

# TOWARDS TRANSPARENT PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN NORTH KOSOVO



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# Introduction

Public procurement serves as a safeguard for the responsible expenditure of public funds collected through taxation. As such, it is of utmost importance for any country. However, given the fact that public procurement is recognised as one of the most corruption-prone areas in the Western Balkan (WB) region, monitoring this area of public administration is of particular importance. In Kosovo, transparency in public procurement has increasingly been supported by digital monitoring tools and civil society initiatives, including platforms such as Integrity Watch Kosovo[1], which provide public access to procurement data and contribute to strengthening accountability mechanisms. Building on these broader transparency efforts, this Index seeks to complement and localise monitoring practices by focusing specifically on the four northern municipalities and assessing transparency from a citizen-centred perspective. But why is public procurement transparency important in the Kosovo context? When it comes to Kosovo and its four northern municipalities (Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok, Leposavić/Leposaviq and Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovica Veriore/North Mitrovica), there are several reasons for improving the monitoring of public procurement there.

First, the aforementioned four municipalities began integrating into Kosovo's political and legal system only after 2013, following the First Agreement on Principles Governing the Normalisation of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina, facilitated by the European Union (EU).[2] In that sense, these four local units were latecomers in adjusting to Kosovo's public procurement system and applying relevant laws. Second, northern municipalities often lag behind compared to other municipalities across Kosovo when it comes to transparency.[3] Third, these municipalities are majority inhabited by the ethnic Serb population, the non-majority community in Kosovo, and are run (usually) by their political representatives. Thus, monitoring their work can also provide an insight into the general state of play in political and institutional integration of Serbs in North Kosovo and normalisation of relations.

## 1. Conceptual Framework and Analytical Approach

Public procurement represents an intersection of the public finances and public administration, with a wealth of literature, both academic and policy, discussing this niche sub-area. Given the nature of the public procurement and its interplay of theory and practice, when reviewing this topic, it is necessary to highlight both perspectives. Therefore, this section will provide a review of selected, most relevant academic works, accompanied by international indices and reports, and relevant policy papers in the area of public procurement with the aim to identify: 1) key principles in public procurement; 2) comparative practices; 3) key indicators observed globally and in the WB region. These would serve as a basis for developing an original public procurement transparency index for North Kosovo. Finally, a short analysis of the relevant legislation and policies in Kosovo will be provided in this section as a necessary precondition for the index development.

[1] <https://integritywatchkosova.org/>

[2] It is also known as the 'Brussels Agreement', see more at: Government of the Republic of Serbia (2013), [Brussels Agreement](#).

[3] For instance, Zubin Potok, Zvečan, and Leposavić recorded the lowest score in municipal budget transparency, see more at: GAP Institute (2025), [Municipal ID 2025](#), p. 28.

What is public procurement? There are multiple definitions, but for the needs of this paper, the widest definition, encompassing the most elements, will be used. The term public procurement, in the widest sense, includes a variety of means by which public agencies and organisations acquire supplies and services from outside sources.[4] This definition is seen as an “umbrella” usage of the term, in which “procurement” encompasses acquisition, contracting, buying, renting, leasing, and purchasing, to include functions such as requirements determination and all phases of contract administration. [5] Furthermore, Gordon defines public procurement as a term that refers to functions exercisable by a public authority of purchasing goods, works, and/or services from a third party.[6] Grandia and others use similar elements, stating that public procurement is the acquisition of works, supplies, or services by government or public organisations from the market or another outside body, while simultaneously creating and safeguarding public value.[7]

On the other hand, international organisations use more or less similar definitions of public procurement. For OECD[8] public procurement refers to the purchase by governments and state-owned enterprises of goods, services and works.[9] The United Nations (UN) and the World Bank (WB) use an academically oriented definition of public procurement, describing it as the overall process of acquiring goods, civil works and services, including all functions from the identification of needs, selection and solicitation of sources, preparation and award of contract, and all phases of contract administration. [10] Finally, for the Asian Development Bank, public procurement is the process by which national and local public administrations establish needs, solicit competitive bids, select based on criteria, award contracts and manage contract performance, all aimed at achieving best value and effective use of public funds.[11] In short, all public money spent by public authorities, including the national government, local government units, or public agencies, enterprises, or entities, should be done through transparent, previously defined procedures systematised in the public procurement system.

[4] Keith F. Snider & Rene G. Rendon (2012), “Public Procurement: Public Administration and Public Service Perspectives”, *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 18:2, 327-348, DOI: 10.1080/15236803.2012.12001687, p. 329.

[5] Khi V. Thai (2001), “Public procurement reexamined”, *Journal of Public Procurement*, 1(1), 9–50, pp. 42-43.

[6] Richard Gordon (2007), 'Public Procurement', *EC Law In Judicial Review* (Oxford, 2007; online edn, Oxford Academic, 31 Oct. 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199266630.003.0015>.

[7] Grandia, J., Kuitert, L., Schotanus, F., Volker, L. (2023). *Introducing Public Procurement*. In: Grandia, J., Volker, L. (eds) *Public Procurement*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-18490-1\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-18490-1_1).

