



# Open Contracting Research Training Module

Developing the Capacity  
of Local Researchers  
in Using Open Contracting  
Data in the Philippines

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AUGUST 2020





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# Introduction

► Transparency in the procurement process and the implementation of procurement contracts is one of the principles enshrined in **Republic Act 9184 (Government Procurement Reform Act)** alongside the principles of competitiveness, public monitoring, accountability, and streamlined procurement process. To promote transparency in government procurement activities, government agencies are mandated to publish all bid opportunities and post all awards and contracts in the **Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS)**.

However, public access to contracting information, from planning to implementation is limited. Most contracting documents are not published online and are being kept internally by agencies. The current version of the PhilGEPS does not have information on the planning and implementation stage. This makes tracking and monitoring of government projects difficult, which in turn makes government procurement activities susceptible to fraud, collusion, and corruption.

With support from HIVOS and in partnership with the European Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines, the Provincial Government of South Cotabato implemented an open contracting program to strengthen transparency and accountability in local procurement systems in the province of South Cotabato. This culminated with the publication of local procurement activities in a centralised portal, in compliance with [Open Contracting Data Standard \(OCDS\)](#). HIVOS has conducted similar initiatives elsewhere in the Philippines.

The publication of data, while important, is not sufficient. To fully realise the value of open contracting, it is critical that users are trained to use open contracting data for different purposes such as advocacy, research, and development projects.

While researchers are one of the core potential user groups of contracting data, very few are trained in how to use it. This research module is intended to help guide organisations in training researchers in open contracting data.







# Overall Framework for Capacity Development

## ► What we mean by capacity

“Capacity development is about transformations that empower individuals, leaders, organisations, and societies. If something does not lead to change that is generated, guided and sustained by those whom it is meant to benefit, then it cannot be said to have enhanced capacity, even if it has served a valid development purpose.” (UNDP, 2009)

This definition of capacity development inspires the overall framework for the approach used in this module. Rather than produce a training to cultivate specific skills, we want to build a sustainable approach to help people engage with contracting data. That means creating a set of tools that not only teach skills, but also the attitude, appreciation, and ability to pass on what they have learned. For this purpose, the research capacity development approach that we advocate in this module is hinged on the idea that building capacity is systemic. We need to “think modular”.

Teaching researchers to use open contracting data requires a whole-of-system approach. This means developing the researcher’s capacity but also that of their peers, their managers, and others they interact with. At the same time, we need to strengthen the openness of the environment that makes researching open contracting data feasible. This includes, for example, engaging with contracting data holders to encourage them to give assistance to researchers. However, this view is long-term, and so we look at “building blocks” to



achieve this process and focus mainly on the researcher and the environment in which they operate.

## **A Phased Approach**

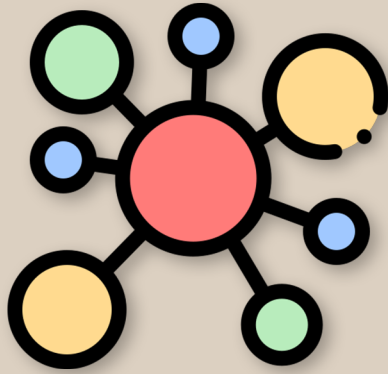
For this purpose, we designed and implemented a phased approach to develop capacity, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Here we explain this phased approach how these phases will be implemented.

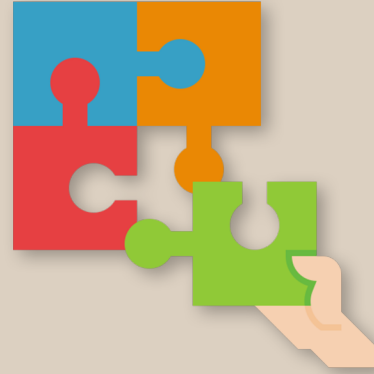
## **Roles**

The role of the “teacher” is that of an “enabler”. He or she “enables” the researcher to arrive at a concrete output at the end of the capacity development process. In this case, this output is a publishable research paper.

