only partially adequate.

3. Incentives

Croatia does not have a national incentive framework for public buyers. Incentive design is left to individual organisations, which generally do not provide incentives. In some cases, fixed-amount financial incentives or formal recognition of competencies exist, but these are not widespread, not performance-based and not regularly disbursed. Respondents consider the current incentive framework inadequate or only partially adequate. No reforms or initiatives are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

No reforms are underway to redefine the public buyer role or introduce incentive mechanisms. Recent developments focus mainly on training and certification requirements rather than on structural changes to the role or its recognition.

Cyprus

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Cyprus does not have a clearly or consistently defined public buyer role at national level. Bigger Contracting Authorities established Procurement Units where relevant roles and structures are in place at organisational level. In smaller Contracting Authorities, with very few procurements per year no such role exists in practice and responsibilities are allocated internally within organisations, typically shared across departments and managed by officers appointed on a case-by-case basis. In Organisations where a role is defined, responsibilities may cover the entire procurement cycle and are linked to the position held. Delegation of responsibilities is possible. A single point of contact is identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents consider the current model only partially effective.

2. Training and Certification

Cyprus has established a network of core representatives from the majority of Contracting Authorities assigned with public procurement roles to provide targeted training that will not be lost due to staff rotation and allow built up of knowledge and expertise in the field. This core team receives mandatory ad hoc training but it is not part of a national certification or accreditation system. Training is mainly delivered in person regarding the procurement aspects and through online courses mainly for the national eProcurement system.

In September 2022, a project on professionalisation commenced employing international experts that developed a syllabus and training path in accordance to ProcurCompEU covering all 30 competencies and all levels. The first 50 procurers – trainers concluded training in 2025 and were certified after succeeding in an exam and successfully going through on the job training. This training and certification process for procurers will be repeated for another 60 professionals from big contracting authorities expected to commence by the end of 2026. This initiative provides structured levels of training in view of a qualification through examination and practical exercise. In smaller contracting authorities skills are primarily acquired through internal on-the-job experience. Annual training budgets are not known.

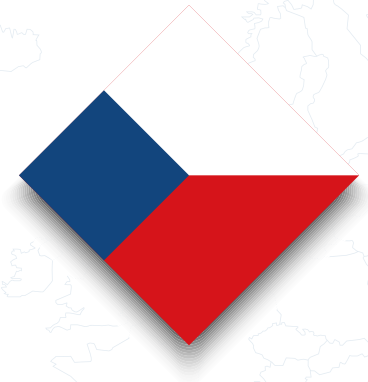
3. Incentives

Cyprus does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. One respondent notes that national law exists but does not provide incentives for this role. Incentives are not disbursed regularly. Respondents consider the current incentive framework inadequate. In an effort to provide incentives to people who invest in professionalism in procurement, there is a Council of Ministers decision establishing the public buyer and a Central Purchasing Unit to handle central purchasing and act as a shared service center in order to invest in professionalisation and remove from smaller contracting authorities the burden to undertake their own procurements.

4. Ongoing Reforms

As discussed above, capitalizing on the Council of Ministers decision, the establishment of the professional procurer and the extension of coverage by the Central Purchasing Unit is currently the reform pursued in order to highlight the benefits of investing in professionals in the area of procurement. However, the challenge remains on tackling the provision of incentives to professional procurers that provide value for money and satisfy the needs of their customers.

Czech Republic



1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

The Czech Republic does not have a nationally defined public buyer role responsible for the entire procurement cycle. One respondent reports that a role exists but only at organisational level, while the other confirms that no such role is formally established. Responsibilities are therefore allocated internally within contracting authorities, typically shared across departments or assigned to officers on a case-by-case basis. In organisations where a role is defined, responsibilities may include procurement planning, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure and bid evaluation. Appointment is usually linked to the organisational position or made directly by the administration. Delegation of responsibilities is generally not used. Identification of a single point of contact varies by organisation. Respondents consider the current model ineffective.

2. Training and Certification

Training for procurement staff exists but is optional. It is delivered through centralised national training, public administrations, accredited external providers, self-training using official materials and international organisations. Training may be structured across multiple levels (basic, intermediate, advanced) in some programmes, while others have no levels. Topics include national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and anti-corruption, digital procurement and green/social/innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person and online. There are no mandatory refresher requirements and no examination or certification system currently in place. Annual training budgets vary, typically below €500, with many free training opportunities available. Respondents consider the current training system partially adequate. Reforms are underway through the National Public Procurement Strategy 2024–2028.

3. Incentives

There is no incentive framework for individuals performing public procurement functions. The role is not formally recognised, and therefore no financial or non-financial incentives are provided. Incentives are not linked to performance and are not disbursed regularly. Respondents consider the current incentive framework inadequate. The National Public Procurement Strategy 2024–2028 includes preliminary considerations on incentives, but no concrete mechanisms are yet in place.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Reforms are underway through the National Public Procurement Strategy 2024–2028, led by the Ministry of Regional Development. The strategy includes measures to strengthen professionalisation, improve training and potentially introduce future incentive mechanisms. However, implementation remains uncertain due to political changes.

Denmark

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Denmark does not have a legally defined public buyer role responsible for the entire procurement cycle. Responsibilities are allocated internally within contracting authorities and are typically shared across different departments. In the absence of a designated role, the main phases of the procurement cycle are managed by central, regional and municipal purchasing bodies. A single point of contact is identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents consider the current model only partially effective. Professionalisation efforts are ongoing, and the role of public buyer has been progressively strengthened over recent years.

2. Training and Certification

Training for procurement staff exists but is optional. It is delivered through national agencies, central purchasing bodies, public administrations, universities, accredited external providers and self-training using official materials. Training is structured across multiple levels (basic, intermediate, advanced) and covers procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and anti-corruption, contract execution, digital procurement, project management, category management, security of supply, IT security and data protection. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously, through e-learning, blended formats and on-the-job training. Updates are optional. A final exam is required for certification. Annual training budgets are not known. Respondents consider the current training system adequate. Reforms are underway, including initiatives related to value-based procurement.

3. Incentives

Denmark does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. Respondents consider the absence of incentives adequate, noting that incentives are not needed. No reforms or initiatives to introduce incentive mechanisms are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Reforms are underway to further professionalise procurement functions, including initiatives related to value-based procurement and broader efforts to strengthen procurement capabilities across public bodies. No structural reforms concerning the formalisation of the public buyer role or incentive mechanisms are reported.

Estonia

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Estonia does not have a legally defined public buyer role responsible for the entire procurement cycle. The Public Procurement Act assigns responsibility to each contracting authority but does not prescribe a single professional role. Responsibilities are therefore distributed across departments and often divided by procurement phases, with planning, procedure management and contract execution assigned to different units or officials. In some organisations, responsibilities are assigned to a project manager, while in others they are managed by multidisciplinary teams involving procurement, legal, financial and technical experts. National public procurement agencies or central purchasing bodies may support certain phases. Identification of a single point of contact varies by organisation. Respondents assess the current model as partially effective or effective depending on the contracting authority's capacity, experience and available resources.

2. Training and Certification

Training for procurement staff exists but is optional. It is delivered through national agencies, central purchasing bodies, public administrations, universities, private training providers, self-training using official materials and international organisations. Training is generally not structured by levels, although some programmes offer a single standard level. Topics include procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and anti-corruption, contract execution, digital procurement and green/social/innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously, through e-learning and via on-the-job training. There are no mandatory refresher requirements and no examinations or certification system. Annual training budgets are typically below €500. Respondents consider the current training system partially adequate or inadequate. No specific reforms on training are reported, although broader professionalisation initiatives exist.

3. Incentives

Estonia does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. Some respondents note that national law exists but does not provide incentives for this role, while others highlight that incentive design is left to entities, which generally do not provide them. Assessments of adequacy vary, with some respondents considering the framework inadequate and others partially adequate or adequate. No reforms or initiatives to introduce incentive mechanisms are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Estonia is implementing several initiatives to professionalise public procurement. These include the adoption of Public Procurement Strategic Principles and an associated action plan aimed at strengthening procurement capacity, developing competency models and building systematic training and support mechanisms. Estonia has cooperated with the OECD under EU-supported technical assistance to assess the procurement workforce, develop competency frameworks and deliver capacity-building activities. Additional reforms include a simplification process of procurement legislation led by the Ministry of Finance to reduce administrative burden. No further reforms are reported by the additional respondents.

Finland

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Finland does not have a nationally defined public buyer role responsible for the entire procurement cycle. One respondent reports that a role exists but only at organisational level, while the other confirms that no such role is formally established. Responsibilities are therefore allocated internally within contracting authorities and are typically divided by procurement phase, with planning, award and execution handled by different units or multidisciplinary teams. In organisations where a role is defined, responsibilities may include procurement planning, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure, bid evaluation and project team coordination. Appointment is usually made directly by the administration or by the responsible manager. Delegation of responsibilities is possible in some organisations. Identification of a single point of contact varies by organisation. Respondents consider the current model effective or only partially effective depending on the organisation.

2. Training and Certification

Training for procurement staff exists but is optional. It is delivered through universities, accredited external providers, public administrations and self-training using official materials. Training may include procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, contract execution, project management and green/social/innovation procurement. Training is delivered through blended formats, in person or online. There is no national certification or accreditation system, and no mandatory refresher requirements. Some organisations conduct periodic assessments, but no formal examinations are required. Annual training budgets are not known. Respondents consider the current training system partially adequate or inadequate. Finland is implementing initiatives to improve procurement training and professional development through the Hankinta-Suomi action programme, which provides training, guidelines, tools and cooperation with educational institutions to strengthen procurement skills across the public sector.

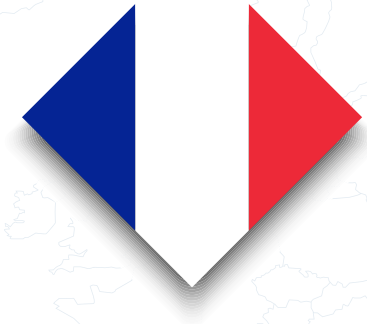
3. Incentives

Finland does not have a national incentive framework for public buyers. Incentives depend on the organisation, but generally no financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. Respondents note that there is no regulatory framework on incentives in procurement. Assessments of adequacy vary, with one respondent unable to comment and the other considering the framework adequate. No reforms or initiatives to introduce incentive mechanisms are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

No reforms are reported concerning the formalisation of the public buyer role or the introduction of incentive mechanisms. However, Finland is actively strengthening procurement professionalisation through the Hankinta-Suomi action programme, which supports competence development, training, practical tools and collaboration with educational institutions.

