

Examining The Factors Influencing The Implementation Of Procurement Plans In Zambia's Financial Regulatory Sector

Vanessa Kasongo, Erastus Mishengu Mwanaumo
Graduate School Of Business Studies, The University Of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia

Abstract

This study examined the factors influencing the implementation of Annual Procurement Plans (APPs) within Zambia's financial regulatory sector, specifically focusing on the Pensions and Insurance Authority (PIA), the Bank of Zambia (BoZ), and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The research aimed to examine critical factors influencing APP implementation, assess the relationship between procurement capacity and APP execution, and determine the influence of interdepartmental coordination on procurement outcomes. A mixed-methods research design was employed, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The study population comprised 123 personnel directly involved in the procurement process across the three institutions. A census sampling technique was used to ensure comprehensive representation, and data were gathered through structured questionnaires and key informant interviews. The findings revealed that budget constraints are a significant challenge, leading to the postponement of essential procurement activities and compromising the effectiveness of the APP. Ineffective communication between procurement functions and user departments, along with regulatory delays, further hinder implementation efforts. The study also highlighted a generally high perception of procurement capacity among respondents; however, concerns about understaffing and skills gaps were prevalent. Effective interdepartmental coordination was identified as crucial for successful APP execution, although challenges in communication and competing departmental needs were noted. The study underscores the need for improved financial planning, enhanced communication strategies, and streamlined approval processes to optimize procurement outcomes. Recommendations include increasing budget allocations, investing in staff training, and establishing formal collaboration mechanisms among departments. Future research should explore the impact of technology on procurement processes and examine stakeholder engagement in procurement planning to further enhance the understanding of procurement practices within public institutions.

Keywords: *Procurement Plans, Implementation, Financial Regulatory Sector, Interdepartmental Coordination, Capacity Building*

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I. Introduction

Public procurement is one of the largest components of government expenditure globally, accounting for approximately 10% to 15% of GDP, and as high as 17% in some African countries (Imani Africa, 2022). In Zambia, procurement plays a central role in public service delivery and institutional effectiveness governed by the Public Procurement Act No. 8 of 2020. Among its key tools is the Annual Procurement Plan (APP), a strategic instrument that aligns procurement with institutional priorities, financial resources, and regulatory compliance. The Zambia Public Procurement Authority (ZPPA) requires all procuring entities, including regulatory institutions, to prepare, approve, and implement APPs as part of structured procurement planning (ZPPA, n.d.). However, despite this regulatory framework, numerous challenges persist in the implementation of APPs, particularly in Zambia's financial regulatory Sector. Zambia's Financial Regulatory Sector has three Institutions, namely; the Pensions and Insurance Authority (PIA), which supervises and regulates the pensions and insurance sectors, Bank of Zambia (BoZ) and the Security and Exchange Commission. The aforementioned institutions have experienced recurring procurement-related delays, under-execution of planned activities, and capacity limitations. These challenges often result in unspent budgets, procurement irregularities, and compromised regulatory effectiveness (Auditor General, 2023).

While prior research in Zambia has addressed procurement inefficiencies in ministries, parastatals, and local authorities (Chisanga, 2024; Nambela and Mutono-Mwanza, 2024; Simpungwe, 2023), there is limited empirical evidence focusing on the unique institutional environment of regulatory agencies. This is a significant gap, considering that regulatory bodies operate with quasi-autonomy and different internal workings. Moreover, there has been insufficient investigation into how institutional factors, such as internal controls, procurement governance, staff competencies, and leadership involvement, influence APP execution. The World Bank (2019)

notes that institutional capacity is key to procurement effectiveness, especially in oversight bodies, yet little is known about how this plays out in Zambia. This study, therefore, sought to fill this gap by conducting an analysis of the factors affecting the implementation of Procurement Plans, focusing on Zambia's Financial Regulatory Sector. The findings will contribute to strengthening public procurement practices within Zambia's financial regulatory sector and support broader public financial management reforms.

Problem statement

In an ideal public procurement system, institutions like the Pensions and Insurance Authority (PIA), Bank of Zambia (BoZ) and the Security Exchange Commission (SEC) should implement Annual Procurement Plans (APPs) in alignment with approved budgets and strategic objectives to promote efficiency, transparency, and value-for-money in accordance with Zambia's Public Procurement Act No. 8 of 2020 (ZPPA, 2021). However, the Office of the Auditor General (2022) reports that many public institutions, including regulatory bodies, face challenges in APP execution due to delayed budget releases, limited procurement capacity, and poor interdepartmental coordination. While research on procurement compliance exists (ZPPA, 2022; World Bank, 2021), there is a notable gap in studies investigating institutional or organizational factors influencing APP implementation within financial regulatory bodies. Most literature centres on ministries and local authorities, overlooking the unique governance factors of regulatory institutions in Zambia. These inefficiencies lead to procurement delays, underutilization of funds, and weakened regulatory effectiveness. Therefore, this study is justified as it seeks to analyse the institutional factors affecting the APP implementation, contributing to improved procurement governance and regulatory efficiency in Zambia's financial sector (Rutkowski, et al, 2022).

Research objectives

1. To examine the factors influencing the implementation of the Annual Procurement Plan in an Institution.
2. To assess the relationship between procurement capacity and the implementation level of the Annual Procurement Plan in an Institution.
3. To determine the influence of interdepartmental coordination on the execution of the Annual Procurement Plan in an Institution.

II. Literature Review

Implementation of the Annual Procurement Plan

Tripathi & Gupta (2021) conducted a comprehensive quantitative study involving 414 procurement professionals across various industries to explore the impact of digitization on procurement functions. Their findings revealed that digital tools significantly enhance strategic decision-making and organizational efficiency. The study highlighted that organizations leveraging digital technologies could streamline their procurement processes, leading to faster decision-making and improved operational outcomes. However, despite these advancements, the authors identified critical internal barriers, such as outdated procedures and limited capabilities among staff, which hinder successful digitization. This finding emphasizes that organizations must not only adopt technological advancements but also engage in a thorough assessment and realignment of their institutional frameworks to ensure that these technologies are integrated effectively. This alignment is essential for organizations globally to optimize their procurement functions and realize the full potential of digital transformation.

