

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF KENYA AGRICULTURAL AND LIVESTOCK RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

¹Musyoki Jedidah Mwende

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

²Dr. D.G. Chege, PhD

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to find out the effect of sustainable Procurement on Public Procurement Performance. The study specific objective was to; establish the effect of Responsible Procurement on public procurement performance of Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization; to assess the effect of sustainable policy development on public procurement performance of Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization; to determine the effect of Framework Agreements on public procurement performance of Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization. The study analyzed existing literature linked to variables. The Research design adopted was a case study design using a qualitative and quantitative approach. The target population of 228 and employees rooted from 10 out of 16 institutions of Kenya Agricultural Livestock Research Organization. The study used stratified random sampling approach to determine the sample which was 145 employees employed by KALRO from the 10 institutions. The sample size from the population was derived using the Yamane Taro method and 95% confidence level. The research opted to use the Yamane formula for sample size calculation because of a small population. The study used primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources of data were self-administered questionnaires while secondary sources were obtained from KALROs data base. The study found out that responsible procurement, framework agreements and sustainable policy development in sustainable procurement were significant predictor variables to public procurement performance ,however the study also found out that accountability and reporting were areas of key focus but monitoring being a key area was not factored into consideration in the organization A similar research should be conducted to calculate and measure the impact of these approaches on procurement performance. Policymakers may explore ways to support research, such as setting research fund kitty. A platform to convert information to knowledge is also needed to guide adaptation strategy in a way that will sustain the momentum of enhancing procurement performance.

Keywords: Sustainable procurement, Responsible procurement, Sustainable policy development, framework Agreements, Public Procurement.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Sustainability is the ability to make sustainable decisions in present development without jeopardizing the capacity to meet needs by future generations. Sustainability became of great interest in 1972 at a United Nations Conference, a discourse held on the consequential environmental distress brought about by the rising of industrial development and practices. The conference debated the concern: human life concerns and environment protection, versus economic development. The debate came into an agreement that economic development, human life, and the environment were interdependent (Chattered Institute of Procurement and Supplies – CIPS – ,2012; Boons & Lüdeke-Freund, 2013; El-Kassar & Singh, 2018).

Sustainable procurement is the action that assimilates the deliberation of sustainability all through the process of procurement in order to attain the prime value for money while carrying out development objectives (World

Bank, 2019). The execution of sustainable procurement in the public organizations commenced sustainable public procurement (SPP). Sustainable public procurement is a system where organizations acquire goods and services to meet their needs and utilities benefiting the society, economy and organization as much as attaining value for money (Casier, Huizenga, Perera, Ruete & Turley, 2015; Ministry of Finance, 2015; UNEP, 2015).

The key to managing a sustainable process in procurement lies at the beginning of the procurement process to the end of the process. Most global corporations and international organizations welcome the principals and values of sustainability and social responsibility (Tavanti, 2014). The trend is reinforced by a growing field of research in corporate social responsibility and sustainable capitalism suggesting how doing well by doing good is a profitable possibility and a growing global trend (Hynes, Murray, & Dillard 2013; Tavanti, 2014).

The public procurement system in Kenya has consistently been refined by the global trends since the mid-1990, most notable improvements taking place within the period 1997-2001 and 2005. However, the enactment of the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act (PPADA 2005) in parliament and the official initiation that took place on 1st January 2007 was the crowning achievement towards sustainability (Kiswahili, 2016). The act has been able to implement various activities impacting the social, environmental, and economics of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) paradigm.

The Public Procurement Asset and Disposal Act, 2015 provides for preferential treatment for locally manufactured goods and services as noted in Section 155 (2). The main aim is to encourage innovation through the production of locally made goods and services for domestic and international trade; enhancing Kenya's competitiveness and consumption of locally manufactured goods and services (State Department of Trade, 2017). Muraguri (2013) notes that contributions towards sustainable procurement are set down through the implementation of the preference and reservation regulation of 2011. The study's recommendation was anchored in the implementation of the regulation. The efforts towards SPP have been noted in Kenya economically, socially, and environmentally. PPADA (2015) proves this by reserving a minimum of thirty percent of the budgetary allocations for enterprises to the SIGs, National Gender and Equality Commission Act 2011; Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are the Youth, Women, People with Disabilities (PWDs) who take a significant percent of the population in the country.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

