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## **THE SELECTION CRITERIA OF COMPETENT SOLID WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE PROVIDERS THROUGH OUTSOURCING: THE EXPERIENCES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES IN TANZANIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In Tanzania, Solid Waste collection is a public service that has been decentralised to Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and as such, the outsourcing model, adopted by Tanzanian councils is deemed as the most effective in forging a lasting solution to solid waste management. This study therefore analysed the role of the outsourcing criteria in the acquisition of a competent solid waste management service provider. A cross sectional exploratory case study was conducted to examine the implementation of the selection criteria for Solid Waste Collection service providers. The purposive selection of the 21 council members and staff, who participated in the semi structured interviews, was informed by their direct involvement in the solid waste collection service provider selection process in the four purposively selected LGAs. Documentary review was also conducted to support empirical data, which was thematically analysed using the framework approach. Mixed findings were revealed in regard to LGAs adherence to the solid waste service provider standard selection criteria stipulated in the Public Procurement Act of 2011, since level of adherence varied across LGAs. Two out of the four LGAs, adhered to the eight selection criteria guidelines had secured service providers with the capacity of collecting more than 80% of solid waste generated. The other two LGAs (Moshi Municipality and Dodoma City Council) which disregarded stipulated standard service provider selection criteria had the capacity to collect 76% and 43% of generated solid waste respectively. The level of adherence to standard selection criteria guidelines is a major determinant of successful outsourcing of solid waste collection in Tanzania's LGAs. Stringent application of the stipulated selection criteria for successful solid waste collection outsourcing process is thus strongly recommended.*

**Key words:** Solid Waste Collection, Competent Supplier of Solid Waste Collection Services, Outsourcing, Local Government Authorities, Selection Criteria

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The efficient management of solid waste remains a major challenge in the majority of Tanzania cities and towns (Kassie (2016) as attributed to several factors (Kyessi and Mwakalinga 2009; Ogwueleka, 2009). In Tanzania, the solid waste management responsibility has been decentralized to Local Government Authorities (LGAs) as part of an intended move to implement the 1998 Decentralisation Policy, and as guided by the principal of Decentralization by Devolution. The autonomy granted by the Decentralization Policy also mandates LGAs to apply the most efficient and effective means of solid waste management. LGAs were provided with two major options that were; to

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use their own staff, resources and equipment for solid waste collection or apply the outsourcing model to secure an appropriate service provider, and the majority of LGAs opted for the latter.

Although the majority of LGAs are in favour of the outsourcing model, the acquisition process of a competent solid waste collection service provider remains a major challenge (Suvituulia and Kauppi 2020). As revealed, available literature on solid waste collection service outsourcing lacks an in-depth analysis of contextual factors governing the selection criteria for a competent service provider. The majority of scholars (see for example Mussa 2015; Kassim and Ali 2003; Kassim and Ali 2006) agree that the selection process is a vital stage in initiating a cordial relationship between service providers and LGAs. Day & Barksdale (1992; 1994) write that the selection process for a competent service provider kicks off with an invitation to tender as followed by an advertisement of the award.

Although some researchers have briefly explored the selection and evaluation process of aspiring solid waste collection service providers (see for example Day & Barksdale, 1992; Day & Barksdale, 1994) the majority have also recommended for it's in depth analysis to achieve a better understanding of the practicability of the process.

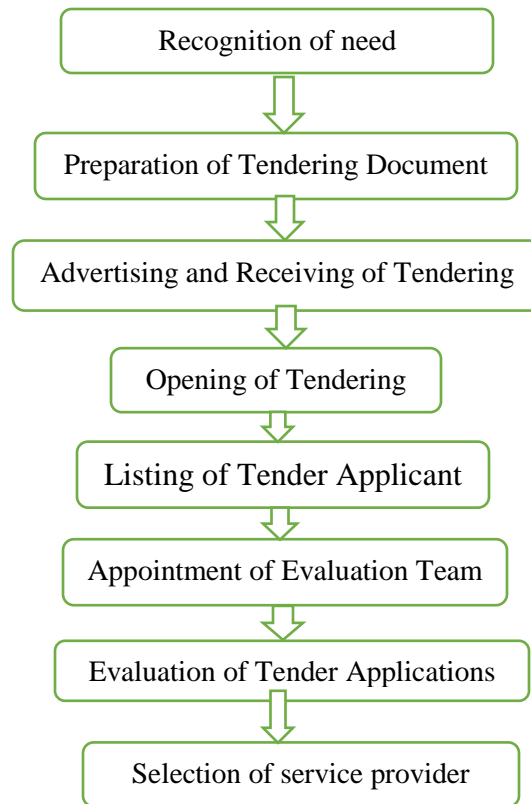
Solid Waste simply refers to the bi-product of everyday activities and according to Mishra *et al.* (2014), "Solid waste is the useless, unwanted and discarded material resulting from daily activities". Some solid wastes are health hazardous and are thus harmful to both human beings and other living things. As recommended, appropriate solid waste management should include; effective handling of wastes such as on-site storage, collection, transportation, and final disposal. Illegal dumping of wastes has been blamed for air, soil and water body pollution, as similarly observed by Huisman *et al.* (2016) and Kaseva & Mbuligwe (2005).

