

**How Complete Is Saint Lucia's Published Procurement Record? A Census Audit of the
Department of Finance Portal**

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Abstract

Public procurement transparency depends on whether records reveal who bought what, from whom, for how much, when, and by what process. This fixed-date census audited Saint Lucia's Department of Finance tender portal. On August 12, 2026, the search archive indexed 840 records, of which 831 detail pages were retrievable. Pages were coded for availability, core fields, award content, lifecycle linkage, timeliness, observable competition, supplier recurrence, agency variation, and record-ID patterns. Of indexed pages, 98.9% opened, and 96.0% of retrievable pages linked an attachment. Yet only 55.7% had a recoverable portal-reported Published date and 78.6% a usable reference. Among 152 award pages, supplier identity was disclosed on 96.1%, value and currency on 96.7%, duration on 98.0%, explicit method on 93.4%, and an award or signature date on 29.6%. Submitted-participant counts appeared on 116 of 133 potentially competitive pages (87.2%); rejection information appeared on 52.6%. Seventy awards (46.1%) linked with high confidence to an earlier portal solicitation. The highest-ID band was more complete than early bands, suggesting but not establishing temporal improvement. The portal is high-availability and document-rich but only partly analysis-ready. Because procurement information may be published through other channels, the study cannot estimate coverage of all government procurement, determine legal compliance, or infer wrongdoing from missing portal data.

Keywords: public procurement, transparency, open contracting, procurement data, Saint Lucia, e-procurement

How Complete Is Saint Lucia's Published Procurement Record? A Census Audit of the Department of Finance Portal

Public procurement is where public budgets become contracts, infrastructure, medicines, consulting services, equipment, and other inputs to public services. Transparency at this point in the expenditure chain matters for several audiences at once. Potential suppliers need enough information and time to compete. Procurement officials need consistent records to monitor performance. Oversight institutions need to reconstruct decisions. Citizens, researchers, and journalists need to know what was acquired, by whom, from whom, for what amount, and through which process. A notice that exists online but cannot be found, linked, dated, or analyzed only partially serves those purposes.

Saint Lucia's Department of Finance maintains a public tender portal containing general procurement notices, invitations and opportunities, requests for expressions of interest, award notices, reports, and related records (Government of Saint Lucia, Department of Finance, n.d.-a). The portal is significant because it places a substantial historical record in one publicly accessible location. It also creates an empirical opportunity. Instead of asking whether transparency is desirable in the abstract, it is possible to test what the published record actually discloses.

This article asks: **Among procurement records published on the Department of Finance portal, how complete, timely, and competitive is the disclosed information?** It addresses five subsidiary questions:

1. How many indexed portal records remain retrievable, and how consistently do they include core metadata?

2. Among contract-award pages, how often are the successful supplier, final value, currency, duration, method, dates, bid counts, and rejection information disclosed?
3. Can solicitation and award pages be linked, and what timing can be measured where dates are usable?
4. What can the disclosed record show about procurement methods, bidder participation, and repeat suppliers?
5. Do disclosure patterns differ across implementing-agency labels and record-ID bands?

The wording is deliberately narrow. This is a census of records indexed by one public portal on one capture date. It is not a census of all procurement by the Government of Saint Lucia. The procurement legislation permits or requires publication in several media, including the *Gazette*, newspapers, a government website, and other electronic means depending on the type of notice. The Department of Finance also links to a separate In-Tend electronic government procurement platform. No independent, complete contract register was available against which the portal could be compared. Accordingly, a missing page or field is evidence about portal disclosure, not proof that a procurement did not occur, that a legal duty was breached, or that wrongdoing occurred.

That distinction leads to the article's main contribution. Procurement publication should be audited at three layers: *availability*, whether a record can be found and opened; *disclosure density*, whether important facts appear somewhere in the page or attachment; and *analytical usability*, whether those facts are structured, consistently dated, machine-readable, and linked across the procurement lifecycle. Saint Lucia's portal performs differently at each layer. The result is best described as a *document-rich but data-thin* disclosure system. The archive is

extensive and many award notices are substantively detailed, but historical dates, stable identifiers, lifecycle links, and structured fields remain incomplete.

Legal and Institutional Context

Procurement objectives and publication duties

The consolidated *Public Procurement Act, Cap. 15:10* identifies transparency, competition, broad participation, fair treatment, value for money, and integrity among the purposes of the procurement system (Government of Saint Lucia, 2023a, § 3). The Director of Public Procurement is assigned information, monitoring, reporting, and public-dissemination functions, including the development of mechanisms for collecting procurement information and the use of websites and other systems (§ 5). The Procurement Administration Unit within the Department of Finance supports these regulatory and oversight functions (Government of Saint Lucia, Department of Finance, n.d.-b).

Publication duties are distributed across statutes, regulations, and administrative guidance. For award decisions, section 76(3) of the Act requires tenderers to be notified of the proposed successful tenderer's name and address and the contract price. Section 76(7) requires a procuring entity to publish the contract award immediately in a newspaper or on the Government website (Government of Saint Lucia, 2023a). The *Public Procurement Regulations, 2023*, which took effect on October 10, 2023, require procurement advertisements or notifications to identify the procuring entity, the nature of the requirement, how documents may be obtained, and the submission deadline (Government of Saint Lucia, 2023b, regs. 4–5). Regulation 5 specifies publication in the *Gazette* and a newspaper of general circulation and permits additional publication on the Government website. Regulation 44 calls for a quarterly award notice in the

Gazette, on the Ministry of Finance website where applicable, or by other appropriate means, including electronically.

These provisions have two implications for the study. First, the Finance portal is an important channel but cannot be assumed to be the complete statutory publication universe. A solicitation absent from this portal may have appeared in the *Gazette*, a newspaper, the In-Tend platform, or another authorized medium. Second, internal record-retention duties are not the same as proactive public-disclosure duties. Regulation 50 requires procuring entities to retain detailed records, including bidder names, prices, evaluation results, and reasons for termination, but it does not make every internally retained item automatically public. The audit therefore evaluates disclosure quality against operational and international benchmarks without converting every benchmark field into a claim of legal noncompliance.

The 2025 *Public Procurement Manual* provides a useful operational benchmark. Its award-publication guidance lists the contract reference and description, contract value, award date, supplier name, and supplier location (Procurement Administration Unit, 2025, § 7.9). The manual contains an unresolved threshold placeholder, “\$ECD xxx,” and notes that donor-funded procurement may follow external-agency procedures. This study uses the listed fields as an administrative disclosure template, not as an enforceable threshold test. Records predating October 10, 2023 were not assessed retroactively against the 2023 Regulations, and records predating the 2025 Manual were not assessed retroactively against that manual.

Electronic procurement and multiple public interfaces

Saint Lucia announced an In-Tend software-as-a-service electronic procurement system in 2020. The stated objectives included faster procedures, wider supplier access, improved transparency, and contract-award data that could support analysis and strategic planning (Government of Saint

Lucia, Department of Finance, 2020). The 2025 manual describes the e-procurement portal as supporting opportunity publication, document access, electronic submissions, evaluations, and award details (Procurement Administration Unit, 2025). The Department of Finance's Procurement Administration Unit page links both a government e-procurement entry point and the In-Tend supplier portal (Government of Saint Lucia, Department of Finance, n.d.-b).

This institutional landscape makes scope precision especially important. The present study audits the historical tender archive hosted on finance.gov.lc. It does not audit the In-Tend platform, newspaper archives, the *Gazette*, procuring-entity files, payment systems, or donor portals. The coexistence of public interfaces is relevant to the discussion because fragmented publication can make an individual portal incomplete even when the broader system publishes information elsewhere.