PPADA (2015) indicate the lack of support of sustainable procurement by awarding contracts to the lowest bidders regardless of poor quality products and increasing quality costs. Low Costing has given the suppliers' room to compromise on quality by quoting and supplying counterfeit products in the market hence incurring overall procurement costs in the long-run. A report by the Auditor General (2018) notes that there has been abuse of contract performance by suppliers, in relation to quality, price and timing: as there has been substantial change in contract conditions to allow more time and/or higher prices for the bidder and Product substitution or sub-standard work or service not meeting contract specifications. Failure to implement or delayed implementation of recommended performance standards has resulted in unnecessary quality costs, uncoordinated business activities, and failure to attract and retain experienced and skilled personnel in the procurement positions, thus affecting the function's performance (Odhiambo and Kamua, 2006). The available studies have shown mixed results on the relationship between sustainable procurement and firm performance. Moreover, in a local context, there lacks adequate evidence on the existent to which organizations and particularly those in the public sector have embraced sustainable procurement practices and whether this has played any notable role in their performance. This study therefore sought to fill the existing gaps by assessing the effect of sustainable procurement practices on the public procurement performance in Kenya.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to determine the effect of Sustainable Procurement on Public Procurement Performance. A case of Kenya Agriculture Livestock Research Organization.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To establish the effect of Responsible Procurement on public procurement performance of Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization
- ii. To assess the effect of sustainable policy development on public procurement performance of Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization
- iii. To determine the effect of Framework Agreements on public procurement performance of Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the effect of Responsible Procurement on public procurement performance of Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization?
- ii. What is the effect of sustainable policy development on public procurement performance of Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization?
- iii. How does Framework Agreements affect public procurement performance of Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder perspective in business can be recognized as the layout of relationships out of groups that have a stake in the activities related to a business (Freeman, 1984; Walsh, 2005; Jones, 1995). The various stakeholders are groups that are considered latent, expectant, and definitive (Mitchell, 1995). Freeman (1984) notes that the hurdles connected to all businesses involve: the difficulty involved increasing of value considering a constant fast changing environment; modeling and operating with value, and the issue of the ethics of capitalism.

A stakeholder is a member of groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist (Freeman, 1963). The stakeholder theory is directly linked to responsible procurement which has a direct impact on public procurement performance (Cheung & Rowlinson, 2011). For sustainability to be achieved practitioners, end-users, and suppliers are required to develop sustainability by collaborating to factor in sustainability into the buying decision (BSI Sustainable Procurement Guide, 2017). The assumption of the stakeholder theory is the commitment towards the customer and human resources Johansson (2010) which stands as a sustainability enhancement tool.

2.1.2 Resource-Based Theory

The resource-based theory elaborates on the prospect of controlling a firm's strategic resources in aspiration to attain a sustainable competitive advantage through a managerial framework (Barney, 1991). Resource-Based View (RBV) explains how firms generate and sustain competitive advantage (Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009). The resource-based theory emphasizes the distinction of strategic resources from other resources.

According to Prajogo and Olhager (2012), in a sourcing process, the use of Framework agreements saves time and cost, avoiding the renegotiation of conditions and standard terms. Framework agreements are a widely used instrument between both parties which is used to communicate and monitor sustainability measures tabled in line with an organization's objective. Sustainable policies communicated to various stakeholders involved in the procurement process give little or no room for negotiation hence resulting in statutory compliance. Procurement contracts, return contracts, quantity and quality contracts, service commitment contracts give a clear communication on the expected sustainable goals (Cachon, Bockem & Schiller 2008).