Figure 1. From Systemic to Modular



**VIEW: SYSTEMIC**



**APPROACH: MODULAR**

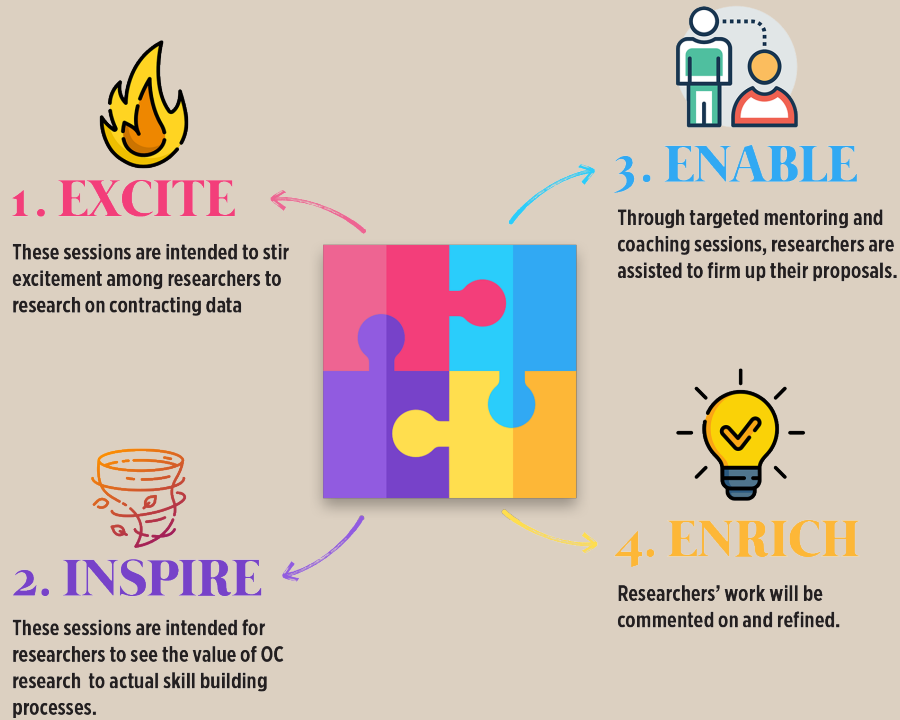


Figure 2. Capacity development approach





# Phase 1: Excite

- ▶ This phase is designed to make researchers excited about doing research using open contracting data. This will involve a single session or a series of sessions that introduce open contracting to researchers, with examples of open contracting research.



### **What we assume**

We assume that researchers are already trained in conducting basic research and are familiar with different research methods

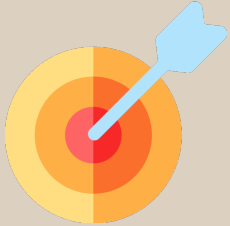
### **What we need to cover**

1. Understanding public procurement in the Philippines and its implications for local government units (if the locale is local government)
2. The basics of open contracting: challenges and opportunities
3. Open contracting in XXXXX (XXXXX can mean a local government unit, an agency, or a ministry. This is to ground the discussion of open contracting research in a particular practice)





4. Use cases of open contracting data
5. Introduction to open contracting data: playing with data to answer research questions



### What we want to achieve

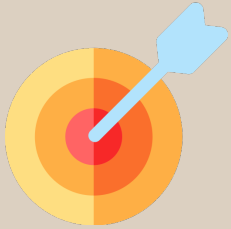
At the end of the session/s, the participants should:

#### Rationale

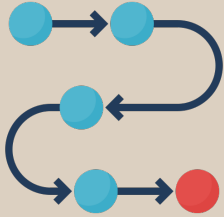
- a. Understand public procurement in the Philippines, including the legal basis, systems, procedures, and implications for contracting processes