Rutkowski, et al, (2022) provides a compelling argument that the integration of technology in procurement processes must be accompanied by a cultural shift within organizations to fully realize its benefits. This perspective is crucial as it underscores the need for a holistic approach to procurement reform, where technology and organizational culture go hand in hand. Organizations must foster an environment that encourages innovation and adaptability among employees, ensuring that they are equipped to utilize new tools effectively. The work of Chaturvedi (2025) further complicates the procurement landscape by underscoring the growing trend toward responsible sourcing, which necessitates careful planning and execution in procurement strategies. As organizations face increasing pressure to adopt sustainable practices, they must navigate the complexities of balancing efficiency with ethical sourcing, thereby enhancing their reputation and compliance with global standards. Agapiou (2022) surveyed 157 construction professionals in the UK to determine the factors influencing procurement route selection in off-site housebuilding. The study concluded that design constructability and environmental sustainability are more critical in off-site procurement than in traditional methods. This finding underscores the necessity for contextual awareness and institutional factors in the implementation of procurement plans, emphasizing the importance of strategic planning in a global context. As the construction industry evolves, procurement professionals must prioritize sustainability and innovative design practices to meet the demands of modern construction projects. This shift not only enhances project outcomes but also contributes to broader environmental goals, illustrating the interconnectedness of procurement strategies and global sustainability efforts. Flynn (2025) utilized content analysis of feedback from SME suppliers via a UK government online

platform to investigate challenges in public procurement. The findings indicated that SMEs perceive the procurement system as biased, citing rigid qualification criteria and unclear tender specifications as significant obstacles. This research illustrates the impact of procurement officer competence and procedural quality on the inclusiveness and efficiency of procurement processes, which are essential for effective implementation on a global scale. By addressing these challenges, procurement authorities can create a more equitable environment that fosters competition and innovation among suppliers, ultimately leading to better service delivery and outcomes. The study advocates for reforms that simplify procurement processes and enhance transparency, ensuring that smaller suppliers have equal opportunities to participate in public procurement.

Mohammedy (2023) examined the factors affecting the implementation of Annual Procurement Plans (APPs) in Tanzania's local government, focusing on the Tanganyika District Council. The study identified procurement knowledge, user participation, and financial support as critical factors influencing the successful execution of APPs. These elements are particularly important in the African context, where limited resources and varying levels of expertise can significantly impact procurement outcomes. The research highlights the importance of engaging stakeholders at all levels, ensuring that user departments are actively involved in the planning and execution of procurement activities. This inclusive approach not only fosters ownership but also enhances accountability and transparency in the procurement process, ultimately leading to improved service delivery in local governments across Tanzania.

Francis (2021) investigated how procurement processes influence public sector performance in Nairobi County, Kenya. The research found that procurement planning, specification writing, and tender evaluation significantly affect procurement effectiveness. By applying institutional theories, the study emphasized the importance of internal systems and interdepartmental collaboration, which are crucial for successful procurement plan implementation in the African context. The findings suggest that strengthening the capabilities of procurement staff and enhancing interdepartmental communication can lead to more efficient procurement processes, thereby improving overall public sector performance. This aligns with the broader goals of public sector reforms in Africa, which aim to enhance governance, accountability, and service delivery through effective procurement practices.

Japhet (2022) focused on the preparation and implementation of Annual Procurement Plans at TANESCO-Geita in Tanzania. The study revealed challenges such as limited budget forecasting and low user department involvement, despite some support from top management. This underscores the necessity of inclusive planning and cross-departmental coordination for effective APP execution, reflecting the broader challenges faced in African procurement environments. By highlighting the need for better collaboration among stakeholders, the study advocates for a more integrated approach to procurement planning that considers the unique context of each organization. This collaborative effort can lead to more accurate budgeting and resource allocation, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of procurement processes in Tanzania and similar contexts.

Sikombe and Phiri (2021) explored institutional factors affecting supplier development initiatives in Zambia's construction sector through qualitative interviews. The study identified political interference, corruption, and unclear engagement criteria as major impediments to effective supplier development. This highlights the necessity of strong institutional governance and monitoring systems to achieve procurement and developmental objectives, which are critical for successful APP implementation across the continent. The findings suggest that establishing clear regulatory frameworks and oversight mechanisms can help mitigate these challenges, fostering a more conducive environment for supplier engagement. Addressing these institutional barriers, procurement authorities can enhance competition and innovation within the construction sector, ultimately contributing to sustainable economic growth in Zambia and beyond.

Simpungwe (2023) investigated procurement performance at Luanshya Municipal Council using a mixed-methods approach. The study found that procurement planning, tendering processes, IT utilization, and political interference significantly affect procurement outcomes in Zambian councils. This aligns with the insights of Nkolola et al. (2025), who argue that effective governance structures are crucial for mitigating the adverse effects of political interference in procurement processes within Zambia. The research emphasizes the importance of establishing robust governance frameworks that promote transparency and accountability in procurement activities. By enhancing the capacity of procurement staff and leveraging technology, Zambian councils can improve their procurement performance, leading to better public service delivery and increased trust among stakeholders.

The Auditor General's Report (2023) highlights the need for coherent planning and coordination among departments to ensure successful implementation of procurement strategies in Zambia. This report underlines the importance of fostering a culture of collaboration and accountability among departments, which can significantly enhance the effectiveness of procurement processes in local governments across the country. Advocating for regular audits and performance evaluations, the report emphasizes the need for continuous improvement in procurement practices. This approach not only helps identify areas for reform but also promotes a culture of

accountability and transparency, ultimately leading to better governance and service delivery in Zambian local governments.

Relationship between Procurement Capacity and APP Implementation

Manu et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive survey involving 590 public procurement professionals to evaluate how various components of procurement capacity influence the achievement of infrastructure procurement objectives. Their study identified three key capacity dimensions: process management, human/physical resources, and financial resources. Among these dimensions, process management emerged as the most significant contributor to successful procurement outcomes, indicating that enhancing procurement capacity is crucial for effective Annual Procurement Plan (APP) implementation. This finding aligns with the OECD (2021), which emphasizes that organizations with strong procurement capacities are better equipped to navigate complex procurement environments. The implication here is clear: investments in process management can lead to improved efficiency and effectiveness in procurement practices, ultimately supporting the successful execution of APPs.

