

A Strategic Framework for Enhancing Procurement Planning in Ghana's Public Procurement Institutions

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Abstract

Public procurement is a key instrument through which governments deliver development objectives and meet the needs of their citizens. To enhance its effectiveness, various reforms have been implemented globally, particularly in developing countries such as Ghana. Despite these efforts, several challenges continue to impede the public procurement process, especially at the planning stage. Procurement planning covering goods, works, and services involves making strategic decisions that influence future procurement activities. Although it is a critical component for the success of the overall procurement process, procurement planning has often been overlooked by public procurement entities, particularly within the local government sector.

This study aimed to develop a framework to improve procurement planning practices in public procurement entities in Ghana. A qualitative research approach was adopted, with primary data collected through unstructured and semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face with key stakeholders. These interactions enabled the collection of in-depth data on current procurement planning practices across selected entities. Additionally, a review of relevant literature was conducted to identify existing challenges within procurement planning. The target population for the study comprised procurement officers from all six (6) Metropolitan Assemblies in Ghana. The qualitative data obtained was analysed using thematic analysis, which facilitated the identification of patterns and insights. The findings revealed eleven (11) distinct stages involved in the current procurement planning process used by entities to develop their annual procurement plans. Furthermore, the study identified sixteen (16) challenges associated with procurement planning.

These challenges include, but are not limited to: limited familiarity with procurement regulations, undue influence on procurement methods, poor records management, weak inter-departmental coordination, exclusion of key personnel from the planning process, low ethical standards, small or restrictive procurement thresholds, and legislative loopholes. Interestingly, the study found that some of these challenges are themselves symptoms of underlying root causes. These root causes were categorised into five broad areas: organisational, professional, political, legislative, and economic/market-related conditions.

Moreover, it was observed that essential elements such as sustainable procurement planning and risk management are currently absent from the procurement planning process, further compounding existing challenges. Based on these findings, the study concludes that procurement planning should be undertaken by a multidisciplinary team comprising relevant personnel at the start of every financial year. It is recommended that the Public Procurement Authority intensify its training programmes on procurement processes and ensure that sustainable procurement planning and risk management are systematically integrated into the procurement planning framework.

Keywords: Public Procurement, Procurement Planning, Local Government, Ghana, Procurement Challenges, Sustainable Procurement, Risk Management, Procurement Reforms, Qualitative

Research, Thematic Analysis, Procurement Framework, Metropolitan Assemblies, Procurement Officers, Legislative Loopholes, Ethical Standards.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Public procurement serves as a vital mechanism through which governments deliver public goods, services, and infrastructure to stimulate economic growth and achieve national development goals. Globally, public procurement accounts for a significant portion of government expenditure—estimated at 12–20% of GDP in many countries (World Bank, 2020). In developing economies such as Ghana, public procurement is not only a tool for service delivery but also a strategic instrument for promoting transparency, efficiency, and good governance (Ameyaw, Mensah, & Osei-Tutu, 2012).

Over the past two decades, Ghana has undertaken major procurement reforms to align with international standards and best practices, notably through the enactment of the Public Procurement Act, 2003 (Act 663) and its amendment, Act 914 of 2016. These reforms aim to improve procurement efficiency, ensure value for money, and reduce corruption in public sector procurement. However, despite these legal and institutional efforts, significant challenges persist—particularly at the procurement planning stage (Amoako, 2019). Procurement planning, which involves forecasting, budgeting, and scheduling procurement activities, is the foundation upon which successful procurement outcomes are built (Thai, 2001). Poor planning often results in project delays, cost overruns, and procurement failures.

In Ghana's local government sector, procurement planning is frequently underemphasized or poorly executed. This neglect leads to fragmented procurement processes, weak interdepartmental coordination, and non-compliance with regulatory guidelines (Boakye & Agyekum, 2020). Moreover, issues such as inadequate capacity, limited stakeholder participation, and political interference further undermine effective procurement planning (Buertey, Ametepey, & Adjei-Kumi, 2016).

Given these persistent challenges, there is a need to examine the current procurement planning practices in Ghana's public procurement entities, especially at the metropolitan assembly level, and to propose a practical framework that incorporates sustainability, risk management, and institutional capacity-building. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the procurement planning processes in selected metropolitan assemblies in Ghana, identify the key challenges, and recommend an effective framework to guide future practices.

2.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Procurement planning has been widely acknowledged as the cornerstone of effective public procurement. It is the initial and most strategic stage in the procurement cycle, involving the identification of needs, definition of specifications, estimation of costs, and scheduling of procurement activities (OECD, 2022). When properly executed, procurement planning enhances transparency, ensures value for money, improves project delivery, and aligns procurement outcomes with organizational goals (Adjei-Bediako, Agyemang, & Oppong, 2023).

2.1 Procurement Planning in Developing Economies

In developing countries, procurement planning has often been sidelined, resulting in inefficiencies and failed procurement processes (Appiah & Tutu, 2021). In Ghana, although the Public Procurement Act 2003 (Act 663) and its amendment Act 914 (2016) mandate public institutions to develop annual procurement plans, compliance remains low, particularly at the local government level. According to Asante and Amoako (2022), many Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) fail to involve key stakeholders in the planning process, leading to unrealistic procurement schedules and poor contract execution.

2.2 Challenges in Procurement Planning

Several studies have identified recurring challenges that hinder effective procurement planning. These include inadequate skills and training among procurement personnel, lack of inter-departmental coordination, poor data management systems, political interference, and limited financial resources (Agyekum, Osei-Poku, & Gyasi, 2020). A recent study by Danso and Owusu (2023) emphasizes that procurement planning in Ghana is often treated as a formality rather than a strategic tool. This has led to fragmented planning practices, ad-hoc procurement decisions, and increased susceptibility to corruption.

Moreover, legal and regulatory loopholes contribute to the planning inefficiencies. Boakye and Abeka (2024) argue that thresholds set for procurement methods are often too low or inconsistently applied, making planning rigid and bureaucratic. Similarly, the absence of automated procurement systems in most Assemblies limits the ability to monitor and adjust procurement plans in real time.

2.3 Role of Sustainability and Risk Management

Recent literature has also highlighted the growing importance of incorporating sustainability and risk management into procurement planning. Sustainable procurement ensures that environmental, social, and economic factors are considered in planning and decision-making (UNDP, 2021). However, Ghana's current public procurement framework lacks structured guidelines for integrating sustainability considerations. Owusu-Ansah and Bediako (2023) found that only a few procurement officers are aware of sustainable procurement principles, and even fewer apply them during planning.

Risk management is another critical yet neglected aspect. Procurement risks such as market volatility, supplier failure, and inflation can derail planned activities if not anticipated and mitigated. According to Antwi and Adomako (2022), most public institutions in Ghana do not include risk assessments in their procurement plans, making them vulnerable to unexpected disruptions.

