



MAPS

Methodology for Assessing
Procurement Systems

MAPS Guide for Countries Authorities

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Introduction

1. What is the purpose of this guide and who is it for?

This guide provides country authorities with practical advice on going through the process of a MAPS assessment.

The guide is structured in three chapters corresponding to the main phases of a MAPS assessment, namely:

- Before a MAPS assessment (planning and preparing)
- During a MAPS assessment (operations and quality assurance)
- After a MAPS assessment (leveraging the results)

The guide is meant for country authorities regardless of their role in the assessment. It focuses on what authorities need to do to prepare themselves for a successful assessment, for what they are expected to contribute with during the assessment itself, and for how they can best ensure that the assessment is leveraged for improving their procurement system.

Because the guide represents the knowledge that country authorities should have before beginning a MAPS assessment, it can also be used by assessors or lead institutions as a reference when interacting with the authorities. It is not, however, guidance on how to apply the MAPS framework. This is instead found elsewhere, cf. the section on resources below.

2. Who is who in a MAPS assessment

Throughout this guide, reference will be made to various actors who are involved in MAPS assessments in different roles. It is vital that the roles and responsibilities of these actors are clear.

In this respect, it is useful to start by distinguishing between who is involved in the MAPS Initiative broadly speaking, and who is involved in individual assessments.

Regarding the MAPS Initiative, there is more information available on the [MAPS website](#). What needs to be understood in the context of this guide is that the MAPS Initiative does not belong to any single organization, but it is backed by a coalition of partners (the MAPS Network) and governed by a Steering Committee composed of countries and international organizations. The MAPS Secretariat is the entity created to run the day-to-day operations of the MAPS initiative and it is an independent entity, housed at the OECD.

For individual assessments, there are actors who are involved in *assessment operations* and there are actors who are involved in *quality assurance*.

Regarding the actors involved in **assessment operations**, the following distinctions are made:

- Government actors from the assessed country. These can be institutions from various levels of government, such as ministries, agencies and the like. In this guide, these are all referred to as *country authorities*.

- Actors from outside the assessed country. These can be multilateral development banks, bilateral development agencies, or international organizations. In this guide, these are all referred to as *international partners*.

Each individual MAPS assessment has a *lead institution*. The lead institution is responsible for running the assessment operations. The lead institution can be an international partner or a country authority. As you will see from this guide, several things are the responsibility of the lead institution, so it makes a crucial difference for country authorities whether they are the lead institution or not. On the other hand, there are also some things that country authorities need to do, regardless of whether they are the lead institution or not.

In addition to the actors mentioned just above, there are of course some actors who will be engaged in the assessment without being directly involved in its operations. These could be actors such as individual procuring entities, state-owned enterprises, or representatives from the private sector or civil society. In this guide, these are called *stakeholders*. Note that country authorities and international partners can be stakeholders too. A checklist of relevant stakeholders is available as part of the MAPS guidance on our [website](#).

Regarding the actors involved in **quality assurance** of individual assessments, these are the MAPS Secretariat and the Assessment's Technical Advisory Group (ATAG). These two actors do not conduct individual assessments, but only participate in the quality assurance process. As such, it is important to understand that:

- The MAPS Secretariat is the overall coordinator of the quality assurance process and provides guidance on this process and on the methodology in general. For every assessment, the concept note and the assessment report are submitted for quality assurance by the lead institution to the MAPS Secretariat.
- The ATAG is assembled for each individual assessment by the MAPS Secretariat, from a standing group of public procurement experts from partners to the MAPS Initiative.

3. Additional resources

In addition to this guide, the MAPS Secretariat offers on its [website](#) several resources that are useful for both country authorities and for international partners wishing to prime country authorities on undertaking a MAPS assessment. These are:

- [Templates and guidance](#) found on the MAPS website, concerning the application of the methodology.
- [The MAPS E-learning Programme](#), which consists in a series of modules each covering an essential aspect of MAPS. All modules are freely available and entirely self-paced.

Chapter I: Before a MAPS assessment

This chapter provides country authorities with guidance on several topics that are essential in the time leading up to a MAPS assessment.

It consists of several things that country authorities need to do to foster the best possible conditions for a successful assessment. It also deals with challenges often encountered when planning an assessment and tips for how to deal with them.

1. Understand MAPS and achieve buy-in

a. Ensure a good understanding of what it takes to do a MAPS assessment

1. There is a need to set the stage for a clear shared understanding by all stakeholders of the main elements of an individual MAPS assessment.

