



Transparency, Competitiveness and Value for Money in Public Procurement of Road Transport Infrastructure: Empirical Evidence from Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Public procurement remains the principal vehicle through which governments in developing economies deliver physical infrastructure, yet it is also one of the most corruption-prone areas of public administration. This study investigated the influence of transparency and competitiveness on value for money in the procurement of road transport infrastructure in Benue State, Nigeria, between 2015 and 2023. Anchored on Douglass North's institutional theory, the study adopted a mixed methods convergent parallel design. A structured questionnaire was administered to 400 respondents drawn purposively from nine local government areas across the three senatorial districts, complemented by in-depth interviews with 13 key informants and systematic observation of procured road projects. The Yamane (1967) formula was used to determine the sample size, while Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.979 to 0.987 confirmed the reliability of the research instrument. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression. The findings revealed that transparency exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on value for money ($\beta = 0.537$, $p < 0.001$) and that competitiveness similarly exerts a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.457$, $p < 0.001$), with the overall model explaining 98.5 per cent ($R^2 = 0.985$) of the variance in value for money. However, mean scores for transparency (2.81), competitiveness (2.58) and value for money (2.76) indicate sub-optimal performance on these dimensions in practice. The study concludes that institutionalising transparency mechanisms and removing barriers to open competitive bidding are essential preconditions for achieving value for money in road infrastructure delivery in Benue State and similar sub-national jurisdictions in Nigeria.

Keywords: Public procurement, transparency, competitiveness, value for money, road infrastructure, Benue State, Nigeria

Introduction

Public procurement – the acquisition by government of works, goods and services from third parties – has emerged as one of the most consequential instruments of public policy in developing economies. It accounts for between 10 and 25 per cent of Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP), making it the single largest category of public expenditure (Hoffmann & Patel, 2024). Across sub-Saharan Africa, the procurement function operates as the principal channel through which governments translate budgetary appropriations into the roads, schools, hospitals, electricity and water systems upon which citizens depend. The integrity of the procurement process therefore conditions the developmental trajectory of the state.

In Nigeria, however, the procurement function has become almost synonymous with rent-seeking. Anti-corruption agencies estimate that the country loses approximately 18 billion United States dollars (US\$) annually to financial crimes and corrupt procurement processes (Egbooh, 2024, as cited in Hoffmann & Patel, 2024). Transparency International (2025) ranked Nigeria 140 out of 180 countries on the 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index, with a score of 26 out of 100, well below the global average of 43. The consequences for

infrastructure delivery are visible. According to the World Bank (2024), 80 per cent of Nigeria's road network is currently in poor condition, and only 30 per cent of the country's estimated 200,000 kilometres of road network is paved (Agusto & Co., 2024). The infrastructure deficit is projected to reach US\$878 billion by 2040 if present trends are not reversed (Agusto & Co., 2024).

Against this backdrop, Nigeria enacted the Public Procurement Act 2007 following a World Bank Country Procurement Assessment Review which established that 60 kobo of every Naira spent by government was being lost to underhand practices and that an average of US\$10 billion was lost annually to fraudulent practices in the award and execution of public contracts (Bureau of Public Procurement [BPP], 2007). The Act established the Bureau of Public Procurement to harmonise government policies, set pricing standards and ensure transparency, competitiveness and value for money in the procurement and disposal of public assets. Benue State domesticated the federal framework through the Benue State Public Procurement Law 2020, which mandates open competitive bidding, transparency, accountability and value for money in all state procurement transactions.

Despite this legal architecture, road infrastructure outcomes in Benue State have remained sub-optimal. Between 2015 and 2023, the administration of Chief Dr Samuel Ortom commissioned a substantial portfolio of road projects, including the Origbo–Imande–Akpu–Gbajimba road, the Daudu–Gbajimba road, the Tse Poor–Mbakya–Apir road, the Anyiin–Ugba road and the Zaki Biam–Tor Donga road, among others. Many of these projects experienced delays, cost variations or quality concerns. The persistence of poor procurement outcomes despite an ostensibly robust legal framework raises fundamental questions about the operational determinants of value for money in sub-national procurement systems.

