

CPB NEWS



Central Procurement Board Newsletter

Issue 20 - December 2024



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Foreword from Chairperson CPB

This being the last newsletter of the year, in this edition, we look back at some innovative action taken, over and above the activities carried out on the various aspects of the duties and responsibilities incumbent on CPB.

Integrity, transparency, accountability, fairness and diligence have been and will always be the key principles by which CPB carries out its duties. One undeniable fact is that CPB leaves no stone unturned in terms of its effort to faithfully represent those values expected from it. At the CPB, we are most conscious that the reputation of a country rests on quality and the integrity of the services it provides and more regarding procurement. Why would anyone do business with Mauritius if the procurement system is untrustworthy.

For the above reasons, the Board is constantly challenging itself and strives to provide the most professional and exemplary service in terms of timely delivery and to obtain value for money for the Government with respect to public procurement of major projects, all in conformity with the United Nation Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), which is a global reference for procurement.

To ensure consistency in the quality of the Bid Evaluation Reports, in collaboration with the Civil Service College, the CPB has introduced an online five module course for all evaluators. Since September 2024, only those evaluators who have followed such a course are selected to constitute the Bid Evaluation Committee (BEC). For information, CPB selects independent experts to carry out bid evaluation reports (BER) in total independence. Furthermore, such BER's are subjected to further scrutiny by a team of two experts (this is an additional step introduced and implemented by the Board, although not required under the Public Procurement Act) before the management presents its recommendations for consideration and approval of awards by the Board.

This year there have been a few cases where awards could not be made as the Bids received were above 15% of the cost estimates, considered to be abnormally high. This is a major issue as the market has been extremely volatile dur-

ing the post pandemic period and there is a general tendency from bidders to hedge against unforeseen increases in rate of exchange, freight, material and labour cost. The consequential cancellation of awards lead to delays in project implementation and further increase in cost when same is refloated and hopefully awarded after a period of 6 to 9 months.

To address delays during the vetting stages, often due to bid documents not being of an acceptable quality, and to avoid lengthy exchanges, the CPB engages with the Public Bodies with face-to-face meetings and provides its input both verbally and in writing.

The CPB continues to engage with the Public procurement Office (PPO) as well as with the Competition Commission with the clear objectives to share information and to improve the public procurement process and provide a level playing field to all.

The CPB, in the financial year 2023/2024, held (i) 94 formal Board meetings, (ii) 30 ad-hoc Board meetings, (iii) 145 meetings with Public Bodies, mostly regarding vetting of bidding documents; and (iv) 2 formal meetings with the Procurement Policy Office.

For the year under report the number of projects vetted, evaluated and approved were: 27 for a value of 7.2 billion rupees. The comparative figures for 2022/2023 and 2021/2022 were 73 projects for a value of 22.3 billion and 71 for a value of 30.4 billion respectively.

This being the last newsletter of the year, on behalf of the CPB family, I would like to thank all our partners (Public Bodies, Bidders, Evaluators, Independent Experts) for their most valuable and much appreciated collaboration.

I thank Board Members for their collaboration and their unflinching support to making CPB the best it can be.

I also thank the Deputy Chief Executive, the Secretary to the Board, the Manager and all the CPB staff for their loyal commitment, dedication and exemplary hard work to uphold the highest standard in matters of major procurement.

On a personal note, as this is my last newsletter, it has been a privilege and an honour to have served my beloved Mauritius, as the Chairman of the CPB, for the last six years during which CPB has provided a service of the highest standard in total transparency, fairness and equity to all.

Seasonal Greetings: We extend to you, dear readers and your loved ones, our best seasonal greetings. We wish you a very happy New Year 2025. Long Live Mauritius.

**Raj H. Prayag, GOSK. PDSM. B.Sc. MSc. CEng.
P.Eng. FIEM
Chairperson, CPB
December 2024**

LA CONTINUITÉ DE L'ÉTAT



“*La Continuité de l'État*” is a concept that, while challenging to fully translate into English without losing its essence, embodies the vitality of a democracy and cements our shared idealism as a nation, especially during periods of governmental transition following general elections. It is characterised by the principle that a state and its institutions are legally mandated to operate continuously, irrespective of prevailing circumstances, particularly before and after an electoral period.