France



1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

In France, there is no legally defined public buyer role responsible for managing the entire procurement cycle. Instead, responsibilities are distributed internally within contracting authorities, and the way they are allocated varies significantly from one organisation to another. Procurement activities such as planning, tendering, and contract execution are handled by different units or officials, depending on internal structures and organisational arrangements.
Despite this fragmentation, contracting authorities generally identify a single point of contact for each procurement procedure, ensuring at least one reference person throughout the process. Respondents consider the current model only partially effective, reflecting the challenges created by decentralised responsibility and heterogeneous internal practices.

2. Training and Certification

France does not have a national mandatory training or certification system for public procurement professionals. Training requirements differ across sectors and public entities, and there is no legal obligation to undergo training, no structured progression through levels, and no standardised examinations.
Skills are typically acquired through a combination of internal experience, self-learning, external courses, and sector-specific training where relevant. Respondents judge the current training system only partially adequate, highlighting gaps in consistency and professionalisation.
A recent Senate report (Rapport n° 830, 2024–2025) strongly advocates for strengthening training and professional development in public procurement. Some public organisations have already begun internal initiatives in this direction. The broader debate on professionalisation is also shaped by the growing use of AI tools to support procurement activities, which further increases the need for structured training.

3. Incentives

France does not have a unified national incentive framework for public buyers. Incentives may exist, but only at the discretion of individual administrations, and they tend to vary widely. They may include non-financial incentives or incentives linked to training and qualification, but financial incentives are not commonly tied to performance criteria. The Legal Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of the Economy is regarded as the leading central government body responsible for supporting public procurers through an ever-increasing number of detailed guidance documents. Calculation methods are sometimes provided in these guides. The same applies to major infrastructure projects (concessions, partnership contracts), where the Ministry of Infrastructures provides even more direct support to public procurers.

There are no standard calculation methods, no caps, and no consistent national approach. Incentive schemes may be introduced by central or local administrations, but respondents do not provide an assessment of their adequacy. No reforms or initiatives aimed at introducing or updating incentive regulation are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

There are no formal national reforms underway to professionalise the public buyer role or to introduce incentive mechanisms. However, the topic is gaining visibility following the 2025 Senate report, which calls for stronger professionalisation, improved training, and better strategic management of public procurement. Some public entities may undertake internal initiatives, but there is no coordinated national reform currently in place.

Germany

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Germany does not have a legally defined public buyer role responsible for the entire procurement cycle. However, many contracting authorities, especially at federal, state (Länder) and municipal levels, e.g. in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) have established central procurement units (Vergabestellen) that coordinate and professionalise purchasing activities. Responsibilities are allocated internally within contracting authorities and are typically shared across different departments. In the absence of a designated role, the main phases of the procurement cycle are managed by multidisciplinary teams combining technical, legal and administrative expertise. In practice, these teams are often located within specialised procurement departments or central purchasing bodies responsible for ensuring compliance with public procurement law. Identification of a single point of contact varies by organisation. Respondents consider the current model only partially effective. The decentralised structure is viewed as functional but can lead to inefficiencies and limited knowledge transfer between authorities.

2. Training and Certification

Continuous training is encouraged but not mandatory under national or regional legislation. Training for procurement staff exists but is optional. It is delivered through accredited external professional courses, self-training using official materials and training provided by international organisations. In addition, professional training opportunities are offered by several national and regional bodies such as the Competence Centre for Innovative Procurement (KOINNO), the Competence Centre for Sustainable Procurement (KNB), the Fortbildungsakademie NRW (FAH) and Kommunale Studieninstitute. Training is not structured by levels and focuses mainly on national procurement legislation and digital procurement. Some providers, such as DVNW Akademie and forum vergabe, offer certificate courses (e.g. "Zertifizierter Vergabemanager"), though these are voluntary and not officially standardised. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously and through e-learning. Updates are optional, and there is no examination or certification system. While there is no state-recognised or mandatory certification scheme, several voluntary programmes exist providing proof of competence. Annual training budgets typically range from €500 to €2,000 per procurement professional. Respondents consider the current training system only partially adequate. Budget and training intensity vary considerably depending on the authority's size and level of professionalisation. Some initiatives exist, including capacity-building measures through KOINNO and EU-funded projects promoting innovation and sustainability in procurement.

3. Incentives

Germany does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. Indirect incentives, however, exist within the general public service framework, for example, performance bonuses under the TVöD/TV-L or career advancement linked to specialised procurement expertise.

National law exists but does not provide incentives for this role. Respondents consider the current incentive framework only partially adequate. The absence of targeted recognition for procurement excellence is often cited as a barrier to further professionalisation.

No reforms or initiatives to introduce incentive mechanisms are reported. No specific reforms are planned, but discussions on increasing job attractiveness in public administration include procurement roles as part of broader modernisation efforts.

Germany

4. Ongoing Reforms

No reforms or initiatives are reported concerning the formalisation of the public buyer role, the strengthening of training and certification or the introduction of incentive mechanisms.

However, several important reforms and initiatives are currently ongoing such as the Procurement Law Modernisation (Vergaberechtsmodernisierung) planned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) for 2025–2026, aimed at simplification, harmonisation and digitalisation of public procurement law; the Promotion of sustainable and innovative procurement through national and state frameworks, including the NRW Tariftreue- und Vergabegesetz; and the expansion of e-procurement and interoperability standards (E-Vergabe, X-Vergabe) for all contracting authorities.

Capacity building and professionalisation supported by competence centres such as KOINNO and KNB.

The system remains decentralised and organisation-dependent. Despite decentralisation, ongoing digitalisation and coordination via competence centres increasingly foster standardisation and exchange of best practices.

Greece

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Greece has a formally recognised "public buyer" professional role. While public procurement is regulated primarily by Law 4412/2016, responsibilities are distributed across multiple actors, including contracting authorities, evaluation committees, and decision-making bodies.

Procurement responsibilities cover the full procurement cycle in a fragmented manner, involving different administrative units and committees rather than a single dedicated professional. In most cases, procurement tasks are carried out in parallel with other administrative duties, and dedicated procurement positions remain limited. The allocation of responsibilities is formally defined through administrative acts, with significant variation depending on the type of contracting authority. Delegation mechanisms exist but are not applied uniformly across organisations. Although a single point of contact is typically designated for each procedure (e.g. via electronic procurement platforms), this does not necessarily imply full accountability or ownership of the procurement process. Respondents consider the current model only partially effective.

2. Training and Certification

Training availability varies significantly across the Greek public sector. Some organisations report no structured training, while others benefit from optional training delivered through centralised national programmes or internal administrative structures. Training topics may include procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation and digital procurement. The existing training initiatives are primarily focused on supporting the procedural aspects of public procurement. They do not yet provide the depth, structure, or formal recognition required for individuals to be considered fully-fledged Public Procurement Experts within a comprehensive professionalisation framework. Training is delivered online, either synchronously or asynchronously, and sometimes through national training centres. A voluntary national certification system exists, consisting of six courses (three for goods and services and three for public works), after which individuals are considered qualified procurement experts. Training is generally free of charge. Respondents consider the current training system partially adequate or inadequate, noting that procurement law is rarely taught in law schools and that training availability is uneven across sectors.

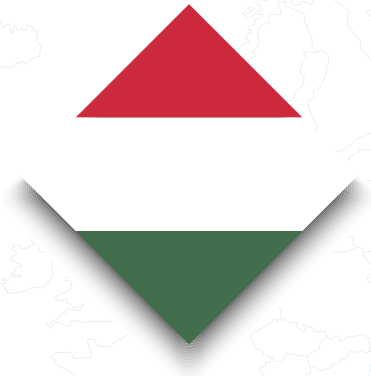
3. Incentives

Greece has a mixed incentive landscape in the field of public procurement. In utilities no specific incentives are generally provided, and the role is not formally recognised for incentive purposes. Within the central administration, recent legislative developments under Law 4412/2016, as amended (notably by Law 5218/2025), have introduced provisions for financial incentives linked to the certification of public procurement staff. In particular, Article 344E establishes incentives for officials registered in the Register of Public Procurement Professionals. These provisions represent an important step towards the professionalisation of the function, aiming to reward certified personnel and improve procurement performance. However, the system is still in an early stage of implementation, and its practical application, coverage, and impact remain to be fully assessed. Financial incentives are expected to take the form of fixed allowances, while non-financial incentives may relate to career development within the broader civil service framework. At present, incentives are not yet applied uniformly across all organisations. Respondents assess the adequacy of the incentive framework differently, with several pointing to its evolving nature and the need for further development and consistent implementation.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Reforms and initiatives exist but are uneven across sectors. Some parts of the public sector report workshops and limited professionalisation efforts, while the central administration is developing a second-phase advanced certification system. No reforms are reported for utilities or EU agencies. Overall, Greece is engaged in partial professionalisation efforts, but implementation varies widely across institutions.

Hungary



1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Hungary has a legally defined public buyer role established by national legislation, specifically the Public Procurement Act (PPA). Responsibilities typically include procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure and evaluating bids. The role is a dedicated professional function and is formally appointed by the responsible manager based on qualification, training or certification criteria. Delegation of responsibilities is permitted. In the absence of a designated role, responsibilities may be shared across departments, with officers appointed on a case-by-case basis. A single point of contact is identified for each procurement procedure. Currently, the use of so-called public procurement consultants is mandatory in certain procedures, which necessitates the employment of public employees holding the status of public procurement consultants. Respondents consider the current model only partially effective.

2. Training and Certification

Hungary has a mandatory national training and certification system for procurement professionals, currently undergoing modification. Training is delivered through accredited external providers and is required to obtain authorisation to perform procurement functions. It is structured at a single standard level and covers national and EU procurement legislation, bid evaluation and green, social or innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person or through e-learning. A final exam is required, and certification must be renewed periodically every two to three years. Respondents consider the current training system only partially adequate. Reforms are under discussion, but no final decisions have been made.