This study therefore examined two such determinants – transparency and competitiveness – and their relative contributions to value for money in the procurement of road transport infrastructure in Benue State. The specific objectives were to ascertain the influence of transparency on value for money in the procurement process and to determine the effect of competitiveness among bidding firms on value for money in road infrastructure procurement. Two corresponding null hypotheses were tested. The study is significant because it interrogates the assumption embedded in procurement reform literature that the mere enactment of procurement legislation produces value for money. By disaggregating value for money into measurable components and testing the explanatory power of transparency and competition, the study contributes to debates on procurement governance and sub-national institutional performance in resource-constrained federations.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The Concept of Public Procurement

Public procurement has been defined in multiple ways, but a common thread runs through the various formulations. Lloyd and McCue (2004) described it as encompassing all stages of the process of acquiring property or services, beginning with the determination of need and ending with contract completion and close-out. Sarfo and Mintah (2014) emphasised the option-appraisal and make-or-buy decision dimensions, while the underlying principle, as articulated by Nwogwugwu and Adebayo (2015), is that a competitive process must be

instituted to ensure that the procurement function is discharged honestly, fairly and in a manner that ensures the efficient utilisation of public resources.

Simpson et al. (2011) likened procurement to a reverse auction, whereby suppliers compete to offer the lowest price for a good or service. Procurement rules aim to ensure that government receives best value without incurring excessive transaction costs. Recent scholarship has expanded the conceptual boundary of public procurement to include sustainability, gender responsiveness and the strategic use of procurement as an instrument of industrial and social policy (Rejeb et al., 2024; Singh et al., 2024).

Transparency in Public Procurement

Transparency in public procurement refers to the degree to which information about the procurement process, decisions and outcomes is readily available, accessible and comprehensible to all stakeholders (Transparency International, 2006). Wayne (2005) defined it as the ability of all interested parties to understand and know the actual process and means by which contracts are managed and awarded. The literature converges on the view that transparency is a sine qua non for procurement integrity.

Masudio et al. (2024), in a study of local government institutions in Uganda, found that access to key procurement information has a statistically significant relationship with overall procurement performance, particularly in terms of cost optimisation and timely delivery. Molelekwa (2022), in a study of suppliers' perceptions in the Free State province of South Africa, observed that the level of information dissemination varies inconsistently from stage to stage and from organisation to organisation, thereby decreasing competition, efficiency and fairness. Bolcha et al. (2024), examining public procurement in the Czech Republic, established that improvements in transparency are associated with measurable efficiency gains, suggesting that the relationship is not confined to developing economies.

In the Nigerian context, Williams and Andrew (2021) examined transparency in the civil service procurement system and concluded that the absence of accessible and timely information undermines competitive bidding. Igwe et al. (2021) argued that an open and transparent procurement process is critical to surmounting the multiple challenges facing the realisation of development project objectives in Nigeria. Okotie and Tafamel (2020) demonstrated that public procurement practices are significantly and positively related to the level of transparency.

Competitiveness in Public Procurement

Competition plays a decisive role in public procurement because it enhances the efficient allocation of public spending (Fountoukidis et al., 2023). Open competition, in many circumstances, constitutes the most appropriate procedure for ensuring the selection of the most efficient contractor (Albano et al., 2017). The principal mechanism through which competition operates in procurement is open tendering, described by King (2008) as a process that attempts to decrease the cost of contracts by increasing the number of qualified bidders. Recent empirical work has refined the understanding of how competition affects procurement outcomes. Manta and Mansi (2024) demonstrated that globalisation has expanded the scope of

competitive procurement in innovative ways, creating opportunities for cross-border participation. Puspita and Gultom (2024), studying the Indonesian experience, found that electronic procurement policy significantly reduces corruption and enhances competitive integrity. Rejeb et al. (2024), in a bibliometric analysis of public procurement research, identified competitiveness as one of the most consistently studied dimensions in the field over the past two decades.

In sub-Saharan Africa, however, several recent studies have documented persistent barriers to genuine competition. Tilese et al. (2024) detected and analysed unbalanced bidding in the South African public construction sector. Kruger and Eberhard (2023) examined competition, trust and capital in renewable energy auctions in South Africa, Zambia and Namibia, finding that institutional weaknesses depress competitive outcomes. Chileshe et al. (2021) identified the critical factors influencing the bid or no-bid decision of indigenous small contractors in Tanzania. Mbazor et al. (2024) catalogued the challenges facing small and medium-scale building contractors in Nigeria, ranging from prohibitive financial thresholds to onerous technical capacity requirements that effectively exclude smaller firms.

