



Centre for Social Justice Newsletter, February 2026

In this Newsletter, CSJ focused on four key issues vis, Publication of Public Procurement Procedures Manual (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Agriculture); Review of the Audit Opportunities Assessment Study; Clause by Clause Analysis of the Agriculture Extension Services Revitalisation Bill 2024; and Publication of the Handbook on Agricultural Research Outreach Centres (AROCs) of Nigeria’s Public Agricultural Research Institutes and Federal Colleges of Agriculture.

Publication of Public Procurement Procedures Manual (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Agriculture)

The United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM) defines Gender Responsive Public Procurement (GRPP) as: *“The sustainable selection of services, goods or works that*

business opportunities” “GRPP is procurement that promotes gender equality through the purchase of works, supplies or services by public sector bodies. This means that buyers and suppliers look at the impact on all of the contracted activities related to women’s and men’s interests and concerns and design and deliver contracts in a way that reduces gender inequalities. GRPP may target inequalities in the workforce through the delivery of a contract (whether local or remote), in the way a contract is performed and/or via the impact it has on users or recipients of the goods, services or works purchased. It does not necessarily imply higher costs, but it does require knowledge and capacity”.

GRPP includes procuring from women owned businesses or gender responsive enterprises. These are businesses whose majority shareholding or ownership is attributable to women. Women led businesses are enterprises led by women or where they hold leadership positions, such as founder, chief executive, or majority owner, with significant influence in decision-making and strategy..

Beyond gender is the bigger challenge of overall inclusivity. According to the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) Indicator 8, there are four critical dimensions for inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the procurement process: (1) Procurement policies consider accessibility and do not create new barriers for persons living with disabilities. (2) The procurement process is accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities. (3) Accessibility targets for procurement are set and met. (4) The entity’s procurement policy promotes purchasing from disability-inclusive suppliers, and guidelines have been developed.

Inclusivity in procurement is about the lived realities of women and men in all their diversity. *While the term ‘lived realities’ is meant to recognise differences between women and men, the addition of ‘in all their diversity’ recognises how other characteristics such as age, socioeconomic situation, disability, race, ethnicity, religion and rural or urban location also affect women and men in their lived realities”.*

Inclusive procurement is founded on national and international legal and policy standards. It is imperative considering that government is the largest spender in the economy and inclusive procurement facilitates economic growth; it provides opportunities for the state to respect, protect and fulfil its obligations under a plethora of international standards ratified and applicable in the state; fairer allocation of economic resources and improving the living standards of women and PWD - addressing challenges and barriers to participation; sustainability of spending operations; disciplining public spending by subjecting it to higher legal and societal norms, etc. The hallmarks of GRPP include economy, efficiency, effectiveness, fairness, transparency, professionalism, accountability and ethical standards.

unavailability of gender disaggregated data and statistics; limited access to finance and capital, time poverty and limited access to procurement information by women. The impediments to inclusivity in public procurement include inadequate legislation and policies, misfit tender designs, excessive requirements demanded from bidders, poor practices by governments, etc.

The basic principles of gender mainstreaming are applicable to public procurement. They are the use of gender sensitive language; gender specific data collection and analysis; equal access and utilisation of services; equal involvement of women and men in decision making and equal treatment is integrated into the steering process. The strategies for introducing and implementing GRPP include; provision for inclusivity in procurement law; advocacy for changes in law and practice; capacity building for the demand and supply side; dedicated funds that provide access to capital for marginalised groups; mainstreaming gender disaggregated data gathering, analysis and use in procurement; enforcing anti-discrimination laws and policies including affirmative action provisions; providing procurement information to women's and PWD networks. Others are promoting financial inclusion and reducing financial entry barriers; reservations and quotas for women and PWDs; institutional arrangements; monitoring and evaluation; margins of preference for women and PWDs; establishment of help desks; strategic subcontracting rules; and communications. In technical procurement terms, fitting tender designs and proportionate requirements are key to inclusivity.