#### Experiential

- a. Reflect on their individual experiences with public procurement practices
- b. Appreciate the value of



- b. Learn about open contracting and how it relates to public procurement processes in the Philippines
  - c. Relate actual public procurement scenarios with public procurement laws and open contracting principles
  - d. Apply basic data skills using actual open contracting data to answer questions of interest for public procurement
- transparency and accountability in public procurement and how open contracting contributes to achieving these goals
  - c. Get excited about learning data skills and applying data analytics to open contracting data



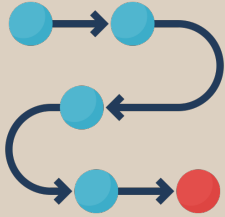
## How we deliver the goods

We suggest that the program includes interactive discussions peppered with exercises and workshops. For each of the topics above, we suggest a few methodologies:

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Topics	Suggested Methodologies
Understanding public procurement in the Philippines and its implications for local government units	Presentation with interactive exercises. While the discussion of the legal provisions may need to be done using a presentation, this should be supplemented with a “provision drill” where trainees are given electronic

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## Topics

## Suggested Methodologies

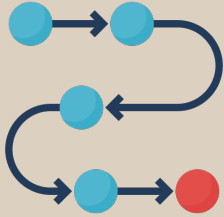
copies of the procurement law and asked to answer questions posed by the facilitator for which they need to locate the provision within the law (or the implementing guidelines).

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The basics of open contracting:  
challenges and opportunities

Interactive discussion using the  
following:

- a. Word puzzle game to introduce the concept of open contracting



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### Topics

### Suggested Methodologies

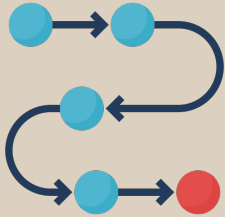
- b. Arrange the steps to discuss the open contracting phases (or cycle):  
planning, tender, award, contract, implementation)
- c. Quick workshop to look at opportunities and challenges related to open contracting

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Use cases of open contracting data

Can be delivered using a case analysis method where participants are given

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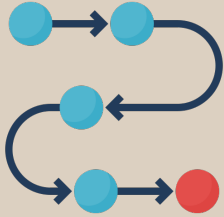
Topics

Suggested Methodologies

short snippets of case studies (abridged versions of open contracting stories)

and asked the following questions:

- a. What problem did they attempt to solve?
- b. How was open contracting used to address the problem?
- c. What lessons can we learn from this case?



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### Topics

Introduction to open contracting data:  
Playing with data to answer research  
questions

### Suggested Methodologies

Participants will need to have laptops  
or be in a computer laboratory with a  
reliable internet connection. They will  
access open contracting portals and  
analyse data with guidance from the  
facilitator. The exercises can be done  
individually or in groups, with questions  
to help guide their data exploration and  
analysis.



## Resources Available:

### On Public Procurement in the Philippines

- [Updated IRR of 9184](#)
- [Local Government Units Procurement Manual](#)

### On Open Contracting

- [Open Contracting Data Standard](#)
- [Successful Tool Re-Use in Open Contracting](#)
- [OCDS Building Block Resource Guide](#)
- [Open Contracting Journey](#)
- [Open Contracting: A Guide for Practitioners by Practitioners](#)





## On Case Studies and Use Cases in Open Contracting

- [HIVOS Repository of Publications and Resources](#)
- [Measuring the Benefits of Open Contracting](#)
- [The Benefits of Open Contracting](#)
- [Mapping Outcomes in Open Contracting](#)
- [Open Contracting Impact Stories](#)

## Analysing (Open Contracting) Data

- [Open Contracting and Procurement Analytics](#)
- [Analysing Open Contracting Data \(Via R\)](#)
- [Basic Data Analysis Guides](#)
- [All You Need to Know About Data Analytics](#)
- [An Introduction to Data Analysis](#)





# Phase 2: Inspire

- ▶ In this phase, we want to show researchers how others have conducted open contracting research by guiding them through a research problem identification exercise using open contracting.



