OECD Public Governance Policy Paper

Lessons learned from the implementation of the European Competency Framework for Public Procurement Professionals
Towards an international competency framework

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Promoting the professionalisation of the public procurement workforce is gaining attention across EU Member States and OECD countries. To support professionalisation initiatives, the European Commission designed a scalable and structured tool to assess the skills and knowledge of public procurement professionals. This tool, known as ProcurCompEU, provides public organisations with the means to identify missing competences or areas where further capability-building initiatives could be implemented. To strengthen the relevance of the tool, the OECD has been supporting public administrations from several OECD countries in testing ProcurCompEU. This report provides insights on these pilots and draws lessons to further increase the scalability of the tool to different contexts and objectives.

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1. Introduction

Public procurement, accounting on average for one-third of total government expenditures across OECD countries, is an essential element of public service delivery. Public procurement contributes to delivering these services through the purchasing of necessary products and services from the private sector, whether it is the construction of buildings for education services, to the design and implementation of modern IT systems for digital public services. In order to optimise value for money from these sizeable investments, it is crucial to develop public procurement frameworks that deliver quality results while also contribute to broader strategic policy objectives (i.e. strategic public procurement). The European Directives on public procurement adopted in 2014, and their national transpositions, provide such a framework to help EU Member States make more efficient and strategic use of public procurement.

Yet, this framework alone is insufficient to ensure an effective use of public procurement in serving citizens' needs. Indeed, the effective provision of public services relies heavily on the skills and competences of public servants. The OECD has developed a skills framework for civil servants which identifies public procurement as a critical skill necessary to deliver public value (OECD, 2017[1]). A professional and recognised procurement workforce is thus needed to unlock the potential of public procurement as a strategic tool that governments can use to promote policy goals ranging from inclusion to sustainability and innovation. The need to back this strategic function with efforts to build capacities has been also been recognised in 2017 by the European Commission which introduced a *Recommendation on the Professionalisation of Public Procurement to EU Member States*.

Developing public procurement capacities to develop a more strategic approach can be challenging, especially as public procurement is becoming increasingly complex, and greater demands are placed on procurement professionals. These range from delivering goods, services and public works that underpin public services to ensuring the resilience and productivity of processes and implementing strategic policy goals. For some time, governments have been using procurement as a strategic tool on several policy fronts, such as supporting the green transition, implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and, more broadly, promoting inclusive growth. Expectations for public procurement have moved beyond simply achieving value for money to include providing tangible benefits to citizens. The purchase of essential goods at the height of the COVID-19 crisis has illustrated the complexities and pressures that public buyers face and led to a greater recognition of how procurement is vital to the functioning of fundamental public services, such as health and infrastructure. Public procurement will also be critical in the post-COVID era to support targeted public investment in infrastructure and include environmental and climate change considerations in recovery plans.

According to the latest evidence, public procurement is increasingly recognised as a stand-alone function in OECD countries, contributing to the recognition of public procurement as a strategic function and to the growing professionalisation of public procurement officials. Furthermore, OECD countries are not just implementing professionalisation strategies in public procurement, but are accelerating their implementation while expanding their use and outreach. For instance, 14 out of 33 OECD countries surveyed in 2020 (42%) had introduced competency models, which define the critical skills necessary to accomplish a given procurement function, compared to 30% in 2018 (OECD, 2021[2]). However, while these developments reflect positive trends, more is needed. Finally, the recognition public procurement

skills and knowledge beyond this function remains a challenge in many countries. Few competency frameworks for senior leaders for example include skills or knowledge around contracting or strategic procurement.

Figure 1. Public procurement recognised as a profession, 2020
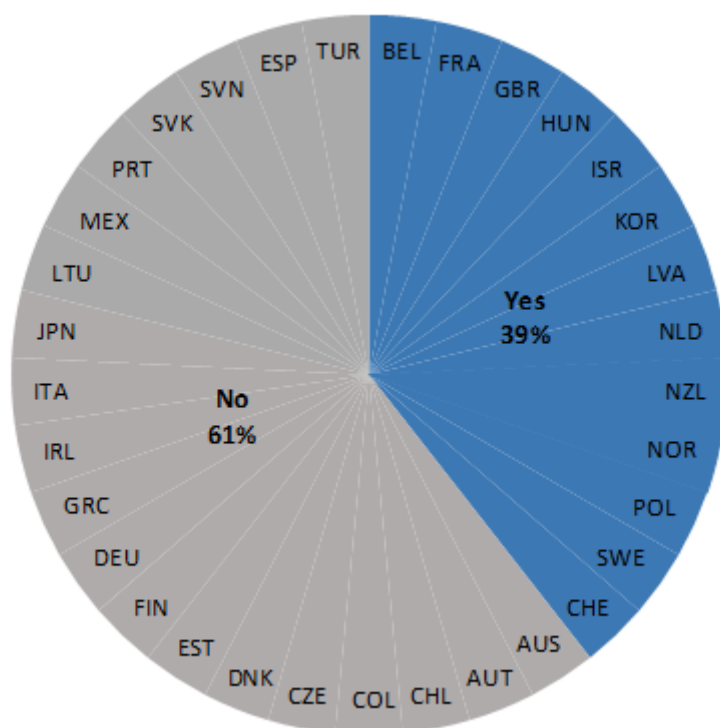
Source: (OECD, 2021[2])

2. The European Competency Framework for Public Procurement Professionals

To provide concrete support to professionalisation initiatives, the European Commission developed a competency framework, the European Competency Framework for Public Procurement Professionals (ProcurComp^{EU}), as a tool for public administrations, contracting authorities and procurement officials to improve their skills and competency levels in the field of procurement.

ProcurComp^{EU} includes the following tools:

- A Competency Matrix, which identifies the competences and skills public procurement professionals should possess, including technical and soft skills covering the full procurement cycle;
- A Self-Assessment Tool, which allows procurement professionals to assess their proficiency level for each competence and compare it with a target goal. The individual self-assessments of procurement professionals can be aggregated to provide an overview of the administration as a whole to identify competency gaps. The aggregated results of the assessment are meant to be used as a basis for developing strategies on how to fill the competency gaps. The tool can be customised.
- A Generic Training Curriculum that shows how public administrations can upskill their procurement professionals.

Given that ProcurComp^{EU} is flexible and allows for customisation, concrete examples from the use and tailoring of ProcurComp^{EU} would help encourage countries and organisations to adopt it. To this end, the OECD and the European Commission agreed to implement ProcurComp^{EU} in concrete contexts as a tool for developing a structured assessment of procurement skills and competences, identifying gaps and setting a common vision for procurement capabilities.

Across EU Member States and OECD countries, competency frameworks for procurement professionals can be used to achieve multiple objectives, from defining desired professional requirements to assessing organisational capabilities and designing capacity-building programmes. The goal of the project was to support the implementation of ProcurComp^{EU} for different uses and draw lessons.

Figure 2. Different use cases

Source: Project description

The use cases identified in the above figure illustrate the scalability of ProcurComp^{EU} to various objectives and contexts. To further test the applicability of the tools in an international context, it was decided to include countries and institutions outside the European Union. Following outreach activities and initial discussions with interested parties, six countries and institutions were selected to participate in the implementation of ProcurComp^{EU} in one of the three use cases. At the end of March 2021, the following participants were formally engaged in the project.

Table 1. Participants by use cases

Use Case	Country	Participating institutions
Training and professional development blueprint	New Zealand	New Zealand Government Procurement (NZGP) as lead institution plus a working group of eight institutions
	Italy	Institute for Innovation and Transparency of Procurement and Environment and the Federal Association of Regions and Autonomous Provinces (ITACA)
Certification scheme	Chile	ChileCompra
Organisational use	Ireland	Office of Government Procurement
	Iceland	Rikiskaup and Landspitali Hospital
	Costa Rica	The Comptroller General of the Republic of Costa Rica and the Ministry of Finance

The next section presents in further detail each use case and its application in participating countries. By highlighting implementation steps and results in participating countries, this paper extracts lessons that could guide further developments of the tool and would assist other countries in implementing professionalisation initiatives in their public procurement ecosystem.

Part II. Case studies

Participating countries and institutions experimented ProcurComp^{EU} for different objectives and at different scales. The first use case consists in the development of a training or professional development blueprint. This use case is looking at implementing a procurement professional development system that would be adapted to the needs of the procurement workforce and which would reflect the priorities on procurement competences.

Leveraging on the ProcurComp^{EU} competency matrix, participating institutions from New Zealand and Italy were able to tailor the list and structure of competences that procurement professionals surveyed were expected to have. Survey responses provided institutions with a greater understanding of priority areas for training and further professional development.

The second use case offered Chile the possibility to assess opportunities for upskilling its national certification framework against the ProcurComp^{EU} competency framework and to see which competences could be included or if its framework would require additional capacity-building activities.

The third use case allowed public authorities from Ireland, Iceland and Costa Rica to better understand their organisational procurement maturity and to identify opportunities for individual professional procurement development.

1. Leveraging ProcurComp^{EU} to define a training or a professional development blueprint

Competency frameworks could help discuss and identify those skills and knowledge that public procurement professionals should possess, depending on their role. In this project, New Zealand and Italy used ProcurComp^{EU} to support the development of a training offering. The sections below provide further details on the implementation of these initiatives.

1.1. Implementation of ProcurComp^{EU} in OECD countries – New Zealand Government Procurement

1.1.1. Background on the New Zealand public procurement system and the partner institution

Public institutions in New Zealand spend about EUR 29.5 billion each year, representing almost 20% of the country's GDP. A specificity of New Zealand is that the share of procurement at sub-national level is well below the OECD average. New Zealand was in 2019 the OECD country with the highest share of procurement expenditure carried out at central level, which amounted to 81.77%.

Yet, this high concentration of procurement spend at central level does not mean that New Zealand's public procurement system is highly centralised. Indeed, the New Zealand procurement ecosystem is a devolved system where, except for some limited categories of goods and services that are procured centrally, individual government agencies conduct their own procurement. Each agency is responsible and accountable for its decisions relating to the purchase of goods and services.

New Zealand Government Procurement (NZGP), a part of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), is the functional leader for public procurement in New Zealand. It is a central purchasing body with responsibilities for centralised purchasing of some categories of goods and services, government procurement policy development and improving procurement capability across government agencies. It takes a centre-led as opposed to a centralised approach to its activities.

There are about 3 600 public organisations in New Zealand, of which over 2 500 are school boards of trustees. Among them, 135 are mandated public organisations as of 6 September 2019. Mandated public agencies include government departments, non-public service departments (such as the New Zealand Police and the New Zealand Defence Force), and Crown entities, including District Health Boards. Mandated public organisations must apply NZGP's procurement policy framework for all procurement. Non-mandated public organisations, such as local government organisations, tertiary education institutions and state-owned enterprises, are encouraged to apply the procurement policy framework.

In October 2018, the government recognised that its procurement activities offer a unique opportunity to achieve broader cultural, economic, environmental and social outcomes for New Zealand. The government then identified four priority outcomes (increasing access for New Zealand businesses, construction skills and training, improving conditions for New Zealand workers and reducing emissions and waste) and incorporated these objectives into the Government Procurement Rules in June 2019.

Among NZGP's responsibilities, uplifting procurement skills is central. The entity first developed a tool evaluating organisational procurement capability. The procurement capability index (PCI) is a self-assessment tool that measures agencies' procurement capability. All agencies that are mandated to use the Government Procurement Rules must submit their procurement capability index (PCI) assessment to NZGP each year. The PCI takes an agency-wide view of procurement capability and covers the complete cycle of procurement across eight categories:

- Strategy and outcomes
- Commercial and social outcomes
- Governance and assurance
- Risks and benefits
- Planning and sourcing
- Managing for results
- People strategy
- Building capability

In August 2019, NZGPP launched a new online training and skills development system for government procurement and property professionals. Hīkina – Learning for Government Procurement and Property - is a learning management website for government agency staff to help build public sector knowledge in procurement and property.

It is composed of modules focusing on general procurement principles and the GPRs, on the implementation of broader outcomes and on procurement capability for social services. The modules are then structured around courses which can be either general introductions to concepts, practical trainings or panel discussions.

1.1.2. Objectives pursued by NZGP

To complement existing organisational procurement competences evaluation and development, NZGP decided to use ProcurComp^EU to evaluate individual skills and competences. To better understand potential challenges when conducting a larger scale assessment, it had been decided that, while the first attempt should be limited in size, the exercise should include multiple agencies. As a mean to better tailor the competency matrix to the New Zealand context, NZGP decided to convene a working group of eight public agencies. The main objective of the initiative was to first test the applicability of a tool designed based on European procurement principles and practices and to see which adaptations were necessary to adapt it to another context.