As a former Secretary for Public Service who has served for over four decades under various governments, I wish to highlight the crucial role played by public officers in ensuring “*La continuité de l'État*” in a democracy like ours, where governments may change but public officers uphold the “*permanence and continuity of the state*”. I seize this opportunity to pay tribute to the thousands of our public officers, our unsung heroes, who have made an indelible contribution to ensuring the conduct of free and fair general elections in November 2024, which preceded a smooth and peaceful transfer of power to the incoming government.

Several aspects are essential to consider regarding the role of public officers in safeguarding our country's stability by upholding *permanence and continuity*. Loyalty to the government of the day remains a fundamental principle governing the conduct of public officers. However, this loyalty must be tempered with a commitment to the broader public interest. Public officers are duty-bound to be loyal to a government duly elected by the people through a free and fair electoral process. This loyalty entails faithfully implementing

government policies and providing impartial advice when required.

Unfortunately, public officers who exhibit loyalty are often unfairly characterized as subservient, politically biased, or even turncoats, particularly during the early days of a new administration. Understandably, political leaders may be hesitant to trust public officers who they perceive as loyal to their predecessors. Trust is, therefore, paramount in ensuring “*La Continuité de l'État*”. To foster trust, public officers must consistently demonstrate exemplary behaviour, a positive attitude, and unwavering professionalism. They have a duty to remain politically neutral, act in the best interests of the government, and refrain from engaging in any illegal or unethical activities. Public officers must prioritise the long-term interests of the country over short-term personal gains and strive to preserve and defend the hard-earned reputation of the public service.

Let us therefore recognise and appreciate the invaluable contributions of our public officers, who often work behind the scenes to safeguard our democracy and serve the best interests of the nation. By upholding the principles of “*Continuité de l'État*”, they ensure the continuity of government, regardless of political changes.

Swaminathan RAGEN
Vice Chairperson

LA PERMANENCE DE L'ÉTAT : UN CONCEPT FONDAMENTAL

L'État, en tant qu'institution centrale des sociétés humaines, incarne l'autorité, l'organisation et la continuité. Depuis les premières cités-États de Mésopotamie jusqu'aux États modernes, il s'est imposé comme une structure pérenne, garantissant la stabilité des sociétés et assurant leur fonctionnement à travers le temps. La permanence de l'État se manifeste dans sa capacité à transcender les générations, à s'adapter aux changements sociaux et politiques, et à survivre même face à des crises majeures. Cette idée repose sur des fondements historiques, juridiques et sociologiques qui méritent d'être explorés.

Une Institution au-delà des Hommes

L'un des éléments clés de la permanence de l'État réside dans sa dissociation des individus qui l'incarnent. Contrairement à des organisations éphémères ou des régimes politiques qui dépendent fortement des leaders au pouvoir, l'État s'inscrit dans une continuité institutionnelle. Les changements de gouvernements, les révolutions ou les guerres civiles n'entraînent pas nécessairement la disparition de l'État. Par exemple, la Révolution française de 1789 a renversé la monarchie, mais elle n'a pas détruit l'État français. Au contraire, l'État a survécu, s'est restructuré et a continué à jouer son rôle central dans la société. Cette capacité à transcender les hommes repose en partie sur les institutions et les symboles de l'État. La Constitution, les lois, le drapeau, les tribunaux et les forces de sécurité sont des éléments qui incarnent l'État de manière durable. Ils permettent de garantir que l'autorité et le fonctionnement de l'État ne dépendent pas exclusivement des individus au pouvoir, mais s'inscrivent dans un cadre légal et institutionnel qui dépasse les aléas politiques.

L'État comme Garant de la Continuité

La permanence de l'État se manifeste également dans son rôle de garant de la continuité sociale et économique. En centralisant le pouvoir et en mettant en place des structures administratives, il assure des fonctions essentielles telles que la justice, la sécurité, l'éducation et la santé. Cette continuité est particulièrement visible dans des périodes de crise. Par exemple, lors des guerres ou des catastrophes naturelles, l'État intervient pour maintenir l'ordre, coordonner les secours et préserver l'intégrité territoriale. Même lorsque des crises remettent en question la légitimité de l'État, comme ce fut le cas pour l'Allemagne après la Seconde Guerre mondiale ou pour les pays africains après les décolonisations, l'idée même de l'État persiste. Dans ces cas, des réformes, des reconstructions institutionnelles ou des médiations internationales permettent de restaurer l'autorité et la légitimité de l'État.