Furthermore, the OECD (2021) provided a framework for measuring public procurement performance, emphasizing the role of procurement capacity in achieving compliance and strategic goals. The report outlines that organizations with robust procurement capacities tend to have better outcomes in implementing their procurement plans, as they can navigate complexities and adapt to changing environments more effectively. This is further supported by Nyirenda. (2024), which highlights the critical role of procurement capacity in ensuring compliance with regulations and improving overall procurement effectiveness. The emphasis on continuous improvement in procurement practices is essential for organizations seeking to enhance their performance and achieve their strategic objectives, reinforcing the notion that procurement capacity is a foundational element of successful procurement processes.

Tripathi & Gupta (2021) also highlighted the importance of institutional readiness in their study on digitization in procurement. They noted that beyond technology, organizational capacity and alignment are essential for leveraging digital tools effectively. This finding reinforces the idea that procurement capacity directly impacts the successful implementation of annual procurement plans, as organizations must be adequately prepared to adapt to new processes and technologies. Furthermore, the work of Rutkowski, et al, (2022) supports this notion by arguing that effective procurement practices are grounded in strong institutional frameworks that foster innovation and responsiveness. Enhancing procurement capacity through strategic investments in technology and training can thus lead to more successful APP execution, demonstrating the interconnectedness of capacity development and procurement effectiveness on a global scale.

In the African context, Mohammedy (2023) found that procurement knowledge and user participation significantly impact the implementation of Annual Procurement Plans in Tanzania. The study emphasizes the need for enhancing procurement capacity among local government authorities, suggesting that improved training and resource allocation can lead to better procurement outcomes. This aligns with the findings of Imani Africa (2022), which argue that building local capacity through targeted interventions is essential for effective public procurement. The emphasis on local capacity development is critical in the African context, where many public institutions face resource constraints and varying levels of expertise among staff. By investing in training and development, local governments can enhance their procurement capabilities, leading to more successful APP implementation.

Francis (2021) highlighted the influence of procurement processes on public sector performance in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study found that effective procurement planning and specification writing are essential components of procurement capacity that directly correlate with the success of APP implementation. This points to the necessity of developing internal capabilities to ensure that procurement processes are efficient and effective. Additionally, the work of Mothupi et al. (2022) supports this notion by emphasizing that organizations must invest in capacity-building initiatives to address challenges in procurement compliance and effectiveness. The findings suggest that enhancing procurement capacity through training and resource allocation can significantly improve public sector performance and service delivery, reflecting the broader goals of enhancing governance and accountability in African public procurement.

Japhet (2022) also underscored the importance of capacity in the preparation and implementation of Annual Procurement Plans at TANESCO-Geita, noting that limited budget forecasts and low user department involvement hinder effective execution. The findings suggest that enhancing procurement capacity through better forecasting and departmental collaboration is crucial for overcoming implementation challenges. This is further corroborated by the research of Mathenge et al. (2018), which highlights the importance of financial management practices in ensuring successful procurement outcomes. The study advocates for the integration of user departments into the planning process to enhance accountability and ownership, ultimately leading to more effective implementation of procurement plans. This integration is vital for fostering a culture of collaboration and transparency in procurement processes, which can enhance stakeholder trust and participation. The African

perspective emphasizes the critical role of procurement capacity in achieving effective implementation of APPs. This key because focusing on training, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement, African governments can improve their procurement outcomes and enhance public service delivery. This approach not only addresses immediate challenges but also lays the foundation for sustainable procurement practices that can adapt to future needs.

Simpungwe (2023) emphasized the role of procurement planning and IT utilization in enhancing procurement performance at Luanshya Municipal Council. The study indicates that improving procurement capacity through better planning and technology adoption can lead to more successful APP implementation. This highlights the necessity for Zambian councils to invest in capacity-building initiatives to improve procurement outcomes. The findings align with the insights of Nambela and Mutono-Mwanza (2024), who argue that e-procurement systems can streamline procurement processes and enhance transparency. By leveraging technology, Zambian public institutions can improve their procurement practices, ultimately leading to better service delivery and enhanced accountability to stakeholders.

Sikombe and Phiri (2021) found that political interference and weak regulatory oversight significantly impede supplier development initiatives in Zambia's construction sector. Their research suggests that enhancing procurement capacity through stronger governance and regulatory frameworks is essential for achieving procurement objectives, including successful APP implementation. This is supported by the work of Nkonde and Kabwe (2025), which emphasizes the need for robust financial management practices in public institutions to ensure compliance with procurement regulations. The study advocates for the establishment of clear guidelines and monitoring mechanisms to foster accountability and transparency in procurement processes. Addressing these issues, Zambian authorities can create an environment conducive to effective procurement practices that support local suppliers and enhance overall procurement performance. This is essential for navigating the complexities of public procurement in Zambia and achieving sustainable development goals.

Influence of Interdepartmental Coordination on the Annual Procurement Plan

The importance of interdepartmental coordination in procurement processes is evident in the findings of Flynn (2025), who noted that SMEs face challenges due to unclear tender specifications and rigid qualification criteria. Effective interdepartmental communication can mitigate these issues by ensuring that all departments are aligned and informed throughout the procurement process. This coordination is vital for enhancing procurement inclusiveness and efficiency, ultimately benefiting the implementation of annual procurement plans. Furthermore, the work of Hawkins et al. (2023) emphasizes that public procurement systems must be transparent and accessible to smaller suppliers. Strengthening interdepartmental relationships can facilitate better communication and collaboration, leading to improved procurement outcomes and greater participation from diverse suppliers.

Agapiou (2022) also highlighted the role of contextual factors in procurement route selection, emphasizing that effective interdepartmental collaboration can lead to better decision-making in procurement processes. By fostering strong relationships between departments, organizations can enhance their procurement strategies and improve the implementation of their annual procurement plans. This aligns with the insights of Rutkowski, et al, (2022), who posits that effective procurement practices are grounded in strong institutional frameworks that encourage collaboration and innovation. The emphasis on interdepartmental coordination is essential for ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are engaged and that procurement processes are streamlined and efficient. The OECD (2021) framework for measuring public procurement performance further supports the idea that interdepartmental coordination is crucial for achieving strategic goals. The report suggests that organizations with strong interdepartmental collaboration tend to perform better in their procurement activities, which directly impacts the effectiveness of APP implementation. This is echoed by the findings of Creswell (2024), who emphasize that effective collaboration among stakeholders is pivotal for successful project outcomes. Enhancing interdepartmental coordination can lead to more efficient procurement processes, ultimately improving the overall performance of public sector organizations.