[8] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

[9] OECD, [Public Procurement](#), accessed: 4 Jan. 2026.

[10] Khi V. Thai (ed), [International Handbook of Public Procurement](#), CRC Press, 2009, p. 3.

[11] Asian Development Bank. (2011), *The Strategic Importance of Public Procurement*, Manila, The Philippines, Asian Development Bank, cited in Emmanuel Bothale, “[Infusing Value for Money \(VfM\) Into the Public Procurement System in Botswana](#)”, *Journal of Public Procurement*, Volume 17, Issue 3, 281-314, 2017, p. 282

Following the definition, another important element is to define key principles of public procurement, especially in the European context. SIGMA has set out basic principles of public procurement based on the EU legal body (Treaties and Directives) and shared European practice.[12] Since Kosovo applied to join the EU in 2022, nesting further discussions within the EU realm of public procurement is warranted. Therefore, there are four key public procurement principles within the EU:

1. Competition;
2. Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination;
3. Transparency;
4. Value for Money.[13]

*Competition* functions as a discovery mechanism by revealing prices, quality, and conditions through market participation, which is maximised by wide advertising and open access to procurement across the EU. Procurement law, therefore, seeks to maintain a level playing field by preventing distortions of competition, prohibiting discriminatory or protectionist barriers, and ensuring equal treatment, mutual recognition, and proportionality. *Equal treatment* requires that comparable situations and economic operators be assessed objectively and identically, based solely on the content of their tenders and without regard to individual advantages or disadvantages. In the EU context, this is complemented by the principle of *non-discrimination*, which prohibits any differentiation based on nationality or origin, as such conditions inherently favour domestic operators and restrict equal access to procurement. Furthermore, *transparency* functions as an enabling principle that supports other procurement objectives by ensuring clarity, openness, and verifiability of the process. Through publication of rules, advance disclosure of specifications and criteria, advertising requirements, and proper record-keeping, transparency allows stakeholders to assess fairness, prevent discrimination, and hold contracting authorities accountable. Finally, *value for money* is a core economic objective of public procurement, referring to the optimal balance between cost-related and non-cost-related factors that best meet the contracting authority's needs. Although not explicitly defined in the Directives, it is operationalised through the requirement to award contracts on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT), emphasising a holistic assessment beyond price alone. The observed principles must be captured in any monitoring and evaluation of public procurement, not only in Kosovo, but in any European country.

[12] Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) is a joint initiative of the OECD and the EU. Its key objective is to strengthen the foundations for improved public governance, and hence support socio-economic development through building the capacities of the public sector, enhancing horizontal governance and improving the design and implementation of public administration reforms, including proper prioritisation, sequencing and budgeting.

[13] See more at: OECD (2016), "Public Procurement in the EU", *SIGMA Public Procurement Briefs*, No. 1, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/caee1fdb-en>, pp. 5-6.

In order to develop monitoring mechanisms for public procurement, it is necessary first to identify key weak spots in the system. Public procurement systems in the Western Balkans continue to face a range of persistent **structural, institutional, and governance-related challenges** that limit their effectiveness and strategic impact. While most economies in the region have largely aligned their legal frameworks with the EU public procurement directives, implementation remains uneven and often formalistic.[14] Empirical evidence points to low levels of competition, manifested through a high prevalence of single-bid procedures and limited participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These outcomes are closely linked to restrictive eligibility criteria, insufficient use of lotting, and administrative burdens that disproportionately affect smaller economic operators.[15] In addition, award decisions remain heavily dominated by the lowest-price criterion, which constrains the effective pursuit of value for money and discourages quality-based, innovative, and sustainable solutions, particularly in complex or high-value procurements.[16]

**Governance and integrity** risks further undermine the performance of public procurement systems across the region. The extensive use of exemptions, special procedures, and project-specific legal arrangements, especially in the context of large infrastructure investments, reduces transparency and weakens competitive safeguards.[17] Weaknesses in procurement planning and contract management remain widespread, contributing to cost overruns, implementation delays, and limited accountability following contract award.[18] Oversight and review bodies frequently operate under capacity constraints, while legal protection mechanisms are often slow, inconsistent, or insufficiently transparent.[19] Although electronic procurement systems are formally established across the Western Balkans, their potential for data-driven oversight, risk analysis, and enhanced public transparency remains underutilised.[20] Overall, limited professionalisation of procurement staff, persistent perceptions of political influence, and low trust among economic operators continue to constrain the role of public procurement as a tool for good governance, efficient public spending, and EU accession-related reforms.

Kosovo shares most of the systemic public procurement challenges observed across the Western Balkans, particularly **low levels of competition, a high prevalence of single-bid tenders**, and a continued reliance on the lowest-price criterion, all of which weaken value-for-money outcomes.

[14] See more at: OECD/SIGMA (2024), [Public administration in the Western Balkans 2024](#), OECD Publishing.

