The Systematic Procurement Planning Guide of State Universities and Colleges: Knowledge, Practice, and Challenges

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Abstract - This study recognizes the role of State Universities and Colleges (SUC) in achieving the sustainable development goals through delivery of quality education. Further emphasizes the role of procurement in carrying-out programs. Procurement is the process of acquiring goods and services with best quality at a lowest price to provide the needs. To have a successful procurement, Republic Act 9184 guides SUC with strict adherence to its implementing rules. Adherence is assessed through the APCPI tool. Recent assessment revealed that procurement failed due to unclear and incomplete work requirements and inaccurate cost estimates being attributed to poor planning. Thus, this study focused on procurement planning and sought the extent of compliance; the level of knowledge in the preparation of technical specification (TS), scope of work (SOW), terms of reference (TOR), and cost estimates (CE); the practice, challenges and the systematic procurement planning guide for SUC in Region V. A purposive method was applied to gather data using survey, interview, focus group discussion and desk review. Studies revealed that SUCs were fully compliant in the APCPI assessment and have satisfactory level of knowledge in preparing the procurement plan. Almost all SUCs have common practice in procurement planning, however, challenged by human and resource management issues. Thus, a systematic procurement-planning guide has been developed to provide procedures in developing TS/WOS/TOR/CE of SUC.

Keywords - Sustainable, development, performance, service, assessment

Introduction

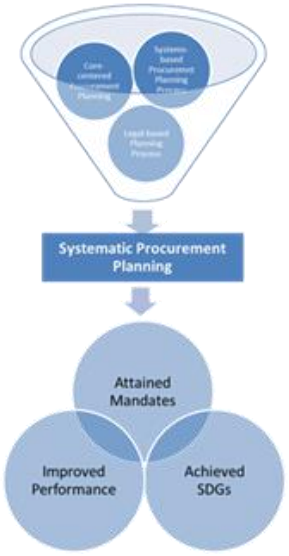
The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) urges higher education institutions to responsively develop projects, activities, and programs (PAP). Accordingly, State Universities and Colleges (SUC) in the Bicol Region, Philippines, are mandated to deliver quality tertiary education in science, technology, agriculture, education, business, humanities, health, engineering, and other disciplines to attain sustainable goals. This necessitates the full implementation of its PAP according to the mandates with observance of government policies and regulations. Along with the attainment of sustainable goals through implementation of PAP, procurement plays a vital role as it is necessary to acquire the materials and services that meet the highest quality standards at a lowest cost. The Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA) defines procurement as obtaining goods, consulting services, and contracting for infrastructure projects by the Procuring Entity (PE). In Section 7 of the implementing rules and regulations of GPRA prescribes meticulous and judicious planning and to consider only those crucial to the efficient discharge of government functions, to optimize the value for money (RA9184, Sec. 7, pg. 5).

Effective procurement planning contributes to prudent budget management, cost control, and the delivery of quality public services. More so, procurement planning is necessary in the government budget process, as it becomes the basis for fund appropriations and the key to laudable performance and receiving incentives. Further, the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) in its 2016 Agency Procurement Compliance and Performance Indicators (APCPI) consolidated reports on government procurement performance, revealed that 50% of the causes of failures in procurement were due to poor planning, resulting in delayed or undelivered services (GPPB, 2016). These findings underscore the significance of effective procurement planning in ensuring the delivery of quality higher education to stakeholders.

It is in this context that this study has been forwarded, with focus on procurement planning as strategy to make procurement successful. It is critical both in administrative and management systems that, if not given preferential attention and action, will result in poor performance, affecting the service delivery of the SUC. This study aimed to assist SUC to achieve successful procurement and provide quality standard of goods and services critical to PAP implementation. Grounded in three fundamental theories: the Golden Circle Theory by Simon Sinek, the Agency Theory by Barry Mitnick, and the Systems Theory pioneered by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, the researcher developed

the Core-Centred Procurement Planning Theory which integrates the purpose, the rules governing the process, and the systematic procedure in procurement planning, leading to the fulfilment of institutions' mandates, as illustrated in Figure 1:

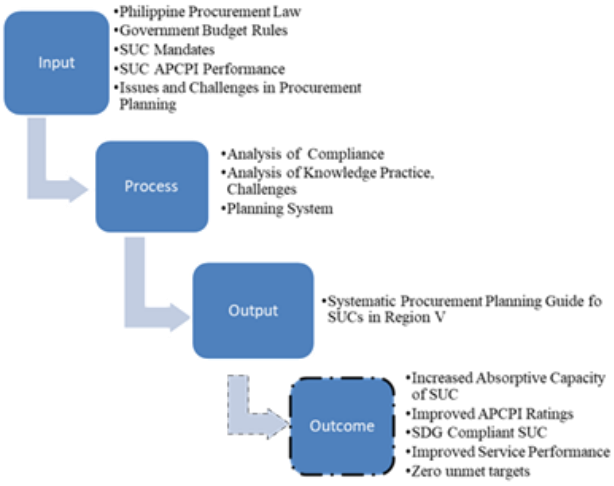
Figure 1 Core-centered Systematic Procurement Planning Theory



Specifically, the study sought: 1) the extent of compliance in APCPI Assessment from the period 2017 to 2021 of SUC pertaining to procurement planning assessment conditions; 2) the level of knowledge of SUC in a) preparation of technical specifications (TS) for goods and services projects; b) preparation of terms of reference (TOR) for consulting services; c) preparation of scope of work (SOW) for infrastructure projects, and; d) preparation of cost estimates (CE); 3) the practice of SUC in procurement planning; 4) the challenges in procurement planning, and; 5) the systematic procurement planning guide for SUC.

Moreover, the study was guided by the conceptual framework on which the issues were processed to arrive at an output that can be beneficial not only to the locale of the study, but for all the government agencies in the region. Figure 2 presents the conceptual paradigm:

Figure 2. Conceptual Paradigm



It is also reflected in the conceptual paradigm the target outcome of the study which will be realized after utilization of the output and realization of its significance. It was provided as an expectation of the positive results of the study, in support of the theoretical framework.

Moreover, the study focuses on the procurement planning process of SUCs in Bicol, being the primary higher institutions that serve as change agents for social and economic transformation. Its role in promoting economic growth particularly on educational quality needs significant systematic support mechanism. Thus, providing a more specified but simple procurement planning guide based on RA9184, will help them achieve its goals without being remiss of the procedural process prescribed by the law.

Materials and Methods

The study uses the mixed-method approach to collect and analyze the data from the nine SUCs in Bicol region, as the locale of the study – Bicol University, Partido State University, Central Bicol State University for Agriculture, Bicol State College for Applied Science and Technology, Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges, Catanduanes State University, Sorsogon State University, and Camarines Norte State College. In the presentation of data, the names of SUC were anonymized to protect its integrity. The specific respondents were those end-users of procurement projects that support instruction, research and extension. Also, informed consent form was used to observe ethical research guidelines.

A desk review of APCPI scores was limited to the five assessment conditions pertaining to procurement planning. The scoring system and the conditions set to meet the specific score for each sub-indicator can be sourced from APCPI User's Guide. Presented in Table 1 the sub-indicators for analysis to determine the extent of compliance of SUC.

Table 1
APCPI Sub-Indicators Pertaining to Procurement Planning

APCPI Sub-indicators	Assessment Conditions
3.e	Use of proper and effective procurement documentation and technical specifications /requirements
5.a	An approved APP that includes all type of procurement
5.b	Preparation of Annual Procurement Plan for Common-Use-Supplies and Equipment (APP-CSE) and Procurement of Common—Use-Supplies and Equipment from the Procurement Service
5.c	Existing Green Specifications for GPPB-identified non-CSE items are adopted
8.c	Planned procurement activities achieved desired contract outcomes and objectives within the target/allotted timeframe

