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Public Procurement Reforms in Africa

Challenges in Institutions and Governance

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‘This study is a major step forward in understanding the way institutions work in different settings.’

Douglass C. North, Nobel Laureate in Economics (1993)

‘This book is a must read for those interested in public procurement systems and their reforms in Africa and elsewhere. Those familiar with the New Institutional Economics will recognize this book as an ambitious and informative application of the NIE framework. New comers to the NIE will likewise be impressed by the value added that accrues thereto.’

Oliver E. Williamson, Nobel Laureate in Economics (2009)

Public Procurement Reforms in Africa thoroughly grapples with the complex challenges of improving public financial management, and in so doing, the authors contribute to a discourse which is critical to Africa’s economic transformation.’

Kingsley Y. Amoako, President, African Center for Economic Transformation

Public Procurement Reform in Africa is an ambitious study that provides a vast improvement to the literature on the effects of political and legal reform. Using original data and in-depth case analyses, the authors are able to demonstrate when exogenously-imposed and endogenously-driven institutional and ideological reforms will affect political outcomes, such as levels of corruption.’

Mathew D. McCubbins, Duke University

‘In identifying the tax system as the intestines of the state, Joseph Schumpeter seriously neglected the other side of the government budget. Building an effective state requires not just resources, but the ability to spend those resources in the interests of society. This book is a seminal study of what it takes to do that in Africa. An essential for anyone trying to understand how to build modern states.’

James A. Robinson, Harvard University

‘This important book deftly analyses African public procurement, where weak public institutions, including ineffectual enforcement and corruption, have defeated the aims and ambitions of countless aid projects. The book’s novel approach fills a major gap in our understanding of this thorny problem, and draw actionable insights by comparing the few successful and many failed reforms.’

Mary M. Shirley, President, Ronald Coase Institute

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Christine Léon de Mariz was a Senior Economist at the World Bank and has more than a decade of experience in international development. She managed projects focusing on institutions, governance, and public finance in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Christine is a graduate of Sciences-Po Paris, holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Paris (Panthéon-Sorbonne), and was a fellow at Harvard University.

Claude Ménard is Professor of Economics at the University of Paris (Panthéon-Sorbonne) and affiliated to the Centre d’Economie de la Sorbonne. He has been visiting professor in numerous universities worldwide, has published extensively in international journals, and has worked as consultant for several international organizations and governments, mainly on issues of reform in network infrastructures and institutional changes. He has been co-editor of the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* for over ten years, and is a co-founder with Ronald Coase, Douglass C. North, Oliver E. Williamson, and others of the International Society for New Institutional Economics.

Bernard Abeillé is a Public Procurement Specialist who initially worked in the private sector in major infrastructure and city planning programmes: 10 years in French Aid abroad, and more than 30 years at the World Bank. He has been head of the procurement family for the Africa region and has assumed important responsibility in the World Bank Procurement Board. He initiated major procurement reforms and played a major role in the working group that issued the OECD Procurement Base-Line Indicators which are now applied worldwide to evaluate national procurement systems. Since he retired, he has been a consultant for the World Bank, African Development Bank, Millennium Challenge Corporation, Agence Française de Développement, and Inter-American Development Bank, and has been involved in numerous training programmes to develop capacity in developing countries.

Institutional reforms and their contribution to development and growth have been a source of renewed interest, as well as of many challenges, over the last two decades. Identifying the forces that push towards reform and the conditions that determine the success or failure of reforms, building organizational arrangements needed to make modifications to the rules of the game sustainable, and understanding the limits to the transfer of reforms and to the help that international organizations and foreign institutions can provide to support change, raise intellectually difficult and politically highly sensitive issues.

This book attempts to address these issues from an economic perspective. Combining knowledge and field experience, it develops an analysis of institutional changes and organizational transformations based on the experience of the public procurement reforms carried out in sub-Saharan Africa. This highlights the economic significance of procurement and the formidable obstacles that institutional changes face. Using an original dataset, it explores the gap between the expectations and what has been achieved. It develops a framework that intends to capture the complex interaction between the different components of reform and aims to provide useful insights for researchers and policy makers.