2.2 Conceptual Framework

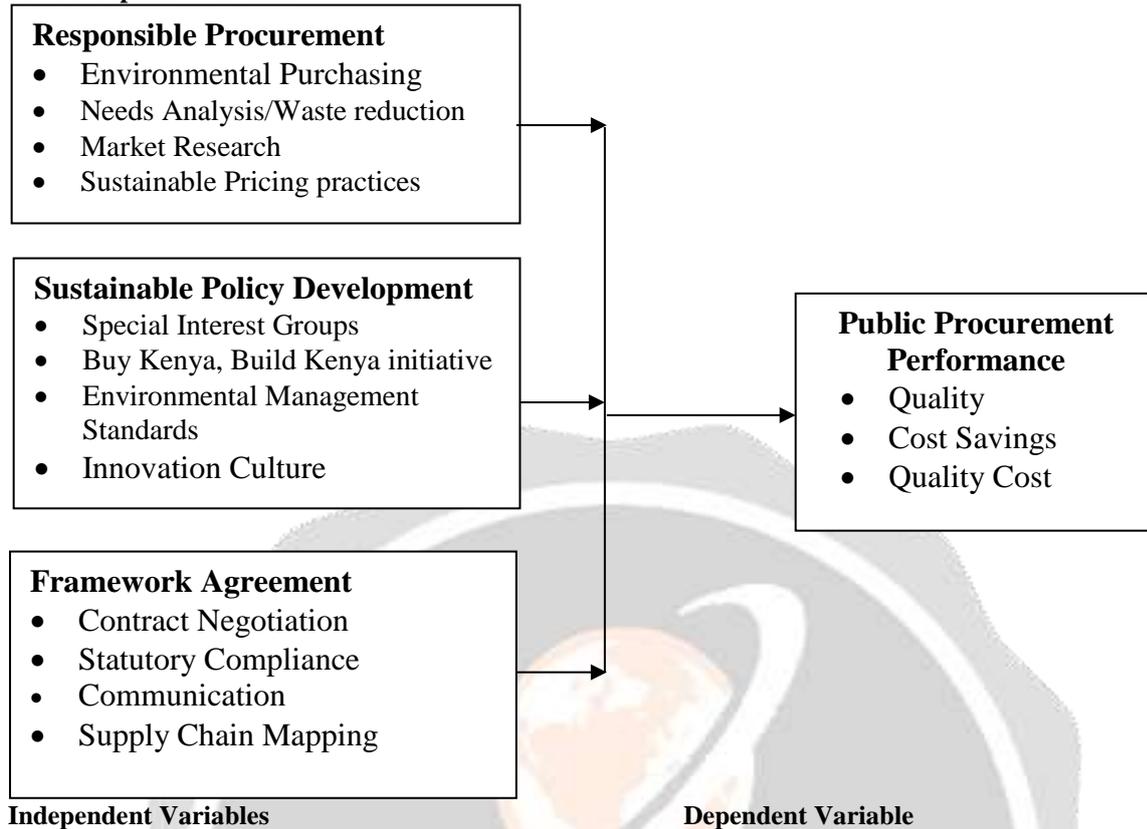


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.3 Responsible Procurement

Responsible Procurement existing as a combination of procurement practices with commercial considerations with social labor and environmental performance (CIPS, 2012) involves effecting sustainability from the beginning of the process . The EU public directives state that the economic, environmental, and social considerations should be built into the earliest stages of the procurement process through early buyer involvement and early Supplier Involvement to avoid procurement of wrong deliveries. Developing requirement specifications is vital and a central issue in the procurement of goods (Munyimi and Chari, 2018).

Large and Thompsen (2011) define environmental purchasing as the integration of environmental consideration into purchasing policies, programs, and actions such as life cycle analysis (LCA). Shah (2013) Environmental purchasing affirmatively involves selecting activities that effectively reduce negative environmental impacts during the acquisition of products and services: It is obtaining products that are conservative towards energy and water, elimination of waste and reduction of pollutants released to the environment, recycling and reusing of products from renewable energy such as bio-based fuels, wind power also finding alternatives on hazardous toxic materials and chemicals including biohazards and radioactive materials.

Soudek and Skuhrovec (2013) analyzed the public procurement of homogeneous products and found out, public procurers regularly overvalue the estimated contract value and therefore their price estimation does not correspond to the actual market price, hence the power in the supply chain stands with the procedures in the public procurement and have a bigger impact on the final price. This proves that it is possible to have competition among suppliers who observe quality and sustainability. According to Lysons and Farington (2017), a sustainable price is a price that the purchaser can afford allowing it to control its cost of production and make a profit representing value for money for the total package. A price that gives the purchaser a cost or quality advantage whilst benefiting the seller on the other hand.

2.4 Sustainable Policy Development.

Sarkis and Dhavelle (2015) state that the most effective way of increasing the sustainability of an organization is to integrate the sustainability policy of an organization with its purchasing activities. Recognizing the manner in which policy beneficiaries perceive policy is principal for policy reception (Cockline et al, 2007).

Ayuso (2013) alludes that the support towards the involvement of firms such as the SMEs by the public organization has created a significant competition of SMEs, as well as the pervasiveness of sustainability standards in value chains (Jorgsen & Knudsen, 2006). The Government of Kenya has put in place institutional and legislative policies to govern the movement of all businesses towards sustainable procurement.

Santos (2011) states that sustainable practices are associated with economic performance and growth hence improving reputation and increasing employee satisfaction. Lutz (2009) took a survey on various approaches by which public procurement can brace sustainable development in England's local governments. The research pointed out procurers have adopted the encouragement of the relationships and bonds between first-tier suppliers as sub-contractors, uplifting voluntary organizations by contracting with them, hence boosting the social aspect and avoiding the use of hazardous material to take care of the environmental side.