Box 1: The main elements of MAPS

- WHY:** The assessment's drivers and specific objectives to be achieved for the country and the expected outcomes.
- WHO:** The stakeholders that shall be involved in the assessment whether their role is to identify data sources, contribute to data collection, provide information and/or data, analyse findings, or participate in consultation and validation phases.
- HOW:** The roles of the main actors in the process, namely the assessment, operations/implementation (Assessment Steering Committee, assessors, and international partners) and the assessment quality assurance (ATAG and MAPS Secretariat).
- WHAT:** The tools used throughout the MAPS process including at the initiation phase, at the data collection and analysis phase, and at the reporting phase allowing a comprehensive and objective analysis of the procurement system's performance.
- WHEN:** The various stages of the assessment and related timeframes, and the validation process phases and timeline.

To achieve a clear and shared understanding the above, the key actors involved in an assessment should comprehend the methodology, the assessment process, and what they can expect from a MAPS assessment. Making this happen is the responsibility of the lead institution, whether this is a development partner or country authority, in collaboration with stakeholders. The MAPS Secretariat offers a comprehensive set of resources that can be used in this regard, mainly the guidance available on the MAPS website and the MAPS E-learning Programme.

2- There is a fine line between what MAPS is and what it is not. This should be made clear to all stakeholders. Whether driven by national governments or recommended by an international development partner prior to designing a support program to the country, the internal dialogue on MAPS with the political leadership needs to happen at early stages and before the assessment is initiated. Country authorities and concerned stakeholders must be aware that MAPS is not an audit or a scoring exercise. It is crucial that they understand that it is a tool to identify the gaps in the system, that it is a vehicle for an internal dialogue on policy issues pertaining to public procurement policy priorities, and linkage with other wider policy agendas such as PFM or public administration.

Tip

Avoiding defensive reactions:

To anticipate and avoid a defensive reaction against the identified gaps and recommendations of the assessment, country authorities need to understand that MAPS is the procurement reform best ally when planning to modernize their regulations and practices.

Box 2: What MAPS is, and what it is not	
<p>MAPS is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A nationally driven exercise where country authorities and international partners synchronize efforts • A reform tool that helps governments advance on procurement policy agendas • A baseline assessment that provides actionable recommendations and helps monitoring progress of policy initiatives against assessment criteria • An objective diagnostic of the current situation to help improving the country procurement system • A basis for the government to organize procurement policy priorities, renew commitment to policies and rally support for a clear policy agenda • A universal assessment tool for different country development and policy contexts 	<p>MAPS is not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A framework where international partners are forcing choices on governments • An evaluation report drafted by the MAPS Secretariat • A report for the shelf to tick the box of assessing the system • A criticism to the government and the procurement system in place • A pass or fail grade • A means to highlight only the strengths of the system • An audit • A systematic passport to access donor financing • A ready-made solution to the country's procurement underperformance and lack of development

b. Ensure the commitment and ownership of the government

1- Before engaging in a MAPS assessment, it is best to ensure commitment and ownership at the highest level of authority. While political commitment at the planning stage of an assessment is vital and a good starting point, it is important to remember that this is not a guarantee of long-term engagement. MAPS is a complex and lengthy exercise. It requires resources, time and efforts by the country's counterparts and sometimes national resources, as well as involvement of many stakeholders. Country authorities should therefore be primed on the methodology, the assessment process, and what they can in general expect from a MAPS assessment at the highest level of authority. For this purpose, the MAPS E-learning Programme, particularly modules 1-2 and 5-6 can be a highly useful supporting tool.

The absence of political support leads to difficulties especially when change in leadership at the institutional level happens during the assessment. Dealing with MAPS without the political support of the minister in charge for example may have negative repercussions in terms of delays in conducting the exercise.

Tip
Deciding to do a MAPS

Undertaking a MAPS assessment is a decision to be taken at a strategic level. Ideally it should be linked to a specific policy agenda.

Box 3: Leading v. owning the assessment

Regardless of whether country authorities are the lead institution or not, country ownership of the assessment is a must.

Country authorities that do not lead the assessment operationally still need to be involved in planning, in formulating objectives, agreeing on scope, engaging the stakeholders, and maintaining communication around the progress across concerned parties. Country authorities are also essential in ensuring data availability. And of course, country authorities are the main actors when it comes to translating assessment recommendation into action.

2- Involving a broad set of stakeholders to anchor the assessment in a policy agenda is key to success. Policy dialogue on the need for a MAPS assessment is normally considered the starting point of the process. Such a dialogue often evolves from discussions with a broad set of stakeholders on the need to improve public procurement systems. It is anchored in a broader public financial management (PFM) policy program or a more general public governance policy agenda. The dialogue within government and with international partners as well as non-governmental actors such as the private sector and civil society organizations. Such dialogue should emphasize the need for evidence-based approaches grounded in comparative analysis, highlighting strengths and weaknesses and recommendations on mitigation measures. It represents an occasion for the country leadership to understand the realities of its public procurement system and how it influences the achievement of objectives in the country's overall policy agenda.