Source: APCPI User's Guide, 2016

In getting the level of knowledge, there was three survey tests used to determine the level of knowledge: the first for end-users for goods and services, the second for infrastructure projects, and the third for consulting services. Each survey test has two parts; part one is on the level of knowledge in technical specification writing, scope of work, and terms of reference preparation, and the part two is on the level of knowledge in cost estimation. Basic information i.e. age, gender, employment was also gathered as individual background of the respondents. Though it was not part of the inquiry, it may be referred to in the discussion of the results. The tool was pilot-tested with a group of individuals other than the identified respondents to detect obvious flaws or awkward wording of questionnaires (ABS, 2023). Percentage score was group into with corresponding adjectival rating. The first cluster with 0 to 39% is classified as poor, next cluster from 40% to 69% is classified as fair, followed by 70% to 99% classified as satisfactory level. The SUC gets a perfect percentage score of 100% for the score of 10. Table 2 presents the scoring system:

Table 2
Scoring system for the level of knowledge of SUC in procurement planning

	Scoring and rating system (Average of all individual scores)			
Average Number of Correct Answers	**0-3**	**4-6**	**7-9**	**10**
Percentage Score	**0-39%**	**40-69%**	**70-99%**	**100%**
Adjectival Rating	**Poor**	**Fair**	**Satisfactory**	**Very Satisfactory**

The analysis and organization of data involved the use of descriptive statistics. Frequency count and percentage were employed to analyze results and describe the level of knowledge of SUCs in the procurement planning process. The percentage score was computed based on the average number of correct answers per SUC and multiplied by 100, as: Percentage = Average number of correct answers x 100%. An interpretation of each cluster of level of knowledge was provided to describe the actual performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency (Calubag, 2020). The adjectival description is a researcher-made customized according to the scope of knowledge being measured, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3
Interpretation of the Level of Knowledge

Percentage score	Adjectival rating	Description
0-39%	Poor	The end-user indicates a minimal or almost nonexistent understanding of needs identification/cost estimation. The end user needs to gain fundamental knowledge and may need help to write the item/work description, but could identify basic needs.
40-69%	Fair	The end-user needs to understand the identification/cost estimation process better. The end-user has some basic knowledge but needs more in-depth or may have misconceptions about certain aspects. Can formulate precise, specific requirements.
70-99%	Satisfactory	The end-user implies a fair understanding of the needs identification/cost estimation process. The end user possesses a reasonable amount of knowledge and can navigate through the basics confidently but may need help with more complex aspects of needs identification. Demonstrate a reasonable understanding of procurement planning principles and develop justification for needs.
100%	Very satisfactory	The end-user demonstrates a strong understanding of the needs identification/cost estimation process. The end-user has a comprehensive grasp of basic and advanced concepts, showing proficiency in applying knowledge to different scenarios. Analyzes and prioritizes needs based on strategic goals and consistently applies effective procurement planning procedures that contribute to efficient and effective procurement processes.

The data on the practice and challenges were gathered through key informant interviews (KII) with the same identified respondents in the survey tests. An unstructured questionnaire was used to aid the researcher in the data gathering procedures. Using the model value, the Researcher determined the value of practice and challenges, repeatedly given by the KI in a specific set (BYJUS, 2023). Recording the answers that frequently stated their occurrences were counted and ranked according to the value.

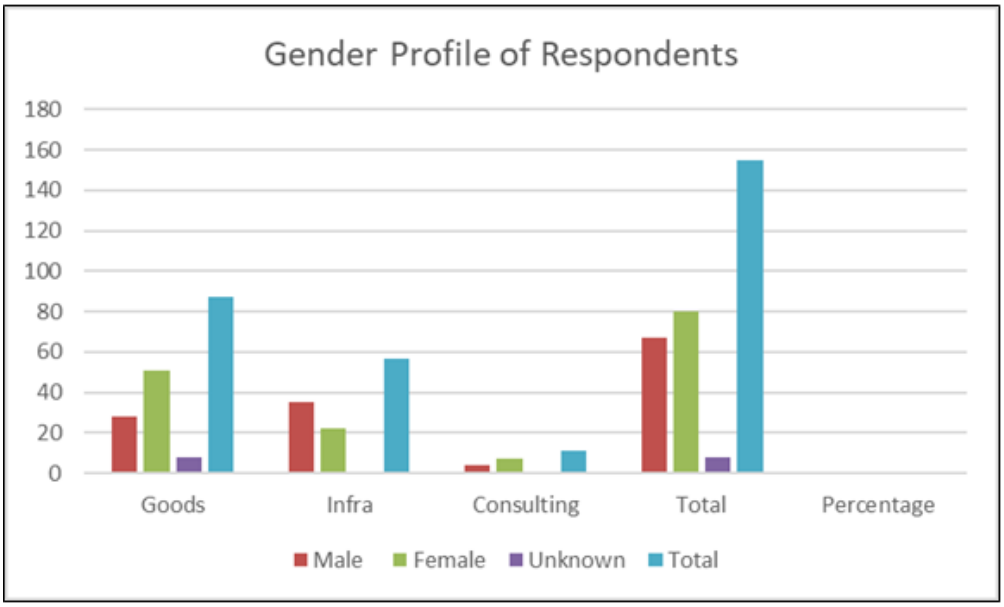
Through purposive sampling, a total of 155 respondents was selected. This method of selection was appropriate due to the homogenous characteristics of the group that supplied the best information in achieving the study's objectives (Nikolopoulou, 2023). The project management office (PMO) or End User units implementing PAP, with procurement of goods and services, infrastructure projects, and consulting services qualified as the respondents.

