

Tool: Guidelines for accelerated public procurement procedures

Purpose

- To alert civil society to the procedures that can be followed by public organisations during emergencies and other situations of urgency.
- To record and consolidate knowledge collection and to serve as a base for an internal ex post review of the use of accelerated procurement procedures.
- To provide a basis for auditors to assess the actions of public sector organisations in the use of accelerated procurement procedures.

Public Procurement
Principle: **Access**

Procurement Stage:
Pre-tendering

Audience: **Policy Maker,
Procuring Entity**

Description

Governments may consider publishing guidelines for accelerated public procurement procedures to provide a single reference for contracting authorities and procurement practitioners covering the entire procurement cycle. There is growing awareness that accelerated public procurements procedures raise the risk of waste, fraud and corruption. These may result from human error, lack of co-ordination and the sheer amount of funds that are transferred in a short period of time. Accelerated public procurement procedures establish alternative processes to operate during times that demand enhanced flexibility, responsiveness and accountability by government operations. Within this category there are two types of accelerated procurement: emergency procurement and non-emergency accelerated procurement.

Accelerated procurement procedures establish alternative procedures to operate during times that demand enhanced flexibility, responsiveness and accountability by public organisations. Within this category there are two types of accelerated procurement: emergency procurement and non-emergency accelerated procurement. Emergency procurement is used in contexts where life, property or equipment is immediately at risk or standards of public health, welfare or safety need to be re-established without delay. Examples include government's responses to natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes, floods and typhoons) and epidemics risks. Non-emergency accelerated procurement procedures are used in contexts where unforeseen circumstances arise and require an urgent response by public organisations. In comparison to emergency procedures, non-emergency accelerated procurement should only be used as an exception and not the norm.

The United States, for example, has issued Emergency Acquisitions guidelines to help procuring authorities and procurement professionals prepare and respond to unforeseen situations. The document is developed jointly by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy and the Chief Acquisition Officers Council's working group on emergency contracting. The most recent guide was released in 2007 and includes a number of management and operational best practices that contracting authorities developed in response to Hurricane Katrina and other emergency situations.

Box: Generic content of guidelines for accelerated procurement procedures

Guidelines for accelerated public procurement procedures may include:

- Strategies for effective response planning and a list of acquisition reminders when contracting during emergencies;
- Operational definition of situations where accelerated procedures may be used;
- Limitations on the types of contracting authorities that can use accelerated procedures;
- Checklists/protocols for using non-competitive procedures (for example see “checklist for non-competitive emergency bidding procedures”);
- Permitted shortened procurement timetables for competitive procedures and increased thresholds for uncompetitive procedures;
- Acceptable adjustments to internal procedures, *e.g.* contract review procedures, documentation and reporting;
- Time limits on the use of accelerated procurement procedures beyond which it is considered reasonable to publish a contract notice and award a service contract in accordance with normal procedures, invoking urgency as a grounds for use of shorter deadlines; and
- A framework for procurement practitioners to evaluate past use of accelerated procedures for the purpose of identifying training needs.

Further Resources

Office of Federal Procurement Policy (2007), [Emergency Acquisition](#).