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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results from an online survey about a growing practice known as Open Contracting. The main purpose of the survey was to understand how familiar people are with the Open Contracting approach and how they understood its effects. Most of the questions, therefore, sought respondents’ views on how Open Contracting practices led or did not lead to improved development outcomes. They also explored the possible constraints to uptake of Open Contracting, including the need for a stronger evidence case for its benefits.

This report has two basic parts. There is a narrative summary of the main findings followed by a comprehensive presentation of the findings with tables and short descriptions. This report can be considered to be preliminary, prepared quickly in order to be available to the October 2012 global meeting on Open Contracting in South Africa. In order to do justice to the richness of the data, more analysis is merited. Researchers and others interested in Open Contracting are most welcome to review and analyze the data set by contacting Michael Jarvis at mjarvis@worldbank.org or Marcela Rozo at mrozo@worldbank.org.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Based on the survey findings, the working theory of how Open Contracting works may be summarized as follows:

**How does Open Contracting advance development?**

Open Contracting strengthens transparency and accountability, reducing the opportunities for corruption in public contracting processes while simultaneously creating conditions in which public contracts can be monitored and implemented more effectively. As a result of both of these dynamics – each of which have a number of causal drivers – Open Contracting is one of the most cost-effective ways to accelerate sustainable development outcomes.

Common sense, long experience, and some good evidence validate this logical, but to get the most value from Open Contracting we need to understand more about the underlying causal factors: Which are more and less powerful? Why? When? Can we quantify the economic benefits?

Open Contracting practitioners and those promoting Open Contracting need answers to these questions to be efficient and effective in their work. The Open Contracting team is committed to creating the tools that will get us those answers, as well as to work at both the global and national levels to build the capacity and support the advocacy required for more countries to take up Open Contracting practices.

This report is one small contribution to providing these answers. Its findings give us a snapshot of how a diverse, international group of people familiar with procurement and different modalities of public contracts thinks about the change narrative of Open Contracting. Future surveys will delve more deeply into the relative contributions of the
different causal drivers and enabling conditions. Future surveys will also sample a wider group in order to have a comparison group of people less directly knowledgeable of Open Contracting. These continuing streams of feedback will be combined with other evidence to better demonstrate the impact of Open Contracting.

**METHODOLOGY**

This survey report cannot claim to be representative of a wider societal view of Open Contracting. It was aimed at people with some familiarity with public procurement and almost three quarters of respondents answered “yes” when asked if they currently practice or promote Open Contracting. A comparison of answers between Open Contracting promoters and practitioners and the quarter that answered “no” to this question shows a slight but consistent tendency of those without direct experience of Open Contracting to need more convincing about its benefits.

Over half of the respondents come from civil society organizations that champion greater transparency in government. Most of the other half divides roughly equally among business, government and donors. There were no statistically significant differences in the responses from these four constituencies. The small remainder is made up of academics, oversight authorities and media. When looked at by sector, the four sectors that relate directly to Open Contracting – namely, access to information, anti-corruption, procurement and social accountability – make up 58% of respondents. They constitute four of the five sectors that are greater than 10%, the other being infrastructure. Again, the data do not show significant differences in answers by sector.

Another question asked about how support from a global initiative to promote Open Contracting affected the respondent’s own work. As seen in the table below, about a fifth of the respondents claim no knowledge of an initiative to support Open Contracting. Another 43% are aware of the initiative but do not benefit from it. And 34% benefit. Disaggregated by type of respondent, government and civil society respondents receive the most benefits while business is half as likely to receive benefits.

It can be taken, however, that the survey has produced an accurate representation of the respondents’ views. We can say this because there is a very high degree of internal

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**Figure 1**

The support I receive through the Open Contracting initiative is important to the effectiveness of my own efforts to promote good governance in public contracting.

- 22% I am not aware of any such global pro-Open Contracting movement.
- 43% I am aware there is a global Open Contracting movement but I do not benefit from it.
- 28% I do get some important help.
- 7% I benefit significantly from the global Open Contracting movement.
consistency in the answers. As such, it provides an important and durable benchmark against which future survey findings may be compared.

It can also be said that despite the generally positive attitude toward Open Contracting as a mechanism for advancing societal progress, there is a great deal of nuance and discernment in the ways respondents see Open Contracting. It is likely this discernment will be even more apparent in future surveys that interrogate different causal drivers and enabling conditions of Open Contracting, and that generate a comparison group of people less familiar with Open Contracting in practice.

A short description of the process used in the survey is provided at the end of this report.

**MAIN FINDINGS**

The summary of findings below is drawn from the data represented in the next section of this report.

