

Report on
Measuring and Minimizing Procurement Risk at FAO Bangladesh

By
Aminul Islam
ID: 23382007

This report has been submitted to the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) as a
component of the Master's degree program in
Procurement and Supply Management (MPSM)

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD)
BRAC University
July 2025

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Declaration

This declaration states that

1. This report is my own unique work that I created while I was pursuing my degree at BRAC University.
2. There is no content in the report that has already been published or authored by someone else unless it is fully cited with full and specific references.
3. The report does not include any work that has been accepted or turned in for a college or university degree or diploma.
4. I have thanked all the important people who helped me.

Name and signature of student:

Aminul Islam

ID: 23382007

Supervisor's Full Name & Signature:

Mahbub Ahmed Chowdhury FCIPS
SVP & Head of Procurement
Procurement Division, City Bank PLC.
Faculty at BIGD, BRAC University
Email: mahbub.chowdhury@thecitybank.com

Letter of Transmittal

Mahbub Ahmed Chowdhury FCIPS
SVP & Head of Procurement
Procurement Division, City Bank PLC.
Faculty at BIGD, BRAC University

Subject: Application to accept the report.

Dear Supervisor,

As part of requirements under my Masters in Procurement and Supply Management(MPSM) program, please find attached my report on "**Measuring and Minimizing Procurement Risk at FAO Bangladesh**".

I am glad to work more closely with you and follow your directions and supervision. Although I tried to do my best to prepare this report, maybe there will be still a few of them missing. I hope this report is useful to you and provides you with some ideas regarding how my organization FAO operates.

Yours truly,
Aminul Islam
ID: 23382007
BRAC University

Agreement Not to Share Information

This agreement is made and entered into by the undersigned Aminul Islam at BRAC University and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, FAO Bangladesh. As I am currently working at the organization, I have access to the Organization's information. I acknowledge that I will maintain the confidentiality of all information and refrain from disclosing it to any individual or entity outside of the organization.

Aminul Islam from BRAC University and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, FAO Bangladesh, have signed this agreement. I can see the organization's information because I work there right now. I agree that I will keep all the information secret and not disclose anyone outside of the company about it.

Name and Signature of student:

AMINUL ISLAM
223382007

Workplace Supervisor's Name and Signature:

Joarder Toufiq Monowar
Procurement Specialist
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, FAO Bangladesh

Acknowledgement

Before all the rest, I would like to thank God who always gives me power to prepare this report project.

I am highly indebted to my academic supervisor Mahbub Ahmed Chowdhury FCIPS, SVP & Head of Procurement at City Bank PLC, Faculty (Adjunct), BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University for his endless support, constructive suggestions and critical comments during the course of this work and to my workplace supervisor Joarder Toufiq Monowar, Procurement Specialist, FAO Bangladesh for his cooperation and encouragement in preparing this paper.

I sincerely express my extensive gratitude to the officers and personnel at BIGD, BRAC University, especially to Madam Tanzina Mizan, Deputy Academic Coordinator of BRAC University, for her constant support during the academic year for this master's program.

Executive Summary

This report is prepared based on my personal experience working within the Procurement team at FAO Bangladesh. In some of its recent FAOs tender I have observed that FAO always ended up limited pool of repetitive vendors who participated through the open UNGM platform even though conducting Expressions of Interest (EOI). This clearly indicates that the FAO is facing a challenge with its inadequate vendor base.

The report also identifies problems with developing criteria for the assessment of the suppliers. In several cases, none of the bidders met the minimum requirements, which indicates that the evaluation criterion was not prepared considering the actual capacity of the supply market. It also indicates a gap in technical expertise among the staff who prepared criteria, as well as a lack of alignment between procurement expectations and the actual capacity of the suppliers.

To tackle these challenges, the FAO must widen and expand its current vendor base. FAO can meet its goal by working with other UN agencies and using EOI to reach as many people as possible. To carry this out, the FAO should do consistent market analysis, have informational meetings with potential vendors, and solicit opinions from vendors who weren't successful in the end. That way, the FAO can effectively communicate and engage with more vendors and supply market and make its bidding process much more transparent, open, and competitive.

Additionally, hiring technical specialists and conducting regular training for the staff will ensure that technical documentation and evaluation frameworks are prepared in realistic way considering the capacity of the supply market. By implementing the recommendations stated in the report, FAO can bring efficiency, achieve supplier diversity, and minimize its procurement risk.

Table of Content

Declaration	1
Letter of Transmittal.....	2
Agreement Not to Share Information	3
Acknowledgement.....	4
Executive Summary	5
Table of Content.....	6
Figure Index	8
Chapter 1: Overview of the Report	1
<i>1.1 Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>1.2 Background Information.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>1.3 Objective of the Study</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>1.4 Structure of the Report</i>	<i>1</i>
Chapter 2 : Operational Overview of FAO	2
<i>2.1 Company Overview.....</i>	<i>2</i>
Chapter 3: Measuring and Minimizing Procurement Risk of FAO Bangladesh	4
<i>3.1 Background and Aim of the Study</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>3.2 Importance of the Report.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>3.3 Limitation of the Report.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>3.4 Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>3.5 Implementation Framework.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>3.6 Findings and Interpretation of Data</i>	<i>8</i>
Summary of Feedback on Remarks 1 to 4	13

<i>Summary of Feedback on Remarks 5 to 8</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Summary of Feedback on Remarks 9</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>My Personal Observation on This Study.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>References</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Annex A.....</i>	<i>22</i>

Figure Index

Figure 1 Core Values of FAO	3
Figure 2 FAO Organizational Structure	3
Figure 3 Theoretical Model for this Study	5
Figure 4 Supply Shortage Risk at FAO	9
Figure 5 Overpayment Risk at FAO	10
Figure 6 Product Quality Risk at FAO	11
Figure 7 Missed Discount Risk at FAO	12
Figure 8 High-Cost Risk at FAO	14
Figure 9 Low-Quality Supplier Risk.....	15
Figure 10 Missing out Warranty & Replacement Risk.....	16
Figure 11 Delivery Delays Risk	17

Chapter 1: Overview of the Report

1.1 Introduction

UN procurement plays a vital role in ensuring the effective use of public/ doner funds to deliver services and development goals. In developing countries, procurement systems face numerous challenges related to transparency, efficiency, and vendor performance. Vendor management, therefore, becomes a critical aspect of procurement to ensure timely delivery, value for money, and adherence to policies and guidelines. FAO Bangladesh engages in diverse procurement activities to support its agricultural, nutritional, and humanitarian programs in Bangladesh.