Prior Research and Disclosure Benchmarks

Why accessible procurement data can matter

Open procurement data can reduce information-search costs, expand oversight, and lower barriers to supplier entry. Duguay et al. (2023) studied the European Union's release of procurement notices in a cohesive, bulk-accessible database and found greater use of open bidding, more bids, and new-vendor entry. Their results also showed weaker contract-execution performance on some dimensions, which is a useful warning: disclosure can change competition and monitoring, but it does not guarantee better outcomes in every stage.

Research on electronic procurement is similarly nuanced. Lewis-Faupel et al. (2016) found no evidence of lower prices in public-works procurement in India and Indonesia, but reported improvements in road quality in India, reduced delays in Indonesia, and more awards to firms from outside the procuring region. The result is consistent with e-procurement facilitating

entry by higher-quality contractors rather than mechanically lowering price. Khorana et al. (2024) likewise emphasize that e-government procurement and institutional quality jointly shape transparency. Technology is an enabling infrastructure, not a substitute for governance, standards, and data management.

For oversight purposes, detailed electronic procurement records can support indicators of competition and integrity. Fazekas et al. (2016), for example, link recurrent awards and restricted competition to a validated corruption-risk framework in a setting with extensive contract-level data. That research does not justify labeling every repeated supplier, direct method, short window, or missing field a corruption indicator. Such inference requires a sufficiently complete universe, carefully defined risk constructs, contextual controls, and external validation. The Saint Lucia portal dataset does not meet those requirements. This study therefore reports disclosure and competition descriptors, not a corruption-risk score.

Data quality and international frameworks

Several international frameworks converge on a lifecycle view of procurement disclosure. PEFA dimension PI-24.3 treats public access to procurement plans, opportunities, awards, complaints, and statistics as part of sound public financial management, with award information including the purpose, contractor, and value (PEFA Secretariat, 2018). MAPS places procurement publication within an effective information system and emphasizes centralized, current, accessible information that can support analysis across procurement stages (MAPS Initiative, 2025). The UNCITRAL Model Law similarly treats public notice of contract awards as a basic transparency mechanism (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law [UNCITRAL], 2011).

The Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) supplies a more granular data model. It links planning, tender, award, contract, and implementation information under a common contracting-process identifier and provides structured fields for buyers, suppliers, amounts, currencies, dates, methods, tenderers, and contract periods (Open Contracting Partnership, n.d.-a). OCDS quality guidance asks whether data are relevant, discoverable, accessible, timely, complete, and sufficiently structured for intended uses. Its practical test is whether the data answer who bought what, from whom, for how much, when, and how (Open Contracting Partnership, n.d.-b).

The World Bank's procurement-data analytics framework adds a country-specific reason to focus on standardization. A 2021 assessment covering Saint Lucia, Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada identified a lack of common standards for recording procurement transactions across contracting entities, strengthening the case for e-procurement and standardized reporting (Cocciolo et al., 2022). The present audit examines how that broader issue appears at the public-disclosure layer.

No single benchmark is treated here as a binding checklist. Instead, the overlapping elements inform a stage-specific audit: identifiable buyer and process, clear opportunity and deadline, award supplier and value, method and competition evidence, event and publication dates, and links between stages. Table 1 summarizes the constructs and the limits placed on interpretation.

Table 1

Three-Layer Framework for Auditing Procurement Publication

Layer	Operational question	Illustrative indicators	Interpretation
Availability	Can the indexed record be found and opened?	Indexed links; retrievable pages; attachment links	Portal access, not total procurement coverage

Layer	Operational question	Illustrative indicators	Interpretation
Disclosure density	Does the public record state core facts?	Reference; entity; supplier; value; dates; duration; bid counts	Presence in HTML or readable attachment
Analytical usability	Can records be compared and linked reliably?	Structured dates; stable IDs; consistent method codes; lifecycle links; bulk data	Supports reproducible monitoring and analysis

Note. The framework distinguishes disclosure on the Finance portal from system-wide coverage of government procurement.

Method

Design and estimands

The study is a descriptive census audit of records discoverable through the Department of Finance portal's Tender search index on August 12, 2026. The principal estimand is *internal portal-record completeness*, defined as the share of retrievable portal records that disclose a specified field under the applicable coding rule. A second estimand is *portal linkage completeness*, defined as the share of award pages that can be linked with defensible confidence to an earlier solicitation-like page on the same portal. Timing and competition statistics are calculated only for records with the necessary disclosed fields.

The study does not estimate *system-wide publication coverage*, meaning the percentage of all government procurements represented on the portal. That measure requires an independent denominator such as a comprehensive contract register, financial-management transaction file, or consolidated award register. No such denominator was part of the portal dataset. The study also does not estimate procurement legality, value for money, collusion, corruption, contract performance, or the accuracy of facts stated in the notices.

Portal population and retrieval

The visible /tenders/ listing was not used as the historical denominator because it contained only 18 active or retained rows on the capture date. Instead, a blank search restricted to type Tender exposed the archive at /search/Tender/null. The search had 84 distinct pages of results with 10

records per page. Page 85 and later repeated the last page rather than returning an empty result, so the crawler stopped when a page contributed no new record identifiers.

The resulting manifest contained 840 unique indexed records with numeric portal IDs ranging from 1 to 854. Fourteen numbers were absent from the index. These sequence gaps were treated as database absences, not as missing procurements. Each indexed detail URL was then requested with browser-like headers, redirects, retries, and a modest request rate because the server intermittently returned HTTP 406 to default clients. Nine indexed URLs redirected to the tender landing page rather than returning a record. The retrievable population was therefore 831 detail pages.

For reproducibility, the extraction retained the indexed title, snippet, search page, visible date strings, detail URL, final URL, HTTP status, page fields, attachment links, raw text, capture time, and SHA-256 hash. The replication materials contain derived records and source URLs but do not redistribute the full collection of government attachments.

Units and category treatment

The primary unit for archive-level analysis is one indexed portal record. The primary unit for award completeness is one page categorized by the portal as “Award of Contracts.” A portal page may represent one contract, several lots, several suppliers, an amendment, a reposting, or a duplicate. It is therefore not assumed to equal one procurement transaction.

All 831 retrievable pages are included in the archive description, including 30 vehicle-sale records and five reports, because they were indexed within the Tender archive. Stage-specific measures use narrower denominators. Solicitation-window analyses were restricted to seven solicitation-like categories. Award-field analyses used the 152 award pages. Competition-disclosure denominators excluded 19 pages that explicitly identified Direct Selection or Direct

Contracting. Individual Consultant Selection and other consultant methods remained applicable unless the source expressly identified a direct procedure; an omitted participant count was coded missing, not not-applicable.

Repeated notices were preserved in the page-level census because revisions, extensions, lots, and stage changes are genuine features of the public archive. Exact normalized title, reference, category, and description fingerprints were used to flag candidate duplication. One award pair, portal IDs 426 and 428, reproduced the same award content. Both pages remain in page-completeness rates; one is excluded from supplier-concentration and page/lot bid-count sensitivity analyses to avoid double counting the same disclosed award.

Archive-field coding

The detail-page template was parsed for title, category, public reference, financing, implementing agency, location, status, description, and supporting-document links. A field was coded usable only when it contained substantive information. Empty values and placeholders such as N/A, NA, Closed, “See Attachment,” and “See in Link” were not counted as direct structured disclosure for the relevant field.

Historical detail pages did not display the table’s Published date or the portal Procedure value. The search-index snippet exposed up to three ISO-format dates. Comparison with the current tender table established the order as configured start, configured close or status, and Published date: all 12 live rows with a valid third search date matched the visible Published column, and all 17 applicable live rows matched the detail-page status date. A valid third date was therefore coded as a recoverable *portal-reported Published date*. In timing analyses it is called the *portal-entry date* because historical pages do not independently label it and the study cannot establish its legal meaning.

