

Research Overview

Emma McEvoy

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Emma was recently awarded an Irish Research Council (IRC) Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship. Emma's research, which is supervised by Professor Michael Doherty, is entitled 'Facilitating 'Small and Medium Size Enterprises' (SMEs) Participation in Public Procurement'. Public bodies spend billions of Euro purchasing goods and services, making procurement an important lever for achieving societal goals. Emma's research questions to what extent the inclusion of social clauses in public procurement facilitates SME participation. Improving the relationship between SMEs and public procurement is intended to bring about increased value to the European economy, stimulate higher growth and increase job opportunities.

A primary aim of the research is to address the core problems faced by public bodies in facilitating SME friendly policies in their tendering practices. Secondly, the research recognises that there is a gap in significant literature and aims to contribute to the level of understanding of the strategic role of European procurement to both academics and practitioners. A cross-national comparative case study approach is adopted to assess the impact of the inclusion of social clauses in public contracts.

Second more detailed option;

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The research examines the relationship between public procurement and small and medium size enterprises ("SMEs"). Public procurement refers to the procedures by which public bodies purchase goods, services or construction works. The research questions to what extent the inclusion of social clauses in public procurement facilitates SME participation. Whilst SMEs represent 99% of all businesses in the EU, SMEs are disproportionately represented in public markets. SMEs are faced with administrative and financial barriers when competing for public contracts (European Commission, 2014). European Public Procurement Directives include a number of social clauses which encourage small business and social enterprise participation, such as the permissible division of large contracts into smaller lots, use of local conditions and setting aside of certain contracts. The research investigates the extent to which the inclusion of social clauses in public contracts facilitates SME participation. Improving the relationship between SMEs and public procurement is intended to bring about increased value to the European economy, stimulate higher growth and increase job opportunities.

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