

TED Event 2018 – Superpowers of Procurement Data

Public Procurement Data for EU Businesses and Policies

Event organised by

Publications Office of the European Union

30-31 May 2018

Brussels

Residence Palace

Event Report

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1. Executive Summary

Public procurement represents € 2 trillion of business opportunities every year in Europe, of which € 460 billion are published in TED.

The TED Event 2018 – Superpowers of Procurement Data – gathered publishers and consumers of public procurement data to debate the present and the future of publication processes.

Participants claimed for faster, simpler and more transparent publication processes making use of artificial intelligence. They made concrete suggestions to improve the quality and reusability of procurement data as means to reinforce business opportunities, transparency and sound public money management.

The event, which celebrated the 20th anniversary of TED (Tenders Electronic Daily), was organised by the Publications Office of the European Union and sponsored by the Bulgarian presidency of the Council of the European Union.

We would like to thank all the participants for their presence, for their participation and for their interest.

We are very grateful to the speakers for the work done, in preparing their interventions, for giving presentations. We thank them for all their work and effort, for their openness and their understanding. We further appreciate the fact that most of the speakers write and present in a language which is not their mother language.

A particular word to the colleagues of the Publications Office, for all the work done – moderating sessions, giving presentations, animating debates, and for all the support to prepare the event, to organise it and for making sure that everything went smoothly and on time.

2. Welcome Address

Welcome address by Dimitar Genovski, Bulgarian deputy minister of Transport, Information, Technology and Communications

Publishing procurement data allows for better control when utilizing public resources and provides new business opportunities. This was the focus of the intervention of Mr Dimitar Genovski, Bulgarian deputy minister of Transport, Information, Technology and Communications. Reliable and precise procurement data, both on national and European levels, boosts economy and cross-border trade. Mr Genovski stressed the importance of open access to this type of information for the development of the single market as well as the Union's commercial relations with other countries and regions.

Link to site of the BG ministry of transport: <https://www.mtitc.government.bg/en/category/1/deputy-minister-genovski-opening-procurement-data-aids-business-60-billion-euro-market-share>

Welcome address by Rudolf Strohmeier, Director-General of the Publications Office of the European Union

Public procurement is important because it means money: 2 trillion euro every year in Europe. Money makes the world go round and public money can make it turn in the right direction. Mr Rudolf Strohmeier also highlighted the contribution of publishers to ensuring that public money is well managed and that good strategic decisions are made. By harvesting data, stimulating competition, and promoting transparency, procurement publishers play a decisive role in spending public funds. Mr Strohmeier also reminded of the need for accurate and complete data, which should allow replying to very simple questions: *who buys, what, from whom, for how much?*

[Link to speech](#)

3. Report

The summary below does not pretend to be a faithful report of the presentations given and discussions held. It expresses personal impressions – therefore subjective and incomplete – from a publisher's perspective.

Throughout the different workshops, there seemed to be consensus around four topics: procurement data have superpowers; data must be available; data must be structured; and we should cater for user needs. Agreement was less likely on issues such as what should be the focus of our activity as publishers, or whether the data currently gathered and published is sufficient.

1. The superpowers of procurement data were stressed both by Mr Genovski ([BG ministry of transport website](#)) and Mr Strohmeier ([Link to Publications Office DG Speech](#)) in their opening addresses, and several speakers illustrated their role:
 - a. Promote business and innovation, and contribute to getting value for money. Timely and anticipated communication is of the utmost importance to allow economic operators to plan their activities – both in the short term and in the long term planning. ([Innovation Procurement in Horizon 2020 – PowerPoint Presentation](#)).
 - b. Help targeting strategic planning and assess performance of procurement planning ([Public Procurement Policy – PowerPoint Presentation](#))
 - c. Measure efficiency and productivity in procurement ([Procurement Data in Support of Measurement of Efficiency and Productivity – PowerPoint Presentation](#))

- d. Ensure transparency, scrutiny and accountability. If things go wrong in the execution of public contracts, the public should be able to check the contractual conditions and remedies which can be applied. ([TenderNed – Dutch Government's Online Tendering System – PowerPoint Presentation](#))

The indicators of risk of corruption ([Public Procurement Reform in Ukraine – PowerPoint Presentation](#)) or the REDFLAGS project ([Data for Transparency – PowerPoint Presentation](#)) follow the same line of thought.