The portal's Procedure and Status fields were preserved as metadata but not treated as direct evidence of competitive openness. Award pages sometimes carried Procedure = Open even when the notice text stated Direct Selection, and many completed awards remained Status = Open because the displayed status appeared to reflect page retention or expiry. Procurement method was therefore coded from the award notice and attachments rather than from the portal Procedure label.

Award-page coding

The 152 award pages were coded using the HTML description and linked supporting documents. Of these pages, 138 linked at least one supporting document. Documents were extracted from DOCX, PDF, and legacy DOC formats; image-only PDFs were processed with optical character recognition where needed. The coding retained provenance and distinguished disclosed, not disclosed, not applicable, and ambiguous values.

The award checklist included public reference, implementing agency, funding source, successful supplier, final or signed value, currency, award or signature date, contract duration, procurement or selection method, submitted-bid or consultant count, evaluated count, and rejection reasons or an explicit no-rejection status. Multiple suppliers, values, or lot-specific bid counts were preserved as semicolon-delimited values. Exact method disclosure required plain-language wording or an unambiguous formal acronym in the notice or contract reference. Method classifications, provenance, and confidence were retained separately so a method inferred only from surrounding structure would not be reported as disclosed.

Openness was an analyst-derived classification, not a portal field or a legal classification. NCB and ICB were coded open competitive because their formal labels identify open bidding; RFB was coded open only when the award could be linked to a public solicitation, which applied

to all six RFB pages; RFQ was coded limited-invitation or quotation-based, not statutory restricted tendering; and Direct Selection or Direct Contracting was coded direct or noncompetitive. Consultant-selection methods were coded competitive with access openness unspecified. Pages without an exact disclosed method remained unclassified.

Bidder counts were derived only when the notice disclosed an explicit count, a clearly labeled list, or a table whose rows could be enumerated. A joint venture was counted as one bidder where the notice treated it as one submission. A value of one means one disclosed submission; a missing count was never recoded as zero. Rejection information was counted as disclosed when the notice gave a reason for at least one rejection or explicitly indicated that none applied.

Successful-supplier names were normalized conservatively for recurrence analysis by standardizing capitalization, punctuation, common corporate suffixes, and manually verified aliases. Joint ventures remained distinct from their constituent firms. Count-based concentration was calculated only among named supplier observations disclosed on the portal. It is not a measure of Saint Lucia's procurement market because the portal's coverage denominator is unknown and award amounts span currencies and uneven multi-lot structures.

Lifecycle linkage and timing

Award pages were linked to earlier solicitation-like pages in ordered tiers. Exact public-reference matches were attempted first, followed by punctuation-normalized references, short suffix variants corroborated by title and scope, compound references, and a finite set of manually audited project-title matches. Ambiguous same-reference matches were rejected where scope conflicted. High-confidence links required strong identifier or uniquely corroborated scope evidence; three project-title links were retained as medium confidence.

Four timing measures were considered:

1. *Portal exposure*: portal-entry date to configured deadline or status date.
2. *Notice window*: first notice or effective date to configured deadline or status date.
3. *Solicitation to award*: earliest or latest linked notice date to an exact award-notification date.
4. *Award entry lag*: exact award-notification date to portal-entry date.

Negative spans and intervals longer than 365 days were flagged and excluded from solicitation-window summaries. No missing dates were imputed. Solicitation-to-award and award-entry results are presented with their small selected denominators and are not generalized to all portal awards.

Statistical analysis

Because the dataset is a census of the accessible portal population on the capture date, results are exact descriptive statistics for that finite population. Routine sampling confidence intervals and null-hypothesis tests would imply a sampling process that did not occur and were not used. Field completeness is reported as counts and percentages. Timing and bid-count distributions are summarized with medians, interquartile ranges (IQRs), and ranges.

An eight-item descriptive completeness score was used only to compare record-ID bands. One point was assigned for each of the following: usable reference, substantive financing source, directly named agency, direct location, description, attachment, recoverable procedure label, and exact Published date. The equal-weight index is formative, not a psychometric scale. Record-ID bands of approximately 100 entries were used as an approximate portal sequence because Published dates were missing selectively. The bands are not exact calendar cohorts, and

differences in agency, category, project, donor, and template composition prevent causal or unqualified temporal interpretation.

Validation and reproducibility

Field extraction and analysis rules were encoded in reproducible scripts. HTML and office-document text were parsed automatically; optical character recognition was used for image-only PDFs; and a language-model-assisted coding workflow extracted candidate award facts, followed by rule-based checks and source review. Live-table comparisons validated the interpretation of search-date positions. Date anomalies, rejected linkage pairs, and duplicate candidates were retained in separate review tables. A separate quality-control pass recoded 56 of the 152 award pages (36.8%), purposively stratified across early, middle, and recent portal IDs; HTML and attachment-based notices; direct, competitive, and consultant-selection methods; and multi-lot records. Nine dimensions were checked against the published source: winner, final value and currency, award or signature date, duration, method, competition applicability, submitted count, evaluated count, and rejection-reason disclosure. First-pass field-level consistency ranged from 69.6% for submitted counts to 96.4% for award or signature dates; duration consistency was 94.6%. The same research workflow adjudicated disagreements against the published sources and revised the coding rules, particularly for method provenance, individual-consultant denominators, winner-plus-respondent counts, multi-lot notices, shared attachments, and blank rejection sections. The regenerated file matched the quality-control recoding on all 504 audited page-field comparisons after adjudication. This is an in-sample consistency check, not independent human inter-rater reliability. Because the sample was purposive rather than probabilistic, the result is not an estimate of corpus-wide error.

All final numerators and denominators were regenerated from analysis-ready CSV files. A companion workbook includes portal records, award coding, supplier observations, linkage results, timing subsets, results, and a codebook. The replication archive includes the scraper, document-extraction logic, portal analysis, award coding, linkage analysis, final-table generation, and validation checks.

Results

Archive availability and composition

The search archive indexed 840 records. Of these, 831 detail pages were retrievable, an availability rate of 98.9%. Nine indexed links, 1.1%, redirected to the tender landing page. This is a small but material break between discoverability and retrievability: the index signaled that a record existed, but the record itself could not be opened on the audit date.

The archive was dominated by requests for expressions of interest (289; 34.8%) and general procurement notices (201; 24.2%). Award pages accounted for 152 records (18.3%), followed by tender opportunities (81; 9.7%) and specific procurement notices (61; 7.3%). Table 2 reports the full distribution.

Table 2

Composition of Retrievable Portal Records

Portal category	n	%
Request for Expressions of Interest	289	34.8%
General Procurement Notices	201	24.2%
Award of Contracts	152	18.3%
Tender Opportunities	81	9.7%
Specific Procurement Notices	61	7.3%
Vehicles for Sale	30	3.6%
Publication for Bidders	8	1.0%
Reports	5	0.6%

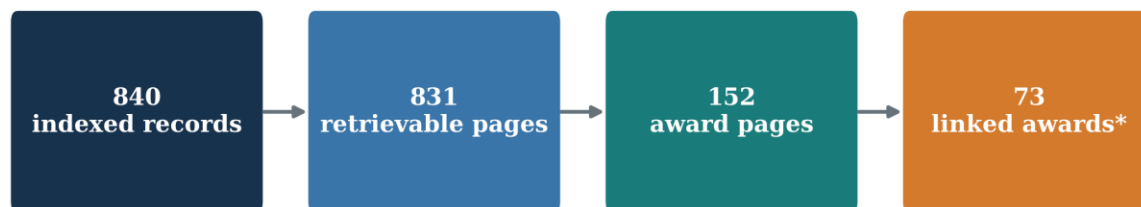
Portal category	n	%
Call for Proposals	3	0.4%
Restricted Procurement Notice	1	0.1%

Note. N = 831 retrievable detail pages. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

The archive also contained substantial document content. At least one attachment link appeared on 798 of 831 retrievable pages, or 96.0%, with 931 attachment links in total. The filenames comprised 492 PDFs, 340 DOCX files, 79 legacy DOC files, 14 ZIP archives, three XLSX workbooks, and three other files. These counts establish that the portal is document-rich. They do not establish that every file remained downloadable indefinitely or that its contents were machine-readable.