2.4 Conceptual Gaps and Frameworks

Although several studies have documented the challenges of procurement planning, few have proposed comprehensive frameworks tailored to the Ghanaian context. Agyemang and Darko (2023) suggest that a multi-stakeholder planning framework—comprising procurement officers, technical experts, financial officers, and project beneficiaries—can improve the quality and realism of procurement plans. Additionally, the integration of digital tools, capacity-building, and performance monitoring can significantly enhance planning outcomes.

The gap in current literature lies in the absence of a holistic framework that not only addresses existing challenges but also embeds sustainability and risk management into the procurement planning process. This study aims to fill this gap by proposing a practical and context-specific framework based on qualitative data from procurement officers in Ghana's Metropolitan Assemblies.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore and understand the procurement planning processes, challenges, and practices within public procurement entities in Ghana, specifically focusing on Metropolitan Assemblies. The qualitative approach was deemed appropriate as it allows for an in-depth examination of experiences, perceptions, and institutional practices that are not easily quantifiable (Creswell & Poth, 2021). Through this approach, rich, descriptive data could be obtained to develop a context-specific framework for improving procurement planning.

3.1 Research Design

A case study design was employed to enable the collection of detailed information from a bounded system—the procurement units of Metropolitan Assemblies in Ghana. Case study research is particularly suitable for examining contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2020).

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population for the study consisted of procurement officers and relevant stakeholders (such as planning officers and finance officers) in the six (6) Metropolitan Assemblies in Ghana: Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale, Tema, and Cape Coast. These Assemblies were selected due to their large-scale procurement responsibilities and the complexity of their procurement environments.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who had direct involvement in procurement planning. Purposive sampling enables the researcher to deliberately choose individuals with the knowledge and experience relevant to the research objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015). A total of 18 participants (three from each Assembly) were selected, ensuring a mix of roles to capture multiple perspectives.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data were collected using both unstructured and semi-structured interview guides. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, allowing for probing and clarification of responses. The interview guides focused on areas such as procurement planning processes, involvement of stakeholders, encountered challenges, and the integration of sustainability and risk management in procurement planning. Interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of participants and subsequently transcribed for analysis. Field notes were also taken to capture non-verbal cues and contextual information.

3.4 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data. This technique involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data, allowing for the interpretation of various aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The process followed six phases: familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. Data were coded manually, and emergent themes were compared across the different Metropolitan Assemblies to identify commonalities and variations. This comparative analysis helped in developing a holistic understanding of the procurement planning landscape.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained prior to data collection. All participants were briefed on the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents analysis of data collected from the field in relation to the study objectives and research questions. The chapter also discusses the interpretation and presentation of the research findings drawn from the research instruments. The study sought to identify the current procurement planning practice, identify challenges and their causes, and to propose a framework procurement planning in public procurement entities. The data was analysed using Miles & Huberman model (1994) of thematic analysis adapted from the work of Alhojailan (2012) to address the objectives of the study. The interview transcripts were read through a number of times, where the key points and themes emanating from the scripts were identified.

4.1 Working Experience of Respondents

The respondents of the study comprised procurement officers in the six (6) Metropolitan Assemblies in Ghana. Six procurement officers were interviewed with the aim of achieving an in-depth understanding of the procurement planning practices in the entities. According to Adjarko *et al.* (2014) people that remain longer in the same profession get to know their work and gain a lot of experience because of their constant involvement in same work over and over again. The interviewees had a working experience of at most five (5) years, a situation which suggests that they have the relevant knowledge and experience to provide relevant information to answer the research questions. In addition, considering the homogenous nature of the local government structure of the local government ministry, procurement officers in the MAs were considered to

have worked longer in the local government and therefore should have the relevant skill and experience and therefore were selected for the interview. The conclusions drawn on this finding is that, though procurement officers are at the metropolitan level of the local government service, their years of experience in procurement appears to be little.

4.1.1 Level of Education and Professional Qualification

The study endeavoured to find out the level of education of participants. It was however found that the majority of respondents, four (4) out of six (6) respondents had a bachelor's degree in procurement management or logistics and supply chain management. The other two (2) had Higher National Diploma (HND) in logistics and supply chain management. This suggests that respondents are likely to have a good knowledge of procurement as reported by the association of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) that having qualifications and relevant training may improve exposure and knowledge and hence improve performance (Basheka and Mugabira, 2008). Nevertheless, the study found that only one respondent had professional qualification but none of them had a master's degree. This finding reinforces the work of Basheka and Mugabira (2008) who revealed that in Uganda only a few procurement officers hold a master's degree implying that the procurement profession was still in its infancy.

4.2 Current Procurement Planning Practices

The study sought to find out the current procurement planning practices of entities. This section therefore discusses the planning practice of entities. In order to answer the research questions, the manuscripts and notes obtained from the interview of procurement officers have been analysed and presented under themes.

4.2.1 Period of Commencing Procurement Planning

Section 3.2 of PPA Manual (2006) states that; „preparation of the annual procurement plan should be commenced at least four months before the start of the financial year to allow sufficient time for a realistic and accurately costed plan to be compiled“. The period of commencing procurement planning in the entities fall within the range of the provision of the law as respondents reported that they begin their planning between the period of September to November. The process begins by first sending circulars to user units to submit their procurement needs for the next financial year. However, a few entities begin the process by reviewing procurements that have been completed so far, and that which are to be done by organising a consultative or strategic meeting to strategise on how to go about it. This practice is consistent to the requirement of the manual and Act's provision.

One of the respondent said: *“The whole process starts from the month of June. Where we do the mid-year review of the previous procurement. After the review, there is a budget committee that is formed.”*

Another respondent said: *“The procurement planning starts in the month of September and we complete it by the end of November. Before the process begins we send letters to departments to submit their inputs.”*

According to one participant: *“We send circulars around to the user units in October and by the end of November we send the procurement plan to the Entity Tender Committee...but by law it's supposed to be at least four months to the end of the year...it would be better if the process starts 6 months to the end of the year.”*

4.2.2 Need Identification

Need identification by entities is done in two ways; the first is external needs identification. This has to do with the needs of communities within the jurisdiction of the metropolitan assemblies. The second is internal estimated requirements for stores replenishment, and the submissions of Departments, Units and Projects within the procurement entity. The needs are those that meet or are in synchrony with the objectives of the entities. The needs are captured in the entity's medium term development plan and further broken down into

annual action plans. The procurement items outlined in the annual action plans are those that get into the annual procurement plan of the entities to be procured for the next financial year. A respondent had this to say about how needs are identified during planning:

“The Assembly prepares a medium term development plan which spans a period of 4-5 years. It’s upon this plan that an annual action plan is deduced and implemented. It is the annual term plan that contains all the procurement need that would be procured in a particular financial year.”