**WHO TOOK THE SURVEY?**

Ten micro-surveys were sent to 529 individuals familiar with public procurement from diverse countries. In total we received 1,055 responses, averaging 105 per survey. 39 people answered all 10 surveys. Survey respondents came mainly from government, civil society and business. There were also a small number of donors, academics and media.

**OPEN CONTRACTING CONtributes TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES**

As a whole, respondents confirm the basic logic about how Open Contracting leads to improved development outcomes. Very large percentages (more than 80%) accept the logic (indicating either the logic can be assumed or that there is good evidence to support it) and almost no one doubts it. Agreement with respect to a list of possible benefits from Open Contracting is high. Conversely, there is little to no conviction that Open Contracting causes harm. This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that, as questions hone in on more specific possible results from Open Contracting such as timeliness of contract completion or cost savings, support remains high but tapers down.

**THE MAIN STAKEHOLDERS AGREE**

The most striking thing about an analysis of the data disaggregated by government, civil society and business was their similarity. There were slight variations in their respective points of view, and these are highlighted in the main data presentations in the next section of this report. But in the main, there is a very high level of consensus across the three groups. This bodes well for the future of Open Contracting. We are not going to have to overcome constituency-based differences. Government, business and citizens are all pulling together for transparency and effectiveness in public procurement.
THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

While much is spoken – rightly – about the essential role that citizens can play in scrutinizing public contracts, the survey highlighted the equal important of an independent media. This takes on new meaning in the era of the new social media and the rise of citizen journalism. This finding points us toward the opportunities to be mined through more active cultivation of partnerships with commercial media and new media.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

There is a strong belief expressed across all respondent groups in the benefits to business from Open Contracting. But this view is conditioned by an equally strong conviction that more evidence is required to demonstrate these benefits. Business respondents in general tend to be more likely to want to see more evidence of the benefits from Open Contracting.

FOUR KEY ENABLERS NEEDED: EVIDENCE OF BENEFITS, STANDARDS, TOOLS AND FUNDING

The data show a significant opportunity for those promoting Open Contracting to close the gaps between strongly felt needs for evidence of benefits, norms & standards (including technical standards regarding data disclosure), know-how/tools and funding for civil society procurement monitoring. All are considered to be important and fewer than 7 percent of respondents believe that these enablers are anywhere close to being sufficiently available. Government respondents were the most adamant on the need for adequate funding for civil society organizations.

OVERCOME POLITICAL RESISTANCE WITH EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY

The respondents felt that the main constraints to wider uptake of Open Contracting were political in nature, as opposed to operational or technical, and could be addressed through evidence-based policy advocacy.
Ten micro-surveys (totalling 46 discrete questions) were sent to 529 contacts. In total we received 1055 responses, averaging 105 per survey. 39 people answered all 10 surveys.

On average most respondents came from civil society or non-profit organizations, with government and business sectors the next largest represented groups.

70% of all respondents were split across five areas of focus, with almost 40% focusing on either anti-corruption or procurement.
The majority of respondents are current practicing open contracting, and on the whole answered questions differently to those not practicing open contracting.

In terms of regional focus, the bulk of respondents operate at the global and regional level, accounting for almost three quarters of survey participants.
These statements are strongly supported, with about 10% overall looking for better evidence. These averages are similar for respondent’s organization type, sector focus and geographic focus. Those who are not currently supporting Open Contracting are twice as likely as those who are to take a more skeptical stance.

Figure 5

1. Open Contracting reduces the opportunities for corruption in public contracting processes.

2. Citizen monitoring of public contracting improves awarding and implementation of public contracts by making it more likely that incompetent and/or corrupt public officials and private companies will be identified and penalized.
The four questions in Figure 6 isolate different possible causal effects of Open Contracting. They tend to show a lower conviction about the causal effects than the two top-level questions, but still a high conviction. The highest conviction is with respect to increasing effective government oversight (81%) while the lowest is for driving greater timeliness (59%).

There are some variations in answers when disaggregated by type of respondent, but none suggesting a clear trend. The three that stand out are:

- Those who do not now practice or promote Open Contracting are twice as likely to take a skeptical view across all the questions.
- Government officials are 20% more likely than any other government respondents to have a strong conviction that Open Contracting increases effective government oversight.
- Business is twice as likely as the other groups to need more evidence to be convinced that Open Contracting exposes sub-standard contract delivery.
The three questions in Figures 7 and 8 provide contrasting views of the impact generated by procurement monitoring by civil society organizations and media. While the questions are not identical, the comparison shows a very high conviction about media impacts (87%) and a reasonably high one for civil society (70%). When disaggregated by type of respondent, it is notable that government is far more likely to be skeptical of civil society impacts while business is more skeptical of media impacts. The separate question on media independence would seem to be consistent with the high conviction about the media role, as 48% of respondents see media as being sufficiently independent and free.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Open Contracting reduces costs to deliver on public contracts by enabling citizen groups to monitor the contracting process</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>It might</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National/Sub-national</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>17.78%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Global/Regional</td>
<td>4.88%</td>
<td>20.73%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Open contracting improves public contracting outcomes by enabling the media to be an effective watchdog</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>It might</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National/Sub-national</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Global/Regional</td>
<td>1.39%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown above, those working at the national level are less skeptical than those at the regional and global levels with respect to civil society and media effects.
The four questions in Figure 9 focus on implications for businesses. The conviction levels are all fairly high, with the highest for fostering competition among suppliers (82%). When disaggregated by respondent characteristics, we see a familiar pattern, with those at the national level and those who practice or promote open contracting being more positive, though in this case marginally. Government and business are both far more skeptical than other groups when it comes to Open Contracting reducing costs to tendering for businesses.
The question in Figure 10 asserts a positive harm to business from Open Contracting. Interestingly, all groups mainly disagree with the statement. Interestingly, government is the most concerned about harm to business while business is the only group not to cast a single vote for the two negative choices – that it does cause harm, or could be assumed to cause harm. The answers here strongly corroborate the answers to the previous four questions in Figure 9.
Coding the answers to the open question in Figure 11 yielded three significant responses, as can be seen from the graph above. These unprompted answers show a great deal of consistency to the answers in the preceding closed questions (Figures 5–10).

“Open Contracting (OC) brings transparency in procurement and contract management, substantially reduces the scope of corruption, better quality due to societal oversight. OC helps in planning, enhances in efficiency and control. Open contract ensures accountability and effectiveness of public procurements, ensure better after-sales service by equipment manufacturers, and it leads to economy as due to reduced cost of procurement. OC facilitates ownership and acceptability to the community.”

“Helps to ensures bribery does not take place from RFPs to implementation.”

“Protect government and tax payers that are swindled by contractors through the non open contracting system.”

“Establishes the set of rules on how bidders are going to be treated and evaluated.”
The four questions in Figure 12 look at three important enablers of Open Contracting: evidence of benefits, norms & standards, and know-how/tools. The bars in the graph show how respondents assessed the importance of each and the colors show how respondents rated the current availability. The story here is dramatic. All are considered to be important and fewer than 7 percent of respondents believe that these enablers are anywhere close to being sufficiently available. The need and gap are starkly identified here. Disaggregations of data by respondent type do not yield interesting insights.
The two questions in Figure 13 look at two potential constraints resulting from the absence of technical specifications for data disclosure – one on the adopting of Open Contracting practices and one on effective civil society monitoring. The results strongly confirm the absence of clear technical data disclosure standards. Their positive importance in the view of respondents is high – 76% for adoption and 62% for civil society monitoring. Again, the need and gap are starkly identified. Disaggregations of data by respondent type do not yield interesting insights.
Figure 14 shows about half of the respondents identifying cost as a real constraint, or more, and half not seeing cost as more than a bit of a constrain, if that. Disaggregations of data by respondent type show a slightly higher concern about costs for those who do not practice Open Contracting and for those operating at the regional and global level.
Coding the answers to the open questions in Figures 15 and 16 yielded several significant responses, as can be seen above. One question asked about the “most significant constraint” while the other asked for the best way to “overcome resistance” to widespread adoption of Open Contracting. The unprompted answers show a great deal of consistency to each other and to the answers in the preceding closed questions, and suggest a ranking of importance. Political will and bureaucratic resistance are volunteered by almost half of respondents as the key constraints. If this is combined with the closely related set of responses that referred to power imbalances and corruption the total is nearly 60 percent. The top two prescriptions offered to overcome resistance are raising awareness/making the evidence-based case for Open Contracting and campaigning/stakeholder engagement. Strengthened legislation, sanctions, penalties and incentives also featured importantly.

One in four noted capacity and know-how as critical constraints.
Examples of responses to the question “In your experience, what is the most important constraint to widespread adoption of Open Contracting?”

