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PROCUREMENT PROCESS APPROVALS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO HIGH QUALITY MARKET DRIVEN PRODUCTS: A CASE OF THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION STABILIZATION MISSION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (MONUSCO) ENTEBBE SUPPORT BASE

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to identify how process approvals contribute to high quality market driven products.

Methodology: The study employed a descriptive case study design. The target population comprised of 261 employees of MONUSCO Entebbe Support Base holding international, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and National contracts. Random and purposive sampling techniques were specifically used to select samples for this study. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides. The quantitative data was further analysed using SPSS for descriptive and inferential statistics while the qualitative data was analysed using content analysis.

Findings: The study findings showed that sourcing activity has been used to identify and select the most qualified bidder with quality products and services needed in MONUSCO ESB since it facilitates adequate gathering and collection of all relevant information on the bidder. The findings further showed that market capability analysis is effectively carried out to determine where to procure the type and quality of products, materials, goods and services needed at the base. It was also found that delivery schedules that fit in MONUSCO requirements are drawn with the suppliers and this has improved on the delivery schedules met by the individual suppliers for all kinds of materials, goods and services required by the MONUSCO users' departments. Staff were found to be aware of vendors' evaluation process in their respective sections which improved on the supplier sourcing and selection process for a fair and unbiased evaluation of the bidders in the base. It was further found that the quality of materials depended on their technical specifications as approved at MONUSCO and not on their price which led to client satisfaction amongst the user departments in the base. In addition, evaluation of vendors starts during the delivery of goods/services and works in the base and this has strengthened the achievement of value for money through specifications, quantity and quality standards agreed on at the time of contract award at the base.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The study recommends that MONUSCO procurement section to adequately select the right suppliers to provide the required goods and services. The organization should establish agreements with suppliers with clear guidelines on operations during service delivery. The study further recommends that members of the

MONUSCO contracts committee should be recruited and allocated duties basing on the competencies as well as experience in procurement activities within the UN environment.

Keywords: *procurement process approvals, quality, market capability analysis, sourcing, evaluation*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Procurement is an internationally recognized profession. Organisations aim at getting the best value product or service by encouraging openness, developing the relationships with potential suppliers, engaging with service users and marketing opportunities widely. The purchasing profession has been gaining recognition in developed countries faster than in the developing countries (Matechak, 2009). Worldwide, public procurement has become an issue of public attention and debate, and has been subjected to reforms, restructuring, rules and regulations.

Public procurement refers to the acquisition of goods, services and works by a procuring entity using public funds (World Bank, 1995a). Procurement process starts when an entity has identified a need and decided on its procurement requirement. Procurement goes through the process of risk assessment, seeking and evaluating alternative solutions, contract award, delivery of, and payment for the property and/or services and, where relevant, the ongoing management of a contract and consideration of options related to the contract. Procurement also extends to the ultimate disposal of property at the end of its useful life (Mugerwa, 2010).

Furthermore, the procurement function is responsible on one hand for the identification of the end-user's needs and, by utilizing suppliers, meeting them. Therefore, by its very nature, procurement is a "service" function (Ishola, 2010). In this study, procurement is defined as service functions provided by a dedicated team of professionals operating at the interface between the organizations' suppliers and the end-user department (s) in order to effectively and efficiently meet the supplies needs of the organization. According to Ellaram et al. (1989), in procurement, customer service outcome exists in two domains; the supplier activity domain and the end-user response domain. Thus, the study identifies two customers to the procurement function: internal and external i.e. the end users and the suppliers respectively. In a procurement process therefore, efforts must be dedicated to ensuring the complete satisfaction of not only the end-user or customer of a product and/or service, but, also the satisfaction of the suppliers whose products or service are incorporated into the end- user /customer order and whose performance impacts the end user satisfaction (Gordon, 2009).

Procurement process is a key function which impacts can be effective or 'ineffective' on service delivery. There is no part of local government service delivery that does not depend on procurement of goods, services and works; and yet the area remains a neglected field of research (Oboth, 2001). According to Helmsing (1995), the importance of procurement reform in almost all country's settings can be demonstrated based on its scale and role in terms of service delivery, the amount stated wasted by existing practices, reduced competition, higher prices due to market perceptions of risks, as well as the demonstrated ability of countries to capture enormous savings through concerted efforts to strengthen their procurement function (Agaba & Shipman, 2007).

Procurement in the United Nations (UN) has also undergone significant transformation since reforms were initiated in 1999. The main issues taken into consideration as part of the UN

procurement reform can be found in several UN official documents, particularly Resolution A/RES/54/14 of November 1999. The Resolution specifies the direction that procurement reform initiatives need to follow in order to strengthen the principles of transparency, effectiveness and efficiency while also fully reflecting the international character of the United Nations. Procurement has evolved from a simple buying function to become recognized as a professional role within the UN as well. Procurement officers and those acting in, or supporting that function, are in a special position of trust and are held to high standards of professionalism. Development of professional and ethical competencies of UN procurement officers is recognized as an important component of the UN procurement reform process.

Procurement officers operate within a complex environment. They are subject to pressure from end-users seeking rapid response or a specific technical solution, from suppliers seeking invitations or contracts, from donor representatives or the public seeking explanation for the use of the funds, and by anyone who thinks they detect a lack of transparency or other weakness in the process. In all UN organisations, procurement has an impact on the overall organisational outcomes and results. It is therefore good practice to undertake strategic planning of procurement at the organisational level in order to link procurement activities and priorities to the overall priorities of the organisation. Strategic planning is also important in order to manage the risks and the total costs involved in procurement, including use of resources.