One participant expressed this in his view: *“We plan the procurement under works goods and services. Most of our projects are works. We have a planning unit which go into the communities and communicate with the assembly members who represent the communities to give them their priority projects that they need in the various communities.”*

Another respondent highlighted that: *“The planning unit in consultation with the communities prepare an action plan for the assembly which contains all the needs of the communities...we send circulars out to solicit for the needs of the various units.”*

4.2.3 Budgeting and Estimating

When buying goods and services procurement officials need to ensure that the best possible outcome is achieved, this must take into account all relevant costs and benefits over the whole procurement cycle (Raymond, 2008). The budget office of the entities play a lead role and in some cases the planning unit in budgeting for procurement needs. When the budget is drawn for the financial year, it is then sent for approval by the General Assembly of the entity. After the budgeting process by the budget office or the budget committees, the procurement unit then picks the approved budget and prepares that annual procurement plan from it using approved budgets for procurement items for that financial year.

An excerpt from a respondent highlighted this concerning budgeting: *“After the review, there is a budget committee that is formed. The various heads of departments prepare their budgets to appear before the budget committee. The budget committee will then have a discussion of the needs that the heads of departments have stated. The discussion is between the heads of departments and the budget committee. When the budget hearing process is done the next stage is to collate whatever procurement need has been budgeted for into the procurement plan.”*

A respondent explained that: *“The procurement plan comprises the information from the action plan and the budget of the various units. The planning and budgeting is done in a team. The planning officers will plan the action plan, the budget officers will also prepare the budget and other functionary units like the works department.”*

Another participant said: *“...the budget allocation is then forwarded to the general assembly or authority meeting for discussion and approval.”*

4.2.4 Aggregation/Consolidation

Section 3.2.2 of PPA Manual (2006) requires that a PE should undertake packaging for where appropriate to achieve economies of scale. Aggregation is the next stage of the planning process after the budget has been approved. The procurement unit then identifies similar items and group them into goods, works and services. After procurement requirements have been classified; the needs are then aggregated to achieve economies of scale. Aggregation is done by the procurement unit of the entity. According to a respondent: *“From the annual action plan we identify all the procurement needs and then we classify them into goods works and services. After classifying the need items we aggregate the similar items to achieve economies of scale.”*

Another respondent replied that: *“Aggregation is where we package the projects into lots or we classify the needs/projects that are of similar nature that will need to be procured at the same time.”*

4.2.5 Specification Writing

Section 3.2.5 of PPA Manual (2006) states that: *“Heads of departments, units, projects and programmes are required to ensure the analysis and preparation of Annual Procurement Plans for their own and subordinate areas of control.”* Also Section 2.8 says Originating Officer,

Department, Project, Programme or Unit should “Prepare the initial specification of the requirement”. Writing of specification in procurement entities is done jointly between the originating department and the procurement unit. According to a respondent: *“The preparation of specification is done in conjunction with the originating/user departments.”* Another responded that: *“Yes, user units are involved in preparing procurement specifications but the aggregation is done by the procurement unit.”* Another participant said that: *“It’s the user department that will give you the specification of what they exactly want.”*

4.2.6 Choice of Procurement Method

Procurement method is the route which the entity decides to use to acquire a particular procurement need. The method of procurement chosen or used by the entities is dependent on the estimated cost of the procurement need and the thresholds stated in Schedule 3 of Act 663. Secondly, it is circumstance driven as stipulated in Section 40 of the Public Procurement Act. A respondent highlighted that: *“As for the method of procurement it is what the Act has stated that guide us....including the amount involved in the project.”* Another replied that: *“The method of procurement which we assign to each procurement is based on the amount of that procurement and taking a look at the threshold in the Act we choose the right method.”*

4.2.7 Procurement Timelines

Section 3.3 has stipulated guidelines for determining completion timescales. This has been categorised under ICT (Goods), NCT (Goods), ICT (Works), NCT (Works) and Request for Quotation. Procurement entities make use of these guidelines to apportion lead times to the procurement process. According to one respondent: *“The time lines that we use are as set out in the manual. So we follow exactly what is in the manual.”* Another participant added that: *“We consider the time the procurement item will be needed by the users and then we plan for it.”*

4.2.8 Approval Authority for Procurement

For every procurement that is undertaken by an entity, Section 3 of the Act has specified bodies or persons responsible for their approval. Therefore, depending of the estimated cost or value of the procurement, the appropriate body or person is selected for approval of the procurement need. One participant said this: *“In the same way the estimated cost tells what the approval authority would be.”* Another respondent said: *“The amount that a project will cost determines the approval authority to be used.”*

4.2.9 Submission of Plan for Approval

Section 21 (2) of Act 663 says that „a procurement (2) entity shall submit to its Tender Committee not later than one month to the end of the financial year the procurement plan for the following year for approval“. Currently procurement entities prepare their draft procurement plan and submit it to the Entity Tender Committee (ETC) for validation and approval. Upon receiving approval from the ETC, the plan is submitted for discussion at the general assembly meeting of the procurement entity. Concerning the approval process for the plan a respondent said:

“After we have finished with the planning we submit it to the entity tender committee for validation and approval.”

Another replied that: *“The draft procurement plan is then presented to the entity tender committee for validation and approval. After the entity tender committee has approved it; it is then sent to the general assembly.”*

4.2.10 Monitoring and Updating

Section 3.4 of PPA Manual (2006) requires that „during project execution the original procurement plan should be regularly monitored and updated“. At the implementation stage of the procurement plan, the plan is subjected to periodic review and updating. Procurement entities review their plans quarterly; during this period procurements that have been completed and those that are pending are reviewed to address any challenge that has been encountered or

may be met, this allows the necessary changes to be put in place. In addition the planned time lines are measured against the actuals to track progress. Procurement needs are prioritized at this stage of monitoring and updating.

One participant pointed out that: *“When we meet quarterly and we find out whether there are some problems with the first quarter.... then amendment or reviews are made to the plan for the following quarter.”*

Another highlighted that: *“Monitoring and updating of plan is done quarterly; during this time we also do prioritization as to which project should be considered or is an emergency one.”*

Another participant said: *“We do review quarterly...so for instance an emergency project may be reviewed from the third quarter to the second quarter.”*

4.2.11 Participation of Key Personnel in Planning

Section of 3.2.2 to 3.2.5 of PPA Manual delineates the actions or responsibilities of the personnel that play a part in the planning process. These include the head of entity, the procurement unit (officer), the head of departments and stores (the head of stores). However, the study found that apart from the head of entity that plays an administrative role of initiating the planning process by instructing the procurement unit to commence development of the annual procurement plan; the heads of departments including the stores department play very little role when it comes to procurement planning, especially the stores department. This was response from a participant who said: *“I recommend that store keeper must be part of the key personnel involved in the planning process.”*

This strengthens the observation of the study which found that stores officer was not mentioned as one of the key people involved at the budgeting stage. Section 3.2.5 of the Manual throws much light on the role that the Heads of Department, Units, Projects and Programmes (HDUPP) in the planning process. The section requires that HDUPP should “ensure the analysis and preparation of annual procurement plans for their own and subordinate areas of control.” Contrary to this HDUPP do not prepare procurement plan for their subordinate areas of control. Instead, they sometimes prepare budgets for their need items and then submit it to the budget office/committee.