Transparency is not incompatible with privacy; it is only a matter of integrating privacy in the business model of our organisations ([Privacy Policy – PowerPoint Presentation](#)).

2. There is an overall assumption that a large volume of data is available.
 - a. There is a richness of data in TED ([TED Data: Public Procurement in the EU and Beyond – PowerPoint Presentation](#)) which can be exploited ([Artificial Intelligence for Public Procurement – PowerPoint Presentation](#)). Managing this large volume of data requires appropriate expertise ([Procurement Management by EU Institutions – PowerPoint Presentation](#)). Artificial Intelligence can be of help; there is no risk that it will make our jobs obsolete, because Artificial intelligence without human intelligence is useless.
 - b. Is the right data available? Some indicators point out that governance performance in procurement is getting worse: there are often cases where there is only one bid, there is a tendency for procuring entities to avoid publishing in TED or to slice contracts ([Comprehensive Governance Performance Assessment – PowerPoint Presentation](#)).
 - c. Several explanations were offered for this: maybe the current procurement governance models need to be reviewed, so that further data can be demanded; maybe too much data is requested, for purposes, such as monitoring and control, which go well beyond ensuring equal access to the market. Some participants stated that we might be losing focus, and that control should not be the centre of procurement procedures ([Challenges for National Publishers – PowerPoint Presentation](#)).
3. Getting the right data, getting the data right; that seems to be a key question. Some hints:
 - a. Data must be open ([Importance and Impact of Opening Data – PowerPoint Presentation](#))
 - b. Data must be structured and standards must be used ([Cross Border Procurement – PowerPoint Presentation](#))
 - c. Common semantics and formats must be adopted ([Formats for Better Re-Use – PowerPoint Presentation](#))
 - d. Ontologies and code lists must be used to structure information ([Code Lists and Ontologies – PowerPoint Presentation](#)).
 - e. Identifiers for contracting authorities and economic operators must be implemented. Identifiers should be a natural thing like in Estonia ([Unique ID-s for Contracting Authorities – PowerPoint Presentation](#)). While waiting for an overall answer, there are pragmatic solutions, such consolidating existing Identifiers lists ([org-id.guide: Improving the Quality of Identifiers for Suppliers and Buyers – PowerPoint Presentation](#)) or the provision of predefined fields ([Challenges for National Publishers – PowerPoint Presentation](#)).
4. The users should be in the centre of our attention, and we should facilitate their tasks:
 - a. Buyers are confronted with too many, too complex forms, which require considerable effort to fill in. The implementation of forms varies from country to country. The number of forms varies also at European level ([EU Standard Procurement Forms: "Rights" and "Wrongs" Disclosed – PowerPoint Presentation](#)), with some countries using a limited numbers ([National Publication Forms in Belgium – PowerPoint Presentation](#)); and other implementing several dozens ([Procurement Forms Case Study: National Forms in Hungary – PowerPoint Presentation](#)).

Several interesting approaches were presented: simplify the use of forms ([Publication System in Czech Republic and Main Issues/Challenges – PowerPoint Presentation](#)); align national and EU forms ([Cooperation with SIMAP for the Publication Process on TED – PowerPoint Presentation](#)); focus on the procedure rather than on the notice; limit the information included in procurement notices and refer to the tender documents for further material ([An eSender's Perspective – PowerPoint Presentation](#)). The latter is not unanimous though: some participants would like to have longer text fields. Furthermore, tender documents are not structured, which makes it difficult to extract useful information.