Solid waste management is vital for the provision of a conducive and safe environment for both human and other living things. In view of various scholars (see for example Moosa 2007; BSB 2020) solid waste management involves the control of the generation, storage, collection, transportation, processing and disposal of solid waste materials in a way that best addresses a range of public health, conservation, economic, aesthetic, engineering, and other environmental considerations". Human activities result to tones of waste materials that are discarded on a daily basis, collected for recycling or safely dumped to decrease human and environmental hazards. Although beyond the scope of this paper, other scholars have conceived solid waste management as a science that addresses the logistics, environmental impact, social responsibility, and cost of an organisation's waste disposal. It is a detailed process that involves human resources, vehicles, government bodies, and natural resources. The management of waste is not the sole responsibility of governments and those who generate such wastes, but also of individuals. Issues involving sanitation and waste management are imperative and conceived as a concern for all.

Being no exceptional, Tanzania, like many other African countries faces several Solid Waste Management challenges. In recent times, tons of carelessly disposed wastes have been a terrible sight in Tanzania's major towns and cities (Huisman *et al.* 2016; Kaseva & Mbuligwe (2005). This predicament has in part, been attributed to the poor coverage of collection systems and methods, limited institutional capacity, lack of resources, both human and capital, unstable work schedules, and inadequate information on quantity and composition of solid wastes (Kyessi and Mwakalinga 2009; Ogwueleka, 2009; Nyampundu *et al.* 2020).

The institutional frameworks that govern the management of solid waste collection in Tanzania include; the Local Government Act of 1982 Section 55(g) and the Environmental Management Act of 2004. These legislations assign LGAs with the responsibility of Solid Waste management. The ACTs also present LGAs with the options of either performing the solid waste management task themselves or outsourcing the service. The majority of LGAs have thus resorted to the outsourcing model of Solid Waste Collection as it has consistently proved as both efficient and effective. It is for this reason that solid waste collection in the majority of LGAs is tendered out to private solid waste collection service providers, who are required to abide by the SW collection and transportation schedule.

Private solid waste collection service providers are secured through tendering procedures as stated in the Public Procurement Act of 2011 as amended. The specific steps for the tendering procedure are as described in figure 1 below. This is a rigorous process undertaken with the intension of acquiring a competent private solid waste collection service provider. Competence as implied herein connotes a solid waste collection private company with the capacity to efficiently collect solid waste generated within the parameters of specific LGAs.



**Figure 1: The LGAs selection process**

LGAs' outsourcing expectation is that they take advantage of the vendors' experience and economies of scale by engaging a private solid waste collection service provider. It is therefore expected that solid wastes will be adequately collected at reduced tax payer cost and at the same time allowing the vendor to earn a satisfactory profit. The primary goal of the private service provider is to reduce costs and increase profit. Since solid waste is treated as a recyclable commodity, companies involved in SWM services enjoy the added benefit of new income streams.

