Malta*

**Strategic framework, action plan and scope for procurement for innovation policy**

Malta has limited experience with procurement for innovation, and does not have a stand-alone procurement for innovation policy. However, existing procurement structures do allow for procurement for innovation to take place and a number of examples of the application of procurement for innovation exist.

Procurement for innovation is seen as a means to obtain improved public products and services while stimulating demand for innovation in the local economy. Procurement for innovation is identified as an important tool to stimulate demand-side innovation in Malta’s new National Research and Innovation Strategy 2020 and possible actions will be included in the National Research and Innovation (R&I) Action Plan, which is currently being developed. Regular awareness raising sessions with various types of procurers are held to highlight the advantages of procurement for innovation. Changing the present procurement culture is generally identified as a major obstacle.

**Implementation**

The Malta Council for Science and Technology and the Department of Contracts within the Ministry of Finance are the main bodies in Malta responsible for promoting procurement for innovation. Most of the work focuses on raising awareness of the benefits of procurement for innovation, helping to steer procurers away from the more traditional, fixed procurement procedures. To this end, the Malta Council for Science and Technology, together with the Department of Contracts, has set up a working group to assist such organisations to engage in innovative procurement. The aim is to offer the necessary support to identify the organisation’s innovation needs and the process involved in procuring it.

In addition, the Malta Council for Science and Technology in collaboration with the Department of Contracts has embarked on seven competitive dialogue processes simultaneously. These processes intend to push for procurement for innovation and to break from the traditional services, supplies and works tenders awarded via the cheapest technically compliant tenders. The competitive dialogue processes have so far proven to be highly successful and to date two processes have been awarded whilst other five are in their final stages and in the proximity of being awarded. The subject matter of the competitive dialogues are processes from design to fabrication to installation of interactive science exhibits for the National Interactive Science Centre, which include the design to installation of a Planetarium, the first of its kind in Malta.

There are examples of successful stand-alone cases of procurement for innovation in Malta that can be considered good practice. A number of these projects were documented as part of Work Package 4 of the ERA-PRISM FP7 project which looked at the small-county dimension of procurement for innovation. The case studies focused mostly on innovation in the procurement process itself.

Challenges, risks and solutions to overcome obstacles

In Malta, the most significant challenge is the need for changing the mind-set of procuring entities, away from the traditional procurement procedures to procurement for innovation. A wider understanding of the procedures and processes involved coupled with a greater understanding of the benefits of procurement for innovation would also result in greater support at all management levels to the use of such procedures.

While personnel at management levels are becoming more aware of the benefits of procurement for innovation and how it can be utilised, the obstacle is still in place and it is still considered the largest challenge.

Key lessons learned

Malta considered a lesson learned that a wider understanding of the procedures and processes coupled with a greater understanding of the benefits of procurement for innovation would eventually result in greater support at all management levels to the use of such procedures.

Measurement and impact assessment

Since procurement for innovation is still at its infancy, Malta focuses on raising awareness about the use of procurement for innovation and changing the current procurement system. A second step will be to undertake proper evaluations of the impact of procurement for innovation.
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