

CENTRAL PROCUREMENT BOARD NEWSLETTER

Issue 21- March 2025



IN THIS ISSUE

- ◇ ***Central Procurement Board of Mauritius Achievements by the current Board***
- ◇ ***Consequences when an award is not made.***
- ◇ ***Pros and cons for design and build contract model***
- ◇ ***Key Achievements of the Present Board***
- ◇ ***Central Procurement Board of Mauritius: Advancing Procurement Excellence***



Foreword from Chairperson CPB

Dear Reader

It is my pleasure, once again, to share with you some of the salient features of the Board's activities over the last quarter January to March 2025.

In this edition, you will read about the main initiatives and achievements of the outgoing board over the last three years. The succinct report shows that the Board does not only carry out vetting and evaluation but does much more than that to ensure that the public funds are used judiciously.

Fairness, total transparency, accountability, level playing field, continuously making the procurement process more friendly to encourage competition and provide opportunities to all. Given that the CPB is the operation arm of the public procurement process for major projects under the PPA, it generates much data, which when analysed yields a lot of information which can help bring improvement and democratise the procurement process. The Board is always identifying constraints that bidders encounter and share these with the PPO so that changes in the PPA, Regulations, Directives and Circulars can be made to encourage competition.

One of the main objectives of the Board is to ensure that the public body gets the best value for money for each project. It is mindful and is always on the lookout for potential cases of collusion or market fixing. In such cases, the Board reports them to the Competitive Commission for investigation.

Vetting of the project documents produced by the pub-

lic bodies are thoroughly scrutinized and systematically subject of joint discussions to ensure its completeness. Otherwise, there are lots of queries that are raised by potential bidders which lead to delays with closing dates and project an image of the unprofessionalism of the preparers and reviewers of the documents.

Furthermore, the Board also puts a lot of emphasis on the accuracy of the cost estimate so that it does reflect market rates. The CPB requests the public bodies to update these on the eve of floating tenders. This is important because any bid received which deviates by more than 25% from the cost estimate cannot be awarded. Even deviation of plus or minus by 15% is considered to be abnormally low or high bids and require negotiation point by point to reconcile the differences before a decision is arrived at.

In this edition, you will also see a couple of articles on some concerns which need to be addressed to make procurement process more friendly and more competitive so that it is a win-win for Mauritius and all those would participate in it. A level playing field and fairness to both the public body and the bidding community brings healthy and fair competition.

Let me conclude by stating that the CPB's record in matters of procurement is second to none. It is viewed as exemplary as it is the most transparent, accountable given that its decisions are subjects of challenges and review by an independent panel and its track record. Its track record in terms of challenges and appeals to IRB bears testimony to that.

Some of the major projects funded by the international agencies such as AFDB, AD etc. bear further testimony to the credibility of the Central Procurement Board.

Long live Mauritius.

Thank you.

**Raj H Prayag GOSK. PDSM. C.Eng. P.Eng. FIEM.
FAeSM
Chairperson**

Central Procurement Board of Mauritius Achievements by the current Board

As the tenure of the current Board at the Central Procurement Board (CPB) concludes, it is an opportune moment to reflect on the significant strides made over the past three years. A commitment to enhancing public procurement has remained at the core of operations, with a focus on transparency, efficiency, and capacity building.

The Board had taken many initiatives to ensure that the procurement done represented the best value for money for the Country. New concepts such as life cost cycles of equipment were computed to come to present net value of the projects.

The Board makes use of independent specialists for the vetting of highly technical projects in areas of IT or medical equipment and even resort to international experts in certain complex cases.

The overriding concern is always the best value for our country.

The board was also very mindful and always on the lookout for potential cases of collusion amongst bidders and attempt to share the market in certain specific projects. Such cases are flagged to the Competition Commission.

One of the issues that is a recurrent problem is the mismatch between the cost estimates and the bid received and, in many cases, this has led to cancellation of the projects and having recourse to rebid, which unfortunately posed additional two problems 1) delay in the implementation of the project and 2) increased cost. This problem is compounded by the fact that the market both at local and international, is highly volatile since the outbreak of the Ukraine war as well as the Covid 19.