The design of the selection process illustrated in figure 1 is informed by recommendations provided in various studies. For instance, Ho et al (2010) concluded that the service provider's capacity and price should be considered primary selection criteria for service providers. Weirich (2003) further asserts that the 'decision' criteria should be as objective and measurable as possible and based on; quality of work, turn-around time, price, communication style, creativity in providing solutions, proximity [location], service offers, e.g. delivery service, ability to follow instructions and willingness to provide information. Other researchers also examined key selection criteria for public service providers for instance, Crimando (2005) identified a list of general criteria that may be used when identifying and choosing service providers to include: service cost and pricing structure, qualifications of staff, linkages between service providers and others to meet special needs, staff: client ratio, reputation of service providers, whether client input is considered in planning the program. Murphy and Poist (2000) revealed that customer orientation and dependability are the most important while Gotzamani *et al.*, (2010), paid special attention to quality related factors and deliberated the relationship between quality management and financial performance of service providers. A major criterion is that the SWM service provider should have the capacity meet beneficiaries' needs and provide reliable services with consistent quality.

In addition to the criteria described above; the initial criteria used to screen aspiring service providers include; supplier reputation, culture fit, financial stability and geographical location (Petroni and Braglia 2000), whereas Aghazadeh (2003) found that prior experience of the industry, regulations and client relationship are also perceived as important selection criteria. In most organisations, a multi-criteria selection process is used to secure suitable SWM service providers and some researchers have categorized these as; capability, quality, client relationship, labour relations and general company consideration.

Organisations should be keen on establishing a selection criteria guideline for competent SP and the capacity of SPs should be at the centre of selection decisions. Likewise the competence of SPs significantly depends on LGAs ability to provide good infrastructure, ensure the enforcement of environmental laws, especially those addressing unplanned dumping sites, and allocate sufficient funds to acquire modern SWM technology (Yhdego and Kingu 2016; Momodu 2011). Furthermore, the selection criteria should include the awareness and active involvement of service consumers as key stakeholders who pay SW fees to service providers, and ensure a cordial relationship between clients and service providers, all identified as detriments to sustainable SWM (Kassim and Ali 2003; Kassim and Ali (2006). LGAs in Tanzania are required using the criteria stipulated in the Public Procurement Act of 2011 and its regulations of 2013. Professional service providers are therefore advised to refer to the Public Procurement Act and its regulations in an attempt to demonstrate their qualifications.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

A cross sectional exploratory case study was conducted in four purposively selected LGAs in Tanzania to examine their implementation of the selection criteria guideline for solid waste collection service providers through the outsourcing model. LGAs that participated in the current study include; Arusha City Council (ACC), Moshi Municipal Council (MMC), Meru District Council (MDC) and Dodoma City Council. The selection of these LGAs was informed by the need to study LGAs in both rural [i.e MDC] and urban settings with varied capacity in terms of revenue collection. Collection of revenue from own source as report in 2020/2021 by PO-RALG in the selected LGAs were: ACC 80%, MMC 91%, MDC 101% and DCC 82%. Likewise based on selected councils' 2018 solid waste collection report, collection capacity was as follows: Arusha City Council (ACC) had a collection capacity of 81%, Moshi Municipal Council (MMC) had 76%, Meru District Council (MDC) had 86% and Dodoma City Council had 43%.

The actual research began with documentary review of; RFP, tendering documents, evaluation reports and advertisements prepared in 2017 to 2018, public procurement act of 2011 and its regulations of 2013, public private partnership act of 2010, its guidelines and 2012 regulations. The review was followed by the 21 in-depth interviews with senior officials employed at the four cases namely; head of environment and sanitation department, head of procurement management unit and environment and sanitation officers. The choice of these key informants was informed by their knowledge and experience in SWM service provider outsourcing process. The two Interviews with the head of environment and sanitation department and head of procurement management units were conducted thrice in the period between February and June 2018. One hour interviews were also conducted with other key informants twice using a semi-structured interview guide. The guide was developed as per pre- defined themes generated during literature review. The interviews were followed by 8 focus group discussions constituting council tender board members, council legal officers, services beneficiaries and directors of companies/service providers from the four cases. Data accrued through interviews underwent thematic analysis with the intension of seeking meaning, interpretation and drawing of conclusions. Direct quotations of the respondents' views and opinions were cited to support key points. A version of the constant comparative method was also used along with the inductive interpretive approach which allows patterns to emerge from analysed data (Glaser and Strauss 2009).

## **3.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **3.1 Selection Criteria for a Competent Solid Waste Collection Service Provider**

Solid waste collection service provider refers to an individual who has the capacity of providing efficient SW related services that meet public expectations. Service providers are selected based on stipulated requirements for SW collection services and as per criteria set by LGAs. Outsourcing solid waste collection services is of mutual benefit to both private solid waste companies and LGAs, who reduce associated risks while increasing SW collection efficiency.