Adaptabilité et Résilience

Un autre facteur clé de la permanence de l'État réside dans sa capacité d'adaptation. Les sociétés évoluent, et avec elles, les formes et fonctions de l'État. Par exemple, la montée des démocraties modernes, la mondialisation ou encore les revendications identitaires ont transformé le rôle de l'État tout en maintenant son existence. Un État moderne doit faire face à des défis tels que les crises environnementales ou les tensions géopolitiques. Malgré ces défis, les États réussissent souvent à se réinventer, que ce soit en réformant leurs institutions ou en adoptant de nouvelles politiques.

Conclusion

La permanence de l'État repose sur sa capacité à incarner une continuité au-delà des individus, à garantir l'ordre et la stabilité, et à s'adapter aux évolutions des sociétés. Si des défis comme la mondialisation, les crises environnementales ou les tensions internes remettent parfois en question son rôle, l'État demeure une institution centrale et indispensable. Sa pérennité témoigne de sa résilience et de son importance dans l'organisation des sociétés humaines. Ainsi, l'État continue de traverser les époques, s'affirmant comme un pilier incontournable des systèmes sociaux et politiques.

Swaminathan RAGEN
Vice Chairperson

From Evaluation to Award: The CPB's Financial Perspective on Public Procurement Decisions

The Central Procurement Board (CPB) of Mauritius operates at the heart of the nation's public procurement framework, ensuring that every major project awarded upholds the principles of transparency, accountability, and value for money. Central to this mandate is a rigorous financial evaluation process guided by the Public Procurement Act, associated regulations, and Directives issued by the Procurement Policy Office.



Financial Oversight in Procurement

At the CPB, financial scrutiny begins with bid evaluation. Each bid undergoes a comprehensive review to assess not only its compliance with technical specifications but also its cost-effectiveness. This process involves a careful balance of ensuring fair competition while safeguarding public funds. Adherence to evaluation guidelines ensures consistency and impartiality, critical in identifying the lowest evaluated substantially responsive bid.

Budgetary Alignment and Value for Money

An integral aspect of the CPB's role is to ensure that procurement aligns with the approved budgetary provisions. By examining pricing structures and life-cycle costs, the CPB evaluates whether a bid represents optimal value. Financial expertise is crucial in identifying red flags such as unrealistic pricing or potential cost overruns, which could compromise project execution.

Award Decisions Rooted in Financial Rigor

The transition from evaluation to award is governed by strict adherence to the Public Procurement Act and Directives. Recommendations for award are not merely technical endorsements but also reflect financial due diligence. This includes verifying that the selected bidder has the financial capacity to fulfill the contract while maintaining the project's overall fiscal integrity.

Upholding Accountability

Every procurement decision taken by the CPB is subject to rigorous documentation and review. This accountability ensures that public procurement remains a tool for sustainable development rather than a liability on national resources.

By embedding financial expertise at every stage of the procurement process, the CPB continues to reinforce its commitment to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and the equitable distribution of public resources.

C. JUGROO
Vice Chairperson

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE MESSAGE



Dear Colleagues, and Stakeholders,

As we bid farewell to 2024, I seize the opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your unwavering support, dedication, and collaboration throughout the journey. It's already been a year now since I joined this institution and I am pleased by the fact that we have been able to achieve significant milestones, uphold our commitment to transparency and fairness, and advance our shared vision of excellence in public procurement.

Your contributions have been instrumental in strengthening the Central Procurement Board's ability to deliver value and maintain public trust in our processes. The implementation of the mandatory online classes on bid evaluation, workshops to engage with stakeholders with a view to enhancing our processes, and the initiatives to become a paperless Board are *inter-alia* some of the areas where your diligence has made a difference.

As we step into 2025, let us continue to build on these successes, embrace new opportunities, and work together toward a future marked by integrity, efficiency, and innovation in public procurement. I am confident that with your continued support, we will rise to new heights and overcome any challenges that come our way.

With these words let me on behalf of the Central Procurement Board, wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a joyful and prosperous New Year.

May 2025 bring you health, happiness, and success in all your endeavours.

Wish you all the best.