In the African context, Francis (2021) found that interdepartmental collaboration is essential for effective procurement planning and execution in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study highlighted that strong internal systems and staff capacity significantly influence procurement effectiveness, indicating that coordination among departments is crucial for successful APP implementation. This is supported by the work of Mohammedy (2023), which emphasizes that fostering collaboration between departments can lead to more inclusive and effective procurement processes. The findings suggest that enhancing interdepartmental relationships can significantly improve procurement outcomes and service delivery in the public sector, ultimately benefiting citizens.

Mohammedy (2023) also emphasized the role of user participation and interdepartmental coordination in implementing Annual Procurement Plans in Tanzania. The study suggests that fostering collaboration between departments can lead to more inclusive and effective procurement processes, ultimately enhancing the success of APP execution. This aligns with the insights of Japhet (2022), who found that low involvement of user departments is a significant challenge in procurement planning. The emphasis on user participation underscores

the need for public institutions to actively engage stakeholders in the procurement process to ensure their needs and perspectives are considered. Japhet (2022) identified low involvement of user departments as a key challenge in the preparation and implementation of Annual Procurement Plans at TANESCO-Geita. This finding underscores the importance of interdepartmental coordination to ensure all relevant stakeholders are engaged in the procurement process, which is vital for effective APP execution. The research aligns with the work of Mothupi et al. (2022), which highlights that effective communication and collaboration among departments are essential for overcoming challenges in procurement implementation. Strengthening interdepartmental coordination can enhance accountability and ownership among stakeholders, ultimately leading to more successful procurement outcomes. From the above, it can be noted that the African perspective emphasizes the critical role of interdepartmental coordination in achieving effective implementation of APPs. Focusing on collaboration, user participation, and stakeholder engagement, African governments can improve their procurement outcomes and enhance public service delivery. This approach not only addresses immediate challenges but also lays the foundation for sustainable procurement practices that can adapt to future needs.

Simpungwe (2023) found that interdepartmental coordination significantly affects procurement outcomes at Luanshya Municipal Council. The study emphasizes that improved coordination among departments is essential for enhancing procurement performance, highlighting the need for Zambian councils to foster collaboration to achieve successful APP implementation. This is supported by the findings of Taylor et al. (2018), which identified poor interdepartmental coordination as a constraint in realizing strategic plan objectives at Kitwe City Council. Strengthening interdepartmental relationships can facilitate better execution of procurement plans, ultimately leading to improved outcomes and service delivery in local governments.

The Auditor General's Report (2023) also underscores the importance of procurement capacity in Zambian public institutions, noting that deficiencies in capacity often lead to non-compliance with procurement regulations. This report highlights the critical need for capacity-building measures to improve the implementation of Annual Procurement Plans and ensure adherence to procurement standards. The findings are consistent with the research of Nyirenda (2024), which emphasizes that effective procurement practices are grounded in strong institutional frameworks and capacity development initiatives. Strengthening procurement capacity is thus essential for enhancing the effectiveness of public procurement and achieving strategic objectives in Zambia. Sikombe and Phiri (2021) pointed out that weak regulatory oversight and political interference hinder supplier development initiatives in Zambia. Their research indicates that enhancing interdepartmental coordination and governance can help address these challenges, thereby improving the effectiveness of procurement processes and supporting successful APP implementation. This aligns with the insights of Nkonde and Kabwe (2025), who emphasize that strong governance frameworks are essential for promoting accountability and transparency in public procurement. Strengthening interdepartmental coordination can thus play a pivotal role in overcoming the challenges faced by Zambian public institutions and enhancing the overall effectiveness of procurement practices.

The Zambian perspective on interdepartmental coordination highlights the need for comprehensive strategies that address both institutional and operational challenges. Notably, investing in collaboration, communication, and governance structures, Zambian public institutions can enhance their procurement capabilities, leading to improved implementation of Annual Procurement Plans and better public service delivery. This multifaceted approach is essential for navigating the complexities of public procurement in Zambia and achieving sustainable development goals.

III. Methodology

Research Philosophy

This study is anchored in a pragmatist research philosophy, which integrates both objective and subjective viewpoints to tackle institutional challenges. Employing mixed methods, the research aims to comprehensively explore quantifiable factors and staff perceptions related to procurement at PIA, BoZ, and SEC.

Research Design

A mixed methods research design was employed to investigate the impact of institutional factors on the implementation of Annual Procurement Plans (APPs) at PIA, BoZ, and SEC. This approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods, enriching data collection through interviews and surveys to capture nuanced insights into institutional culture.

Study Area or Site

The research was conducted at PIA, BoZ, and SEC in Lusaka, Zambia, which are pivotal agencies for procurement planning and decision-making. This setting is crucial for understanding the implementation of the Annual Procurement Plan.

Study Population

The study targeted staff members directly or indirectly involved in the procurement process at PIA, BoZ, and SEC. This included personnel from various departments interacting with the Annual Procurement Plan.

Study Sample

Approximately 123 individuals were identified as directly involved in implementing the APP across PIA, BoZ, and SEC. The sample breakdown reflects strategic allocation based on departmental roles, ensuring a comprehensive representation of perspectives.

Sampling Techniques

A census approach was used to select respondents from different departments, aiming to capture insights on factors affecting APP implementation. This method ensures a broad representation of experiences among stakeholders involved in the procurement process.

Instruments for Data Collection

Data collection utilized a semi-structured questionnaire and key informant interview guide, facilitating both quantitative and qualitative insights. The questionnaire included closed-ended and open-ended questions to measure variables and allow for elaboration.

Procedure for Data Collection

Data collection commenced after obtaining necessary ethical approvals, with scheduled appointments for questionnaire distribution and interviews. Questionnaires were administered in person, and interviews were conducted face-to-face, ensuring accuracy through audio recording and field notes.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive and inferential statistics to summarize and examine relationships. Qualitative data from interviews underwent thematic analysis, with transcriptions and coding to identify recurring themes.

