



# Public procurement trajectories in Tanzania: a review of reforms, practices, and compliance

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## ABSTRACT

Over decades, public procurement in Tanzania experienced critical reforms; however, not much is known about the reforms and hence there is a dearth of comprehensive reviews about them. The current study reviews existing literature relating to public procurement reforms, practices, and compliance in Tanzania. By employing a systematic literature review, the study draws upon 65 publications from Scopus and Google Scholar databases. Findings unveil that the implementation of public procurement laws and regulations has significantly improved transparency, accountability, and fairness in public procurement undertakings. The foundation for a well-organized institutional framework that emphasizes decentralization, standardization, and governance over public procurement has also been established by these reforms. Despite these positive contributions, certain reforms have introduced challenges due to interference and uncoordinated efforts that hamper public procurement activities. The study exclusively focuses on journal articles from Scopus and Google Scholar, excluding other publication forms like book reviews and conference proceedings. While acknowledging this limitation, the article serves as the pioneering systematic review profiling public procurement reforms in Tanzania, shedding light on professional dilemmas and compliance issues. Given the limited literature on the subject, this study enriches the existing knowledge and offers valuable insights for scholars, procurement practitioners, public entities, and stakeholders.

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## 1. Introduction

Worldwide, governments are the largest spenders of public funds due to the challenge of meeting the 'public requirements' of their citizens regarding infrastructure and public services through public procurement contracts. Thus, public procurement, among other things, provides the foundation for achieving socio-economic, environmental, and technological goals (World Bank, 2016). The construction of public infrastructure (e.g., schools, universities, health, and transport), acquisition of hospital facilities and supplies, and connectivity of computer systems in public buildings are all examples of sectors impacted by public procurement (World Bank, 2018). Mostly, the procurements are done from the private sector, and the figures, of course, vary from country to country, but generally, the sheer amounts spent have a significant impact on the respective country's economy. Similarly, public procurement undertakings drive product development innovations and service provision to fulfill societal needs and support public objectives, including employment creation, income generation, and economic growth (Knutsson & Thomasson, 2014; Talebi & Rezania, 2020).

The World Bank (2018) approximates that governments worldwide spend about 9.5 trillion USD each year on the acquisition of goods, works, and related services. This substantial expenditure has, in turn, heightened public demand for greater transparency and efficiency in government spending. For instance, in the Netherlands, nearly 45% of government expenditure goes towards procurement, constituting

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