Should the exercise prove relevant, the longer-term objective would be to link the results of the assessment of individual skills and competences with the identification of training modules available in Hīkina or the development of new ones.

1.1.3. Project implementation timeline (2021-2022)

Figure 1.1. Project rollout
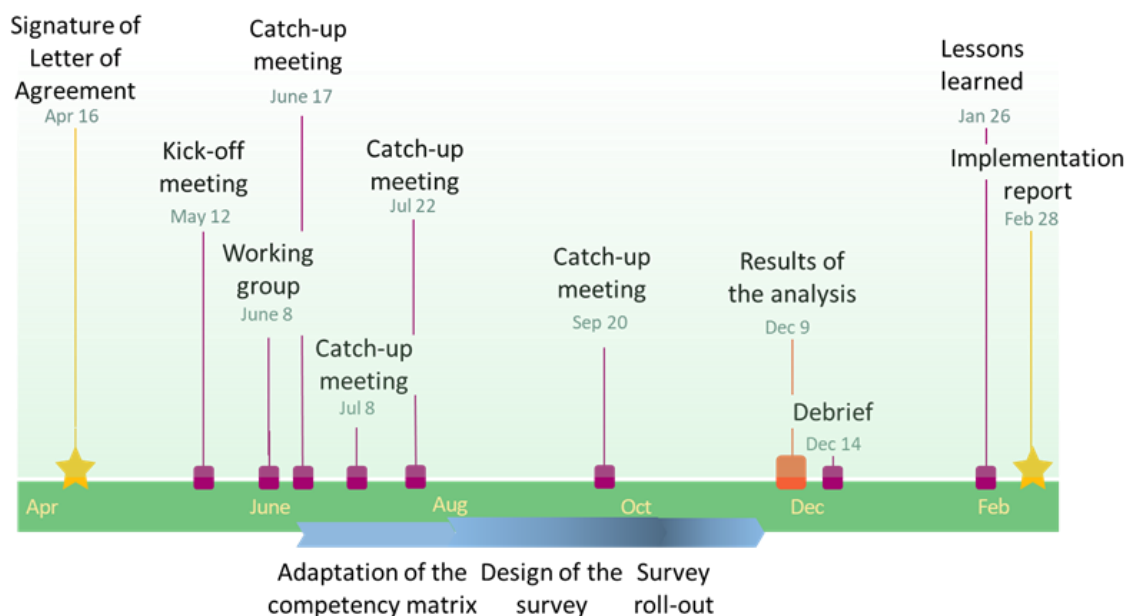
1.1.4. Various steps undertaken to implement ProcurComp^{EU}

Design of a working group. Since the assessment was carried out across different agencies, NZGP first decided to set up a small working group where the various implementation steps could be discussed. Using NZGP's existing networks, participating agencies and key contacts were identified. NZGP then conducted in-person meetings with Head of Department/Capability Leaders to set the context and gain buy-in prior to undertaking the trial.

Adaptation of the competency matrix to better fit the New Zealand context. The working group amended the wording of some competences, removed some altogether, and left the wording untouched on others – mostly the soft competences. Competences relating to the unique nature of the Treaty of Waitangi, broader outcomes, and knowledge specific to NZ Government rules of procurement were added.

Identification of proficiency levels for specific roles. The working group made a number of changes to the description of proficiency levels in order to remove references to EU legislation, and clarify the requirements of NZ Government procurement.

Design of the survey in EUSurvey. After some technical issues, it was possible for NZGP to design the survey in the tool and to adapt it to decisions made by the working group on the competency matrix. Additional open questions were added to the standard template such as the name of the agency of the respondent since the exercise was carried out across multiple agencies.

Running the survey. Participants were provided details on the survey via e-mails (direct from MBIE) and in person (conversations with the relevant manager/team leader). They were given 4 weeks to answer the survey. By the deadline, 27 responses were received. The results were provided to the OECD which inputted information into the calculation tool and analysed the results.

Discussing the results. In a meeting held on 14 December 2021, NZGP and the OECD discussed the results of the survey, how the various reporting capabilities developed by the OECD could further help address the objectives of this use case, and what were the main takeaways from this exercise.

1.1.5. Results achieved

The results of the trial provided insights into which areas needed improvement, for example the use and understanding of e-procurement tools. The specific characteristics of the survey (cross-agencies, different procurement roles in organisations) further allowed to identify the most meaningful reporting capabilities, either already existing or further developed by the OECD. For example, to support the long-term objectives of this use case (i.e. developing a training or professional development blueprint), reporting capabilities which provide insights at aggregated levels (by type of organisations or by years of experiences) could help define target audience for the provision of specific trainings. Similarly, identifying competences which exhibit the largest gaps between the expected proficiency level and average assessments (irrespective of the job profile) could evidence specific competences that are most in needs of trainings and identify training priorities. It could lead to the rolling out of targeted trainings or to the development of new training modules.

1.1.6. Benefits and challenges

Carrying out the exercise in a concrete environment provided some benefits and helped to better understand what could be improved in the future to maximise its impact:

- All the reporting functionalities developed were of some use or value. As a system lead, NZGP needs to collect data at different levels. From the analysis, it could be easily seen how each participating government agency was performing at the agency level. The most useful functionalities were those providing an understanding of competences at an aggregate (system) level and where agencies could be grouped to see performance at sector level.
- Tailored reporting capabilities supporting the objective of this use case could provide users with enhanced visibility on the specific needs for training or professional development.
- The possibility to customise the survey with the addition of open questions on job profiles, years of experience or type of organisations in which respondents are working could provide additional analytical capabilities that would be useful to gain a better understanding of training needs at system or sector level.

Yet, the exercise also helped to reveal some challenges that would need to be better accounted for to ensure it serves the full purpose of this use case:

- Given the non-standardised procurement roles across NZ Government, there is no direct alignment with job profiles. To further complicate matters, there are variations in proficiency levels for the same job title and job role/profile across different government agencies. For example, a "senior procurement specialist" in one agency could be classified as a "procurement specialist" in another government agency, and therefore subject to a slightly different set of competences. Hence, additional work will need to be done to better understand job roles and associated proficiency levels for NZ public procurement practitioners.
- A job profile definition and mapping of the various roles which would fall under that job profile would provide useful context to respondents and would facilitate the analysis of responses.
- To better reflect the New Zealand context, a "cultural" competency would need to be included in the competency matrix. Since support to Maori and Pacifika populations through public procurement is a strong area of focus for the Government, this additional competency should be developed.

- Adding questions assessing staff engagement (e.g. confidence in senior leadership, recognition for good work, opportunities for learning and development, effectiveness of managers in helping resolve work related issues, etc.) could provide contextual information which would better inform the analysis of the results, especially at aggregated level.

1.2. Implementation of ProcurComp[EU] in OECD countries – ITACA, Italy

1.2.1. Background on Italy's public procurement context

Public procurement in Italy accounts for EUR 241.7 billion each year, representing 11.8% of the country's GDP, and 20.6% of the country's total general government expenditures (OECD, 2021[2]). Public procurement is highly decentralised and is carried out by over 30 000 contracting authorities at the central and local level, including national ministries, national agencies, and publicly-owned companies[1]. They apply the public procurement legal framework governed by the "Public Procurement Code" (PPC), which transposes the three European Directives (2014/23/EU, 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU). Nonetheless, the regulatory environment has been in flux over the past several years.

The central purchasing body Consip is responsible for a large share of public procurement. At the regional level, centralisation of procurement spend occurs with the regional central purchasing bodies (CPBs). In fact, all of the Italian regions have set up their own central procurement structures[2]. In fact, most expenditure occurs at the sub- national level: over 60% of public works contracts are commissioned by territorial entities[3].

This fragmented ecosystem and complicated legislative framework has emphasized the need to support public procurement capacity. Parts of the legal framework concerning centralisation and professionalisation of the procurement function have never been fully operationalised, as the corresponding implementing regulations have not been implemented when the 2016 legal framework was introduced. Indeed, article 38 of the PPC foresees the so-called qualification of contracting authorities as a pre-requisite for conducting public procurement. The aim is to measure the organisational and technical capacity of contracting authorities based on procurement size, category of goods, services and works and territorial areas. ANAC is tasked with maintaining a registry of qualified contracting authorities, those lacking this qualification shall procure via a CPB. To date, the details of the reform remain undefined and the reform is thus unimplemented. It should be noted that the implementation of the Italy's Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) is providing new impetus to implement this reform.

Furthermore, Italy does not have concrete measures in place to support public procurement capacity such as a competency model, entry requirements according to contracting authorities' needs, obligatory training, or certification framework. Nonetheless, the National School for Public Administration (SNA) offers a Diploma on Public Procurement for civil servants and managers as well as to private sector professionals. In addition, the Institute for Innovation and Transparency of Public Contracts and Environmental Compatibility (ITACA) is responsible for training and professionalisation across Italian regions in order to promote and ensure coordination between regions, and between local/regional level and central institutions. ITACA in collaboration with SNA and other stakeholders have elaborated the National Training

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[1] European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, Stock-taking of administrative capacity, systems and practices across the EU to ensure the compliance and quality of public procurement involving European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds : final report : country profiles, Publications Office, 2016, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2776/456668

[2] In total, there are 21 regional procurement structures representing each of the Italian regions. The Region of Trentino Alto Adige is represented by two purchasing structures for the autonomous province of Bolzano and the autonomous province of Trento, respectively.

[3] Ibid,

Plan on Public Procurement and Concessions (PNRR Academy), which consists of several training initiatives targeting generic and more in-depth aspects of public procurement.

Italy's EUR 191.5 billion Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) will reform and digitalise the public administration and the justice system, improve the business environment and support the digitalisation of businesses. Furthermore, the Italian RRP contains measures to reform the public procurement legislative framework and to encourage professionalisation of contracting authorities. It includes:

- Introduction of urgent measures (included in a Law Decree adopted in May 2021) to simplify and digitalise public procurement procedures and to set up dedicated offices in charge of public procurement procedures at Ministries, Regions and Metropolitan Cities.

- Establishment of the Single Coordination Body for public procurement policy, which shall have an adequate level of staffing and shall adopt a professionalisation strategy providing trainings at different levels and ANAC shall complete the exercise of qualification of contracting authorities.

- More structural reform of the Public Procurement Code by Q2-2023, with actions aimed at reducing the fragmentation of contracting authorities, requiring the setting of an e-platform as a basic requirement to participate in the nationwide evaluation of procurement capacity and empowering the national anti-corruption authority to review the qualification of contracting authorities.

The professionalisation strategy has been adopted as of December 2021, and features a number of activities, including gathering an understanding of the procurement-related competences by applying ProcurComp^{EU}.

1.2.2. Objectives pursued by ITACA and the network of regional CPBs

ITACA, in cooperation with the network of regional CPBs, decided to pilot the use of ProcurComp^{EU} for three key purposes. First, to gather a comprehensive view of the skills and competences within Italy's most specialised procurement bodies. This insight can be helpful in the overall professionalisation context in Italy, whereby a large audience of buyers will undergo a series of professionalisation activities. Second, the results from ProcurComp^{EU} are meant to better tailor the training offer for regional CPBs, either to be provided by ITACA or as part of training activities by the single regional CPBs. Third, the first experience with ProcurComp^{EU} in a pilot context can pave the way for mainstreaming its use more widely at the national level. In line with the National Professionalisation Strategy, the ambition of ITACA is to establish ProcurComp^{EU}, once adapted to the Italian context, as a strategic tool for professionalisation of procurement in Italy, accessible to individual buyers or contracting authorities to better address professionalisation gaps.