Among the indicators of the so-called public procurement performance framework, several focus on the number of employees involved in public procurement and the nature of their employment; a report on this is prepared annually and is a publicly available document. The available data on issues related to professionalization are based on responses to questionnaires administered to stakeholders. Findings regarding expert capacity also pertain to the qualifications and continuing education of the staff and experts involved, which has been included among the metrics measuring the efficiency of Hungarian public procurement.

3. Incentives

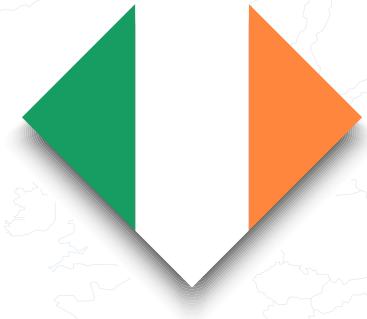
Hungary does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. There is no regulatory framework on incentives in procurement. Respondents consider the current incentive framework only partially adequate.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Hungary is considering reforms to strengthen the professionalisation of public procurement, including potential updates to the training and certification system. However, no final decisions have been taken.

An initiative to reform the current expert system, aimed at professionalizing the public procurement sector, was submitted to the Government in 2025. Thus, policy documents exist that have not yet been adopted.

Ireland



1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Ireland has a legally defined public buyer role established through national legislation. Responsibilities typically cover the entire procurement cycle, including procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure, evaluating bids and contract execution management. The role is a dedicated professional function and is formally appointed by the responsible manager, usually linked to the position held within the organisation. Delegation of responsibilities is permitted. In the absence of a designated role, responsibilities may be shared across departments, with contract managers handling the main phases. A single point of contact is identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents consider the current model only partially effective.

2. Training and Certification

Ireland provides optional training for procurement staff, delivered through public administrations, universities and accredited external providers. Training may include national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation and legality and transparency requirements. Training is delivered in person or online synchronously. It is not compulsory for authorisation to perform procurement functions and is structured at a single standard level. A final exam may be required depending on the provider. Annual training budgets are not known. Respondents consider the current training system only partially adequate. Some reforms or initiatives to improve procurement training exist, but details are not available.

The Construction Sector Capacity Procurement unit in the Infrastructure Division of the Department of Public Expenditure Infrastructure Public Service Reform and Digitalisation will roll out a renewed Commercial Skills Academy Training Programme to include Practitioner Training, eLearning Modules, Community of Practice and Information Sessions and Masterclasses for Public Sector staff involved with construction procurement using the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) in 2026.

3. Incentives

Ireland does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. There is no regulatory framework on incentives in procurement. Respondents consider the current incentive framework only partially adequate. No reforms or initiatives to introduce incentive mechanisms are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Some initiatives exist to professionalise procurement functions and improve training and development, but respondents are unable to provide details. No reforms are reported concerning the formalisation of the public buyer role or the introduction of incentive mechanisms.

Italy

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Italy has a legally defined public buyer role, established by national legislation, primarily Legislative Decree 36/2023. The role covers the entire procurement cycle, including procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure, evaluating bids, contract execution management and monitoring, and project team coordination. The role may be a dedicated professional function or assigned to existing staff depending on the organisation. Appointment is formal, and may occur ad personam for each procedure, as reported by the respondent, or be linked to the position held. While national legislation generally allows delegation of responsibilities, some organisations — including the respondent's central purchasing body — do not permit delegation internally. In the absence of a designated public buyer, responsibilities are divided by procurement phase (planning, award, execution) and managed by officers appointed case by case. A single point of contact is typically identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents consider the current model partially effective.

2. Training and Certification

Italy has a mandatory national training system for procurement staff, introduced by Legislative Decree 36/2023. Training is delivered through national bodies such as the National School of Administration (SNA), ANAC, ITACA, MIT, central purchasing bodies, public administrations, universities and accredited external providers. Training is structured across multiple levels (basic, intermediate and advanced) and covers a wide range of topics, including procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution, digital procurement, project management, and green, social or innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously, through e-learning, blended formats and on-the-job training. Annual updates are mandatory, and examinations may be required depending on the course. Annual training budgets vary significantly across organisations. Respondents consider the current training system partially adequate. Italy is implementing a systemic professionalisation strategy, including updated ANAC guidelines, MIT initiatives and a national training plan for RUPs and procurement officials.

3. Incentives

Italy has a structured incentive framework for procurement professionals, regulated by national legislation, particularly Article 45 of Legislative Decree 36/2023. Financial incentives are calculated as a percentage of the contract value or may vary based on the complexity of the procedure. Incentives may be partially linked to performance, with reductions applied if works are not completed within planned timelines. A cap exists, equal to 100% of the employee's gross annual remuneration. Non-financial incentives include promotions, higher grades, formal recognition of competencies and assignment to leadership or coordination roles. Incentives apply to all public buyers or, in some organisations, only to qualified or accredited roles. Incentives are disbursed, although irregularly. Respondents do not provide a unified assessment of adequacy.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Italy is undergoing extensive reforms to professionalise public procurement. Legislative Decree 36/2023 introduced mandatory continuous training for all procurement actors and established a national qualification system for contracting authorities, managed by ANAC. Additional reforms include updated ANAC guidelines, MIT initiatives for RUP and project manager training, and the development of advanced certification phases. Some administrations are also implementing digital delegation systems to improve internal governance. The overall strategy aims to standardise competencies, strengthen professional roles and improve the quality of procurement across all levels of government.

Kosovo

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Kosovo has a legally defined public buyer role established by the Law on Public Procurement and supported by secondary regulations and guidelines issued by the Public Procurement Regulatory Commission (PPRC). Responsibilities cover the entire procurement cycle, including procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure, evaluating bids, contract execution management and monitoring, and project team coordination. The role is a dedicated professional function and is appointed either automatically based on the position held or formally by the responsible manager, always requiring qualification, training and certification. Delegation of responsibilities is permitted. In the absence of a designated role, responsibilities are shared across contracting authorities or central purchasing bodies who are in charge of conducting procurements on behalf of other contracting authorities A single point of contact is identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents consider the current model partially effective or effective.

2. Training and Certification

Kosovo has a mandatory national training and certification system for procurement officials. Certification is required for all procurement officers with the role as responsible procurement officer working in contracting authorities. Training is delivered through the Public Procurement Regulatory Commission (PPRC) in cooperation with the Kosovo Institute for Public Administration (KIPA). Training and certification are structured across multiple levels (basic and advanced) and covers procurement planning, national procurement legislation, EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution, digital procurement and green/social/innovation procurement. Training is delivered primarily in person. Refresher requirements vary, with some respondents indicating optional updates and others reporting mandatory annual updates. A final exam is required for both certifications. Basic certification is for a three year duration while advanced certification is unlimited. Training and certification are provided for free by PPRC and KIPA. Respondents consider the current training system partially adequate or adequate. Legislative reforms are underway to modernise training and align procurement practices with EU standards.

3. Incentives

Kosovo does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. National law exists but does not provide incentives for procurement roles. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. Respondents consider the current incentive framework inadequate. Some reforms may be considered in the context of the new procurement law currently being drafted, but no concrete measures are yet defined.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Kosovo is undergoing significant legislative reform in public procurement. A new Public Procurement Law is being drafted, which is expected to strengthen the professionalisation of public buyers, revise training programs and certification requirements and align national procurement practices with EU standards. Reforms also aim to modernise the procurement system, including e-procurement operations, and enhance the role of PPRC in capacity-building and regulatory oversight.

Latvia

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Latvia does not have a legally defined public buyer role responsible for the entire procurement cycle. Across institutions, responsibilities are allocated internally and typically divided by procurement phase, with planning, award and execution handled by different departments or multidisciplinary teams. In some organisations, responsibilities are assigned ad hoc for each project or linked to the position held. Delegation of responsibilities is generally not permitted. A single point of contact is usually identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents consistently consider the current model only partially effective, noting that fragmentation and institutional variability limit coherence and professionalisation.

2. Training and Certification

Latvia provides optional training for procurement staff through centralised national programmes, the Procurement Monitoring Bureau (IUB), the School of Public Administration, universities, private providers, international organisations and self-training using official materials. Training is often structured across multiple levels (basic, intermediate and advanced), although some respondents report no formal levels. Topics include procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution, digital procurement, project management and green/social/innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously, through e-learning, blended formats and on-the-job training. Updates are optional. Examinations may be required depending on the provider, but not systematically. Annual training budgets range from no dedicated budget to under €500. Respondents consider the current training system partially adequate or inadequate, with gaps especially for smaller contracting authorities and decentralised entities.

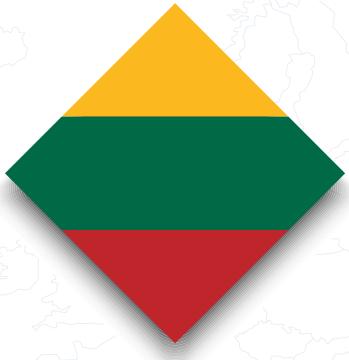
3. Incentives

Latvia does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. The role is not formally recognised for incentive purposes. Respondents uniformly consider the current incentive framework inadequate. No reforms or initiatives to introduce incentive mechanisms are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Latvia is exploring increased centralisation of procurement, with some categories already procured centrally and plans to expand centralisation to municipal organisations. There is also discussion about certifying procurement professionals and introducing liability insurance mechanisms. Additional initiatives include strengthening training for centralised procurers. No structural reforms concerning incentives or the formalisation of the public buyer role are currently underway.

Lithuania



1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Lithuania has a legally defined public buyer role established by the Law on Public Procurement. Responsibilities generally cover the entire procurement cycle, including procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure, evaluating bids and, in many organisations, contract execution management and monitoring. The role is often a dedicated professional function, formally appointed by the responsible manager, although in some organisations it depends on internal structures. Delegation of responsibilities is permitted in most cases, but some entities report no provision for delegation. In the absence of a designated role, responsibilities may be allocated to procurement project managers or divided by procurement phase. A single point of contact is usually identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents consider the current model effective or partially effective.

