

Procurement Ethics And Contract Management In Kisoro: A Case Study Of Kisoro Municipal Council

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Abstract

The study is titled "Procurement Ethics & contract Management in Kisoro District: A case study of Kisoro Municipal Council". This study sought to examine the variable of Procurement Ethics and how it affects Contract Management in Kisoro Municipal Council. The specific objectives of the study included finding out the ethical procurement practices at Kisoro Municipal Council; examining the contract management practices at Kisoro Municipal Council; and also determine the relationship between procurement ethics and contract management at Kisoro Municipal Council. The results revealed a robust ethical framework within the council, with an overwhelming majority of respondents affirming strong adherence to principles of equity, fairness, and supplier confidentiality. For instance, 98% of respondents agreed that contracts were awarded fairly, and 90% confirmed the safeguarding of supplier information. In contract management, the council demonstrated exceptional proficiency in creating precise contractual terms, with 100% agreement, and in proactive risk management, with 96% acknowledging the inclusion of contingency plans. A very strong, positive relationship was identified between ethical procurement and effective contract management, with respondents unanimously linking ethical practices to long-term value and overwhelmingly associating them with reduced disputes and smoother project execution.

The study concluded that Kisoro Municipal Council has established a solid foundation for ethical procurement and systematic contract management, which are widely perceived as being mutually reinforcing. The ethical environment was found to foster the trust and transparency necessary for successful contract implementation, while diligent contract management provided a framework that upheld ethical standards throughout a project's lifecycle. However, it was also concluded that opportunities for enhancement remained, particularly in converting neutral perceptions among some staff through improved communication and in fully leveraging technology for contract monitoring. Based on these findings, the study recommended a multi-faceted approach. Key recommendations included the implementation of a continuous ethics training and communication program, the development of a public-facing procurement portal to enhance transparency, a strategic investment in integrated contract management software with accompanying staff capacity building, and the formalization of the ethics-contract management link through the inclusion of ethical performance indicators in contractor evaluations and monitoring. These actions are proposed to systematically strengthen the council's procurement and contract management systems, ensuring maximum value for public resources.

Keywords: Procurement Ethics, Contract Management, Public Procurement, Good Governance, Kisoro Municipal Council

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Background of the Study

Globally, public procurement represents a substantial portion of economic activity, accounting for an average of 12-20% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in most countries (World Bank, 2023). This immense financial flow makes procurement and contract management a critical function for delivering public services and fostering economic development. However, it is also highly vulnerable to corruption, fraud, and mismanagement. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2022) consistently identifies procurement as the government activity most at risk for corruption, with estimates suggesting that corruption can inflate project costs by 20-50%, draining public coffers and undermining trust in institutions. In response, there has been a global push towards strengthening procurement ethics through international frameworks like the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the development of principles such as transparency, accountability, competition, and integrity. The integration of e-Government Procurement (e-GP) systems is increasingly seen as a key tool to mitigate these risks by reducing direct human discretion and creating auditable trails (Sarah & Audrey, 2024). The global challenge, therefore, is to move beyond mere compliance and embed a culture of ethical conduct throughout the entire contract lifecycle, from planning and sourcing to performance management and closure.

In Africa, the challenges of procurement ethics are magnified by the continent's significant infrastructure gap and the pressing need for public services. The African Union has estimated that Africa loses over \$50 billion annually in illicit financial flows, a significant portion of which is linked to corrupt practices in public procurement (African Union, 2021). This hemorrhage of resources directly undermines development efforts, diverting funds meant for schools, hospitals, and roads into private hands. Weak institutional capacities, political interference, and a lack of transparency often characterize procurement systems across many African nations (Nelson, 2024). A report by Transparency International (2022) on African public procurement systems highlighted that while most countries have established legal frameworks, enforcement remains a critical weakness. Collusion between bidders, conflict of interest among public officials, and the manipulation of contract specifications to favor particular suppliers are common malpractices. This not only leads to poor value for money but also erodes the social contract between citizens and the state, fueling public discontent and hindering sustainable economic growth (Ronald et al., 2023).