[15] Miloš Đinđić, Sava Mitrović and Milica Škorić (2023), [Western Balkans PAR Monitor](#), European Policy Centre (CEP), pp. 141-161.

[16] Ibid, OECD/SIGMA (2024).

[17] World Bank (2020), [Enhancing government effectiveness and transparency: The fight against corruption](#), World Bank Group.

[18] Ibid, OECD/SIGMA (2024).

[19] Ibid, OECD/SIGMA (2024).

[20] Miloš Resimić (2023), [Accountability, Loading: A survey of open data for enhancing political integrity in the Western Balkans and Türkiye](#), Kosova Democratic Institute & Transparency International.

SMEs face similar barriers related to administrative complexity and qualification requirements, while strategic procurement instruments (quality criteria, life-cycle costing, green procurement) remain largely underutilised in practice. Governance and integrity risks are also pronounced: the frequent use of **exemptions and special procedures**, including project-specific arrangements for large infrastructure investments, has raised persistent concerns regarding transparency and equal treatment. In addition, Kosovo faces some **country-specific challenges**, notably long-standing **capacity constraints and credibility issues within the procurement review system**, including delays and inconsistencies in decisions, which undermine effective legal protection.[21] While Kosovo has made relatively early progress in establishing a comprehensive **e-procurement platform**, the system's analytical and oversight potential is still insufficiently exploited, limiting proactive risk detection and policy learning. Overall, despite a formally advanced legal and digital framework, weaknesses in implementation, oversight, and trust continue to constrain the effectiveness of public procurement as a governance and development tool in Kosovo.

In the past 25 years, Kosovo experienced five revisions of its public procurement law–PPL (2003, 2007, 2011, 2014), the latest in 2016.[22] A new draft public procurement law has been sitting in the Assembly for more than four years, awaiting adoption.[23] Since the existing PPL is only partially aligned with the EU directives, there is an expectation from the EU for the adoption of a new PPL, but also the Law on public-private partnerships and concessions.[24] Alongside legislative misalignment with the EU, existing challenges with their enforcement may be even more problematic in the case of Kosovo. For instance, monitoring by civil society and watchdogs shows that **negotiated contracts without prior publication of notices** have been widely used across contracting authorities, including for works and supplies that could involve infrastructure-related spending. For example, the Initiative for Progress (INPO) found that in Q4 2024, **192 contracts worth nearly €14 million were awarded through negotiated procedures without publication of contract notices**, even though nearly 2800 total contracts were concluded in that period, suggesting a significant share of non-competitive deals in public procurement overall.[25] Alongside the issue of using negotiated or single-source contracts in public works, there are frequent procedural violations in road construction contracts observed. In mid-2025, media reported that the **Ministry of Infrastructure signed contracts for the “Prishtina-Podujeva road” project in apparent violation of procurement procedures**, because the ministry proceeded to sign contracts *despite an active procurement review body complaint*, which is prohibited under the PPL until the complaint is resolved.

[21] See more at: Miloš Pavković (2025), Lex Specialis as Modus Operandi: Analysing Public Procurement Systems in the Western Balkans, Policy Brief, European Policy Centre (CEP), pp. 6-7.

[22] Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law Nr. 04 / L-042 on Public Procurement in the Republic of Kosovo, 2016.

[23] European Commission, Commission Staff Working Document – Kosovo\* 2025 Report, SWD(2025) 752 final, p. 59.

[24] Ibid, European Commission.

[25] Kosova Press, INPO: Over 190 contracts for tenders were signed in three months without publication of the notice, 2025.

This reflects procedural non-compliance with the law in an infrastructure-related contract.[26] In light of the identified legislative shortcomings and significant implementation challenges, findings related to the monitoring of public procurement in northern Kosovo should be interpreted with a high degree of caution.

## 2. PUBLIC PROCUREMENT TRANSPARENCY INDEX (PPTI)

Following an overview and analysis of relevant legislation and practices in public procurement in Kosovo, and the identification of key principles and elements in this area across Europe, this section develops the original index for monitoring public procurement in the North of Kosovo. The index aims to provide a foundation for the quality monitoring of local administration and public enterprises in four municipalities: Zvečan, Zubin Potok, Leposavić, and Mitrovica North. At the centre of the monitoring, the following elements will be observed: *transparency*, *accountability*, *competition* and *citizen participation*. These elements are further elaborated through individual indicators. Jointly, they make a unique and original Public Procurement Transparency Index (PPTI).

**Transparency** represents one of the key principles and necessary elements for monitoring public procurement. To monitor the transparency of a municipality or other public entity, which is lawfully obligated to follow public procurement procedures, six indicators have been developed. The first two indicators cover the appointment of a public procurement officer and documented market research for any tender falling within the scope of PPL (see Table 1, T1 & T2). An absolutely essential part of transparency is the publication of tender calls either on the public procurement portal or the municipality website, but ideally on both of them (T3 in Table 1). Having in mind that this index specifically targets North of Kosovo with a majority Serbian population, indicator 4 assesses whether tender documentation is publicly available in both Serbian and Albanian languages (T4). Another relevant indicator for measuring transparency is the timely publication of award notices (T5) and publication of cancelled procedures with clearly stated reasons of cancellation (T6). These six indicators make up the transparency pillar of the PPTI.