2. Training and Certification

Lithuania has a mixed training and certification system. Training is generally optional and delivered through national agencies, central purchasing bodies, public administrations, universities, accredited external providers, international organisations and self-training using official materials. Training may or may not be structured by levels depending on the provider. Topics include procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution, digital procurement, project management and green/social/innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously, through e-learning and through on-the-job training. Updates are optional. A final exam is required for certification. Certification is mandatory for specific roles, such as at least one member of a procurement commission or specialists conducting high-value open procedures. Annual training budgets are generally below €500. Respondents consider the current training system adequate or inadequate, with some organisations reporting no dedicated training path.

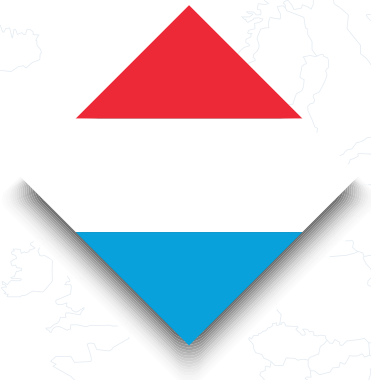
3. Incentives

Lithuania does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. National law does not provide incentives for procurement roles. Respondents consider the current incentive framework partially adequate or adequate. No reforms or initiatives to introduce incentive mechanisms are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Lithuania is strengthening professionalisation through the establishment of competence centres and by encouraging the certification of procurement professionals. No major reforms are reported concerning incentives or the formalisation of the public buyer role. Centralisation trends and capacity-building initiatives continue, particularly within national procurement bodies. No reforms are reported regarding training, although some organisations highlight the need for more structured development pathways.

Luxembourg



1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Luxembourg does not have a legally defined public buyer role responsible for the entire procurement cycle. Responsibilities are allocated internally within contracting authorities and are typically shared across different departments. In the absence of a designated role, the main phases of the procurement cycle are managed by contract managers. Identification of a single point of contact varies by organisation.

2. Training and Certification

Luxembourg does not have a specific mandatory training system for procurement professionals. Civil servants must complete general mandatory training modules, which include only a basic introduction to public procurement. There is no requirement for specialised training to perform procurement functions, no structured levels and no certification system. Skills are primarily acquired through internal on-the-job experience.

3. Incentives

Luxembourg does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. The role is not formally recognised for incentive purposes.

4. Ongoing Reforms

No reforms or initiatives are underway to professionalise the public buyer role, strengthen training or introduce incentive mechanisms. The system remains decentralised and dependent on internal organisational structures.

Malta

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

In Malta, the public procurement function is partially formalised, with no single nationally defined public procurement profession or unified occupational profile. Procurement responsibilities are allocated through function-based appointments rather than through a dedicated professional role grounded in a national competency framework. In practice, procurement responsibilities span several ProCompEU lifecycle phases, including procurement planning and needs assessment, selection of procurement procedures, drafting of procurement documents, management of procurement procedures, evaluation of tenders, and in certain cases, contract execution and performance monitoring.

These responsibilities are typically assigned to administrative posts within contracting authorities and are often linked to the substantive position held within the organisation, rather than to demonstrated procurement competencies. Appointments are made either centrally, through the Malta Public Administration Head HR Office, or at departmental level by senior management. Delegation of procurement responsibilities is permitted under national legislation and is applied in line with stratified procurement thresholds, reflecting varying levels of decision-making authority and procedural complexity. In the absence of a formally designated procurement role, responsibilities may be exercised by contract managers, project managers, or distributed across multiple organisational units. The identification of a single procurement point of contact varies across contracting authorities.

Stakeholder feedback indicates that the current model delivers partial effectiveness, particularly in relation to role clarity, consistency of competencies, and continuity across the procurement lifecycle.

2. Training and Certification

Malta has established a structured and multi-level procurement training ecosystem, which supports the development of procurement competencies across different proficiency stages, broadly corresponding to foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Training is coordinated and delivered through a combination of central public administration structures, the Department of Contracts, the Institute for the Public Service, universities, and accredited external training providers.

Training programmes address a broad range of ProcurCompEU competency areas, including procurement planning and market analysis, national and EU public procurement legislation, management of procurement procedures, evaluation methodologies and award criteria, probity, integrity and transparency, contract management and execution, digital procurement tools, project management, and green, social and innovation-oriented procurement. Training is delivered through multiple learning modalities, including face-to-face instruction, synchronous online learning, blended formats and on-the-job learning. Participation in training is not mandatory but is strongly encouraged and widely taken up by staff involved in procurement-related functions.

Where training programmes are accredited, certification may include periodic assessment of learning outcomes. Annual training budgets allocated to procurement capacity building vary significantly across organisations, ranging from under €500 to over €5,000 per participant. Despite the breadth of available provision, respondents consider the current training and certification system to be partially adequate or inadequate, particularly in relation to systematic competency assessment and role-linked certification. Reforms are currently underway to review and remodel training courses, with the objective of better aligning content with the operational needs of contracting authorities.

Malta

3. Incentives

In the absence of a formally recognised procurement profession, Malta operates a structured but uneven incentive framework to support procurement-related functions. Financial incentives are available in some organisations and may be linked to the performance of procurement duties or appointment as a procurement officer. These incentives are subject to defined caps, which vary by organisation and may range from approximately 25%, with additional allowances of up to 15% for managerial roles, or other percentage-based limits.

Non-financial incentives include preferential access to procurement-related training, opportunities for promotion or progression to higher grades, and recognition within organisational structures.

Incentive schemes may apply either broadly to staff involved in procurement activities or be restricted to specific qualified roles, depending on the contracting authority. These schemes are established at both central and local administration levels and may be governed by ad hoc agreements. Incentives are generally disbursed according to predefined schedules. Stakeholder feedback indicates that the incentive framework is perceived as inadequate or only partially adequate, primarily due to the lack of harmonisation, consistency and linkage to defined competency levels.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Current professionalisation efforts in Malta focus predominantly on competency development through training. Ongoing initiatives include the review and updating of existing training models, targeted training for evaluation committee members, and the expansion of accredited procurement training opportunities.

In addition, some contracting authorities are developing tailored training programmes designed to address specific operational and sector-specific procurement needs. At present, no reforms are reported in relation to the formal establishment of a national public procurement professional role, the introduction of competency-based role certification, or the development of new or harmonised incentive mechanisms linked to proficiency levels.

Netherlands

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

The Netherlands does not have a single nationally defined public buyer role, but contracting authorities consistently establish the role at organisational level. Responsibilities typically include procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure, evaluating bids and coordinating project teams. The role is generally a dedicated professional function, formally appointed by the responsible manager or automatically assigned based on the position held. Delegation of responsibilities is permitted in some organisations but not in others. In all Dutch contracting authorities, a public buyer must be appointed and processes are formally established. A single point of contact is usually identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents consider the model effective, although some note fragmentation and variability across organisations.

2. Training and Certification

The Netherlands has a professionalisation culture supported by specialised education. Training is optional but widely undertaken, with most procurement professionals completing NEVI qualifications (www.nevi.nl). Training is delivered through universities, accredited external providers, national agencies like PIANOo (www.pianoo.nl) and, international organisations. It is often structured across multiple levels and covers procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, contract execution, digital procurement, project management and green or innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online or through blended formats. Updates are optional. Certification may involve final examinations depending on the provider. Annual training budgets vary, with some organisations reporting no dedicated budget. Respondents consider the training system partially adequate or adequate, noting that professionalisation is an ongoing national process.

3. Incentives

The Netherlands does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. National law does not establish incentives for procurement roles. Respondents uniformly consider the incentive framework inadequate or not relevant. No reforms or initiatives to introduce incentive mechanisms are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Professionalisation is an ongoing national effort supported by PIANOo, which provides guidance, tools, training and knowledge-sharing platforms for contracting authorities. Additional initiatives include seminars, education programmes and informal professional networks. No major structural reforms are reported concerning incentives or the formalisation of the public buyer role.

North Macedonia

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

North Macedonia has a partially formalised public buyer role. One respondent reports that the role is legally defined through the Law on Public Procurement, covering the entire procurement cycle, while the other indicates that no single professional role exists at national level. In practice, responsibilities are allocated internally within contracting authorities and may be shared across departments or divided by procurement phase. Appointment may occur through formal designation by the responsible manager or through selection from an official register. Delegation of responsibilities is generally not permitted. In the absence of a designated role, responsibilities are managed by officers appointed case by case or by national procurement agencies. Identification of a single point of contact varies across organisations. Respondents consider the current model partially effective or ineffective.

2. Training and Certification

North Macedonia has a mandatory training and certification system for procurement officials, delivered through the Public Procurement Bureau and the Ministry of Finance. Training may be structured across multiple levels (basic, intermediate and advanced) or offered without levels depending on the provider. Topics include procurement planning, national procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution and digital procurement. Training is delivered in person, with periodic updates required every two to three years. Certification may involve periodic assessment. Annual training budgets are generally below €500 or not available. Respondents consider the current training system partially adequate. No reforms or initiatives to improve training are reported.

3. Incentives

North Macedonia has a mixed incentive landscape. One respondent reports that no incentives exist and that national law does not provide incentives for procurement roles. Another indicates that financial incentives may be available, calculated as a fixed amount and capped at 35% of base salary, with non-financial incentives such as leadership roles. Incentives are irregular and depend on organisational discretion. Respondents consider the current incentive framework inadequate. No reforms or initiatives to introduce incentive mechanisms are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Broader systemic reforms are not reported in North Macedonia.

Norway

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Norway does not have a single, legally defined public buyer role covering the entire procurement cycle. Instead, each public sector organisation is responsible for organising its procurement function in compliance with national legislation. Roles and responsibilities are typically formalised internally, and many procurement processes are carried out by multidisciplinary teams. In organisations where the role is defined, responsibilities include procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure, evaluating bids, contract execution management and monitoring, project team coordination and, in some cases, price and product negotiations after contract award. Appointment is formal and based on qualifications, training or certification criteria. Delegation of responsibilities is permitted. Identification of a single point of contact varies across organisations. Respondents consider the current model only partially effective.