The statistical analysis and organization of data involved the use of descriptive statistics. Frequency count and percentage were employed to analyze results and describe the level of knowledge of SUCs in the procurement planning process. The researcher measured the level of knowledge depending on the total scores. A percentage score was determined according to the number of correct answers and the total number of correct answers. Percentage was based on the range of total answers per set of assessment criteria.

Results and Discussions

Results of the study provided basic information about the respondent's profile, although not part of the scope, but are important to note that out of 155 participants to the research undertakings, 43% or 67 are males, 52% or 80 are females. The remaining 5% or 8 participants did not indicate their gender identity. This implied that females dominated the respondent's population. As to the status of employment, 71% or 110 are permanent and the rest are either on contract of service, job order or casual employees. The accountability and liability of the 29% are not binding to the SUC due to none employee-employer relationship. Shown in Figure 3 the gender profile of respondents:

Figure 3. Gender profile of respondents



Given the profile, the following study results were gathered and presented according to the chronology of problems sought:

I. The extent of compliance in the APCPI assessment for the period 2017-2021 pertaining to procurement planning of SUC in Region V are presented as follows:
A. Full compliance in sub-indicator 3.e, use of proper and effective procurement documentation and technical specifications/requirements. The high score indicates full compliance with all the conditions for the sub-indicator. Review of documents showed "no reference to brand name" rule was observed, except for items/parts that required compatibility with the existing fleet or equipment. Most of the technical specifications of the items in the purchase requests were written in a generic manner, and bidders are given equal opportunity to participate. The focus of the description is in the purpose and expected functional service. Those descriptions coming from a specific brand was presented in a generic manner, which avoided tailor fitting. The description was mostly very short but clear. This implied that SUC scores are supported with evidences.

B. Full compliance in sub-indicator 5a, an approved APP that includes all type of procurement. The full compliance to the conditions for this sub-indicator was verified through review of Annual Procurement Plans (APP). The SUC used the prescribed format both in the original and supplemental APP. Posted APP can be accessed at PE's website

and the submission to GPPB was evidenced by printed copy of sent email to GPPB. However, posting and submission were not fully complied due to findings of some unposted APP and supplemental APP. Noted also the late submission of the same documents to GPPB of some SUCs. Thus, the high scores were not fully supported by the evidences found in the respective procurement office.

C. Full compliance in sub-indicator 5b, preparation of APP-CSE and procurement of CSE from the Procurement Service (PS). SUC used the prescribed format, with evidence of submission to PS but some SUC failed to provide the amount of purchases in Annex B of the APCPI self-assessment. There were also findings of non-submission from some of the SUCs This can affect the self-assessment during the confirmation process of GPPB.

D. Full compliance in sub-indicator 5c, existing Green Specifications for GPPB-identified non-CSE items are adopted. This requirement for green specifications became mandatory before the assessment period however, assessment started from 2020 only. Some SUC already observed green specifications, to cite, SUC A purchased those with energy efficiency and conservation to enhance the efficient use of energy, following Republic Act No. 11285. Energy Efficiency and Conservation (EEC) Act of the Philippines. This energy efficiency can be seen in refrigerators, air-conditioning units, electric stoves, and other IT/ICT laboratory equipment procured. Green specifications were also found in SUC C and D requests for catering services, where food packaging specifications are all environment friendly, no plastic and non-toxic materials were indicated. However, this green specification was not indicated in all of the requests, thus, requiring more orientation on green public procurement is necessary for the End-Users of all SUCs. Thus, the score is acceptable for this condition.

