

# Preface

Society has become increasingly aware of environmental and human rights-related risks in global supply chains. Both governments and business are under pressure to take greater responsibility to prevent and address these risks before they impact people and the planet. The purchasing power of governments is emerging as an important lever to promote transparency and sustainability in supply chains. This includes strengthening risk management systems in public procurement to integrate Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) objectives and risk-based due diligence along global supply chains.

The impact of public procurement is vast. It accounts on average for 12% of GDP in OECD countries and 20-30% of GDP in developing economies. Increasingly, governments view public procurement as a strategic policy tool to promote sustainability, inclusiveness, and resilience.

The COVID-19 pandemic illustrates the relevance of this agenda as disruptions in global supply chains have revealed gaps in risk awareness. Many public buyers have admitted they were unaware of the provenance of their supplies and the associated risks, including possible over-dependence on a few suppliers. Implementing OECD risk-based supply chain due diligence in public procurement processes can strengthen supply chain resilience, help buyers make well-informed business decisions to prevent and address risks, and be better prepared for future emergencies.

OECD members have long recognised the potential benefits of more sustainable and responsible public procurement practices, and in 2019 launched a programme to bridge both policy areas. This report contributes to the research and analysis component in this programme and sheds light on how countries incorporate RBC objectives in public procurement. It is an example of multidisciplinary research and cooperation across two significant areas of OECD expertise: Responsible Business Conduct and Public Procurement.

Societies and economies are responding to global challenges, to recent events like the COVID-19 pandemic and to ongoing mega trends like climate change. These challenges also provide an opportunity to explore agile approaches to reflect citizens' expectations on responsible behaviour. Governments are in a unique position to recognise their responsibility to avoid harmful impacts. While building back better, governments can implement efficient and effective measures to ensure responsible conduct in all areas of government action, including in public procurement. The OECD will continue to provide evidence-based analysis to support these efforts.



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