Concerning departmental planning this is an excerpt from a respondent: *“The various heads of departments prepare their budgets to appear before the budget committee.”*

In the same vein another respondent said that: *“Departments do not prepare their own procurement plans. Rather they do prepare their budgets and action plans.”* In addition, Section 3.2.3 which states that the procurement unit shall “issue detailed instructions to the heads of departments, units, projects and programmes on the format and content of submissions for the procurement plan.” and also “Receive submissions, check quantities and costing, obtain clarifications and other responses to any queries, analyse and compile all submissions into a procurement plan for the procurement entity.”

Section 3.2.3 strengthens the fact that HDUPP are responsible for the preparation of procurement plan for their own subordinate areas of control and the procurement unit has the responsibility of receiving, checking quantities and costing and obtaining clarifications and responses to any queries; just as section 3.2.5 states that HDUPP shall „respond to any queries raised by the procurement unit“.

Meanwhile, from the responses gathered it suggests that it is the budget and the planning officers (units) that play a substantial role in the planning process, especially at the budgeting stage of the planning process. In a nut shell, procurement planning in entities is not carried out in a team manner rather it’s the budgeting stage that is handled by a team. Respondents however made mention of some personnel that can be part of the procurement planning team. These include the Procurement Officer, Budget Officer, Planning Officer and heads of departments, units, projects and programs.

4.2.12 Sustainable Procurement Planning

In identifying the current procurement planning practices of entities, respondents were asked the extent to which they incorporate sustainable procurement planning into the procurement process. The study found that most of the respondents had no specific knowledge of sustainable procurement planning, whereas others had an appreciable knowledge of sustainability. However, respondents who had knowledge of sustainable procurement was skewed towards environmental safety as they expressed the importance they attach to any procurement that has environmental impact. Typical responses from the respondents concerning sustainable procurement planning are as follows:

One participant said:

“In considering sustainability we look and the energy efficiency, economical gain and the environmental safety of the procurement need.”

Another responded that:

“As a result of our CIPS background in training as a unit we have an idea of sustainability and we have been taking that into account before the recent workshop by PPA training in sustainability. The training highlighted on taking into consideration how environmentally friendly a procurement need will be in every procurement.”

Another respondent highlighted that:

“Before the training sustainable procurement I was not actually factored into the planning process. However, after the training whatever we do we factor it in to ensure that we obtain a sustainable product.”

A participant replied that:

“Under the plan we have general services which include environmental issues and others so before we embark on any project we have to conduct an environmental assessment.”

4.2.13 Risk Planning

Considering the fact that risks are inherent in all the stages of the procurement process (GPP, 2010), respondents were asked the extent to which they incorporate risk management into their procurement planning process. The study found that respondents were not incorporating risk management into the procurement planning process because of their lack of specialised knowledge in it. There is no clear cut process which they go through to plan for risks that may be associated with a procurement process. In addition, they expressed concern that a training program and the provision of guidelines would be helpful for the planning process. The following excerpt from one participant captures this: *“Currently risk management is not captured by the procurement plan. But for procurement of works, after the signing of the contract there is a project management team that takes care of that, for instance checking the engineering works. For goods it’s considered after purchasing; ways by which shall be disposed are considered.”*

Another respondent added this: *“Currently we do not have that incorporated in to the planning process.”*

Another replied that: *“I have a general knowledge of risk consideration for a procurement need, but not a specialised knowledge of risk management and how to incorporate it into the planning process.”*

4.3 Challenges Faced in Procurement Planning

This section focuses on, the analysis, discussion and interpretation of the challenges faced in procurement planning. A number of challenges faced in procurement planning were identified in literature that is chapter two of the study. These were set out in a semi structured interview guide with which respondents were interviewed. Respondents however, did not state any challenges aside those identified from literature.

4.3.1 Small or Low Procurement Thresholds

Low threshold as stipulated by the Public Procurement Act, 2003 (Act 663) are to inform the method of procurement to be adopted and the approval authority to be used be it goods, services or works. The study found that low procurement thresholds make room for procurement officials to split procurement items. This they attributed to the bureaucratic process that has to be fulfilled in order to solicit fund for advertisement and the cost of advertisement involved. In addition, managerial influence is a contributing factor. Respondents however, stressed that these thresholds need to be amended. This finding is consistent with other findings such as (Baffour, 2014; Etse and Asenso-Boakye, 2014; Frempong *et al.*, 2013; Osei-Owusu *et al.*, 2014) who observed that low thresholds give room for procurement entities to break into smaller components (break up items in parts) during procurement planning to avoid exceeding the threshold value which changes the method of procurement. An excerpt of a response from a respondent is this:

“That is perfectly true, the low level of the threshold gives room for splitting of procurements. It is something that the Act has to be amended... The difficulty is writing memos to solicit money for advert coupled with the duration of four weeks stated by the Act by which an advert has to last at least. This is what causes people to split procurements, considering the bureaucracy involved.”

4.3.2 Familiarity with Regulations

The study sought to find out how familiar procurement officials are with procurement rules regarding planning. Respondents reported that they are familiar with the legal frame-work, principles, procedures and processes which govern procurement planning. This they expressed that for procurement officers they are very much familiar with the rules governing planning. This finding therefore contradicts the assertion of (Eyaa and Oluka, 2011; Gesuka and Namusonge, 2013) who assert that procurement officials are not familiar with procurement rules and regulations. For instance, a respondent stated that: *“For people who do procurement planning in the assembly they do understand and are familiar with the regulations.”* However, a point worth noting is that respondents mentioned that management and other units who use the plan are those who are not familiar with the rules and regulations, this finding is also in synchrony with that of Frempong *et al.* (2013) study which reported that senior officers or management do not have any technical knowledge in procurement. An interesting deduction from the response of respondents is that either they are conversant with some rules governing procurement planning or there is an incorrect interpretation and application of some provisions. For example, respondents mentioned that originating departments or user units are not responsible for preparing their individual procurement plan to be submitted to the procurement unit. This position is not in agreement with Section 3.2.5 of the Manual which stipulate that: „heads of departments, units, projects and programmes are required to ensure the analysis and preparation of Annual Procurement Plans for their own and subordinate areas of control“. This to some degree suggests the lack of understanding, unfamiliarity or incorrect interpretation of rules governing the role of user units in the planning process, a role which particularly important in the planning process.