The country authorities should make sure to anchor MAPS in this agenda in the medium and long terms. It is also necessary to mobilize an extensive network of partners (national and international) to ensure the support needed, and to supplement the policy dialogue with independent expertise, comparative analysis of other countries efforts, and lessons learned globally.

In some contexts, at early stages of the MAPS assessment (following concept note approval and launch workshop), a change in government may derive in MAPS being de-prioritized or even cancelled. Continuous dialogue is to be maintained throughout the assessment to protect the progress from potential changes in government leadership priorities. Continuous dialogue throughout the MAPS process, as well as regular briefings to decision makers are instrumental in maintaining interest and commitment even in contexts where there are high probabilities for change in leadership that may affect the process.

RISKS

Risks of a non-inclusive process

- Weak ownership.
- Non-compliance with MAPS methodology, affecting the quality of the assessment.
- Nurturing in-country wide and long-lasting resistance, even if the country has already engaged in procurement reform or has previously assessed the procurement system using one of the international partners' tools.
- Ignoring a stakeholder group interest/point of view, especially in countries with complex procurement systems.
- Perception that MAPS is as an imposed agenda by international organizations or a biased decision by the government to "satisfy a certain political agenda" of entities that have "monopolies over the procurement system".
- Reliability of information and analysis captured in the indicator's matrix.

To mitigate the above risks, it is not sufficient to provide the assessment team or development partner(s) with a list of stakeholders and their contact information. Dialogue and exchange with stakeholders should take place regularly so to keep them abreast of the progress of MAPS and ensure continuous access to reliable and unbiased information that appropriately feeds in the indicators' matrix and enriches the gap analysis.

c. Determine when to start and when to end

1- The timing of the assessment influences MAPS process and results. Choosing an appropriate time of the year for launching MAPS is central. If, for example the assessment coincides with the budget preparation calendar, or if it overlaps with other in-country development partner priorities, projects or assessments, it may be difficult to organize meetings with senior officers and collect needed data properly. The assessment needs to be timed when key officials are not overburdened with competing priorities and are available to provide the needed input.

The political momentum is also an ingredient of success. When the momentum for structural reforms is prevalent, a MAPS could inform the national priorities and guide the reform process towards tangible policy outcomes. In case the country has a recently adopted procurement legislation, caution should be exercised to ensure that the evaluation of all MAPS pillars is consistent. Particularly, procurements that will be analysed in Indicator 9 of the core methodology need to be consistent with the legal and institutional framework that is assessed through pillars I and II.

2- MAPS is a time-consuming exercise and needs effective planning. Based on the experiences in both developing or developed country contexts, it is necessary that the assessment's time planning is comprehensive, detailed, and realistic. Setting the correct timeline requires considering the various interventions throughout the assessment, whether compulsory ones to abide by the MAPS methodology, or country-specific to cater for a specific situation or stakeholders' concerns. While a core MAPS assessment may be done in a period between 6 and 12 months, lessons learnt from the cases reviewed for this guide show that most assessments took longer than that. Around 12 to 18 months may seem realistic in many cases to complete the assessment, including collecting information, drafting findings and recommendations, addressing comments from the MAPS Secretariat and the ATAG. Stakeholders involved also need to bear in mind unforeseen circumstances such as changes in the leadership of key institutions, difficulties to collect data, etc. In addition, some assessments have had to complete several rounds of revisions and comments to make them meet all the requirements to receive the MAPS Seal of Approval, in terms of compliance with the methodology and quality. Following the methodology as it is established and guaranteeing a high level of quality from the start of the process are crucial elements to avoid delays during the quality assurance process.

Tip
Get your timeline right
 Schedule every action of the assessment in the timeline, sequentially.

Plan your timeline without buffers. If you are uncertain about how long time a step will take, this is an important risk factor that should be discussed in the concept note.