Planning of public procurement is the foundation and a critical aspect of procurement proceedings. The Procurement Plan lists out the goods, works and services to be procured, the timeliness and procedure for such contracting and its contents and subject to the rules, include results of needs analysis, market surveys and cost implication analysis and where applicable indicate evidence of aggregation of needs or such other items as MDAs may consider necessary.

Procurement planning is a step towards value for money which from a gender perspective interrogates inequalities and its effect on financial behaviors, access to resources, and the distribution of benefits from programmes and policies between men and women. The whole context of value for money brings up an interrogation of the concept of values and raises inter alia the following posers: Which values? Whose values? What values?

Values are not just blindly price-centric or economic; there are social values, local content, issues of access to rights (livelihoods, water, land, energy, health, education, etc.), services and inclusivity – these are norms, values, ends and legitimate targets for public expenditure. These values should inform needs analysis and market surveys because when a need is properly defined from an inclusivity perspective, the market survey will be looking for the goods, services and works that will meet the

Situating the above issues in agriculture, procurement planning should take note of the fact that women make up about 70% of the agriculture labour force and 91.72% of crop production is done in the informal sector. There should be a deliberate attempt to ensure that the composition of the procurement planning committee, tender boards and approving authorities are gender sensitive.

The language of the solicitation must be gender sensitive and expressly indicate the gender considerations relevant to the procurement process, especially indicating that WOB and WLBs are encouraged to apply. Where there is a quota and it is strictly restricted to affirmative action principles, this must be clearly stated in the solicitation documents. The solicitation documents must be available to all through formal and informal sources.

Essentially, according to Guidelines on the Implementation of Indicator 8 of the UN Disability Strategy, the following will facilitate accessibility: Mandatory check for accessibility of solicitation documents incorporated in procurement framework (e.g. Procurement Manual); information on how to make procurement documents accessible provided to procurement staff (e.g. information on training resources); solicitation documents are published in an accessible format; other procurement-related documents are accessible (e.g. Procurement Manual); and inventory of procurement systems compiled. Others are the norm for accessibility for new systems established (in collaboration with IT); accessibility audit - scope defined; audit carried out; key recommendations from accessibility audit implemented and accessibility of supplier-facing procurement systems maintained over time. Issues around vision, hearing and mobility should be strategically taken care of in the documentation.

All the essential selection criteria should be captured in the solicitation documents. Almost every procurement activity or sub activity has a GRPP requirement and this should be meticulously followed in procurement proceedings that deploys GRPP principles. Furthermore, budgetary provisions can be finetuned to pave the way for GRPP at the implementation stage.

For the evaluation and comparison of bids that have been adjudged valid for the purposes of evaluation, no other method or criteria shall be used except those stipulated in the solicitation documents. This general principle also applies in GRPP. Therefore, the continuum of procurement planning, preparation of bid solicitation documents, tenders, bid examination and evaluation shows that once gender and inclusivity are mainstreamed from the beginning, they must be followed through to the end in deciding who eventually gets the contract to provide the goods, services or works or what kind of goods, services and works are eventually delivered. For PWDs, "reasonable accommodation" and "universal design", if introduced at the beginning of the process in procurement planning, must be followed through.

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Publication of the Audit Opportunities Assessment Study

The Audit Opportunities Assessment Study was published and presented to the stakeholders in February 2026 by CSJ.

Part One is the introduction, containing the background to the study, objectives, methodology and limitations. Part Two is on legal provisions and it deals with categories of legal sources, creation of office and appointment procedure, functions, powers and responsibilities of Auditor-General, submission of reports to the legislature and independence of the Auditor-General. Other issues dealt with in this part are tenure of office of Auditor-General, the public accounts committee and summary of legal gaps.