The board is constantly provided feedback to the Public Procurement Office so that remedial / corrective action is taken through Regulations/ Directives of even changes in the Standard Bidding Documents.

Below is a summary of key achievements:

1. **Enhancement of the Existing Newsletter**

The CPB has improved its existing newsletter to better serve stakeholders by:

- **Improving Content Quality:** Including detailed analyses of procurement trends, regulatory updates, and case studies.
- **Increasing Accessibility:** Making the newsletter available in both digital and printed formats.
- **Encouraging Stakeholder Engagement:** Allowing interactive feedback and contributions from public bodies and evaluators.

Central Procurement Board of Mauritius

Achievements by the current Board

The refined newsletter continues to be a valuable resource, promoting engagement and informed participation in public procurement.

2. Revamping of Previous Circulars

Existing CPB circulars were reviewed and revamped to provide clearer guidance to all stakeholders, including preparers, reviewers, and evaluators. These enhancements focused on:

- **Clarifying Ambiguous Provisions:** Ensuring consistency in interpretation and application.
- **Introducing Practical Examples:** Providing case studies to illustrate best practices.
- **Streamlining Processes:** Reducing inefficiencies and standardizing document preparation.

The updated circulars have improved the overall quality and coherence of procurement documentation.

3. In-Built Mechanism for Monitoring at Board Level

A structured monitoring mechanism was introduced at the board level to ensure continuous oversight of procurement activities. This includes:

- **Real-Time Tracking:** Systematic monitoring of procurement decisions and execution.
- **Accountability Measures:** Ensuring compliance with regulatory frameworks and best practices.
- **Data-Driven Insights:** Utilizing analytics to improve procurement processes and decision making is data driven.

4. Implementation of a New Method for Selecting Evaluators

Recognizing the importance of impartial and competent evaluation, the evaluator selection process was reformed. The reviewed method emphasizes:

- **Merit-Based Selection:** Evaluators are chosen based on expertise, experience, and track record. Evaluators are also mandated to conduct an online course on evaluation followed by an assessment where the pass mark threshold is 80%.
- **Conflict of Interest Checks:** Ensuring evaluators have no vested interests in the projects they assess.
- **Diverse Panels:** Incorporating professionals from various sectors to provide balanced perspectives.

5. Introduction of Working Sessions Prior to Board Vetting

To enhance decision-making efficiency, preliminary working sessions were introduced. These sessions involve:

- **Pre-Vetting Discussions:** Detailed analysis of proposals before formal board meetings.
- **Stakeholder Input:** Insights from relevant parties to inform deliberations.
- **Issue Resolution:** Addressing potential challenges early to streamline final approvals.

This initiative has reduced bottlenecks and expedited the procurement process.

Central Procurement Board of Mauritius

Achievements by the current Board

6. Online Training Sessions

Embracing digital transformation, online training modules were launched to:

- **Enhance Accessibility:** Allowing participants to learn at their own pace and convenience.
- **Expand Reach:** Making training available to stakeholders across Mauritius, including remote areas.
- **Cost Efficiency:** Reducing expenses associated with in-person sessions.

The online platform has democratized access to procurement training, fostering a more knowledgeable community.

7. Induction Sessions for New Evaluators

To ensure evaluators are well-prepared, comprehensive induction programs were implemented, focusing on:

- **Procurement Frameworks:** Educating on local laws and international best practices.
- **Ethical Standards:** Emphasizing the importance of integrity and impartiality.
- **Practical Workshops:** Simulated evaluations to provide hands-on experience.

These sessions have equipped new evaluators with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective performance.

8. Preparation of Guidelines for Technical Committees/Due Diligence Committees

Standardized guidelines were developed for Due Diligence Committees to improve the assessment of evaluation reports. This initiative includes Standardized Report Formats to ensuring uniformity in reporting and assessment.

It is worth noting that the law does not provide for this additional scrutiny step by the Technical Committee (TC), regarding evaluation of bids. This TC was instituted by the Board to provide itself with additional comfort that the Evaluation has been carried out strictly in accordance with the PPO's evaluation guide.