2. Training and Certification

Norway has a well-developed but voluntary training and certification system. Training is delivered by DFØ, universities, accredited external providers, sector-specific organisations and international bodies. It is structured across multiple levels (basic, intermediate and advanced) and covers procurement planning, national procurement legislation, EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution, digital procurement, project management and green/social/innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously, through e-learning, blended formats and on-the-job training. Updates are optional. Certification is voluntary and includes the SOA basic certificate issued by DFØ. Annual training budgets vary by organisation. Respondents consider the training system partially adequate. Reforms are underway to revise certification curricula and strengthen guidance on strategic competence management.

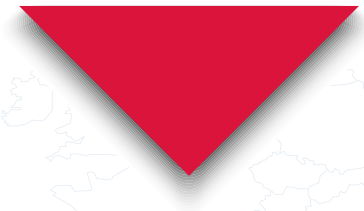
3. Incentives

Norway does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. Incentives follow general employer policies and may include career progression opportunities, but no financial or performance-linked incentives exist specifically for procurement roles. Respondents consider the current incentive framework partially adequate. No reforms or initiatives to introduce procurement-specific incentives are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Norway is actively strengthening procurement professionalisation. DFØ is expanding its certification schemes, developing local purchasing partnerships and broadening the portfolio of centralised purchasing agreements. Continuous improvement is supported through national guidance, knowledge-sharing platforms and collaboration with other countries. Public procurement is viewed as a dynamic field, with ongoing efforts to adopt best practices and adapt to regional and local needs within the national and EU regulatory framework.

Poland



1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Poland has a partially formalised public buyer role defined through the Public Procurement Law, but its implementation varies widely across organisations. In many contracting authorities, responsibilities are divided by procurement phase and carried out by multidisciplinary teams. In more structured entities, responsibilities cover the entire procurement cycle, including procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender process, evaluating bids, contract execution management, monitoring and project team coordination. Appointment may derive from legal provisions, administrative designation or the nature of the funding source. Delegation of responsibilities is permitted in most cases, though some organisations restrict it. A single point of contact is not consistently

2. Training and Certification

Poland offers extensive but optional training for procurement staff. Training is delivered by national agencies, universities, central purchasing bodies, accredited external providers, specialised coaching companies and international organisations. Topics include procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution, digital procurement, project management and green/social/innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously, through e-learning, blended formats and on-the-job training. Annual training budgets vary significantly, from no dedicated budget to €500–€2,000 and even above €5,000 in some central bodies. Respondents consider the current training system partially adequate or inadequate. Reforms are ongoing to strengthen training, professional development and digitalisation.

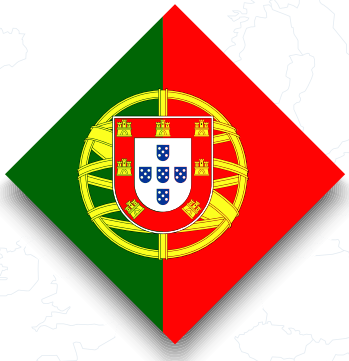
3. Incentives

Poland has no national incentive framework for procurement professionals. Incentives, where they exist, are discretionary and irregular. Some organisations provide no incentives at all, while others offer occasional financial or non-financial rewards, such as recognition, training opportunities or project-based bonuses. Financial incentives are not linked to performance criteria and lack defined calculation rules. Incentives are not systematically disbursed and depend entirely on organisational discretion. Respondents consider the current incentive framework inadequate or only partially adequate.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Poland is implementing significant reforms to professionalise public procurement. Key initiatives include the introduction of the national certification system (effective July 2026), capacity-building programmes led by the Public Procurement Office, and updates to the Public Procurement Law focusing on digitalisation, revised thresholds and streamlined procedures. Central purchasing bodies and specialised agencies are strengthening internal training systems and professional standards. These reforms aim to enhance efficiency, transparency and professionalisation across the procurement system.

Portugal



1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Portugal does not have a legally defined public buyer role covering the entire procurement cycle. The only role formally established in national legislation is the contract manager, responsible for contract execution and personally liable for post-award obligations. This individual liability is widely perceived as discouraging staff from working in procurement. Responsibilities during the procurement cycle are allocated across phases and assigned to different individuals or multidisciplinary teams. In central purchasing bodies (ESPAP, SPMS), responsibilities may cover the entire procurement cycle, including procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender process, evaluating bids, contract execution management and project team coordination. Appointment may be formal, automatic based on the role held, or based on qualifications. Delegation of responsibilities is inconsistently regulated. A single point of contact may exist, but this varies across organisations. Respondents consider the current model partially effective or ineffective.

2. Training and Certification

Portugal offers a wide range of voluntary training opportunities, but no national, coordinated professionalisation framework exists. Training is delivered by national agencies, universities, specialised associations, central purchasing bodies and external professional providers. Topics include procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution, digital procurement, project management, green and innovation procurement and data management on the Public Contracts Portal. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously, through e-learning, blended formats, on-the-job training and specialised labs (e.g., green procurement labs). Updates are optional. Certification exists only for specific courses and is not part of a national qualification system. Annual training budgets vary dramatically: some entities report no budget, while others (notably SPMS) invest over €5,000 per professional. Respondents consider the training system partially adequate or inadequate, noting the need for national coordination.

3. Incentives

Portugal does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. Most organisations provide no incentives, and the role of public buyer is not formally recognised for incentive purposes. In some central bodies, limited financial or non-financial incentives exist (e.g., fixed-amount bonuses, priority access to training), but these are internal and not regulated by national law. Incentives are not systematically disbursed. Respondents unanimously consider the current incentive framework inadequate.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Portugal is preparing to join an OECD-coordinated project to develop a national professionalisation framework for public procurement. IMPIC has formally applied to participate. Several public entities and training organisations are independently improving training quality, but respondents highlight the need for national alignment and a unified professionalisation strategy. Discussions on potential reforms to incentive structures and role definitions are ongoing but have not yet produced concrete measures.

Romania

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Romania has a legally defined public buyer role established under Law 98/2016 together with the implementing regulations set out in Government Decision No. 395/2016. Responsibilities cover the entire procurement cycle, including procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure, evaluating bids, contract execution management and monitoring, and project team coordination. The role is a dedicated professional function and is automatically assigned based on the position held, with appointment dependent on qualifications (mandatory professional specialization in public procurement), training or certification criteria. Delegation of responsibilities is permitted. In the absence of a designated role, responsibilities are divided by procurement phase and may be managed by central purchasing bodies. A single point of contact is generally identified for each procedure.

2. Training and Certification

Romania provides optional training for procurement staff through national agencies, universities, accredited external providers, international organisations and self-training using official materials. Training is not structured by levels and covers procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution, project management and green or innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously, through e-learning and blended formats. Updates are not required. There is no mandatory certification system. Annual training budgets are generally not available. Respondents consider the current training system inadequate, and no reforms or initiatives are underway to improve professional development.

3. Incentives

Romania does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and no performance-linked mechanisms exist. National law does not establish incentives for procurement roles. Respondents consider the current incentive framework inadequate. No reforms or initiatives to introduce incentive mechanisms are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

At the executive level, the Romanian Government has adopted the National Public Procurement Strategy (2023–2027), outlining the strategic objectives required to sustain the ongoing reform of the procurement system. A cornerstone of this reform is the professionalization of the personnel involved in the procurement cycle. Key proposed measures include: (i) amending the Administrative Code to create a public management function in the field of public procurement; (ii) formally integrating the occupation of "Public Procurement Manager" into the national occupational standards (COR); and (iii) implementing a structured induction programme for junior public officials entering the public procurement field, integrating theoretical off-site training with practical clinical placements.

However, no tangible reforms or initiatives are currently underway to professionalise the public buyer role, strengthen training or introduce incentive mechanisms. Professionalisation efforts rely primarily on informal networks and knowledge-sharing among procurement experts.

Slovakia

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Slovakia has a legally defined public buyer role established through national legislation. It is called "expert guarantor" and it is a voluntary institute from April 2024. Expert guarantor primarily assesses compliance with the rules for determining the estimated value of the contract, assesses the selection of the public procurement procedure, assesses the selection criteria and the criteria for evaluating bids, cooperates in drafting the description of the subject of the contract and the conditions for contract performance, ensures the preparation of tender documents necessary for the preparation of the bid, after announcing public procurement, ensures communication with economic operators, and ensures the evaluation of the bids.

The status of a professional guarantor is obtained by an applicant who successfully passes a test of professional knowledge in the field of public procurement. However, entry in the list of professional guarantors is not an obligatory condition for the realization of public procurement procedures.

In general, employees of the contracting authority who carry out public procurement have typically these tasks and duties: procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure, evaluating bids. The role may be assigned ad hoc for each project or linked to the position held within the organisation. Delegation of responsibilities is permitted. In the absence of a designated role, responsibilities are shared across departments and managed by multidisciplinary teams. A single point of contact is generally identified for each procurement procedure.

2. Training and Certification

Slovakia offers optional training for procurement staff mainly through the Public Procurement Office, which provides training activities both in person and online on various current topics in the field of public procurement. It organizes training courses, workshops, conferences, hackathons, and publishes a professional magazine.

Obtaining the status of a professional guarantor is a form of certification and is explained above. Education is also provided by private educational institutions that hire experienced lecturers, and some universities teach students the basics of public procurement. In some cases, educational activities may be financed from EU sources, e.g. from the Recovery and Resilience Plan or Operational programme Slovakia.

3. Incentives

Slovakia does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. Incentives are not regulated by national law and are generally not provided by organisations. No financial or non-financial incentives exist, and no performance-linked mechanisms are in place. Respondents consider the current incentive framework partially adequate. No reforms or initiatives to introduce incentive mechanisms are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

No major reforms or initiatives are currently underway to professionalise the public buyer role, strengthen training or introduce incentive mechanisms. The Public Procurement Office plans to introduce an e-learning platform and add an oral exam for applicants for the status of professional guarantor. It also regularly organizes meetings of public procurement departments of ministries and representatives of local governments with the aim of exchanging experiences.

Informal network for exchange of experience is also provided by the Union of Public Procurement Professionals (Únia profesionálov verejného obstarávania).