Figure 1

From Portal Index to Linked Award Records



*70 high-confidence and 3 medium-confidence links to an earlier portal solicitation

Note. Counts are page-level. The 70 links are a subset of 152 award pages and do not imply that unmatched awards lacked a lawful solicitation.

Structured and recoverable fields

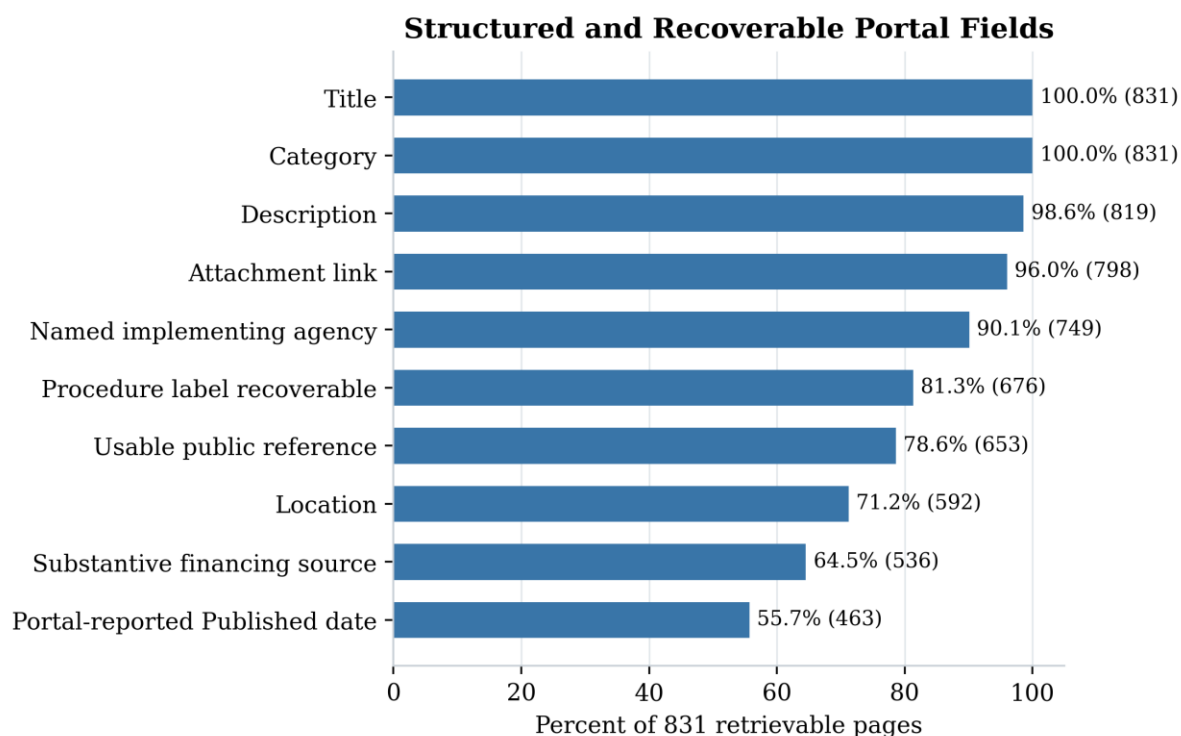
Title and category were present on every retrievable page, and 98.6% had a nonempty description. A directly named implementing agency appeared on 90.1%, and a procedure label could be recovered for 81.3%. Usable public references were available for 78.6%; location for 71.2%; and a substantive financing source for 64.5%.

The weakest common field was the portal-reported Published date. It could be recovered for 463 of 831 pages, or 55.7%. Date missingness varied by category: the Published date was recoverable for 85.5% of expressions of interest but only 34.9% of awards and 26.9% of general procurement notices. Consequently, a conventional year-by-year trend based only on dated pages would overrepresent categories using newer or better-populated templates.

Table 3*Completeness of Common Portal Fields*

Field	Disclosed	Denominator	%
Title	831	831	100.0%
Category	831	831	100.0%
Description	819	831	98.6%
Attachment link	798	831	96.0%
Named implementing agency	749	831	90.1%
Procedure label recoverable	676	831	81.3%
Usable public reference	653	831	78.6%
Location	592	831	71.2%
Substantive financing source	536	831	64.5%
Portal-reported Published date	463	831	55.7%

Note. Published is the portal-reported field recoverable from the search archive or live table; it is not treated as a legally verified publication timestamp.

Figure 2*Completeness of Common Portal Fields*

Note. N = 831 retrievable pages. Published is the recoverable portal-reported date field.

The populated Status field should not be interpreted as procurement-stage completeness.

Only 17 detail pages were marked Open on the capture date, and 13 of those 17 were already award pages. Among 33 award pages with configured start and close values, the median interval was 199 days and 11 were exactly 365 days, consistent with page-retention metadata rather than bidder-response periods. Status was therefore excluded from substantive completeness scores.

Award-notice completeness

The 152 award pages disclosed many core outcome fields at high rates. The successful supplier was named on 146 pages (96.1%). Six notices described an “Individual Consultant” without identifying the person. A final, signed, or contract value and its currency were disclosed on 147 pages (96.7%). Duration was disclosed on 149 pages (98.0%). An exact procurement or selection

method was explicitly disclosed on 142 pages (93.4%): 89 used a plain-language or labelled method, and 53 used an unambiguous formal acronym in the notice or contract reference. Ten pages did not disclose an exact method and remained unclassified rather than receiving one from a bid-table pattern alone.

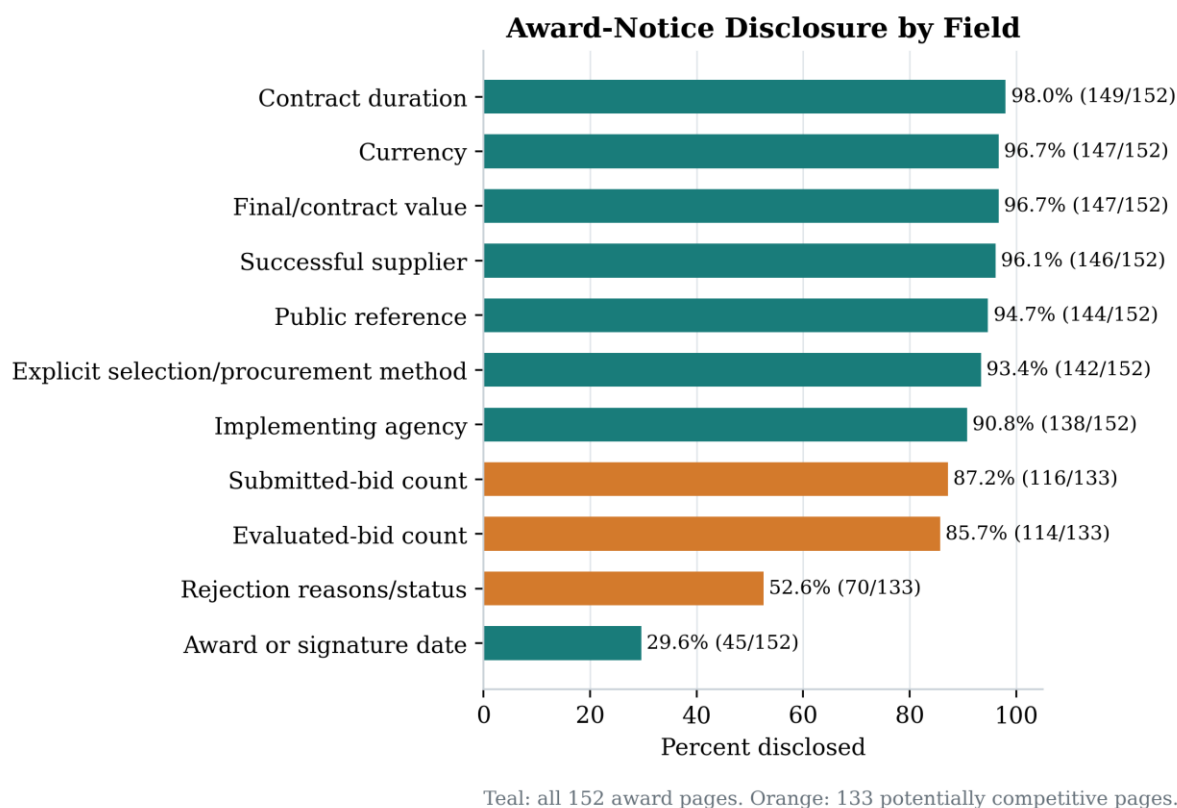
Two fields were materially weaker. An implementing agency was directly disclosed on 138 pages (90.8%), while 14 were empty or otherwise not substantive in the portal field. More importantly, only 45 pages (29.6%) disclosed an award, notification, signature, or signing date. The date field was also semantically inconsistent: 27 were contract-signature dates, 15 were award-notification dates, two were labeled signing dates, and one was labeled contract-award date. Even when a date existed, its event type was not uniform enough for portal-wide lag analysis.