Value for Money in Public Procurement

The concept of value for money (VfM) has its modern origins in the British public sector reforms of the 1980s. Glendinning (1988) provided one of the earliest systematic accounts of the concept, describing it not as a tool or method but as a way of thinking about the proper use of resources. The World Bank (2016) considers VfM to involve the effective, efficient and economical use of resources, entailing the evaluation of relevant costs and benefits, risk assessment, life-cycle cost and non-price attributes.

More recent contributions have extended this conceptual lineage. MacDonald et al. (2012) emphasised that VfM is not limited to the conventional cost dimension but includes qualitative or non-financial aspects. Olatunji et al. (2017) defined VfM as a measure of a client's satisfaction in achieving project objectives, while Simaya and Maro (2018) characterised it as the assurance of achieving the best possible results from money spent. Mehkri (2024) explored how procurement planning enhances VfM, while Adebayo et al. (2024) demonstrated that sustainable procurement practices can balance compliance, ethics and cost-effectiveness in delivering VfM.

Empirical studies in the African context confirm the importance of VfM as an evaluative criterion. Mwakolo et al. (2024) examined the procurement of good governance as a strategic tool for achieving VfM in public construction projects, finding strong evidence that institutional quality mediates the relationship between procurement processes and VfM outcomes. Chikwere et al. (2023) studied VfM in Zimbabwe's rural district councils and concluded that the realisation of VfM is contingent on the procurement environment rather than on the procurement rules alone. Panya and Awuor (2023) provided a comprehensive review of procurement reforms across Africa and concluded that VfM remains an aspiration rather than an achievement in most jurisdictions.

Theoretical Framework: Institutional Theory

This study is anchored on the institutional theory developed by Douglass North (1990). North defined institutions as “humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interactions” (p. 3). These constraints comprise formal rules – constitutions, statutes, property rights – and informal restraints – sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions and codes of conduct. North (1990) argued that institutions provide the incentive structure of an economy and that, as that structure evolves, it shapes the direction of economic change towards growth, stagnation or decline.

The relevance of institutional theory to the present study is twofold. First, the Public Procurement Act 2007 and the Benue State Public Procurement Law 2020 are formal institutions designed to constrain discretionary behaviour by procurement officials and promote transparency, competitiveness and value for money. The theory predicts that the operation of these formal rules will be conditioned by informal constraints – the customs, codes of conduct and unwritten understandings that shape actual behaviour. Where informal institutions diverge from formal rules, the predicted outcomes of reform will not materialise. Second, the theory directs attention to transaction costs. North (1990) emphasised that institutions affect economic performance by altering the costs of measurement and enforcement. In procurement, these costs include the costs of obtaining information, evaluating bids, monitoring contractor performance and enforcing contractual obligations. Effective procurement institutions reduce these costs; ineffective ones magnify them.

Recent contributions to institutional theory in public administration scholarship have extended these insights. Siddiki and Frantz (2021) have shown how institutional theory illuminates patterns of policy action and institutional change, while Frederickson et al. (2016) have argued that institutional theory is particularly suited to describing the fragmentation, asymmetries and interdependencies that characterise contemporary governance. Critiques of the theory – notably that it tends to be static, struggles with the agency–structure issue and underplays power dynamics (Hirsch & Lounsbury, 1997) – are acknowledged but do not vitiate its analytical purchase on the procurement question.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed methods convergent parallel design as articulated by Creswell (2014). In this design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently, analysed separately, and then compared and integrated at the interpretation stage. The intent is to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Morse, 1991). The design is appropriate for this study because public procurement is a phenomenon with both measurable and interpretive dimensions: the level of transparency in the procurement process can be assessed quantitatively through respondents’ evaluations of specific information practices, but the meaning of these practices in the context of actual project delivery requires the deeper interrogation that qualitative methods afford.

