



LEVEL OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION OF ANNUAL PROCUREMENT PLANS ON PUBLIC ENTITIES IN TANZANIA: A CASE OF TANROAD IN IRINGA REGION

¹ *Immaculata Makene*, ² *Dr. Yasinta Kassimba*, ³ *Dr. Bahati Golyama*

Department of Business Studies, University of Iringa, Tanzania

Email 1: immaculatemakene@gmail.com

Email 2: kassimbayasinta@gmail.com

Email 3: tibagolyama@gmail.com

ABSTRACT :

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of stakeholder involvement in the implementation of annual procurement plans (APP) in public entities, with a focus on TANROADS in the Iringa Region. The study specifically aimed to examine the extent and forms of stakeholder participation in APP implementation. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, employing a cross-sectional research design. Data collection involved the use of structured questionnaires administered to 75 respondents and in-depth interviews with five key informants, from a population of 100 employees. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS Version 20, applying descriptive statistics to summarize the data and multiple linear regression to establish relationships between variables. The findings revealed that aspects of stakeholder involvement such as inclusion of stakeholder feedback, frequency of stakeholder meetings and participation in decision-making positively influenced the implementation of annual procurement plans. The study concluded that active stakeholder involvement is a critical driver for the successful implementation of APPs in public entities. Strengthening stakeholder participation improves compliance with procurement schedules and budgets while enhancing accountability and transparency in the procurement process. Based on these conclusions, the researcher recommended that TANROADS institutionalize regular stakeholder engagement mechanisms, promote inclusive decision-making processes and develop frameworks to ensure effective stakeholder participation at all stages of procurement planning and implementation. For policymakers, the study advised establishing standardized guidelines for stakeholder engagement across public entities to promote consistency, accountability and transparency. Further research was suggested to compare stakeholder involvement in procurement implementation across different regions and sectors.

Keywords: Annual Procurement Plans (APP), Stakeholder Involvement, Procurement Implementation

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Annual Procurement Plans (APPs) are important in public organizations because they guide the purchase of goods, services and works within a set budget and time. Their main purpose is to make sure that public money is spent properly and that services are delivered to citizens. For this to happen, many stakeholders must be part of the process. These include government officers, suppliers, contractors and even local communities. When stakeholders are not involved, the plans may fail to meet the real needs of the people (Karimi, 2022; Shakya, 2024).

In many countries, research shows that procurement works best when stakeholders are fully included. For example, when suppliers and users are part of the planning stage, there is better communication, fewer mistakes and less corruption (Metcalf, 2016). On the other hand, leaving out key players often leads to delays, poor allocation of resources and waste of funds (Achilles, 2023). This shows that procurement is not only about rules but also about how people and groups work together to reach common goals (World Bank, 2021).

Across Africa, governments have tried to improve procurement by involving different groups in decision-making. Contractors, suppliers, oversight agencies and civil society organizations are often invited to share their views before plans are approved. This helps to increase fairness and competition while making sure that projects are useful to the public (UNDP, 2021). However, when this involvement is weak, challenges like disputes, corruption and project delays remain common (EBRD, 2022).

In Tanzania, the government has passed several laws and policies to improve procurement. The Public Procurement Act of 2011, which was later revised in 2016, was created to guide the planning and use of public funds. Institutions are also required to publish their procurement plans to promote transparency

(Odari, 2020; PPRA, 2019). Even with these reforms, many problems remain. Studies show that lack of proper stakeholder engagement continues to affect the smooth running of procurement activities (Msuya & Mbwambo, 2022).

TANROADS, which manages road construction and maintenance, is one of the largest public entities in Tanzania that depends heavily on annual procurement plans. Roads require the input of engineers, suppliers, contractors, government officers and local communities. But reports from the Controller and Auditor General (2022) show that many TANROADS projects face delays, cost overruns and incomplete work. These challenges are often linked to weak involvement of stakeholders in planning and monitoring (Komba, 2022). Stronger participation could help TANROADS finish projects on time and use resources more wisely.

This study therefore focuses on the level of stakeholder involvement in the implementation of annual procurement plans, using TANROADS in the Iringa Region as a case. It looks at how inclusion of feedback, frequency of meetings and participation in decision-making affect procurement results. The findings are expected to guide public entities in Tanzania on how to improve accountability, transparency and service delivery through stronger stakeholder engagement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Tanzania, good procurement planning is very important for finishing projects on time, saving costs and making sure public money is used well (Mtweve, 2022). Institutions such as the Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS) depend on annual procurement plans (APPs) to guide road construction and maintenance. The government has created legal frameworks, such as the Public Procurement Act of 2011 (revised in 2016), to support this process and improve accountability (URT, 2016).