2.5 Framework Agreements

A framework agreement (FA) is an agreement between one or more than one suppliers for goods services and works. FA establish ground rules of a contract being awarded by one or more than one contracting agencies in a stipulated period, concerning maximum price, less technical specifications and predicted quantities. Framework Agreements do not focus on price and technical performance but total overall costs and performance-based specification making it an efficient tool for sustainability (Kunhui Ye, 2018).

Framework agreements regard the maximum price of products. Public Institutions use framework agreements hence making sustainable procurement sustainable procurement feasible (Lariviere, 2016). However, considering the overall life cycle of a product changes this notion as quality products that are performance-based add value, save costs in the long run and products can be reused to perform other activities making framework agreements a suitable tool to carry out sustainable procurement (Bresnen & Marshall, 2000). According to Arnek (2004), frameworks are well known for reducing overall procurement costs and internal resource; they stimulate sustainable decision making and foster the long-term relationship between buyers and suppliers. Contracting emerged from the principal-agent theory in economics (Holmstrom, Grossman & Hart, 1983) where at least a buyer and a seller are involved in trading.) the principal-agent theory is centralized on a ubiquitous relationship, where an existing party (principal) commissions work to another (Lee & Klassen 2008; Awaysheh & Klassen, 2010). The development of a contract is meant to materialize commitments responsibilities and rights of both parties in this case related to sustainability.

2.6 Research Gap

Existing literature on sustainability proves that several existing gaps have enough weight to be researched on. The objective of this paper is to identify these gaps and address them to our understanding to inform policy development at the government and organizational levels. Academic research is on the verge of acknowledging the concept of sustainability without disruption of operations. Sources of revenue from the environmental authority are from assessment application, environmental impact, and waste management as it's obliged to yield its returns to the central government nonetheless its limited to spending money from the exchequer limiting its ability to carry out EMS. Several studies have pointed out that conservation programs operating on diverse instruments such as taxes, grants have been made inept due to focusing on the site information in lieu of environmental outcomes.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a case study Research Design as it brings about a deep understanding of the behavior pattern of a unit of concern. A case study is known to be a remark examined that set in motion a present day phenomenon enclosed by real-life conditions especially where there lays a thin line between a phenomenon and context. Both qualitative and quantitative design were used where qualitative research is concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the participants' perspective while quantitative research is built on testing a theory, measured with numbers to an identified problem, and analyzed using statistical techniques.

3.2 Target Population and Sampling

The target population for the study was 228 employees from the 10 institutions out of the 16 under KALRO. The sampling frame for the study was 145 employees employed by KALRO from the 10 institutions. A stratified sampling procedure was used. This involved dividing into non-overlapping groups called strata,

defined by selected characteristics and each sampled separately. The strata involved 10 institutions where the samples were obtained.

Given a population of 228, obtained from the 10 KALRO institutions (strata). The research worked with a sample of 145 inclusive of KALRO Project Heads, Supply Chain Managers, Supply Chain Officers, Accountants, and Human Resource Managers.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{228}{1 + 228(0.05)^2} = 145$$

3.3 Data Collection

The study utilized primary and secondary sources of data. The questionnaire contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions; the closed-ended aimed at giving precise information minimizing bias information while open-ended will allowed respondents to explain their genuine views. Document analysis was used to obtain information from journals, reports, and previous research presented related to this study.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was collected coded, compiled, and systematically analyzed, calculating the response rate using smart PLS. Inferential statistics such as correlation and regression analysis was used to establish the nature and magnitude of the relationships between the variables and to test hypothesized relationships. Findings were presented through frequency distribution tables and pie charts using Microsoft excel, to enhance easier understanding.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Response Rate

Questionnaires were distributed to 145 respondents, 125 respondents returned the duly filled questionnaires. This translated to a response rate of 86.21 %. Bryman and Bell (2014), measure a response rate of 50% as satisfactory, while 60% and 70% are good enough and excellent.