1.2.3. Project implementation timeline (2021-22)

Figure 1.2. Project rollout
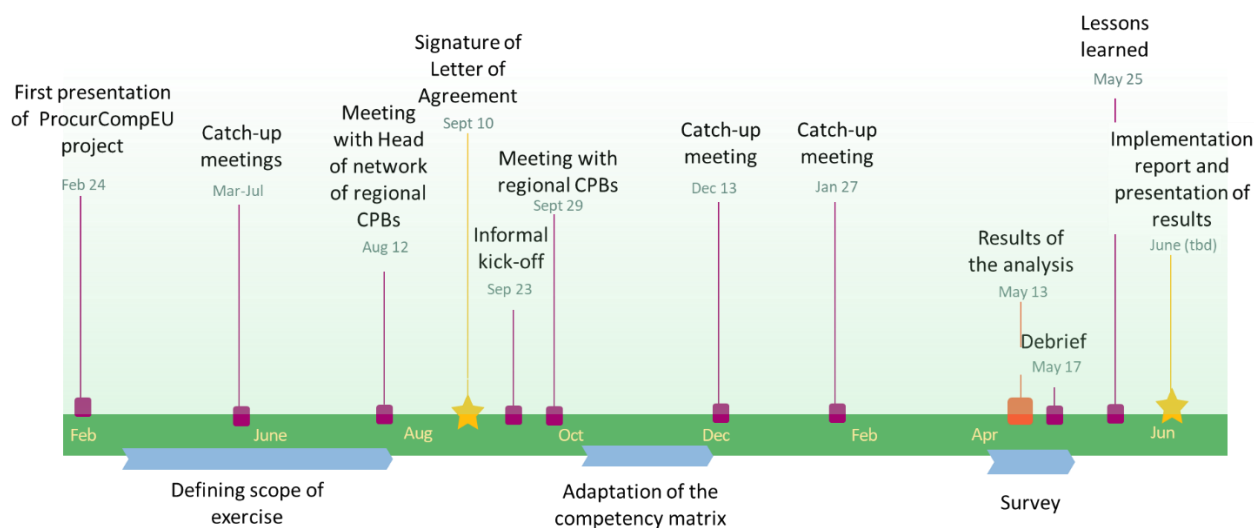
1.2.4. Various steps undertaken to implement ProcurCompEU

Defining the scope of the exercise: A number of preliminary steps were held in preparation of the ProcurComp^EU pilot. This consisted primarily in defining the scope of application of ProcurComp^EU and bringing on-board the relevant actors, i.e. the network of regional CPBs. Participants were also familiarised with the suite of tools.

Set up of Working group: Upon recommendation of the OECD, a smaller working group was set up to take operational steps in the tailoring of ProcurComp^EU to the specific Italian context.

Review of competences: The main step in the adaptation of ProcurComp^EU consisted in reviewing the 30 competences of the framework. The exercise resulted in a simplification of the framework, whereby 22 competences were maintained, and no additional competences were added. The final competency matrix entails 14 procurement-specific competences and 8 soft competences. Regarding job profiles, no specific adaptation was deemed necessary. The introduction of proficiency levels was also not considered fit in the regional CPB context, given the many organisations involved in the exercise.

Design and launch of survey: The EU Survey tool was chosen as survey tool. The survey was sent to ITACA's contact point within each of the regional CPBs. Regional CPBs were responsible for further disseminating the survey among their staff. The results were provided to the OECD which inputted information into the calculation tool for further processing and analysis.

Outlook and next steps: ITACA intends to broaden the use of ProcurComp^EU by making it available to any buyer on its website for self-assessment purposes.

1.2.5. Results achieved

The analysis of a sample of specialised buyers provides preliminary insights into areas where greater professionalisation is needed, and where training efforts could be concentrated in to ensure that the potential for using procurement strategically is achieved. Based on a preliminary assessment, the sample indicates limited diversity among job profiles. Thus, ensuring a better definition and understanding of various roles within the procurement function could also contribute to greater professionalisation.

Specifically, a total of 189 buyers responded to the survey. Among these, over 50% identified as public procurement support officers, while 30% described themselves as public procurement specialist. Only few respondents identified as category specialist (2%), contract manager (3%), and department manager (2%).

Overall, innovation procurement and sustainable procurement appear as the lowest competences, demonstrating that even within regional CPBs buyers do not show strong confidence in their skills related to strategic procurement. In contrast, competences around legislation, lifecycle, ethics and compliance as well as team management and leadership show comparatively high results from the self-assessment.

1.2.6. Benefits and challenges faced

With professionalisation of public procurement being a high priority to the Italian government in the context of the RRP, there is significant potential to make use of ProcurComp^{EU} to advance this agenda. At the same time, the current public procurement context is also in flux due to upcoming regulatory and policy changes related to nation-wide professionalisation efforts. This leads to considerations about the timing of a pilot exercise such as ProcurComp^{EU}, namely:

- Advantages
  - Favourable context as it is a high priority for the government to invest in procurement professionalisation
- Challenges
  - Decision-making can be stalled in operational matters, both during the pilot as well as in implementing results (e.g. specific content for training courses cannot be defined until nation-wide legal changes are made)
  - Initiatives related to professionalisation conducted in parallel can take precedence (e.g. survey by ANAC to understand parameters for qualification of contracting authorities)

Further considerations need to be taken into account when launching ProcurComp^{EU} with multiple organisations that have their own structures, priorities, and agendas such as:

- Advantages
  - Picture resulting from the ProcurComp^{EU} captures a pool of representative buyers
  - Insights drawn from regional CPBs can have wider application scope and lessons learnt for the country
- Challenges
  - Greater coordination efforts needed to bring on board multiple actors, and ensure a harmonised understanding of the exercise
  - Risk of finding the 'lowest common denominator' as basis for agreement, instead of making an aspirational use of ProcurComp^{EU}

2. Leveraging ProcurComp^{EU} to revamp a competency model linked with national certification frameworks

The second use case consists of supporting the development or improvement of national certification schemes. This use case is looking at implementing a national certification scheme that would be adapted to the needs of the procurement workforce and which would define necessary competences in the competency model.

A certification framework certifies the levels of acquired skills and competences of public procurement officials. It is associated to a competency model that details skills and competences that public procurement professionals should possess. Such system further allows public procurement officers to improve their knowledge and skills through targeted trainings on the competences required under the certification framework. Thus, it may greatly contributes to recognising public procurement as a stand-alone profession and to increasing motivation. In this project, Chile decided to leverage ProcurComp^{EU} to revamp a competency model linked with the national certification framework. The section below provides further details on the implementation of these initiatives.

2.1. Implementation of ProcurComp^{EU} in OECD countries – ChileCompra

2.1.1. Background on the Chile's public procurement system and the partner institution

In 2021, government spending through public procurement amounted to about 9.8 trillion Chilean pesos (EUR 11.4 billion) in Chile, accounting for 4.7% of the GDP in 2021. Each of the 911 contracting authorities in Chile conducts its own procurement procedures through the national e-procurement system (Mercado Público) in accordance with Article 18 of Law No. 19886 on Public Procurement. Therefore, in order to support effective public spending, it is essential to ensure that contracting authorities are equipped with a skilled public procurement workforce.

ChileCompra is the central purchasing body under the authority of the Ministry of Finance of Chile. Its mandate includes centralised purchasing (e.g. framework agreements), the development of public procurement policy, the administration of Mercado Público and the reinforcement of the capabilities of the public procurement workforce in accordance with Article 30 of Law No. 19886 on Public Procurement.

ChileCompra is further in charge of administering the certification framework of the public procurement workforce in Chile, as part of its mandate to reinforce their capability. Chile has been a pioneer in implementing a certification framework for the public procurement workforce since 2006. The necessity of developing a certification framework arose from a regulatory requirement adopted in 2004. It required all public procurement officers to be accredited to have the access to the e-procurement system Mercado

Público. This requirement remains unchanged. In June 2019, ChileCompra implemented a major update where it introduced a proficiency-based certification with four levels (basic, intermediate, advanced, and expert), making a transition from the traditional profile-based certification system. In the last three years (2019-2021), 24 258 procurement officials were accredited under the version 3: basic (13 658), intermediate (8 421), advanced (3 266), and expert (903).

2.1.2. Objectives pursued by ChileCompra

In 2021, ChileCompra decided to update the certification framework by revamping the competency matrix in order to further modernise its public procurement system. To implement this reform, ChileCompra showed a strong interest in leveraging ProcurComp[EU].

This ProcurComp[EU] pilot started with a benchmarking exercise comparing existing competences against those available in ProcurComp[EU]. This exercise helped updating the competency matrix by adapting relevant competences of ProcurComp[EU] to the context of Chile. Then, the survey was launched to public procurement officials in 15 contracting authorities in order to identify the competences that require more capacity-building activities.

2.1.3. Project implementation timeline

Figure 2.1. Project rollout (2021-2022)

Benchmarking	Update of the competency matrix	Survey to CAs	Adjustment and the finalisation of the competency matrix	Country implementation report
June-July, 2021	**Aug-Oct, 2021**	• Webinar for launch: 11.26, 2021 • Survey closure: 12.31, 2021 • Meeting to show the survey result: 1.12, 2022	**January, 2022**	**April, 2022**
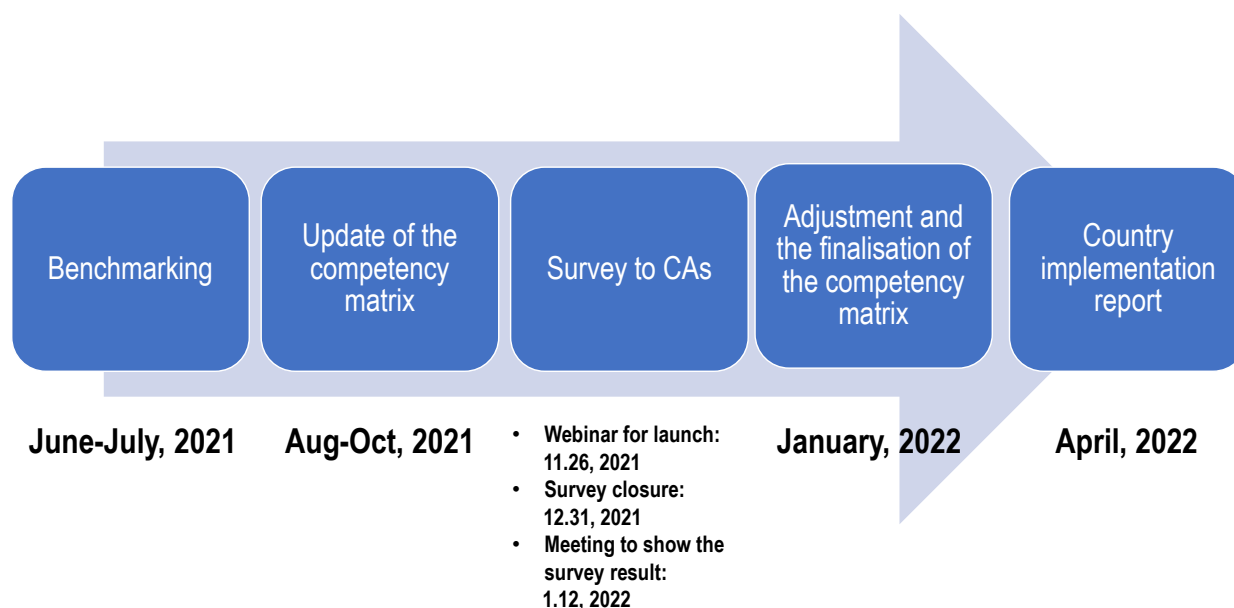
2.1.4. Various steps undertaken to implement ProcurComp[EU]

Benchmarking exercise. ProcurComp[EU] pilot started on May 2021 with the benchmarking exercise of comparing existing competences against those in ProcurComp[EU]. Since Chile had its own competency matrix of the public procurement workforce, the benchmarking exercises aimed at adopting the elements of ProcurComp[EU] (competency itself and proficiency description) which are relevant to the local context of Chile. At the beginning of this pilot implementation phase, ChileCompra carried out this benchmarking exercise by referring to the competency matrix used in the version 3. As a result, ChileCompra identified 15 competences that are aligned with the ones of ProcurComp[EU] and/or could be adapted to the local context of Chile. ChileCompra also streamlined the structure of the competency matrix, built upon the

ProcurComp^EU competency matrix. Then, ChileCompra prepared the updated competency matrix with these 15 competences to share it with the OECD team in June 2021.

Adoption of new competences in the competency matrix. The OECD reviewed the updated competency matrix and suggested some improvements of the proficiency descriptions by adopting some descriptions of the ProcurComp^EU competency matrix. The OECD also proposed to include two new competences on "Tender document" (including the elements of contract award criteria) and "Sustainable procurement". The adoption of these two additional competences aims at further enhancing the implementation of sustainable procurement (green public procurement, SMEs development, social and inclusive procurement including gender), which ChileCompra has been pursuing for a long time but which was absent from the competences identified in the national certification scheme. In October 2021, ChileCompra and the OECD agreed on the draft competency matrix with 17 competences (15 competences plus 2 competences proposed by the OECD) as well as on the proficiency description of each competency.

Design of the survey in EUSurvey. Under the certification framework, ChileCompra needs to provide the candidates with the mandatory trainings related to 17 competences included in the draft competency matrix. Therefore, ChileCompra needed to identify the current knowledge and skill levels of the public procurement workforce related to these 17 competences. This allowed ChileCompra to identify and rank the competences that require more priority in capacity building activities.