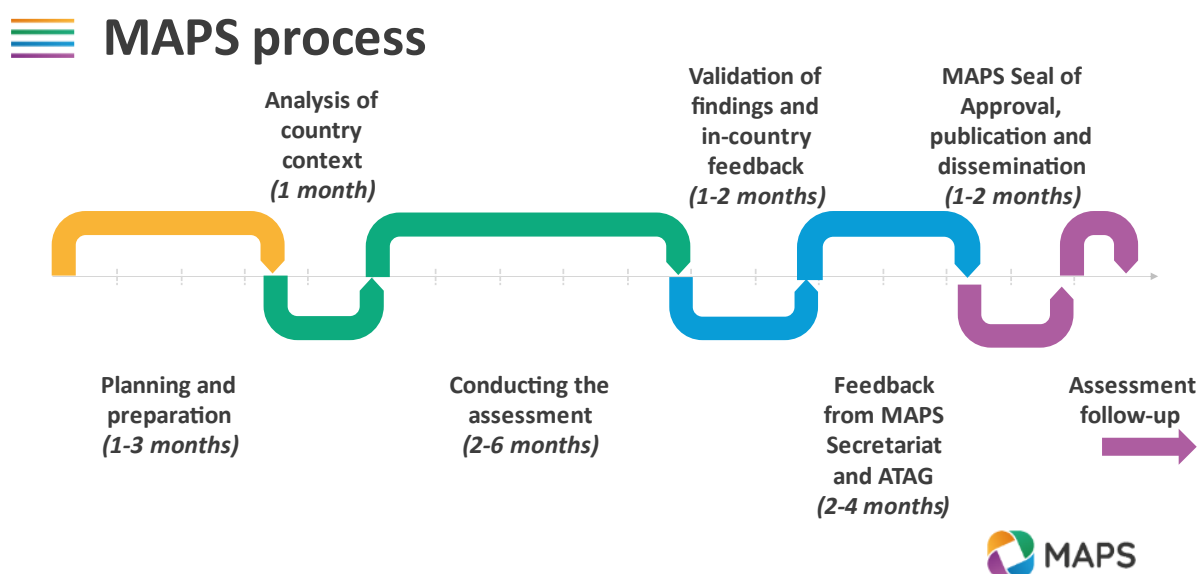
This time requirement should be discussed with the international partner at the initiation phase, so that all in-country challenges are revealed and pondered when finalizing the timeline. A realistic timeframe should allow for a more accurate budget estimation. Too lengthy timeframes could put at risk the timely issuance of recommendations and thus slow up the reform momentum.

Box 4: What does a timetable need to include?

- Allow appropriate time for the country's competent authority to discuss the assessment's objectives and requirements with all stakeholders.
- Train all concerned stakeholders on the methodology implementation
- Take into consideration that in some contexts, working in two languages is required especially when collecting input to fill the indicator matrix and analysing data to feed in the report.
- Allow appropriate time for the validation and review stages as multiple review, comments, discussions with multiple players at the national and international levels need to be planned.
- Anticipate the time required for final approvals as several layers of reviews by international partners and ATAG are needed. Sometimes the review is undertaken by other experts selected by the DPs
- Provide time to fill information gaps after initial comments are received from the reviewers.
- Identify the point in time when the assessment initial findings are communicated to the country leadership to equip decision makers with the appropriate evidence as the political time to act on procurement reform may not wait until the final stages of assessment review.
- Accommodate unforeseeable complications/events that may occur (political crisis, elections, change in institutional leadership, economic downturn, security issues, health emergencies, etc.).

3- MAPS is a staged assessment. Authorities need to have clear appreciation of the time frame involved and the effort necessary at each stage so that they can allocate the required human and financial resources accordingly. The timeline should be communicated to all concerned stakeholders.

The following is a diagram of the MAPS process, along with the usual duration of each stage. However, difficulties mentioned above may extend the duration particularly of the planning and preparation; conducting the assessment; and feedback from the MAPS Secretariat and ATAG. Particularly regarding the latter, if more than two rounds of comments are required, and if the issues encountered are important, the time to restructure and address all comments may exceed the 4 months indicated below.



Box 5: Contingency plans

Contingency plans need to be developed especially in the event of:

- Disruptions caused by nationwide events that affect the normal proceeding of activities and the participation of stakeholders such as elections. In this case, it may be beneficial to consider "refresher" training / awareness session(s) so that the newly elected authorities renew their commitment and ownership of the process.
- Transformative events that may threaten the peaceful/normal organization of workshops, meetings, field work, cause delays and alter the working conditions and priorities for actors involved in this exercise (strikes, demonstrations, protests, pandemic, etc). In this case, the use of on-line and remote work should replace regular communication for input collection, interviews, validation of findings and report completion

2. Prepare to start the assessment

a. Appoint a national coordinator of the assessment

1- Even if they are not leading the assessments, country authorities should officially appoint a national coordinator that acts at the main owner of the assessment. When designating the national coordinator, it is advisable that country authorities consider the coordinator's positioning within the country's public procurement system, and their capacity to deliver on the requirements of MAPS. The national coordinator plays an instrumental role in making sure that the assessment is anchored in the country's policy agenda, and that it is not perceived as a stand-alone evaluation or as an additional burden on the day-to-day tasks across public administration.

2- The absence of a national coordinator puts at risk the ownership of the assessment and the overall coordination by national authorities. In some contexts where capacity is lacking, the consultants involved may need to play the role of coordinators and liaise directly with stakeholders including non-governmental entities (private sector and civil society). It is advisable that this situation be avoided as it weakens the country ownership of MAPS process and results.

Box 6: What should a National Coordinator do?