Uganda has made significant strides in establishing a comprehensive legal and institutional framework to govern public procurement. The Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, 2014, and the establishment of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) were landmark steps aimed at promoting efficiency, transparency, and fairness (Ahumuza et al., 2025). The PPDA's annual reports, however, consistently reveal persistent challenges. For instance, the PPDA Authority (2023) reported that common procurement irregularities in local governments include failure to evaluate bids properly, contract variations that exceed the legal thresholds, and poor

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record-keeping (Ntirandekura, Ainebyoona, et al., 2022). Furthermore, the 2023 Inspectorate of Government Report noted that local government procurement remains a high-risk area for corruption, with numerous cases of embezzlement and mismanagement of funds reported annually. The gap between the robust national legislation and the on-the-ground reality in districts and municipalities points to systemic issues such as inadequate funding for oversight bodies, insufficient training of procurement staff, and persistent political pressure, which collectively compromise the integrity of the process (F. Christopher et al., 2022).

Kisoro Municipal Council, like many other local governments in Uganda, is tasked with delivering essential services to its growing urban population, including waste management, road maintenance, and public health initiatives. The effective execution of these services is heavily dependent on sound procurement practices and diligent contract management (T. Christopher, 2022). However, the municipality operates in a context where the national-level implementation hurdles are acutely felt. As a burgeoning urban center in a remote part of the country, it faces unique pressures, including a limited pool of qualified suppliers, closer-knit social networks that can blur professional boundaries, and potentially less scrutiny from central government agencies compared to more prominent municipalities. There is a palpable concern among citizens and stakeholders regarding the fairness and outcomes of public contracts, with anecdotal evidence often pointing to delayed project completion, cost overruns, and questions about the quality of works delivered (Julius, 2024). A study by the Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (2023) in the Southwestern region highlighted local governments like Kisoro as being particularly vulnerable to procurement-related malpractices due to capacity constraints and weak civic oversight. Therefore, this study is imperative to move from anecdotal evidence to an empirical investigation, examining the specific ethical challenges within the procurement and contract management processes at Kisoro Municipal Council.

Problem Statement

Contract management in organizations constitutes a focal issue in the organization (Kilonzo, 2017). Despite the emphasis and regulatory framework on contract management, Uganda Public Procurement Compliance Reports sanctioned by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority have continuously shown contract management as one of the areas where performance of public entities is poor (Kazaara et al., 2024). According to the Baseline Survey Report on Public Procurement Systems in Uganda (PPDA, 2016), there were significant variances between the actual and indicative time frames in the processing of procurements from the stage of approval of procurement to the award and signing of contracts. Contractual payment period revealed that 29.5% of the procurements had a time variance against the contractual payment period as compared to 21.8% of the procurements that did not have a time variance and 48.7% of the procurements (Sarah & Audrey, 2024). For most contracts, there was no appointment of contract managers and no contract monitoring or supplier appraisal reports prepared. This casts doubts on contract management compliance which maybe hampers service delivery in places like

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Kisoro Municipal Council (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2025). Despite the set values for contracts management, there is registered constraints in handling, supervising of contracts, closure and monitoring that has presented an overall challenge to the purchasing environment, has led to loss of money, shoddy procurements and entire procurement performance constraints (Ntirandekura, Friday, et al., 2022). Despite the existence of the contracts challenges, the key cause for the contracts management constraints are not known though could be affiliated to ever decreasing values in terms of ethics that could have undermined the performance of the contracts (Ojo, Adeyemi and Fagbenle, 2019), and which if not addressed has a likelihood of harming Kisoro Municipal Council. It is on this basis that the researcher got intrigued and thus sought to carry out a study on Procurement Ethics and contract management in Kisoro Municipality.

Objectives of The Study

1. To find out the ethical procurement practices at Kisoro Municipal Council.
2. To examine the contract management practices at Kisoro Municipal Council.
3. To determine the relationship between procurement ethics and contract management at Kisoro Municipal Council.