9. Flaws in Bid Evaluation Reports

To ensure the highest standards in bid evaluation, a structured approach to addressing flaws in evaluation reports was introduced:

- **Fee Deductions:** Evaluators' fees are reduced in cases where significant errors are identified.
- **Transparency:** Specific flaws are clearly demarcated and defined, and, deductions are applied consistently.
- **Fairness:** The process ensures uniformity and accountability in evaluations.

Central Procurement Board of Mauritius

Achievements by the current Board

10. Zero Independent Review Panel (IRP) Decisions Against CPB

Over the past three years, there have been no adverse decisions from the Independent Review Panel concerning procurement processes. This achievement reflects:

- **Adherence to Best Practices:** Strict compliance with established procurement guidelines.
- **Robust Internal Audits:** Regular reviews to identify and rectify potential issues proactively.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Engaging with bidders and agencies to address concerns before escalation.

Maintaining a flawless record with the IRP underscores the dedication to fairness and transparency.

11. Engagement with stakeholders

With the fast-evolving procurement processes over the years, it has become increasingly important to ensure comfort and trust of the business community in the transparency and fairness of our public procurement system.

In this context a number of workshops has been organized to, *inter alia*,

- Provide information on the different levels of checks and balances involved in the procurement process undertaken by CPB
- To provide an overview of the various changes to the legislative framework making procurement processes robust, fair and sound

12. Currently in Progress

ISO 9001 Certification in Progress for CPB

CPB has initiated the process to obtain ISO 9001 certification, aimed at strengthening quality management systems. Key steps already completed include:

- **Process Mapping:** Comprehensive documentation of CPB's process flows.
- **Responsibility Assignment:** Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities to enhance accountability. This certification will reinforce CPB's commitment to excellence in public procurement. The CPB expects to be ISO 9001 certified by May/June 2025.

Central Procurement Board of Mauritius Achievements by the current Board

Conclusion

The tenure of the current Central Procurement Board has been marked by a series of transformative initiatives aimed at refining Mauritius's public procurement landscape. Through enhanced communication, rigorous evaluator selection, revamped circulars, accountability measures, and capacity-building programs, a robust foundation has been established for continued excellence. The structures and practices implemented are expected to serve as a catalyst for ongoing improvement and integrity in public procurement.



Consequences when an award is not made

CPB is very concerned about the rising number of projects, which after due procurement process of vetting, calling for bids, receiving bids and after a vigorous evaluation exercise by an independent expert team of evaluators, cannot be awarded.

The main reasons for this are 1) the mismatch between the cost estimates prepared by the Public Body and the bids received and 2) there is a significant reduction in the number of bidders or bids submitted.

These unsuccessful bidding exercises cause much prejudice to Mauritius as projects get delayed in their implementation. Therefore the public does not benefit from the expected timely services and inevitably there are cost implications. In some cases when projects are refloated, an increase in the cost of the same project is of the order of 20 to 25%.

The disparity between the cost estimates and bids received is a major cause for failure to make an award. Hence the quality and accuracy of the cost estimates is paramount. Directive 52 issued by the PPO provides for procedures to be followed when bids received are 15 to 25% above cost estimates and Directive 61 provides for the procedures for negotiations. Any bids received which are over 25% over the cost estimate are set aside.

Additionally, there is the administrative cost associated with the project, such as vetting, joint CPB / Public Body technical committees, the board's approval of the vetting, appointment of evaluation committees, fees to evaluators etc. These can be as high as MUR 400,000 per project. This is public money spent which can certainly be avoided and put to better use.

Exercise is ongoing to analyse the causes and to address these concerns. CBP generates many data arising from calls to bids through queries raised by bidders and the ensuing issue of clarification and addendum to request for extension of time allotted to submit bids. This provides the board with feedback that the bid documents are inadequately prepared to the extent that the bidders are raising queries. All this data is shared with PPO so that the regulatory body can take remedial action and bring appropriate changes to the PPA, The Regulations, the Directives etc.