Table 4

Disclosure in Award Records

Award field	Disclosed	Denominator	%
Public reference	144	152	94.7%
Implementing agency	138	152	90.8%
Successful supplier	146	152	96.1%
Final/contract value	147	152	96.7%
Currency	147	152	96.7%
Award or signature date	45	152	29.6%
Contract duration	149	152	98.0%
Explicit selection/procurement method	142	152	93.4%
Submitted-bid count	116	133	87.2%
Evaluated-bid count	114	133	85.7%
Rejection reasons/status	70	133	52.6%

Note. Denominators vary where a competition field is method-applicable. Method disclosure is counted only when the source states a method; analytical method classifications inferred from reference codes or notice structure are reported separately.

Figure 3*Disclosure in Award Records*

Note. N = 152 award pages except for method-applicable competition fields. Explicit method disclosure is separated from inferred classification in the final coding.

Competition details were strong where the notice presented a comparative table or list, but incomplete across the full potentially competitive subset. Nineteen pages explicitly identified Direct Selection or Direct Contracting and were treated as not applicable for competition-disclosure denominators, even if a direct notice displayed a one-row quotation table. Among the remaining 133 pages, 116 (87.2%) disclosed a submitted-participant count and 114 (85.7%) disclosed an evaluated count. Rejection reasons or an explicit no-rejection status appeared on 70 (52.6%). Individual Consultant Selection remained competition-applicable unless the source explicitly identified a direct procedure. Thus, the notices often contained enough information to

reconstruct the number of participants, but were less consistent about why submissions were rejected or filtered out.

Observable procurement methods and bidder participation

Method terminology reflected a mix of domestic and donor procurement templates. Requests for quotations were the largest family (44; 28.9%), followed by individual-consultant selection (34; 22.4%), competitive bidding or requests for bids (25; 16.4%), consulting-firm methods such as qualifications-based, quality-and-cost-based, and least-cost selection (20; 13.2%), and direct selection or contracting (19; 12.5%). Ten pages (6.6%) did not state an exact method. These families are descriptive. An RFQ, individual-consultant selection, or consultants' qualifications process can include competition, while direct methods can be lawful where applicable conditions are met.

The portal's Procedure label could not support the requested open-versus-restricted comparison. Of the 19 award pages whose notice identified Direct Selection or Direct Contracting, 17 were labeled Open by the portal and two were labeled Local Open. None was labeled direct. This complete mismatch shows that Procedure is a portal configuration value, not a reliable empirical measure of the award method. Reporting the portal's Open and Local Open labels as method shares would therefore be misleading.

The notice-derived, analyst-applied classification supplies only a partial alternative. Twenty-five pages (16.4%) were coded open competitive under the stated rule: 19 disclosed NCB or ICB, and six disclosed RFB and linked to a public solicitation. Forty-four pages (28.9%) disclosed RFQ and were coded limited-invitation or quotation-based, not statutory restricted tendering; 19 (12.5%) disclosed direct or noncompetitive methods. For 54 consultant-selection pages (35.5%), the disclosed method established a competitive selection family but not whether

access was open or restricted, and 10 pages (6.6%) were unclassified. No page was explicitly classified as restricted under these rules. That zero is not evidence that no restricted procurement occurred; openness remained indeterminate for 64 of 152 pages, and the study covers only published portal awards.

After excluding one page from the duplicate award pair, 125 page/lot observations contained a submitted-participant count. The median was four submissions (IQR 2–5; range 1–20). Sixteen observations (12.8%) showed one submitted bid, quotation, or proposal. Evaluated counts were available for 122 page/lot observations, with a median of three. These are conditional statistics among disclosed counts. They combine methods, lots, contract types, funding regimes, and procurement values, and they do not establish whether any individual process achieved sufficient competition.

Table 5

Selected Competition, Linkage, Timeliness, and Supplier Metrics

Measure	Analyzable denominator	Result
Submitted participants per disclosed page/lot	125 observations	Median 4; IQR 2–5; range 1–20
Single-submission observations	16 of 125	12.8%
Coded open competitive	25 of 152 pages	16.4%
Coded limited-invitation / quotation-based	44 of 152 pages	28.9%
Direct / noncompetitive method disclosed	19 of 152 pages	12.5%
Openness indeterminate	64 of 152 pages	42.1%
High-confidence solicitation–award links	70 of 152 awards	46.1%
Portal entry to deadline/status	403 pages	Median 16 days; IQR 14–27
Earliest linked notice to award notification	9 awards	Median 121 days; IQR 113–250
Award notification to portal entry	9 awards	Median 5 days; IQR 3–6
Named-winner pages involving a repeat supplier	49 of 145 pages	33.8%
Largest / top-five supplier count shares	166 supplier observations	4.8% / 15.7%

Note. Openness is analyst-derived: NCB/ICB were coded open; RFB was coded open only with a linked public solicitation; RFQ was coded limited-invitation or quotation-based, not statutory restricted tendering. Bid and supplier distributions exclude duplicate award page 428. No page was explicitly classified as restricted, but openness was indeterminate for 64 pages. Timing subsets are selected by usable dates and should not be generalized to all awards. Supplier shares are count-based within disclosed portal awards, not market shares.

Supplier recurrence and count concentration

After excluding the duplicate award page, the dataset contained 166 named supplier observations across 145 award pages with a disclosed winner. Conservative normalization produced 127 supplier identities. Nineteen suppliers appeared on at least two award observations. Forty-nine named-winner award pages, 33.8% of the deduplicated named-winner pages, involved at least one supplier that appeared elsewhere in the portal award set.

Count concentration was modest within this disclosed set. The most frequent normalized supplier accounted for 4.8% of named supplier observations; the five most frequent accounted for 15.7%. The count-based Herfindahl–Hirschman Index was 0.0123. These figures describe recurrence among the portal awards only. They are not market shares because the portal may omit awards published elsewhere, the observation unit is not uniformly one contract, and values in different currencies were not converted or aggregated.

Repeat awards are not inherently adverse. Suppliers can win more than once because they are competitive, specialized, locally available, or participating in separate lots. The recurrence measures identify records that could support further market analysis if a complete contract universe, supplier identifiers, procurement classifications, and award values were available.