Methodology

The research adopted a case study design, as this approach is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2018). This design was deemed most appropriate for developing a comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomena of procurement ethics and contract management, as it allowed for the investigation of these issues within the specific, bounded system of Kisoro Municipal Council, capturing the pertinent contextual conditions that shape ethical practices (Jallow et al., 2022). The study was conducted at Kisoro Municipal Council, located in southwestern Uganda and comprising three divisions: Southern, Northern, and Central. The target population included 60 personnel from key departments involved in the procurement process, specifically the Procurement & Disposal Unit (PDU), accounting, legal, and administration sections, as these individuals were directly engaged with or impacted by the procurement and contract management functions under investigation (Nafiu et al., 2012).

A sample of 52 respondents was determined using Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size from a known population, ensuring a representative subset of the target population. A mixed-method sampling procedure was employed to select participants. Purposive sampling was used to select all seven administrators, as their strategic roles and decision-making authority provided critical insights into the ethical climate and contract oversight (Gunto Lu et al., 2013). For the remaining staff in the PDU, accounts, and legal departments, simple random sampling was applied to give every individual an equal chance of selection, thereby minimizing selection bias and enhancing the generalizability of the findings within the municipal context (George Stanley & Nafiu, 2020). Data collection utilized a triangulation of

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methods to ensure richness and validity. Self-administered questionnaires with structured and Likert-scale questions were distributed to gather quantitative data on the implementation of key procurement ethics. To gain deeper, qualitative insights, structured interviews were conducted with district administrators (Lanlege et al., 2013). Furthermore, direct observation was employed, allowing the researcher to witness firsthand the procurement processes and official behaviors, thereby verifying and contextualizing the data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Rigorous data quality control measures were implemented to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. The validity of the instruments was established through expert judgment, where the research supervisor assessed the content relevance and phrasing of the questionnaires, and a Content Validity Index (CVI) was computed. Reliability was tested through a pilot study involving 20 respondents from a similar municipal setting, and the internal consistency of the quantitative instrument was measured using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, with a threshold of 0.7 considered acceptable (Taherdoost, 2021). Following collection, data was securely managed through encrypted digital storage and cloud backups. The quantitative data was cleaned, coded, and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, to provide summaries of the sample characteristics. Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended questions was analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved coding and categorizing the data to identify emergent themes and patterns. Throughout the research process, strict ethical considerations were upheld, including seeking informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality, and obtaining official permission from the Town Clerk of Kisoro Municipal Council.

Results

Table 1: Ethical Procurement Practices

	SD		D		NS		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Transparency	0	0%	0	0%	8	16%	15	30%	27	54%
Integrity	0	0%	2	4%	6	12%	17	34%	25	50%
Accountability	0	0%	0	0%	10	20%	17	34%	23	46%

The organization safeguards the supplier confidentiality	0	0%	0	0%	5	10%	15	30%	30	60%
There is equity and fairness on awarding of the contracts in the organization	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	16	32%	33	66%
The tenders and awarded contractors are advertised in the local news papers	0	0%	0	0%	10	20%	17	34%	23	46%

Source: Primary Data (2024)

A dominant trend across all listed indicators is the strong consensus among respondents affirming the adherence to key ethical principles. This is most strikingly evident in the responses concerning equity and fairness, where a overwhelming 98% of respondents either agreed (32%) or strongly agreed (66%) that contracts are awarded equitably. This near-unanimous perception suggests that the organization has successfully cultivated an environment where favoritism and bias are perceived to be minimal, which is a cornerstone of a credible and trustworthy procurement system. Similarly, the principle of supplier confidentiality is strongly upheld, with 90% of respondents in agreement (30% agreed, 60% strongly agreed), indicating a robust institutional respect for sensitive business information that is critical for maintaining competitive and fair bidding processes (Nelson et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the core pillars of public procurement transparency, integrity, and accountability also received substantial endorsement from the staff. Transparency was affirmed by 84% of respondents (30% agreed, 54% strongly agreed), a sentiment strongly supported by the fact that 80% also believe that tenders and awarded contracts are advertised in local newspapers. This indicates that the organization makes a conscious effort to make its procurement activities visible and accessible to the public, a key deterrent against corrupt practices. Integrity, which involves honesty and moral conduct, was also perceived positively, with 84% agreement (34% agreed, 50% strongly agreed). While this is a strong majority, it is noteworthy that a small minority expressed disagreement (4%) or neutrality (12%), hinting at isolated concerns or experiences that may warrant further investigation. Accountability, the obligation to take responsibility for one's actions, followed a similar pattern, with 80% of respondents affirming its practice.