Part Three is on international standards, comparative experience and gaps in Nigerian law. The issues discussed in this part are establishment of office and appointment procedure, tenure of Auditor-General, immunity and removal from office, timeliness of audit reports, functions and mandate, the principle of effectiveness: powers of the Auditor-General, access to information, power to summon and take evidence on oath. Others are protection of whistle blowers, timeline to respond to audit queries, access to banking information, power to conduct search, power to surcharge, follow up on audit recommendations, financial autonomy, human resource management, reporting, transparency and public engagement, audit standards, independent auditor and sanctions and penalties.

Part Four is on gaps in audit practice and opportunities. The issues discussed are timeliness of reports, poor response to audit queries, low implementation of prior year audit recommendations, compliance by parastatals with financial reporting requirements, inadequate funding of Auditor-General, remuneration of staff of the

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remittances of revenue/internally generated revenues by MDAs, failure to recover outstanding revenue/debts, unrecovered tax liabilities by the Federal Inland Revenue Service, payments for services not rendered and contracts not executed, supply items not taken on store charge, store items not taken on store charge, unretired loans and advances, circumvention of procurement procedures, irregularities in procurement award and execution. Others include contract splitting and inflation, cash advances above stipulated approval limit/use of cash advances to circumvent procurement thresholds, payment without prepayment audit, unspent balances on capital votes not returned to chest, violation of e-payment policy, extra budgetary spending and virements without approval, payment for overseas travels and conferences without approval, etc.

Part Six focused on mismanaged resources and the opportunity cost. The issues covered are Federation Account issues, amounts queried by audit, and reports of the PAC upon consideration of AUGF's report. The opportunity costs are in the debt challenge, poor social indicators, infrastructure deficit, implications for trade, employment, reduction of poverty, rule of law challenge and reduced public trust in government. The part ends with the case for reform. part seven deals with political economy analysis. It reviews the context and historical legacies, understanding of audit function and power dynamics, legal and institutional issues, economic and financial aspects, operational challenges and ends with reform opportunities.

Part Eight is on findings, recommendations and conclusions. It starts with a synthesis of findings, political-economy of audit dysfunction, legal and institutional imperatives, operational and governance lessons and ends with strategic recommendations. The recommendations include the following; enact the federal audit service bill; amend sections 85 - 87 of the constitution; legislative accountability as a reform anchor; establish an inter-agency audit enforcement and sanctions committee; increased consequences for non-compliance; guarantee direct appropriation to the OAUGF; link audit compliance to budget releases; deploy a digital audit dashboard; institutionalise multi-stakeholder oversight forums and improve audit relevance and public demand. Others are benchmark federal and or state level audit performance; adopt a consequence management framework; demonstrate feasibility of reform; institutionalise continuous dialogue and peer learning; and coalition-building beyond formal institutions.

CSJ published this Study with the support of the EU funded Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Programme (RoLAC).

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Clause by Clause Analysis of the Agriculture Extension Services Revitalization Bill 2024

This Clause by Clause Analysis by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) seeks to enrich the Bill for an Act to provide a legal framework for sustainable agricultural extension services, strengthen investment in agriculture and increase agricultural productivity for food security and revenue generation in Nigeria; and for related matters. It seeks to respond to the gaps in the draft and to provide greater clarity towards the achievement of the goal of a legislated agriculture extension policy with clear funding sources and operational schemes.

This analysis is a follow up to some of the findings and outcome of the “National Workshop on Improving Visibility and Linkages Between Agricultural Research, Extension Services, and Farming for Sustainable Food Value Chains in Nigeria” organised in July 2025 by Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN), Small Scale Women Farmers Organisation of Nigeria (SWOFON) with the support of Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Nigeria (HBS). The workshop had observed that:

- *Although Nigeria has enacted a National Agriculture Extension Policy in 2023, many states of the Federation do not have state level Agriculture Extension Policy. Nigeria lacks a legislated Extension Policy which gives a strong legal backing to good extension practices including assured sources of funding. Federal and state level extension policies have not been costed. There is no agreed formula for funding extension services between the Federal, State and Local Government Councils. Although there are private sector extension services/agents, they need to be regulated and certified to improve available services, and compliment services of a strengthened government extension services.*

Thereafter, the workshop made critical recommendations for executive and legislative action. Major highlights of recommendations for improvement which have now been reflected in the clause by clause analysis include:

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continuous basis in accordance with S.16 (A) (b) of the 1999 Constitution as amended". Although agriculture is on the Concurrent Legislative List, the Bill makes provisions that will bind states and the agriculture extension service duty of Nigeria is largely derived from the right to food encapsulated in the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. This bill can therefore be anchored on item 60 of the Exclusive Legislative List.