1.2 Background Information

This study was motivated by the increasing complexity of UN procurement in donor-funded organizations and the rising need for effective vendor management. In Bangladesh, UN procurement is often constrained by bureaucratic delays, limited no off and their vendor capacity, and risk of non-compliance. FAO Bangladesh frequently engages with local and international vendors, making vendor management both a strategic and operational priority. This research aims to explore how FAO Bangladesh navigates these challenges through structured vendor management strategies.

1.3 Objective of the Study

General objective: To explore vendor management strategies and associated risks in FAO Bangladesh procurement system.

Specific objectives:

- To identify existing vendor management strategies
- To evaluate procurement risks related to vendor performance
- To recommend best practices for vendor selection, evaluation, and risk mitigation

1.4 Structure of the Report

This report is divided into four main parts. The first chapter introduces the study. The second chapter explains the background and how FAO Bangladesh operates. Chapter three focuses on how vendors are managed. The final chapter presents case examples, analysis, and recommendations. Additional materials are included in the annex, and references are used throughout the report

Chapter 2 : Operational Overview of FAO

2.1 Company Overview

Introduction

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations is a specialized body whose major purpose is to fight hunger across the world, make sure everyone has enough food, and help agriculture expand and develop in a way that is good for the environment. FAO's goal is to end hunger and malnutrition around the world. Established in 1945, it operates in over 130 countries including Bangladesh. FAO works with interested parties in the forestry, agriculture, fisheries and rural departments of Bangladesh to assist programs that will enhance the lives of people and help regular access to food.

FAO functions through capacity building, policy guidance, technical expertise, and the facilitation of information and best practice sharing. Additionally, it is essential for emergency response and recovery in the agriculture sector after crises or natural catastrophes, which is especially important for a country like Bangladesh that is vulnerable to climate change.

Achieving food security for all means that people regularly have access to enough wholesome food to live active, healthy lives. This is FAO's main goal. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global development objectives are in line with its initiatives.

Vision

FAO aspires to a world free from hunger and malnutrition, where agriculture and food help raise everyone's standard of living, particularly the most vulnerable

Mission

The goal of FAO is to assist member nations in eradicating hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition; increasing the productivity and sustainability of forestry, fisheries, and agriculture; lowering rural poverty; and ensuring inclusive and effective food and agricultural systems.

Core Values

FAO's key values include prioritizing the most vulnerable, acting honorably, upholding professionalism, encouraging collaborations, and welcoming innovation.

FAO promotes climate resilience, sustainable farming, improved nutrition, and stronger food systems in Bangladesh. It is a vital ally in the nation's journey towards sustainable agriculture and food security because of its cooperative attitude.

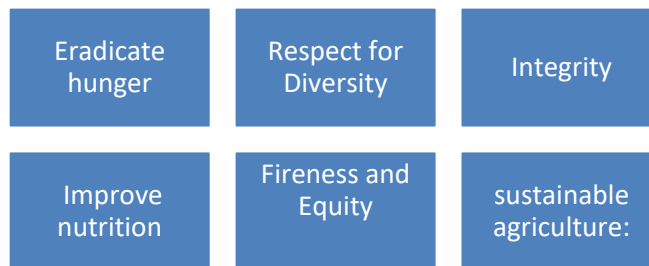


Figure 1 Core Values of FAO

Company Organogram

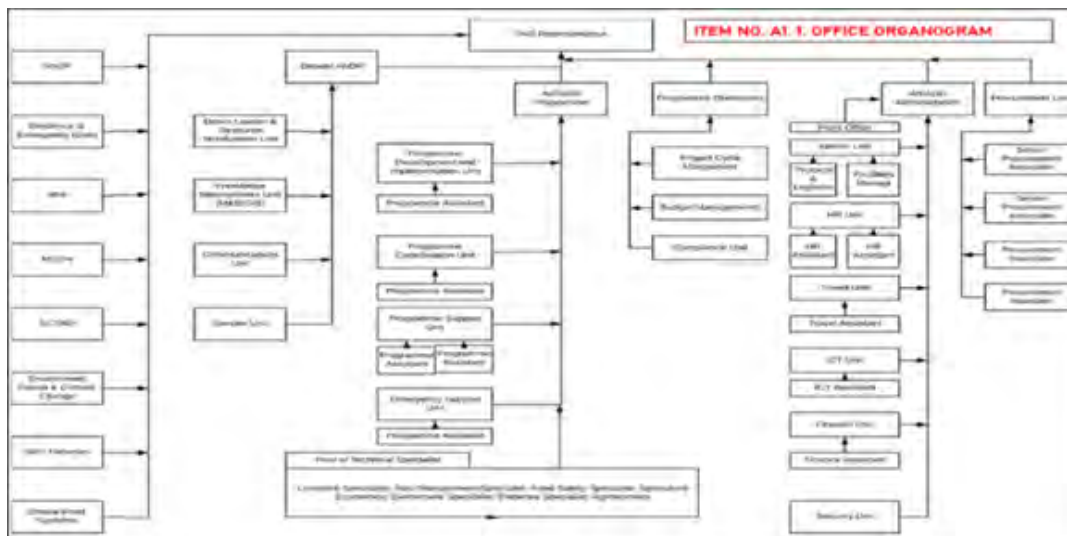


Figure 2 FAO Organizational Structure

Chapter 3: Measuring and Minimizing Procurement Risk of FAO Bangladesh

3.1 Background and Aim of the Study

This chapter explores how an inadequate vendor base and inadequate vendor evaluation criteria can lead to risks within the supply chain of FAO Bangladesh. The primary objective is to analyze real experiences and opinions from employees to understand the challenges and consequences, as well as to develop an action plan aimed at mitigating future risks related to procurement and the supply chain.

3.2 Importance of the Report

The report is important because it highlights a critical area that affects the overall performance and risk exposure of FAO Bangladesh. By identifying those underlying risks in its procurement system, FAO can take steps to improve its systems, reduce risks, and ensure better delivery of goods and services.