This was a typical response from a respondent: *“Departments do not prepare their own procurement plans. Rather they do prepare their budgets and action plans.”*

Another participant replied: *“We don’t prepare procurement plan at units or departmental levels...”*

4.3.3 Setting High Budgets

The planning and budgeting phase of the procurement process is one that has been reported as being plagued with corruption (Ampofo, 2013). Consistent with this assertion, respondents reported that setting of budgets high is one way by which corruptions manifests in the planning process. This they pointed out to be caused by management and political influence. This finding is in agreement with (Ampofo, 2013; Matechak, 2002) who reported that, budgets are usually set artificially high so that excess allocations can be misapplied, misappropriated or diverted to unplanned projects. This is an excerpt of a participant: *“I agree to some extent that sometimes budgets could be set high, but the reason is as a result of payments that delay and the influence of leaders.”* Another participant added that: *“Yes sometime there is over budgeting, where budgets could be set artificially high.”*

4.3.4 Absence of Functional Procurement Units

The existence of a functional procurement unit has been reported to have a significant positive impact on successful projects (Ogachi, 2014). The study found that procurements entities studied had functional procurement units. Therefore, the finding of this study contradicts findings elsewhere which says there is delay in establishing procurement units in entities and also there are no procurement units in entities (Etse and Asenso-Boakye, 2014; Obanda, 2010; Ogachi, 2014). A participant responded that: *“For our establishment we have functional procurement unit.”* Another added that: *“Contrarily, there is a procurement unit in the assembly.”*

4.3.5 Inadequate Qualified Personnel/Professional Workforce

Employee competence influences procurement efficiency to a large extent (Shiundu and Rotich, 2014). Addai-Donkor (2014) stated that the lack of procurement professionals with the requisite knowledge in procurement has been a major challenge in most procurement units especially in Ghana. The respondents reported that they have qualified personnel in their procurement units who handle procurement, thus taking into consideration their educational qualification as discussed earlier. This assertion however, is opposed to Raymond (2008) who described professionalism as not only relating to the levels of education and qualifications of the workforce but also includes the professional approach employed in the conduct of business activities. Nonetheless, their assertion is not in agreement to the finding of (Addai-Donkor, 2014; Obanda, 2010) who observed that procurement officers lack the requisite skill for procurement planning. Procurement officers reported that they have the professional workforce, this is an excerpt from one participant expressing his view: *“No, there is a lack of competent professional workforce, in our own case here we have the workforce to facilitate procurement planning.”* Another respondent said: *“Just as we have a procurement unit we also have the professional workforce who man it.”*

However, the study found that five (5) out of the six procurement officers who were interviewed, only one had professional qualification. Meanwhile, empirical literature posits that „building professionalism among procurement officials with a common set of professional and ethical standards is equally important“ in achieving integrity in procurement (OECD, 2007, p. 13). Building up a larger pool of trained procurement staff serves as an important tool for corruption control (Schultz and Søreide, 2008). This therefore reveals that procurement officers may not be considered as having the professional workforce in these entities. This assertion is in agreement with (Adam *et al.*, 2012; Raymond, 2008) who emphasize that professionalization of procurement – whether it involves private or public practice – not only implies having relevant knowledge only relating to the levels of education and qualifications of the workforce and appropriate skills. Instead it assumes following moral expectations, ethical codes and the professional approach employed in the conduct of business activities (Adam *et al.*, 2012; Raymond, 2008).

Loopholes in Legislations

Procurement practitioners face many challenges given the complexity of the set of laws, and government systems at times not in line with the Procurement Act (Denis and Kilonzo, 2014). Consequently, the absence of the law or a loophole in it could make room for malpractices. Respondents of the study reported that there were loopholes in the rules and regulations for procurement planning. A typical example that they put forward was the low threshold in the schedule three of Act 663 which states the method of procurement to be used for procurement items. For example, a classic response by one participant was: *“For instance clear procedures for procurement planning, that is beginning the budgeting process from the unit or departments level then to the budget committee, the budget committee will sit to analyse all the requests that have come from the departments and then from there we get any information about the procurement and then we start the procurement planning.”* Another respondent added that: *“A more detailed guideline on how planning should be carried out will be of good help to the work we do.”*

Considering loopholes in the legislation guiding procurement planning, other areas which require noting are sustainability and risk management incorporation in the procurement process. It is interesting to note that the Act and Manual have no provisions for which these all important areas of planning. It appears important then to have the Act amended in order to make

up for uncaptured areas of procurement especially sustainable procurement and risk management.

4.3.6 *Influence on the Choice of Procurement Method*

The public procurement Act has made provision for methods of procurement to be used for any particular procurement. The study found that the method of procurement is largely influenced by actions of management and political leaders. This substantiates the finding of (Hui *et al.*, 2011; Matechak, 2002; Vanderpuye, 2014) who stated that suppliers influence the method of procurement also interference from the local politicians, members of parliament and very influential top management individuals have interrupted the procurement processes and in effect daunted transparency. For instance, Osei-Tutu *et al.* (2014) posited that politicians influence the choice of contract, the nature of contract and who the winning contractors and suppliers should be at the tendering and contracting stage. This was confirmed by respondents when they mentioned vividly that the planning process many times is influenced by top management and officials in political offices.

A respondents said: *“Yes, there exist influence on the choice of the method for procurement process. There is that influence on planning from suppliers, management and political leaders.”* Another respondent added that the choice of method of procurement is influenced, as captured below: *“As for this one you cannot avoid. There are instances where projects are given to particular people which conflict the provisions of the law. Sometimes these projects are tagged job for the boys. And these are people who are working under political officials.”*

4.3.7 *Poor Records Management*

Records management is an essential aspect of the procurement function in organisations or entities. Meanwhile, many developing countries lack a systematic approach to managing records (Shiundu and Rotich, 2014). Respondents agreed to the assertion that procurement records management in entities is poor. The study found that there are challenges with the records management in terms of filing systems, difficulty in accessing documents among others. One participant attributed the cause of this challenge to financial constraints. This is an excerpt of a respondent highlighted that: *“Sometimes in our institution here, you need a document of complete a task and you just can't seem to get. Because of the absence of good recording or you can't find the documents needed completing the procurement planning on time becomes a challenge.”*

This challenge poses a question on the level of professionalism at which procurement is carried out in these entities. This is because the quality of one's record keeping is also a reflection of his/her professional practice (PPCC, 2007). In addition, good record keeping is an indication of skilled practitioners, whereas careless or incomplete record keeping often highlights wider problems with the individual's practice (PPCC, 2007). This finding therefore suggests that professionalism is compromised given that efficient record management is an indication of professionalism, facilities improved decision-making and policy formulation based on reliable information and a demonstration of high level of accountability in the public procurement process (Bondzi, 2014; PPCC, 2007).

4.3.8 *Influence of Economic and Market Conditions*

Thai (2001) discusses five environmental factors influencing the public procurement system, these include market, internal environment, legal environment, political environment, and socio-economic environment. Economic and market conditions were noted as a contributing factor to the challenges of procurement planning. This is manifested in the rapid change of prices in the market which impact the procurement plan significantly. According to one respondent: *“The changes of prices in the market have an influence on the procurement plan.”*

Another one added that: *“Changes in the market affects planning in addition to tight budgets of the assembly.”*

4.3.9 *Poor Coordination between Departments*

Organizations need effective communication to ensure that information flows in a timely manner to all and parts of the organization, both vertically and horizontally (Tan, 2013).

