



# Open Contracting

## Theory of Change Survey Report

### Main Findings

#### WHO TOOK THE SURVEY?

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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

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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

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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 detailed data presentations in the main survey 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

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While much is spoken – rightly – about the essential role that citizens can play in scrutinizing public contracts, the survey highlighted the equal importance 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

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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

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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

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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.

These summary findings are drawn from the data represented in the main survey report. For a copy of the report, please go to [www.keystoneaccountability.org](http://www.keystoneaccountability.org).