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However, a more nuanced reading of the data reveals potential areas for improvement, primarily located in the "Neutral" (NS) responses. For instance, while the agreement rates for transparency, accountability, and contract advertising are high, each of these categories had a significant 20% of respondents who were non-committal. This neutrality could stem from a lack of awareness of the processes, uncertainty about what full transparency entails, or a hesitation to provide a negative assessment. The 16% neutral response on transparency and 12% on integrity further suggest that while the ethical framework is strong, its communication and demonstration in daily operations may not be perceived equally by all staff members.

Table 2: Contract Management Practices

	F	SD	D		NS		A		SA	
		%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Compliance to technical specifications	0	0%	0	0%	8	16%	14	28%	28	56%
Contracts designed to accommodate changes in scope or unforeseen circumstances	0	0%	2	4%	8	16%	19	38%	21	42%
Comprehensive & precise terms outlining the rights, obligations, & remedies of all parties.	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	17	34%	33	66%
Involvement of relevant stakeholders in contract development and execution	0	0%	0	0%	4	8%	20	40%	26	52%

Inclusion of contingency plans and risk-sharing mechanisms in contracts	0	0%	0	0%	2	4%	19	38%	29	58%
Use of tools such as contract management software for real-time monitoring	0	0%	1	2%	9	18%	17	34%	23	46%

Source: Primary Data (2024)

A striking finding is the overwhelming consensus on the clarity and comprehensiveness of contract terms, with a full 100% of respondents agreeing (34%) or strongly agreeing (66%) that contracts feature precise terms outlining the rights, obligations, and remedies of all parties. This universal endorsement suggests that the foundational documents governing projects are perceived as legally sound and well-defined, which is critical for minimizing disputes and ensuring all parties are aligned on expectations. This strength in foundational design is further complemented by a strong focus on proactive risk management, as evidenced by 96% of respondents affirming the inclusion of contingency plans and risk-sharing mechanisms (38% agreed, 58% strongly agreed) (Nelson et al., 2023). This indicates that the organization does not merely react to problems but strategically plans for potential uncertainties, thereby enhancing project resilience.

Furthermore, the data suggests that the organization successfully fosters a collaborative environment during the contract lifecycle. The involvement of relevant stakeholders in both the development and execution phases was confirmed by 92% of respondents (40% agreed, 52% strongly agreed). This high level of perceived inclusivity is a hallmark of mature contract management, as it helps to secure buy-in, leverage diverse expertise, and ensure that project outcomes meet the needs of all involved parties. When examining the execution phase, the practices remain strong. An impressive 84% of respondents reported that there is a high level of compliance with technical specifications (28% agreed, 56% strongly agreed), pointing to effective supervision and a culture of adherence to quality standards. Similarly, the flexibility of contracts is well-regarded, with 80% of respondents agreeing that contracts are designed to accommodate changes in scope or unforeseen circumstances (38% agreed, 42% strongly agreed). This demonstrates a pragmatic understanding that complex projects often require adaptation, and the contracts are seen as living documents capable of facilitating such changes in a structured manner.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive picture, one area presents a slight, yet notable, divergence from the otherwise exceptional ratings: the use of specialized technology. While still positive, with 80% of respondents acknowledging the

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use of tools like contract management software for real-time monitoring (34% agreed, 46% strongly agreed), this category recorded the highest level of neutral responses (18%) and the only instance of direct disagreement (2%). This suggests that while technological tools are in use, their implementation or effectiveness may not be perceived as uniformly as other manual or procedural practices. Some staff may be less familiar with the software, or the system's functionality may not be fully leveraged across all departments.