Respondents mentioned that poor coordination is manifested in difficulty of receiving accurate, relevant, and up-to date information in a timely manner from departments or user units. In other instances, it is encountered in the inability of user departments to accurately write their specifications, and also the decision to use brand names for describing procurement items. Effective communication is therefore a challenge when it comes to coordination between departments. This finding substantiates other findings which observed that poor coordination between user departments and the procurement unit affect the procurement function in entities (Barasa, 2014; Chesang, 2013; Kenya and ECIAfrica, 2008; Obanda, 2010; OECD, 2007). The following except from one of the participants expresses this view:

“This is true. There is difficulty in receiving accurate, relevant, and up-to date information in a timely manner from departments or user units.”

4.3.10 Difficulty in writing of specification, statement of work and statement of objectives

Specification in procurement planning is one that can determine the success or failure of the whole procurement process. From the current practices it was found that originating departments write their own specifications and in other instances it is done in conjunction with the procurement unit. Respondents however, reported that they do not have any difficulty in writing specification for procurement items, however, the difficulty has to do with user departments, especially when they are not explicit on what they want to be procured. For example, a one respondents said: *“Difficulty in developing specifications we do not have any difficulty”*

Another respondent said: *“In the writing of specification it’s not the duty of the procurement unit. It’s the user department. It’s the user department that will give you the specification of what exactly they want. But sometimes when there are specialist works we fall on special consultants for assistance.”*

Moreover, an observation that was made was the fact that respondents were silent on how they write their statement of work and statement of objectives, even though further questions were asked to probe how they develop their SOW and SOO, yet their answers were linked to specification writing. This suggests that currently developing SOW and SOO is one aspect of the procurement planning process that is given attention.

4.3.11 Non Participation of Key Personnel

Basheka (2009) argues that the accounts or finance departments, the users of respective departments and procurement units are central when it comes to procurement planning. The study found that planning is currently not done in a team. It was observed that the team work only comes in at the budgeting level and needs assessment in communities, which involves the budget officer, planning officer and in some cases heads of departments. The procurement unit does not play an active part at this level, but only starts their process when the budget is approved. This finding strengthens the assertion of Basheka (2009) who contend on the important role that the finance officers play in the planning process. However, in Ghana the procurement law and its manual do not include the finance officer as key personnel in the planning process.

However, respondents stated that the planning process will be more effective if it’s carried out in a team. This was a typical response of a respondent: *“Currently procurement planning is not done in a team, however it would be very helpful if it’s done by a team so everyone can contribute to the plan. The team can comprise the following key people: finance officer, budget officer, stores officer, works engineer, procurement officer.”*

4.3.12 Political Influence

Political interference affects the implementation of policies in the public sector (Badaso, 2014) and has been noted as one of the most significant challenges to the implementation of process and public procurement reforms (Ameyaw *et al.*, 2011). Respondents of the study mentioned that political interference or influence is one that poses a challenge to the planning processes. According to one participant, political influence is one that cannot be ignored when it

comes to procurement. This observation explains why political influence remains a challenge in public procurement because it is a business process within a political system (Basheka and Mugabira, 2008). One respondent expressed his view in this excerpt: *“Sometimes these projects are tagged job for the boys. And these are people who are working under political officials. It’s something that cannot be eliminated out rightly. Many times these come from political influences and also management.”* This finding is in agreement with (Ameyaw *et al.*, 2011; Ameyaw *et al.*, 2012; Aning and Edu-Afful, 2013; Badaso, 2014; Chesang, 2013; Addai-Donkor, 2014; Hui *et al.*, 2011; Odhiambo and Kamau, 2003; Osei-Tutu *et al.*, 2014; Williams-Elegbe, 2012), who unanimously agree that political influence is inherent in the procurement process.

4.3.13 Inadequate Training of Procurement Officials

According to Ambe and Badenhorst-Weiss (2012), lack of skills and capacity is one single and greatest impediment to the implementation of successful public procurement in most developing countries. Therefore, continuous development of staff through training has become essential as the procurement function progresses towards a tactical and strategic function (Dza *et al.*, 2013). Responses from the interview with procurement officers indicate that there is adequate training (on the job training) for procurement officials from time to time. Some of these training programs are organised by the Public Procurement Authority and World Bank. The study found that PPA in collaboration with the SWISS government had organised a training program on sustainable procurement in the last quarter of year 2014. This is the first training program in sustainable procurement that PPA has organised. This is an indication of progressive work by the PPA to keep procurement officials up to date of new procurement trends. The following is an excerpt from one participant: *“There are training programs for procurement officials. So PPA organises training programs for procurement officials. For instance, just last year PPA organised a training program in sustainable procurement.”* Another participant added that:

“There is proper training for us from time to time. Especially PPA, local government service and International Development Agencies. For example, just the last quarter of 2014 PPA has organised a training workshop in Sustainable Procurement in conjunction with the Swiss Government. World Bank also organises training seminars. As for donor funded projects they are not afraid to pay and so they will spend to train you so to ensure that you do the right thing.”

Furthermore, a point worth noting is the familiarity of procurement officials (management) as reported as not being abreast with the rules and regulation guiding procurement (Eyaa and Oluka, 2011; Gesuka and Namusonge, 2013). The import of this is that if there is adequate training, why the deficiency in the familiarity of management. This confirms the assertion of Ameyaw *et al.* (2012) that most staff members of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA’s) and District Assemblies (DA’s) responsible for procurement were not procurement- proficient, even though they have been trained. This implies there is the need to intensify training programs that will equip management as well as procurement officers with the requisite knowledge resulting from the low level of procurement capacity, inadequate knowledge and training to ensure smooth running of procurement in entities (Hui *et al.*, 2011; Sarfo and Baah-Mintah, 2013; Williams-Elegbe, 2012). A respondent highlighted that:

“Our officers are familiar with the regulations and how they should be applied, but rather is management that has difficulty with familiarity.”

4.3.14 Low Ethical Standards

In enhancing professionalism, especially in procurement planning it requires not only management procedures but also a clear set of values and ethical standards clarifying how to achieve these objectives (OECD, 2007). Respondents reported that there are ethical issues that are challenges currently. One major ethical issue that was noted in this study is conflict of interest. According to respondents, ethical issues will always remain in the procurement function given the environment within which procurement operates. Citing examples, they mentioned the involvement of management and political leaders whose actions concerning procurement contradicts the provisions of the law. This largely compromises the procurement processes and

makes the goal of achieving value for money a distant dream. For example, right at the initial stage (planning stage) of the procurement process the winner of a project is known because of a political decision to give projects to preferred suppliers even before they are planned for. One of the respondent gave a typical example in this excerpt:

“As for this one you cannot avoid. There are instances where projects are given to particular people which conflict the provisions of the law. Sometimes these projects are tagged job for the boys. And these are people who are working under political officials. It’s something that cannot be eliminated out rightly. Many times these come from political influences and also management.”