The National Coordinator should:

- represent the main country authority in the assessment,
- be the first point of contact within the government
- have the responsibility to liaise with all concerned stakeholders within government and outside,
- facilitate their participation to assessment meetings, workshops, feedback forms.
- facilitate fact-finding missions and data access for the assessment team and follow-up on data gaps and additional documents as required.
- provide logistical support such as hosting meetings, arranging internal travel and accommodations, etc.

3- It is crucial that the national coordinator receive adequate and substantive training on MAPS methodology, objectives, process, and requirements. The MAPS E-learning Programme is the ideal tool for this, and the national coordinator should complete at least the MAPS Fundamentals course.

4- Lessons learnt from international experience show that insufficient training of the national coordinator presents high risk to its implementation. The most significant risk is that the assessment will be poorly anchored in the given country in terms of policy agenda and stakeholders, leading to the assessment being of little use in the country.

5- It is essential that the national coordinator has sufficient resources at their disposal to carry out their function. Usually, this means that the national coordinator should be supported by a team of officials from the country authorities who can act as counterparts to the assessment team.

b. Use the concept note as an opportunity for getting all involved actors aligned

1- The concept note is the reference document that spells out the objectives, scope, governance, timeframe, and budget of the assessment. Drafting the concept note is the responsibility of the lead institution. However, it is essential that country authorities are closely involved in the drafting, even if they are not the lead institution, to ensure ownership of the assessment and to avoid any misunderstandings regarding objectives, scope, and expectations.

The MAPS Secretariat provides a template that describes the main sections of the concept note, and whose use is mandatory. Because the concept note is the outcome of a proper planning process, it is crucial that it is completed before the assessment. This includes the quality assurance process where the concept note is reviewed by the MAPS Secretariat and the ATAG.

Many of the challenges encountered in the assessment phase of a MAPS project is often due to poor planning. The table below lists some possible problems in concepts notes that would lead to subsequent issues in the assessment itself:

RISKS	
Possible problems arising at the concept note stage	
Problem	Consequence
Insufficient engagement from country authorities. The concept note is drafted exclusively by a development partner or a single country authority without any commitment from key country stakeholders.	The whole assessment will lack country ownership, and there is a high risk of resistance to the project from stakeholders.
Objectives are not clearly thought through. Generic, and abstract objectives without a proper connection to the country are listed.	The purpose of the assessment will be unclear, and it will be difficult to convince stakeholders to commit the necessary resources.
Timeline is unrealistic, often failing to consider data collection and quality assurance.	Expectations for when the assessment will be published will not be met, resulting in disillusionment.
Stakeholders are not properly mapped, often lacking non-government stakeholders.	Input necessary for the assessment will not be received or will be delayed.
Data sources are not identified, and considerations on quantitative data are lacking. It is assumed that data will be made available immediately.	The whole assessment is delayed because data is not available at the time where it is needed.
Assessment governance is unclear, and as a result, operational roles in the assessment process are not certain.	Crucial steps may be delayed or missed, putting the whole assessment in jeopardy.
The assessment starts before the approval of the concept note by the MAPS Secretariat and the ATAG.	Reprocessing due to changes requested by the MAPS Secretariat and the ATAG, with the subsequent impact on timeline, costs, and effort to complete the assessment. Risk of not obtaining the MAPS Seal of Approval because of not following the MAPS process.

2- Good practices for the concept note

- **The national coordinator is responsible for the country authorities' input to the concept note.** If the assessment is led by country authorities, the national coordinator should be responsible for writing the concept note.
- **Embed the assessment in the country context.** While a comprehensive country context analysis is required for the assessment report itself, what is needed at the concept note stage is a brief layout of the environment that the assessment will be dealing with. The general structure of the public procurement system and its links with the broader public financial management system is the most important information.
- **Define the objectives and background clearly.** The concept note should explicitly cite the reasons why a MAPS assessment is relevant for the specific country at hand. For this, it is important to connect the assessment to previous assessments as well as previous and current policy agendas in the country. Likewise, the objectives must be unambiguously country-specific, and should be explicitly tied to government policy goals.
- **Define the scope as specifically as possible.** To ensure that the assessment has support from all key stakeholders, it's important that the scope is clear and specific. This includes how different levels of government as well as SOEs are covered, as well as whether there are topics that are of particular interest and why.
- **Identify data sources as precisely as possible.** The [guidance and templates on the MAPS website](#) includes checklists of various generic sources of data (both qualitative and quantitative). The sources specific to the assessed country needs to be identified in the concept note, however. This is especially important for data that's not immediately publicly available, such as data from PFM and e-Procurement systems, data from institution records, and the procurement files needed for the sampling. System- and data-owners should be identified and the strategy for obtaining data should be laid out.

