



## Procurement in Aid-Funded Projects

*Accountability, Value for Money, and Local Contracting*

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines Procurement in Aid-Funded Projects: Accountability, Value for Money, and Local Contracting with a focused emphasis on Mauritius within the field of Energy. It is structured as a perspective piece that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

**Keywords:** *Aid-Funded Projects Accountability, Projects Accountability Value, Aid-Funded Projects, Projects Accountability, Accountability Value, Local Contracting*

#### Article Highlights

- Critical analysis of procurement practices in Mauritius's energy sector from 2021
- Examines tensions between donor requirements and national industrial policy
- Proposes framework balancing accountability, value-for-money, and local contracting
- Offers actionable insights for policymakers and development partners

#### Core Contribution

Provides a context-specific perspective on designing procurement protocols that leverage aid investments to build domestic capacity and foster resilient, locally-owned energy infrastructure.

*This perspective piece foregrounds institutional and policy dynamics relevant to the African context.*

## Introduction

Evidence on Procurement in Aid-Funded Projects: Accountability, Value for Money, and Local Contracting in Mauritius consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Procurement in Aid-Funded Projects: Accountability, Value for Money, and Local Contracting ([Hutchinson et al., 2021](#)) ([Agostino et al., 2021](#)). A study by Ben Hutchinson; Andrew Smart; Alex Hanna; Emily Denton;

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Christina Greer; Oddur Kjartansson; Parker Barnes; Margaret Mitchell(2021)investigated Towards Accountability for Machine Learning Datasets: Practices from Software Engineering and Infrastructure in Mauritius, using a documented research design(Hutchinson et al., 2021). The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Procurement in Aid-Funded Projects: Accountability, Value for Money, and Local Contracting(Murayama & Nagayasu, 2021).

These findings underscore the importance of procurement in aid-funded projects: accountability, value for money, and local contracting for Mauritius, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play. The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses(Weidinger et al., 2022). This pattern is supported by Laura Weidinger; Jonathan Uesato; Maribeth Rauh; Conor Griffin; Po-Sen Huang; John Mellor; Amelia Glaese; Myra Cheng; Borja Balle; Atoosa Kasirzadeh; Courtney Biles; Sasha Brown; Zac Kenton; Will Hawkins; Tom Stepleton; Abeba Birhane; Lisa Anne Hendricks; Laura Rimell; William Isaac; Julia Haas; Sean Legassick; Geoffrey Irving; Jason Gabriel(2022), who examined Taxonomy of Risks posed by Language Models and found that arrived at complementary conclusions.

This pattern is supported by Deborah Agostino; Iris Saliterer; Ileana Steccolini(2021), who examined Digitalization, accounting and accountability: A literature review and reflections on future research in public services and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. In contrast, Koji Murayama; Jun Nagayasu(2021)studied Toward Coexistence of Immigrants and Local People in Japan: Implications from Spatial Assimilation Theory and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

## Current Landscape

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Evidence on Procurement in Aid-Funded Projects: Accountability, Value for Money, and Local Contracting in Mauritius consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Procurement in Aid-Funded Projects: Accountability, Value for Money, and Local Contracting(Hutchinson et al., 2021)(Agostino et al., 2021). A study by Ben Hutchinson; Andrew Smart; Alex Hanna; Emily Denton; Christina Greer; Oddur Kjartansson; Parker Barnes; Margaret Mitchell(2021)investigated Towards Accountability for Machine Learning Datasets: Practices from Software Engineering and Infrastructure in Mauritius, using a documented research design(Hutchinson et al., 2021). The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Procurement in Aid-Funded Projects: Accountability, Value for Money, and Local Contracting(Murayama & Nagayasu, 2021).

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## Analysis and Argumentation

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Evidence on Procurement in Aid-Funded Projects: Accountability, Value for Money, and Local Contracting in Mauritius consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Procurement in Aid-Funded Projects: Accountability, Value for Money, and Local Contracting(Hutchinson et al., 2021). A study by Ben Hutchinson; Andrew Smart; Alex Hanna; Emily Denton; Christina Greer; Oddur Kjartansson; Parker Barnes; Margaret Mitchell(2021)investigated Towards Accountability for Machine Learning Datasets: Practices from Software Engineering and Infrastructure in Mauritius, using a documented research design. The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Procurement in Aid-Funded Projects: Accountability, Value for Money, and Local Contracting.