Another added that: *“With all these challenges ethics are really an issue.”*

This finding is in congruence with Williams-Elegbe (2012) who reported that undue pressure from such politicians and officials is one of the most challenging aspects faced by procurement personnel in conducting the procurement function. To sum up, Raymond (2008) who contend that best achievable procurement outcome would be a reality if procurement officials will avoid improper use of their positions and hold in high esteem ethical standards in the face of numerous challenges faced in their profession.

4.3.15 Poor Monitoring by Oversight Agencies

According to the respondents there is an effective monitoring by oversight agencies. These agencies do periodic monitoring in public entities. They mentioned internal auditor, external auditors, Public Procurement Authority and Functional Organization Assessment Tool a examples if those who monitor procurements. These bodies to some extent have been a check for the procurement function in entities (Ampofo, 2013). A constant monitoring of procurement practitioners and entities as well as education on the provisions of the Act reduces the possibility of the occurrence of any corrupt practices, ensures that key stakeholders do to act with integrity and also helps procurement officials to account for their decisions and conduct. Concerning the monitoring of procurement planning processes, a respondent said: *“Yes PPA does monitoring every year. In additions the Regional Coordinating Council also does monitoring and also the external auditors always come in to do monitoring.”*

Another participant added that:

“They come often these include both internal and external auditors, FUAT – Functional Organization Assessment Tool and PPA come to assess your work. For FUAT, the marks you score will determine whether you will benefit from their donor funds or not.”

4.4 Causes Of Challenges Facing Procurement Planning

This section of the study focuses on analysis, discussion and interpretation of the research finding on the causes of challenges in procurement planning. The study sought to identify the causes of the challenges and categorise them under various themes for discussion. A summary of the identified themes has been illustrated in figure 14 below.

4.4.1 Organisational Challenges

The uniqueness of every organisation as well as the organisational structure presents it with its own challenges. In the context of this study, organisational challenges were defined to include those that are caused or spring from the actions or capacity of personnel in the organisation, organisational activities and processes. The following challenges were identified: familiarity with regulation, influence on the method of procurement, poor records management, poor coordination between departments, non-participation of key personnel and low ethical standards in procurement planning.

4.4.2 Political Challenges

Very successful reform programs around the world have been traced to strong political will of governments (Ameyaw *et al.*, 2011). According to Osei-Tutu *et al.* (2014) political commitment is a necessary condition for procurement reforms. However, the absence of it gives an influx of challenges in to the procurement function. The study observed that political influence is one of the major root cause of the challenges faced in procurement planning. This is usually

manifested in the need identification, budgeting and choice of method of procurement; which undermines the ethical structures of the procurement profession. Political influence remains a challenge in developing countries like Ghana because public procurement constitutes a principal instrument for exercising political patronage (Ngwili and Were, 2014).

4.4.3 Professional Challenges

The lack of adequately trained professional staff in the procurement function is still pervasive in developing countries like Kenya, Uganda and Ghana (Ameyaw *et al.*, 2012; Chesang, 2013). The study classified challenges that result from the abilities of procurement officials as professional challenges. Among the challenges identified in procurement planning are familiarity with regulations, setting high budgets, inadequate qualified personnel or professional work force, influence on choice of procurement method, difficulty in writing specification and low ethical standards.

4.4.4 Legislative Challenges

Legislative challenges are those challenges that are faced as a result of a non-provision or short fall in the legal framework guiding procurement planning. Among the challenges reported by respondents are small or low thresholds and loopholes in legislative provisions. These were identified as challenges that surface by reason of the absence of areas of the procurement law that need to be amended.

4.4.5 Economic and Market Conditions

The study categorised these kinds of challenges as those that do not result from any of the above mentioned categories, but rather they are those that come about as external influence on procurement planning process. These include influence of economic and market conditions and influence on method of procurement by suppliers.

4.5 Framework For Procurement Planning

Generally, the lack of information about the legal frame-work, principles, procedures and processes of procurement among procurement staff in many PEs suggests the need for additional written guidelines, training and sensitisation (PPOA, 2007). Procurement planning transcends the mere choosing of the method of procurement for various goods, works and services contracts and when to schedule activities or better still inputting procurement needs into the procurement plan template. Even though these are some important parts of the planning process, they are rather at the end of the planning process or more so outputs of the planning process (PPM, 2007). It is therefore important to understand what goes into the procurement planning process. These includes the stages/processes, data/activities at each stage and finally the personnel involved in the planning process.

4.5.1 Data/Activities

Data in this framework refers to the information that is needed to be processed at every stage of the planning process. It includes the relevant information that each stage of the planning process has to make use of in order to achieve the objective of that stage. This can also be described as the activities that have to be undertaken at each stage of the planning process. For instance, under need identification, the information required would include the needs of departments, stores replenishment report, previous procurement plan and others. This will provide planning officers with the information that should be factored into each stage.

4.5.2 Stages/Process

This refers to the process that should be followed in planning procurements. It takes into account the legislative process (what is required by law), administrative process (internal processes of an entity) and the practice in principle. These form the basis for which the various stages of the framework were built.

4.5.3 Key Personnel

Public procurement is a complicated function which involves interdisciplinary skills and knowledge or persons (Gesuka and Namusonge, 2013). Examples of such discipline include

economics, public administration, marketing, political science, law, operations research, accounting, engineering, architecture and others (Gesuka and Namusonge, 2013). Key personnel in this study therefore refers to the human expertise that is required to undertake the planning process. These personnel would include both those who are required by law and those whose services would be needed at certain stages of the planning process. Examples of such personnel include risk managers, procurement consultants and others. This is an answer to one of the questions that require an answer in procurement planning; thus who (personnel) will be involved in the procurement.

4.5.4 Summary

This chapter captured the findings in this study and the analysis of the empirical data obtained from the field of study. The chapter started with data analysis, beginning with the background information of respondents. It further went on to identify and discuss the challenges faced in procurement planning in public procurement entities in Ghana. Five categories of causes of challenges were identified under which the cause of challenges faced in procurement planning were discussed. Finally, the chapter presents a framework for procurement planning in public procurement entities.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter rounds off the study by presenting the summary, conclusion and makes recommendations on the study a framework for the procurement planning in public procurement entities in Ghana. In addition, the section also presents areas for further research which were identified during the conduct of the study.

5.1 Scope of Investigation

The study focused on the procurement planning in public procurement entities in Ghana. Procurement officers in Metropolitan Assemblies were the main focus for the study in order to identify the current procurement planning practices, challenges faced and their causes. The study adopted a survey strategy using interviews as the main data collection instrument. In addition, an extensive review of literature was conducted, which provided the researcher data on the challenges faced in procurement planning. The data collected was analysed using Miles and Huberman model (1994) of thematic analysis to gain an in-depth understanding of the qualitative data that was collected from participants.