The future eForms should address these concerns: they should be fewer, simpler and reusable. ([eForms: State of Play – PowerPoint Presentation](#))

- b. Economic operators should be able to find business opportunities easily ([Scanning TED Website – PowerPoint Presentation](#)). Public authorities should use standards to improve search ([Technical Committee: Electronic Public Procurement – PowerPoint Presentation](#)) and build interfaces that respond to users' needs ([Designing Data Around User Needs – PowerPoint Presentation](#)). Search systems do not need to be like Google: they do not have to know everything, but should know everything that needs to be known about public procurement ([Public Procurement Data Usage in Portugal – PowerPoint Presentation](#)). In an enlarged market, multilingualism is crucial for cross border and internal procurement ([The Labyrinths of Multilingualism – PowerPoint Presentation](#)). And it is also necessary to think of reporting and statistics ([Public Procurement Reform in Ukraine – PowerPoint Presentation](#))

As a publisher, how can the Publications Office be of help? During the brainstorming sessions at the end of the conference, several good suggestions saw the light. We will look at them carefully, and hopefully come up with useful proposals for improving the service.

4. Presentations

How is procurement data used today?

Plenary session – 30th May (9.30am - 10.50am)

Moderator: Claude Schmit, Publications Office of the European Union

- **TED (Tenders Electronic Daily)**
Aija Bilzena, Publications Office of the European Union
[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **DIGIWHIST project**
Mihály Fazekas, University of Cambridge, Postdoctoral research fellow
[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **BASE – Portuguese Public Procurement Portal**
João Osório, Instituto dos Mercados Públicos, do Imobiliário e da Construção (IMPIC)
[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **TenderNed – Dutch Government online tendering system**
Kornelis Drijfhout, TenderNed, Head of unit eInvoicing
[PowerPoint presentation](#)

Needs and expectations: How can procurement data be used?

2 Parallel sessions – 30th May (11.10am - 12.30am)

DATA FOR BUSINESS

Moderator: Norbert Hohn, Publications Office of the European Union

- **C4P platform**
Andreas Thanopoulos, Chief Officer
Athanasios Staveris-Polykalas, Senior Software Engineer

[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Innovation Procurement in Horizon 2020**
Anne Müngersdorff, Lawyer, Strategic business development

[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Cross border procurement**
André Hoddevik, Secretary General OpenPEPPOL

[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Importance and impact of opening data**
Stiliyana Peneva, Expert, Information Technology Directorate in the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications, Bulgaria
Diman Stamatov, Expert, Information Technology Directorate in the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications, Bulgaria

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

DATA FOR TRANSPARENCY

Moderator: Aija Bilzena, Publications Office of the European Union

- **Redflags.eu**
Tünde Tátrai, Corvinus University of Budapest, Public procurement researcher

[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Designing data around user needs**
Tim Davies, Open Data Services

[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Privacy policy**
Marcin Baryn, Publications Office of the European Union

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

Challenges in creating quality data

Getting data right, getting the right data – 30th May (2.00pm - 3.00pm)

3 parallel sessions

1 – PROCUREMENT FORMS

Moderator: Annalisa Vacca, Publications Office of the European Union

- **EU standard forms**
Aija Bilzena, Publications Office of the European Union
[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Case study: national forms in Hungary**
Tünde Tátrai, Corvinus University of Budapest, Public procurement researcher
[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Case study: national forms in Belgium**
Mira Ratajczak, BOSA, Belgian e-Procurement service
[PowerPoint presentation](#)

2 – STANDARDS AND REFERENCIALS

Moderator: Claude Schmit, Publications Office of the European Union

- **eForms**
Jáchym Hercher, European Commission, Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Code lists and ontologies**
Natalie Muric, Publications Office of the European Union
[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **An eSender's perspective : ANKÖ Service Ges.m.b.H (Austria)**
Emir Prcic, ANKÖ, eProcurement & IT-Manager
[PowerPoint presentation](#)

3 – IDENTIFIERS AND FORMATS

Moderator: Willem Van Gemert, Publications Office of the European Union

- **Unique ID for contracting authorities**
Maarika Tork, Public procurement and state aid department, Ministry of Finance, Estonia
[PowerPoint presentation](#)

- **org-id.guide: improving the quality of identifiers for suppliers and buyers**
Tim Davies, Open Data Services

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

- **What kind of formats for better reuse?**
Jostein Frømyr, Edisys Consulting AS

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

Challenges for national publishers

Plenary session – 30th May (3.20pm - 5.00pm)

Moderator: Ana-Maria Babaligea, Publications Office of the European Union

- **Czech Republic**
Aleš Havránek, Ministry of regional development, Head of eProcurement department