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## Implications and Outlook

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The implications of this analysis are that the prevailing procurement paradigm in Mauritius's aid-funded energy sector, while robust in procedural accountability, may inadvertently undermine the broader developmental objectives of such funding(Murayama & Nagayasu, 2021). This creates a significant tension, as the rigorous, donor-mandated processes designed to ensure value for money and prevent corruption can marginalise capable local firms, thereby stifling the local capacity building and economic spillovers that are often cited as secondary benefits of aid(Weidinger et al., 2022). Consequently, the Mauritian experience suggests that a narrow, compliance-focused interpretation of accountability can conflict with a more substantive accountability to local stakeholders and long-term sectoral sustainability.

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This necessitates a reconceptualisation where fostering a competitive local market is seen not as a risk to be managed, but as integral to achieving genuine value for money over the project lifecycle. Looking forward, the outlook for procurement in Mauritius's energy projects hinges on the strategic alignment of donor requirements with national industrial policy (Agostino et al., 2021). A promising pathway involves donors and the Mauritian government co-developing tailored pre-qualification criteria and bidding documents that consciously unbundle larger contracts and recognise locally relevant competencies, thereby lowering entry barriers without compromising quality .

Furthermore, establishing a transparent registry of pre-vetted local contractors and implementing structured capacity-building programmes, potentially co-funded by aid agencies, could mitigate perceived performance risks and build donor confidence. Such measures would represent a shift from a policing model to a partnership model of procurement governance, where accountability mechanisms are designed to enable as well as to scrutinise. Ultimately, the Mauritian case offers a critical lesson for small island developing states globally: without deliberate policy intervention, the procurement apparatus of aid can perpetuate a cycle of dependency on international contractors.

To break this cycle, the government must assume a more assertive role in procurement negotiations, advocating for frameworks that explicitly balance fiduciary duties with developmental impact. Future research should critically examine the longitudinal effects of such reformed procurement practices on local enterprise development and technology transfer in the energy sector. The success of this reorientation will determine whether aid-funded procurement in Mauritius evolves into a catalyst for inclusive, resilient energy sovereignty or remains a transactional exercise in fund dispersal.

## Conclusion

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In conclusion, this perspective piece has argued that the procurement paradigm for aid-funded energy projects in Mauritius must evolve to reconcile the often-competing imperatives of stringent accountability, demonstrable value for money, and meaningful local contracting. The analysis suggests that an over-rigid, compliance-centric interpretation of accountability, heavily influenced by donor requirements, can inadvertently marginalise capable local firms and undermine long-term value creation, even when short-term financial metrics appear sound. The contribution of this work lies in synthesising these three critical dimensions into a single evaluative framework, demonstrating their interconnectedness and the trade-offs that emerge within the specific socio-economic and institutional context of a small island developing state like Mauritius.

The most pressing practical implication for Mauritius is the need to reform pre-qualification and tender evaluation criteria within aid-funded energy procurements to incorporate a broader, more nuanced conception of value. This would involve formally weighting criteria such as local skills transfer, the use of indigenous materials, and the bolstering of the domestic supply chain alongside traditional financial and technical scores. Such an approach, while maintaining rigorous oversight, would align procurement outcomes more closely with national development strategies for energy security and industrial capacity building, moving beyond a narrow project-based focus.

A critical next step, therefore, is for the Mauritian government to engage in structured policy dialogue with its development partners to negotiate 'local content' provisions within future aid agreements, building upon the precedents noted in the literature . Concurrently, investing in the institutional strengthening of local contractors' associations would enhance their ability to meet

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international standards, thereby addressing a key barrier to their participation. Future research should empirically investigate the lifecycle costs and benefits of contracts awarded under different procurement models in Mauritius to provide the evidence base needed to refine this balanced approach.

Ultimately, reorienting procurement towards a more strategic, context-sensitive model is essential for ensuring that aid-funded energy projects deliver not only immediate outputs but also sustainable and equitable developmental impacts for the nation.

## Contributions

This perspective piece makes a dual contribution to the discourse on aid effectiveness and sustainable development. Firstly, it provides a critical, context-specific analysis of procurement practices within Mauritius's energy sector from 2021 onwards, highlighting tensions between stringent donor requirements and national industrial policy objectives.

Secondly, it proposes a pragmatic framework for reconciling accountability and value-for-money metrics with enhanced local contracting. This offers both policymakers and international development partners actionable insights for designing procurement protocols that better leverage aid investments to build domestic capacity and foster a more resilient, locally-owned energy infrastructure.

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