Lifecycle linkage

Reference and scope matching linked 70 of 152 award pages to an earlier portal solicitation with high confidence (46.1%). Adding three medium-confidence project-title matches increased the linked share to 73 pages (48.0%). The accepted links comprised 109 page pairs because several awards had revised, repeated, or multiple earlier notices.

Most high-confidence links depended on a public reference: 53 award pages linked through exact normalized references, three through punctuation normalization, four through a

short suffix variant, and one compound-reference award linked to two earlier notices. Twelve additional award pages were linked through audited project and title evidence. Four apparent same-reference matches were rejected after the award and solicitation scopes conflicted.

The result is a measure of portal navigability, not procurement legality. An unmatched award may have been solicited in another authorized medium, may have used a method without an open solicitation, may predate the archive, or may carry an inconsistent reference. Nevertheless, a public user should not need retrospective fuzzy matching to connect a solicitation with its result. Stable process identifiers and explicit links would immediately improve analytical usability.

Timeliness

Among 644 solicitation-like pages, 405 exposed both a portal-entry date and a deadline or status date. Two negative intervals were excluded, leaving 403 analyzable portal-exposure observations. The median portal-entry-to-deadline interval was 16 days (IQR 14–27; range 0–365). Twenty-two pages (5.5%) had fewer than seven days remaining, 92 (22.8%) had fewer than 14 days, and 261 (64.8%) had fewer than 21 days. Eighty-three (20.6%) had at least 30 days.

Category medians differed: 15 days for requests for expressions of interest ($n = 245$), 20 days for general procurement notices ($n = 53$), 23.5 days for tender opportunities ($n = 60$), and 34 days for specific procurement notices ($n = 41$). These are not like-for-like comparisons. Portal category, method, threshold, donor rules, complexity, amendments, and whether the first or revised notice was indexed all affect the appropriate period. Because the portal Procedure field is unreliable as a method classifier, the overall median cannot be used as a legal compliance test against method-specific minimum periods.

Only nine linked awards combined a usable notice date with an exact day-level award-notification date. In this selected subset, the median interval from earliest linked notice to award notification was 121 days (IQR 113–250; range 79–308). The interval includes bid preparation, evaluation, clarification, approvals, negotiation, and other process stages; it is not a measure of administrative delay alone.

Nine recent award pages also combined an exact award-notification date with a portal-entry date. Their median award-notification-to-entry interval was five days (IQR 3–6; range 1–32). This is encouraging evidence of prompt entry where the lag could be measured, but the denominator is too small and selected to support a portal-wide claim. The legally operative word “immediately” in section 76(7) is not assigned a numeric threshold in the Act, and the historical third date cannot be independently verified as the legal publication event.

Agency variation

Field rates differed substantially across exact implementing-agency labels. For example, the Project Coordination Unit within Economic Development (n = 117) disclosed a usable reference on 96.6% of its pages, a direct location on 92.3%, and a Published date on 74.4%. The Project Implementation Unit in Health (n = 88) disclosed the corresponding fields on 98.9%, 97.7%, and 86.4%. In contrast, an older Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs, Planning and Social Security label (n = 113) had rates of 57.5%, 5.3%, and 24.8%.

Table 6

Selected Exact Agency Labels and Field Completeness

Exact portal label	n	Ref.	Location	Attach.	Published
Project Coordination Unit, Department of Economic Development, Transport and Civil Aviation	117	96.6%	92.3%	94.0%	74.4%
Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs, Planning & Social Security	113	57.5%	5.3%	99.1%	24.8%
Project Implementation Unit - Department of Health	88	98.9%	97.7%	100.0%	86.4%

Exact portal label	n	Ref.	Location	Attach.	Published
Ministry of Finance, Economic Growth, Job Creation, External Affairs and Public Service	44	52.3%	6.8%	95.5%	27.3%
[missing]	43	79.1%	67.4%	88.4%	30.2%
Project Implementation Unit Caribbean Digital Transformation Project (CARDTP)	41	100.0%	97.6%	97.6%	87.8%
Department of Finance	39	28.2%	79.5%	92.3%	15.4%

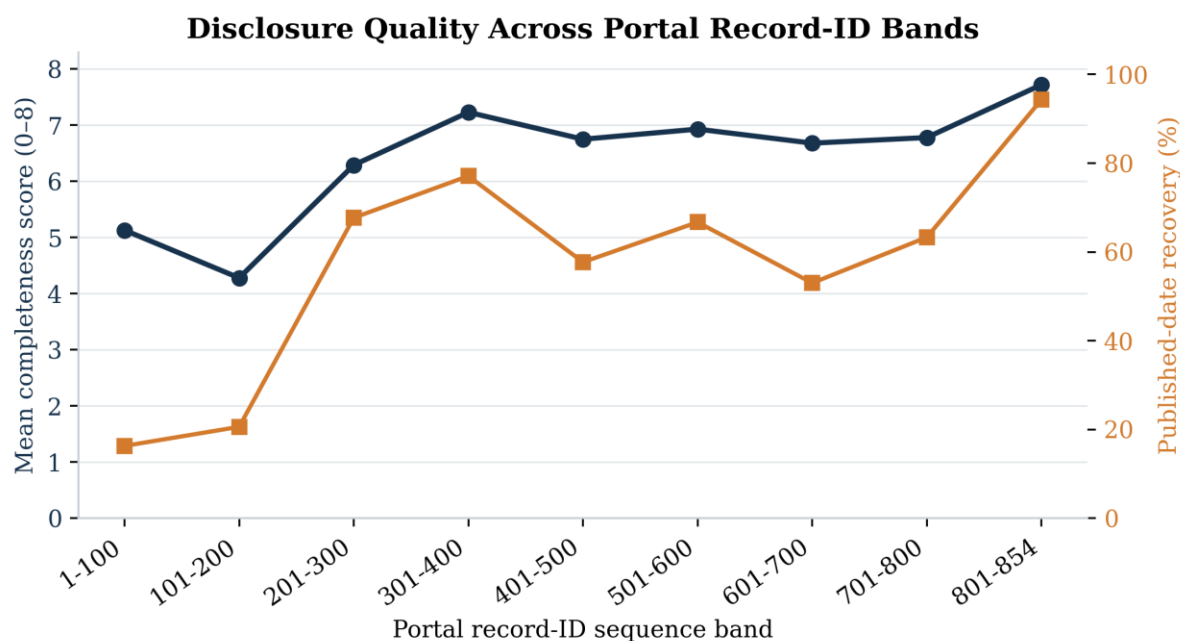
Note. Percentages are descriptive and are not agency performance scores. Exact labels are confounded with period, project, funder, procurement category, template, and government reorganization.

These differences should not be interpreted as agency rankings. Exact labels fragment ministries across reorganizations and spelling variants, and they are confounded with historical period, procurement category, project, funder, and document template. Award-date disclosure illustrates the problem. It appeared on 18 of 26 Health Project Implementation Unit award pages but on none of 22 UBEC award pages, even though both groups disclosed most other award facts. The pattern is more consistent with template and event-date practice than a general measure of institutional performance.

Descriptive differences across record-ID bands

Record sequence avoids the selective missingness of publication-year analysis, but it is only a descriptive ordering. The eight-item mean completeness score was 5.13 of 8 for IDs 1–100 and 4.28 for IDs 101–200. It rose to 6.29 for IDs 201–300, 7.23 for IDs 301–400, and remained between 6.68 and 6.93 across IDs 401–800. The highest-ID band, IDs 801–854, reached 7.72.

The highest-ID band had a usable reference on 96.2% of pages, a direct location on 98.1%, a procedure value on 98.1%, and a Published date on 94.3%. In the first band, the corresponding rates were 64.1%, 10.9%, 67.4%, and 16.3%. The sequence is not monotonic, record ID is only an approximate chronology, and band composition varies. The magnitude and breadth of the difference suggest, but do not establish, temporal improvement.