Slovenia

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Slovenia does not have a legally defined public buyer role responsible for the entire procurement cycle. Responsibilities are not standardised at national level and are instead regulated internally by each contracting authority. As a result, the allocation of tasks varies significantly across organisations. In the absence of a designated role, responsibilities for procurement planning, tender preparation, procedure management and contract execution are distributed according to internal rules. A single point of contact may or may not be identified, depending on the organisation. The respondent considers the current model only partially effective.

2. Training and Certification

Slovenia provides optional, non-mandatory training for procurement officials. Training is delivered primarily by the Ministry of Public Administration through the Public Procurement Academy, as well as through other public administrations and self-study using official guidance materials prepared by the Ministry of Public Administration.

Training is structured across multiple levels (basic, intermediate and advanced) and covers procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution, digital procurement, project management and green or innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously and through e-learning. Updates are not required. There is no national certification system. Respondents consider the current training system adequate, although participation is voluntary and not harmonised across the public sector.

In addition to formal training, several soft-capacity instruments have been introduced by the Ministry: free-of-charge written and telephone consultations provided by the Ministry, free thematic seminars in cooperation with specialised agencies, new learning modules, improvements to national e-procurement platforms, subject-matter specific guidance rules, sample documentation, etc.

3. Incentives

Slovenia has prepared a non-paper reflecting Slovenia's initiatives in the context of the ongoing EU-level reforms of public procurement legislation. The initiative emphasises the importance of lean legislation, professionalisation, capacity-building and trust-based evaluation environment as core pillars of an effective procurement system, alongside simplification and digitalisation. These initiatives indicate a growing strategic focus on improving the attractiveness, recognition and professionalism of public procurement roles.

Furthermore, a reform of the public sector pay system is underway, which foresees the creation of higher-valued positions for experts and specialists in specific areas, including public procurement. These positions may introduce differentiated remuneration for procurement professionals, but the reform is still in development.

Slovenia

4. Ongoing Reforms

Slovenia has implemented a broad set of reforms aimed at improving transparency, competitiveness and professional capacity in public procurement. Legislative changes, including amendments to the Public Procurement Act, introduced clearer procedural rules, strengthened the treatment of abnormally low tenders, enhanced digitalisation, and improved the accessibility and reliability of procurement data. Alongside legal improvements, technical analyses conducted by external experts provided an evidence-based foundation for identifying systemic gaps and recommending targeted measures to strengthen competition and reduce non-transparent practices.

Reforms have also prioritised the professionalisation of procurement staff. The establishment of the Public Procurement Academy created a structured framework for training, upskilling and standardising competencies across different job profiles. This was complemented by additional soft-capacity measures such as free advisory support, thematic seminars, upgraded online procurement tools and improved guidance materials. Together, these initiatives have strengthened the practical capabilities of contracting authorities and contributed to a more consistent and effective application of procurement rules.

While formal or informal professional communities dedicated exclusively to procurement have not yet emerged, the combined legislative, analytical and capacity-building reforms represent a substantial step towards modernising the Slovenian public procurement system and ensuring long-term sustainability. In addition, Slovenia is executing the project "Raising professionalisation in public procurement," which foresees, among other activities, the creation of new electronic tools designed to support communication and the exchange of experiences among public buyers, particularly those participating in the training programmes of the Public Procurement Academy.

Slovenia is also preparing reforms within the broader public sector pay system that may introduce specialised and better-valued positions for procurement professionals.

Spain

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Spain does not have a nationally defined public buyer role covering the entire procurement cycle even if the development of a national competence framework for public procurement by the Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública (INAP) might prelude to such a recognition. In most organisations, responsibilities are allocated internally and vary significantly across sectors and regions. Tasks may be divided by procurement phase or shared across departments. In the health sector in Catalonia, procurement may be carried out by central purchasing bodies, individual healthcare providers or national agencies, often through multidisciplinary teams. In local government, some entities with limited personnel appoint an official with responsibilities covering planning, needs assessment, procedure selection, tender drafting, procedure management, evaluation and contract execution. A single point of contact may exist, but this depends on the organisation. Respondents consider the current model only partially effective.

2. Training and Certification

At national level, the Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública (INAP) has developed a competence framework inspired by ProcureCompEU, which defines the knowledge and skills required across the procurement cycle, but does not result in formal certification. At regional level, some administrations, such as for instance Catalonia or the Basque country, have advanced in structuring professional profiles and training pathways. In Catalonia, a competence framework for procurement professionals has been developed as part of a broader strategy to improve procurement governance. More generally, Spain offers extensive but optional training for procurement staff, delivered by national and regional public administration institutes (INAP and regional schools), universities, specialised associations, external professional providers and international organisations. Training covers procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution, digital procurement, project management and green or innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously, through e-learning, blended formats and on-the-job training. Updates are optional. There is no national certification system or structured qualification framework, although some entities use multi-level internal training schemes. Respondents consider the training system partially adequate, noting that high-quality training exists but is fragmented and lacks national coordination.

3. Incentives

Spain does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. Incentives are not regulated by national law and are generally not provided by organisations. No financial or non-financial incentives exist, and no performance-linked mechanisms are in place. Respondents consider the current incentive framework inadequate. No reforms or initiatives to introduce incentive mechanisms are reported.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Spain is implementing several initiatives to strengthen procurement professionalisation, though not within a unified national framework. In Catalonia, the health sector is promoting value-based procurement, which includes capacity-building for procurement staff. At national level, OIReScon disseminates and centralises information on training and events, while capacity-building initiatives are supported by the Recovery and Resilience Plan (NextGenerationEU). Spain also participates in European programmes such as PPE+. Despite these efforts, respondents highlight the absence of a comprehensive national professionalisation strategy.

Sweden

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Sweden does not have a legally defined public buyer role responsible for the entire procurement cycle. Responsibilities are not standardised at national level and vary significantly across contracting authorities. In most organisations, procurement officers manage the main phases of the procurement cycle, but this is not established in law. When no specific role is appointed, responsibilities are allocated internally according to organisational rules. A single point of contact is generally identified for each procurement procedure. The respondent considers the current model only partially effective, noting insufficient resources for contract performance monitoring.

2. Training and Certification

Sweden offers optional training for procurement staff through public administrations, universities, private providers, consultants, law firms and member organisations. There is no national training centre or unified qualification framework. Training covers procurement planning, national and EU procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution, digital procurement, project management and green or innovation procurement. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously, through e-learning, blended formats and on-the-job training. Updates are not required. Certification varies depending on the training provider. Respondents consider the current training system partially adequate.

3. Incentives

Sweden does not have a procurement-specific incentive framework. No financial or non-financial incentives are provided, and the role of public buyer is not formally recognised for incentive purposes. Incentives are not regulated by national law and are not disbursed regularly.

4. Ongoing Reforms

No reforms or initiatives are currently underway to professionalise the public buyer role, strengthen training or introduce incentive mechanisms. Professionalisation relies primarily on voluntary training and the work of national associations such as Sveriges Offentliga Inköpare (SOI), which provides policy input to procurement authorities.

Ukraine

1. Role Definition and Responsibilities

Ukraine has a legally defined public buyer role, centred on the authorised procurement person, established through national legislation. Responsibilities include procurement planning, needs assessment, selection of the procurement procedure, drafting tender documents, managing the tender procedure, evaluating bids and, in some organisations, contract execution management and project coordination. The role may be a dedicated professional function or assigned depending on organisational structure. Appointment is formal and based on administrative designation and qualification requirements. Delegation of responsibilities is generally permitted, although some organisations do not allow delegation. In the absence of a designated role, responsibilities cannot be reassigned, as the system requires an authorised procurement person to be appointed. A single point of contact is identified for each procurement procedure. Respondents consider the current model effective or partially effective.

2. Training and Certification

Ukraine has a mandatory national qualification system for public buyers. Authorised procurement persons must complete compulsory training and/or pass mandatory knowledge-confirmation tests aligned with requirements set by the Ministry of Economy. Training is delivered through national agencies, central purchasing bodies, public administrations, universities, accredited external providers, international organisations and self-training using official materials. Training covers procurement planning, national procurement legislation, tender procedure management, bid evaluation, legality and transparency, contract execution, digital procurement and project management. Training is delivered in person, online synchronously, through e-learning, blended formats and on-the-job training. Annual updates or periodic assessments are required. Some organisations report training as mandatory for authorisation, while others classify it as optional but still required for compliance. Respondents consider the training system partially adequate, with reforms underway to expand advanced courses and standardise professional development.

3. Incentives

Ukraine has a mixed and inconsistent incentive landscape. One respondent reports the existence of financial and non-financial incentives, including performance-linked rewards, fixed-amount bonuses and formal recognition of competencies. Another respondent reports no incentives at all, noting the absence of a regulatory framework specific to procurement. Incentives, where they exist, are governed by the Civil Service Law and internal regulations rather than a national procurement-specific system. Incentives may be disbursed irregularly. Respondents consider the current incentive framework inadequate or only partially adequate.

4. Ongoing Reforms

Ukraine is undergoing significant reforms to professionalise public procurement. Key initiatives include the transition from tender committees to authorised procurement persons, expansion of mandatory training and testing, development of standardised professional development programmes and improvements to the Prozorro system. Planned reforms aim to strengthen procurement planning, strategy and contract management, and to provide publicly available training for all categories of procurement users. Professional communities, including Transparency International Ukraine and the Community of Public Purchasers of Ukraine, play an active role in supporting knowledge sharing, advocacy and policy development.

