Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems (MAPS) - Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (MAPS Secretariat)

Objectives and features

1. Objective
MAPS serves as a reform tool for all countries to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public procurement, ensure integrity and transparency in the use of public funds, and strengthen how procurement systems contribute to sustainability and broader policy objectives, and encourage dialogue between stakeholders.

2. Institutional coverage
National and subnational governments.

3. Technical coverage
Starting from a country context analysis to the final report, the assessment focuses on four pillars. Each pillar has a set of indicators and sub-indicators.

4. Application method
By self-assessment or by any external entity.

5. Methodology
The public procurement system is assessed using the following three-step approach:

1. Review of the system, applying assessment criteria expressed in qualitative terms – review of the existing regulatory and policy framework, as well as contractual and operational arrangements, to determine whether the prescribed standard has been attained.
2. Review of the system, applying a defined set of quantitative indicators – focuses on the application of (a) minimum set of 15 quantitative indicators related to the prevailing procurement practices in the country. Additional indicators are available and may be used as appropriate. Each indicator is measured against specific principles. The baseline data, drawn from the quantitative indicators from the assessment, is used to identify strengths and gaps. Quantitative indicators are not benchmarked against set standards but can be used by the country to define national targets, and measure progress over time.
3. Identification of substantive or material gaps (gap analysis) – if the system is not meeting the stated criteria, if an essential indicator is missing, and if procurement practices differ from the regulatory framework, each gap is labelled substantive and can be addressed to improve the quality and performance of the system. Red flags are assigned to highlight any element that can impede the achievement of public procurement goals but that cannot be mitigated directly or indirectly (e.g., conflicting national laws or international agreements, political economy).

An applicable recommendation is provided for a prioritized reform strategy intended to address areas of weakness identified.

6. Benchmarking system
Benchmarking system (based on international good practices) with narrative evaluation. Scoring has been removed from the revised MAPS (2018) as the tool is not used to compare countries, but rather to guide procurement reforms in a country.

7. Linkage to PEFA framework
All quantitative indicators have been aligned with procurement data required in PEFA assessments (PEFA performance indicator on procurement (PI-14)) for consistency in assessments and policy formulation. Some sub-indicators have references to other PEFA performance indicators such as performance information for service delivery (PI-15), internal control on non-routine expenditure (PI-16), internal audit (PI-16), internal audit (PI-25), and legislative scrutiny of audit reports (PI-35).

8. Complementarity with PEFA framework
MAPS assessment provides a more detailed and in-depth analysis of a country’s procurement systems.

Development and use

9. Development and coordination
MAPS was developed in 2003-2004 by a joint initiative of the World Bank (WB) and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) to assess and improve public procurement systems in developing countries by providing a common tool to analyze information on key aspects of any procurement system. It is not one of international high-level commitments by the donors to use country procurement systems more frequently.

A revision was carried out between 2015 and 2018 with emphasis on value for money, transparency, fairness, and good governance. The revision aimed to make MAPS universally applicable (comparing with developing countries of 3015 MAPS). The revised methodology was refined after testing in countries at different development levels. Cross-country elements (national policy objectives, support for private sector, civil service reform, etc.) have been integrated to ensure that the application of MAPS contributes to achieving efficiency. The revised MAPS draws heavily from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement – OECD (2019); UNCITRAL Model Law on Public Procurement (2011); EU Directives on Public Procurement (2014), and the procurement frameworks used by multilateral development banks, countries, and implementing institutions. MAPS had a public consultation at the end of its last update. Six supplementary modules are being added to the revised MAPS (e-procurement, procurement entities, professionalization, public-private partnerships and concessions, owner markets, and sustainable public procurement). In carrying out assessments, the MAPS Secretariat coordinates with stakeholders based on country context, wherever applicable.

10. Assessment management
Before the assessment is carried out, the scope, time, assessment team, milestones, and data collection mechanisms are defined. MAPS can be applied using the core methodology and the supplementary modules, depending on the requirements. Four reviews as part of quality assurance should also be defined prior to the assessment process. A MAPS Assessment Steering Committee is recommended to be set up to ensure close departmental cooperation and to demonstrate commitment by the government. The MAPS Secretariat can provide training to the assessors to enhance their understanding of the tool and its recommended use.

Assessors gather information through reports from international agencies, statistics from the government, previous studies, and interviews with relevant stakeholders. Certain indicators that cannot be assessed through documentary evidence require surveys/interviews with stakeholders and participants in public procurement. List of resources to be consulted are detailed in the user guide. MAPS assessors can rely on secondary resources to substantiate their assessment, such as the Government at a Glance (OECD/G20), Country Classifications (WB and others), the Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International), the Global Competitiveness Report (World Economic Forum), the Human Development Index (UN), and databases on international membership and reports such as the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) from the WTO, among others.

A robust quality-assurance approach involves a review of compliance with the assessment process and compliance with the report of the MAPS methodology, and the quality review of assessment results by the MAPS Secretariat and a designated MAPS Technical Advisory Group. The MAPS Secretariat will review every MAPS assessment, and if it has been carried out correctly, the Secretariat will issue certification that the assessment meets the prescribed quality standards.

A validation exercise with the stakeholders may be conducted to ensure the findings of the assessment, according to the agreement at the time of planning the assessment.

11. Uses by the government and members of the PFM community
Governments use MAPS to assess the value for money, transparency, fairness, and good governance of public procurement systems. Based on the strengths and gaps identified, the governments develop strategies and implement procurement reforms. Development partners (e.g., WB, GIZ, IDB, AfDB, AFD, USAID, and the Caribbean Development Bank) use MAPS at the time of planning interventions to assess the maturity of procurement systems in a country.

12. Sequencing with other tools
MAPS is an important input for assessments such as Governance Risk Assessment (CCL) and Countrywide Strategy for Procurement Risk Assessment (CPSR). It is also advisable to conduct MAPS assessment after completing a broad-based PFM assessment to drill down on the procurement function.

13. PFM capacity building
MAPS Pillar II focuses on the capacity of the officials involved in public procurement. Recommendations from the assessment can be used as input for capacity development interventions, where applicable.

14. Tracking of changes and frequency of assessments
MAPS allows countries to draw baselines and targets. Progress made between assessments can be tracked against these baselines. A full update of a MAPS assessment should be performed whenever major changes in legislation occur or whenever other substantive elements of the system change and/or affect the system performance. OECD recommends periodic evaluations as it identifies the MAPS framework as not just a diagnostic tool but a reform tool.

15. Resource requirements
Time and resource requirements for the assessment depend on the evolution and maturity of the country and scope of the assessment (all modules vs. specific modules), stakeholder coordination, buy-in/willingness of the country, and data availability or access to information. Average time for each MAPS assessment would be around six to nine months.

16. Access to methodology
Methodology is possible.

17. Access to assessment results
Some MAPS assessments are publicly available. Earlier assessments are not yet available on the website. However, some recent reports based on the revised MAPS framework are published and the new MAPS Secretariat will populate the website with the assessments that it approves.