IV. Findings

Factors influencing the implementation of the Annual Procurement Plan in an Institution

Table 1: Rating of the overall effectiveness of the Annual Procurement Plan (APP) implementation

Rating	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Average	25	20.8	20.8	20.8
Excellent	7	5.8	5.8	26.7
Good	88	73.3	73.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The findings reveal that a significant majority of respondents (73.3%) rated the effectiveness of the APP implementation as "Good," while only 5.8% rated it as "Excellent." This suggests a generally positive perception of the APP's effectiveness, but also indicates room for improvement, as a notable percentage of respondents did not rate it as excellent. The presence of 20.8% rating it as "Average" further emphasizes the need for enhancements in the APP implementation process to achieve higher satisfaction and effectiveness.

Table 2: Factors influencing the implementation of the Annual Procurement Plan

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
The guidelines and procedures for APP implementation are clear and well-communicated.	12	0	12	70	26	4.00	0.88
There is adequate training provided to staff involved in the APP process.	12	0	56	45	7	3.30	1.31
The institution allocates sufficient resources (financial, human, and technological) for APP execution.	12	0	19	58	31	3.72	1.06

Likert Scale Values:

Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5

Mean (M) = $\sum (f \times x) / N$

Where:

- *f = frequency (number of responses)*
- *x = Likert value*

- N = total number of responses
- Standard Deviation (SD) = $\sqrt{[\sum f(x - \text{mean})^2 / N]}$
- Where:
- f = frequency (number of responses)
 - x = Likert value
 - N = total number of responses

Responses to statements about factors affecting APP implementation show that, while most respondents agree that guidelines for APP implementation are clear (mean of 4.00), there is a notable gap in training provision, as indicated by a mean of 3.30. This suggests that while communication is effective, inadequate training could hinder the optimal execution of the APP. Additionally, the mean score of 3.72 regarding resource allocation indicates a perception that resources are somewhat sufficient but could be improved, highlighting an area for institutional focus to enhance APP effectiveness.

Qualitative themes: Objective 1

Theme 1: Budget Constraints

Budget constraints emerged as a significant factor affecting the implementation of the Annual Procurement Plan (APP). Respondents uniformly highlighted that insufficient budget allocations lead to the postponement of essential procurement activities, which can severely disrupt planned projects. Respondent 3 stated, *“Implementation of procurement plans is tightly linked to budget availability. Insufficient allocations sometimes lead to postponement of activities,”* emphasizing the direct relationship between funding and procurement success. Respondent 6 also echoed this concern, noting, *“Budget constraints are a major issue; without proper funding, we cannot initiate or complete the planned procurements.”* This sentiment reflects a broader concern that financial limitations not only impact immediate procurement activities but also create long-term challenges in meeting institutional goals. Additionally, Respondent 2 mentioned, *“When budgets are tight, we often have to prioritize which procurements are most critical, leaving some necessary items unfunded,”* illustrating how budgetary pressures can force difficult decisions that compromise the effectiveness of the APP.

Theme 2: Ineffective Communication

Ineffective communication between the procurement function and user departments was frequently cited as a barrier to successful implementation of the APP. Several respondents pointed out that a lack of clarity in communication often leads to misunderstandings and delays. For instance, Respondent 1 stated that, *“There is a lack of understanding of procurement law and procedures by users,”* which suggests that miscommunication can lead to non-compliance and delays. Respondent 7 elaborated, *“Late requisition by users, not allowing enough time for the processes needed, creates a backlog that affects everything.”* This highlights the critical need for timely and clear communication throughout the procurement process. Moreover, Respondent 1 mentioned, *“If users are not adequately informed about the procurement timelines and requirements, they may submit requests that are incomplete or poorly defined,”* indicating that effective communication is essential for ensuring that procurement requests align with institutional standards and timelines.

Theme 3: Regulatory Delays

Delays in the enactment of legislation and lengthy approval processes were identified as significant challenges impacting the implementation of the APP. Respondent 9 articulated that *“delayed commencement of procurement activities”* significantly affects the APP's effectiveness, causing ripple effects throughout the procurement cycle. Respondent 4 emphasized the bureaucratic nature of the approval process, stating, *“Lengthy approval processes can stall projects, leading to missed deadlines and opportunities.”* This sentiment was echoed by Respondent 2 who noted, *“When we have to wait for approvals that take too long, it can lead to failed procurements, as suppliers may withdraw their bids or change their terms.”* These insights suggest that regulatory inefficiencies not only hinder the timely execution of procurement plans but also risk undermining the entire procurement strategy, as delays can lead to lost opportunities and increased costs.

The relationship between procurement capacity and the implementation level of the Annual Procurement Plan in an Institution

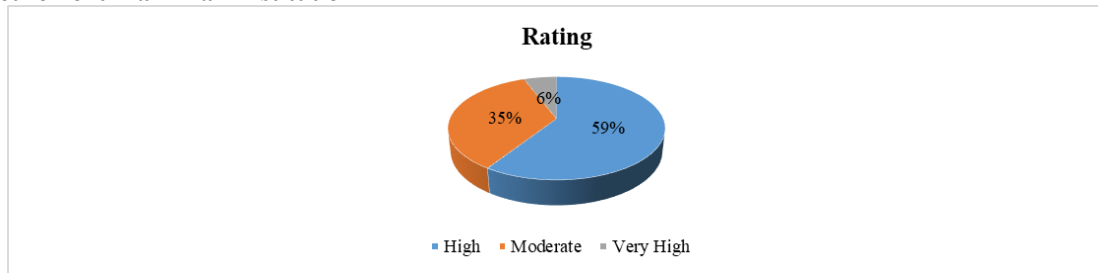


Figure 1: Rating of the capacity of the Procurement Unit/Department

The Procurement Unit/Department’s capacity is rated generally high, since 59% of respondents selected High. A substantial proportion (35%) rated it Moderate, indicating capacity is reasonably strong but not uniformly perceived as the highest level. Only a small fraction (6%) rated the capacity as Very High, suggesting that while strong performance exists, it is not widely seen as exceptionally high by most respondents.