Annex B
Questionnaire

1.1 Last Name
1.2 First Name
1.3 Email address
1.4 Mobile phone
1.5 Country of employment
1.6 Current Role
2. Type of organisation
2.1 Primary sector of activity
2.3 Organisation name
2.4 Organisation website
2.5 Contact person email address, if available
3. Percentage of public procurement expenditure as a share of GDP in your country
4. Trend in public procurement expenditure in recent years
5. Is there a legally defined role responsible for managing the entire procurement cycle (public buyer / public procurement professional) in your country?
6.1 How is the role of public buyer identified?
Indicate legal/regulatory references
6.2 Formal responsibilities of the public buyer
6.3 Does the public buyer have a specific professional role?
6.4 How is the role of public buyer appointed?
6.5 How is the public buyer appointed?
6.6 Can the public buyer delegate certain responsibilities?
6.7 Is there a national system for qualification / accreditation / certification of public buyers?
6.7.1 Description (mandatory)
6.8 A public buyer generally is:
6.1 In the absence of a specific and individual role, how are responsibilities allocated in the public procurement process?
6.2 Who manages the main phases of the procurement cycle when there is no appointed public buyer?
6.3 Is there a single point of contact identified for each procurement procedure?
7. Do you consider the current model for allocating responsibilities in public procurement in your country to be effective?
8. Are there any reforms or initiatives underway in your country to professionalise the role of public buyer/public procurer?
8.1 Description
9. Is there specific training for staff performing public procurement functions in your country?
9.1 How is training organised and delivered for those involved in procurement (multiple answers possible)?
9.1.1 Please indicate the name of the body/organisation that provides the training and, if available, a contact person (email or website).

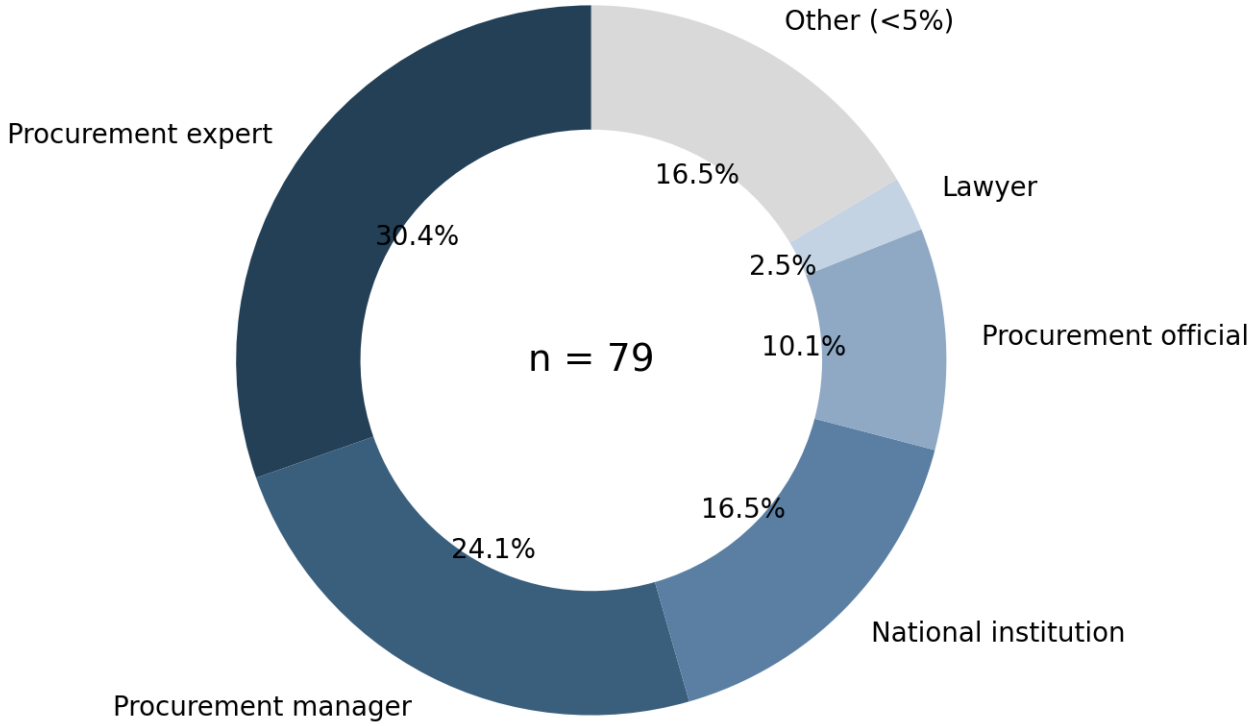
9.2 Is training compulsory in order to obtain authorisation to perform public procurement functions/tasks?
9.3 Is training structured by levels or qualifications?
9.4 Main training topics (multiple answers possible)
9.5 What are the training modes used? (multiple answers possible)
9.6 Frequency of required training / refresher
9.7 Are there any examinations or tests for skills certification?
9.8 Average annual training budget per procurement professional in your administration
9.1 In the absence of specific training, how are the necessary skills acquired? (multiple answers)
10. Do you consider the current training system for public procurement adequate?
11. Are there reforms or initiatives underway to improve procurement training and professional development?
11.1 Description
12. Are there specific incentives for individuals performing public procurement functions in your country?
12.1 Types of incentives available (multiple answers possible)
12.2 Are financial incentives linked to performance criteria?
12.3 How are financial incentives calculated?
12.4 Is there a cap on financial incentives relative to base salary?
12.4.1 If yes please indicate the limit
12.5 Non-financial incentives include
12.6 Who are incentives targeted at
12.7 Who establishes incentive schemes
12.7.1 Please indicate legislation
12.8 Are incentives disbursed regularly?
12.9 If no incentives exist, which statement best describes the situation in your country?
13. Do you consider the current incentive framework adequate?
14. Are there reforms or initiatives to introduce or update incentive regulation for public buyers?
14.1 If yes please description
15. Are there formal or informal professional communities of public buyers / procurement professionals in your country (associations, networks, working groups)?
15.1 Nature of the community
15.2 Main activities of the community
15.3.1 Community / association name
15.3.2 Contact person
15.3.3 Website/social network (linkedin) address
15.3.4 Email address
15.3.5 Phone number if available
16. Do you believe professional communities contribute to the professionalisation of public procurement in your country?

Annex C

Infographic

INFOGRAPHIC 1

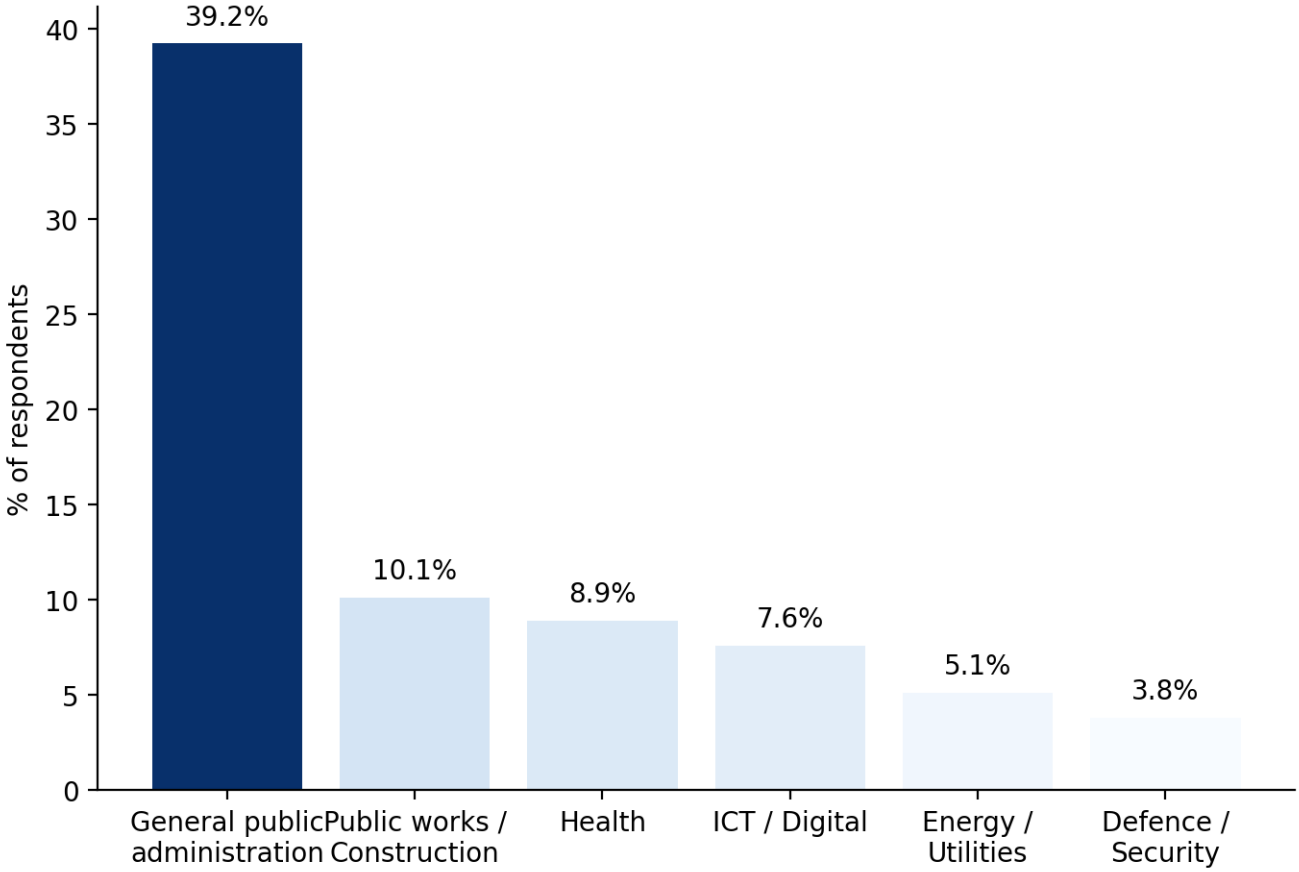
CURRENT ROLE OF RESPONDENTS (79 RESPONDENTS, 32 COUNTRIES)



Other (<5%) includes:
- University professor / researcher — ~1.3%
- Innovation procurement expert — ~1.3%
- National review body representative — ~1.3%
- Business manager — ~1.3%
- Head of procurement department — ~1.3%
- Private consultancy — ~1.3%
- Senior advisor roles — ~1.3%