E. Full compliance in sub-indicator 8c, planned procurement activities achieved desired contract outcomes and objectives within the target/allotted timeframe. In this condition, all SUCs found to have records of failure of biddings. Although the reasons for failure of biddings were not accurately attributed to poor planning, but the failure of supplier or contractor to submit the eligibility requirements due to unclear TS/SOW/TOR/CE can be attributed to SUCs unclear details. There was no specific analysis conducted on the causes of failure of each failed project at the level of the BAC or the SUC. As regards the completion of projects within the timelines, records showed compliance to the delivery period of goods and services being procured. There were also documents on the extension of deliveries duly approved by the respective heads.

It was noted that SUCs has to establish institutionalized system yet regarding the procedures for inspection. Deliveries were checked by the presence or absence of the items only.

It is worthy to note that SUC has to fully substantiate all APCPI results. The unavailability and non-retrieval of records from the BAC Secretariat was observed by the researcher. Most of the SUC BAC Secretariat and Procurement Office had difficulty in gathering data from other concerned office i.e. supply office. It was also observed that some of the SUCs failure in complying with some of conditions is the lack of coordination with other offices that has the appropriate data. The gathering and consolidation of data was another found issue due to inadequate knowledge to do the process.

II. SUCs have satisfactory level of knowledge in procurement planning specific to preparation of TS/SOW/TOR/CE, except for SUC B with fair knowledge in TOR preparation. Reflected in Table 4 the summary results of survey tests:

Table 4
Summary results of survey tests conducted to SUC on the preparation of TS/SOW/TOR

SUC	Percentage Score/Qualitative Score					
	TS		SOW		TOR	
	PS*	QS**	PS	QS	PS	QS
A	8.18	Satisfactory	8.82	Satisfactory	8.00	Satisfactory
B	8.20	Satisfactory	7.00	Satisfactory	6.00	Fair
C	7.00	Satisfactory	7.88	Satisfactory	8.00	Satisfactory
D	8.75	Satisfactory	7.50	Satisfactory	7.50	Satisfactory
E	9.00	Satisfactory	7.67	Satisfactory	7.50	Satisfactory

F	7.67	Satisfactory	8.00	Satisfactory	7.00	Satisfactory
G	8.80	Satisfactory	7.50	Satisfactory	9.00	Satisfactory
H	8.64	Satisfactory	7.25	Satisfactory	8.00	Satisfactory
I	8.67	Satisfactory	7.36	Satisfactory	8.00	Satisfactory

Legend: * percentage score; ** qualitative score

It can be seen from the data in Table 4 that the level of knowledge of nine SUCs in the preparation of technical specification is generally satisfactory. It implied that SUC can describe the items and services they need and can set specifications based on performance requirements and relevant characteristics as required under Section 18 of RA9184. Their knowledge is enough to provide the basic details of the requirements, enabling bidders to prepare the bids effectively (RA9184, Sec. 17, page 8) and ensuring the success of the procurement. The scores reflect the end users' recognition of the importance of these specifications in the efficient discharge of functions, aligning with the institution's objectives (Section 7.1, RA9184, page 33). SUC's ability to formulate and prepare their PPMPs with complete item descriptions is acceptable and could justify the need. However, requiring assistance in formulating complex projects, the difficulty in defining the needs is expected, as these projects involve more intricate aspects, especially those highly technical in nature.