3.3 Limitation of the Report

There were a few challenges that came up while developing this report. We gave a survey to twenty employees from different departments of FAO Bangladesh and asked them to fill it out by a certain date. But many responses came in after the deadline, which slowed down the whole process. Also, time limits made it difficult to do additional in-depth research.

As a result, the report primarily reflected the opinions and statements of the participating employees.

3.4 Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

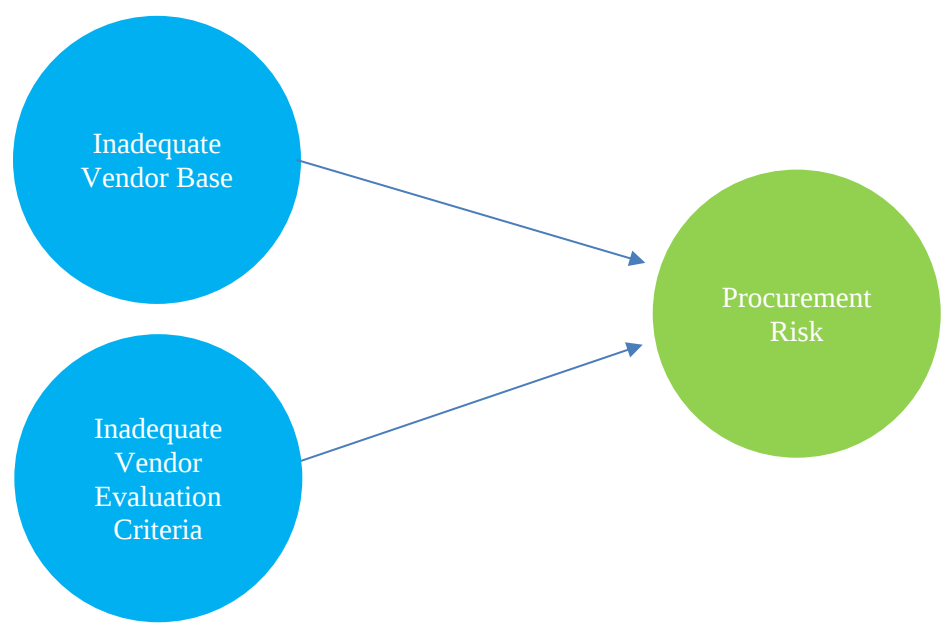


Figure 3 Theoretical Model for this Study

Inadequate Vendor Base:

In the proposed framework, the first segment highlights that an inadequate vendor base can significantly increase organizational risk. A limited number of families vendors may lead to over-dependence on a few suppliers, reduced flexibility, and may expose the vulnerability to supply chain disruptions or quality issues. This suggests a direct and positive relationship between vendor base inadequacy and procurement risk.

Hypothesis:

- **H1:** There is a direct and significant relationship between an inadequate vendor base and the augmentation of organizational risk.

Inadequate Vendor Evaluation Criteria:

In the framework, the second segment emphasizes that inadequate vendor evaluation criteria can significantly increase organizational risk. When vendors are not assessed using comprehensive, objective, and standardized criteria, the likelihood of selecting underperforming, non-compliant, or high-risk suppliers increases. This can cause problems with operations, money loss, and damage to goodwill. Therefore, a direct and positive relationship is expected between poor evaluation criteria and procurement risk

Hypothesis:

- **H2:** There is a direct and significant relationship between inadequate vendor evaluation criteria and the augmentation of organizational risk.

3.5 Implementation Framework

Study Framework

The goal of the study is to show how two independent variables, an inadequate vendor base and inadequate vendor evaluation criteria, are linked with the dependent variable, an increase in the organizational procurement risk. The report also wants to find out if these two independent variables exist in the procurement practices of FAOs, which could make the organization more exposed to risk overall.

Sampling Framework

The aim of the analysis was to evaluate the staff representing all FAO Bangladesh divisions. We selected twenty individuals from each section of FAO Bangladesh. Three of the twenty personnel were assigned to the procurement section, three from the admin and finance unit, four from the operations division, two to the human resources unit, and eight to the requested unit.

Research Instruments

We have prepared a standardized questionnaire with predetermined response possibilities to ensure the accuracy of the data gathered from FAO Bangladesh staff. There were nine questions in the questionnaire:

Eight items focused on measuring the two independent variables of the study.

One question was open-ended, allowing respondents to provide additional insights or suggestions.

We used a five-point Likert scale, which is an ordinal measuring instrument, to see how much people agreed with each statement. This scale went from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," which made it easier to get a better picture of how employees felt.

3.6 Findings and Interpretation of Data

Statistical Analysis of Variables and Hypothesis Evaluation

In this part, I explained about the two independent variables that make up the framework of this study and tested the two hypotheses that had already been set. While doing the survey, I concentrated on getting information about four things related to each variable.

Inadequate Vendor Base

Respondent Feedback on Item 1

The first remark addressing the independent variable 'Inadequate Vendor Base' was: 'An inadequate vendor base raises the likelihood of supply shortages, can lead to higher costs, and increases overall risk. Most respondents expressed agreement with this statement.

An inadequate vendor base raises the likelihood of supply shortages, can lead to higher costs, and increases overall risk.

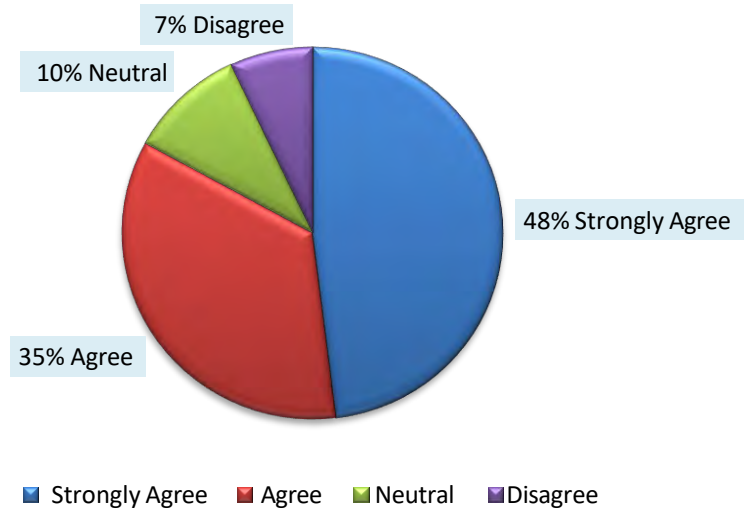


Figure 4 Supply Shortage Risk at FAO

Among the 20 employees of FAO Bangladesh, 48% strongly agreed and 35% agreed that an inadequate vendor base raises the likelihood of supply shortages, can lead to higher costs, and increases overall risk. Meanwhile, 10% of the employees disagreed, and 7% remained neutral. This result indicates a strong consensus that an inadequate vendor base significantly contributes to supply shortages, increased costs, and heightened risk

Respondent Feedback on Item 2

The second remarks regarding the independent variable ‘Inadequate Vendor Base’ was the risk of overpaying for goods relative to their actual value often stems from having an inadequate vendor base. Most respondents expressed agreement with this statement.