The outsourcing process, as implemented in the majority of LGAs is informed by a specific stipulated selection criteria and additional council specific requirements to include; additional criteria, number of criteria, conformity with standard selection criteria, SWM needs and requirements and LGAs selection criteria preparation capacity. For instance, ACC and MDC prepare and use specific criteria for the selection of a competent service provider unlike MMC and CCD as revealed on Table 1 below. It was further revealed that despite variations in the selection criteria, competent service provider selection significantly depends on; cost, financial resources, past experience with similar service provision and capability (human and equipment). The central aim is achieving cost reduction and increase in solid waste collection efficiency.

The standard selection criteria are provided in the Public Procurement Act of 2011 as amended and its 2013 regulations, which are essential for the effective selection of a competent service provider. Section 116 (1a) of the Public Procurement Regulations provide a list of criteria that procuring entities are required to apply in the selection process of a competent service provider. The said criteria include: possess the necessary professional and technical qualifications, professional and technical competence, financial resources, equipment and other physical facilities, managerial capability, reliability, experience and reputation and the personnel to perform the assignment. The stipulated criteria takes into consideration the; capacities, competencies and resources which are imperative for solid waste collection service delivery in an acceptable, feasible and effective manner. Moreover, there are additional requirements associated with the standard selection criteria, with the aim of improved solid waste management service delivery. Criteria such as; analysis of income and expenditure and bank statements are some of the requirements needed to prove service provider's financial capacity, litigation history, number of years in service provision, photographs of directors of company, while evidence of employee routine medical check-up was used to verify competence and experience.

As revealed in Table 1, common criteria emerged as critical to the selection decision and these include: Tender application fees, Service provider registration documents; business license, certificate of incorporation, list of equipment and vehicles and Experience with similar assignment with good performance. The criteria are used to substantiate the eligibility of bidders to efficiently deliver SW collection services, and to further verify their solid establishment and official registration as SW collection service providers. The selection guideline is broadly categorised into three standard selection criteria to include; professional and technical qualifications, equipment and other physical facilities and personnel to perform the assignment. Section 72 of the 2016 PPA ensures that LGAs make the best selection decision possible since the outsourcing essence of quality and satisfaction significantly depends on such decisions. The findings in Table 1 present the comprehensive solid waste service provider selection criteria.

**Table 1: The selection criteria of competent solid waste collection service providers in Selected LGAs**

ACC	MMC	MDC	CCD
<b>STAGE ONE</b>	-Official office	-Application fee (Tender fee)	-Application fee (Tender fee)
- Application fee (Tender fee)	-Business	-Copy of company/CBOs Registration Document	-Duly completed signed and stamped tender application form,
-The tender document should be signed	Licence	- CBOs should attach identification letter of their leaders from the respective ward	-Registration certificate of companies
-Registration Document	-Workers	- Copy of TIN and VAT certificate	- Valid Business License
- Business License	- Uniform	- Business License	- TIN and VAT certificate
- Certificate of Incorporation and Memorandum and Articles of Association	-Identity card endorsed by WEO	- Company profile	- Bid Securing declaration
- TIN and VAT certificate	-Firefighting certificate	- List of equipment and vehicles and employees. Attach Copy of vehicle registration certificate	- Power of Attorney
- Bid Securing declaration	-Previous performance	- Evidence of medical check-ups of all employees at least twice a year	- Tax clearance certificate
- Power of Attorney		- Ant bribery declaration	- OSHA certificate
		-Copy of certificate of qualified personnel in environmental health	- The list of related activities
<b>Stage Two</b>		- Photograph of directors of their company	- Qualifications of proposed staff
- Analysis of income and expenditure of the expected solid fees collection and the remaining balance.	-Company profile	-Litigation history	- List of equipment to be used in the contract vehicle and machine registrations cards
- Experience of similar assignment of not less than three years		-The applicant should not be an the employee of the government or have any personal interest with the council	- Experience in similar activities
- Qualified personnel		- Analysis of income and expenditure of the expected solid fees collection and the remaining balance.	- Firms capacity in terms of machines and equipment
- The applicant should not be an the employee of the government or have any personal interest with the council		- Experience of similar assignment with good performance	
- Bank statement of a specified one year		- Security Bond	
- Litigation history			
- Photograph of directors of their Company			
- Copy of certificate of qualified personnel in environmental health			