Study Area and Population

The study was conducted in Benue State, which lies in the middle belt of Nigeria and occupies a landmass of 34,059 square kilometres. The State comprises 23 local government areas spread across three senatorial districts, with a population of 4,253,641 according to the 2006 national census. The study population was drawn from nine local government areas selected across the three senatorial districts on the basis of having had funded road infrastructure within the study period (2015–2023). These were Katsina-Ala, Konshisha and Ukum in Benue North-East; Buruku, Guma and Makurdi in Benue North-West; and Ado, Ogbadibo and Otukpo in Benue South. The combined population of these nine local government areas is 1,946,644.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The Taro Yamane (1967) formula was used to determine the sample size from the study population. With a population of 1,946,644 and a tolerable error of 5 per cent (0.05), the formula yielded a sample size of approximately 400. The sample was allocated proportionally across the nine local government areas. In addition to the 400 questionnaire respondents, 13 key informants were purposively selected for in-depth interviews. The qualitative sample size was guided by the principle of data saturation, with Guest et al. (2006) and Hagaman and Wutich (2017) suggesting that between 12 and 20 interviewees is adequate for valid qualitative inference.

Purposive sampling was used because the study targeted respondents with specific knowledge of and involvement in public procurement processes. Participants were drawn from the State Ministry of Works and Housing, the State Ministry of Rural and Cooperative Development, the State Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, the Benue State Planning Commission, the Benue State Public Procurement Commission, registered construction companies with procurement experience in the State, local contractors, members of the Benue State House of Assembly serving on relevant committees, and serving and former Commissioners of relevant ministries.

Data Collection Instruments

Four instruments were used for data collection: a structured questionnaire, an in-depth interview guide, systematic observation and content analysis of documentary sources. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) to elicit respondents' perceptions on the transparency, value for money, competitiveness, efficiency and compliance dimensions of public procurement. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha. Table 1 presents the alpha coefficients for the constructs relevant to this paper.

Table 1

Reliability Coefficients of the Research Instrument

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Transparency	0.987	10
Value for Money	0.983	6
Competitiveness	0.984	6

Note. Computed by the researcher from the pilot study (2024). Coefficients above 0.9 indicate excellent internal consistency.

All coefficients exceeded the 0.7 threshold recommended for social science research, indicating excellent internal consistency. The in-depth interviews followed a structured guide that was audio-recorded with respondents' consent. Systematic observation involved site visits to road projects, with photographs and field notes documenting the physical condition of the procured infrastructure. Documentary sources included the Benue State approved budgets (2015–2023), contractor performance reports and reports of the Benue State House of Assembly Committee on Project Monitoring.

To test the hypotheses concerning value for money, a multiple linear regression model was specified. The functional form is:

$$VfM = f(TP, COM)$$

Which is expressed in estimable form as:

$$VfM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TP + \beta_2 COM + \mu$$

Where VfM denotes value for money, TP denotes transparency, COM denotes competitiveness, β_0 is the intercept, β_1 and β_2 are the coefficients of the independent variables, and μ is the error term. The model was estimated using ordinary least squares in IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. The 5 per cent ($p < 0.05$) level of significance was adopted in line with the convention for social science research (Bryman & Cramer, 1997).

Ethical Considerations

The study observed established research ethics. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were assured of voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality. No personally identifying information was elicited or recorded, and participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Results

Response Rate and Respondent Profile

Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 354 (88.5 per cent) were returned and 320 (80.0 per cent) were valid and fully completed. The analysis was based on the 320 valid questionnaires. Among respondents, 65 per cent were male and 35 per cent female; 45 per cent were aged 30–49 years; 55 per cent held a Higher National Diploma or bachelor's degree or higher; and 56.9 per cent were civil servants directly involved in procurement-related functions, with 24.4 per cent from private sector contractors. Over 70 per cent of respondents had more than five years of procurement-related experience.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 summarises the descriptive statistics for the three variables of interest. The mean scores indicate that respondents perceived all three dimensions as below the satisfactory threshold of 3.50 on the five-point scale, suggesting widespread dissatisfaction with the operation of these dimensions of public procurement in Benue State.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Transparency, Competitiveness and Value for Money

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Transparency	2.81	1.308	Within average
Competitiveness	2.58	1.340	Within average
Value for Money	2.76	1.290	Within average

Note. Computed from field survey (2024). Acceptance threshold is 2.5 and above on the five-point scale; satisfactory performance is 3.50 and above.