Against this background, ChileCompra and the OECD started the preparation for launching the survey to public procurement officials in order to assess their current level in these 17 competences. First, ChileCompra selected 100 public procurement officials working in 15 different contracting authorities. These selected 15 contracting authorities consist of 12 large contracting authorities and 3 small ones.

The survey was prepared in the EUSurvey platform. Questions were aligned with the tailored competency matrix. Additional questions were included notably on the identification of the contracting authority in which the respondent works, ProcurComp^EU competences that were not included in the selected 17 competences but which could be included in the future, and a free text entry to receive feedback from respondents on the competency matrix. The survey had first been tested with 5 officials of ChileCompra to ensure it would perform as intended.

Organising the webinar to launch the survey. ChileCompra and the OECD invited selected 100 public procurement officials of 15 contracting authorities to the webinar held on 26 November 2021 to launch the survey. During the webinar, ChileCompra and the OECD explained the ProcurComp^EU and the objective of this pilot project and survey. A demonstration of the survey was provided to participants in order to explain how it worked and how to respond to the various questions. The survey was closed on 31 December 2021, with a response rate of 86%.

Discussing the results. The OECD analysed responses to the survey by integrating them into the self-assessment calculation tool. The OECD organised a meeting with ChileCompra on 12 January 2022 in order to discuss main results, key findings and recommendations. The results helped ChileCompra and the OECD to slightly fine-tune the competency matrix.

2.1.5. Results achieved

This pilot project showed the great potential of ProcurComp^EU as a useful tool in revamping the competency matrix linked to a national certification framework. This case allowed ChileCompra to modernise the competency matrix by harnessing the ProcurComp^EU competency matrix. ProcurComp^EU competency matrix provided valuable insights in identifying the competences and defining the proficiency description.

Chile had its own competency matrix of the public procurement workforce even before starting this pilot project. Therefore, the benchmarking exercises aimed at not only comparing the existing competency

matrix against those included in ProcurComp^{EU} but also adopting additional elements (competency itself and proficiency description) which are relevant to the local context of Chile. In the end, ChileCompra and the OECD updated the competency matrix of Chile with 17 competences including the three new competences related to the concept of *C5 Sustainable procurement, C14 Tender documentation* (including contract award criteria)*, and C29 Performance orientation*. During the preparation of the draft competency matrix, ChileCompra and the OECD had a series of technical meetings to define the proficiency description of these competences. ChileCompra and the OECD updated and improved the proficiency descriptions for 17 competences by adopting the elements of ProcurComp^{EU} relevant to the context of Chile. For example, Chile adopted exactly the same proficiency descriptions of *C2 Lifecycle* of the ProcurComp^{EU} competency matrix. *C5 Sustainable procurement* specified the name of decrees issued in Chile on green public procurement, SMEs development, and social and inclusive procurement including gender.

2.1.6. Benefits and challenges faced

ChileCompra benefited from revamping the competency matrix by adopting ProcurComp^{EU} competences to its local context and relevance. In addition, the result of the self-assessment survey achieved its two main objectives: (i) identifying priorities for the development and reinforcement of training courses of 17 competences linked with the certification framework and (ii) obtaining the feedbacks on the draft competency matrix including the new competences to be included in the future.

ProcurComp^{EU} will continue to provide insights to ChileCompra by allowing it to identify opportunities for future skills of the public procurement workforce in Chile. For example, *C6 Innovation procurement*, which was not introduced in the competency matrix in this pilot, will soon become more prominent and could well be integrated into future updates of the competency matrix. Indeed, the Law No. 19886 on Public Procurement is now being amended to further modernise the public procurement system of Chile. The draft amendments foresee new procurement procedures such as the procurement for innovation and competitive dialogue. It will require ChileCompra to work on capacity-building activities for *C6 Innovation procurement*. ProcurComp^{EU} competency matrix and generic training curriculum will therefore provide valuable inputs for ChileCompra.

3. Leveraging ProcurComp^{EU} to assess organisational maturity

The third use case consists in the assessment of organisational maturity. This use case is looking at assessing the current capability level for each job profile at organisational level that would allow for the identification of gaps between the current level and the target level set for each job profile. In this project, three countries decided to leverage ProcurComp^{EU} to assess its organisational maturity: Ireland, Iceland and Costa Rica. The sections below provide further details on the implementation of these initiatives.

3.1. Implementation of ProcurComp^{EU} in OECD countries – Ministry of Finance and Comptroller General of the Republic, Costa Rica

3.1.1. Background on the Costa Rica public procurement system and the partner institution

Public Procurement accounted for 12.5% of the GDP in Costa Rica in 2018. Currently, there are 350 contracting authorities in Costa Rica. The General Directorate of Asset Management and Public Procurement (La Dirección General de Administración de Bienes y Contratación Administrativa, DGABCA) of the Ministry of Finance (Ministerio de Hacienda) and the Comptroller General of the Republic (La Contraloría General de la República, CGR) are the two main institutions of the public procurement system in Costa Rica.

DGABCA functions as a regulatory body of public procurement system in Costa Rica as well as a public procurement authority for the central government. Its mandate includes, but is not limited to, centralised purchasing (e.g. framework agreements), the development of public procurement policy, and the administration of the national e-procurement system (SICOP). CGR is a supreme audit institution in charge of monitoring and auditing the utilisation of public funds including public procurement spending. Its main functions related to public procurement consist in the ex-post control and the remedy system to review challenges related to public procurement procedures.

Costa Rica, the newest OECD member, started to reform its public procurement regulatory framework in 2019 in order to align it with international good practices as part of the accession process to the OECD. The new public procurement law (No.9986) was published in the National Gazette on 31 May 2021, and entered into force on 1 December 2022 (18 months after publication). It creates the Public Procurement Authority (Autoridad de Contratación Pública, ACP) to act as a central public procurement authority, which is composed by three ministers (or their vice-ministers): the Minister of Finance (chair); the Minister of Science, Technology and Telecommunications; and the Minister of National Planning and Policy. It also creates the Directorate of Public Procurement (Dirección de Contratación Pública, DCoP). DCoP will act as the implementing agency for the ACP, and will take over the mandates of DGABCA with additional responsibilities including the professionalisation of the public procurement workforce. Articles 132 and 136 require ACP (DCoP as its implementing agency) to develop its first-ever professionalisation strategy

including a certification framework and the promotion of the capacity-building of the public procurement workforce by May 2024 (18 months after the new law enters into force on December 1, 2022).

3.1.2. Objectives pursued by Costa Rica

The objective of the exercise was to assess the current capability level of the public procurement workforce of the two participating entities (Ministry of Finance and General Comptroller of the Republic), and to assess the applicability of ProcurComp^{EU} to civil servants in charge of auditing public procurement processes at the General Comptroller of the Republic.

DGABCA under the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and CGR showed a strong interest in leveraging ProcurComp^{EU} to enhance their preparation for the upcoming development of the professionalisation strategy. They decided to embark into this exercise to assess current capability levels of several job profiles in the following four divisions:

- Department of Consolidated Procurement (DCC: Departamento de Compras Consolidadas), DGABCA: managing framework agreements for the central administration
- Department of Institutional Procurement (DPI: Departamento de Proveeduría Institucional), Ministry of Finance (MoF): carrying out procurement procedures of the Ministry of Finance
- Public Procurement Division (DCA: División de Contratación Administrativa), CGR: reviewing challenges related to public procurement procedures, authorising the use of exceptions to competitive tendering and constitutional approval of contracts (ex-ante control)
- Operational and Evaluative Audit Division (DFOE: División de Fiscalización Operativa y Evaluativa), CGR: monitoring and auditing the utilisation of public funds including public procurement spending

This ProcurComp^{EU} pilot started with a benchmarking exercise comparing existing competences against those available in the ProcurComp^{EU} competency matrix. This exercise allowed MoF and CGR to define relevant competences of each job profile. Then, the survey was launched to officials with different job profiles at the four divisions of MoF and CGR. In total, 71 officials (16 from MoF and 55 from CGR) responded to the survey.

3.1.3. Project implementation timeline

Figure 3.1. Project rollout

| Benchmarking | Survey | Meeting to show the survey result | Country implementation report |

July -Oct, 2021

- Launch:
- MoF: 10.19, 2021
- CGR: 11.8, 2021
- Survey closure:
- MoF: 11.5, 2021
- CGR: 11.25, 2021
- Follow-up: by 12.17, 2021

- MoF: 2.18, 2022
- CGR: 2.8, 2022

April, 2022
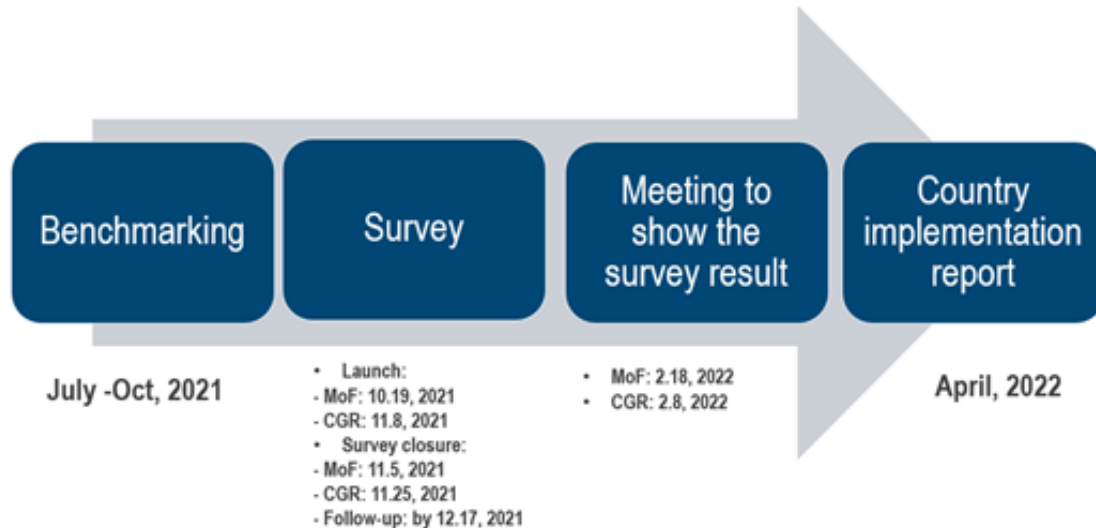
3.1.4. Various steps undertaken to implement ProcurComp^{EU}

Benchmarking exercise. This ProcurComp^{EU} pilot started in July 2021 with the benchmarking exercise of comparing existing competences against those in ProcurComp^{EU}. MoF and CGR decided to use different sources of information available for the benchmarking exercise, because a national competency model for the public procurement workforce did not exist in Costa Rica. MoF used the job descriptions of the four selected job profiles (FA Assistant, FA Analyst, Procurement Analyst - Low value, and Procurement Analyst – Tender) as the basis for the benchmarking analysis. CGR, on the other hand, used its own competency model. It is worth noting that this competency model foresees only soft competences, but no competences specific to procurement.

At the beginning of this pilot implementation phase, the OECD carried out the benchmarking exercise by identifying elements of competences available in the job profiles (MoF) and the competency model (CGR). Then, MoF and CGR verified the result of the OECD's benchmarking exercise by undertaking the same exercise by themselves. It should be noted that competences were considered as "exist" if at least one proficiency description similar to those of ProcurComp^{EU} was identified in the description of the job profiles or the competency model.

Adaptation of the competency matrix. After the benchmarking exercise, Costa Rica and the OECD defined the competences to be included in the pilot survey as well as their target for each job profile. It also involved the adaptation of the standard ProcurComp^{EU} competency matrix to better fit the context of Costa Rica. MoF and CGR slightly adjusted the description of proficiency levels by removing references to terminologies related to the EU such as the EU legislation and by mentioning the country's terminologies such as the e-procurement system (SICOP) and regulations related to sustainable procurement.

Design of the survey in EUSurvey. The survey was prepared in accordance with the ProcurComp^{EU} self-assessment questionnaire demo. It should be noted that CGR and the OECD decided to ask the CGR officials to assess only their knowledge level, not skill level. This is because CGR officials are responsible for the remedy system and audit but not for carrying out procurement procedures. The best solution would have been to prepare a competency matrix customised to the tasks of auditors, but it was out of the scope of this pilot project.

Launching the survey. Participants received the survey via e-mails sent by each division of MoF and CGR and had the opportunity to ask questions to their manager. By December 2021, 71 individuals responded to the survey from the four divisions of MoF and CGR. Costa Rica provided the OECD with the survey responses after eliminating the name of the respondents to preserve the confidentiality of personal information.