Table 3: Relationship between procurement ethics and contract management

	F	SD		D		NS		A		SA	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Ensures that contracts are awarded to suppliers based on merit, which fosters trust and minimizes disputes during contract execution	0	0%	0	0%	8	16%	15	30%	27	54%	
Creates a clear framework for contract monitoring performance, the risk of and inefficiencies.	0	0%	2	4%	6	12%	17	34%	25	50%	
Ensures mutual trust and collaboration during contract implementation, improving outcomes and minimizing conflicts.	0	0%	2	4%	8	16%	19	38%	21	42%	



Drives long-term value through contracts that prioritize environmentally friendly practices and ethical labor conditions.	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	17	34%	33	66%
Ensures smoother execution by avoiding unethical practices that could lead to contract breaches or reputational damage.	0	0%	0	0%	4	8%	20	40%	26	52%
Enhances collaboration and commitment from all parties, ensuring successful contract fulfillment.	0	0%	2	4%	8	16%	19	38%	21	42%

Source: Primary Data (2024)

A dominant theme across all statements is the recognition that ethical procurement is not merely a procedural hurdle but a foundational driver that directly enhances the efficiency, integrity, and outcomes of the contract management lifecycle. This is most vividly illustrated in the perception that ethics drive long-term value, with a unanimous 100% of respondents agreeing (34%) or strongly agreeing (66%) that ethical practices lead to contracts prioritizing environmentally friendly practices and ethical labor conditions. This suggests a deep-seated understanding that ethical procurement extends beyond immediate financial cost to encompass broader social responsibility and sustainable value, embedding these principles directly into contractual agreements.

Furthermore, the data strongly affirms that procurement ethics serve as a critical risk mitigation and trust-building mechanism. A significant majority of 84% of respondents believe that ethical practices ensure contracts are awarded based on merit, which in turn fosters trust and minimizes disputes during execution. This foundational trust is seen as crucial for smoother project implementation, a notion supported by 92% of respondents who agreed that adhering to

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ethics helps avoid unethical practices that lead to breaches or reputational damage. The role of ethics in creating a transparent and accountable framework for monitoring performance is also strongly endorsed, with 84% agreement. Respondents clearly perceive that a procurement process grounded in integrity establishes a clear and defensible roadmap for contract management, thereby reducing the avenues for corruption and inefficiency that can derail a project after the award is made.

The collaborative benefits of this ethical foundation are also prominently highlighted. A combined 80% of respondents affirmed that procurement ethics ensure mutual trust and collaboration during implementation, which improves outcomes and minimizes conflicts. An identical percentage believed that ethics enhance collaboration and commitment from all parties, ensuring successful contract fulfillment. While these percentages are strongly positive, it is noteworthy that these collaboration-focused statements, along with the framework for monitoring, recorded the only instances of disagreement (4% across these items) and the highest levels of neutral responses (12-16%). This slight dip, compared to the unanimous agreement on long-term value, may indicate that while the structural and principled benefits of ethics are unquestioned, their consistent translation into daily interpersonal collaboration and monitoring rigor may face occasional challenges. In conclusion, the table powerfully demonstrates that within this organization, procurement ethics are perceived as an indispensable strategic function.

Conclusions

The study concluded that Kisoro Municipal Council has successfully established and maintains a robust framework for ethical procurement that is widely recognized and affirmed by its staff. The organization was found to have a strong culture of integrity, particularly in the critical areas of equity, fairness, and supplier confidentiality. The fact that an overwhelming 98% of respondents affirmed that contracts are awarded fairly and equitably indicates that the core principle of competitive and unbiased bidding is deeply embedded. Furthermore, the strong adherence to transparency, demonstrated through public advertisement of tenders, and the high levels of perceived accountability show that the procurement process is largely perceived as open and responsible. However, the study concluded that while the ethical framework is strong, there is a minor vulnerability. The consistent presence of a "neutral" cohort across several key indicators (e.g., 16% on transparency, 20% on accountability) suggests that not all employees are equally convinced or aware of how these principles are consistently applied in every instance. Therefore, the conclusion is that the ethical foundation is solid, but there is a need for continuous reinforcement and communication to convert this neutral group into confident affirmers.

