PROCUREMENT

Transparency declines as public infrastructure data goes unreported

The once-praised public procurement portal now stands silent, raising concerns over accountability and weakening public trust.

Infrastructure.

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The Government Procurement Portal (GPP), once central to tracking public infrastructure projects, has recorded a sharp decline in disclosures, raising concerns about transparency and accountability in public spending.

Latest figures show that only six infrastructure projects worth Shs213 billion were published on the portal in 2025. No project or financial disclosures have been recorded this year.

The drop is a significant reversal from previous years. In 2022, 126 projects valued at Shs3.4 trillion were disclosed on the GPP following targeted training of procurement officials.

Reporting, however, dropped to just seven projects in 2023 before rising again in 2024, when 253 projects worth Shs352b were published.

However, that progress has not been sustained.

Jolly Violet, a project officer at CoST Uganda, which provided the data above, warned that the country is losing ground after initially leading Africa in open contracting. "We made history as the first African country to publish infrastructure data using the Open Contracting for Infrastructure Data Standard, but we are now witnessing a troubling trend where vital project data is disappearing from public view," she said.

She attributed the decline to a combination of challenges, including staff turnover, which has led to the loss of trained personnel, and limited refresher training to keep up with evolving standards.

"Many officials trained to publish this data have left their positions, and without continuous training, compliance becomes difficult," Violet said.

Other factors include weak policy enforcement, gaps in integrating new reporting requirements into the system, and unreliable internet connectivity affecting reporting by local entities.

Despite the setbacks, Aloysius Byaruhanga, the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) director of performance monitoring, said it is important to maintain transparency in infrastructure investments.

"Infrastructure is critical to Uganda's economic transformation, and these investments must be managed with integrity, efficiency, and accountability," he said, describing the upgraded GPP as a key milestone in the country's digital procurement journey.



The Government Procurement Portal shows declining infrastructure disclosures, raising concerns over transparency, accountability, and public oversight of government spending. PHOTO / FILE

Analysts warn that reduced visibility of infrastructure data weakens public oversight and undermines trust in government spending.

The decline also comes at a time when Uganda faces a significant infrastructure financing gap.

A World Bank report estimates the country requires about $1.4b annually to meet its infrastructure needs, while inefficiencies result in losses of nearly $300m each year.

Experts say restoring transparency will require stronger policy enforcement, renewed investment in capacity building, and upgrades to the procurement portal to align with evolving global standards.

"With the right investments in technology and human capacity, Uganda can reclaim its position as a leader in transparency and rebuild public trust," Violet said.

The decline in public infrastructure disclosures signals a setback for a platform once seen as a key tool for promoting accountability in Uganda's public investments.

Key data

253

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