Despite these efforts, many public entities still face challenges in implementing APPs. Reports from the Controller and Auditor General (CAG, 2023) show that more than 40% of public infrastructure projects in Tanzania face delays and cost overruns. In Iringa Region, several TANROADS road projects have been delayed for more than a year and gone over budget, leading to poor service delivery and public complaints (CAG, 2024). These failures raise questions about the role of stakeholders in procurement planning and implementation.

Previous research in other regions has highlighted that involving stakeholders such as contractors, suppliers, oversight agencies and communities improves decision-making, budget control and reduces project delays (Komba & Mtweve, 2022). However, most of these studies were carried out in major cities like Dodoma and Dar es Salaam, while smaller regions such as Iringa remain less studied. Limited evidence suggests that weak participation of stakeholders may contribute to delays, cost overruns and lack of accountability in TANROADS projects, but the extent of this problem is still unclear (Komba, 2022).

Therefore, this study focuses on examining the level of stakeholder involvement in the implementation of annual procurement plans in public entities, with a special focus on TANROADS in the Iringa Region. The study seeks to find out how feedback collection, regular meetings and inclusive decision-making by stakeholders influence procurement performance. The results are expected to help improve accountability, efficiency and transparency in procurement practices in Tanzania.

Theoretical and Empirical Reviews

This study is guided by the Institutional Theory, which explains how organizations are shaped by rules, regulations and expectations from stakeholders (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2014). The theory suggests that public institutions like TANROADS must comply with procurement laws, cultural norms and stakeholder demands to gain legitimacy. It is useful for this study because it shows how stakeholder involvement through feedback, participation and monitoring affects the implementation of annual procurement plans.

Empirical studies also show that stakeholder involvement improves procurement performance. For example, Freeman et al. (2021) found in the United States that engaging stakeholders reduces conflicts and increases compliance. In Australia, Smith and Jones (2022) showed that feedback from stakeholders improves accountability, while Ajayi and Olaniyi (2022) in Nigeria confirmed that training stakeholders helps reduce inefficiencies. Similar findings were reported in Kenya (Mwangi & Otieno, 2022) and Uganda (Achieng & Kamau, 2023), where regular communication with stakeholders led to better transparency and fewer delays.

In Tanzania, studies highlight both strengths and weaknesses of stakeholder engagement. Mwakalinga and Mushi (2023) found that involving stakeholders in the planning phase reduces delays and improves accountability. However, Ng'wanakilala and Magesa (2021) reported that in many councils, stakeholder input is rarely considered in decisions, while Kweka (2022) noted that most stakeholders are only involved at later stages, limiting their influence. Joseph and Mhando (2023) further observed that bureaucracy and lack of training often weaken meaningful participation. These gaps show why it is important to study the level of stakeholder involvement in TANROADS, especially in Iringa Region.

Methodology

This study was carried out in the Iringa Region, focusing on the Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS). The agency was chosen because of its central role in planning and executing road projects and its frequent involvement of multiple stakeholders in procurement processes. The study adopted a cross-sectional design, which allowed data to be collected at a single point in time to capture the current situation of annual procurement plan implementation.

The target population was 100 TANROADS employees in Iringa. From this, 75 respondents were selected through simple random sampling and given structured questionnaires for the quantitative part of the study. For the qualitative part, five key informants were purposively selected based on their strategic roles and experience in procurement. This mixed-method approach ensured that both numerical data and deeper insights were captured.

Data were collected using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns. Ethical standards were strictly followed by obtaining informed consent, protecting confidentiality and ensuring participants' right to withdraw at any stage.

Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the findings of the study aimed at assessing level of stakeholders involvement in the implementation of annual procurement plans (APP) in public entities, with a focus on TANROADS in the Iringa Region. The discussion integrates these findings with existing literature to highlight consistencies, variations and implications for public procurement practices.

Level of Stakeholder Involvement on the Implementation of Annual Procurement Plans

The objective of this study was to determine the level of stakeholder involvement in the implementation of annual procurement plans at TANROADS in the Iringa Region.