The most poorly rated transparency indicators were the public availability of contract awards and prices (mean = 2.28) and the clear disclosure and explanation of selection criteria for winning bids (mean = 2.36). The most poorly rated competitiveness indicators were the fairness, objectivity and clarity of bid evaluation criteria (mean = 2.30) and the transparency and equal access aspect of the bidding process (mean = 2.45). On value for money, the lowest rated items concerned the encouragement of innovative solutions (mean = 2.40) and the consideration of long-term environmental, social and economic impacts (mean = 2.40).

Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed strong positive relationships among the three variables. Transparency was correlated with value for money ($r = .973$, $p < .01$) and with competitiveness ($r = .975$, $p < .01$); competitiveness was correlated with value for money ($r = .996$, $p < .01$). The high correlation coefficients suggest that the three dimensions are tightly interlinked aspects of procurement governance: improvements in any one dimension are systematically associated with improvements in the others.

Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Normality of the dataset was confirmed by skewness values within the ± 2 range and kurtosis values within the ± 7 range. The multiple regression results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Regression Results: Determinants of Value for Money in Public Procurement of Road Infrastructure

Variable	Coefficient (β)	t	p-value
Constant	0.026	1.340	.181
Transparency (TP)	0.537	7.445	.001
Competitiveness (COM)	0.457	6.337	.001
R ²	0.985	—	—
F-statistic	10,384.387	—	.001

Note. Dependent variable: Value for Money (VfM). N = 320. Computed from field survey (2024) using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27.

The model explained 98.5 per cent ($R^2 = 0.985$) of the variation in value for money, with the F-statistic of 10,384.387 ($p < .001$) confirming overall model fit. The transparency coefficient of 0.537 ($t = 7.445$, $p < .001$) indicates that a one-unit increase in transparency is associated with a 0.537-unit increase in value for money. The first null hypothesis – that there is no relationship between transparency and value for money in the procurement process of road infrastructure provision in Benue State – is therefore rejected.

Similarly, the competitiveness coefficient of 0.457 ($t = 6.337$, $p < .001$) indicates that a one-unit increase in competitiveness yields a 0.457-unit increase in value for money. The second null hypothesis – that there is no relationship between competitiveness and value for money consideration in the procurement process of road infrastructure provision in Benue State – is also rejected. Together, transparency and competitiveness emerge as statistically robust determinants of value for money in the procurement of road infrastructure in Benue State.

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data corroborated and elaborated the quantitative results. Of the 13 key informants, more than 90 per cent held the view that procurement information is not publicly available in any operationally meaningful sense. They cited the absence of a functional website where procurement information could be accessed and the restriction of procurement decision-making to a small group of officials. Several procurement officials interviewed acknowledged that, for road projects, the State adopts restricted rather than open competitive bidding, which they justified on the basis of the technical specialisation required. This admission directly contradicts section 1 of the Benue State Public Procurement Law 2020, which mandates open competitive bidding in a manner that is transparent, timely and equitable.

Systematic observation by the researcher confirmed that procurement information is rarely accessible. Notices on ministry boards typically contain calls for tender but not the criteria for selection, the basis of pricing, the identities of bidders or, after award, the contract terms. Site visits to roads procured during the study period showed that several remained incomplete or had been executed to a quality manifestly below specification. The Ge-Ikyobo–Agbeede road in Konshisha was identified by interviewees as an emblematic case of contract abandonment despite repeated budgetary allocations.

Discussion

The principal finding of this study – that transparency and competitiveness exert positive and statistically significant influences on value for money in the procurement of road infrastructure in Benue State – is consistent with a substantial body of recent international scholarship. Mwakolo et al. (2024) found similar effects in their study of construction projects, while Bolcha et al. (2024) reported analogous results from the Czech Republic. Adam (2024) and Obura (2024) likewise documented strong positive relationships between procurement

transparency and value for money outcomes. The convergence of findings across diverse jurisdictions strengthens confidence in the proposition that transparency and competitiveness constitute generic determinants of procurement value, not artefacts of particular institutional contexts.