3- Once completed, the concept note serves as a basis for formally obtaining the support of relevant stakeholders and for confirming sources of funding. Country authorities should review and agree to the concept note. This can be done by organizing a workshop during which concerned stakeholders review and validate the concept note. Additionally, such a workshop offers the opportunity to:

- Explain the rationale behind the assessment and its importance for the country's policy agenda, the content of the concept note, and the technical aspects related to MAPS methodology.
- Level the field of understanding and minimize resistance among senior officials / heads of institutions.
- Involve the stakeholders in reviewing the concept note and give them the floor to raise their concerns or announce their support.

It is crucial to remember that the concept note is the founding document of a MAPS assessment and that the assessment itself should not start before the concept note has been approved by the MAPS Secretariat and the ATAG.

Chapter II: During a MAPS assessment

This chapter provides country authorities with guidance on several topics that are essential when the concept note for the assessment has been approved and the assessment proper has started.

It consists of what country authorities need to do to ensure that the assessment progresses according to plan and delivers satisfactory results. It also deals with challenges often encountered when an assessment is ongoing and tips for how to deal with them.

1. Support the assessment

1- Country authorities need to have a clear understanding of the data needed in a MAPS assessment and their role in making it available. The data (refer to box for types of data) must be collected and analysed according to MAPS methodology and templates. Country authorities need to dedicate human, technical, and financial resources for this task, or seek assistance for it.

Box 7: Data to collect for the MAPS assessment

MAPS assessments require that data pertaining to various aspects of the procurement functions and related institutions are analysed. There are two main types of data in a MAPS assessment:

- Collected data, which already exists in a more or less refined form. This includes:
 - Documents, such as laws, regulations, policy papers, strategies, whitepapers, assessments, guides, toolkits, audits etc.
 - Statistics, including international statistics, national statistics, and intragovernmental statistics, such as operational statistics from various government systems (e.g. the e-procurement systems, PFM systems, HRM systems etc.)
- Produced data, which is unlikely to already exist, but which is nonetheless crucial, especially when assessing the practical reality of the procurement system as opposed to the black-and-white reality described in the legal and regulatory framework. This includes data from:
 - Interviews with stakeholders (public buyers, other officials, market representatives, civil society organizations etc.).
 - Surveys conducted on representatives of stakeholders (public buyers, other officials, market representatives, civil society organizations etc.).
 - Samples of procurement cases (i.e. files relating to specific purchases, from the planning stage through contracting to contract management).

In the case of collected data, data should be made available at central and local levels and within the assessment timeframes. While in some cases centralized digital systems allow easy access, collecting and/or accessing data including the identification of key entry points may present major challenges in other contexts.

In the case of produced data, necessary arrangements need to be made to set up meetings, gather relevant files etc.

While the generation of both types of data is the responsibility of the lead institution, country authorities play a vital role in ensuring access and availability.

2- Collecting and analysing data is at the core of the assessment success. It is considered one of the most challenging parts. Based on lessons learnt from various MAPS assessments, such challenges include:

- Difficulty in accessing contract files, due to the lack of precise archiving rules, laxity when compiling and updating files (documents are kept in a non-systematic way – scattered between the different services) which cause waste of time and prevent the assessment team from documenting and analysing actual public procurement methods and outcomes. As a result, values for some of the quantitative indicators required by the methodology may not be calculated.
- Difficulties in accessing financial information pertaining to procurement operations (from planning to payment).
- Scattered regulations (state-owned enterprises, local authorities, etc.) not readily accessible.
- Absence of a full-fledged electronic procurement system, and open procurement data, which leads to cumbersome manual data collection and in a paper format.
- Weak understanding of what the indicators mean, especially quantitative ones, and what type of information and data corresponds to which indicator.
- Resistance from public authorities to disclosing procurement files and data, often related to misunderstanding of the assessment's objectives
- Fear of public authorities / officials from attributing the collected information to a specific department, person, or contract, which increases resistance.
- Multiplicity of stakeholders across one sector (like business sector) leading to various sources and approaches in dealing with public procurement.
- Lack of streamlined templates to collect data related to public contracts, to use for analysis by the assessment team
- Response rate to online surveys is generally low in case not preceded by proper awareness on the assessment.
- Limited funding for the complete, systematic identification, gathering, and analysis of data.

While it is the responsibility of the assessment team to deal with these challenges, it is important that country authorities are aware of them. This allows them to support the assessment team in the best way possible.

3- It is important that the national coordinator have a clear understanding of the limitations and impediments to data collection. These shall be discussed at the concept note stage. Appropriate time and resources need to be allocated to ensure data collection is properly done. The national coordinator needs to take into consideration:

- The administrative culture of the country pertaining to archiving/data storage standards and to access to data and related rules and regulations
- The availability of data across the public sector, access, quality, reliability, etc.
- The data sources, governmental or non-governmental, providing both qualitative and quantitative data and best ways to solicit them.
- The actual procurement cases to analyse: how to design the sample in a way to be representative i.e. covering high value procurement, sensitive procurement, covering central

and local government, covering line ministries, independent public services, state owned enterprises, representing various sectors, covering a considerable period.