Table 1: Level of Stakeholder Involvement on the Implementation of Annual Procurement Plans

Variable	Response	Frequency (n=75)	Percent (%)	Mode
Level of consultation with stakeholders	Very Low	2	2.7	3.00
	Low	2	2.7	
	Moderate	49	65.3	
	High	15	20.0	
	Very High	7	9.3	
Inclusion of stakeholder feedback	Yes	55	73.3	1.00
	No	20	26.7	
	None	2	2.7	
Frequency of stakeholder meetings	1-2	1	1.3	3.00
	3-4	29	38.7	
	5-6	29	38.7	4.00
	More than 6	14	18.7	

Source Field data (2025)

The findings in Table 1 indicate that the overall level of stakeholder involvement in the implementation of annual procurement plans at TANROADS was generally moderate to high. A majority of respondents reported that stakeholders were consulted and engaged in different stages of procurement planning, although the intensity and consistency of this involvement varied.

Level of Consultation with Stakeholders

Results in Table 1 present the respondents' views on stakeholder consultation during procurement planning at TANROADS. In terms of frequency, most respondents, 49 (65.3%), rated the level of consultation as moderate, which was also reflected in the mode value of 3.00. This was followed by 15 respondents (20.0%) who rated it as high and 7 respondents (9.3%) who rated it as very high. The lowest responses were from those who rated consultation as very low and low, each accounting for 2 respondents (2.7%). Regarding whether stakeholder feedback inputs had been considered in procurement planning, 55 respondents (73.3%) said yes, while 20 respondents (26.7%) said no, giving a mode of 1.00. For the number of engagement meetings held in the last 12 months, the highest frequency was for both 3–4 meetings and 5–6 meetings, each with 29 respondents (38.7%), followed by 14 respondents (18.7%) reporting more than six meetings. Very few respondents indicated no meetings (2 respondents, 2.7%) or only 1–2 meetings (1 respondent, 1.3%). These results indicate that stakeholder consultation during procurement planning at TANROADS is generally at a moderate level, with a significant portion of staff acknowledging that feedback is incorporated into planning processes. The predominance of responses in the moderate category shows that while consultation exists, it is not yet optimal or at the highest level of engagement. The relatively high number of respondents reporting 3–6 meetings annually suggests a consistent, though not necessarily intensive, effort to engage stakeholders. The majority's agreement that feedback is considered demonstrates that stakeholders' voices are recognized in decision-making. However, the small percentage of respondents reporting low or very low consultation points to the presence of gaps that limit full participation. The data further indicate that while some departments may have regular structured engagement, others have minimal interaction. Overall, the statistics reflect a structured but somewhat restrained consultation process within the organization.

The researcher conducted interviews with respondents to gain deeper insights into these findings. One manager noted,

"We usually involve key stakeholders during the initial stages of procurement planning, but the engagement is often limited to formal meetings. There is little follow-up to ensure that their inputs are fully integrated" Another respondent emphasized, *"Consultation happens, but sometimes it is more of an information-sharing session than a two-way discussion. Some stakeholders do not feel their opinions change the final plan"* (Interview with respondent A; 20/6/2025, 8:05 a.m.)

Another respondent emphasized,

“Consultation happens, but sometimes it is more of an information-sharing session than a two-way discussion. Some stakeholders do not feel their opinions change the final plan. In fact, many view these sessions as updates rather than engagements. While management believes consultation has taken place, the absence of meaningful debate reduces its value. Without active participation, stakeholders remain disengaged from implementation outcomes” (Interview with respondent B; 20/6/2025, 8:15 a.m.).

A third respondent observed,

“In most cases, consultation is reactive rather than proactive. We are called upon after key decisions have already been made, so our contributions are limited. Although meetings are scheduled, they rarely create room for open dialogue. Sometimes, recommendations are only partially considered, which frustrates participants. If stakeholders were engaged earlier, the outcomes would likely be more effective and inclusive” (Interview with respondent C; 20/6/2025, 8:25 a.m.).

Finally, one officer explained,

“The current consultation process is structured, but not flexible enough to capture diverse views. Often, only senior representatives are invited, leaving out critical voices from the operational level. This limits the richness of the feedback collected. The process should be broadened to include continuous communication, not just periodic meetings. When people feel excluded, they become passive in supporting implementation” (Interview with respondent D; 20/6/2025, 8:35 a.m.).