The SUC has demonstrated a reasonable proficiency in preparing the scope of work for infrastructure projects. This capability is evident in their ability to prepare the scope of work with the detailed engineering requirements for procuring infrastructure projects, as outlined in Annex A of RA 9184. This score was consistent with the KIs statements that most pre-engineering activities in infrastructure projects have been adhered to. The preparation of the scope of work is dependent upon the inputs and structure details derived from the purpose and objective of the building or works requested. Most of the respondents were familiar with crosschecking of the scope with the objective and followed the design standard and acceptable detailed engineering practice, specifically the seismicity of the area to determine the optimum safety of structures. All infrastructure projects passed through a layer of evaluations during the work and financial planning, administrative and in some cases academic council meeting. In no case, the Board of Regents approves the project without passing through the Committee on Finance that reviews the project proposal to ensure that the objectives of the projects were considered.

The level of knowledge on the preparation of terms of reference for consulting services projects is slightly lower than of the other two categories. SUCs possess an acceptable level of knowledge, except for SUC B. Implying basic capacity to supply he information needed in the contract of services as reference of consultant in delivering the services. SUCs may encounter challenges when dealing with more complex consulting projects. This awareness will help SUC prepare for such situations and work towards improving its capabilities. The complex projects for consulting services may include other types of procurement, such as when it is mixed with procurement of infrastructure or procurement of goods and services. At this level, consulting professionals and technical associations can help in completing the requirements of the terms of reference of the consulting project.

On the other hand, SUC B's fair knowledge on the crafting of terms of reference requires more understanding the process. The end-user has some basic knowledge but needs more in-depth or may have misconceptions about certain aspects in completing the details. This SUC even though, can formulate precise, specific requirements at the minimum level still requires assistance of an expert in formulating the TOR. Close supervision of an expert is always necessary.

In cost estimation, SUC can basically develop cost estimate for the project. The knowledge varies on the type of procurement, considering the different characteristics of the need's requirements per category. Table 5 presents the scores of each SUC:

Table 5
Results of the Survey Test Conducted for the Level of Knowledge of the Preparation of Cost Estimates

Respondents Code	Cost Estimation for Goods and Services	Cost Estimation for Infrastructure Projects	Cost Estimation for Consulting Services
A	8.82	8.55	7.50
B	9.80	9.50	6.00
C	8.67	8.25	7.00
D	9.00	8.75	5.50
E	7.33	9.00	5.50
F	6.22	10.00	6.00
G	8.60	8.50	5.00
H	8.91	9.25	5.50
I	9.56	9.43	9.00
Average Score	8.55	9.02	6.50
Adjectival Rating	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Fair

In procuring goods and services, SUCs reflect a strong sense of confidence in the accuracy of the budget for the contract. It considered delivery costs, hauling costs, and other related services that required the supplier to deliver the items at the doorsteps were duly considered. The practice of conducting of market price survey supports the satisfactory knowledge. Although, there were discussions happened on the eligibility issues of the suppliers being canvassed from the market.

The level of knowledge in cost estimation for infrastructure projects also agrees with the informants practice in cost estimation. On which they could basically prepare the estimates using the historical data and application of parametric estimating. This tool in cost estimation was reasonably quick, especially for projects with a very short period of preparation. The application of cost of a component or of the whole part of the project is based on a similar and currently done similar project, on which costs were already established from a finished one. However, this strategy loses appropriate data and difficult to generate statistically correct data when it is subject for audit. Nonetheless the satisfactory knowledge provides the basic requirements for setting the approved budget for the contract.

It is worthy to note the lower scores in cost estimation for consulting services against the goods and infrastructure. The score indicated that SUCs' needs to understand the cost estimation process better. The end-user has some basic knowledge but needs more in-depth or may have misconceptions about certain aspects. Although SUC formulate precise, specific cost requirements with the support of the more skilled in cost estimation.

III. The SUC's practices in procurement planning specific to TS/SOW/TOR are internet sourcing, market survey, suppliers' catalogue, historical data and the constitution of the special committee. Out of a total of 155 key informants, 122 or 79% were searching the internet whenever they need a specification for the procurement of goods. Mostly coming from online markets and social media blogger. This is followed by the market survey with 74% of the respondents are practicing. The markets referring to are those malls, enterprises, and known suppliers within the locality. Looking at the products specification attached to the item were the source of information in completing the technical specification. Next are the benchmarking and historical data with 60% and 36% of the respondents, respectively provided this information. The benchmarking provided them actual experiences and performance status of the items or services similar to what they currently procuring. Review of historical data i.e. completed contracts similar to current project provides them convenience in preparing technical specifications.