Poor service delivery can be justified by ineffective procurement systems within an organization. Procurement planning for instance is a factor influencing service delivery. Mullins (2003) asserts that the contribution of procurement planning in facilitating an efficient and effective service delivery in public sector organizations is generally undisputed in both developed and developing countries. A sound procurement system has to have a competent professional workforce equipped with defined skills and knowledge for specified procurement jobs (OECD-DAC, 2006). Creating a procurement workforce with the right skills and capabilities can be a challenge, given changes to procurement processes, the introduction or expansion of alternative contracting approaches, and increased reliance on services provided by the private sector (Government Accountability Office, 2005).

Expectations for effective service delivery in peacekeeping missions keep increasing in most of the affected countries where UN Missions (currently there are 16 UN peacekeeping missions in the world) operate. The largest UN peacekeeping mission is MONUSCO. The Security Council established the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) by its Resolution 1279 of 30 November 1999 (S/RES/1279; 30 November 1999). In MONUSCO as well as in all UN agencies, procurement is a function through which the organisation meets its goals and objectives by exploiting the available resource in efficient and effective way.

The MONUSCO Entebbe Support Base is the main logistic hub where 80% of the purchased commodities to support MONUSCO operations are received and thereafter dispatched all over the mission area in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In his report dated February 2016 to the Fifth Committee (the 5th Committee of the General Assembly with responsibilities for administration and budgetary matters. Based on the reports of the Fifth Committee, the General Assembly considers and approves the budget of the Organization in accordance with Chapter IV, Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations. This function was reaffirmed by the General

Assembly in its resolution 45/248 B, Sect. VI), the Chief of Entebbe Support Base has emphasized on the strategic logistic role of the ESB.

The MONUSCO Entebbe Support Base was established by MONUSCO (formerly MONUC) in 2006 near the Entebbe International Airport to provide logistics and operational support to Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Since its establishment, the proven operational capabilities of this facility coupled with the strategic location to neighboring missions, the reliable logistic infrastructure and the political stability of Uganda were all valuable considerations which prompted the expansion of ESB to its current capacity 9152,000 square meters). MONUSCO ESB staff in 2015 is 810, comprising of International Staff, United Nations Volunteers, Nationally recruited staff, as well as contractors and uniformed personnel (military and United Nations police).

Besides its primary role of supporting the logistic operations in DRC, MONUSCO ESB is currently serving eleven different UN entities located in its premises. The support provided continues to expand with a call for quality services through a coordinated delivery system. Consequently, this study had identified limited gap in existing empirical literature as it relates to service delivery addressing procurement related issues in the logistic support provided to MONUSCO. It is against this background that the study sought to fill the gap by evaluating how process approvals contributed to high quality market driven products in MONUSCO.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Although UN has sound procurement rules, policies, guidelines and regulations to ensure best value for money and to effectively and efficiently support its operations, several reports and complaints indicated that services are not delivered to the full expectations of end-users. Within MONUSCO ESB, physical interactions with end-users and various stakeholders, reports and emails have highlighted the quality of services and/or commodities and shown growing dissatisfaction and queries towards procurement practices in MONUSCO.

In fact, several complaints pointed out the level of dissatisfaction among various stakeholders and end-users. The Regional Training Centre and Conference (RTCC) issued an Interoffice Memorandum dated 23 November 2011 (Ref. RSC/RTCC/2011/237) following several complaints from training participants about the quality of pens. Consequently, 114,621.00 pens valuing USD \$98756.31 were returned to stock and thereafter written - off. In May 2014, following the expansion of the Regional Service Centre Entebbe (RSCE), Supply section was urgently requested to locally acquire office furniture to support the relocation of 200 staff to ESB. Due to the urgency of the move, office furniture which was locally purchased was found to be of poor quality, resulting in raising complaints from end-users.

Following a delay in procurement planning in 2014, MONUSCO faced a shortage of office supplies, which had led for an emergency purchase of USD 150,000.00 (Ref. Fund Commitment# 3000003042). On 23 January 2015, a vendor who had been issued a contract to supply office stationeries and supplies, failed to timely deliver the order, thus leading the Mission to urgently look for another supplier to cater for its urgent logistic requirements. Besides, the partially delivered goods were of poor quality resulting in increasing the dissatisfaction of end-users and queries about the vendor's evaluation and capacity to meet its

contractual obligations. A Vendor Performance Report dated 16 June 2015 was raised and sent to Procurement for appropriate action against the vendor without any success.

It is based on such evidence that the study is carried out to investigate the role of procurement process in ensuring effective service delivery in United Nations Entebbe Support Base. Therefore, this study sought to identify how process approvals contribute to high quality market driven products.

1.2 Research Objective

To identify how process approvals contribute to high quality market driven products.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Institutional Theory

According to Scott (2004), institutions are composed of cultural-cognitive and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources give meaning to life. He further explains the three pillars of institutions as regulatory, normative and cultural cognitive. The regulatory pillar emphasizes the use of rules, laws and sanctions as enforcement mechanism, with expedience as basis for compliance. The normative pillar refers to norms (how things should be done) and values (preferred or desirable), social obligation being the basis of compliance. The cultural-cognitive pillar rests on shared understanding (common beliefs, symbols, shared understanding). This theory is very important when it comes to the implementation of sustainable procurement policy and practice in organizations that serve the public. This is a matter of organizational culture and the degree to which the prevailing climate in an organization is supportive of sustainability and/or of change in general. In other respects, this dimension includes the extent to which there is support for SP at senior levels in an organization and the degree to which organizational processes and structures support, or retard, the development of SP (Brammer & Walker, 2007).