- Clear functions for a secretariat to facilitate the implementation of decisions of the National Technical Committee on Agricultural Extension Services and provisions for state structures (to be established by state laws) in accordance with National Agriculture Extension Policy.
- A funding mechanism that ensures continuous availability of resources for agriculture extension services nationwide.
- Provision and approval of agriculture extension workplans across the Federation and costing of extension services.
- Grants and engagement with states and local governments to stimulate wider and qualitative agriculture extension services coverage.
- Reportage and accountability mechanisms.
- Rearrangement of some sections for proper sequencing of the Bill.

CSJ hopes that this analysis will facilitate legislative work in the approval and enactment of the Bill into an Act of the National Assembly.

CSJ undertook this Analysis with the support of the Heinrich Boll Foundation, Nigeria.

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Publication of the Handbook on Agricultural Research Outreach Centres (AROCs) of Nigeria's Public Agricultural Research Institutes and Federal Colleges of Agriculture.

The Agricultural Research Outreach Centers (AROCs) under the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN) play a vital role in promoting agricultural development and improving livelihoods across Nigeria. Launched in 1996, AROCs serve as platforms for demonstrating and disseminating improved agricultural technologies, all aimed at enhancing food security, empowering farmers, and driving agricultural innovation. However, some findings of some National Agriculture Research Institutes lie on the shelves awaiting dissemination to farmers due to the weak and poorly funded extension service system. This weak link between research and farmers and limited access to modern agriculture knowledge by rural farmers inhibits productivity and the full activation of benefits derivable from the value chain of many agricultural products. It may stultify the realization of the vision of “growing Nigeria’s agriculture sector, driving income growth, accelerating food and nutrition security, generating employment, and transforming Nigeria into a leading global food market with wealth for farmers” .

The Agricultural Research Outreach Centres (AROCs), Adopted Villages and Schools, seeks to bridge the gap by providing a model for disseminating improved agricultural technologies to smallholder farmers and schools, fostering direct collaboration between researchers, extension agents, and farming communities thereby enhancing food security, empowering farmers, and inspiring youth engagement in agriculture. ARCN, mandates each National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) and Federal College of Agriculture (FCA) to adopt 2 villages and 2 schools.

The locations, activities and service available at the Adopted Villages, Schools, and Agricultural Research Outreach Centres (AROC) where research findings are demonstrated are largely unknown to some grassroots farmers who ideally should benefit from their services. This is a low hanging fruit that critical civil society intervention can provide facilitation for the last mile.

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economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the Covenant by all appropriate means. This Handbook focuses on some of the locations, activities and service available at the Adopted Village/Agricultural Research Outreach Centres (AROC). It is about facilitating the implementation of the state obligation to take steps by all appropriate means and utilizing the maximum of available resources for the progressive realization of the right to food and a plethora of other rights encapsulated in the right to an adequate standard of living. Knowledge and information emanating from the work of public research institutions and agricultural colleges are great available resources. Disseminating available information, farming methodologies, techniques and technologies to farmers is an appropriate step taken towards the realization of basic rights. This documentation therefore facilitates access to information which is a prerequisite for benefitting from research interventions.

SWOFON members, other farmers and the general public are therefore encouraged to use this handbook to locate outreach centres where they can have access to new knowledge and methodologies demonstrated to improve farming and value addition. .

CSJ published this Handbook with the support of the International Budget Partnership.

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