Table 3: Relationship between procurement capacity and the implementation level

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
The procurement team possesses the necessary skills and qualifications to implement the APP effectively.	12	0	0	33	75	4.56	0.50
The institution has effective systems and processes in place for procurement planning.	12	0	6	52	50	4.38	0.49

The data indicates a strong perception of the procurement team’s capacity, with a mean score of 4.56 for possessing necessary skills and qualifications, and 4.38 for having effective systems in place. This suggests confidence in the procurement unit's ability to execute the APP effectively. However, the low standard deviations (0.50 and 0.49) indicate a consensus among respondents regarding these perceptions, pointing to a robust procurement capacity that should be leveraged for improved implementation of the APP.

Qualitative findings: Objective 2

Theme 1: Understaffing in the Procurement Unit

Understaffing was a recurring theme in discussions about procurement capacity, with many respondents expressing concern about the limited size of the procurement team relative to the growing demands for services. Respondent 11 stated, *“The capacity is small...very few people with growing demands of procurement services,”* highlighting the mismatch between workload and available human resources. Respondent 5 explained that, *“Understaffing in the Procurement Unit results in failed procurements and delayed procurements, leading to increased audit queries,”* which underscores the direct correlation between staffing levels and procurement outcomes. Additionally, Respondent 5 also mentioned that, *“When the team is overwhelmed, we struggle to meet deadlines, and this often leads to rushed decisions that can compromise the quality of our procurement.”* This indicates that inadequate staffing not only delays processes but also increases the risk of errors, ultimately affecting the effectiveness of the APP.

Theme 2: Skills Gaps Among Procurement Staff

The lack of specific skills among procurement staff was identified as a barrier to effective implementation, with respondents noting that current training is insufficient to meet the demands of modern procurement. Respondent 3 stipulated that, *“We need a better understanding of insurance-related procurements and international procurement of goods and services,”* highlighting the gaps in knowledge that can hinder effective procurement practices. Respondent 12 suggested that *“financial acumen”* and *“advanced negotiation skills”* are essential for improving procurement outcomes, indicating that the current skill set may not be sufficient to navigate complex procurement processes effectively. Furthermore, Respondent 10 pointed out, *“There’s currently insufficient oversight, as the procurement manager is also significantly involved in the execution of procurements, regardless of their size,”* suggesting that the lack of specialization can lead to inefficiencies and oversight issues. This collective feedback underscores the urgent need for targeted training programs to enhance the capabilities of procurement staff.

Theme 3: Reactive vs. Proactive Engagement

Respondents noted that limited capacity forces the procurement unit into a reactive position, which undermines effective planning and execution of procurement activities. Respondent 4 stated that, “*When capacity is thin, engagement becomes reactive instead of planned,*” suggesting that a lack of resources leads to last-minute procurement requests that are often incomplete. This sentiment was echoed by Respondent 7 who noted, “*Overworked teams are more likely to make avoidable errors in bidding documents,*” indicating that a reactive approach not only delays procurement processes but also increases the likelihood of mistakes. Additionally, Respondent 1 remarked, “*Delayed procurements may occur due to current capacity constraints, which hinder the ability to manage procurements to completion as they arise,*” emphasizing that without adequate staffing and resources, the procurement unit struggles to maintain control over the procurement cycle. This highlights the importance of building capacity to foster a more proactive and effective procurement environment.

The influence of interdepartmental coordination on the execution of the Annual Procurement Plan in an Institution

Table 4: Rating of interdepartmental coordination

Rating	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Effective	77	64.2	64.2	64.2
Ineffective	6	5.0	5.0	69.2
Neutral	24	20.0	20.0	89.2
Very Effective	13	10.8	10.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The majority of respondents (64.2%) rated interdepartmental coordination as "Effective," while only 5% found it "Ineffective." This high level of perceived effectiveness suggests that departments are collaborating well during the procurement process, which is crucial for successful APP execution. However, the presence of 20% of respondents rating it as "Neutral" indicates that there may be inconsistencies in experiences or perceptions of coordination, suggesting a need for ongoing assessment and improvement in interdepartmental communication and collaboration.

Table 5: Effectiveness of the coordination between departments involved in procurement

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
Departments communicate effectively during the procurement process.	12	6	30	72	0	3.52	1.04
There is a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities among the departments involved in the APP execution.	12	6	6	96	0	3.40	0.71
Collaborative efforts among departments lead to the timely execution of the APP.	12	6	0	60	42	3.62	1.03

The responses indicate mixed perceptions of the effectiveness of communication and role clarity among the departments involved in APP execution. The mean scores for statements regarding effective communication (3.52) and understanding of roles (3.40) suggest that, while there is general agreement on the effectiveness of coordination, a significant portion of respondents remain neutral or disagree. This points to potential gaps in communication and clarity of responsibilities, which could impede the timely execution of the APP.

Table 6: Rating the support from leadership regarding procurement activities

Rating	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
High	71	59.2	59.2	59.2
Moderate	18	15.0	15.0	74.2
Very High	31	25.8	25.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The data reveals that a majority of respondents (59.2%) rated leadership support as "High," with an additional 25.8% rating it as "Very High." This indicates a strong perception of leadership involvement in procurement activities, which is essential for fostering a supportive environment for the APP. However, the presence of 15% rating it as "Moderate" suggests that there may be opportunities for leadership to further enhance their support and involvement in procurement processes.

Table 7: Role of leadership support

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
Leadership provides adequate resources for procurement activities.	0	0	12	89	19	4.07	0.76
Leadership is actively involved in the procurement planning process.	0	0	7	82	31	4.23	0.79

The findings regarding leadership support reflect a generally positive perception, with means of 4.07 and 4.23 for statements on resource provision and involvement in planning, respectively. This indicates that respondents feel adequately supported by leadership in terms of resources and active participation in the procurement planning process. However, the lack of strong disagreement suggests that there is still room for improvement in ensuring that all staff feel fully supported, which could enhance the overall effectiveness of procurement activities.