4.2 Responsible Procurement

The first objective of the study sought to establish the influence of Responsible Procurement in public procurement performance at KALRO. The survey findings revealed that a majority of KALRO employees indicated that public procurement performance became more sustainable with increased responsible procurement mechanisms put in place in the Institutes. The results are as shown in Table 1. The findings revealed that a majority of the respondents often examine the total environment impact of a product through its every step of it cycle, from obtaining raw material to disposal stage of a product. The respondents also strongly agreed that environmental purchasing drove the organization procurement activities towards purchasing of quality and environment friendly products. The results imply that the majority of employees at KALRO believed that responsible procurement always incorporated key aspects of environmental purchasing such as evaluating a product's environmental impact, its quality and environment friendliness among other relevant inputs. In sum, these findings are in line with findings reported by Claudy, M. *et al.*, 2019 who reported that socially responsible procurement practices led to enhanced procurement performance. Additionally, this finding is consistent with Munyimi and Chari, 2018 and Soudek&Skuhrovec (2013) who found that responsible procurement play an active role in sustainable procurement of goods and services.

Table 1: Environmental Purchasing

Environmental Purchasing	N	Mean	Std. Dev
We examine the total environment impact of a product through its every step of it cycle, from obtaining raw material to disposal stage of a product.	125	3.77	0.86
Environmental purchasing has driven the organization procurement activities towards purchasing of quality and environment friendly products	125	4.04	0.82

We carry out Inventory analysis, which involves identifying all relevant inputs in terms of energy consumed and solid waste produced upon purchase of assets 125 4.10 0.87

4.3 Sustainable Policy Development

The second objective was to assess the effect of sustainable policy development on public procurement performance within KALRO research Institutes. The analysis of the survey data revealed that most of the employees perceived that public procurement performance in KALRO had been marked by an increased trend of incorporating sustainable development policies such as Special Interest Groups (SIGs), Buy Kenya Build Kenya Initiative, Environment Management Standards among other practices. Overall, these findings are consistent with studies by Sarkis and Dhavale (2015) who found that the most effective way of increasing the sustainability of an organization is to integrate the sustainability policy of an organization with its purchasing activities.

Table 2: Special Interest Groups

Special Interest Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev
We involve the special interest group in Supplies of Goods and services	125	4.33	0.79
There is a 30 % budget allocated for the special interest group	125	4.78	0.62
The 30% budget allocation for the special interest group taken seriously	125	4.71	0.69
The Special Interest groups Suppliers observe sustainability while delivering products i.e. quality, environmental friendly products and are they cost efficient	125	4.06	0.96
We observe the Buy Kenya Build Kenya Initiative?	125	4.57	0.66
The organization prefers buying local produced goods and services over imported goods	125	4.19	0.86
There is a reporting tool for the local production of goods and services	125	4.65	0.72
We observe the Environmental Management standards?	125	3.71	0.85
We communicate to suppliers on supply of environmentally certified products	125	4.02	0.80
Environmentally certified products are quite costly	125	4.06	0.91

4.4 Framework Agreements

Finally, with regard to the third objective, whose aim was to explore the effect of Framework Agreements in public procurement performance in KALRO. The survey findings indicated that KALRO employees perceived procurement performance in KALRO over the years had become increasingly characterized by set framework agreements in the research Institutes. According to Prajogo and Olhager (2012) Framework agreements save time and cost of a sourcing process as they avoid the need to renegotiate standard terms and conditions. Thus, our study findings are consistent with previous studies.

Table 3: Descriptive Results on Framework Agreements

Aspects	N	Mean	Std. Dev
I am aware of some government frameworks that govern procurement of goods	125	3.91	0.83
Contracts with suppliers have minimized under performance of duties by either of the parties as well as avoided the possibility of a failure of contract performance	125	4.11	0.69
Contracts with suppliers has reduced sustainability-related issues as well as procurement uncertainties during performance	125	4.15	0.78
Contract negotiating with our suppliers communicates what it takes to achieve sustainable performance from the suppliers	125	4.17	0.74
We are expected to report on procurement performance every quarter, half year and annual basis	125	4.77	0.54
Our contracts with suppliers remind suppliers of the statutory requirements by relevant law and regulations in regard to sustainability to signal importance of social, environmental and economic standards	125	4.15	0.67

Supply chain mapping is key considered the activities we run before involving any suppliers into any contracts	125	4.28	0.81
We use mapping before procurement of goods to ensure procurement of the right products	125	3.94	0.77
We give a clear communication to contracted suppliers on the expected sustainable goals.	125	4.32	0.69
We ask for sustainability –related Questions, capability and commitment in pre-qualification questionnaires to determine their willingness of sustainability adoption and their needs to carry out such adoptions	125	4.07	0.81

4.5 Procurement Performance

The study sought to find out the procurement performance of KALRO. The findings shows an overview of how the employees in KALRO perceived sustainable procurement performance in reference to; quality cost, quality and cost saving on products and services. The respective descriptive statistics were as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Results on Procurement Performance