Warm Regards

J Rughoobur

**Deputy Chief Executive
Central Procurement Board**

Statistics Snapshot (01 January 2024 - 15 December 2024)

No. of New Projects Received	49
No. of Bidding Documents vetted (completed)	39
No. of Public Openings	38
No. of Evaluations Completed	31
No. of Approvals of Award	32

Vision

To be the model for efficient and effective public procurement in Mauritius

Mission

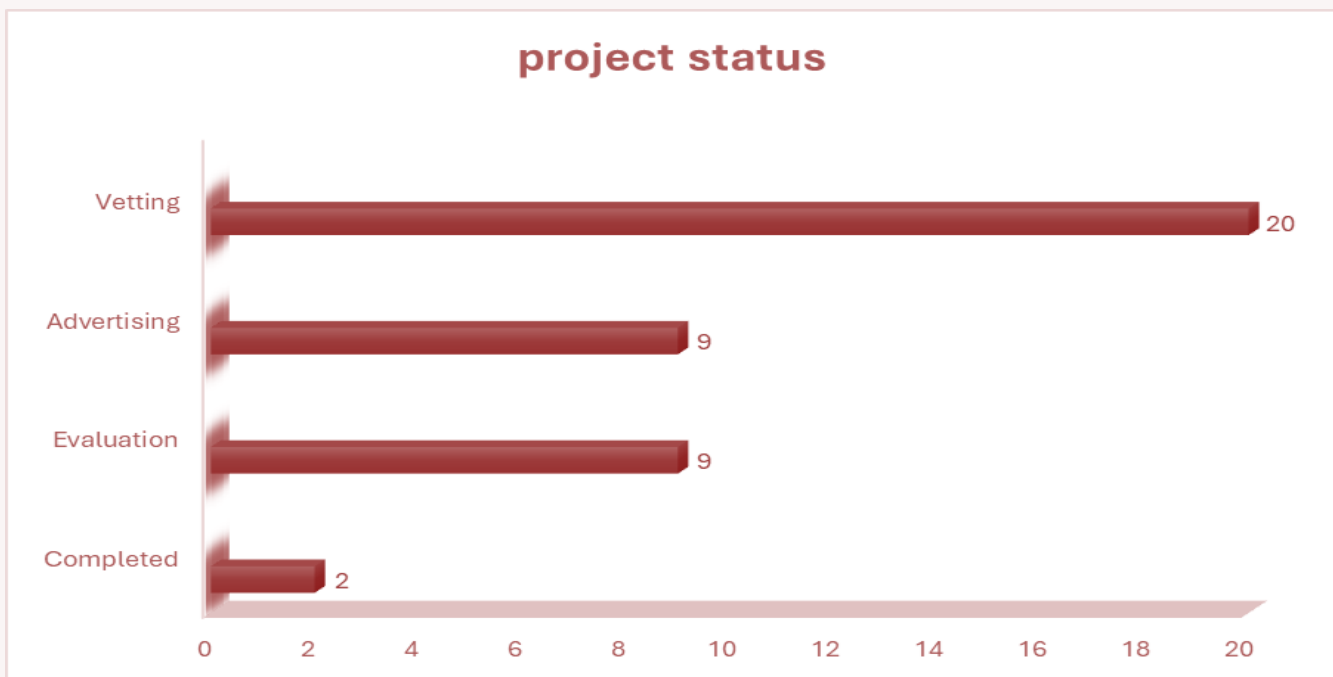
To ensure value for money in public procurement and timely acquisition through a fair and transparent process

Core Values

Transparency - Integrity - Ethical Practice - Equality/Fairness - Accountability

PROJECT STATUS

As at 15 December 2024, the CPB was handling 38 procurement projects falling under the category of major contracts. Out of which, 20 were at vetting stage, 9 at advertising stage, 9 at evaluation stage and 2 have been completed. (graph below).



CPB'S END OF YEAR GATHERING & TEAM BUILDING EXERCISE 2024

As the year draws to a close, all the staff of the CPB gathered on the 13th December 2024, to take a moment to celebrate their achievements, reflect on the experiences they have shared and enjoyed each other's company before they head into the new year. The Team Building exercise involved a visit to the SAJ Bridge followed by visiting the Albion Phare and ended with a lunch at Sunset Garden Restaurant, Flic-en-Flac.





Wishing you a
Christmas that's
Merry and Bright,
and a
a new year
Endless possibilities.

Central Procurement Board

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