[26] Mentor Buzhala (June 2025), Liburn Aliu's Ministry violates another institution, illegal contracts for the Pristina-Podujeva road confirmed, Periskopi.

**Table 1 Transparency indicators**

Code	Indicator	Type
T1	<i>Municipality has a formally appointed and publicly identifiable public procurement officer (name and contact published)</i>	Input
T2	<i>Documented market research exists in procurement files for procedures above the high-value threshold</i>	Process
T3	<i>Calls for tenders above legal thresholds are published on the Public Procurement Portal and/or municipality website</i>	Process
T4	<i>Tender documentation is publicly available in both Serbian and Albanian</i>	Process
T5	<i>Award notices are published within the legally prescribed deadline</i>	Output
T6	<i>Cancelled procedures are publicly announced with stated reasons</i>	Output

**Risks addressed:** Informal procedures, restricted access, linguistic exclusion

Your paragraph textAccountability, as a second pillar of the PPTI, scrutinises the work of relevant public procurement institutions at both the central and local levels, with the aim of measuring effects on public procurement quality in general. As shown in Table 5, five indicators address potential risks often present in public procurement, such as weak remedies, arbitrary decision-making and lack of justification. First indicator checks how active the Public Procurement Review Body is in reviewing procedures carried out in the North (A1 in Table 2). This is important to ensure scrutiny and compliance with PPL. Second indicators measure the average number of complaints lodged by businesses participating in tenders, revealing how often economic operators in the North consider their rights violated or any other procedural shortcomings noted (A2). In order to observe fairness in tenders, the third indicator (A3) collects data on all public tenders in the North during one year, and counts the share of procedures using clear, pre-disclosed award criteria. Cancelled procedures are a normal occurrence, however, too frequent cancellation can signal disruption and anomaly in the public procurement system. Indicator 4 (A4), for that reason, measures the percentage of cancelled procedures. Finally, the last indicator (A5) measures the share of cancellations justified by procedural or legal deficiencies.

High share of cancelled procedures due to procedural or legal deficiencies suggests poor preparation of tender documentation, weak legal expertise or training, or inadequate internal controls and ex ante checks.

Table 2 Accountability indicators

Code	Indicator	Type
A1	<i>Number of procedures carried out in the north reviewed by the Public Procurement Review Body per 100 procedures</i>	Outcome
A2	<i>Number of complaints lodged by economic operators per 100 procedures carried out in the north</i>	Outcome
A3	<i>Share of procedures using clear, pre-disclosed award criteria</i>	Process
A4	<i>Percentage of cancelled procedures among all procedures carried out in the north</i>	Outcome
A5	<i>Share of cancellations justified by procedural or legal deficiencies</i>	Outcome

**Risks addressed:** Weak remedies, arbitrary decision-making, lack of justification

**Competition**, as a third pillar of PPTI, measures economic activity at public tenders, as public procurement often is a significant source of income for local enterprises, all the while strong competition provides better offers and helps municipalities to reach value for money. One of the best ways to measure competition is the average number of bids per tender (C1 in Table 3). This indicator is complemented by the second one, assessing the share of single bid procedures (C2). This indicator can reveal hidden anomalies which cannot be captured by indicator C1. Value is also an important segment of the tender. Low-value procedures might not be interesting enough for enterprises to participate and submit their offers, which indirectly affects competition as well. Also, if the value awarded through open procedures is lower than the value of procedures carried out through other means, this can signal abnormalities. That's why indicator C3 targets the share of procurement value awarded through open procedures, all the while indicator C4 targets the share of negotiated procedures without prior publication. Finally, indicator C5 checks whether there exists a supplier concentration, as a limited number of the same suppliers are often awarded in public tenders. These five indicators should comprehensively cover competition in the public procurement procedures in the North of Kosovo.

Table 3 **Competition indicators**

Code	Indicator	Type
C1	<i>Average number of bids per open procedure in the north</i>	Outcome
C2	<i>Percentage of procedures with a single bid in the north</i>	Outcome
C3	<i>Share of procurement value awarded through open procedures</i>	Outcome
C4	<i>Share of negotiated procedures without prior publication</i>	Outcome
C5	<i>Supplier concentration index (top 3 suppliers' share of total value)</i>	Outcome

**Risks addressed:** Market capture, artificial restriction of competition

**Participation** of the public, which is more frequently reflected in civil society organisations, rather than individual citizen participation, is the fourth pillar of the PPTI. Citizen participation in public procurement is important because it enables external oversight of how public funds are planned and spent, increasing transparency and reducing the risk of misuse or corruption. It also strengthens accountability and trust by allowing citizens and civil society to raise concerns, provide input on procurement priorities, and monitor whether procedures serve the public interest. Therefore, within this pillar, five different indicators measure public participation in relation to public procurement (Table 4). P1 checks whether the municipality has carried out public consultation on the annual procurement plan. Indicator P2 shows whether procurement plans are publicly available. More importantly, the P3 indicator reveals if and how many CSOs actively monitor public procurement, which, given the CSOs' role as watchdogs in many areas, might be instrumental. CSOs are often the main information seekers; thus, municipal response rate to procurement-related access-to-information requests can reveal a great deal about public participation, but also accountability of the local administration. Finally, the P5 indicators check whether the procurement data is available in open and reusable formats.