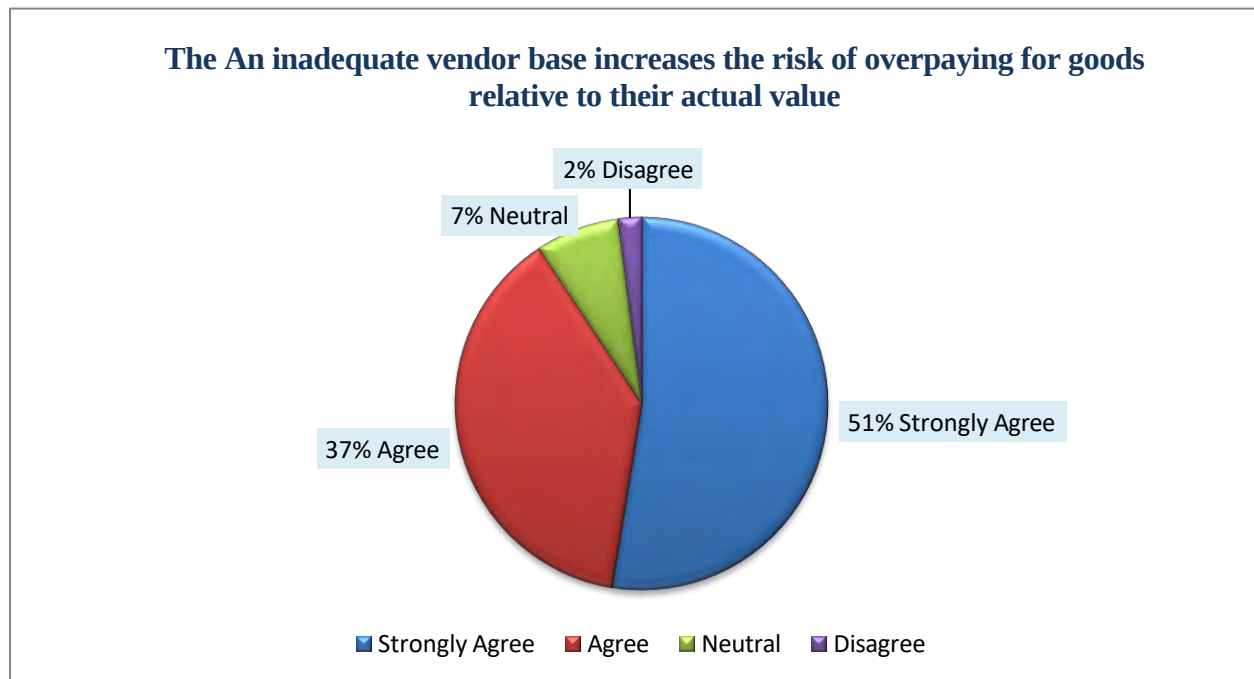


Figure 5 Overpayment Risk at FAO

Among the 20 employees of FAO Bangladesh, 51% strongly agreed and 37% agreed that an inadequate vendor base increases the risk of overpaying for goods relative to their actual value. Moreover, only 8% of the employees disagreed, and 2% remained neutral. This result indicates a strong consensus that an inadequate vendor base significantly increases the risk of overpaying for goods.

Respondent Feedback on Item 3

The third remark regarding the independent variable ‘Inadequate Vendor Base’ was: “An inadequate vendor base increases the risk of receiving poor-quality products due to limited competition and reduced quality assurance”. Most respondents agreed with this statement, indicating a shared concern about quality risks associated with limited supplier options.