Qualitative findings: Objective 3

Theme 1: Importance of Effective Coordination

Effective interdepartmental coordination was highlighted as crucial for the smooth execution of procurement activities. Respondent 6 stated, *“Interdepartmental coordination has a big, practical impact on how smoothly procurement runs and how much value the Authority gets from it,”* emphasizing that interdepartmental collaboration is vital to optimizing procurement outcomes. Respondent 9 also noted, *“When departments are aligned, procurement becomes faster, cheaper, and more reliable,”* which illustrates the benefits of effective teamwork. This sentiment was further supported by Respondent 3 who mentioned, *“Proper coordination ensures that everyone is on the same page, which minimizes delays and misunderstandings.”* These insights collectively underscore the importance of fostering strong interdepartmental relationships to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the procurement process.

Theme 2: Challenges in Communication and Alignment

Several respondents pointed out communication gaps and departmental misalignment, which can complicate procurement activities. Respondent 11 articulated that, *“Communication gaps”* and *“budget gaps”* as significant issues that hinder effective procurement processes. This was echoed also by Respondent 2 who stated, *“Late involvement of the Procurement Unit often leads to misalignment between what departments need and what gets procured.”* The lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities was also mentioned, with Respondent 5 participant noting, *“Vague or changing specifications can create confusion and lead to delays.”* These challenges illustrate the need for improved communication strategies and clearer processes to ensure that all departments are aligned in their procurement efforts.

Theme 3: Impact of Competing Needs

The competing needs of different departments were identified as a significant challenge in coordinating procurement activities. Respondent 10 expressed that, *“One of the primary challenges is the competing needs, which complicates the scheduling of procurement dates, particularly towards the end of the year.”* highlighting the difficulties in managing multiple priorities. Respondent 1 noted, *“When different departments have conflicting demands, it can create bottlenecks in the procurement process,”* suggesting that these competing interests can lead to delays and inefficiencies. Additionally, Respondent 8 remarked, *“This competition for resources can result in missed opportunities and increased frustration among teams,”* indicating that unresolved conflicts can undermine the APP's overall effectiveness. These insights emphasize the importance of establishing mechanisms to prioritize and balance competing needs across departments, facilitating smoother procurement operations.

Challenges faced in the implementation of APPs

Table 8: Challenges

Challenges	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Collaboration with end users	31	25.8	25.8	25.8
combination of specific procurements with relatively general one, Lack of flexibility of procuring preferred procurements.	8	6.7	6.7	32.5
Conflicting activities and budget constraints	7	5.8	5.8	38.3
I don't participate in this activity. But off the top of my head. I would say the main problem is the bureaucracy	12	10.0	10.0	48.3
Ineffective coordination between HR, IT and Procurement	6	5.0	5.0	53.3
Lack of understanding of the procurement process by some of the staff	6	5.0	5.0	58.3
None	13	10.8	10.8	69.2
Not sure	7	5.8	5.8	75.0
Process execution delays in some procurements	12	10.0	10.0	85.0
Requisitioning of user departments to initiate procurement of planned items	6	5.0	5.0	90.0
Some requests are short notice due to nature of work	6	5.0	5.0	95.0
Under budgeting	6	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The findings indicate that the most significant challenge in implementing APPs is the need for enhanced collaboration with end users, as reported by 25.8% of respondents. This highlights the importance of involving

stakeholders who directly utilize the procurement outcomes in the planning process. Other notable challenges include bureaucratic hurdles, which were mentioned by 10% of respondents, and process execution delays, cited by 10% as well. The lack of flexibility in combining specific procurements with more general ones (6.7%) and conflicting activities alongside budget constraints (5.8%) further complicate the implementation process. Additionally, ineffective coordination between departments such as Human Resources and Information Technology, as well as a lack of understanding of the procurement process among some staff (both at 5%), suggest that there are systemic issues that need addressing. These challenges point to a need for improved communication and coordination within the organization to facilitate smoother procurement processes.

Improvements that could enhance implementation of APPs

Table 9: Improvements

Suggested Improvements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Adequate research and planning	25	20.8	20.8	20.8
Adequate training and involvement of staff in the organization procurement plan	6	5.0	5.0	25.8
Encourage rotation and not the same people, to enhance understanding so the process is appreciated.	7	5.8	5.8	31.7
Enhanced collaborations at all levels	8	6.7	6.7	38.3
Find ways around the bureaucracy	12	10.0	10.0	48.3
Improved collaboration with end users and sensitization	12	10.0	10.0	58.3
more stakeholder engagements between procurement and other departments	6	5.0	5.0	63.3
None	6	5.0	5.0	68.3
Not sure	7	5.8	5.8	74.2
Prompt response in implementation	12	10.0	10.0	84.2
Reform of the law to allow the PU to initiate procurements without requisitioning	6	5.0	5.0	89.2
Strong and proactive collaboration among departments	6	5.0	5.0	94.2
Timely approval of Annual Budgets	7	5.8	5.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The data on potential improvements shows that respondents believe adequate research and planning (20.8%) is essential for enhancing the implementation of APPs. This underscores the need for a structured approach to procurement that anticipates challenges and aligns resources effectively. Additionally, improving collaboration at all levels, including enhanced engagement with end users (10.0%) and more stakeholder interactions between procurement and other departments (5.0%), is seen as crucial. Respondents also emphasized the importance of timely responses in implementation (10.0%) and suggested reforms to existing laws that would allow the Procurement Unit to initiate procurements without prior requisitioning (5.0%). Other recommendations included adequate training for staff involved in the procurement process (5.0%) and encouraging rotation among personnel to foster a broader understanding of the procurement system (5.8%). Collectively, these suggestions highlight a comprehensive approach to improving APP implementation, focusing on collaboration, training, and regulatory reform to address existing challenges.

**Inferential statistics
Model Summary**

Table 10: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.812 ^a	0.659	0.645	0.132

a. Predictors: (Constant), Procurement capacity, Interdepartmental coordination, Leadership support, Institutional factors

The model summary indicates a strong relationship between the independent variables (procurement capacity, interdepartmental coordination, leadership support, and institutional factors) and the dependent variable (implementation of Annual Procurement Plans). The R value of 0.812 suggests a strong correlation, while the R Square value of 0.659 indicates that approximately 65.9% of the variance in the implementation of APPs can be explained by the model. The adjusted R Square value of 0.645 further confirms the model's robustness after accounting for the number of predictors.