5.2 Evaluation Summary of Aim and Objective of the Study

This section discusses how each of the objectives was achieved in order to attain the overall aim of the study. Prior to drawing valid conclusions for the study, it is expedient that an evaluation of the results obtained from the study be made and mirrored against the objectives of the study. The aim of the study was to propose a framework for procurement planning in public procurement entities in Ghana. To achieve this aim the under listed objectives were set:

- To identify current practices of procurement planning in public procurement entities.
- To identify challenges faced in procurement planning.
- To identify the causes of challenges faced in procurement planning.
- To propose a framework for preparing procurement planning.

Objective 1: To identify the current procurement planning practices of public procurement entities in Ghana.

In order to identify the current procurement planning practices of procurement entities, the study adopted a survey strategy where an unstructured interview guide was used to elicit information from procurement officers in MAs. The thematic analysis conducted identified 12 themes under which procurement planning in MAs is conducted. These include period of commencing planning, need identification, budgeting and estimating, aggregation/consolidation, specification writing, choice of procurement method, procurement timelines, approval authority for procurement, submission of plan for approval, submission of plan on PPA website, monitoring and updating and participation of key personnel in planning. However, the study also found that new areas such as sustainable procurement planning and risk planning were not currently part of the planning process, giving a bases for which it was included in the proposed framework for

procurement planning. It was also noted that certain key personnel were not involved in the planning process, for example the stores officer or manager and the finance officer. To sum up, the study found that heads of departments, units, projects and programs were not preparing procurement plans for their subordinated areas of control to be further forwarded to the procurement unit to be used to prepare that annual procurement plan for that procurement entity. From, the above it is concluded that this objective of the study was achieved.

Objective 2: To identify the challenges faced in procurement planning.

To achieve this objective, an extensive literature review was conducted in chapter two of the study, where a number of challenges were identified to be encountered in procurement planning in public entities. These factors were set out in a semi structured interview guide where respondents were asked how these challenges affect their work in procurement planning. Respondents replied in affirmation that the following; small or low procurement threshold, familiarity with regulation, setting high budgets, influence on the method of procurement, poor records management, poor coordination between departments, non- participation of key personnel, influence of economic and market conditions, difficulty in writing specification, statement of work and statement of objectives, political influence, inadequate training of procurement officials and low ethical standards. It can therefore be concluded that, objective two (2) of the study was achieved.

Objective 3: To identify the causes of challenges faced in procurement planning.

A critical review of literature in chapter two of the study identified the challenges faced in procurement planning. However, some of these challenges were also the causes of the challenges in procurement planning. The causes of challenges were challenges as well. Therefore, they were categorised based on their similarities and the common theme under which they are identified. These are familiarity with regulation, loop holes in legislations, poor records management, poor coordination between departments, non-participation of key personnel, influence of economic and market conditions and political influence. These challenges were further categorised under five themes, namely: organisational challenges, political challenges, professional challenges, legislative challenges and economic and market conditions. It can therefore be concluded that, objective three (3) of the study was accomplished.

Objective 4: To propose a framework for procurement planning in public procurement entities.

In order to achieve objective four (4), the study relied on an extensive review of literature to gather information relevant for procurement planning especially relating to public procurement. In addition to this, the study took into consideration the factors identified by respondents as challenges faced and their causes in procurement planning. The framework is founded on three main components; these are the process/stage, data/activities and the key personnel involved in procurement planning process. The study also included new areas of procurement planning in the build-up of the framework. This was based on the findings of the study that sustainable procurement planning and risk planning was not part of the current procurement planning process.

5.3 Evaluation Summary

The aim of the study was to propose a framework for procurement planning in public procurement entities. Therefore, with the successful achievement of the objectives that were set it can be concluded that the aim of the study was accomplished.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study a framework for procurement planning in public procurement entities in Ghana establishes that there is a current procurement planning practice in metropolitan assemblies by which an annual procurement plan is developed for every financial year. The current planning practice, even though it is comprehensive in developing a procurement plan, still falls short of certain key areas of the planning process. Sustainable procurement planning and risk planning are areas of the planning process that require urgent attention considering the trend of modern procurement system. In addition, heads of departments, units, projects and programs do not oversee the preparation of procurement plans

for their subordinate areas of control. The study concludes that, there are challenges inherent in the procurement planning process the limit the successful achievement of procurement planning objectives. These challenges can be further broken down into organisational, political, professional, legislative and economic and market challenges.

Through the various chapters a number of challenges were identified in the procurement planning process as well as the current procurement planning practices. It is therefore hoped that an addition to strategies, policies and practices that can be undertaken in procurement planning would contribute to the attainment of procurement general objective of value for money.

5.5 Recommendations

Public procurement generally is far from achieving its set objectives as a result of poor planning and in other cases no planning. The effect of these are seen in high cost of procurement and overspending of budgetary allocations. Having identified the current planning practices in PEs and the identified challenges and their causes and subsequently a proposed framework for procurement planning the goals of procurement would be achieved in procurement processes. Based on the findings generated from this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- The time frames set out in the manual for the procurement process should be reviewed to include adequate time for further sustainability research, sustainability requirement development and risk planning.
- A government policy on sustainable public procurement to guide procurement should be developed.
- Procurement planning should be conducted by a team, and this can be constituted or set up for every financial year, taking into consideration the procurement needs that will be procured in the next financial year. This will help know the special personnel that will be needed to be brought on board to put in their inputs for every financial year.
- The manual's requirements on procurement planning should be more explicit and detailed on the processes and personnel who should be involved in the planning process.
- More training programs in sustainable procurement planning should be organised for procurement officials.
- Considering the skill level and capacity issues, its recommended that the planning process begin earlier than stipulated in the law, preferably should be in line with the planning season of the entity.
- Training programs should be organised in risk management for procurement officials in order to get them equipped with the necessary basics on risk associated to the procurement process.
- A redesign of tender documents to include sustainable procurement planning.
- There should be a review of thresholds in Act 663 upwards to avoid breaking of bulk procurements.
- The approved procurement plan should be distributed to HDUPP to ensure that end user departments are privy to the content of the approved procurement plan. Considering the high value, complexity of goods, works or services a project- specific procurement plan can also be prepared in addition to preparing annual procurement plans for need items.

5.5.1 Recommendation for Further Study

Detailed research is further needed to document procurement planning in other stages or phases of the procurement process; such as supplier engagement; contract management; and

disposal. Procurement planning is the key function that sets the stage for the procurement process and also its successful completion. There is further need to study the impact of procurement planning on successful completion of projects.

5.6 Contribution to Knowledge

The aim of the study was to propose a framework for procurement planning in public procurement entities in Ghana. Upon a successful investigation to answer the research questions the study has brought light the following:

- Eleven stages of current procurement planning practices of procurement entities in Ghana.
- Fourteen challenges faced in procurement planning in public procurement entities in Ghana.
- Five categories of the causes of challenges in procurement planning in public procurement entities.
- A proposed framework for procurement planning in public procurement entities in Ghana.

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