**Gift Steward Meeting**

**Open Contracting Partnership**

 *August 2020*

COVID-19 put public procurement into the spotlight. The news is full of stories of contracting gone wrong during this emergency.

Yet the pandemic has also demonstrated the vision of open contracting. We have seen clearly that countries that invest in open contracting data and work with civil society and business in planning and monitoring have gotten better contracting results.

[Colombia](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Qy_7GwHMjIt71psdSkxPLwdxL3pdOEdIiiRY5D01c7Q/edit), Ecuador, Moldova, Paraguay and [Ukraine](https://www.open-contracting.org/2020/05/05/covid-19-data-driven-monitoring-in-ukraine-how-much-do-gloves-cost/) can show that with open contracting they were able to better plan, buy and deliver essential COVID-19 contracts.

**So what did these countries do?** We have seen [4 key areas of action](https://www.open-contracting.org/2020/03/25/emergency-procurement-for-covid-19-buying-fast-open-and-smart/):

* Policy: Open emergency procurement that makes data and information about awards public.
* Planning: Centralized and coordinated procurement for quick and better planning.
* Data: Contracting processes and budget lines are tagged with “COVID-19”, disclose technical comments from suppliers, and publish all contract awards
* Collaboration: Partnerships with the private sector for innovation and with CSOs and media organizations for oversight and monitoring.

**What have these countries achieved?** We will share three examples and you can find more on [our website](https://www.open-contracting.org/what-is-open-contracting/covid19/):

* In [Paraguay](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F1DliifDzJBV4JANSji7Ej_Y8unJXvxv1x8y8EXvvRE/edit), the government (through their procurement agency) wanted to ensure transparency of the Covid-19 emergency purchases. Because of the emergency, government agencies were allowed to buy quickly without competition. But, just because something has to be done quickly, doesn’t mean it has to happen without accountability. OCP’s Helpdesk advised them on how they could use the Open Contracting Data Standard to identify Covid-19 related procurement and ensure that it referenced the Covid-19 emergency budget lines. This data was then published by the government but also reused by a tool developed by the InterAmerican Development Bank to combine with budget and geographical data. The data included the buyers, the prices, the suppliers, and information about the items or services being purchased and their delivery. Users of this data include government, business, civil society, academia and media. Journalists reported about several irregular procurements in the media, including a case in which large volumes of tonic water were purchased at roughly 5x market price as a Covid-19 procurement. As a result of this case, the government issued a new requirement that buyers must report and publish market reference prices to justify prices paid which will hopefully avoid other inflated emergency procurements. The national public procurement agency published [a searchable dataset](https://www.contrataciones.gov.py/dncp/covid-19.html#registro-productos) of their COVID-19 response procurement and created a [framework agreement](https://www.contrataciones.gov.py/dncp/covid-19.html#tienda-virtual-covid) to procure emergency items. They also worked to ensure that the public could easily monitor Covid-19 purchases by establishing a dedicated, searchable [web-page](https://www.contrataciones.gov.py/buscador/licitaciones.html?nro_nombre_licitacion=&fecha_desde=&fecha_hasta=&tipo_fecha=&marcas%5B%5D=covid_19&convocante_tipo=&convocante_nombre_codigo=&codigo_contratacion=&catalogo%5Bcodigos_catalogo_n4%5D=&page=&order=&convocante_codigos=&convocante_tipo_codigo=&unidad_contratacion_codigo=&catalogo%5Bcodigos_catalogo_n4_label%5D=), a [dashboard](https://www.contrataciones.gov.py/dncp/sie.html#adjudicaciones-covid), and a [mobile app](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=py.gov.dncp.notificaciones) to send notifications of newly awarded contracts.
* In Moldova, [Positive Initiative](http://www.positivepeople.md/), the largest patients’ rights and advocacy group in the country, built a coalition of 30 nonprofit and governmental organizations. [In just a matter of weeks they launched a public procurement platform](https://www.open-contracting.org/2020/05/08/building-a-campaign-for-covid-monitoring-in-moldova-in-60-days/) that displays detailed information about all government contracts for supplies and services to fight COVID-19. Now journalists can run investigations, civil society is tracking spending, procuring entities can use the tools for better planning, and suppliers can conduct market analysis.
* In Nigeria, a coalition of civil society organizations such as BudgIT and CODE have come together to use Covid-19 procurement data for [advocacy and monitoring](https://twitter.com/ppmonitorNG/status/1293549824558727169).

**How can we help you?**

* Policy advice on decrees or legislation to make emergency and recovery efforts effective, open & accountable and to link budgeting and procurement data.
* Easy to adapt and use tools and [guides](https://www.open-contracting.org/resources/guide-to-collect-publish-visualize-covid-19-procurement-data/) to start quickly collecting, publishing and analyzing data for better planning, tracking and monitoring of COVID-19 response procurement, including budget data.
* Strategies to increase collaboration and coordination among stakeholders from budgeting through procurement through implementation.
* [Monitoring](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1u_0ZOkQ5hoj_XFAYdZ797ZWgJBim-Ra1A6gJZzqgFMU/edit#slide=id.g52faee228b_0_311) methodologies and advocacy strategies for civil society organizations, researchers, media, and government agencies to provide oversight for both the emergency response and the economic recovery.

Make sure to check out our special Covid page that has lots of guidance on data and examples from different countries.

**Our Plans**

We will continue to help our in country partners to navigate the Covid-19 response and recovery. We will continue to assist with policy advice, data support, monitoring assistance and also documenting and sharing challenges and successes.

Next year we will also be launching the next generation of our [impact accelerator, Lift,](https://www.open-contracting.org/implement/lift/) which will aim to support teams of reformers to have a more equitable and effective recovery from Covid-19 by using open contracting. Stay tuned for more information and please do reach out if we can help in any way.

We are also working on key issues, such as increasing [inclusion and equity](https://www.open-contracting.org/resources/empower-women-led-business-procurement/) in public procurement.

**Get in touch!**

If you are working on procurement and budgeting and need OCP’s help or have examples of work to share, please do reach out to us!

Kathrin Frauscher, Deputy Executive Director, kfrauscher@open-contracting.org

Lindsey Marchessault, Director of Data and Engagement, lmarchessault@open-contracting.org

Georg Neumann, Senior Manager Communication, gneumann@open-contracting.org