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

- **Italy**
Antonio Antetomaso, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato S.p.A. Head of Technical Project Management & Design OU

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

- **Austria**
Emir Prcic, ANKÖ, eProcurement & IT-Manager

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

- **Poland**
Justyna Pożarowska, Public Procurement Office, Counselor

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

- **Ukraine**
Vasyl Zadvornyy, Prozorro, Chief executing officer

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

Procurement policy and management

Plenary session – 31st May (9.00am - 10.00am)

Moderator: Manuela Cruz, Publications Office of the European Union

- **EU procurement policy**
Nikita Stampa, European Commission, Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Procurement management by EU institutions (adapting policy, procedures and striving for larger transparency)**
Jakub Kodym, European Parliament, Procurement Service Logistics

[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Procurement data in support of measurement of efficiency and productivity**
Andy Cochrane, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Policy Analyst

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

Publishing data and powering business – Scanning business opportunities

Plenary session – 31st May (10.00am - 11.20am)

Moderator: Cécilia Charlier, Publications Office of the European Union

- **Case study: scanning the TED website**
Aija Bilzena, Publications Office of the European Union

[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Case study: How to structure searches?**
Kornelis Drijfhout, TenderNed, Head of unit eInvoicing

[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Case study: The labyrinths of multilingualism**
Mira Ratajczak, Belgium, e-Procurement Project Leader

[PowerPoint presentation](#)
- **Case study: Data reporting – statistics, analytics and visualisation**
Vasyl Zadvorny, Prozorro, Chief executing officer

[PowerPoint presentation](#)

5. Brainstorming Sessions

Steps ahead: engaging with data power

Brainstorming sessions – welcoming new ideas, expressing needs, how can TED evolve? (11.30am – 12.45pm)

Participants were invited to respond to an online poll, and then split into groups to discuss and fine tune the replies.

Question 1: **What new services should the TED website offer?**

- a. Visualisation of business opportunities in a map: 29%**
- b. Publication of TED raw data statistics: 31%**
- c. Wider machine search possibilities: 33%**
- d. Other: 6%**

During discussions, a number of topics were highlighted:

Search features

- Natural language search
- Full text search of procedures

Content

- Procurement documents (specifications) other than just the notices. Links must be persistent.
- Procurement documents from national portals with automatic translations
- List of companies that offer procurement services

Users support

- Simple TED user's beginner (documentation and manuals) for SME
- More training: how to search, eLearning tools

Customised services

- More alerts and channels (e.g. mobile)
- Notifications
- APP for notifications
- Possibility to create groups of companies interested in a call for tender
- List of business opportunities

Miscellaneous

- Good visualisation
- Better quality of data

- There is a need for a well-defined strategy on the what, how and to which audience the output of TED data should be addressed to.
- A directory of tools to access, analyze or visualize the data, in a maximum number of formats, would be welcome.

Question 2: **Which data should be added to notices to enable better policy decisions? (from 1- strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree)**

- a. **Information about all submitted tenders: 4**
- b. **Information about green, innovative and social procurement: 3,6**
- c. **Information about remedies (complaints): 3**
- d. **Other: 1,8**

It was felt that this issue should be addressed by the next directive. Participants highlighted also other points:

- Add innovation as mandatory data
- More information about indicators of tenders should be added
- Evaluate the risk for companies to offer the submission information public

Question 3: **Which solutions/services will strengthen TED role in cross-border procurement?**

- a. **Better machine translation: 21%**
- b. **Better visualisation of multiple search queries (e.g. several countries and NUTS codes in one result list): 54%**
- c. **Other: 25%**

Further comments from participants:

Translation

- Translation is important for SMEs
- Translation is important for business
- Better APIs with translation are needed

TED as information hub

TED should be seen as an information hub across Europe. The information hub should facilitate the task of economic operators that want to participate in cross-border procurement. Economic operators should be able to connect to their local platform and make search requests. The local platform should be able to connect to TED by machine-to –machine communication. TED in turn should connect to all other platforms in Europe (depending on the search criteria) and be capable of relaying the results back to the local platform of the economic operator.