Table 4 **Citizen participation indicators**

Code	Indicator	Type
P1	<i>Public consultation conducted on the annual procurement plan prior to adoption</i>	Process
P2	<i>Procurement plans publicly available and downloadable</i>	Transparency
P3	<i>Number of civil society organisations actively monitoring procurement</i>	Outcome
P4	<i>Municipal response rate to procurement-related access-to-information requests</i>	Outcome
P5	<i>Availability of procurement data in reusable/open formats</i>	Transparency

**Risks addressed:** Closed decision-making, lack of societal oversight

When it comes to citizen participation, indicators P2 and P5 on publishing procurement plans and procurement data in open formats may draw attention, as these two can easily be part of the first pillar – transparency. They could legitimately be placed in the *Transparency* pillar, but they were placed under *Citizen Participation* to capture **who transparency is for and how it is used**, not just whether information exists. Modern EU/SIGMA/OECD approaches increasingly treat transparency as instrumental, meaning that transparency is valuable only if it enables external scrutiny, participation, and accountability. That is why they were grouped under **Citizen Participation**: they measure **enabling conditions for participation**, not transparency per se.

## Box 1. Typology of indicators used in the Public Procurement Transparency Index

### Input indicators

Input indicators measure the **formal and institutional preconditions** for conducting public procurement. They capture the existence of legal, organisational, and human resource arrangements that enable procurement activities, such as the appointment of procurement officers or the adoption of internal rules. Input indicators assess whether the **basic framework** is in place, but do not provide evidence on how procurement functions in practice.

### Process indicators

Process indicators assess **how procurement procedures are implemented** in practice. They focus on compliance with procedural standards and principles, including transparency, equal treatment, and non-discrimination. Typical examples include the publication of calls for tenders, the use of pre-disclosed award criteria, or the conduct of market research. Process indicators provide insight into **procedural integrity**, but not necessarily into final results.

### Output indicators

Output indicators capture the **immediate and measurable results** of procurement procedures. These include observable procedural outcomes such as the number of bids received, the publication of award notices, or the frequency of cancelled procedures. Output indicators reflect what procurement processes produce, but may be influenced by contextual or market-related factors beyond the control of contracting authorities.

### Outcome indicators

Outcome indicators measure the **broader effects** of procurement practices on policy objectives such as competition, accountability, and value for money. Examples include the prevalence of single-bid procedures, supplier concentration, or the rate of complaints relative to procurement volume. Outcome indicators are particularly useful for identifying **systemic risks and patterns**, although they require cautious interpretation.

### Transparency indicators

Transparency indicators assess the extent to which procurement-related information is **proactively disclosed, accessible, timely, and understandable** to external stakeholders. They focus on the availability and quality of information that enables public scrutiny, including the publication of tender documentation, contract awards, cancellation notices, and data in accessible formats. Transparency indicators are a **necessary condition** for accountability and participation, but not sufficient on their own.

### 3.PPTI Scoring Methodology

Following the development of key indicators within the four pillars of the Public Procurement Transparency Index, this section explains scoring for each indicator, describing benchmarks and sources of verification, pillar scoring and overall Index score.

#### 3.1 Indicator scoring

Each indicator is scored on a **0–2 scale**, ensuring simplicity and comparability:

- 0 – Not fulfilled / no evidence
- 1 – Partially fulfilled
- 2 – Fully fulfilled

A three-point (0–2) scoring scale was selected to balance analytical rigour with practical feasibility. Given data availability constraints and the need for consistent application across municipalities, the scale allows for clear differentiation between non-compliance, partial compliance, and full compliance, while minimising subjective judgment. This approach is commonly used in composite governance indices where comparability and replicability are prioritised.

Quantitative indicators (e.g. single-bid procedures) are converted using benchmarks:

Example:

- Single-bid procedures
  - 50% = 0
  - 30–50% = 1
  - <30% = 2

Benchmarks are explicitly defined in the Technical Annex.