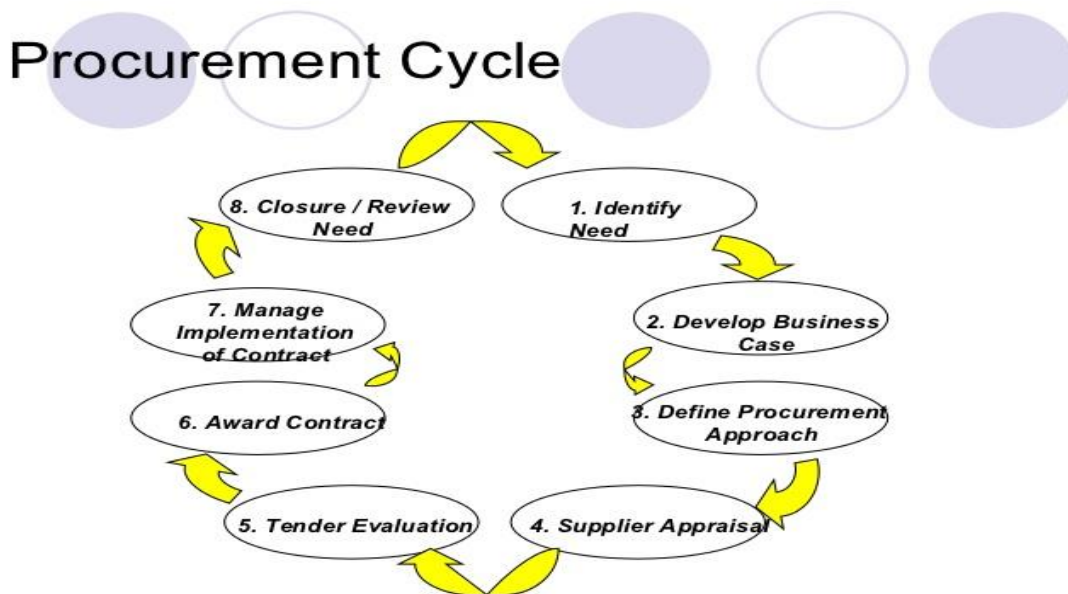
2.1.2 Socio-economic Theory

Sutinen and Kuperan (1999) propounded the socio-economic theory of compliance by integrating economic theory with theories from psychology and sociology to account for moral obligation and social influence as determinants of individuals' decisions on compliance. According to Lisa (2010) psychological perspectives provide a basis for the success or failure of organizational compliance. Wilmshurst and Frost (2000) also add that the legitimacy theory postulates that the organization is responsible to disclose its practices to the stakeholders, especially to the public and justify its existence within the boundaries of society. This theory, which focuses on the relationship and interaction between an organization and the society, provides a sufficient and superior lens for understanding government procurement system (Hui et al., 2011). From this theory, one can understand the policy, planning and sustainable procurement practices in public institutions and their influence on service delivery to the society.

2.2 Procurement Process

According to Simchi et al. (2009), the procurement function is responsible on one hand for the identification of the end-user's needs and, by utilizing suppliers, meeting them. By its very nature therefore, procurement is a "service" function (Ishola, 2010). Hence, in this paper we define procurement as a service function provided by a dedicated team of professionals operating at the interface between the organisation's suppliers and the end-user department (s) in order to effectively and efficiently meet the supplies needs of the organisation. According to Ellaram et al. (1989) in procurement customer service outcome exists in two domains; the supplier activity domain and the end-user response domain. The study, thus, identifies two customers to the procurement function: internal and external i.e. the end users and the suppliers respectively. In a procurement process therefore, efforts must be dedicated to ensuring the complete satisfaction of not only the end-user or customer of a product and/or service, but, also the satisfaction of the suppliers whose products or service are incorporated into the end- user /customer order and whose performance impacts the end user satisfaction (Gordon, 2009).

In the United Nations Procurement Manual, Revision 7 (2013) the purchasing process for companies breaks down into eight clear steps. In the first step the company identifies a need, for which the answer is the purchase of a product. The final step is the execution of a purchase contract. The steps in between build an organized, informed process that results in the company purchasing the right product for the need from a qualified supplier whose product is the most durable for the price.



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Figure 1: Procurement Cycle flow chart according to the UN Procurement Manual

According the United Nations Procurement Manual, Revision 7 (2013) The UN procurement process involves a wide-range of activities including: acquisition planning; drafting; reviewing

or approving Specifications, SOWs and TORs; identifying, registering and evaluating Vendors; preparing and developing Solicitations; evaluating Bids or Proposals; Source Selection; negotiating price or terms and conditions of Contracts; reviewing and approving awards of Contracts; providing legal services including drafting Contracts; signing Contracts and Purchase Orders; receiving and inspecting goods or services; performing oversight services; managing Contracts; reviewing Vendor Performance; certifying, approving and making payments pursuant to large and complex Contracts; and handling Vendor protests or disputes regarding the procurement process.