Figure 4*Completeness Across Portal Record-Sequence Bands*

Note. Record sequence is an approximate portal-entry order, not an exact calendar-time measure. The equal-weight score is descriptive.

Discussion

The answer depends on which kind of completeness is meant

The question “How complete is Saint Lucia’s published procurement record?” has three different answers.

At the *availability* layer, the Finance portal performs strongly. It exposes a long historical index, 98.9% of indexed detail pages were retrievable, and 96.0% of pages linked at least one attachment. This is a meaningful public asset. Many procurement systems provide only current notices or remove expired opportunities; the Saint Lucia archive retains substantial historical content.

At the *disclosure-density* layer, the answer is also more favorable than a quick inspection of the structured fields suggests. The award notices were particularly substantive. Successful

supplier, value, currency, explicitly stated method, and duration were disclosed on roughly 93% to 98% of award pages, and submitted-participant counts were recoverable on 87.2% of potentially competitive pages. The high rates show that many implementing teams already use detailed award templates and that the underlying public record often contains the facts needed for accountability and market analysis.

At the *analytical-usability* layer, the record is materially incomplete. Only 55.7% of retrievable pages had a recoverable Published date. Fewer than half of award pages could be linked confidently to an earlier portal solicitation. Award-event dates were available on only 29.6% of award pages and were not semantically standardized. Procedure and Status fields were misleading if read literally. Data were spread across HTML, DOCX, PDF, legacy DOC, ZIP, and spreadsheet attachments rather than offered as a coherent bulk dataset. A researcher could extract many facts, but only after crawling, document conversion, optical character recognition, manual review, alias normalization, and conservative linkage.

This is the sense in which the portal is document-rich but data-thin. The phrase does not mean that the portal lacks information. It means that the information has high reading value but lower computational and relational value. The distinction matters because procurement transparency now serves human readers and analytical systems. A supplier may be able to read one notice while a regulator still cannot calculate bidder participation, award lag, or supplier concentration reliably across the system.

Timeliness is only partly observable

The study produces three timing findings, each with a different evidentiary strength. First, the 403 analyzable solicitation-like pages had a median of 16 days between portal entry and the configured deadline. The distribution is informative about public exposure, but it cannot be

converted into a compliance rate because the portal does not reliably encode method, threshold, or whether a record is an original notice or amendment. Some short periods may be appropriate for expressions of interest, quotations, extensions, or donor-governed processes; others may warrant review. The portal cannot distinguish them systematically.

Second, the nine linked and exactly dated solicitation-to-award cases had a median of 121 days. The selected sample is too small for a system estimate, but it establishes that the portal can support lifecycle measurement when identifiers and dates are present. Third, nine recent award notices entered the portal a median of five days after the stated award notification. This suggests that prompt publication is achievable in current practice. The main weakness is not necessarily delay; it is that comparable dates are rarely structured across the full archive.

Competition is more visible in attachments than in portal metadata

The portal's award documents contain considerable competition detail. Median disclosed participation was four submissions, and most potentially competitive pages allowed submitted counts to be recovered. However, 12.8% of disclosed page/lot counts showed only one submission, and rejection reasons were less consistently stated than counts. These observations can help identify where procurement teams or policymakers might investigate market conditions, specification design, supplier outreach, or method choice. They are not proof of inadequate competition in any particular procurement.

The strongest negative finding is semantic: the portal's Open and Local Open labels cannot be used as method data. Every notice-text direct-selection or direct-contracting award was labeled Open or Local Open in the portal. A field that appears structured but carries a different administrative meaning can be more hazardous than an empty field because it invites a confident but wrong analysis. The immediate reform need is to separate *publication status*, *page expiry*,

competition type, procurement method, and selection method into distinct fields with controlled values.

Supplier recurrence was visible but not highly concentrated by count within the disclosed set. A 33.8% repeat-supplier page share means that recurring winners are common enough to merit routine monitoring, not that recurrence is suspicious. In a small economy, the relevant supplier market may be narrow for specialized goods, works, or consulting services. Meaningful competition analysis would require product classifications, supplier identifiers, procurement values, method, number of eligible firms, and coverage of all awards.

Higher-ID records are more complete, but causation is unresolved

The highest-ID record band is markedly more complete than the earliest bands. This descriptive pattern is consistent with better templates, stronger project implementation units, electronic procurement reforms, or more disciplined publication, but the design cannot distinguish among those explanations. It also aligns with the World Bank's earlier regional observation that common transaction-recording standards were needed (Cocciolo et al., 2022). The practical implication is narrower: some portal records already demonstrate that near-complete references, locations, procedure values, dates, and attachments are operationally feasible.

The pattern is not sufficient to conclude that all procurement is now published, that agency practices have converged, or that the 2023 Regulations caused a change. Historical dates are missing selectively, the newest year is incomplete, record sequence is only an approximate timeline, and band composition differs. A causal assessment would need known implementation dates, a complete system denominator, consistent pre- and post-reform fields, and controls for project and donor composition.

Implications for research and oversight

The study also shows why data-quality auditing should precede corruption-risk or performance scoring. A literal analysis of portal Procedure would classify direct awards as open. A literal analysis of Status would treat completed awards as live opportunities. Treating missing bid counts as zero would understate competition; treating unmatched awards as missing solicitations would ignore other publication channels and lawful noncompetitive methods. Each shortcut would create a more dramatic but less accurate result.

The appropriate next analytical step is a *coverage audit*, not a stronger inference from the same portal. The Procurement Administration Unit could reconcile portal awards against a comprehensive administrative register, the *Gazette*, In-Tend, financial commitments, and procuring-entity returns. That exercise would supply the missing denominator and reveal whether gaps arise from nonpublication, alternative publication, inconsistent identifiers, or incomplete system integration.

Recommendations

The findings support a practical reform sequence focused on using information that procuring entities already create.

Establish one canonical contracting-process identifier

Every procurement should receive a stable identifier at planning and retain it through solicitation, amendments, award, contract, implementation, and closeout. Lot and contract identifiers should be children of the process identifier. The public portal should display explicit links among related records instead of relying on title or reference matching. Regulation 60 already requires chronological reference numbers that distinguish procurement types; implementation can extend this principle into a lifecycle identifier.

Publish a minimum structured award record

The structured award record should include, at minimum, procuring entity, process and lot identifiers, procurement description, method, legal or policy basis where a restricted or direct method is used, number of submissions, number evaluated, successful supplier name and identifier, award value, currency, award-notification date, contract-signature date, planned duration, and portal-publication timestamp. The existing notice or signed document can remain as an attachment. Structure should supplement, not replace, the human-readable notice.

Distinguish event dates from publication dates

The system should maintain separate immutable fields for original notice date, submission deadline, amendment date, award-notification date, standstill end, contract-signature date, and portal-publication date. A public change log should show corrections. This would make “immediate” award publication measurable without confusing contract signature and notification events.

Separate method, competition type, and page status

The current Procedure and Status fields should be renamed or redesigned. Controlled method codes should distinguish open competitive tendering, restricted tendering, RFQ, direct procurement, emergency procurement, individual-consultant selection, qualifications-based selection, quality-and-cost-based selection, and other methods used under domestic or donor rules. Page visibility or expiry should be a separate technical field and should never display a completed award as an open competition.

Provide bulk, machine-readable access

The Department of Finance should publish a documented CSV or JSON download, preferably aligned with OCDS, and a lightweight API or regularly updated bulk file. The dataset should

expose both current and historical releases, retain version history, and link to original documents.

A human-facing search interface can continue, but public analysis should not require scraping 84 pages and converting mixed office files.

Create a federated public index

Because official procurement information is distributed across the *Gazette*, newspapers, the Finance portal, In-Tend, and donor systems, a single public index should point to every known official record regardless of hosting location. This would preserve institutional responsibilities while giving citizens and suppliers one authoritative discovery layer. Each record should state where and when the legally required notice was published; inclusion of a donor-platform record in the index would not itself establish compliance with a statutory publication duty.