### **3.2 Comparison between the standard criteria and actual criteria used in selecting competent solid waste management service providers in LGAs**

As revealed by our study findings, there was a significant variation between standard selection criteria recommended and the actual selection criteria used by two out of the four LGAs that participated in the study. As revealed on table 2 below, ACC complies with seven (87.5%) of the stipulated standard selection criteria however, the council flouted the criteria of reliability. ACC's Compliance with seven standard criteria has enabled the local council to collect 81% of the SW generated. Likewise MDC complies with almost all stipulated standard selection criteria and collects 86% of generated SW. MMC complies to only three (37.5%) of the standard selection criteria however, the council collects 76% of the generated SW, this performance is owed to the council's failure to adhere to the recommended service provider selection criteria. Similar findings were established through interviews with MMC's Ward Executive Officer and as directly quoted: *"We rarely rely on the standard selection criteria but rather on how trustworthy the applicant is"*.

CCD complies with only five out of the eight standard criteria (62.5%) and as revealed, 43% of the SW generated is collected from this LGA. This implies that the selected service provider is incapable of handling SW collection in this council and lacks the required financial resources and managerial capability to efficiently provide SW collection services in CCD. Kurdi (2012) in this regard, recommends that the selection of SPs should be based on capability in an array of aspects and not just price or a single aspect.

Although all LGAs follow the standard SW service provider selection criteria in varied extents comparatively however, two LGAs poorly adhered to the selection criteria. For instance criteria such as availability of an office, or employee uniforms, previous performance or list of related activities are not strong determinants of aspiring service provider competence although these are the main focus in the selection process of the two LGAs. Weirich (2003) recommends that standard criteria guiding service provider selection should be ranked in their importance, be discussed and should be as objective and measurable as possible. The author further concludes that; Quality of work, Turn-around time, Price, Communication style, Creativity in providing solutions, Proximity (location), Service offers, e.g. delivery service, Ability to follow instructions and Willingness to provide information are strong indicators of service provider competence. LGAs should therefore abide to the standard selection criteria to ensure consistence in all LGAs in terms of managing service provision, problems should be approached in a similar manner and a similar set of values should be held. In this regard, the environmental and sanitation officials of ACC and MDC had this to say:

*"The Selection criteria for acquiring a competent SP can be one of the most important attributes for decisions and potentially one of the costliest mistakes LGAs can make"*

Through an interview with the Head of Procurement Management Unit (HPMU), it was revealed that the selection decision was a process that comprised of several stages and noted that the selection criteria varied depending on the selection decision stage.

**Table 2: Extent of LGA's level of conformity to the standard solid waste collection service Provider selection criteria**

Standard selection Criteria Reg. 116		Criteria used by selected Councils			
		ACC	MMC	MDC	CCD
Professional and Technical Qualification	Technical	Tender fee The tender document should be signed Business License Certificate of Incorporation and Memorandum and Articles of Association TIN and VAT certificate Bid Securing declaration Power of Attorney	-Official office -Business Licence	Tender fee Copy of company/CBOs Registration document CBOs should attach identification letter of their leaders from the respective ward Copy of TIN and VAT certificate Business License	Tender fee Duly completed signed and stamped tender application form, Registration certificate of companies Valid Business License TIN and VAT certificate Bid Securing declaration Power of Attorney Tax clearance certificate OSHA certificate Qualifications of proposed staff
Professional and Technical competence	Technical	Certificate of qualified personnel in environmental health		Copy of certificate of qualified personnel in environmental health	
Financial Resource		Analysis of Income and expenditure		Analysis of income and expenditure of the expected solid fees collection and the remaining balance.	
Equipment and other physical facilities		List of equipment		List of equipment and vehicles Attach Copy of vehicle registration certificate	List of equipment to be used in the contract vehicle and machine registrations cards Firms capacity in terms of machines and equipment
Managerial capability Reliability Experience and Reputation		Company Profile Experience of similar assignment of not less than three years	Previous performance	Company profile Security Bond Experience of similar assignment with good performance	The list of related activities Experience in similar related activities
Personnel to perform the assignment		Qualified personnel	Identity card endorsed by WEO uniform	List of employees	