The findings show that while stakeholder consultation at TANROADS exists, its depth and influence are limited, with many stakeholders feeling their involvement is more symbolic than impactful. Most respondents confirmed that feedback is considered and meetings are held regularly, reflecting a commitment to engagement, but interviews revealed that consultation is often procedural rather than collaborative, reducing its effectiveness. This aligns with Institutional Theory, which views involvement as a response to regulatory and social pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991) and the Resource-Based View, which emphasizes engagement as a valuable resource for improving performance (Barney, 1991). Empirical studies also support these results: Mwangi and Otieno (2022) and Mwakalinga and Mushi (2023) found that active engagement improves trust, efficiency and transparency, while Mitchell and Patel (2023) and Achieng and Kamau (2023) warned that weak or inconsistent participation leads to delays and limited influence. Overall, TANROADS' consultation processes are established but require strengthening to ensure more inclusive, interactive and impactful stakeholder engagement.

Inclusion of Stakeholder Feedback

Results in Table 1 show that the majority of respondents, 55 out of 75 (73.3%), agreed that stakeholder feedback is considered in the procurement planning process at TANROADS, while 20 respondents (26.7%) reported that it is not. The mode value of 1.00 reflects that “Yes” was the most common response. This high proportion of affirmative responses suggests that the organization has mechanisms in place to capture and utilize stakeholder inputs. Nevertheless, the 26.7% who disagreed represents a significant minority whose experiences indicate inconsistency in the feedback inclusion process. This split highlights that while feedback is generally acknowledged, it may not be uniformly applied across all departments. Such variation points to differences in either the commitment to or the capacity for integrating stakeholder perspectives.

These results indicate that feedback from stakeholders is often incorporated into procurement plans, demonstrating an organizational awareness of the importance of participatory planning. The dominant “Yes” response shows that many employees recognize instances where stakeholder suggestions influence final decisions. However, the fact that more than a quarter of respondents felt that feedback is not considered indicates a shortfall in ensuring that engagement translates into action. This also means that in some areas, feedback collection might be more symbolic than substantive, limiting its effectiveness. The findings suggest that while TANROADS has laid a foundation for feedback inclusion, its implementation is uneven, creating opportunities for improvement. Ensuring that all feedback processes are followed through consistently across departments would strengthen overall procurement performance.

The researcher conducted interviews with respondents to gather more insights into this variation. One respondent explained,

“We do receive feedback from stakeholders, but sometimes it's after key decisions have already been made, so there's little room to make changes. The feedback then becomes more of a record than a tool for action. Stakeholders sometimes feel frustrated when their input is acknowledged but not implemented. This creates a perception that consultation is symbolic rather than impactful. If feedback was integrated earlier, it could significantly improve the quality of procurement plans” (Interview with respondent A; 20/6/2025, 9:15 a.m.).

Another respondent added,

“Some departments take feedback seriously and adjust plans accordingly, but others just record the comments without much follow-up. In certain cases, feedback is discussed but not reflected in the final decisions. This inconsistency weakens trust among stakeholders, as they feel their input may or may not count. Where feedback is acted upon, results are often better aligned with needs. However, the selective application makes the process unreliable” (Interview with respondent B; 20/6/2025, 9:18 a.m.).

A third respondent emphasized,

“There are instances where feedback is collected simply to fulfill a requirement. We attend meetings, provide our views, but later see no reflection in the outcomes. This has led to reduced participation, as people think their contributions are ignored. The process should be more transparent, showing which feedback is considered and why. Only then can stakeholders believe their input truly matters” (Interview with respondent C; 20/6/2025, 9:20 a.m.).

One officer observed,

“The effectiveness of feedback depends a lot on leadership in each department. Some managers encourage open dialogue and genuinely use input to improve plans. Others, however, are resistant to change and prefer sticking to predetermined approaches. This makes feedback inclusion very uneven across the organization. A standardized approach would ensure fairness and better outcomes” (Interview with respondent D; 20/6/2025, 9:45 a.m.).

Finally, another respondent stated,

“The problem is not the lack of feedback, but how it is handled afterward. In many cases, feedback is documented but lacks follow-up mechanisms to track whether it has been used. Without accountability, the process loses credibility. Stakeholders become passive when they see little impact of their efforts. A clear system for monitoring how feedback influences decisions would restore confidence and improve collaboration” (Interview with respondent E; 20/6/2025, 10:15 a.m.).

