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Transparencia y efectividad en la ejecución presupuestaria y contratación pública en los gobiernos cantonales

Transparency and effectiveness in budget execution and public procurement in cantonal governments

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the research was to design an improvement plan of the public procurement processes in San José de Chimbo Cantonal Decentralized Autonomous Government, to improve transparency and effectiveness in budget execution and control. The type of research was descriptive with a non-experimental design. Among the main results, the lack of interdepartmental communication and the lack of coordination between the annual operating plan, the annual contracting plan and the budget stand out, which have caused poor budget execution. Undoubtedly, research on public procurement processes is crucial in order to enhance public management and understand the impact it has on the financial and budgetary situation of government entities.

Descriptors: Recruitment; planning; state budget; program planning; electronic catalog. (Words taken from the UNESCO Thesaurus).

INTRODUCTION

In Latin America, the public contracting system has become a fundamental part of the acquisition of goods and services in the state entities, which focus is aimed at increasing the use of public resources efficiently and effectively. Besides, it generates equitable opportunities for entrepreneurs, due to everyone may participate as bidders to comply with the principles of efficiency, transparency and quality.

In this context, budget execution is important because the collection of income and expenses is determined through this phase, visualizing how the money has been invested. Through this means, the degree of execution is known in relation to the budget. In this respect, when budget execution is efficient, goods and services necessary to satisfy the needs of the population may be acquired.

In the particular case of Ecuador, the Cantonal Decentralized Autonomous Governments (DAG), being independent, have the Legislative Organ (Cantonal Council) as the governing body to seek the best programming policies, projection of income and expenses so that they remain in a balanced scale, they also have the power to program their budget based on their own multi-year and operational planning.

Despite the above, the Cantonal Decentralized Autonomous Governments face a deficient budget allocation provided by the Central Government, through the Ministry of Finance, which makes it impossible to meet the proposed goals in relation to the acquisition of goods and services, execution of programs and projects. The fact of not having the necessary resources generates a lag in the fulfillment time, causing incompliance of the contracting process and, consequently, of the administrative planning, budgeting, payment to suppliers, among others. Besides, the budgetary allocations should be available monthly, but due to the funding of resources depends on the financial situation of the Ministry of Finance and the cash flow of the Central Bank, the availability of money in the accounts of each DAG cannot be ensured.

It should be specified that the Cantonal Decentralized Autonomous Governments obtain resources by self-management; however, these revenues are not enough to support the execution of territorial development plans. Therefore, the objective of the investigation is to design a plan to improve the processes for public contracting in the Decentralized Autonomous Government of the Cantonal of San José de Chimbo, as a contribution mechanism to improve transparency and effectiveness in budget execution and control.

METHOD

This research was non-experimental and cross-sectional descriptive, since an analysis of budget executions and public procurement processes was carried out. At the same time, the historical-logical method was applied because the literature was reviewed in relation to the period of time from old times to the present. The interview and the survey were applied through a questionnaire of closed structured multiple-choice questions, which was applied to five officials of the financial department of the Municipal Decentralized Autonomous Government of San José de Chimbo Canton, located in the Bolívar province, who participated in voluntarily and made up the universe of study (Zamora-Cabrera, Narváez-Zurita & Erazo-Álvarez, 2019).

RESULTS

Budget and public purchases: The budget and public purchases are important axes of government accounting, since through the budget public revenues and expenditures are organized. By means of public purchases, the expenses that are presented in the budget are executed. In this sense, good budget planning allows the frequent and adequate use of public purchases so that taxpayers may access better services.

Once the research instruments were applied, the following results were obtained:

Relationship between the AOP and the budget: It was evidenced that there is no relationship between the AOP and the budget, being this the main reason why the budget is not executed according to the needs of the population.

AOP as a reference to prepare the budget: The AOP is an important element in planning, which is consistent with the budget, however, this aspect is not considered in the institution, at the same time in the results, it is found that there is no relationship between the two instruments, in addition, the preparation of the AOP does not take into account the institutional objectives and goals.