Most SUC practiced market price surveys for cost estimation to get the appropriate price for any procurement project with 97% of the responses. End-users for goods and services usually conducted market surveys for prices. Tag prices of items in the store within the city, like SM Department Store, were considered with a 10% markup. The market they were referring to is the existing suppliers or stores in the locality. Searching the online market, such as Lazada, Shopee, and other international online sellers for prices with 88% of the respondents was doing. These mean the prices of items in the online market were the most convenient, especially when there has been limited processing time. For infrastructure projects, 99% of the respondents are getting the cost from the DPWH price index to determine the prices

of infrastructure materials. They also observed the implementation of the project, whether a one-year or multi-year project; they added 10 to 20% of the current market price to address inflation rates and future price changes.

The practices reflected that most SUCs are not yet aware of the recommended sources of information as stipulated in the procurement law. Even though the practices provide accurate information, still are conventional in nature. The GPPB-Technical Support Office provided list of sources of specifications especially for non-CSE projects. Consultations with entities that issue technical standards, inquiry of specifications from relevant agencies, consultation with professional and technical association, looking for technical journals/magazines, are practices that the SUC can adopt. It is important to note that specification from internet are not providing acceptable information. Most of the specifications found focused on the features and design, without properly identifying the functional and performance specification of the item or services. It is just good to be true.

IV. SUC's are facing challenges in procurement planning specifically in completing the TS/SOW/TOR and cost estimates of the projects. Ranked highest is the insufficient time to prepare the plans with 88% of the respondents experiencing it. An equivalent time for the pre-implementation to cover the activities is needed, such as the preparation of project requests, procurement planning, and processes. Based on their information, project management usually includes only the implementation phase. In this case, the time allotted for the implementation of the project was affected by the procurement planning process. A market survey or pre-canvass requires enough time to gather more information to complete the item description and check the items' availability thoroughly. KIs emphasized that a single project may require approximately one day of travel within the city or province where the target source is available.

Moreover, additional time is needed to complete the legwork by going to the other government agencies to coordinate and process documents for pre-engineering requirements, i.e., the Bureau of Lands, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Assessor's Office, and others. Likewise, when a feasibility study is required, its preparation requires time, with more or less a month. Factoring the time for the planning stage in the project duration would result in a quality output. Further, searching the Internet requires extra time, especially if the Internet connectivity is very slow. Surfing requires patience and diligence to get information.

The inadequacy of number of personnel ranked second with 71% of the respondents had expressed as one of the biggest challenges in doing the procurement plan. Although most end users know how to write the minimum project specifications, the lack of staff to assist in the process became an issue. If there were no other staff assigned in the office, doing the survey or pre-canvass would be delayed. Waiting for anyone free to go out is a waste of time. Most of the tasks assigned to the personnel in the project management office were ad-hoc. Thus, these pre-procurement activities are on top of the regular functions. For example, the job description includes conducting a market survey and pre-engineering activities and other related planning work with corresponding equivalent credit.

If personnel were available to be assigned, they would need to gain the knowledge to prepare the procurement plan, thus requiring training or, at least, an orientation on procurement law. Notably, a procurement project, regardless of value and how small it is, requires a person to do the details of the project's specification, more so, to do the planning process. This challenge affirmed the findings of Rey (2019) that additional manpower in the office of the procurement management office particularly in the planning section of the Bicol University is necessary to assist the end-users in the project packaging (Rey, 2019).

While limited knowledge in procurement planning process is the third among the challenges with 70% of the respondents have experienced. The knowledge regarding itemizing and giving complete descriptions of the needed materials is limited only to what they have just heard and observed. Uncertainties on what should have been done was experienced by the70% of the respondents. Difficulty in writing the complete descriptions of the projects is usually the cause of some delays in planning. Some end-users were not properly oriented on the process of planning especially those newly hired personnel given procurement project. Most end-users are not aware that planning process is their responsibility. Orientation is necessary for those unfamiliar with the planning process, specifically the writing of TS/TOR/SOW and cost estimation. This challenge is relevant to the result of survey test on the satisfactory result of survey test on the level of knowledge on which possesses basic ability to do procurement planning.