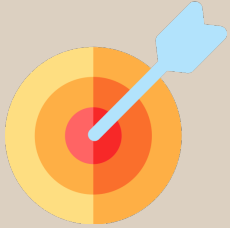
### **What we assume**

We assume participants have already undertaken an introductory course in open contracting, public procurement, and data analytics. In short, they have undergone Phase 1.

### **What we need to cover**

1. Defining research questions in open contracting
2. The open contracting research proposal
3. Research methods, technology, and use
4. Finalising the research proposal





## What we want to achieve

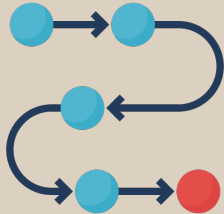
At the end of the session/s, the participants should:

### Rationale

- a. Define concrete research questions and the methods that will enable them to answer their questions
- b. Finalise their research proposal
- c. Draw a plan of action to implement their research proposal

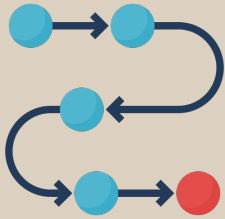
### Experiential

- a. Feel a sense of accomplishment in completing a research proposal
- b. Appreciate the importance of a carefully-planned open contracting research project



## How we deliver the goods

We suggest that the program includes interactive discussions peppered with actual

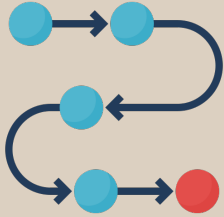


exercises and workshops. For each of the topics above, we suggest a few methodologies:

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Topics	Suggested Methodologies
Defining research questions in open contracting	<p>This should be done using a phased workshop method, addressing the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Is your research question at the intersection of your passion, impact, and strength?</li><li>b. What questions do you want to ask? (exploratory, descriptive, evaluative, explanatory, or predictive?)</li></ol>

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## Topics

## Suggested Methodologies

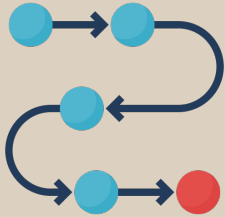
- c. Are you doing basic research?  
Applied research? Or application  
development?

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The open contracting research  
proposal

This will be a workshop that should  
answer the following fundamental  
questions:

1. Research background: What is the  
overall context of the research?
2. Research questions: What



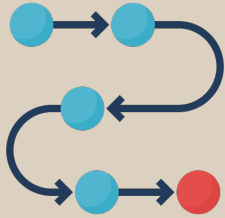
Topics

Suggested Methodologies

questions would you like to address?

3. Review of literature: What has been said before about this research question?
4. Significance and limitations: What are you contributing to this discourse?
5. Methodology: How do you plan to tackle your questions?





Topics

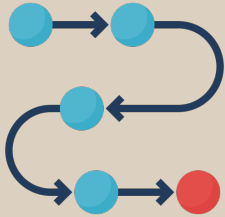
Suggested Methodologies

6. Plan and timetable: How do you plan to implement the proposal?

Research methods, technology, and use

This should be done as a workshop and will be dependent entirely on the nature of the research:

- a. Is it qualitative or quantitative research?
- b. What is the nature of the research?
  - a. Is it basic research? Does it aim



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## Topics

## Suggested Methodologies

to answer basic questions on a particular issue or topic in open contracting?

- b. Is it applied research? Does it want to solve a practical issue affecting an individual or group?

In the case of OC research, this is about advancing the state of technology in open contracting.

- c. Is it about application
-

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## Topics

## Suggested Methodologies

development? Is it a design-based research aimed at developing an app that would address a particular issue or problem in open contracting?

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Finalising the research proposal

This should be a workshop using a mentoring approach.