#### Transparency = 25% of Index

Code	Indicator	Source of verification	Type
T1	<i>Public procurement officer</i>	Website/Interview	0-2
T2	<i>Market research</i>	Interview	0-2
T3	<i>Calls for tenders published</i>	Website/Public procurement portal	0-2
T4	<i>Tender documentation in Serbian and Albanian</i>	Website/Public procurement portal	0-2
T5	<i>Award notices</i>	Website/Public procurement portal	0-2
T6	<i>Cancelled procedures</i>	Website/Public procurement portal	0-2

### Accountability = 25% of Index

Code	Indicator	Source of verification	Type
A1	<i>Number of reviewed procedures</i>	Public procurement portal	0-2
A2	<i>Number of complaints</i>	Public procurement portal	0-2
A3	<i>Procedures - clear, pre-disclosed award criteria</i>	Website/Public procurement portal	0-2
A4	<i>Percentage of cancelled procedures</i>	Public procurement portal	0-2
A5	<i>Share of cancellations</i>	Public procurement portal	0-2

### Competition = 25% of Index

Code	Indicator	Source of verification	Type
C1	<i>Average number of bids per</i>	Public procurement portal	0-2
C2	<i>Procedures with a single bid</i>	Public procurement portal	0-2
C3	<i>Share of procurement value (open procedures)</i>	Public procurement portal	0-2
C4	<i>Negotiated procedures without prior publication</i>	Public procurement portal	0-2
C5	<i>Supplier concentration index</i>	Public procurement portal/interview	0-2

## Citizen participation = 25% of Index

Code	Indicator	Source of verification	Type
P1	<i>Public consultation</i>	Website/Interview	0-2
P2	<i>Procurement plans publicly available</i>	Website/Interview	0-2
P3	<i>Number of CSOs actively monitoring procurement</i>	Interview	0-2
P4	<i>Response rate to access-to-information requests</i>	Interview/Fol	0-2
P5	<i>Availability of procurement data</i>	Website/Public procurement portal	0-2

### 3.2 Indicator scoring

Pillar scores, therefore, reflect the relative performance of a municipality within a specific dimension of public procurement, rather than absolute compliance with legal or policy standards. Each pillar score is calculated as:

$$\text{Pillar Score (0-25)} = (\text{Sum of indicator scores} \div \text{Maximum possible indicator score}) \times 25$$

Each pillar contributes **25 points** to the total Index score.

Indicator	Score
1. Transparency	
2. Accountability	
3. Competiton	
4. Citizen participation	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

### 3.3 Indicator scoring

For each pillar, the sum of indicator scores is divided by the maximum possible score for that pillar and multiplied by 25. This ensures that each pillar contributes a maximum of 25 points to the overall index score. The overall index score is calculated as the sum of the four pillar scores, resulting in a scale from 0 to 100.

$$\text{Overall Index Score} = \text{Transparency} + \text{Accountability} + \text{Competition} + \text{Citizen Participation}$$

The final Public Procurement Transparency Index (PPTI) score ranges from **0 to 100**, reflecting the aggregated performance of a municipality across the four pillars of *transparency, accountability, competition, and citizen participation*. Higher scores indicate stronger alignment with EU and SIGMA public procurement principles, while lower scores signal elevated governance, integrity, and performance risks.

The interpretation thresholds presented below are designed to provide a **diagnostic reading** of procurement systems, rather than a normative or punitive assessment. They should be understood as indicative ranges that help identify patterns, weaknesses, and reform priorities, particularly in a context characterised by institutional and political constraints such as North Kosovo.

Score Range	Interpretation
0-39	High-risk procurement environment
40-59	Significant weaknesses
60-79	Moderate compliance, systemic issues remain
80-100	Largely compliant with EU/SIGMA standards

Municipalities scoring in the **0–39 range** exhibit serious and systemic deficiencies across multiple pillars. Such results typically point to weak transparency practices, limited competition, ineffective accountability mechanisms, and minimal opportunities for external oversight. Deeper analysis of pillar-level results provides a detailed explanation for this category. In these cases, procurement processes are likely to be highly vulnerable to mismanagement, inefficiency, and integrity risks, requiring urgent and comprehensive institutional interventions.

Scores in the **40–59 range** indicate the presence of basic procurement structures and procedures, but with substantial weaknesses in implementation. While formal rules may exist, their application is often inconsistent, and key safeguards, such as effective remedies, competitive tendering, or proactive disclosure, remain underdeveloped. This range suggests a need for targeted capacity-building, improved oversight, and stronger enforcement of existing rules.

Municipalities scoring between **60 and 79** demonstrate a moderate level of compliance with public procurement standards. Transparency and competition mechanisms are generally in place, and accountability arrangements function to some extent, but structural or recurrent issues persist. These may include reliance on single-bid procedures, limited use of quality-based award criteria, or insufficient engagement with civil society. Improvements at this level typically require more advanced reforms focused on professionalisation, data use, and strategic procurement practices.

Scores in the **80–100** range reflect procurement systems that are largely aligned with EU and SIGMA principles. High-performing municipalities in this category demonstrate consistent transparency, robust competition, effective accountability mechanisms, and meaningful opportunities for citizen and civil society engagement. While no procurement system is risk-free, municipalities in this range exhibit good practices that can serve as benchmarks for others.