Yet the descriptive statistics qualify this finding in an important way. While the regression coefficients are large and significant, the absolute levels of transparency (mean = 2.81), competitiveness (mean = 2.58) and value for money (mean = 2.76) are all below the satisfactory threshold of 3.50. This pattern is consistent with what institutional theory would predict in a setting where formal rules exist but informal constraints diverge from them (North, 1990). The Benue State Public Procurement Law 2020 contains all the requisite provisions for transparent and competitive procurement; what is absent is the informal institutional ecosystem that would render those provisions operationally meaningful.

The qualitative finding that restricted rather than open competitive bidding is the predominant procurement method for road projects, despite the legal mandate to the contrary, illustrates the institutional gap. The official justification – technical specialisation – is unpersuasive in the construction sector, where the universe of qualified Nigerian road contractors is sufficiently large to support genuine open competition. The more plausible explanation, suggested by the documented practice of pre-selecting preferred contractors and the patronage-driven politics of contractor selection in Nigeria, is that restricted bidding serves rent-extraction rather than procurement-efficiency objectives. This interpretation aligns with Hoffmann and Patel's (2024) finding that informal social dynamics enable and perpetuate corruption in Nigerian procurement even where formal rules ostensibly proscribe it.

The macro-context further underscores the stakes. With Nigeria's infrastructure deficit projected to reach US\$878 billion by 2040 (Agusto & Co., 2024), the road freight sector losing approximately US\$7.8 billion annually to poor road infrastructure (Olikagu, 2024), and 80 per cent of the national road network in poor condition (World Bank, 2024), the cost of procurement failure is not merely fiscal but developmental. The findings of this study suggest that the path to addressing the infrastructure deficit runs through institutional reform of the procurement function, not through additional financial allocations alone. The Federal Government's 2024 budgetary allocation of ₦1.32 trillion (5 per cent of the budget) to infrastructure – already inadequate against the US\$100 billion annual target set by the National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan – will yield disproportionately diminished returns in the absence of procurement reform (Agusto & Co., 2024).

The strong inter-correlations among the variables ($r > .97$) merit attention. Such high correlations could raise multi-collinearity concerns; however, the model diagnostics confirmed the stability of the parameter estimates, and the substantive interpretation is consistent with the institutional view that transparency, competitiveness and value for money are mutually reinforcing dimensions of procurement integrity rather than independent variables. An improvement in transparency facilitates competition by widening the pool of informed bidders; competition in turn disciplines pricing and quality; and these together yield value for money. The corollary is that piecemeal reform – targeting one dimension while leaving the others untouched – is unlikely to produce durable gains.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the influence of transparency and competitiveness on value for money in the procurement of road transport infrastructure in Benue State, Nigeria. Using a mixed methods convergent parallel design with quantitative data from 320 respondents and qualitative data from 13 key informants and systematic observation of procured road projects, the study found that transparency and competitiveness together explain 98.5 per cent of the variance in value for money outcomes, with both variables exerting statistically significant positive effects. The findings confirm the theoretical expectation, derived from institutional theory, that procurement integrity is a function of the institutional architecture within which procurement is conducted.

Three policy recommendations follow. First, the State should institutionalise the transparency indicators implied by the Benue State Public Procurement Law 2020. This includes the development and maintenance of a functional procurement portal on which calls for tender, evaluation criteria, contract awards, contract values, contractor identities and project progress reports are publicly accessible. The portal should be supplemented by mandatory publication in widely circulated national newspapers, consistent with section 1 of the Law. Second, the State should adopt zero tolerance for collusion and the use of restricted bidding for road projects, except in narrowly defined emergency circumstances. Evaluation criteria should be communicated in advance to all interested parties, and the basis of the winning bid should be disclosed publicly after award. Third, the State should institute structured stakeholder engagement throughout the procurement cycle, including the participation of representatives of private sector professional bodies and civil society organisations as observers, in accordance with section 21 of the Law.

The study has limitations. It focused on road infrastructure rather than the full range of procurement categories; it was confined to Benue State rather than multiple jurisdictions; and it did not undertake comparative analysis across political administrations. Future research could usefully extend the study by undertaking comparative analyses across Nigerian states, by examining other categories of procured infrastructure such as electricity and water, and by integrating quasi-experimental designs that exploit policy variation across jurisdictions.

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