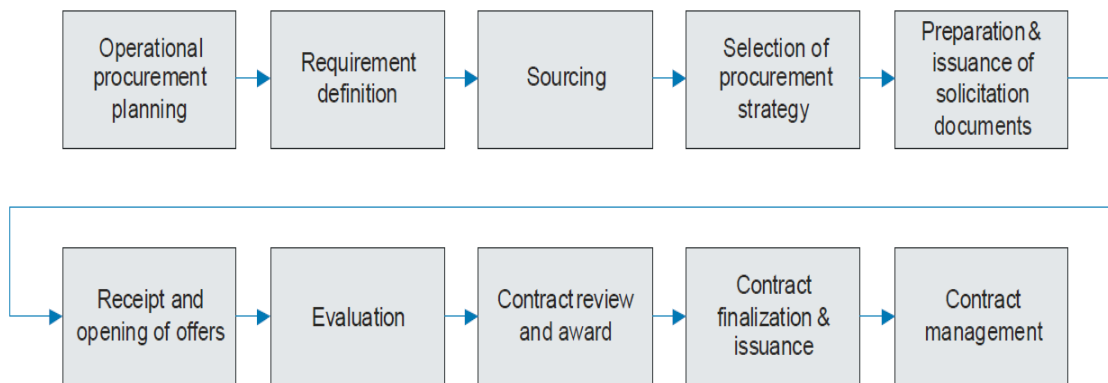


Figure 2: Procurement process flow chart of the United Nations

A key aspect of the procurement process outlined in UN Procurement Practitioner's Handbook (2006) Manual begins with the registration of potential recipients of UN Solicitation Documents. It is the procurement staff responsibility to further develop the sourcing by identifying vendors that will meet the Requisitioner's requirements. The UN in its sole discretion determines whether a Vendor is eligible for registration, and continues to remain eligible, for the purpose of establishing a pool of prospective UN Vendors. Such Vendors may be invited to participate in a particular Solicitation. Determination of eligibility for registration is a UN prerogative. Thereafter, the UN receives and evaluates responses to Solicitations, determining whether the Vendor is both qualified and meets the requirements of Financial Rule 105.15(a) for Bids or (b) for Proposals. The UN decides which Vendor to select and notifies it of its intention to award a Contract. The successful Bidder, following Contract negotiations (if any) and the signature of a Contract, would then become a UN contract or whose relationship vis-à-vis the UN is governed by the contract formation processes outlined in this Procurement Manual. Unsuccessful Bidders will be notified accordingly and may be granted a debriefing.

This study does not intend to evaluate the entire procurement process stages but to focus on the following: sourcing, evaluation of bids, contract review and award, contract finalisation and issuance; and contract management.

2.2.1 Evaluation of Potential Vendors

UN Procurement Practitioner's Handbook (2006) and the United Nations Procurement Manual (2013) defined evaluation process as consisting of the preliminary examination and evaluation of the offers received, and considered to be valid, to assess their responsiveness to specifications and requirements as defined in the solicitation document, analyse their cost and benefit, and determine their price and value. Evaluation, together with the requirement definition and the evaluation criteria and method specified in the solicitation document, is the basis for the subsequent selection of the offer that provides the best value for money for the organization.

Best value for money in the context of evaluation of offers, means that price alone is not always the only criterion factored into an evaluation method. Other criteria such as quality, availability, time, compliance, cost for maintenance and support, life cycle cost, etc. are part of the equation to determine the best return on investment of the procurement of goods, services or works. Evaluation is conducted by a designated evaluation team and in accordance with the relevant regulations, rules and procedures, using the evaluation criteria and method pre-determined in the solicitation document in order to conduct a fair and unbiased evaluation. The evaluation process also needs to be transparent, and therefore each step of the process documented in an evaluation report which subsequently is the basis for the recommendation of award.

Upon the receipt and opening of offers, evaluation must be conducted according to the set of evaluation criteria and method, which have been established during the preparation of the solicitation documents. Once established in, and issued with the solicitation documents the evaluation criteria and method must not be altered unless by amendment of the solicitation documents before the closing of the solicitation. This provides the basis for an objective and transparent evaluation approach.

2.2.2 Supplier Evaluation

Before making a recommendation of award, the procurement officer should make sure that the supplier whose offer has been evaluated as the most advantageous one is also qualified to effectively carry out the contract. It is good practice to consider past performance and to check their financial soundness and the currently available resources to perform under the contract. If pre-qualification has not preceded the solicitation process, the selected supplier's qualification should be checked prior to contract award. This is usually called post-qualification. The post qualification process should be performed based on the qualification criteria set out in the solicitation documents. Such qualification criteria may be, for example, all or some of the following: financial strength, performance record, integrity and business ethics record, experience and technical capacity and lastly production capacity. In some UN organizations, the contract award is subject to the condition that the selected supplier successfully completes the supplier registration process as this also constitutes a form of qualification in those organizations.

2.2.3 Contract Review and Award

Contract review is an essential step in the contracting process. It provides for independent written advice on the acceptability of the procurement process undertaken, and the proposed commitment of funds by the highest level procurement authority or officer with the appropriate delegated authority, through contracts or purchase orders (awarding authority). Award is the formal decision and approval to establish a contract, e.g. services contract or purchase order, or a

Long Term Agreement (LTA), with a successful supplier, based on independent review of the procurement process within the limits of awarding authority. The award phase marks the successful conclusion of the procurement process and the starting point for contract finalization and execution.

The purpose of conducting a review prior to recommending awards is to: Provide an independent and unbiased review of recommendations for contracts or purchase orders. Ensure that the procurement process was fairly conducted and followed the appropriate policies and procedures. Confirm the necessary budget for the contractual commitment is available. Confirm that the recommendation for award and terms of contract represent best value for money and that it is in the interests of the UN to select the chosen supplier. Seek approval from the appropriate authority to contractually commit the UN to procure the goods, services or works.

2.2.4 Contract Finalization and Issuance

In the United Nations Procurement Manual, Revision 7 (2013), it is stated that contract finalization is the process followed by the UN procurement officer to form a written contract with a supplier. The purpose of contract finalization is to ensure that all proper elements are in place to conclude a written agreement that protects the interests of the UN organization and reflects the offer made by the supplier in response to the requirement presented by the UN organization. A contract is formed on the basis of an “offer” and an “acceptance” and in the context of procurement in the UN system of organizations, is a written document, containing the agreement, and the terms and conditions, between the UN organization and the supplier, and which serves as proof of the obligation. Contractual instruments common among UN organizations are Purchase Orders (POs), contracts for services and works, LTAs, system contracts, blanket purchase orders, lease agreements, etc. for goods, services and works. In the UN system of organizations, contracts are based on competitive solicitation processes.