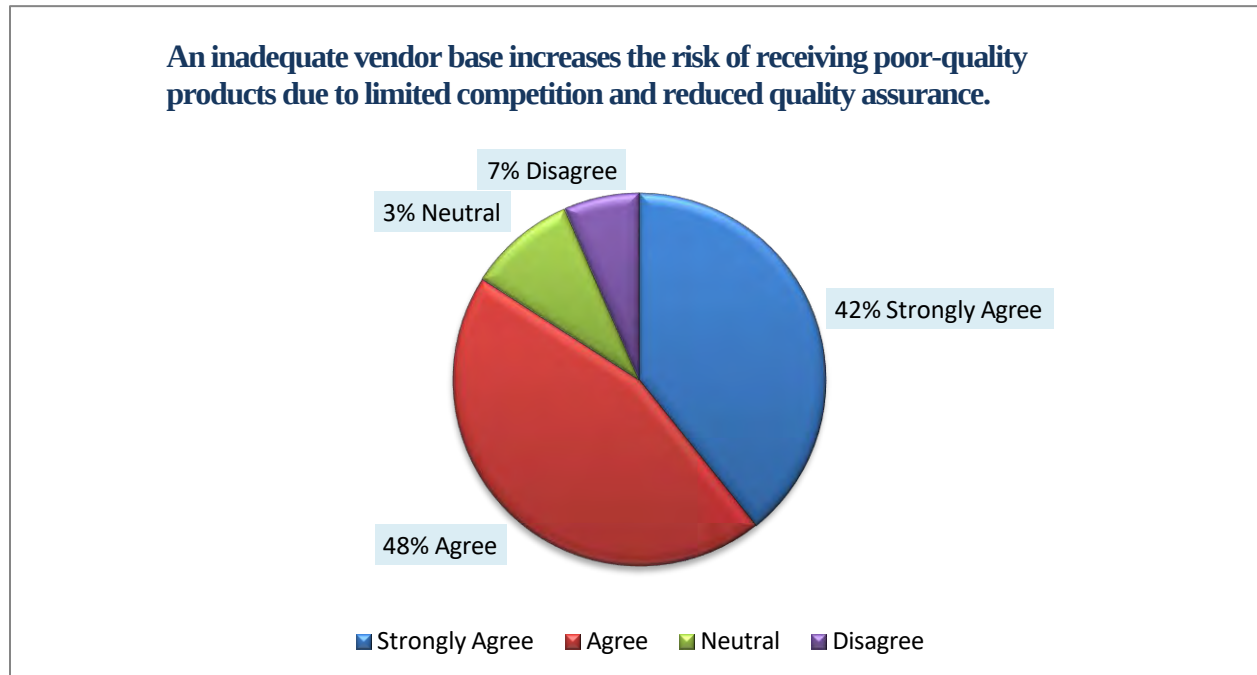


Figure 6 Product Quality Risk at FAO

Among the 20 employees of FAO Bangladesh, 42% strongly agreed and 48% agreed that an inadequate vendor base increases the risk of receiving poor-quality products due to limited competition and reduced quality assurance. Moreover, only 7% of the employees disagreed, and 3% remained neutral. This result indicates a strong consensus that an inadequate vendor base significantly heightens the risk of receiving substandard products.

Respondent Feedback on Item 4

The fourth remark regarding the independent variable ‘Inadequate Vendor Base’ was: “An inadequate vendor base increases the risk of missing out on product discounts due to a limited number of suppliers.” Most respondents agreed with this statement, indicating a shared concern about the financial disadvantages associated with limited or inadequate supplier options.

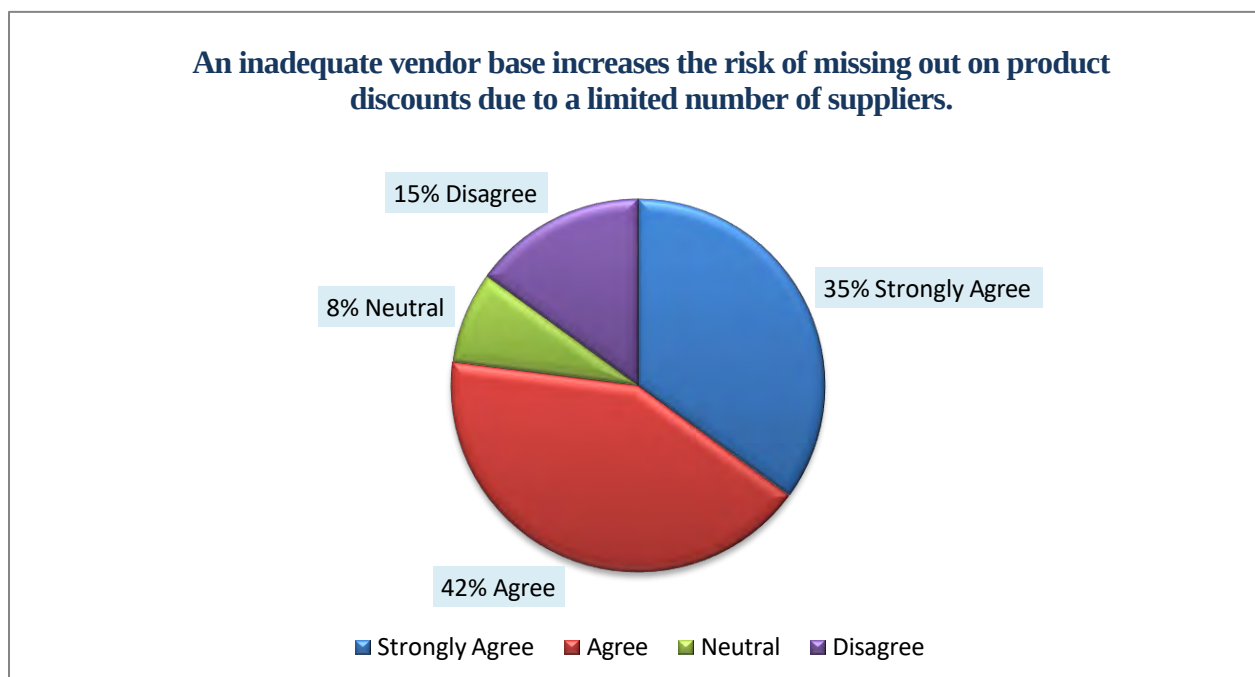


Figure 7 Missed Discount Risk at FAO

Among the 20 employees of FAO Bangladesh, 35% strongly agreed and 42% agreed that an inadequate vendor base increases the risk of missing out on product discounts due to a limited number of suppliers. Moreover, 15% of the employees disagreed, and 8% remained neutral. This result indicates a strong consensus that an inadequate vendor base significantly increases the risk of financial drawbacks.

Summary of Feedback on Remarks 1 to 4

The results from the above four remarks from 01 to 04 support the previously established hypothesis (H1): “There is a direct relationship between an inadequate vendor base and procurement risk.

Most of the people who work with FAO Bangladesh agreed that an inadequate vendor base increases the risk of supply shortages, higher procurement costs, and overall operational risk. It also raises the likelihood of overpaying for goods, receiving poor-quality products due to limited competition, and missing out on discounts due to a lack of supplier options.

Inadequate Vendor Evaluation Criteria

Respondent Feedback on Item 5

five remarks regarding the independent variable 'Inadequate Vendor Evaluation Criteria' was: 'An inadequate vendor evaluation criterion can lead to higher supply chain costs.' Most respondents agreed with this statement, indicating a shared concern about the financial inefficiencies that can arise from poor supplier assessment and selection processes.