Discussing the results. The OECD analysed responses to the survey by integrating them into the ProcurComp^{EU} self-assessment tool. The OECD organised a meeting with MoF on 18 February 2022 and with CGR on 8 February 2022 in order to demonstrate and discuss main results, key findings and recommendations.

3.1.5. Results achieved

The results of the self-assessment allowed MoF and CGR to identify the gaps between the actual level and the target for each of the seven job profiles at the four divisions of these two institutions. Thus, it contributed to identifying future priorities for the development and reinforcement of trainings to narrow the gaps.

3.1.6. Benefits and challenges faced

Costa Rica benefited from using Procurcomp^{EU} to assess organisational maturity of two institutions and identify capability gaps. However, this case also showed a challenge in applying Procurcomp^{EU} to the context of auditors. Procurcomp^{EU} is oriented towards public procurement officials who carry out public procurement procedures rather than audit them. During the survey period, the CGR received the feedbacks from officials that they had challenges in assessing their level due to the orientation of the ProcurComp^{EU} competences and proficiency towards procurement officials.

In the future, Costa Rica could carefully discuss the potential options on the competency matrix to be oriented towards auditors: (i) using the unified national competency matrix of the public procurement workforce but assessing only the knowledge level (as it was the case under this pilot), or (ii) developing a competency matrix which is tailored to the auditor but adopt competences and their proficiency descriptions similar to the national competency matrix as much as possible. The case of Costa Rica highlights the relevance of potentially developing a competency matrix for auditors under ProcurComp^{EU}.

3.2. Implementation of ProcurComp^{EU} in OECD countries – Office of Government Procurement, Ireland

3.2.1. Background on Ireland's public procurement system and the partner institution

Public sector procurement in Ireland is governed by EU and national rules and totals approximately €17 billion annually, representing approximately 8.8% of GDP in 2020. EU rules are set out in three main Directives, which are transposed into Irish national legislation and apply to tenders whose value exceeds certain thresholds. For tenders of lower value, national rules apply; however, these national rules must follow the general principles of EU law. Government policy on public procurement is set out in various documents issued by the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, including the Public Spending Code, a comprehensive set of expenditure appraisal, value for money requirements and related guidance covering all public expenditures.

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP), part of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, was established in 2013 to maximise value for money and operational efficiency through the central

management of public procurement. The OGP is responsible for public procurement reform, procurement policy and procedures, sourcing systems and data analytics. Together with four key sectors (Health, Local Government, Education and Defence), the OGP also has responsibility for procuring goods and services on behalf of the public service. Government policy requires that public bodies, where possible, make use of all central arrangements, and must provide a value for money justification if they do not. This model has led to a shift towards a centralised model of procurement for sixteen categories of spend: in 2020, the OGP established 32 framework agreements with an estimated value of EUR1.5 billion.

However, while policies, guidance and procurement solutions exist at a national and sectoral level, and a national electronic tendering platform exists for publishing all procurement opportunities, procurement practices and systems remain distributed across more than 8 000 public sector organisations. Individual contracting authorities are responsible for ensuring the proper conduct of procurements, including conformance to standards of good governance and accountability.

The Irish government has set out a number of commitments in its 2020 Programme for Government in relation to public procurement, including evaluating and managing the environmental, economic and social impacts of procurement strategies, developing and implementing a sustainable procurement policy and requiring that all procurement frameworks are updated in line with green procurement practice. Achievement of these goals will rely on the ongoing development and professionalisation of OGP public procurement professionals. The OGP recognises this and, for example, already promotes the professional development of public servants working in delivery roles that involve procurement through its Commercial Skills Academy[4]. The primary aim of the Commercial Skills Academy is to enhance the commercial delivery capabilities of key spending departments and public sector bodies through a focussed training programme. The Commercial Skills Academy was established in 2019 to provide training for public service managers to gain an understanding of key issues, commercial skills, and best practice approaches for effective project delivery throughout the entire lifecycle of the project.

3.2.2. Objectives pursued by OGP

The aim of this exercise is to assess OGP's organisational procurement maturity and to examine the skills necessary for professional public procurement at an organisational level.

The OECD and OGP set out the following common objectives for the collaboration to test ProcurComp[EU], applying the third use case of the competency framework:

- Review the Irish civil service competency framework and specific procurement skills developed by OGP;
- Review the European competency matrix to identify competences/level of proficiency/profiles relevant to OGP's context;
- Carry out self-assessment exercises amongst a representative sample of the sourcing team according to predefined profiles/roles;
- Review the results of the assessment and discuss potential gaps identified.

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[4] https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/39075-commercial-skills-academy/

3.2.3. Project implementation timeline

Figure 3.2. Project rollout

May 2022	June 2022 - Phase 1	July 2022 - Phase 2	October 2022 - Phase 3	November 2022 - Phase 4	December 2022 - Phase 5
• Project kick-off	• Selecting the specific OGP job profile • Reviewing, adapting the Competency Matrix • Identifying relevant Competences • Determining the target proficiency level for each selected competence	• Calibrating the ProcurComp Self-assessment tool for OGP use • Identifying the OGP sample team • Adapting the Self Assessment Tool	• Communicate to OGP Sourcing staff regarding Survey content and context • Workshop - how to use the Self Assessment Tool • Issuing the survey to OGP selected Sourcing Staff • Carrying out the Self Assessment Survery	• Collecting data • Analyse data against pre-defined target proficiency levels set • Collating full Analysis of the results • Aggregating data for orgainisational use case	• Final Report and recommendation for follow-up actions

### 3.2.4. Various steps undertaken to implement ProcurComp^{EU}

Comparison of the Irish civil service competency framework and the ProcurComp^{EU} competency matrix. The implementation of the project started with the comparison of the Irish civil service competency framework, the specific procurement skills developed by OGP and the ProcurComp^{EU} competency matrix. The benchmarking exercise resulted in the following findings:

Procurement-specific competences: There are no directly related procurement specific competences as defined in the ProcurComp^{EU} model indicated under the key competences for the Category Specialist role. The competency 'Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development' speaks to the applicants existing role which may not be in public procurement, as experience in public procurement is not a mandatory requirement at this entry grade level.

Interpersonal (Soft) competences: There are directly related competency headings from the Irish Civil Service Category Specialist competency listing which align to the ProcurComp^{EU} competence listing under the Personal, People and Performance clusters.

The below figure illustrates to which extent competences included in the Irish civil service competency framework align with those existing in ProcurComp^{EU}.

Figure 3.3. Civil Service Competency Wheel versus ProcurComp^{EU} Competency Matrix
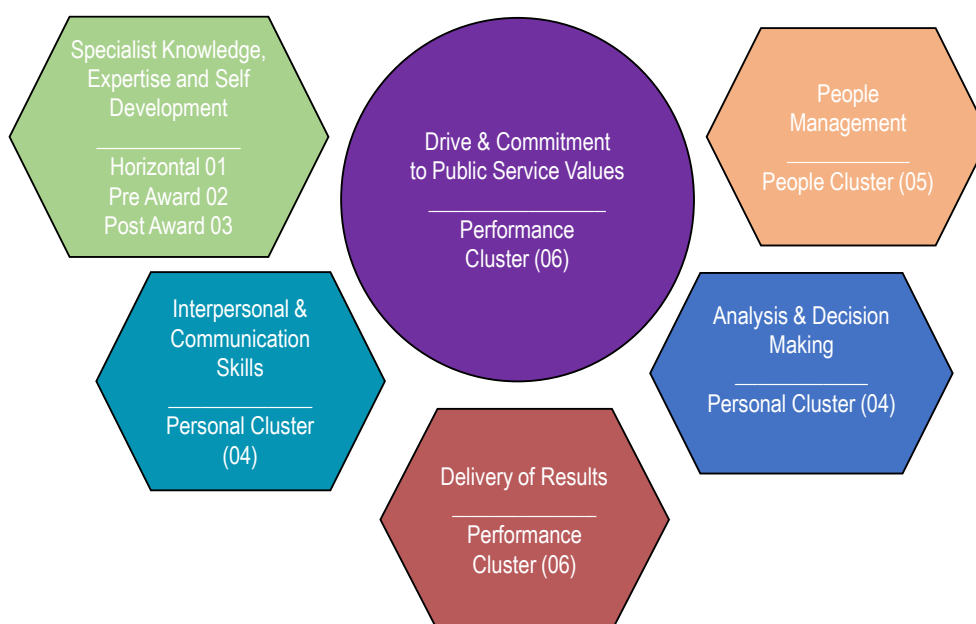
Source: Information provided by OGP

Adaptation of the Competency Matrix. OGP first selected 13 competences: eight procurement specific competences and five interpersonal/soft skills. In terms of procurement specific competences, OGP did not select a particular competency from the post-award cluster for the specified job profile. Based on discussions between OGP and OECD as well as on the further analysis of the model, OGP formulated a view that including additional competences could illustrate the 'ideal' competences/skills rather than simply the 'core' knowledge areas expected of an individual. Based on these further considerations, additional 12 competences from the Competency Matrix were chosen, both procurement specific competences (15 in total) and interpersonal (soft) skills (6 in total).

Table 3.1. Final list of the selected competences for the pilot exercise

Type of competences	Cluster of competences	Competency
Procurement Specific	Horizontal	1. Planning (1)
		2. Lifecycle (2)
		3. Legislation (3)
		4. e-Procurement and other IT tools (4)
		5. Sustainable procurement (5)
		6. Category specific (7)
		7. Supplier management (8)
	Pre-award	8. Needs assessment (10)
		9. Market analysis and engagement (11)
		10. Procurement strategy (12)
		11. Technical specifications (13)
		12. Tender documentation (14)
		13. Tender evaluation (15)
	Post-award	14. Contract management (16)
		15. Reporting and evaluation (18)
Interpersonal (Soft)	Personal	16. Adaptability & Modernisation (20)

		17. Analytical & Critical Thinking (21)
		18. Communication (22)
		19. Ethics & Compliance (23)
People		20. Collaboration (24)
		21. Stakeholder Relationship Management (25)
		22. Leadership (26)
Performance		23. Organisational awareness (27)
		24. Project Management (28)
		25. Business and Performance Orientation

Core competences   Aspirational competences

OGP had decided that they would concentrate on one job profile, the Category Specialist, which is OGP entry grade for public procurement specialist. The Category Specialist works as part of a Category Team supporting the delivery of procurement solutions through completion of assigned tasks and procurement activities. To determine the proficiency level, the main driver for OGP was that the target proficiency level must reflect OGP's ambition for a person fully competent in the role of the Category Specialist.

Design of the survey in EUSurvey. OGP worked on the design of the survey in EUSurvey so that it can be sent to individuals participating in the self-assessment. After some technical issues, it had been possible for OGP to design the survey in the tool and to adapt it to decisions made previously on the competency matrix. Additional open questions were added to the standard template such the respondents' current tasks and responsibilities related to public procurement, the number of years/months the respondents have been in their current positions, years of experience in public procurement or about the completed training on public procurement. Additional questions were included to support local interpretation of the survey data by providing a wider background under which responses could be considered. The OGP project team was particularly mindful that approximately 60% of the respondents were in post less than 12 months and were working in a remote (from home) environment.

Launching the survey. Participants were provided details on the Survey via e-mails sent by OGP and had the opportunity to have in-person conversations with their manager or team leader. The Survey was launched on 12 October 2021 and closed on 27 October 2021. Out of the 36 invited participants, by the deadline, 33 completed responses were received (92% response rate). From the validation review, it was noted that one participant had been promoted the week of the Survey and therefore their response was no longer within the job profile group and was removed. Thus, there were 32 responses for the final Survey Export.

Discussing the results. The results were provided to the OECD, which inputted information into the calculation tool and analysed the results. In a meeting held on 16 December 2021, OGP and the OECD discussed the results of the survey. The main questions that were discussed were how the various reporting capabilities developed by the OECD could further help address the objectives of this use case and what the main takeaways from this exercise were.

3.2.5. Results achieved

The results of the self-assessment could serve different objectives, such as designing a training action plan focusing on those competences where the overall score was the lowest ones or helping identify priorities for the development of new training modules or courses.

3.2.6. Benefits and challenges faced

The implementation of the pilot gave OGP insights on opportunities (and to a certain extent on potential challenges) offered by the use of a self-assessment tool supported by a structured competency matrix.

Should this exercise be conducted to a larger scale, a few considerations might maximise the effectiveness of the initiative:

- Feedback from respondents confirmed that the survey was easy to access and to fill. However, some participants highlighted the need to make a closer link between descriptors of proficiency levels and answers in the survey so that respondents understand clearly what their self-assessment mean. Adding the final competency matrix with descriptors of proficiency levels to the message sent to participants could address this challenge.