The investigation concluded that the contract management function at Kisoro Municipal Council is highly systematic, proactive, and effective. The organization excels in creating a strong contractual foundation, as evidenced by the unanimous agreement (100%) that contracts contain comprehensive and precise terms. This legal clarity was identified

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as a major factor in minimizing disputes. The study also concluded that the council is highly proficient in proactive risk management, with an overwhelming majority (96%) confirming the inclusion of contingency plans and risk-sharing mechanisms in contracts. This indicates a forward-thinking approach that anticipates and mitigates potential project disruptions. A key strength identified was the deeply collaborative nature of contract management, with strong stakeholder involvement throughout the process. The only area concluded to require further development was the technological integration of contract management. While the use of specialized software was still viewed positively, it was the only practice that registered any disagreement and a notable level of uncertainty, pointing to an opportunity for enhancing digital tools and training to achieve the same level of excellence seen in procedural practices.

The study conclusively determined that a direct, positive, and symbiotic relationship exists between procurement ethics and successful contract management within Kisoro Municipal Council. Staff overwhelmingly perceived ethical procurement not as a standalone compliance activity, but as the essential bedrock upon which effective contract execution is built. The data led to the conclusion that ethical procurement acts as a critical risk mitigation strategy; by ensuring contracts are awarded based on merit and integrity, the council fosters trust from the outset, which in turn minimizes disputes, avoids reputational damage, and ensures smoother execution. Furthermore, it was concluded that this ethical foundation creates a clear and defensible framework for monitoring contractor performance, thereby reducing opportunities for corruption and inefficiency during the contract lifecycle. Perhaps the most significant conclusion was that ethical procurement is viewed as a driver of long-term, sustainable value, with all respondents linking it to contracts that prioritize environmental and social responsibility. In essence, the study found that in Kisoro Municipal Council, a clean and transparent procurement process is the most significant predictor of a well-managed, collaborative, and successful contract outcome, proving that ethics and efficiency are mutually reinforcing objectives.

Recommendations

The primary focus should be on transforming good practices into a model of excellence by embedding continuous enhancement into the institutional culture. To achieve this, there should be an immediate initiative to design and implement a continuous ethics communication and training program. This program must move beyond a static code of conduct by developing simplified, accessible guides and launching interactive workshops that use real-world case studies to help staff navigate ethical dilemmas. Concurrently, there should be an enhancement of proactive transparency through the development of a dedicated, user-friendly procurement portal on the council's website. This portal should serve as a dynamic repository for all tender advertisements, awarded contracts, and key contractor information, complemented by a public feedback mechanism to foster greater social accountability.

There should be a strategic investment in technology and capacity building to modernize the contract management function. This process should begin with a thorough needs-assessment to select a standardized contract management

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software that fits the council's specific requirements, followed by comprehensive, hands-on training for all relevant staff to ensure its effective adoption. Integrating this software with existing financial and procurement systems is crucial to create a seamless data flow and a holistic view of project performance. To institutionalize organizational learning, there should be the introduction of mandatory "Contract Close-Out Reports" for every major project and the establishment of a quarterly "Contract Review Committee." This committee would be tasked with analyzing these reports to extract lessons learned, update standard bidding documents, and refine future risk assessments.

There should be a deliberate effort to formalize the powerful synergy between procurement ethics and contract management. This can be accomplished by developing and incorporating specific "Ethical Performance Indicators" into the standard contract monitoring framework to track metrics such as dispute resolution timeliness and adherence to ethical clauses. Moreover, there should be a strategic enhancement of the bid evaluation process to more heavily weigh a bidder's past ethical performance, thereby creating a market incentive for contractors to uphold the highest standards.

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