Frequencies of budget execution reports: They are prepared every three months by the personnel of the financial department, using the information reflected in the government accounting with the accruals and existing commitments during the quarter.

Budget execution and its importance: As a result of applying the indicators, it is determined that the level of budget execution is low. When an execution of this magnitude occurs, it causes institutional management to be deficient, by virtue of that , the vital needs of the population are not met.

Departmental communication: Communication is non-existent. The legislative body when approving the budget does not request support from the financial director. Because of this, it does not understand the budget situation and it becomes unreliable information. Between the departmental areas there is lack of coordination due to the lack of communication, causing that the requested requirements do not arrive within the established deadlines and, therefore, do not appear in the official documentation.

The Annual Contracting Plan (ACP) and the budget: It is identified that there is no relationship between these instruments, since the ACP is prepared according to the requirements of the staff; however, there are departments that do not present their needs on time so they are not included in this instrument.

Planning of the contracting processes: There is no timetable for the activities to be carried out, they are only governed by the times established for the pre-contractual and contractual preparation phases.

Types of contracting: Those of smaller amount, negligible amount, electronic catalog for the facilities they provide, and sometimes, the reverse auction, consultancy and special regime are used.

Parameterization in the public contracting processes: To start the contracting processes, the activities mentioned in the manual of good public contracting practices are followed, respecting the guidelines established in the law of the public contracting system.

Transparency: Public contracting processes are uploaded to the web portal of the public contracting system, in this way, the accountability is presented in person, however, when reviewing the web page there is no option to check the information relevant to the institutional arrangements.

PROPOSAL

The results obtained derived from the need to create an improvement plan of the public procurement and budget control processes for the Municipal Decentralized Autonomous Government of San Jose de Chimbo.

Element 1: Planning

This component aims to improve the planning of public procurement processes, through the use of orderly and sequential actions that allow the successful achievement of the objectives, so that they may be more efficient and effective in search of the improvement of the institution.

Element 2: Budget

It is the necessary instrument for future decision making; it will allow knowing the economic and financial management of the institution, in this way, all acquisitions will be contemplated in the budget, being acquired without any inconvenience.

Element 3: Digitized Instruments

The digitized instruments store the information in technological means to reduce the space and preserving the documentation over time without the danger of being lost; obtaining, in this way, excellent results for the communication and information of the institution.

Element 4: Control

This component allows knowing the situation of the institution, it also serves to verify the processes and objectives, and in case of deviations, take corrective actions on time.

Element 5: Monitoring

It allows being in constant contact with the interests of the institution to supervise the actions carried out, the hiring processes and the personnel working in the DAG.

Element 6: Transparency

It is an important act in the public sector to make the information of the institution transparent and, therefore, know the management that the authorities perform in the Cantonal DAG.

Element 7: Social responsibility

The purpose of this component is to comply with accountability, transparency, ethical behavior and respect towards the environment.

DISCUSSION

The most essential part of this study corresponds to the fact that there must be coordination between the budget, the annual contracting plan and the annual operating plan, because it will allow making efficient decisions in the Cantonal Decentralized

Autonomous Government of San José de Chimbo. To achieve this, such decisions must be coordinated between departments to obtain quality results.

The public contracting improvement plan for the Cantonal DAG of San José de Chimbo will permit to make the contracting processes efficiently and transparently as determined in article 8 of the National Public Procurement Law. For budget execution to be efficient, it will have to be in accordance with departmental needs and based on the policies established by the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

In addition, these actions will provide information so that the personnel working in the public procurement department may carry out the work in a timely manner. With the use of this plan, innovation will be accomplished through social responsibility and it will be evaluated through appropriate indicators to identify the efficiency, effectiveness and the level of control necessary for the fulfillment of objectives.

Finally, the results obtained in this research serve as the basis for subsequent studies related to the public procurement system and the budgets of public or private companies, since the budget constitutes a fundamental part of the administration of resources and public procurement of goods and services.

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