Design and build contract model: Advantages and Disadvantages

There has recently been a trend to float a tender for design and build where potential bidders are asked to carry out individually expensive geotechnical site investigations of the site, identify existing services, design the project including complex structures. All these require the potential bidders to employ specialists in the respective fields to prepare a competitive bid document and are very costly. One must remember that all these costs are obligatorily passed on to the public body in their submission. This mode of floating tenders demotivates some bidders from participating as their chances of being successful are less than 20%. It would be more practical and reasonable if the bidders only had to provide their bid prices for a fully defined project.

An analysis of bids received under this model of procurement shows that very few contractors have the resources to participate in them. Therefore, it limits competition.

Design and build model should only be used when dealing with very highly technical and complicated projects where the public body does not have the necessary expertise. Hence, given the limited number of bidders, the public body should consider direct negotiations with them through existing procedures for competitive negotiations as provided under section 25B in the PPA.

Central Procurement Board of Mauritius: Advancing Procurement Excellence

The Central Procurement Board (CPB) of Mauritius continues to uphold transparency, efficiency, and integrity in public procurement. Over the past three years, the CPB has taken significant steps to strengthen procurement evaluation, streamline processes, and ensure compliance with established regulations.

Key Achievements and Highlights (2022-2025)

1. Strengthening Procurement Oversight

The CPB has played a pivotal role in ensuring that all high-value public contracts comply with procurement regulations. Through rigorous evaluation procedures and enhanced scrutiny, the Board has maintained fairness and competitiveness in tendering processes.

2. Overseeing Major National Projects

The CPB has successfully managed the procurement of high-impact projects, ensuring value for money and adherence to procurement regulations. Some key projects include:

1. Construction of La Brasserie-Beaux Songes Link Road - Phase 2
2. Wastewater project at La Source, Quatre Bornes and Environs Phase 1
3. Procurement of Orthopaedics Implants and Instruments for two years
4. Procurement of Medical Gas for all Hospitals (2022-2024)
5. Procurement of Services for Maintenance & Repair of Ship to Shore Cranes Rubber Tyre Gantry Cranes and Substations at Mauritius Container Terminal
6. Construction of Residence Mon Reve, Clos Verger MHC
7. Design/Build/Turnkey for a Grade Separated Junction at Wooton - RDA
8. Construction of a Grade Separated Junction to link the proposed Verdun Bypass and St Pierre Bypass - RDA
9. Upgrading of Savanne Road (A9) from La Flora to Tyack - RDA
10. Construction of Flic-en-Flac Bypass from Xavier to Pierrefonds - RDA
11. Procurement of Gas Oil for the Five Depots of the

NTC

12. Procurement of Petroleum Products for a period of 36 months under Framework Agreement
13. Procurement of Renovation of Port Louis Theatre Phase II
14. Construction of a Flyover on Motorway M1 at la Vigie (Design and Built/Turnkey) Stabilisation Works along B103 at Chamarel
15. Landfill works for Vertical Expansion of the Mare Chicose Landfill and Operations and Post Closure Management of Cells
16. Pailles Guibies Sewerage Project Phase 3 - Construction of trunk Sewer Reticulation Network and CWA Connections
17. Watch and Security Services in Schools/ Institutions (3 yrs)

3. Enhancing Procurement Efficiency and Transparency

The CPB has implemented digital tracking and monitoring tools to streamline procurement workflows, reducing delays and improving accountability. By leveraging the e-Procurement System, the Board has improved data accessibility and bidder participation.

4. Commitment to Fair and Competitive Procurement

As an independent entity, the CPB continues to reinforce ethical procurement practices, ensuring that all evaluations are conducted with the highest level of transparency and due diligence. Continuous training for procurement professionals and collaboration with key stakeholders have further strengthened procurement governance in Mauritius.

Looking ahead, the CPB remains committed to upholding procurement excellence, ensuring that public funds are utilized effectively and equitably to support national development goals.