Importantly, **overall index scores should always be interpreted together with pillar-level results**. A relatively high overall score may conceal critical weaknesses in a specific dimension, such as citizen participation or accountability. Conversely, a lower overall score may mask good performance in individual pillars. For this reason, the PPTI is intended primarily as an **analytical and diagnostic tool**, supporting evidence-based policy dialogue, targeted reforms, and longitudinal monitoring, rather than as a ranking instrument. While quantitative indicators improve comparability, their results may be influenced by market size, economic structure, and external factors. Therefore, scores should be interpreted alongside qualitative contextual analysis

#### **4. Instead of Conclusion – Baseline Benchmarks**

Rather than offering a conventional conclusion, this paper establishes **baseline benchmarks** for the future application of the Public Procurement Transparency Index (PPTI) in the four northern municipalities of Kosovo. Given that the PPTI is designed primarily as a **monitoring and diagnostic instrument**, its analytical value lies not in a one-off assessment, but in its capacity to track changes in procurement practices over time and to identify trends, improvements, or regressions.

The establishment of a baseline year is particularly important in the context of North Kosovo. Between 2022 and 2025, all four municipalities experienced prolonged political instability, institutional disruptions, and limited administrative continuity, which significantly affected the functioning of local government, including public procurement activities. As a result, procurement data from this period may not accurately reflect structural or institutional performance, but rather extraordinary political circumstances. For this reason, **2026 is proposed as the baseline year** for the systematic application of the PPTI.

Baseline benchmarks derived from the 2026 data will serve as a **reference point** against which future performance can be assessed. Subsequent measurements will enable the identification of relative improvements or deteriorations within individual pillars: transparency, accountability, competition, and citizen participation, as well as across municipalities. This approach allows the PPTI to support **longitudinal analysis**, rather than static comparison, and reduces the risk of misinterpretation associated with isolated scores.

Importantly, baseline benchmarks should not be understood as normative targets or minimum compliance thresholds. Instead, they represent an **empirical snapshot** of procurement practices at a defined moment in time. Progress should therefore be assessed in relative terms, by comparing municipalities to their own past performance and by examining trends within each pillar, rather than through simplistic ranking or naming-and-shaming exercises.

By framing the PPTI around baseline benchmarks, the index is positioned as a **learning and reform-oriented tool**. It can inform policy dialogue between municipalities, central institutions, civil society, and international partners, support targeted capacity-building interventions, and contribute to evidence-based discussions on public procurement reform in Kosovo. In this sense, the absence of a traditional conclusion reflects the open-ended nature of the index itself: its purpose is not to close a debate, but to **initiate continuous monitoring and improvement**.

In addition, the PPTI is designed to be accessible to **civil society organisations, media, and research institutions**, supporting independent oversight and evidence-based advocacy. By translating complex procurement data into a structured set of indicators and scores, the Index can help non-state actors identify priority risk areas, engage municipalities in informed dialogue, and formulate targeted recommendations. Over time, the PPTI may also contribute to broader policy discussions on public procurement reform in Kosovo, particularly by highlighting persistent implementation gaps and good practices that can be replicated beyond the northern municipalities.

# Technical Annex

## Benchmarking and Data Collection Methodology for the Public Procurement Transparency Index (PPTI)

This Technical Annex provides a detailed explanation of the **benchmarking logic** and **data collection methodology** used for each indicator included in the Public Procurement Transparency Index (PPTI). The purpose of this annex is to ensure **replicability, transparency, and methodological consistency** in the application of the Index across municipalities and over time.

Unless otherwise stated, indicators are assessed on an **annual basis**, using data from the relevant calendar year.

### Transparency Indicators

#### T1. Publicly identifiable public procurement officer

##### Benchmarking

- **2 points** – A formally appointed public procurement officer exists and their name and contact details are publicly available (municipal website and/or official documents).
- **1 point** – A procurement officer exists, but contact details are not publicly disclosed or information is incomplete.
- **0 points** – No evidence of a formally appointed procurement officer.

##### Data collection

- Review of municipal websites
- Official organisational charts
- Semi-structured interviews with municipal officials (verification only)

#### T2. Documented market research for high-value procedures

##### Benchmarking

- **2 points** – Documented market research exists for all reviewed high-value procedures.
- **1 point** – Market research exists for some, but not all, relevant procedures.
- **0 points** – No evidence of documented market research.

##### Data collection

- Review of procurement files (where accessible)
- Interviews with procurement officers
- Cross-checking tender documentation on the Public Procurement Portal

### **T3. Publication of calls for tenders**

#### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – All calls above legal thresholds are published on the Public Procurement Portal and/or municipal website.
- **1 point** – Most calls are published, but gaps or delays are observed.
- **0 points** – Calls are inconsistently published or not publicly accessible.

#### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal
- Municipal websites
- Cross-check with annual procurement plans

### **T4. Availability of tender documentation in Serbian and Albanian**

#### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Tender documentation is systematically available in both Serbian and Albanian.
- **1 point** – Documentation is partially bilingual or inconsistently translated.
- **0 points** – Documentation is available in only one language.

#### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal
- Municipal websites
- Sampling of tender documentation

### **T5. Timely publication of award notices**

#### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Award notices are published within legally prescribed deadlines in all reviewed cases.
- **1 point** – Occasional delays observed.
- **0 points** – Systematic delays or non-publication.

#### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal
- Comparison of award dates and publication dates

## **T6. Publication of cancelled procedures with reasons**

### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – All cancelled procedures are published with clear and specific reasons.
- **1 point** – Cancellations are published, but reasons are vague or incomplete.
- **0 points** – Cancellations are not systematically disclosed.

### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal
- Review of cancellation notices

### **Accountability Indicators**

#### **A1. Procedures reviewed by the Procurement Review Body (per 100 procedures)**

### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Review activity is proportionate and consistent with procurement volume.
- **1 point** – Limited review activity.
- **0 points** – No or negligible review activity.

### **Data collection**

- Decisions of the Procurement Review Body
- Public Procurement Portal
- Annual procurement statistics

#### **A2. Complaints lodged by economic operators (per 100 procedures)**

### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Complaint rate reflects active legal protection mechanisms.
- **1 point** – Low complaint activity.
- **0 points** – No complaints recorded.

### **Interpretation note:**

This indicator is interpreted cautiously and cross-checked with transparency indicators.

### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal
- Review Body statistics

### **A3. Use of clear, pre-disclosed award criteria**

#### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Clear award criteria used in all reviewed procedures.
- **1 point** – Criteria used inconsistently.
- **0 points** – Award criteria unclear or modified during procedures.

#### **Data collection**

- Tender documentation
- Public Procurement Portal

### **A4. Percentage of cancelled procedures**

#### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Cancellation rate within acceptable range.
- **1 point** – Elevated but not excessive cancellation rate.
- **0 points** – Very high cancellation rate indicating systemic disruption.

#### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal
- Annual procurement statistics

### **A5. Share of cancellations due to procedural or legal deficiencies**

#### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Low share of procedural/legal cancellations.
- **1 point** – Moderate share.
- **0 points** – High share, indicating systemic capacity problems.

#### **Data collection**

- Review of cancellation notices
- Classification of stated reasons

#### **Competition Indicators**

### **C1. Average number of bids per open procedure**

#### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Average  $\geq 3$  bids
- **1 point** – Average 2–2.9 bids
- **0 points** – Average  $< 2$  bids

#### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal
- Tender statistics

## **C2. Share of single-bid procedures**

### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – < 30%
- **1 point** – 30–50%
- **0 points** – > 50%

### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal

## **C3. Share of procurement value awarded through open procedures**

### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Majority of value awarded through open procedures.
- **1 point** – Mixed use of procedures.
- **0 points** – Predominant use of non-open procedures.

### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal
- Aggregated contract values

## **C4. Use of negotiated procedures without prior publication**

### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Rare and justified use.
- **1 point** – Occasional use.
- **0 points** – Frequent use.

### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal
- Procedure type classification

## **C5. Supplier concentration (top 3 suppliers)**

### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Low concentration.
- **1 point** – Moderate concentration.
- **0 points** – High concentration.

### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal
- Aggregated supplier data

## Citizen Participation Indicators

### P1. Public consultations on annual procurement plans

#### Benchmarking

- **2 points** – Consultation conducted prior to adoption.
- **1 point** – Limited or late consultation.
- **0 points** – No consultation.

#### Data collection

- Municipal websites
- Interviews
- Public announcements

### P2. Public availability of procurement plans

#### Benchmarking

- **2 points** – Plans published and downloadable.
- **1 point** – Partial or outdated publication.
- **0 points** – No public access.

#### Data collection

- Municipal websites
- Public Procurement Portal

### P3. Active CSO monitoring

#### Benchmarking

- **2 points** – Multiple CSOs actively monitoring procurement.
- **1 point** – Limited CSO involvement.
- **0 points** – No evidence of CSO monitoring.

#### Data collection

- Interviews with CSOs
- Public reports and publications

#### **P4. Response rate to access-to-information requests**

##### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Majority of requests answered within legal deadlines.
- **1 point** – Partial responsiveness.
- **0 points** – Low or no responsiveness.

##### **Data collection**

- FOI request tracking
- Interviews with requesters

#### **P5. Availability of procurement data in open formats**

##### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Data available in reusable/open formats.
- **1 point** – Limited or non-standard formats.
- **0 points** – No reusable data available.

##### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal
- Municipal websites

All indicators are assessed using **triangulation of sources** wherever possible. Where data gaps exist, scores are assigned conservatively, and assumptions are documented. This approach ensures consistency, credibility, and comparability across municipalities and over time.

#### **P4. Response rate to access-to-information requests**

##### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Majority of requests answered within legal deadlines.
- **1 point** – Partial responsiveness.
- **0 points** – Low or no responsiveness.

##### **Data collection**

- FOI request tracking
- Interviews with requesters

#### **P5. Availability of procurement data in open formats**

##### **Benchmarking**

- **2 points** – Data available in reusable/open formats.
- **1 point** – Limited or non-standard formats.
- **0 points** – No reusable data available.

##### **Data collection**

- Public Procurement Portal
- Municipal websites

All indicators are assessed using **triangulation of sources** wherever possible. Where data gaps exist, scores are assigned conservatively, and assumptions are documented. This approach ensures consistency, credibility, and comparability across municipalities and over time.

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