- Setting the proficiency level for the one selected job profile was easy and enabled the organisation to set its growth aspiration; selecting the proficiency level for a number of job profiles might add complexity. However, to facilitate the analysis of the results and the understanding of the gaps between assessments from respondents and OGP's ambition, creating two separate job profiles would provide OGP with a clearer view of aspirational competences which require the most upskilling. Further, it would also provide OGP with a means to assess whether those additional competences are better fulfilled with more experience in the role by triangulating data with responses on the number of years of experience in the position

- The reporting functionalities that proved useful are the aggregated result ranking the self-assessment scores versus the 'target maximum scores' categorising knowledge/skill area gaps and the profile of results by Individual helpful to highlight strength areas and to explore areas for support. During the pilot exercise, OGP and OECD discussed the possibility of developing new reporting functionalities related to "Reshuffling" and "Mentoring". However, the additional functionality of Reshuffling (indicating the compliance level with each procurement job profile) did not prove useful or necessary for the specific pilot where only one job profile was selected. This reporting element could be beneficial in a larger project where a number of job profiles are selected

- The results of the self-assessments display significant variations across skills and knowledge of different respondents. For several competences, a number of respondents assessed themselves as having advanced proficiency levels while other indicated basic or non-existent knowledge and skills. The reporting functionality "mentoring" created in the SAT could help OGP to identify where mentoring opportunities might exist as a mean to increase its organisational procurement maturity.

- OGP could further build on the obtained results by conducting a deeper analysis of the core competences (the ones considered as the core knowledge and skill areas for an individual in the role of the category specialist), with special focus on the competences that were significantly underperforming during the self-assessment exercise. The results could be used to better understand the current status of each competence and gain insight on the correlation with the expectations towards this specific role within the organisation.

3.3. Implementation of ProcurComp[EU] in OECD countries – Rikiskaup and Landspitali, Iceland

3.3.1. Background on Iceland's public procurement system and the partner institutions

Public procurement in Iceland accounts for 15.3% of the country's GDP[5], with the largest share of public procurement spending directed to health (25.7% of Iceland's public procurement spending in 2019).

The procurement rules are designed to conform to European Economic Area standards, with the Public Procurement Act laying down the rules on government procurement. The overall administration of public procurement, policy issues and the drafting of legislation falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of

[5] OCDE (2021), Government at a Glance 2021, Éditions OCDE, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en

Finance and Economic Affairs. The total number of contracting authorities is around 80. Iceland's public procurement system is highly centralised, with the following two participating authorities bearing relevant roles in the public procurement system:

Ríkiskaup is the central purchasing body operated by the state and subject to the authority of the minister of finance and economic affairs. It handles procurement for the state institutions and corporations, collects their procurement needs, co-ordinates framework agreements, provides procurement agent services to other contracting authorities, handles selling and purchasing of state property;

Landspitali is the leading hospital in Iceland. In addition to providing service to patients, teaching and training of clinical staff and scientific research, it is also responsible for public procurement of medicine and medical supplies for all state-owned healthcare institutions. The volume of Landspitali's public procurement reaches up to 25B ISK (EUR 179M) and constitutes around 70% of its expenditure.

3.3.2. Objectives pursued by the partner institutions

Ríkiskaup decided to leverage ProcurComp^{EU} to become the knowledge centre of public procurement in Iceland. The aim is to increase procurement education both internally (conduct regular self-assessments based on ProcurComp^{EU} framework, addressing the organisation's and individual training needs) and externally (with the framework helping improve the already existing trainings and in the process of creation of the procurement school).

Landspitali aimed to obtain an overview of the status quo regarding the relevant competences levels within the organisation and to identify the potential for further developments in professionalising their procurement workforce.

3.3.3. Project implementation timeline

Figure 3.4. Project rollout
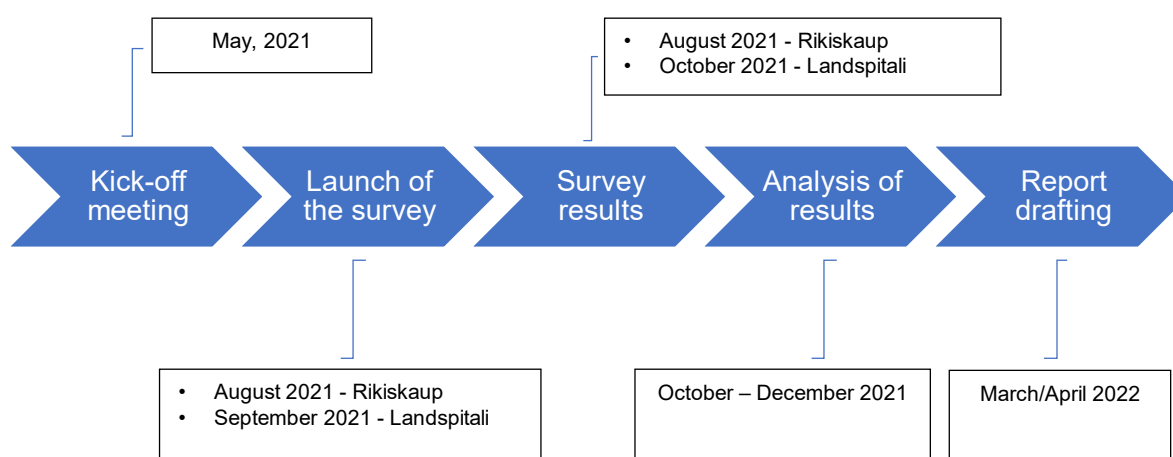
3.3.4. Various steps undertaken to implement ProcurComp^{EU}

Establishing a dedicated project team. Both organisations have decided to establish dedicated teams for the pilot implementation. They have tasked the teams with: the review and adjustment (if needed) of the competency framework, identifying the staff that would be eligible for participation based on their job profiles, rolling out the survey and developing internal communication strategies.

Rikiskaup and Landspitali then organised meetings with the relevant staff for explaining the ProcurComp^{EU} framework and the goal of the exercise. In addition, other measures in order to ensure a good understanding of the purpose of the exercise have been taken, such as meetings with the management (Rikiskaup), implementing a one-stop-shop approach to address any additional questions by designating one expert in the organisation as a contact point (Landspitali), and sharing a link to the ProcurComp^{EU} framework with the participants of the self-assessment.

Deciding on the approach to the self-assessment. Organisations chose different ways of conducting the exercise. Rikiskaup adapted the competency matrix to better fit their organisational context (10 job profiles in total). Landspitali used the pre-defined job profiles without any modifications and matched them with the existing job profiles in the organisation (5 job profiles in total). None of the organisations modified the survey nor included additional questions.

Design and running of the survey in EUSurvey. Although both organisations experienced some technical issues when setting up the survey (Landspitali could only launch the survey when using Chrome browser) and finalising its results (Rikiskaup found some errors in the formula, creating discrepancies between individual and aggregated results), they managed to implement the self-assessment. The participants were given 1 week to complete the survey in Rikiskaup and 1 month in Landspitali. By the deadlines set within the organisations, participants respectively provided 26 and 13 responses. Rikiskaup inputted the information in the calculation tool, analysed the results and shared them with the OECD. Landspitali shared the survey results for the OECD to input them into the calculation tool and conduct the analysis.

Having two public buyers from the same country has also allowed for synergies during the implementation of the exercise. Landspitali stated the relevance of learning from the Rikiskaup's experiences and reported on conducting consultations with Rikiskaup during the set-up of the self-evaluation survey.

Experience sharing has also happened on a use case level – Rikiskaup utilised the practice from the Irish Office of Government Procurement, namely creating a timeline for the exercise in order to ensure a proper management of the related tasks internally.

Lastly, both participating organisations have highlighted the usefulness of the ProcurComp^{EU} toolbox (user guide, template survey, etc.) in the effective implementation of the exercise, stating that the toolbox provided answers to most questions arising in the process of setting up and conducting the self-assessment.

Discussing the additional reporting capabilities of the calculation tool. While working on the analysis of the results OECD has developed some additional reporting capabilities, relevant for the use case 3. In a meeting, held on 14 November 2021, OECD presented the potential benefits of these reporting capabilities in addressing the objectives of this specific use case.

3.3.5. Results obtained

The results have provided insight in the areas that require improvement (for example, the need to address soft skills at Rikiskaup) and a deeper analysis behind certain results (such as addressing the results of specific job profiles to understand their impact on the organisational results at Landspitali) in each organisation.

The exercise has also allowed to identify the need for additional reporting capabilities that are relevant for this specific use case, such as mentoring (for identifying individuals that are scoring the best in particular competences, as well as those underperforming) and reshuffling (for demonstrating individual assessment of proficiency levels against those defined for all job profiles).

Results obtained could efficiently cater to the targeted approach in professionalising the procurement workforce in both organisations. Namely, that could be done by:

1. identifying target audiences for the trainings;
2. identifying competences that are underperforming on organisational level, as well as
3. identifying competences that could serve as a starting point in building more ambitious and forward-looking internal procurement strategies;
4. identifying the need for an overall review of internal approach to professionalisation matters (existing strategies, need for their upgrade, harmonising the job descriptions with factual expectations towards the staff, etc.).

3.3.6. Benefits and challenges faced

Conducting the exercise provided some benefits and helped to better understand how certain elements could maximise the impact of the self-assessment in the future:

- Newly developed reporting capabilities tailored to a specific use case could provide the users with better visibility on the specific needs and potential for training and (or) professional development;
- While the use case is oriented towards the organisation, a closer look at the job profile level would allow to gain insights on how individual scores influence the organisation's final result and to detect tendencies in self-assessment depending on the job profile;
- Insights on the status quo paired with new reporting capabilities could also serve as a means to address the issue of retaining the staff by adopting a strategic outlook on procurement workforce professionalization, based on career-tree concept.

The exercise has also helped reveal some challenges that should be considered for effectively implementing the specific goals within the use case:

- Additional work would be needed to understand the sharp differences in self-assessment, both appearing within the specific job profiles and between the profiles of the specialist-level and managerial level procurement staff;
- Lack of understanding of the relevance of proficiency levels may produce less objective results, meaning this aspect requires particular emphasis while internally communicating the purpose of exercise and explaining the practical aspects of the implementation of the self-assessment;

The exercise has also proven the need to highlight the relevance of forward-looking approach by considering the competences (their levels) that might only become relevant in the future. While that might make the exercise somewhat more complicated for the participating organisations by demanding to draw two concepts of themselves (current vs aspirational with corresponding competency levels), it would also allow for a more ambitious approach by crystalising the vision of the ideal organisational capabilities.

Part III. Lessons learned and recommendations

The implementation of ProcurComp[EU] in the six participating countries helped to identify common trends, challenges and key takeaways for a successful implementation of professionalisation initiatives leveraging on this suite of tools. These lessons learned and recommendations could be grouped in three different groups:

- Lessons and recommendations on the implementation process
- Lessons and recommendations on the competency matrix
- Lessons and recommendations on the Self-Assessment Tool

4. Increasing the effectiveness of the implementation process

4.1. Ensuring a clear understanding of the architecture of the tools

The swift implementation of ProcurComp[EU] requires having a good understanding of how the different tools, and their functionalities, interact with each other. For example, a final competency matrix listing both selected competences and proficiency descriptors is required to be able to answer the survey. In the same vein, the structure of the online survey will influence the way the self-assessment calculation tool should be configured.

Experiences in New Zealand, Ireland and Iceland clearly evidenced the benefits of a clear understanding about how the different tools interact with each other. This is not only necessary for those responsible for designing, implementing the survey and analysing the results but also for survey participants. Indeed, an unclear understanding of what is actually expected from public procurement professionals at a specific level of proficiency in a given competency could lead to increased subjectivity in the answers provided to the survey.

To mitigate this risk, several options exist. First, a recommendation could be included in the user guide developed by the European Commission to encourage survey administrators to attach the tailored competency matrix to the message sent to participants and to remind them about the importance of carefully reading the proficiency descriptors before assessing their level of skills and knowledge.

Second, a more automated process could be introduced where the relevant proficiency descriptors would appear alongside the response options (i.e. no knowledge/skill, basic, intermediate, advanced, expert) displayed in EUSurvey. This would allow respondents to clearly understand what is expected at each level of proficiency for any given competency. However, given the scalability of the competency matrix where competences could be either removed or added – and thus the corresponding questions in the survey template – this might imply additional developments.