The findings reveal that while stakeholder feedback is often included in TANROADS' procurement planning, its application is inconsistent, with variations across departments reducing its potential impact. Quantitative results show a strong commitment to participatory planning, yet interviews highlight delays, symbolic practices and limited follow-up, underscoring the need for stronger accountability mechanisms. Interpreted through Institutional Theory, this reflects compliance with external pressures for legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), while the Resource-Based View emphasizes feedback as a strategic resource that enhances performance when effectively applied (Barney, 1991). These results are consistent with studies such as Smith and Jones (2022) in Australia and Ajayi and Olaniyi (2022) in Nigeria, who found that active feedback integration strengthens accountability and efficiency, while Mitchell and Patel (2023) and Mwakalinga and Mushi (2023) warned that neglecting or inconsistently applying feedback undermines outcomes. Overall, TANROADS shows commitment to feedback inclusion, but greater consistency and follow-up are needed to maximize its benefits.

Frequency of Stakeholder Meetings

Results in Table 1 show that the most common responses for the number of stakeholder engagement meetings held in the last 12 months were 3–4 meetings and 5–6 meetings, each reported by 29 respondents (38.7%). This was followed by 14 respondents (18.7%) indicating more than six meetings within the same period. Only 2 respondents (2.7%) reported that no meetings were held, while 1 respondent (1.3%) stated that there were only 1–2 meetings. The mode values of 3.00 and 4.00 reflect the predominance of moderate meeting frequencies. These figures reveal that stakeholder engagement occurs regularly for most respondents, though the intensity varies between departments. The relatively small proportion of respondents reporting very few or no meetings indicates that non-engagement is uncommon but still present.

These results indicate that stakeholder meetings are a regular feature of the procurement planning process at TANROADS, with the majority of respondents experiencing between three and six meetings per year. This level of frequency shows that the organization maintains an active schedule for engagement, ensuring that stakeholders are given repeated opportunities to contribute to planning discussions. The presence of more than six meetings for nearly one-fifth of respondents demonstrates that some areas go beyond the average in fostering dialogue. However, the minimal reports of no meetings or very few meetings signal the existence of engagement gaps in certain sections of the organization. This variation in frequency suggests differences in departmental priorities or operational demands, which may influence how often meetings are scheduled. Overall, the findings show that while stakeholder meetings are common, there is room for more uniformity in ensuring consistent engagement across all departments.

The researcher conducted interviews with respondents to explore reasons behind the variation in meeting frequency. One respondent commented, “In our department, we meet with stakeholders almost every two months because our projects require constant updates and approvals” Another noted, “Some departments only meet when a big procurement is coming up, so there are fewer meetings in a year” A third respondent added, “Budget constraints sometimes limit how often we can organize stakeholder sessions, especially when travel or accommodation for participants is involved” These responses illustrate that meeting frequency is shaped by project requirements, departmental practices and resource availability.

The findings indicate that TANROADS has a strong culture of stakeholder meetings, though the frequency and intensity vary across departments, often influenced by project needs and available resources. While most staff report moderate to high engagement, some areas hold fewer meetings, highlighting the need for organizational policies that standardize minimum interaction levels. Institutional Theory explains this practice as a response to external pressures for legitimacy and accountability (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and empirical studies in Uganda and Kenya show that regular communication fosters trust and alignment (Achieng & Kamau, 2023; Mwangi & Otieno, 2022). From the Resource-Based perspective, structured participation serves as a strategic resource enhancing efficiency (Barney, 1991; Mwakalinga & Mushi, 2023). However, variation in meeting frequency aligns with Mitchell and Patel's (2023) warning that inconsistent stakeholder involvement can undermine resource use and reduce procurement planning effectiveness.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study found that stakeholder involvement in the implementation of annual procurement plans at TANROADS Iringa is generally moderate, with most respondents confirming regular consultation, feedback inclusion and multiple engagement meetings each year. However, the depth of involvement is inconsistent across departments and in some cases, consultation is more procedural than collaborative. This limits the full impact of stakeholders on procurement outcomes. Therefore, TANROADS should strengthen early and meaningful consultation, ensure consistent integration of feedback across all units and establish clear standards for the frequency and quality of meetings. Doing so will improve transparency, accountability and efficiency in procurement planning, ultimately leading to better project delivery and public trust.

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