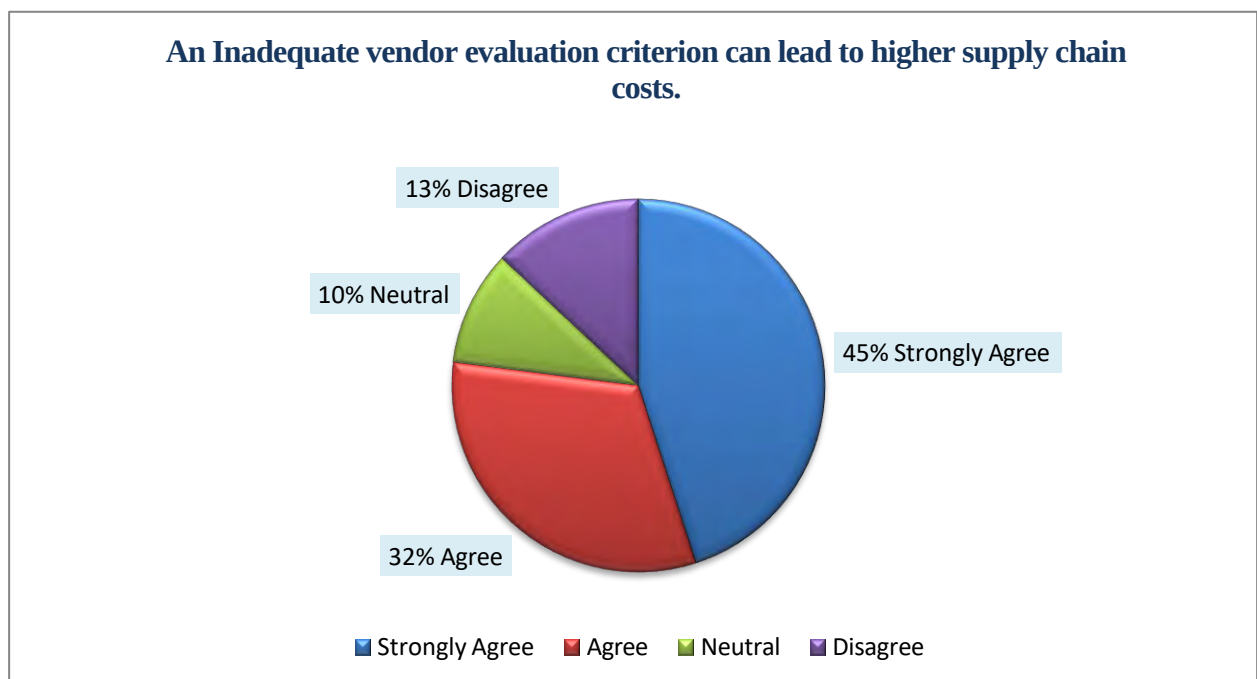


Figure 8 High-Cost Risk at FAO

Among the 20 employees of FAO, 45% strongly agreed and 32% agreed that inadequate vendor evaluation criteria increase the risk of higher supply chain costs. Moreover, 13% of the employees disagreed, and 10% remained neutral. This result suggests a strong perception among respondents that supply chain cost risks are closely linked to inadequate vendor evaluation practices.

Respondent Feedback on Item 6

The sixth remarks regarding the independent variable ‘Inadequate Vendor Evaluation Criteria’ was: “An inadequate vendor evaluation criterion can lead to the selection of unreliable suppliers, increasing the risk of receiving low-quality products.” Most respondents agreed with this statement, indicating the negative impact of poor supplier selection.

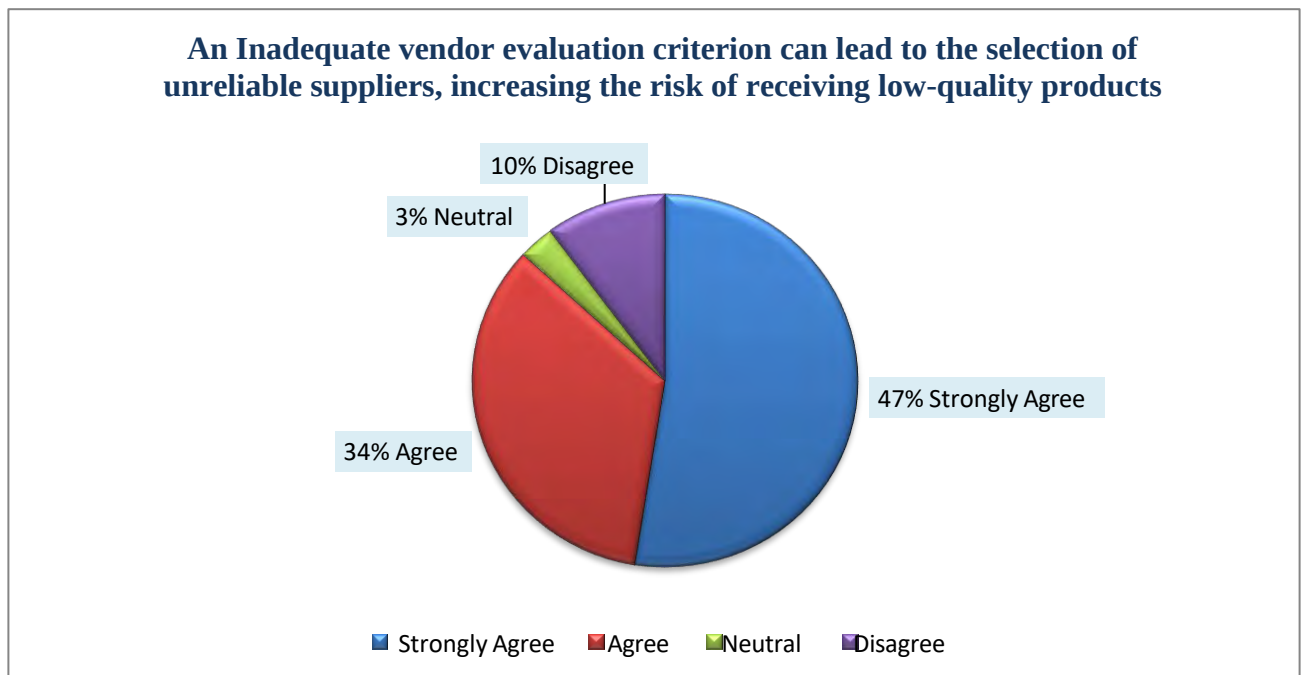


Figure 9 Low-Quality Supplier Risk

Among 20 FAO employees, 47% strongly agreed and 34% agreed that inadequate vendor evaluation increases the risk of selecting unreliable suppliers and receiving low-quality products. Only 10% disagreed and 3% were neutral, indicating a strong consensus on the negative impact of poor vendor assessment

Respondent Feedback on Item 7

The seventh statement regarding the independent variable ‘Inadequate Vendor Evaluation Criteria’ was “Inadequate vendor evaluation criteria can lead to difficulties in claiming warranties or obtaining replacements, increasing operational risks”. Most respondents agreed that inadequate vendor evaluation can hinder warranty claims and replacements.