4.2. Communicating about the objectives of the survey

Irrespective of the objectives pursued, conducting surveys aimed at assessing the level of competences of public procurement professionals require to clearly communicate about the goals of the initiatives to avoid confusion, namely with existing performance assessment frameworks or other recurring appraisal initiatives. The experiences in the participating countries and institutions demonstrated the need for a well-thought-out communication campaign. The Office of Government Procurement in Ireland organised several internal meetings to explain the purpose of the exercise and notably to clarify that it was not meant to be a performance assessment initiative.

For implementation exercises involving more than one institution, communication efforts are becoming even more critical. New Zealand Government Procurement set up a working group of participating

institutions to build a consensus around the main steps of the initiative and to trigger an internal dialogue with targeted respondents. Similarly, several meetings were held among the network of regional CPBs in Italy to gather buy-in prior to the agreement to conduct the pilot. ChileCompra, together with the OECD, organised a webinar attracting more than 100 participants to explain the content, the structure and the objectives of the survey.

This element is a key success factor to avoid misperceptions which would ultimately lead to bias in survey responses, hence hampering the relevance of self-assessment results and follow-up actions. Currently, in the user guide published by the European Commission, this step remains relatively succinct. From the outset, it would be beneficial to insist on the importance of communication and how it can steer an effective implementation of the survey providing relevant results to inform future professionalisation initiatives.

4.3. Defining the level of ambition in applying ProcurComp^{EU}

Another important aspect to consider is to have a clear picture on the level of ambition that is targeted when using ProcurComp^{EU} as a framework. Indeed, ProcurComp^{EU} has the potential to be used as an aspirational tool, in which high standards are defined towards which procurement stakeholders need to work on (as seen in the Ireland case). This entails carefully defining relevant competences, adding or maintaining competences, job profiles and based on the national or organisational ambition.

On the other hand, particularly in the context when multiple actors need to tailor ProcurComp^{EU} to their needs, or when the tool needs to be applicable to a very wide audience of public buyers, there is a risk of generating consensus only for the 'lowest common denominator' in the choice of the elements related to ProcurComp^{EU} (competences, job profiles, proficiency levels), thus reducing ProcurComp^{EU}'s aspirational role. In part, this seems to apply in the Italian context, in which certain potentially aspirational competences have been left out. Nevertheless, a conscious choice for maintaining competences, which have been deemed advanced and relevant for a forward-looking procurement function, e.g. sustainable procurement and innovation procurement, has been made.

A similar discussion can be held regarding the benefits of defining expected proficiency levels. If these proficiency levels need to apply to more than one organisation, the complexity of setting the right target increases. The choice can be made of leaving out proficiency levels and analysing average performance across competences, instead of gaps related to a certain target (such as in the Italian and Chilean pilot).

In this scenario, the advantage is that there is less risk of misperceiving the exercise as a performance measurement exercise, in which certain results are expected. Similarly, there is no risk of defining unrealistic proficiency levels, if they need to apply uniformly to a very diverse and broad spectrum of contracting authorities. On the other hand, the ambition regarding competences to be expected in certain procurement job profiles are not clearly spelled out, and therefore do not serve either for individual buyers as a reference for areas of improvement, and do not help organisations in being more efficient in targeting capacity-building efforts to areas that require the greater attention.

5. Enhancing the relevance of the competency matrix in an international context

5.1. Accounting for the strategic management of cultural identity

In many public procurement systems, inside and outside the OECD area, cultural identity is an element that should be factored in procurement strategies. In New Zealand, Australia, Canada or the United States, giving due consideration to ethnic minorities is a requirement for public procurement professionals. The initiative with New Zealand Government Procurement shed light on the relevance of this dimension.

One specific area of focus of the Government of New Zealand is the economic empowerment of Maori and Pasifika populations, and public procurement, through the Broader Outcomes, is seen as a strong lever. This requires public procurement professionals who are conscious of the characteristics of specific groups and able to design procurement strategies accounting for these specificities.

Therefore, defining an additional competency linked to the understanding and ability to account for cultural identity would better align the procurement competency framework with country's priorities. New Zealand is certainly not alone in this quest towards better integration of minority groups, as Canada's Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business (PSIB), for example, requires educating procurement officers on the benefits and obligations of Indigenous procurement.

ProcurComp^EU would therefore greatly benefit to integrate a specific competence linked to the integration of minority groups in public procurement strategies. Besides clear requirements promulgated outside of the European Union, some Member states also promote social inclusion in public contracts of minority groups. This is for example the case in Hungary with the Roma community (see box below).

> **Box 5.1. Employing Roma people in cleaning services for Budapest's public chimney sweeping company**
>
> Budapest's public chimney sweeping company - FŐKÉTÜSZ Capital Chimney Sweeper Ltd. – which is fully owned by the municipality of Budapest, tendered for a cleaning service for its headquarters and other premises. FŐKÉTÜSZ decided to provide an opportunity for companies that employ Roma people to undertake this contract, due to high levels of unemployment among this group. This procedure was chosen as the contracting authority's first attempt at using evaluation criteria beyond price, as it was considered easy to control and an effective way of integrating Roma people in the labour market.
>
> This procedure involved the inclusion of social considerations in the award criteria. It is one of the few cases, showing the use of the best price-quality ratio (BPQR) award criterion instead of the lowest price in Hungary. Social considerations were weighted at 20% and included the following three sub-criteria:
>
> - The tenderer had to show evidence of having a cooperation agreement with any Roma public interest foundation, which has been registered for at least 3 years.
> - The tenderer had to undertake to employ Roma employees that are registered as disadvantaged persons during the contract period.
> - The tenderer had to ensure that the number of Roma employees constituted at least 8% of the whole staff.
>
> The agreement between the bidders and a Roma public interest foundation had to be signed by the time of the submission of the tender. The successful bidder was a business (Fort Facility Ltd.) which had a cooperation agreement with Roma Civic Association, a Roma public interest foundation. The contract was signed in December 2017 and lasted for two years.
>
> Source: (European Union, 2020[3])

While in most European Member States, leveraging public procurement to promote economic empowerment of minorities could be seen as a part of sustainable procurement strategies (a specific competency already foreseen in the competency matrix of ProcurComp[EU]), some countries outside of the European Union place a stand-alone emphasis on supporting indigenous populations through public procurement. Should ProcurComp[EU] be designed to progress towards an international competency framework, this dimension would need to be better captured in the competency matrix.

5.2. Distinguishing between different policy objectives being pursued through public procurement strategies

Strategic public procurement can help achieve various broader policy objectives, such as reducing the public sector environmental footprint, supporting the economic empowerment of small size enterprises or minority groups, increasing ethics and responsible business conduct or boosting innovation in the public sector. Evidence shows that these multiple policy objectives are individually being pursued in many OECD countries.

Figure 5.1. Existence of a strategy/policy to pursue secondary policy objectives in public procurement
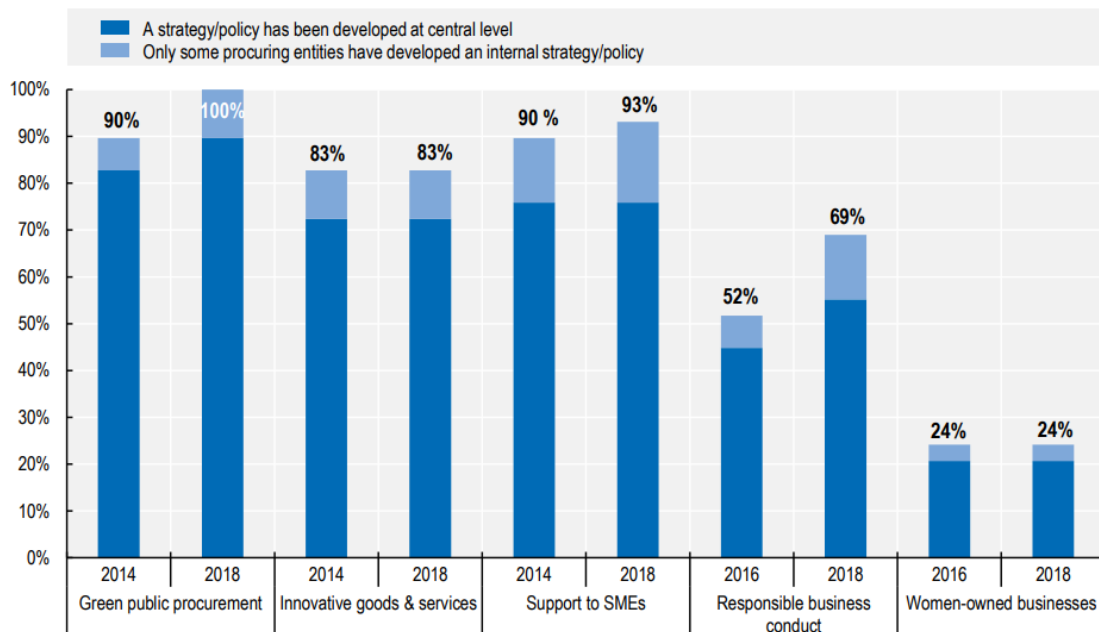
Note: : The chart is based on data from 29 countries (28 OECD countries plus Costa Rica) that answered both the 2018 and one of the 2016/2014 Surveys on public procurement. Percentages give the sum of both categories. Countries indicating that some procuring entities developed an internal strategy/policy and that a strategy/policy has been developed at central level are included in the second category (i.e. a strategy/policy has been developed at central level).
Source: (OECD, 2019[4])

Yet, apart from public procurement of innovation, the broader policy objectives are aggregated into one single competency referred to as sustainable procurement. However, they convey very different concepts and actions that should be implemented by public procurement professionals. For example, green public procurement requires skills and knowledge relating to specific sectoral legislations (e.g. the Clean Vehicles Directive), a capacity to allow for variants in solutions proposed, a thorough understanding of environmental impact assessment tools, etc.

Leveraging public procurement to support SMEs requires an intimate knowledge of market structure and composition, barriers affecting SMEs participation and the design of effective allotment strategies. Implementing socially responsible public procurement also features a specific skillset that could be provided by specialised public procurement professionals as in the case of France.

Box 5.2. Building a network of social clauses facilitator

Social clauses facilitators are professionals in charge of promoting and supporting the implementation of social clauses at local level. A recent cartography has identified 448 facilitators employed by 323 organisations (mainly Employment Services - Maisons de l'Emploi and Local Plans for Employment and Integration - Plans Locaux pour l'Insertion et l'Emploi PLIE).

Their main tasks are to:

- support public buyers in the identification of markets suitable for containing social clauses and in the drafting of specifications;
- inform bidding companies and assist contracted companies to implement of social clauses;
- act as a relay between the companies and local integration structures (training and social centres, work integration social enterprises (WISE), associations, etc.); and
- monitor the implementation of social clauses.

In 2009, Alliance Ville Emploi started a network of social clause facilitators. Born as an informal meeting place for facilitators, it has become more structured, even if it does not have an autonomous legal form. It is the only national network, but other informal networks exist at local level.

Results of the activities of the network in 2019 include:

- 8 interregional meetings in the large French cities;
- 2 training courses to give facilitators the necessary skills to promote social integration and employment in public procurement; and
- 2 specialised training modules on "social clauses in service tenders" and "promoting social clauses in private markets".

A key task of the network is to homogenise interventions across France. This helps create a secure base of interpretation on which to work and, consequently, encourages greater use of such clauses.

Source: (European Union, 2019[5])

The same is true for skills and knowledge required to use public procurement to support innovation which is subject in the competency matrix of ProcurComp^{EU} of a stand-alone competence. Isolating main themes of policy objectives that could be leveraged through public procurement would allow to define more thoroughly skills and knowledge specifically required in each, would help better identifying what would be required at different proficiency levels and would also allow to use the competency matrix in institutions which might be specialised in promoting specific policy objectives such as competence centres for green public procurement.