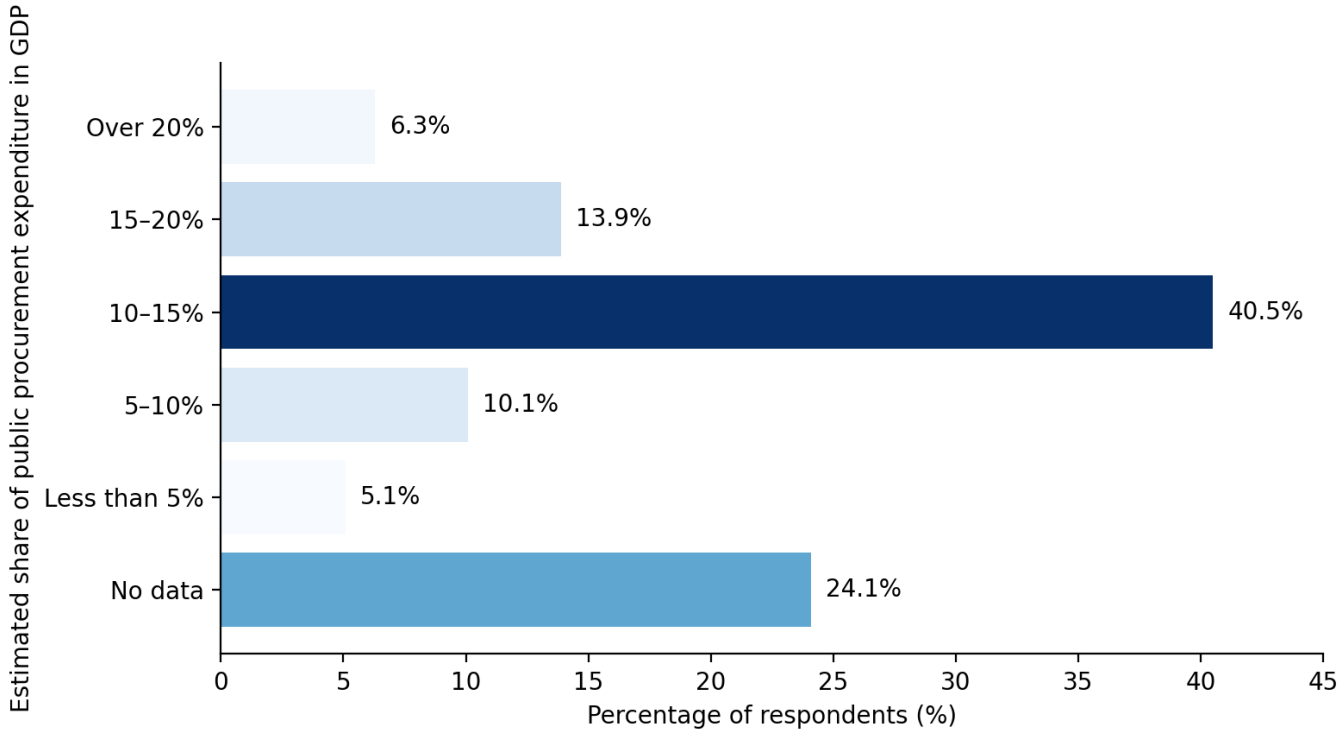
INFOGRAPHIC 2

PRIMARY SECTOR OF ACTIVITY OF RESPONDENTS



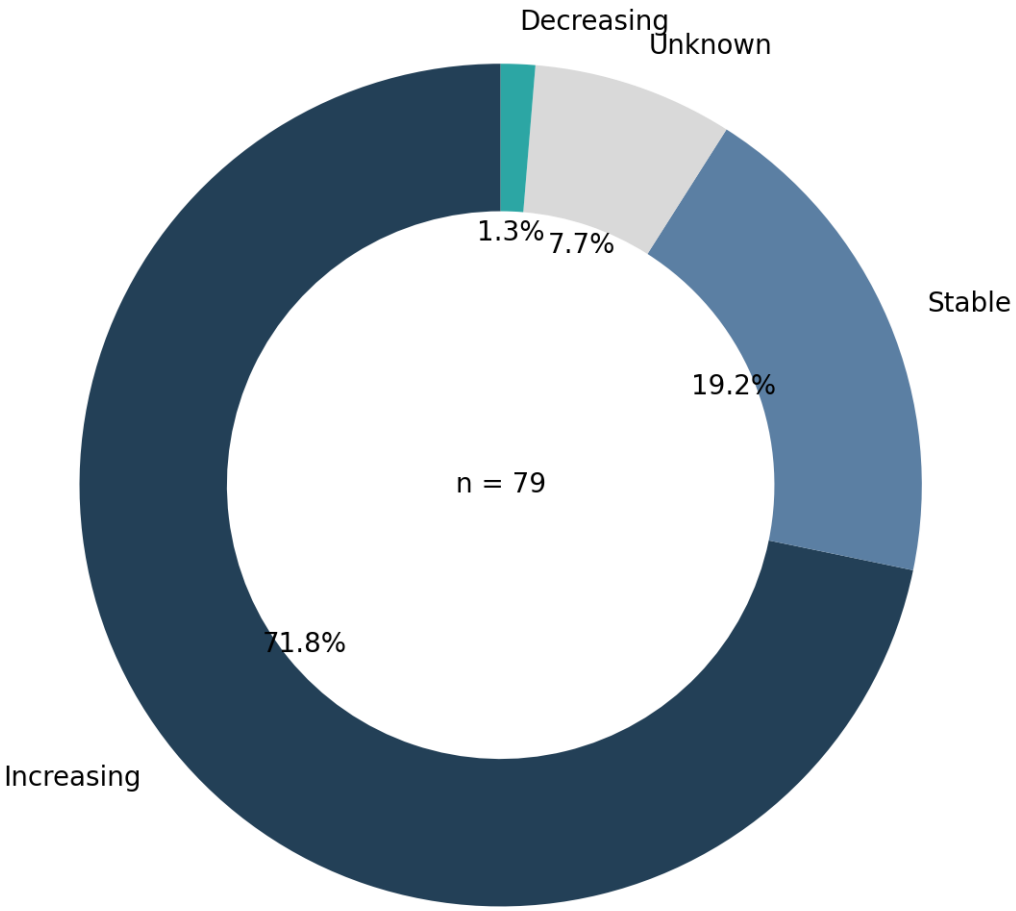
INFOGRAPHIC 3

ESTIMATED SHARE OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN GDP



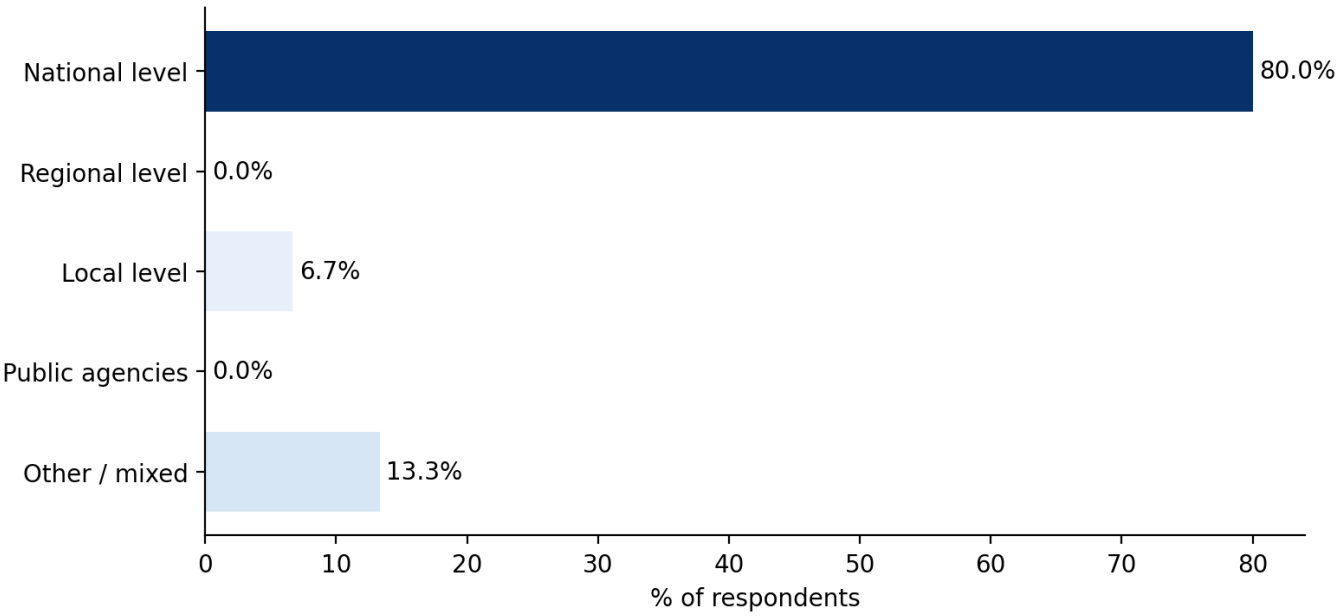
INFOGRAPHIC 4

TREND IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT EXPEDITURES



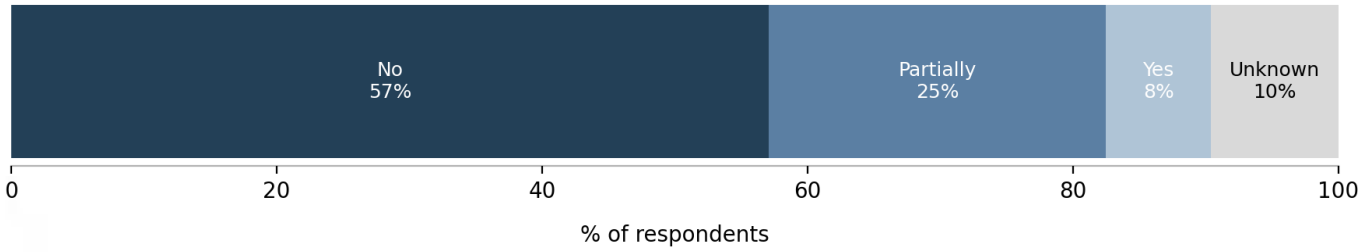
INFOGRAPHIC 5

AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR ESTABLISHING INCENTIVE SCHEMES



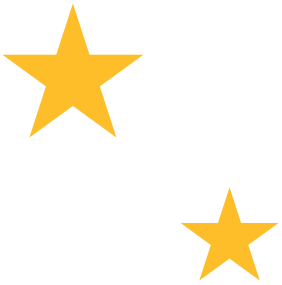
INFOGRAPHIC 6

ADEQUACY OF INCENTIVE FRAMEWORK



EUPPM.NET

Procurement for People



info@euppm.net

www.euppm.net