2.2.5 Contract Management

The terms “contract management” and “contract administration” are often used synonymously. However, Thai (2009) noted that “contract management” is commonly understood as a broader and more strategic concept that covers the whole procurement cycle including planning, formation, execution, administration and close out of a contract and goes beyond the day to day “administrative” activities in the procurement cycle. Because it is difficult to draw the line between the two terms and because the majority of the UN organizations commonly use “contract management” when describing the contract administration phase, “contract management” will be hereby used.

The purpose of contract management is to ensure that all parties to the contract fully meet their respective obligations as efficiently and effectively as possible, delivering the business and operational outputs required from the contract and providing value for money. It also protects the rights of the parties and ensures required performance when circumstances change. Thai (2009) further observed that contract management is similar to project management. Each contract is a mini-project. It has a unique goal, consumes resources, has a beginning and end date, and requires coordination and planning of relevant activities, as well as documentation in a contract file throughout the process.

Contract management includes monitoring and documenting performance. Kattel and Lember (2010) noted that depending on the organization and goods or services procured, daily/regular monitoring of the contract may be primarily the responsibility of the requisitioner. In all situations, the procurement officer is responsible for following up and ensuring that the actions of the supplier and the UN organization are in line with the contractual responsibilities, that the contract is amended to reflect agreed changes in circumstances, and that any claim or dispute is resolved amicably according to the terms of the contract. Therefore the Kattel and Lember (2010) suggested that the stages of contract management are intended to ensure that the parties work together to achieve the objectives of the contract. Contract management is based on the idea that the contract is an agreement, a partnership with rights and obligations that must be met by both sides to achieve the goal. Contract management is aimed not at finding fault, but rather at identifying problems and finding solutions together with all contracting parties involved.

2.2.6 Contract Performance Monitoring And Control

Once the contract has been awarded, the responsible procurement officer, or the requisitioner, monitors performance, collects information, and measures actual contract achievement. This is essential for effective control. Gonzalez-Benito (2007) reiterated that the resources devoted to these tasks, and the techniques used to perform them, will depend on the nature of the contract work, the size and complexity of the contract, and the resources available. For small, simple, non-critical contracts, an occasional telephone call may be all that is needed to satisfy the responsible UN staff member that everything is proceeding according to plan. Baily, Farmer and Jessop (2005) however, for large, complex contracts, the responsible UN staff member may require extensive reports, regular progress meetings, formal testing, and technical reviews and audits. In performance based contracts, performance indicators developed in the contract are used. In some cases, the proposed supplier's quality assurance plan may be used as a basis for monitoring the supplier's performance.

Observations are made in order to collect information related to those aspects of performance that, when measured, will describe the progress of the work. The reason for observing, collecting information, and measuring progress is to have a basis for comparing actual achievement with planned achievement in order to exert control. Each party must direct its attention internally to ensure that it is fulfilling its own obligations, and externally to ensure that the other party is fulfilling its obligations. Observing and collecting information should be directed at four general control points. These include: cost control, schedule control, compliance with specifications, terms of reference, statement of work (quality assurance and control) and compliance with terms and conditions, paperwork requirements, and administrative aspects of the performance

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive case study design. The study population comprised of 261 staff members holding international, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and National contracts. Both probability and non-probability sampling methods were used to select the respondents. Random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select samples for this study. Two research instruments namely self-administered questionnaires and interview guides were used for data collection. The quantitative data collected was further analysed using SPSS where

descriptive and inferential statistics were generated while the qualitative data was analysed using content analysis.

4.0 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 158 questionnaires administered to the selected respondent where a total of 133 questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This represented an overall successful response rate of 84.18% which was very adequate for this study.

4.2 Procurement Process Approvals and their Contribution to High Quality Market Driven Products

The objective of the study was to assess how procurement approvals contribute to high quality market driven products in MONUSCO Entebbe Support Base. The study findings are presented in the preceding tables.

4.2.1 Importance of Sourcing in Identifying Products and Services on the Market

A key aspect of the procurement process outlined in this Manual begins with the registration of potential recipients of UN Solicitation Documents. It is the procurement staff responsibility to further develop the sourcing by identifying vendors that will meet the Requisitioner's requirements. The respondents were asked whether really Sourcing helps to identify products and services on the market and responses obtained are shown in the Table 1:

Table 1: Importance of Sourcing in Identifying Products and Services on the Market

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percent
Sourcing helps to identify products and services on the market	Disagree	1	.8
	Neutral	9	6.8
	Agree	60	45.1
	Strongly Agree	63	47.4
	Total	133	100.0

Results in the table above show that, 1 (8%) disagreed, 9 (6.8%) were neutral, 60 (45.1%) agreed and 63 (47.4%) of them strongly agreed. Results obtained indicate that 123 (92.5%) of the respondents generally agreed that really Sourcing helps to identify products and services on the market. During the interviews respondents revealed “*it is at this stage that the Procurement department identifies existing suitable products and services on the market and qualifies suppliers available to provide those products and services as per the user department requisitions*”. This implies that the sourcing activity has been used to identify and select the most qualifying bidder with quality products and services needed in MONUSCO.

4.2.2 Use of Sourcing in Getting Information about Potential Vendors and Identifying Appropriate Supplier Qualification Criteria

The first step in the planning process is to identify the desired outcomes and objectives of the procurement. However the process is not necessarily linear. In some cases information obtained in the informational gathering stage will also have an impact on the identification of objectives.