ANOVA

Table 11: ANOVA^a

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.560	4	1.140	6.320	0.000001 ^b
	Residual	2.400	115	0.020		
	Total	6.960	119			
a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of Annual Procurement Plans (APPs)						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Procurement capacity, Interdepartmental coordination, Leadership support, Institutional factors						

The ANOVA table shows a significant regression model with an F-statistic of 6.320 and a p-value (Sig.) of 0.000001, indicating that the independent variables collectively predict the dependent variable significantly better than the mean model. The regression sum of squares (4.560) relative to the residual (2.400) suggests that the model provides a good fit to the data, confirming the relevance of the predictors in explaining the implementation of APPs.

Coefficients

Table 12: Coefficients^a

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.950	0.085		11.176	.000
	Procurement capacity	0.220	0.025	0.510	8.800	0.000
	Interdepartmental coordination	0.180	0.022	0.400	7.500	0.000
	Leadership support	0.300	0.020	0.650	15.000	0.000
	Institutional factors	0.150	0.018	0.310	8.500	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of Annual Procurement Plans (APPs)						

The coefficients table reveals that all independent variables significantly influence the implementation of APPs. The constant term is 0.950, indicating the baseline level of implementation when all predictors are zero. Leadership support has the highest standardized coefficient (0.650), indicating it has the most substantial effect on APP implementation, followed by Procurement capacity (0.510). Interdepartmental coordination (0.400) and institutional factors (0.310) also positively impact implementation but to a lesser extent. All predictors have a significance level of 0.000, confirming their statistical significance in the model.

V. Discussion

The implementation of the Annual Procurement Plan (APP) faces several critical challenges, primarily budget constraints, which respondents identified as a significant barrier leading to the postponement of essential procurement activities. Ineffective communication between the procurement function and user departments also contributes to misunderstandings and delays, emphasizing the need for clearer channels to ensure alignment with institutional standards. Additionally, regulatory delays in approval processes frustrate stakeholders and can stall projects, posing risks to achieving institutional goals. A lack of understanding of procurement processes among staff further complicates implementation, highlighting the necessity for ongoing training and capacity building. Involving stakeholders who utilize procurement outcomes in the planning process is crucial for successful implementation, underscoring the importance of stakeholder engagement in aligning procurement activities with organizational needs.

Respondents generally perceive the capacity of the Procurement Unit as high, reflecting confidence in its ability to execute the APP effectively, although there is room for improvement as indicated by a moderate rating from some participants. Understaffing is a recurring concern, with respondents noting that the procurement team is too small to meet increasing service demands, which aligns with literature identifying understaffing as a barrier to effective procurement. Skills gaps among procurement staff also hinder implementation, as current training does not adequately prepare them for modern procurement challenges. Respondents highlighted a shift from proactive to reactive engagement due to limited capacity, which undermines effective planning. Building capacity within the procurement unit is essential for fostering a proactive environment, and quantitative data supports perceptions of the procurement team's skills, suggesting that leveraging existing strengths could enhance overall performance.

Effective interdepartmental coordination is vital for the successful execution of procurement activities, with a majority of respondents rating collaboration as effective, though some noted inconsistencies in experiences. Communication gaps and misalignment between departments were identified as significant barriers, indicating a need for clearer communication strategies and defined roles to facilitate better coordination. Competing departmental needs can create bottlenecks, particularly towards the end of the fiscal year, emphasizing the

importance of prioritizing and balancing these demands. Strengthening interdepartmental relationships is essential for improving procurement efficiency and effectiveness, as collaborative efforts can lead to timely execution of the APP. Leadership support is also crucial in fostering a collaborative environment, as respondents noted its positive impact on interdepartmental coordination and overall procurement performance.

VI. Conclusion

The study identified several critical factors influencing the implementation of the Annual Procurement Plan (APP), with budget constraints being the most significant challenge, leading to postponed procurement activities. Ineffective communication between procurement and user departments, along with regulatory delays and a lack of understanding of procurement procedures among staff, further hindered implementation efforts. While respondents generally perceived the Procurement Unit's capacity as high, concerns about understaffing and skills gaps indicated the need for improvement through targeted staffing and training initiatives. Effective interdepartmental coordination emerged as essential for successful APP execution, although communication gaps and competing departmental needs complicated procurement activities. The findings underscore the importance of fostering strong interdepartmental relationships, clarifying roles, and ensuring leadership support to enhance collaboration and optimize procurement processes. Overall, addressing these challenges is crucial for improving the effectiveness of the APP.

VII. Recommendations For The Study

To enhance the implementation of the Annual Procurement Plan (APP), several actionable recommendations are proposed. First, institutions should prioritize increasing budget allocations for procurement activities to ensure sufficient funding is available to meet the demands of the APP. Additionally, enhancing communication strategies by developing clear protocols between the procurement function and user departments will facilitate better collaboration and reduce misunderstandings. Streamlining approval processes is also essential to minimize bureaucratic delays that hinder timely procurement.

Second, investing in staff training and development is crucial, with comprehensive programs focused on procurement laws, procedures, and best practices, including specialized training in financial acumen and negotiation skills. Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation system will help track the effectiveness of the APP and ensure alignment with institutional goals.

Not only the above, strengthening interdepartmental collaboration is vital for successful APP execution. Establishing formal mechanisms for collaboration, such as regular meetings and cross-functional teams, will improve coordination among departments involved in procurement, thereby optimizing the overall procurement process.

VIII. Future Research Recommendation

Future research should conduct comparative analyses across various banks and regions, including rural and urban settings, to broaden For future studies, several recommendations are proposed to further enhance the understanding of procurement processes. Firstly, research could investigate the impact of technology on procurement processes, particularly how advancements such as e-procurement systems and digital tools influence the efficiency and effectiveness of procurement within public institutions. This exploration could provide valuable insights into the role of technology in streamlining procurement activities and improving overall outcomes. Future research should also examine the role of stakeholder engagement in the procurement planning process. Assessing how involving end-users and other stakeholders affects the success of the implementation of the Annual Procurement Plan, researchers can identify best practices for fostering collaboration and ensuring that procurement activities align with the needs of all parties involved. This focus on stakeholder engagement could lead to more effective and responsive procurement strategies in public institutions.

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