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## Resources Available:

### On Research Questions

- [Developing Research Questions – Monash University](#)
- [How to Write a Research Question – The Writing Center](#)
- [Research Guide by USC](#)

### On Research Methods

- [Research Design and Method – Virginia Tech](#)
- [Research Methods - Sociology](#)
- [Qualitative Research Methodology - ALNAP](#)
- [Guide to Quantitative Research Methods - HOD](#)



- [Quantitative Methodologies](#)

## On Research Proposals

- [Steps in Developing a Research Proposal](#)
- [Writing a Research Proposal – SHU](#)
- [Writing a Research Proposal – Monash U](#)
- [Writing a Research Proposal – USC Guide](#)





# Phase 3: Enable

- ▶ In this phase, we will assist researchers in the implementation of their research by providing support, encouraging them to move forward, and delivering technical assistance when necessary.



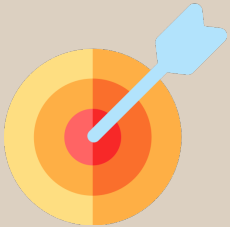
### **What we assume**

We assume that participants have already completed their research proposal.



### **What we need to cover**

In this phase, there is no particular topic to cover. The job of the “enabler” is to provide the necessary support to the researcher.



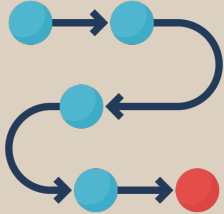
### **What we want to achieve**

The main aim of this phase is to ensure that the researcher can implement their research and deliver the following:

- a. A draft research paper



- b. A draft slide deck to present



### How we deliver the goods

The “enabler” will facilitate at least one meeting per week with the researcher, either online or face-to-face. These meetings should cover the following questions:

- a. What progress has the researcher made towards implementing their research?
- b. What challenges has the researcher encountered?
- c. What support does the researcher need?
- d. What lessons did the researcher learn?



## Resources Available:

### On Research Mentoring

- [Responsible Mentoring of Researchers](#)
- [Responsible Conduct of Research - Mentoring](#)

### On Mentoring in General

- [Quick Guide for Mentors](#)
- [Keys to Successful Mentoring Relationships](#)
- [Approaches to Coaching and Mentoring](#)
- [Nature's Guide for Mentors](#)



## On Research Proposals

- [Steps in Developing a Research Proposal](#)
- [Writing a Research Proposal – SHU](#)
- [Writing a Research Proposal – Monash U](#)
- [Writing a Research Proposal – USC Guide](#)





# Phase 4: Enrich

- ▶ In this phase, we will help researchers to improve their research outputs through a facilitated internal peer review process.



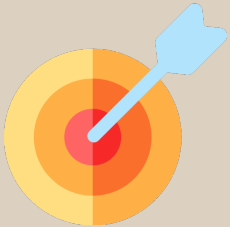
### **What we assume**

We assume that participants have already completed their research.



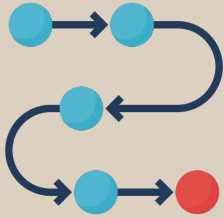
### **What we need to cover**

In this phase, there is no particular topic to cover. The job of the “enabler” is to provide the necessary support to the researcher.



### **What we want to achieve**

The main aim of this phase is to ensure that the researcher improves their research output and delivers a research paper of publishable quality.



## How we deliver the goods

The “enabler” will facilitate a research review process by engaging other scholars whose expertise or research interest is similar to the researcher’s output.

With the approval of the researcher, the “enabler” will share their research with other scholars for review. The “enabler” will also schedule a research presentation with relevant stakeholders.



## Resources Available:

### On Research Review

- [Resources for Peer Reviewers](#)



- [Resources on How to Peer Review](#)
- [Learn to Peer Review with Confidence](#)

## On Research Presentations

- [Presenting Research Effectively](#)
- [Preparing for your Oral Presentation](#)







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August 2020



With funding support from HIVOS