The respondents were asked whether really sourcing aims at getting information about potential vendors and identifying appropriate supplier qualification criteria and responses obtained are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2: Use of Sourcing in Getting Information about Potential Vendors and Identifying Appropriate Supplier Qualification Criteria

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percent
Sourcing aims at getting information about potential vendors and identifying appropriate supplier qualification criteria	Disagree	1	.8
	Neutral	5	3.8
	Agree	52	39.1
	Strongly Agree	75	56.4
	Total	133	100.0

Results in the table above show that, 1 (8%) disagreed, 5 (3.8%) were neutral, 52 (39.1%) agreed and 75 (56.4%) of them strongly agreed. Results obtained indicate that 127 (95.5%) of the respondents generally agreed that really sourcing aims at getting information about potential vendors and identifying appropriate supplier qualification criteria in MONUSCO. During the interviews respondents revealed “*during the sourcing process, clear information is gathered and obtained pertaining the potential vendors who meet the qualification criteria*”. This implies that the sourcing activity is adequately used to gather and collect all relevant information on the type/quality of products, materials, goods and services needed by user departments in MONUSCO.

4.2.3 Use of Market Capability Analysis to Determine Where to Procure From

Arrowsmith, Linarelli and Wallace (2000) also asserted that procurement planning involves deciding whether there is a need for the particular goods or services. This clearly shows that for the organization to attain value for money, it has to continuously undertake market capability analysis. The respondents were further asked whether market capability analysis is carried out to determine where to procure from and responses obtained are shown in the Table 3:

Table 3: Use of Market Capability Analysis to Determine Where to Procure From

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percent
Market capability analysis is carried out to determine where to procure from	Disagree	1	.8
	Neutral	14	10.5
	Agree	68	51.1
	Strongly Agree	50	37.6
	Total	133	100.0

Results in the table above show that, 1 (8%) disagreed, 14 (10.5%) were neutral, 68 (51.1%) agreed and 50 (37.6%) of them strongly agreed. Results obtained indicate that 118(88.7%) of the respondents generally agreed that market capability analysis is carried out to determine where to procure from. During the interviews respondents revealed “*the members of the contracts committee conduct a market survey to determine which suppliers to procure from basing the price structure and service quality exhibited by the suppliers*”. This implies that the market

capability analysis is effectively carried out to determine where to procure from concerning the type and quality of products, materials, goods and services needed in MONUSCO ESB.

4.2.4 Use of Sourcing in Identification and Invitation of Relevant Suppliers for Maximized Competition

The objective of procurement activities within the UN system is the timely acquisition of goods, services and works while addressing the guiding principles of fairness, integrity and transparency, through competition. The respondents were also asked whether sourcing leads to identification and invitation of relevant suppliers for maximized competition and responses obtained are shown in the Table 4:

Table 4: Use of Sourcing in Identification and Invitation of Relevant Suppliers for Maximized Competition

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percent
Sourcing leads to identification and invitation of relevant suppliers for maximized competition	Disagree	2	1.5
	Neutral	3	2.3
	Agree	58	43.6
	Strongly Agree	70	52.6
	Total	133	100.0

Results in the table above show that, 2 (1.5%) disagreed, 3 (2.3%) were neutral, 58 (43.6%) agreed and 70 (52.6%) of them strongly agreed. Results obtained indicate that 128 (96.2%) of the respondents generally agreed that sourcing leads to identification and invitation of relevant suppliers for maximized competition. During the interviews respondents revealed that “still the members of the contracts committee use the sourcing process to identify and invite pre-qualified and qualified bidders for the bidding exercises”. This implies that the sourcing process has led to the effective identification and invitation of relevant suppliers for maximized competition throughout the procurement process at MONUSCO ESB.

4.2.5 Drawing of Delivery schedules that fit in MONUSCO requirements with Suppliers

The respondents were also asked whether delivery schedules that fit in MONUSCO requirements are drawn with the suppliers and responses obtained are shown in the Table 5:

Table 5: Drawing of Delivery schedules that fit in MONUSCO requirements with Suppliers

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percent
Delivery schedules that fit in MONUSCO requirements are drawn with the suppliers	Strongly Disagree	5	3.8
	Disagree	16	12.0
	Neutral	20	15.0
	Agree	66	49.6
	Strongly Agree	26	19.5
Total	133	100.0	

Results in the table above show that, 5 (3.8%) strongly disagreed, 16 (12%) disagreed, 20 (15%) were neutral, 66 (49.6%) agreed and 26 (19.5%) of them strongly agreed. Results obtained

indicate that 92 (69.1%) of the respondents generally agreed that delivery schedules that fit in MONUSCO requirements are drawn with the suppliers. During the interviews respondents revealed that “*the members of the contracts committee draw the supplier’s delivery schedule in collaboration with the qualified bidders based on Terms Of References (TOR), Scope Of Work (SOW) or Bill of Quantities (BoQ)*”. This has improved on the delivery schedules met by the individual suppliers for all kinds of materials, goods and services required by the MONUSCO users’ departments.

4.2.6 Staff Awareness of Vendors’ Evaluation Process in their Respective Section

UN Procurement Practitioner’s Handbook (2006) and the United Nations Procurement Manual (2013) defined evaluation process as consisting of the preliminary examination and evaluation of the offers received, and considered to be valid, to assess their responsiveness to specifications and requirements as defined in the solicitation document, analyse their cost and benefit, and determine their price and value. The respondents were further asked whether they are aware of vendors’ evaluation process in their respective sections and responses shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Staff Awareness of Vendors’ Evaluation Process in their Respective Section

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percent
I am aware of vendors’ evaluation process in my section	Strongly Disagree	4	3.0
	Disagree	12	9.0
	Neutral	17	12.8
	Agree	46	34.6
	Strongly Agree	54	40.6
	Total	133	100.0

Results in the table above show that, 4 (3%) strongly disagreed, 12 (9%) disagreed, 17 (12.8%) were neutral, 46 (34.6%) agreed and 54 (40.6%) of them strongly agreed. Results obtained indicate that 100 (75.2%) of the respondents generally agreed that they are aware of vendors’ evaluation process in their respective section. During the interviews respondents revealed “*Evaluation is conducted by assigned contracts and bids evaluation team and in accordance with the relevant UN regulations, rules and procedures, using the method as pre-determined in the bids solicitation document*”. This has improved on the supplier sourcing and selection process for a fair and unbiased evaluation of the bidders in MONUSCO ESB.