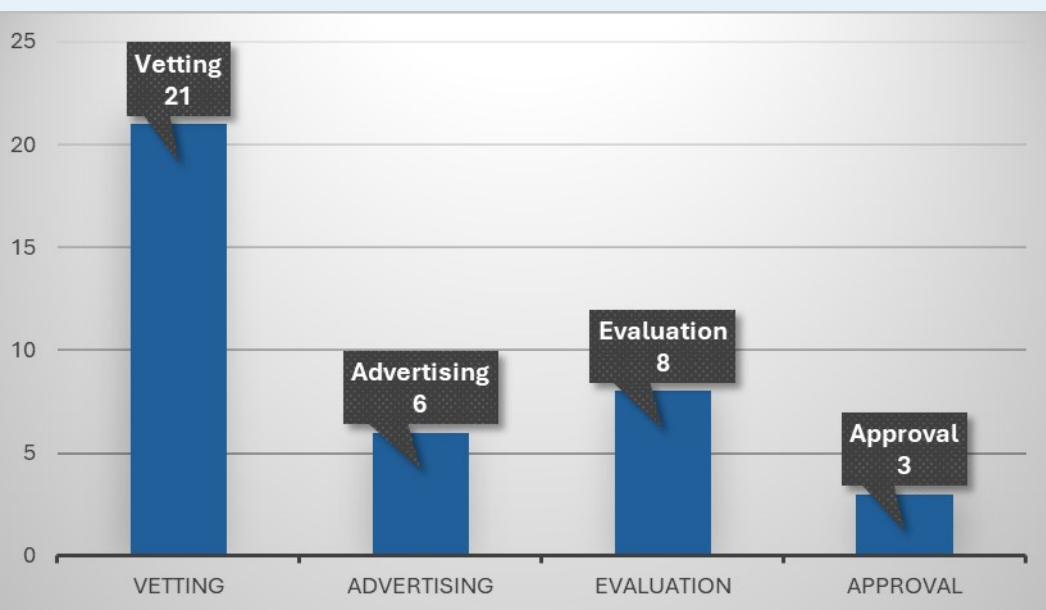
Chittaman Jugroo
Vice Chairperson

Statistics Snapshot (01 January 2025 - 28 March 2025)

No. of New Projects Received	8
No. of Bidding Documents vetted (completed)	7
No. of Public Openings	9
No. of Evaluations Completed	6
No. of Approvals of Award	3

PROJECT STATUS

As at 28 March 2025, the CPB was handling 35 procurement projects falling under the category of major contracts. Out of which, 21 were at vetting stage, 6 at advertising stage, 8 at evaluation stage and 3 have been completed. (graph below).



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

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information and visit our website for additional information.

Central Procurement Board

1st Floor, NPF Building,
Julius Nyerere Street,
Rose Hill

Tel: +230 465 9300

Fax: +230 465 9086

Email: cpb@govmu.org

Website:
<https://cpb.govmu.org>

Celebrations of the Independence Day and Republic Day

We celebrated with zeal the 57th Independence anniversary and the 33rd Republic Day of Mauritius on Tuesday 11th March 25 with the traditional singing of the national anthem and the cutting of the cake. This occasion provided us with the opportunity to enhance and further reinforce our determination to serve our country and to make Mauritius the best country in matter of public procurement based on the sacrosanct principles of transparency, equity, fairness, accountability etc.

The fact that our decisions have not been reversed by either the IRP or any higher courts over the last six years bears testimony to the high standards of ethics and professionalism of the board and the staff of the CPB. Each employee is fully committed to acting as an ambassador of Mauritius and to uphold the highest image of fairness in matters of procurement.



57 As one People
As one Nation

Proudly celebrating 57 years of Independence
and 33 years as a Republic

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2025

Women, the epitome of patience,
A soul of strength and silent resilience.
Since the first dawn of our conscience,
She nurtures life with endless
brilliance.

Family survival is her priority,
Bears burdens with quiet dignity.
Through storms and shadows, she
stands tall,
Her heart is a shelter — embracing all.
No matter how much difficulty,
She rises in grace and humility.
Smiling and shining, through night or
day,
A guiding lamp lighting the way.
With hands that heal and dreams that
soar,
She builds the future from her core.
A force of love, a voice so strong,
In her spirit, the world belongs.
On this 8th of March, let's proudly say,
We honour you — every step, every
way.

Women of courage, wisdom, and light,
You make this world beautifully
bright.

Rajnee

#InternationalWomensDay