- (i) Political issues (ii) lack of monitoring by civil society (iii) lack of independance of procurement authorities
- Political will and the capacity of procurement officials
- Reluctance of governments and pushback by industry
- Powerful bidders may manipulate design and specification
- Lack of knowledge and information about Open Contracting
- Perception that Open Contracting is a difficult, expensive and unnecessary process

Examples of responses to the question “In your experience, what is the best way to overcome resistance to widespread adoption of Open Contracting”

- Raising awareness about open contracting and developing a legal framework
- Public awareness campaigns
- Win the political debate about the benefits of transparency
- Create incentives for Open Contracting
- Severe penalties and punishments for officials who are caught working outside the regulations pertaining to Open Contracting should be instituted. Like imprisonment up to 100 years!
- Make Open Contracting a public matter to create a critical mass of citizens that demand open contracting
- Through civic actions that challenge procurement agencies to adopt transparency in the award of contracts. Civil society must be at the forefront of seeking such accountability.
These three questions (see Figures 17 and 18 above) explore the capacity for effective citizen voluntary monitoring. The first question considers citizen awareness. 57% of respondents felt that there was not enough citizen awareness, while 38% felt there was enough. These findings take on greater significance when viewed alongside the next two questions, which focus on the capacities and funding base for civil society organizations to lead on this work. The data show that respondents believe that 72% of civil society organizations require capacity and 78% lack funding to play their role as procurement monitors. Interestingly, the only respondent sub-group that differed substantially on these questions was government, which was far more skeptical that citizens had the requisite...
awareness (18% said citizens had now awareness; no other group chose this answer). Government was in agreement with other groups, however, on civil society organization capacity and funding.

Civil society organizations are the hydroelectric turbines of contract monitoring. They turn the rivers of citizen action into the electricity of procurement monitoring. If there is a drought, or if the turbines lack capacity or funding, we are not going to be able to turn on the lights of transparency.
The questions in Figures 19 and 20 explore the role of government in Open Contracting, and in particular the extent to which resistance, sanctions and operational and technical challenges limit adoption of Open Contracting practices. 71% see resistance by public officials as a real constraint, or more. 76% see penalties and sanctions to be inadequate to support Open Contracting. But only 54% see technical and operational challenges as posing a constraint. Disaggregations of data by respondent type yield some interesting variations. Government officials are nearly twice as likely as civil society organizations to see government resistance as a “huge constraint” (46% to 27%). Similarly, government officials are more than twice as likely to consider sanctions and penalties in their countries to be “not at all sufficient” to root out corruption in procurement (45% of government and 20% each of business and civil society answers).
The questions on the next two pages (Figures 21 and 22) asked respondents to rank ten different possible activities to support Open Contracting. The values assigned to all these activities were consistently high with net promoter scores\(^1\) ranging from 24 to 44. This means that the majority of respondents are assigning 9s and 10s to each item.

The three most popular options were:
- Provide tools and support to measure the impact of Open Contracting.
- Broaden participation in Open Contracting from government, civil society and the private sector at the global and country levels.
- Build capacity of national and sub-national government for Open Contracting.

When disaggregated by type of respondent, the highest score for civil society and government was for capacity building for itself. The highest score from business was for “Build and share knowledge on effective Open Contracting (including documenting good practice)”

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1 Net Promoter Score (NP Score) is derived by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters. Promoters are those who give a rating of 9 and 10. Detractors are those who give a rating of 0-6.
1. Build capacity of national and sub-national government for Open Contracting.

2. Broaden participation in Open Contracting from government, civil society and the private sector at the global and country levels.

3. Provide tools and support to measure the impact of Open Contracting.

4. Build and share knowledge on effective Open Contracting (including documenting good practice).

5. Build capacity of civil society and the media for Open Contracting.

**Figure 21**

NP Score is derived by subtracting the percentage of detractors (Scores 0–6) from the percentage of promoters (Scores 9–10).
1. Build the “business case” for Open Contracting.

2. Foster alignment with and linkages between Open Contracting and related movements or initiatives around openness and transparency.

3. Foster exchange and learning about Open Contracting across countries, sectors and stakeholders.

4. Reinforce existing initiatives to support Open Contracting.

5. Support innovation in Open Contracting.

NP Score is derived by subtracting the percentage of detractors (Scores 0–6) from the percentage of promoters (Scores 9–10).
Ten micro-surveys were sent to 529 individuals familiar with public procurement from diverse countries. In total we received 1,055 responses, averaging 105 per survey. 39 people answered all 10 surveys.

Public procurement specialists at the World Bank compiled a list of nearly 500 potential survey recipients. Publicizing the survey in the CIVICUS newsletter, eCIVICUS, and in the Open Development Technology Alliance LinkedIn group attracted 63 additional respondents.

To encourage forthright responses, respondents’ were assured that their answers would be confidential, reported only in aggregate. The respondents raised no concerns during the process, although one commented that they should not need to include their name and email address. To encourage a high response rate, two Apple iPads were offered as prize to those who answered all the surveys. 39 people answered all the surveys, and will be entered into the draw, which is to take place at the conference in Johannesburg.