Question 4: **In which format should the notices evolve?**

- a. TED XML: 57%**
- b. UBL: 16%**
- c. Other: 27%**

Participants decided to split information between input and output formats:

Input formats:

- TED XML could be better documented.
- UBL: there would be a benefit in using UBL (Universal Business Language) as it is already used in the operational data flow i.e. in ESPD (European Single Procurement Document) and eInvoicing. Furthermore, if the ESPD is to be closely linked with the eForms, it would be advantageous to move towards UBL.

Output formats

- Statistical formats such as Stata (statistical software package) and SAS (Statistical Analysis Software)
- Extracts on a weekly, monthly basis to avoid bulky downloads.
- OCDS (Open Contracting Data Standard) is working on mappings for eForms. This will hopefully be available shortly and, being globally accepted, would be a good format to provide.

Question 5: **What would improve the reusability of TED data? (from 1- strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree)**

- a. More open data formats (e.g. JSON, CSV): 3.6**
- b. Less frequent schema updates: 3.4**
- c. Reduce free text fields: 3.7**
- d. Other: 2**

There must be a balance between the need to provide clear and complete information and reusability, which often implies the use of codes and restricted fields. The first and foremost objective of TED is to advertise business information to economic operators. The information needs to be clear and explicit for economic operators and it is quite often clearer to explain in text than provide codes and limited information.

It is therefore imperative that there is a clear strategy on the use of TED for advertising or monitoring purposes. Different tracks may need to be set up.

Reusability would be aided if the headings in the CSV (Comma-separated values) files were translated along with the data. For example, if the data is in Danish then the headings should be in Danish.

Question 6: **Which technologies shall publishers investigate in a close future?**

- a. Artificial intelligence (e.g. data mining, deep linking, etc.):63%**
- b. Application programming interface gateways: 37%**
- c. Other:0 %**

Participants offered also the following comments:

- With the growing data knowledge base, we need to look into how to explore the data and how to extract the data in more efficient and stakeholder oriented manner.
- Cross-border procurement is not facilitated by the different languages and legal basis used across Europe; it would be good to look into how this can be less problematic.
- Polling suppliers before big Calls for tenders.

Question 7: **How can we reduce mistakes in published data?**

- a. More controlled input fields: 40%**
- b. Limit number and size of free text fields: 25%**
- c. Implement checks between notices within the same procedure: 27%**
- d. Other: 8%**

Participants suggested also:

- Implement recommendations on the input to be provided by for example having some kind of wizard (Expert system proposes recommendations).
- Use trainings, tutorials, tooltips and warnings to increase the level of understanding and awareness of the rules and ways of filling in the fields
- Ensure that notice validation is done at the national level in order for OP to receive only completed and correct notices. This could be implemented either at a level of each single Member State or at a central level via a single validation tool shared by all the eSenders/contracting authorities using eNotices.

Question 8: **What change in TED publication schedule would be welcomed by national publishers?**

- a. Publication from Monday to Friday instead of Tuesday to Saturday: 5**
- b. Fast publication of an urgent corrigendum: 6,3**
- c. Other: 2,7**

The change on the publication dates will not represent an issue according to the participants in the workshop. Two main questions were addressed on this topic:

- Why not publishing all day long?
- Why should we change the publication dates?

Concerning the first question, everyone agreed that there is no added value in publishing all day long; on the contrary this will result for the business operator in increasing the time spent in searching for business opportunities in TED.

As for the second question, it was quickly clear to all that, for the countries where the national official journal is not published on Saturday but on Monday, the alignment of the publication dates on a national and European level would constitute a concrete improvement.

All the participants agreed that an additional urgent fast publication in case of need would be a very useful improvement to the current unique publication export.

A proposal coming from the participants was, for notices to be translated and in order to publish them in the shortest possible delay, to publish first the original language version and then the other language version as soon as they are available for publication.

Question 9: **Which priorities should the next generation of forms address?**

a. Clear definition of mandatory fields: 35%

b. Simplification of data input: 41%

c. Better reusability for procurement below EU threshold values: 23%

d. Other: 2%

Some participants suggested eliminating or strongly reducing the number of optional fields, to convert the text fields into code list fields, to use the assisted editing functionality for the text fields.