Whereas, the 62% of the respondents confided that multi-tasking greatly affects the procurement planning process. Given the nature of procurement, which often involves managing multiple suppliers, contracts, and internal stakeholder requirements simultaneously, the demand for multi-tasking is high. However, this can lead to decreased

focus, errors, and burnout among procurement professionals. Respondents from SUCs F and H stressed that most of their End-Users and designated personnel in the procurement office provided multiple tasks. Sometimes, pre-canvassing was done along with any other official business in Metro Manila to save time and effort. But the priority was focused on the main purpose of travel rather than going to the different suppliers. This situation usually placed the procurement activity at a limited time. Overlapping some tasks may lead to inefficiency and more errors in procurement activities. The volume of work in their hands was oftentimes is overwhelming and confused which task should be prioritized, the procurement tasks or the other equally important one. This confusion discouraged them and ending up not doing at all, and not pursuing the procurement instead. Putting minds into different tasks will just jeopardize the quality of the procurement project, especially if the person's adaptability to this nature of work is a challenge. The risk of not doing well will lead to a more complicated output and consequently require more time to fix, revise and finalize the procurement plan.

With complacency as the fifth challenges with 21% of end-users have admitted during the KII. Some felt they needed to be more concerned about being responsible for procurement planning. The end-user thought that somebody would always do a market survey for them. The activity proponent would wait for the BAC to procure the items identified in the proposal without making necessary purchase requests or PPMP. Even if they knew it, they would not go out to do the market survey because of many reasons. Another factor is the non-consolidation of similar small project procurement. Data from the CPMRs reflects a volume of procurement done through alternative procurement methods.

It is worthy to note that in the study conducted on the implementation of performance-based bonus in SUC in Bicol region by Luzon (2019) revealed that SUC were challenged by systematic lapse in planning, monitoring and implementation of PAPs and lack of manpower. The study further emphasized in its recommendation that investments on planning and other preparatory activities before procurement should be conducted to attain successful implementation of projects of SUCs, (Luzon, 2019).

Thus, the current study calls for a serious and dedicated institutional policies and guidelines to address the above-mentioned challenges by way of developing a systematic procurement planning guide that can help the SUCs in properly identifying items and services crucial to the performance of day-today delivery of mandated functions.

V. The systematic procurement planning guide for SUCs has been provided containing among others the development process from needs analysis, information gathering and writing the TS/SOW/TOR. It also provides the process of cost estimation that considers all factors in forecasting estimates. It also provides tips in every aspect for the End-User to observe. The experiences and information from KIs and FGDs were considered, to provide realistic and appropriate activity recommendation to the Systematic Procurement Planning Guide for SUC. The procurement planning guide supports the study of Altshuler (2019) which recommends for inclusive planning to help understand the purpose and the need to do to attain the desired outcome.

This guide is useful in completing the details of goods and services, infrastructure and consulting services being procured by the SUC as basis for setting the contractual obligation of the supplier, contractor and consultant. The End-User will be guided on the factors being considered in procurement planning focusing on purpose, design, function, performance requirements and most especially providing value for money. Consequently, states the requirements such that the intended purpose will be served.

Most of the content-instructions of the guide are sourced from the GPPB-Technical Support Office, being tasked to provide guidelines to all government agencies, under RA9184 (please refer to Appendix A).

Conclusion

From the preceding findings, the following conclusions are presented:

1. The SUCs' are doing well in procurement planning per APCPI assessment, pertaining to procurement planning for the period 2017 to 2021;
2. The SUCs possess acceptable knowledge in procurement planning specifically in a) writing technical specifications, b) preparation of scope of work, c) preparation of terms of reference, and d) preparation of cost estimates;
3. The SUCs' practices in procurement planning are common and traditional in nature;

4. The SUCs are challenged by insufficient time, inadequate manpower, and financial resources management affecting the preparation of procurement plans;
5. The systematic procurement planning guide containing the development process with basic activity guide is necessary to address the challenges and improve practice and knowledge in procurement planning process.

Acknowledgment

To all who have imparted their time and expertise to making this paper worth reading, my heartfelt gratitude. To God be All the Glory!

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