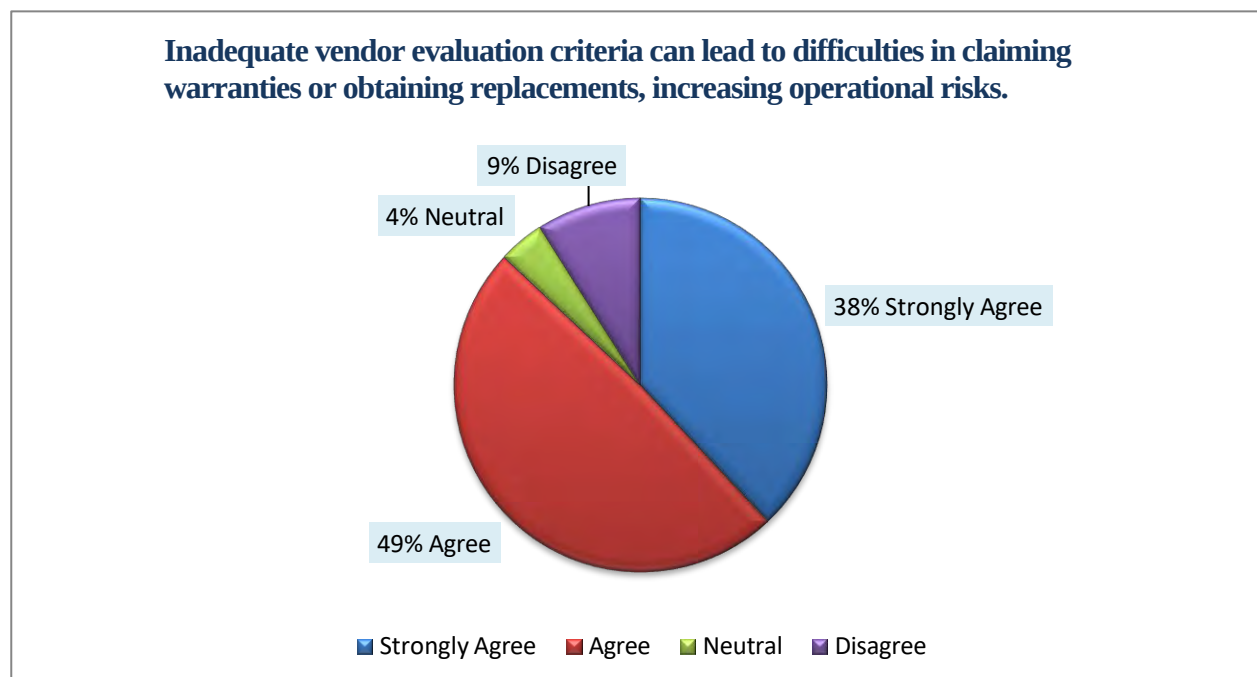


Figure 10 Missing out Warranty & Replacement Risk

Among 20 FAO employees, 38% strongly agreed and 49% agreed that inadequate vendor evaluation can lead to difficulties in claiming warranties or obtaining replacements. Only 9% disagreed and 4% were neutral, reflecting a strong consensus that poor evaluation practices increase operational risks and may prevent buyers from accessing warranty or replacement benefits

Respondent Feedback on Item 8

The eight statement regarding the independent variable ‘Inadequate Vendor Evaluation Criteria was “Inadequate vendor evaluation criteria can increase the risk of delayed deliveries and lead to potential delays and disruptions in operations”. Most respondents agreed that inadequate vendor evaluation criteria can disrupt supply and delivery operations.

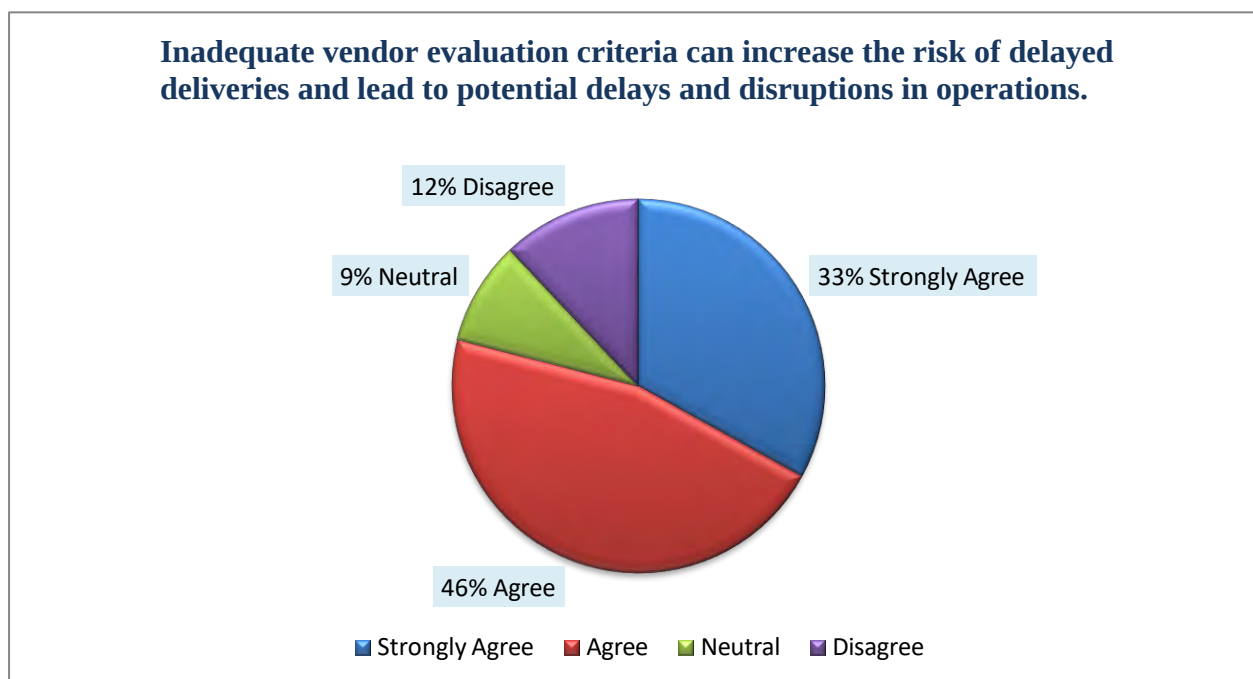


Figure 11 Delivery Delays Risk

Among 20 FAO employees, 33% strongly agreed and 46% agreed that inadequate vendor evaluation increases the risk of delayed deliveries and operational disruptions. Only 12% disagreed and 9% were neutral, indicating a clear concern that poor evaluation practices can negatively impact supply and delivery operations.