- The choice of methods/tools to be used for data collection (assessment workshops, focus groups, one-to-one interviews, online surveys, etc.).
- The timeframe dedicated for data collection, processing and analysis. It should correspond with the assessment requirements and the availability of stakeholders

Again, while the data collection itself is the responsibility of the assessment team, the national coordinator's support can make the crucial difference in ensuring a successful process.

4- Planning the field work shall be done in collaboration with the assessment team. The main objective of the field work is to collect and analyse authentic data and prepare preliminary findings for each assessment criteria and indicator while at the same time preparing the ground for reform dialogue. The field work helps to identify and fill gaps in the information required to complete the draft report, including recommended tables and narrative content. At the conclusion of the field work, and prior to the validation phase, the assessment team and the national coordinator may wish to organize a presentation to the senior government officials on the findings of the field work. This presentation provides an opportunity to highlight data gaps and to develop a timeline to obtain additional needed information. Experience indicates that it often takes considerably longer to obtain such additional information if a request is submitted after the conclusion of field work, necessitates tedious follow-ups, and often leads to delaying the finalization of the report.

2. Assist the validation process

1- To ensure that the assessment process is valid and credible, a validation exercise involving representatives of key stakeholders shall be conducted. This may take the form of a workshop or a series of workshops, depending on the size of the country and number of stakeholders, where the report findings and results are discussed.

This validation workshop plays an important role in laying the ground for an inclusive dialogue on reform priorities and in developing a shared strategy for addressing key weaknesses in the system.

RISKS

Not conducting the MAPS evaluation validation workshop leads to

- Missing out on completing/supplementing the preliminary findings with relevant information/data.
- Missing the opportunity to clarify certain formulation of preliminary findings, which might lead to confusion.
- Biased findings not reflecting in a balanced way the views of all actors (usually business community and non-governmental actors).
- The preliminary findings may be contradictory as some sub-indicators in the matrix may be interrelated.
- The assessors may have captured from the fact-findings missions and from the interviews qualitative and quantitative information that are outdated or not exact, which affect the analysis and statements at the indicator level.
- The analysis of country context might not be comprehensive.
- The type of documents reviewed at the initiation phase may need to be complemented.
- The assessment not receiving the MAPS Seal of Approval

2- In collaboration with the assessment team, the national coordinator invites governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to take part in the validation process.

Thematic (by pillar) workshops, or workshops organized for various stakeholders' categories are recommended. Even when the face-to-face meetings are not possible due to unforeseen circumstances (security situation, health conditions, etc.), the country competent authority may ask for the assistance of partner organizations(s) to cater for video conferences / virtual meetings to facilitate the conduction of the validation exercise.

Tips
Validation workshops

- ✓ Review the preliminary findings, request adjustments if any, and approve them.
- ✓ Endorse the gap analysis and the red flags identified across the four pillars.
- ✓ Review the proposed recommendations at the indicator level and adjust if need be.

Chapter III: After a MAPS assessment

This chapter provides country authorities with guidance on several topics that are essential when the assessment report has received the MAPS Seal of Approval and has been published.

It consists of what country authorities need to do to ensure that the assessment is leveraged for the good of the country procurement system. It also deals with challenges often encountered when an assessment is concluded and tips for how to deal with them.

1. Communicate about the assessment and build consensus

1- While communication about MAPS assessment is key starting from the inception phase to the results phase, it becomes indispensable once the assessment is published. Such a step is crucial to consolidate ownership of the assessment results, the government's commitment to implement its recommendations, and for advancing reforms of the public procurement system as advised by the assessment.

RISKS

Absence of proper communication is a drawback and contributes to:

- Weakening the reform momentum.
- Negatively affecting the inclusiveness and transparency of the process.
- Questioning trust in government and its commitment to modernize/reform the procurement system.

2- Dissemination of the assessment report is a shared national responsibility. Once approved, national authorities should publicise the report, the data, the analysis, and the recommendations, through various media and social media channels. They should not stop at the publishing stage, and instead take the lead in widely disseminating its findings, and in convening policy fora around key areas where the gaps are substantives and risks are high. This is an essential step especially that MAPS leads to the conceptualizing of a national reform action plan / strategy. Opening the door to discussions and roundtables on the findings is a perfect opportunity to launch and keep the momentum with all concerned stakeholders.

3- Following certification by the MAPS Secretariat, the report should be shared with the political leadership and key decision-makers to ensure political buy-in of next steps. Dissemination efforts could also include one-to-one meetings with policy makers, ministers, and heads of international partners organizations active in the country. In case a national working group is already set to prepare the reform strategic plan, considering a meeting with the group members accelerates the process and helps synchronize the efforts.