Measure coverage against administrative records

The Procurement Administration Unit should produce a quarterly reconciliation with an explicit denominator: total contracts or awards recorded administratively, total required to be published under each rule, total published by channel, total linked to a procurement plan, and total with complete minimum fields. Exceptions should be categorized as legally exempt, confidential, pending correction, published elsewhere, or unexplained. Only this cross-system reconciliation can answer how much of total government procurement is publicly covered.

Institutionalize data-quality controls

Validation should occur before a record is accepted: required fields by method and stage, ISO dates, currency codes, supplier identifiers, numeric values, valid links, consistent lot totals, and method-specific applicability. Automated checks should flag negative intervals, missing dates, duplicate fingerprints, dead links, reused references with conflicting scopes, and award pages

without a linked process. A correction channel and public issue log would let users report errors without conflating errors with misconduct.

Table 7

Recommended Disclosure Roadmap

Priority	Reform	Core action	Monitoring indicator
1	Canonical process ID	Assign at planning; retain through award, contract, amendments, and closeout	Share of awards linked to a solicitation
2	Minimum structured award	Supplier, value, currency, method, counts, dates, duration, lot and entity IDs	Completeness by required field
3	Date semantics	Separate notice, deadline, notification, standstill, signature, and portal-entry timestamps	Award-publication lag coverage
4	Controlled method/status	Separate method, competition type, page visibility, and expiry	Method-to-label validation rate
5	Bulk access	Publish versioned CSV/JSON aligned where practical with OCDS	Machine-readable record share
6	Coverage reconciliation	Match portal, Gazette, In-Tend, financial records, and entity returns	Published awards / publishable awards

Note. The sequence prioritizes stable identifiers and minimum structured fields before advanced risk or performance analytics.

Limitations

This study has nine main limitations. First, it audits one portal, not all publication channels or all government procurement. Second, the capture is a moving snapshot; portal content, live status, and links can change after August 12, 2026. Third, the unit is a portal page, which is not uniformly one procurement, lot, contract, or supplier.

Fourth, many facts were embedded in attachments. Text extraction and optical character recognition can introduce errors, and document layout sometimes required manual review. Fifth, Published dates were recoverable for only 55.7% of pages and were missing selectively, limiting calendar-time trends. Sixth, award and signature dates were combined for completeness but were not treated as equivalent for lag analysis.

Seventh, agency labels were not harmonized across government reorganizations, projects, spelling variants, and implementation units; descriptive differences are confounded with time,

category, funder, and template. Eighth, linkage and timing subsets were selected by data availability. The nine-case process and award-entry lag results are not representative estimates. Ninth, supplier concentration is conditional on disclosed portal awards and count observations. It is not a measure of expenditure concentration or market power.

The audit also does not verify whether published facts are accurate against signed contracts, evaluation reports, or financial records. It does not assess contract amendments, payments, delivery, performance, complaints, or beneficial ownership. Missing records and fields are not treated as evidence of wrongdoing.

Conclusion

Saint Lucia's Department of Finance tender portal is a substantial and valuable public archive. Nearly every indexed page remained retrievable, attachment coverage was extensive, and most award notices disclosed the successful supplier, value, currency, duration, an explicit method, and participant counts. The highest-ID band is much more complete than the earliest bands, a descriptive pattern that suggests but does not establish temporal improvement.

The portal is not yet a complete analytical record. Historical Published dates are missing from nearly half the pages, award-event dates are uncommon and inconsistent, fewer than half the awards link to an earlier portal solicitation, and apparently structured Procedure and Status labels cannot safely be interpreted at face value. The result is high availability, high document density, and only partial data usability.

Timeliness was only partly observable: 403 eligible pages showed a median 16 days from inferred portal entry to configured deadline or status, while only nine awards supported a five-day median award-notification-to-entry estimate. Among 125 disclosed page/lot participant counts, the median was four and 12.8% were single-participant observations; because access

openness and portal coverage were incomplete, these figures do not support a system-wide competitiveness rating.

The most important conclusion is also the most limited one: *the published portal record is internally rich but relationally incomplete, while its coverage of all Saint Lucia procurement remains unknown*. The next reform should not be simply to upload more documents. It should be to publish one linked, structured, versioned record across the procurement lifecycle and reconcile that record against the administrative universe. Doing so would turn the existing archive from a collection that can be read into a system that can also be measured, monitored, and improved.

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Appendix A

Core Coding Rules

Table A1

Core Coding Rules

Variable	Counted when	Important exclusion or caveat
Usable reference	Nonempty procurement reference; excludes Closed or other status text	Missing otherwise
Named agency	Substantive entity name in the implementing-agency field	A pointer such as See attachment is not direct disclosure
Successful supplier	Named person, firm, or joint venture identified as winner	Generic Individual Consultant is missing
Value and currency	Final, signed, or contract amount plus stated currency	No currency conversion or aggregation
Method disclosed	Source explicitly states the procurement or selection method	Inference from reference code is classified separately
Submitted count	Explicit count or enumerated distinct participants, including named winner	Missing is not zero; joint venture is one submission
Competition applicability	Applicable unless the source explicitly identifies direct selection/contracting or another noncompetitive method	Individual-consultant selection alone remains applicable
Award date	Award notification, contract award, signing, or signature date with event label	Event types retained separately
Repeat supplier	Conservatively normalized supplier appears in at least two observations	Portal recurrence is not market concentration

Note. Coding distinguishes source disclosure from analytical classification and preserves method-specific not-applicable states.

Appendix B

Linkage Tiers and Timing Definitions

Table B1

Linkage Tiers and Timing Definitions

Tier or measure	Decision rule	Treatment
Exact reference	Normalized award and solicitation references match	High
Punctuation normalized	Only punctuation or formatting differs	High
Short suffix	Distinctive suffix plus corroborating title and scope	High
Compound reference	Award reference contains multiple corroborated solicitation references	High
Audited project/title	Unique project and scope match after manual review	High or medium
Rejected candidate	Reference overlaps but title, lot, or scope conflicts	Not linked
Portal exposure	Portal-entry date to configured deadline/status	Negative or >365-day intervals excluded
Solicitation to award	Linked notice date to exact award-notification date	No imputation; selected subset

Note. High-confidence linking requires a stable identifier or uniquely corroborated scope evidence. Unmatched awards are not assumed to lack a solicitation.

Appendix C

Sensitivity and Interpretation Rules

The page-level completeness analysis retains every retrievable record, including repeated notices and the award pair 426/428, because the public archive contains both pages. Supplier recurrence and page/lot participant-count distributions exclude page 428 so that one repeated award does not contribute twice. Repeating the supplier analysis with both pages included does not change the substantive conclusion: the largest supplier count share remains below 5%, and the five largest shares account for about 16.2%.

Missing is not coded as zero. A missing bidder count therefore does not imply no competition, a missing value does not imply a zero-value contract, and an unmatched award does not imply that no solicitation occurred. N/A, NA, empty strings, and pointers to an attachment are not counted as direct structured disclosure. A fact found in a readable attachment counts for award-content disclosure but remains distinguishable from a structured portal field.

The eight-item sequence score is an equal-weight descriptive index, not a validated latent scale. Its purpose is to summarize whether several observable fields differ together across record-ID bands. Results are also reported field by field so the composite cannot conceal which elements changed.

Appendix D

Data and Code Availability

The accompanying publication package contains the analysis-ready portal census, coded award pages, normalized supplier observations, linkage and timing files, result tables, figures, codebook, reproducible scripts, and a workbook with formula-linked results. Source URLs and checksums are preserved. Government attachments are not redistributed in the compact replication archive; the download-and-extraction script and attachment manifest identify the public sources used.