4.2.7 Evaluation of MONUSCO Vendors Based on their Offers

Upon the receipt and opening of offers, evaluation must be conducted according to the set of evaluation criteria and method, which have been established during the preparation of the solicitation documents. The respondents were further asked whether MONUSCO vendors are evaluated based on their offers and responses obtained are shown in Table 7. Results in the table above show that, 2 (1.5%) strongly disagreed, 12 (9%) disagreed, 12 (9%) were neutral, 53 (39.8%) agreed and 54 (40.6%) of them strongly agreed. Results obtained indicate that 107 (80.4%) of the respondents generally agreed that indeed MONUSCO vendors are evaluated based on their offers. During the interviews respondents revealed “*vendors’ evaluation is conducted basing on the bid price offers among other aspects like quality specifications, quantity and*

delivery schedule for materials". This has strengthened the achieving of fairness and competitiveness through the bidding and procurement process at MONUSCO ESB.

Table 7: Evaluation of MONUSCO Vendors Based on their Offers

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percent
MONUSCO vendors are evaluated based on their offers	Strongly Disagree	2	1.5
	Disagree	12	9.0
	Neutral	12	9.0
	Agree	53	39.8
	Strongly Agree	54	40.6
	Total		133

4.2.8 Quality of Materials Based on its Price rather than its Technical Specifications Approved

In performance based contracts, performance indicators developed in the contract are used. In some cases, the proposed supplier's quality assurance plan may be used as a basis for monitoring the supplier's performance. The respondents were further asked whether the quality of materials depends on its price and not on its technical specifications approved by the requisitioners and responses obtained are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Quality of Materials Based on its Price rather than its Technical Specifications Approved

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percent
Quality of materials depends on its price not on its technical specifications approved	Strongly Disagree	47	35.3
	Disagree	46	34.6
	Neutral	12	9.0
	Agree	18	13.5
	Strongly Agree	10	7.5
	Total		133

Results in the table above show that, 47 (35.3%) strongly disagreed, 46 (34.6%) disagreed, 12 (9%) were neutral, 18 (13.5%) agreed and 10 (7.5%) of them strongly agreed. Results obtained indicate that 93 (69.9%) of the respondents generally disagreed that the quality of materials depends on its price not on its technical specifications approved in MONUSCO. During the interviews respondents revealed "it is not common for the quality of materials to be determined basing on the price but it is always based on the user department technical specifications". This implies that at the quality of materials depends on its technical specifications as approved at MONUSCO and not on its price. This has led to client satisfaction amongst the user departments of the MONUSCO ESB.

4.2.9 Start of Vendor Evaluation During the Delivery of Goods/Services and Works

Before making a recommendation of award, the procurement officer should make sure that the supplier whose offer has been evaluated, determined both responsive, compliance, and

acceptable; offering lowest price/cost, is qualified to effectively carry out the contract. The respondents were further asked whether in their respective sections, evaluation of vendors starts during the delivery of goods/services and works at MONUSCO and responses obtained are shown in the Table 9:

Table 9: Start of Vendor Evaluation during the Delivery of Goods/Services and Works in Respective Sections

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percent
In my section, evaluation of vendors starts during the delivery of goods/services and works	Strongly Disagree	23	17.3
	Disagree	30	22.6
	Neutral	11	8.3
	Agree	39	29.3
	Strongly Agree	30	22.6
	Total		133

Results in the table above show that, 23 (17.3%) strongly disagreed, 30 (22.6%) disagreed, 11 (8.3%) were neutral, 39 (29.3%) agreed and 30 (22.6%) of them strongly agreed. Results obtained indicate that 69 (51.9%) of the respondents generally agreed that indeed in their respective sections, evaluation of vendors starts during the delivery of goods/services and works in MONUSCO. During the interviews respondents revealed “vendors’ evaluation is conducted right from the process of product specifications and at the time of delivery of goods and services”. This has strengthened the achieving of value for money through specifications, quantity and quality standards agreed on at the time of contract award at MONUSCO ESB.

4.2.10 Checking of Received Goods and Services Against Purchase Order

The respondents were also asked whether received goods and services are checked against purchase order in MONUSCO and responses obtained are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Checking of Received Goods and Services Against Purchase Order

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percent
Received goods and services are checked against purchase order.	Disagree	2	1.5
	Neutral	1	.8
	Agree	28	21.1
	Strongly Agree	102	76.7
	Total		133

Results in the table above show that, 2 (1.5%) disagreed, 1 (0.8%) were neutral, 28 (21.1%) agreed and 102 (76.7%) of them strongly agreed. Results obtained indicate that 130 (97.8%) of the respondents generally agreed that indeed received goods and services are checked against purchase order in MONUSCO. During the interviews respondents revealed “the suppliers goods are checked at the time of delivery to ascertain whether items delivered match the purchase order specifications as submitted by the procuring entity in MONUSCO Entebbe Support Base”. This has strengthened the achieving of value for money through delivery of requisitioned product specifications in terms of quantity and quality standards agreed on at the time of contract award.

Hypothesis Test

H₀: Process approvals do not contribute to high quality demanded commodities.

H_A: Process approvals contribute to high quality demanded commodities.

The study used a linear regression analysis to test the hypothesis. The model summary under table below shows the R square was 34.2% of the observed variability in high quality demanded commodities explained by the independent variables that is; Supplier audits are undertaken to correct compliance errors, Timely approvals are key for procurement process, MONUSCO's vendors do not meet the delivery time, I am involved in following up materials ordered, There are guidelines on process approval in MONUSCO, All vendors have a clear delivery schedule. R=0.585 is the correlation coefficient between the observed value of the dependent variable and the predicted value based on the regression model.