2. Improve the procurement system based on MAPS findings and recommendations

a. Leverage on the MAPS assessment to agree on reform outcomes

1- A MAPS assessment can inform policy choices and serve as the foundation for a structured dialogue among high-level officials in government to set the country priorities. Relevant high-level officials must be made aware of the MAPS report recommendations and what they entail in terms of

political commitment and resources both in the short, medium, and long term. If a strategic action plan has already been drawn up in the assessment report, the immediate post-assessment dialogue should focus on operationalizing the plan in specific policy initiatives and assigning the responsibility for implementation to appropriate authorities. If a strategic action plan has not been fully drawn up in the assessment report, the immediate post assessment dialogue should focus on translating the consolidated recommendations into such a plan. The guidelines found in the MAPS framework and the MAPS E-learning Programme will be useful in this respect. Regardless of the situation, someone should be designated as the lead on coordinating post-assessment efforts at the national level and reporting on progress. It will usually be advisable that this is the national coordinator, and as such it is recommended that their role and position is re-affirmed and extended after the assessment is concluded.

Box 8: MAPS assessment results are crucial for the reforms

A MAPS report is not “yet another assessment”. It serves as an improvement instigator based on evidence and benchmarks shared by country authorities and international partners. The following examples show how countries capitalized on the assessment to advance the reform agenda:

- Anguilla has amended its public procurement law in 2016 and 2021 and that was due to MAPS assessment. It has also worked on enhancing contract and financial management in public procurement.
- In the DRC, the priority was ensuring the long-term engagement on the political level to undertake actions as recommended in MAPS report. Another area of high importance for the government was to install a reliable electronic procurement system for the collection of standardized data.
- In Lebanon, MAPS exercise led to the drafting of the first public procurement law in the country, considering all recommendations of the assessment. It also laid the ground to mobilizing donors support for the development of a full-fledged reform strategy.
- For Mauritius, MAPS was the kick-start of the procurement reform process. Before completing the assessment, MAPS highlighted certain areas for reform.
- In Mauritania, MAPS was critical in terms of planning the next procurement reforms although ATAG hasn't yet approved their report. However, the country has already started revising its procurement law and the institutional mapping (e.g., the entities that regulate the procurement system).
- In Moldova, the country has partially secured needed resources to implement the MAPS recommendations (human resources and external technical assistance). Maintaining the dialogue with international partners is thus important to mobilize resources, while keeping them informed of actions undertaken as well as challenges to implement the assessment's recommendations.

b. Rally adequate support from international partners

1- Continued dialogue and communication with international partners is key to keep them abreast of developments, shortcomings, difficulties, and the need for technical assistance or direct support.

A MAPS assessment can be a catalyser for the international partners active in the country. It rallies them towards a more structured engagement in support of procurement reforms. International

partners who were directly involved in supporting the MAPS assessment, and/or previous assessments prior to MAPS, are usually those that are most likely to support implementation of recommendation. This is something that underlines the importance of engaging potential partners already when planning the assessment, even if the assessment is going to be led and conducted by the country itself.

c. Monitor the progress closely

1- A MAPS assessment is an excellent baseline for countries to monitor improvement in their procurement systems. Each MAPS assessment captures the particularities of the assessed system and will as such allow country authorities to keep an overview of the development of a public procurement system, in a way that is objective, transparent and built through the interaction with relevant stakeholders. After the completion of a MAPS assessment, country authorities may use individual sub-indicators related to areas identified as particular priorities in the strategic action plan to gauge progress over time without the need of carrying out a full new assessment. It is usually not advised to do another full MAPS assessment until initiatives have had time to mature or there has been substantial changes to the country's procurement system. Over the medium to long term, MAPS may be reapplied to gain a full understanding of the changes and the impact of reforms.

2- When looking progress after a MAPS assessment, it is important to mind the distinction between monitoring implementation and measuring its impact. Both dimensions should be part of following up on an assessment. However, while monitoring implementation begins as soon as the assessment is concluded, measuring impact will often be something for the long term. Considerations as to the desired impact and how it can be measured should be a part of the strategic action planning.

d. Share your success and learn from others

1- The country authority in charge of coordinating post-assessment initiatives should stay updated with latest developments in the global public procurement community and transfer knowledge and international good practices to national initiatives. One way of doing that is to engage with the stakeholders, national as well as international, that were engaged in the MAPS assessment. Sharing success stories and challenges of reform implementation is instrumental and may be done through the MAPS Network where the MAPS Secretariat serves as the point-of-entry. Because the MAPS Secretariat is also a focal point for the public procurement community at large, keeping up to date with news from the Secretariat is recommended.