Summary of Feedback on Remarks 5 to 8

The results from the above four remarks from 5 to 8 support the previously established hypothesis (H2): “There is a direct relationship between an inadequate vendor evaluation criteria and procurement risk.”

Most employees at FAO Bangladesh agreed that inadequate vendor evaluation criteria can lead to several issues, including increased supply chain costs, the selection of unreliable suppliers, difficulties in claiming warranties or obtaining replacements, and delays in deliveries that disrupt operations.

Summary of Feedback on Remarks 9

At the end of the assessment, I requested of the FAO staff, “Do you observe any shortcomings within the FAO Procurement and Supply Unit, aside from the issues related to an inadequate vendor base and inadequate vendor evaluation criteria?” They gave several key pieces of feedback, highlighting the subsequent issues:

- The FAO occasionally gets poor specifications accompanied by unrealistic delivery timelines, posing significant challenges.
- The FAO encounters difficulties in establishing specifications for inspections conducted both pre- and post-delivery.
- The FAO sometimes takes more than 30 days following a successful delivery to process supplier payments. This may damage FAO's goodwill, leading potential suppliers to lose motivation to collaborate with the FAO.
- The FAO occasionally struggles to organize and execute internal training for all staff involved in the procurement and supply division.
- The FAO is unable to implement cross-functional activities to improve other staff's understanding of the challenges and risks typically faced by the procurement team.
- Lastly, the unit is constrained by a shortage of human resources, limiting its ability to effectively support procurement operations.

My Personal Observation on This Study

While working with the procurement team at FAO, I observed that most tenders are published on the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM). However, after the tender closing dates, the same or similar vendors frequently participate. Although FAO procurement circulates an Expression of Interest (EOI) to attract a broader pool of bidders before launching the actual tender, the outcome remains largely unchanged. This suggests that FAO has not effectively expanded its supplier base across different categories, limiting opportunities to engage new and diverse vendors. This clearly indicates that FAO procurement is facing challenges due to an inadequate vendor base, it doesn't have enough vendors, which makes it hard to work with new and different suppliers in different categories. Thus, limiting opportunities to engage new and diverse suppliers across different categories.

In some of my cases I noticed that all bidders failed to meet the evaluation criteria, which suggest that the criteria may not have been designed in alignment with the actual capacity and capabilities of the supply market. This shows that there is a lack of technical knowledge or we may say that a gap exists in technical expertise when it comes to developing realistic and appropriate evaluation standards. Additionally, I observed a general lack of competence among personnel in preparing standard evaluation criteria reflecting the supply market capacity, which could make these problems happen again and again. This further indicates that FAO procurement is badly struggling to design evaluation frameworks that accurately reflect market conditions and supplier capabilities.

Recommendations

FAO procurement faces challenges due to its inadequate vendor base, as most of the time repetitive suppliers participated in the tender despite efforts like EOIs. This limits competition and supplier diversity. Additionally, supplier evaluation criteria are not prepared considering the supply market capacity and the nature of its requirement, leading to all bidders failing to pass the minimum eligibility criteria for the further evaluation. This clearly indicates a need for improved technical capacity and staff training on documentation preparation.

The FAO should actively find and register new suppliers to increase its overall supply base. It can do this by reaching out to specific groups, consulting other UN agencies, getting involved in local markets, and working with industry associations and chambers of commerce. Besides, FAO should be focused on improving the design and communication of EOIs documentation to catch the supplier's attention. In addition, FAO should regularly conduct sessions with supplier briefings or webinars to find more qualified and varied suppliers. Furthermore, regular market analysis through the EOI process can help the procurement team at FAO figure out the new suppliers and their capacities. FAO should regularly arrange training to improve the knowledge and capacity of the procurement staff and better train them on how to use fair, market-aligned evaluation criteria. FAO should recruit and hire technical specialists to develop the TOR inspection guidelines and establish standard evaluation criteria.

Finally, FAO should aim to get feedback from its suppliers who failed to win. This feedback collection process can help FAO make their procurement processes even better and encourage those suppliers to participate in future opportunities. These procedures will not only make the procurement process more efficient, but they will also help build better connections with suppliers and maintain an open, trustworthy, and collaborative relationship.

Conclusion

This study highlights the main problems associated with the FAO's procurement process. They are mainly related to an inadequate vendor base and inadequate or poor evaluation criteria.

In summary, procurement at the FAO has some big challenges to fix. It needs to do a much better job working with suppliers and assessing them.

The problems can be fixed by carefully contacting the supply market section, making realistic and appropriate evaluation frameworks for vendors, and training all relevant staff. FAO should also focus on employing enough technical staff to develop the "technical documentation" that will help to solve these problems. This will raise the overall value, and provide FAO with a better competitive edge, and make the procurement process more efficient.

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Annex A

Data Collection Instrument at FAO Bangladesh

1. An inadequate vendor base raises the likelihood of supply shortages, can lead to higher costs, and increases overall risk.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

2. An inadequate vendor base increases the risk of overpaying for goods relative to their actual value.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

3. An inadequate vendor base increases the risk of receiving poor-quality products due to limited competition and reduced quality assurance.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

4. An inadequate vendor base increases the risk of missing out on product discounts due to a limited number of suppliers.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

5. An inadequate vendor evaluation criterion can lead to higher supply chain costs.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

6. An inadequate vendor evaluation criterion can lead to the selection of unreliable suppliers, increasing the risk of receiving low-quality products.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

7. Inadequate vendor evaluation criteria can lead to difficulties in claiming warranties or obtaining replacements, increasing operational risks.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral

- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

8. Inadequate vendor evaluation criteria can increase the risk of delayed deliveries and lead to potential delays and disruptions in operations.

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

9. Do you identify any shortcomings within the FAO Procurement and Supply Unit, apart from the challenges related to an inadequate vendor base and inadequate vendor evaluation criteria?

(Please describe briefly below.)

.....