Aspects	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Internal Failure cost(costs of deficiencies before the delivery)	125	3.70	1.10
External Failure Costs(costs of deficiencies after the delivery)	125	3.76	1.07
Appraisal costs(all the costs to determine the conformance/inspection costs)	125	3.70	1.14
Prevention Cost(represent all the costs incurred to keep failure and appraisal costs to a minimum)	125	3.86	1.11
Extent to which Innovations and products Improvement cost savings has been observed in 2017/2018 FY	125	2.49	0.91
Extent to which Innovations and products Improvement cost savings has been observed in 2018/2019 FY	125	3.33	0.86
Extent to which Innovations and products Improvement cost savings has been observed in 2019/2020 FY	125	4.14	0.78

4.6 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis between Performance, Framework arrangement, Responsible Procurement and Sustainable Policy Development was conducted. The results in Table 5 showed that there was a positive and a significant association between performance and responsible procurement ($r=0.965$, $p=0.000$). Further, it was observed that there was a positive and a significant association between performance and sustainable policy development ($r=0.978$, $p=0.000$). Lastly, there was a positive and a significant association between performance and Framework arrangements ($r=0.973$, $p = 0.000$).

Table 5: Correlation Analysis

	Responsible Procurement	Sustainable Development	Policy Framework Arrangements	Performance
Responsible Procurement	1	.979**	.927**	.965**
Sustainable Policy Development		1	.959**	.978**

Framework Arrangements	1	.973**
Performance		1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.7 Regression Analysis

The study reported herein sought to prove the effect in responsible procurement, sustainable procurement development and framework arrangements on Procurement Performance within KALRO Institutes. This was evaluated using multiple linear regression analysis. Specifically, the construct indices of changes in responsible procurement, changes in sustainable policy development and changes in frame work arrangements were regressed on the composite index of procurement performance.

The value of R^2 or coefficient of determination as shown in Table 6 is a measure of how variability in the outcome variable could be explained by the combined effect of responsible procurement, changes in sustainable policy development and changes in framework arrangements. The results show that $R^2=0.975$ which means that the changes in responsible procurement, sustainable policy development and changes in framework arrangements accounted for 97.5% of variation in procurement performance. The remaining 2.5% was explained by other factors not considered in this study.

Table 4.6: Regression Output

Model Summary					
R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate		
0.988	0.975	0.975	0.048		
ANOVA					
Model	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	11.248	3	3.749	1597.298	.000
Residual	.284	121	.002		
Total	11.532	124			
Regression Coefficients					
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sg.
(Constant)	1.919	.044		43.592	.000
Changes in Responsible Procurement	.196	.043	.324	4.546	.000
Changes in Sustainable Policy Development	.125	.059	.198	2.113	.037
Changes in Framework Agreements	.319	.034	.482	9.447	.000

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that responsible procurement had a positive effect on public procurement performance in KALRO. This shows that responsible procurement existing as a combination of processes has to be initiated at the beginning of the process for sustainability to be effective in public procurement performance.

Sustainable policy development had a positive effect on public procurement performance in KALRO. The results also proved that support from Public Institutions has a positive social and economic impact on the

country. This has been seen from the creation of job opportunities in the country. Adoption of the special interest group and Buy Kenya Build Kenya Initiatives has enhanced local Sustainable Supplier Selection and relationships and has highly encouraged innovation through the production of locally made goods and services.

Framework agreements had a positive effect on public procurement performance in KALRO. Results signified that a framework agreement being agreements between one or more than one suppliers for goods services and works to establish ground rules of a contract being awarded by one or more than one contracting agencies in a stipulated period, concerning maximum price, less technical specifications and predicted quantities. It stands as an efficient tool for sustainability.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that greater attention should be on responsible procurement. Securing visible commitment and leadership, ensuring that skilled employees in the relevant field lead the sustainable procurement agenda implementing it as policy as they factor in the impacts of the decisions from the beginning of the process would be critical. The participation of private sector in propping up sustainability related initiatives to ensure persistency and consistency all through the country. However, stringent policies and instruments need to be in place in support of the initiatives. Monitoring should consider any possible mediation and moderation on products and services such as, effects on non-target entities, the environment, and cost-effectiveness of entire procurement process. This will enhance mutual obligations expressed through negotiated supply contracts, and enhance fair competitive pressures to meet price and non-price criteria through transparent competitive bidding.

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