Table 11: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.585 ^a	.342	.311	.840

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier audits are undertaken to correct compliance errors. Timely approvals are key for procurement process, MONUSCO's vendors do not meet the delivery time. I am involved in following up materials ordered. There are guidelines on process approval in MONUSCO. All vendors have a clear delivery schedule.

The analysis-of-variance (ANOVA) table was also used by the study to test the equivalent null hypothesis. The F=10.917, p<0.000, the null hypothesis that Process approvals do not contribute to high quality demanded commodities was rejected, meaning that at least one of the population regression coefficient is not zero. The results indicate that that an increase in the independent variables will result in to a corresponding increase in high quality demanded commodities.

Table 12: ANOVA^a

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	46.173	6	7.696	10.917	.000 ^b
	Residual	88.819	126	.705		
	Total	134.992	132			

a. Dependent Variable: I am satisfied with the quality of services/goods offered in MONUSCO.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier audits are undertaken to correct compliance errors. Timely approvals are key for procurement process. MONUSCO's vendors do not meet the delivery time. I am involved in following up materials ordered. There are guidelines on process approval in MONUSCO. All vendors have a clear delivery schedule.

The regression matrix below tests what independent variable is more important to the dependent variable. The results show that Supplier audits are undertaken to correct compliance errors because it has a t-statistic = 0.860, p< 0.000. This indicates that there is a strong correlation with

the dependent variable. This means that the more supplier audits are undertaken to correct compliance errors the higher the quality of goods and services received.

Table 13: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.960	.750		7.942	.000
1					
I am involved in following up materials ordered.	-.005	.062	-.007	-.087	.931
MONUSCO's vendors do not meet the delivery time.	-.457	.069	-.510	-6.619	.000
All vendors have a clear delivery schedule.	-.025	.092	-.023	-.269	.788
Timely approvals are key for procurement process.	-.352	.147	-.191	-2.399	.018
There are guidelines on process approval in MONUSCO.	.031	.122	.021	.256	.799
Supplier audits are undertaken to correct compliance errors.	.062	.072	.068	.860	.391

a. Dependent Variable: I am satisfied with the quality of services/goods offered in MONUSCO.

5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The current study established that 123 (92.5%) of the respondents generally agreed that really Sourcing helps to identify products and services on the market. During the interviews respondents revealed “it is at this stage that the Procurement department identifies existing suitable products and services on the market and qualifies suppliers available to provide those products and services as per the user department requisitions”. This implies that the sourcing activity has been used to identify and select the most qualified bidder with quality products and services needed in MONUSCO ESB.

The study findings also revealed that 127 (95.5%) of the respondents generally agreed that really sourcing aims at getting information about potential vendors and identifying appropriate supplier qualification criteria in MONUSCO. During the interviews respondents revealed “during the sourcing process, clear information is gathered and obtained pertaining the potential vendors who meet the qualification criteria”. This implies that the sourcing activity is adequately used to

gather and collect all relevant information on the type/quality of products, materials, goods and services needed by user departments at MONUSCO.

The current study further established that 118 (88.7%) of the respondents generally agreed that market capability analysis is carried out to determine where to procure from. During the interviews, respondents revealed “the members of the contracts committee conduct a market survey to determine which suppliers to procure from basing the price structure and service quality exhibited by the suppliers”. This implies that the market capability analysis is effectively carried out to determine where to procure from concerning the type and quality of products, materials, goods and services needed at MONUSCO ESB.

The study findings further revealed that 92 (69.1%) of the respondents generally agreed that delivery schedules that fit in MONUSCO requirements are drawn with the suppliers. During the interviews, respondents revealed that “the members of the contracts committee draw the supplier’s delivery schedule in collaboration with the qualified bidders based on Terms Of References (TOR), Scope Of Work (SOW) or Bill of Quantities (BoQ)”. This has improved on the delivery schedules met by the individual suppliers for all kinds of materials, goods and services required by the MONUSCO users’ departments.

According to the research findings, that 100 (75.2%) of the respondents generally agreed that they are aware of vendors’ evaluation process in their respective section. During the interviews respondents revealed “Evaluation is conducted by assigned contracts and bids evaluation team and in accordance with the relevant UN regulations, rules and procedures, using the method as pre-determined in the bids solicitation document”. This has improved on the supplier sourcing and selection process for a fair and unbiased evaluation of the bidders in MONUSCO ESB.

The study findings further revealed that 93(69.9%) of the respondents generally disagreed that the quality of materials depends on its price not on its technical specifications approved at MONUSCO. During the interviews respondents revealed “it is not common for the quality of materials to be determined basing on the price but it is always based on the user department technical specifications”. This implies that at the quality of materials depends on its technical specifications as approved at MONUSCO and not on its price. This has led to client satisfaction amongst the user departments in MONUSCO ESB.

Further still findings revealed that 69 (51.9%) of the respondents generally agreed that indeed in their respective sections, evaluation of vendors starts during the delivery of goods/services and works in MONUSCO. During the interviews respondents revealed “vendors’ evaluation is conducted right from the process of product specifications and at the time of delivery of goods and services”. This has strengthened the achieving of value for money through specifications, quantity and quality standards agreed on at the time of contract award at MONUSCO Entebbe Support Base.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concluded that procurement process approvals had a significant contribution towards high quality market driven products more particularly through supplier audits]which were undertaken to correct compliance errors hence ensuring the higher the quality of goods and services received.

5.3 Recommendations

The study recommends MONUSCO procurement section to adequately select the right suppliers to provide the required goods and services. The organization should establish agreements with suppliers with clear guidelines on operations during service delivery. It is further recommended that members of the MONUSCO contracts committee should be recruited and allocated duties basing on the competencies as well as experience in procurement activities within the UN environment.

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