Integrating three policy dimensions (green public procurement, socially responsible public procurement and SMEs-friendly public procurement) into one competency also poses challenges in identifying specific knowledge and skill gaps. The survey questionnaire allows participants to select only one level for the whole competency, not separately for green public procurement, socially responsible public procurement and SMEs-friendly public procurement, unlike the case of *C30 risk management and internal control* in which the sub-score is available separately for risk management and internal control. Therefore, it is difficult to identify which of these three policy dimensions are relatively strong and/or weak from one integrated score on sustainable procurement. If separated, the score of one policy dimension (e.g. SMEs-friendly procurement) could be relatively higher than another policy dimensions (e.g. socially responsible public procurement).
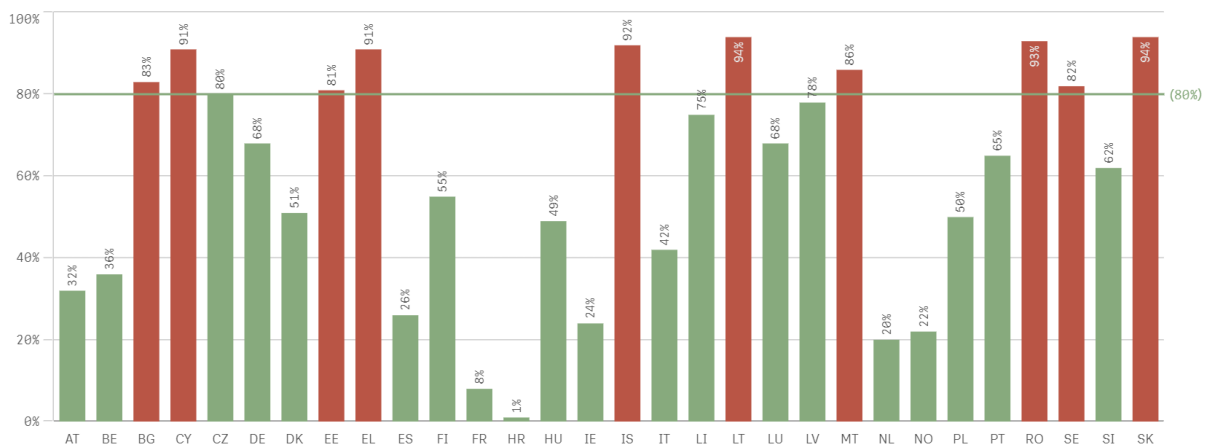
The European Commission could therefore consider developing specific competences for green public procurement, socially responsible public procurement and SMEs-friendly public procurement.

5.3. Developing a stand-alone competency on award criteria

In its standard version, the competency matrix of ProcurComp[EU] bundles skills and knowledge about award criteria together with the drafting of technical specifications and the setting of exclusion and selection criteria. However, defining adequate and pro-competitive award criteria requires its own set of skills and knowledge. Too often, oversight bodies in European Union countries find errors and irregularities specifically related to the design of award criteria.

From ensuring that criteria are linked to the subject matter of the contract to objectively assessing qualitative elements of the bids or designing complex scoring formula incentivising genuine competition in public tenders, public procurement professionals are required to navigate a complex web of options. The 2014 Directives put a central focus on the use of MEAT criteria when designing open public tenders, yet the practice shows that its use varies greatly amongst Member States as shown in the figure below.

Figure 5.2. Proportion of procedures awarded based on lowest price, 2020

Source: (European Commission, 2020[6])

Among the different solutions identified, reinforcing the skills and knowledge of public procurement professionals in this respect is considered critical. Therefore, one first would need to identify strengths and weaknesses on this specific topic. Developing a stand-alone competence in the competency matrix focusing on award criteria would allow to detail the various proficiency levels for implementing effective award criteria and thus identify opportunities for upskilling public procurement professionals.

In addition, as already suggested for the competency related to sustainable procurement, dividing the competency related to technical specifications into one specifically for technical specifications and one for award criteria would allow users to identify knowledge and skill gaps for specific public procurement techniques.

6. Leveraging the Self-Assessment Tool and additional reporting capabilities to better inform professionalisation initiatives

6.1. Adapting the Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) to conduct large scale surveys

The six initiatives where the implementation of ProcurComp^{EU} has been tested provided insights on technical elements which impact the seamless experience of users, especially when computing the results of the survey in the SAT. First, the size of the survey significantly impacts the efforts required to integrate responses into the tool for further analysis.

EUSurvey is the European Commission's official survey management system for creating and publishing forms available to the public, e.g. user satisfaction surveys and public consultations. Launched in 2013, its main purpose is to create official surveys of public opinion and forms for internal communication and staff management, e.g. staff opinion surveys and forms for evaluation or registration. The user interface is available in 23 of the official EU languages.

Provided the survey is carried out in EUSurvey, responses can be extracted in the form of an excel file. In its standard version, the SAT requires to transpose each individual responses in the tool for analysis purposes. When using the SAT for large scale surveys, this task would be extremely tedious. Therefore, considering the scale of surveys implemented in Chile and in Italy, which accounted from around 100 to close to 200 respondents, a new conversion sheet has been designed by the OECD which allows to integrate into the SAT normalised responses on skills and knowledge in bulk. This functionality proved indeed critical for the purpose of designing a training or professional development blueprint at national level or for redesigning a national certification scheme.

The European Commission could consider integrating the new conversion sheet which allows to integrate responses in bulk in the SAT standard version.

6.2. Developing reporting functionalities tailored to the objectives of the self-assessment: organisational use

Whether participating institutions wanted to identify opportunities for training development or to assess its organisational procurement maturity, the objectives of the implementation of ProcurComp^{EU} are different and warrant differentiated reporting functionalities. For organisational purposes, public institutions might want to explore potential reorganisation of their procurement function based on responses. For

assessments including various procurement roles, understanding how an individual compare with various job profiles could provide useful insights.

Therefore, a new sheet "Reshuffling" has been created in the SAT to allow for comparisons of individual responses with the different job profiles and their proficiency levels. The tool now allows to visualise in which roles a specific individual would have the required competences at the expected proficiency level.

Figure 6.1. Individual assessment against all job profiles

Procurement support officer	Standalone public buyer	Public procurement specialist	Category specialist	Contract manager	Department manager
1.00	0.00	0.00	-1.00	-1.00	-2.00
1.00	0.00	-1.00	-1.00	0.00	-1.00
1.00	-1.00	0.00	0.00	-1.00	-3.00
-1.00	-2.00	-2.00	-1.00	-1.00	-2.00
0.50	-0.50	-1.50	-2.50	-1.50	-2.50
0.00	-1.00	-2.00	-3.00	-2.00	-3.00
3.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	3.00	3.00
2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.00	-1.00	-1.00	1.00	-1.00	-2.00
2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	0.00
1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	2.00
1.00	-1.00	-1.00	0.00	1.00	-2.00
1.00	0.00	0.00	-1.00	2.00	2.00
0.50	-0.50	-0.50	0.50	1.50	1.50
2.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	2.00	0.00
0.00	-1.00	0.00	-1.00	-2.00	-1.00
0.50	-0.50	0.50	1.50	-1.50	-0.50
0.50	-0.50	-0.50	1.50	-0.50	-1.50
2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
1.50	-0.50	0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-1.50
1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-1.00	-2.00
1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	-1.00	-1.00
0.00	-1.00	0.00	1.00	-1.00	-2.00
-1.00	0.00	-1.00	0.00	-1.00	-2.00
0.50	0.50	-0.50	0.50	-1.50	-2.50
2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	-1.00
0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	-2.00
0.00	-1.00	-1.00	1.00	-1.00	-2.00
0.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-2.00	-2.00
0.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-2.00	-3.00

Source: Developments made on the Self-Assessment Tool

Beyond offering the possibility to identify in which role a public procurement professional would best perform, the organisational use of ProcurComp^{EU} could also allow for identifying those that could lend support to other members of the organisation. Therefore, a new excel sheet named "Mentoring" has been created to select in each competence and for each role who is performing best.

This functionality could help organisations identifying among their staff individuals who could provide support to other team members in specific competences, either procurement-related or soft ones. For the purpose of increasing the overall organisation procurement maturity, it could be useful to identify who is more knowledgeable on market analysis across a specific procurement function and see who could benefit from targeted advice.

Besides developing internal upskilling strategies, additional reporting functionalities could provide organisations with insights on linkages between employee engagement and assessment of skills and knowledge. Engaged employees perform better, thus increasing productivity, public sector innovation and citizens' satisfaction. Organisations with more engaged employees also see less sick leave and higher retention rates. The drivers of employee engagement vary greatly, but common factors include perceived quality of leadership and management, working conditions and opportunities for career progression (OECD, 2016[7]). Employee engagement can thus be considered a performance measure for people management.

Linking metrics on employee engagement and self-assessments of skills and knowledge could provide organisations with a more holistic view of the procurement function and how its role is perceived as being aligned with the organisation's missions and values. To do so, survey managers would just have to include additional questions in the survey on perceived quality of leadership and management, working conditions and opportunities for career progression.

6.3. Developing reporting functionalities tailored to the objectives of the self-assessment: designing a training action plan

In such a use case, the main objective of using ProcurComp^{EU} lies with the identification of training priorities and target audiences for the implementation of a training action plan. Considering the potential to issue large scale surveys, as demonstrated in the case of Chile and Italy, the SAT could benefit from enhanced functionalities to gather a more granular understanding of trends and patterns.

Identifying training priorities could be challenging in case several job profiles are defined. Indeed, different job profiles would display different expected proficiency levels, making averages less relevant. To address this issue, a new reporting functionality "Profile gaps" has been developed which measures the distance to targets irrespective of the proficiency level. This helps identifying competences in which all respondents are most in need of additional training.

In a similar vein, when users are leveraging ProcurComp^{EU} to design a training action plan or a professional development blueprint, they need to gather insights on priority groups for training activities. In its standard version the SAT allows to visualise average strengths and weaknesses related to the competences included in the competency matrix.

However, while the tool provides an analysis of respondents' average assessments compared to target levels, it does not identify where most respondents have assessed their skills and knowledge below expected proficiency levels. Incorporating such functionality could signal to users where the greatest cohort of trainees could be found. Therefore, the excel sheet "Profile gaps" displays information on the number and the share of respondents underperforming according to the expected proficiency level for each procurement role.

Given the flexibility of EUSurvey, survey managers can further tailor questions being asked to respondents. When using ProcurComp^{EU} to develop a training action plan, it could be useful to add a question relating to respondents' workplace. Responses could be provided either in a free text entry or via a drop-down list. Since free text is prone to errors and could imply additional efforts on data cleaning, it might be preferable to use a pre-defined drop-down list, as it was implemented in the case of Chile. In case of a large survey, the type of institutions in which respondents are working could be structured either around levels of government or by type of sectors, depending on the needs of the survey manager. This could provide additional analytical capabilities and help to identify priority groups for the implementation of a training action plan.

7. Conclusion: How the use of ProcurComp^{EU} impacts professionalisation initiatives?

In all six pilots, using the structured approach offered by ProcurComp^{EU} to the assessment of skills and knowledge expected from procurement professionals has helped informing capacity-building strategies. In many instances, initial findings stemming from the analysis of the results would need to be confirmed in larger scale exercises, but the pilot implementation already provided useful insights.

The above sections provide a detailed account of steps carried out to implement ProcurComp^{EU}, lessons learned and recommendations for a greater uptake of these professionalisation tools. Besides these elements, the close collaboration with the participating institutions provided broader insights on the relationship between the use of ProcurComp^{EU} and professionalisation initiatives.

First, it helps steering the conversation on skills and knowledge expected from procurement officials. By looking at individual competences, project implementers need to identify those that are critical to effectively fulfil a specific procurement role. The pilot in New Zealand for example allowed exchanges and discussions on creating a stand-alone competence related to the understanding and ability to account for cultural identity. Those discussions, should they materialise in the development of this specific competence, would provide a greater alignment between procurement roles and the country's strategic priorities.

It also supports a better coordination between different procurement functions. For example, the pilot in Iceland clearly highlighted opportunities in ensuring complementarity between different roles, thus better aligning organisation's capabilities. In Rikiskaup, the project lead decided to define job profiles, such as procurement specialist and strategic procurement specialist, with a distinct set of competences and proficiency levels. Given the importance of ensuring that benefits sought after when using public procurement more strategically (e.g. looking at better environmental performance, innovation, etc…) materialise during contract execution, more emphasis has been given to the post-award phase in the strategic procurement specialist job profile.

By supporting the conversation around skills and knowledge of the procurement function, ProcurComp^{EU} also provides opportunities to implement a more forward-looking approach to capacity-building activities. Indeed, alongside those that are critical for a specific procurement role, using the competency matrix could help looking at more aspirational competences. The pilot in Ireland clearly illustrates these benefits. In the final list of competences selected by OGP, almost half of them were identified as aspirational. Analysis of responses therefore provided a gap analysis for the transition towards an updated job profile.

Last, this type of exercise could also offer the possibility to extend the assessment of skills and knowledge of stakeholders, beyond procurement professionals, who actively contribute to the effectiveness of the procurement ecosystem. In Costa Rica, the implementation involved the assessment of the procurement audit function, further nurturing the debate on procurement knowledge that auditors should possess to contribute to the effectiveness of the procurement system. The self-assessment of auditors proved

challenging but could serve as a first step to develop a ProcurComp^{EU} light, which would be applicable to other roles such as auditors or subject-matter experts.

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