### 3.3 Effectiveness of the selection Criteria used in selected LGAs

Findings from the documentary review indicate that it is mandatory for all aspiring service providers to meet the standard requirements stipulated in the bidding document. It was further revealed that both service beneficiaries and providers have a particular interest in the selection process of a competent service provider. An interview with one of the service providers in ACC reveals that the contract duration significantly influences the majority of service providers' decision to participate in the selection process and in this regard, the manager of SWM services had this to say:

*“The time used in investing in SWM is too short for many companies to make decisions and to realise profits throughout the period of service provision”.*

Findings from the tendering document reviewed showed that the solid waste collection contract duration was one year, which were too short for service providers to invest in adequate equipment and recruit employees. Furthermore the main criterion used in the selection of a competent service provider was the accuracy analysis of costs involved in the provision of SWM services and in regard to accuracy of costs, the Head of MDC's Procurement Management Unit had this to say:

*“To determine the cost of providing SWM services (collection, transporting and final disposal) the applicants are usually required to provide estimates of the costs they expect to incur during SWM service provision particularly, revenue from collection fees, expenditures and expected profits”.*

These findings suggest the need to extend the contract duration to enable SPs to adequately invest in necessary SWM equipment. Furthermore, service cost analysis should be reasonable and affordable to service beneficiaries. These two criteria fall under the equipment and financial resources category of the standard selection criteria.

Patricija and Danijela (2017) similarly concluded as per their study findings that costs and prompt service delivery are imperative and a prime aspect of the service provider selection process.

Study findings reveal that service beneficiaries in the selected cases are given the opportunity to share their views on the selection process of service providers. Service beneficiaries are expected to provide a report which is largely experiential in nature and informs on bidders' competence and equipment. The beneficiaries also respond to various cues to assess service provider competence such as equipment used, employees of the SP, capacity of SP and service delivery time, all of which fall under the professional technical competence and equipment in the standard selection criteria. These findings suggest that SWM services have a significant impact on livelihoods in LGAs and therefore top management must be involved from the very beginning; starting with need identification and later, the inclusion of all the other stages of SP selection process and most importantly the preparation of selection criteria. Kurdi (2012) similarly found that there is need to ensure that stipulated requirements are in line with the best practices and are written prior to the selection of the service provider. As part of the requirements, the nature of relationship LGAs wish to establish with service providers should be clarified.

Although LGAs have various approaches to SWM service delivery (e.g door to door collection, preventing littering, collection of SW from collection point) as shown on table 2 above, the recommended standard selection criteria typically includes; 1, cost analysis, capability and accurate delivery time. These are the major considerations in the selection process although standard preliminary considerations include; tender fees, business licence, tax certificates "company registration certificate.

As revealed by study findings, trust and commitment are fundamental aspects in the selection criteria of SWM service providers in all selected LGAs. Indicators of potential service provider's trustworthiness include; prior experience with similar assignments, past performance and level of commitment. In this regard, the HPMUs of these LGAs shared that; *"The selection of a competent SP basically depends on their technical ability, experience with similar activities and employee skills"*.

The HPMU of MDC further added that: *".....where aspiring service providers fail to express their abilities in a concise and professional manner, then their application may not be considered"*.

We were also interested in identifying attributes to bidder to rejection upon evaluation and in this regard, the HPMUs of ACC and MDC revealed that competing bidders were not necessarily excluded but were simply not chosen thus, this implies that there is a qualitative difference between being excluded and not being selected. We assume that not being chosen reflects a failure to (positively) differentiate bidders, whereas being excluded is most likely due to some error on the part of the bidder. In this regard, HPMU of MDC stated that: *".....during the course of evaluation, a bidder may be excluded if they fail to clearly analyse the income and expenditure of the expected SW fees collected and the remaining balance"*.

### **3.4 LGAs attitude towards the selection criteria**

Abiding to the standard selection criteria cannot be over emphasised if LGAs are to mitigate SW related problems. The selection criteria used by selected LGAs in the outsourcing process of service providers are broadly categorised as; capability, experience with the provision of similar services and staff qualification. In reference to bidder's capability, it was that some LGAs, particularly CCD was significantly ignorant about SW services to be provided and the detailed technical error in specifying equipment owned by bidders. Although it is likely that bidders not chosen may have actually been capable, some items may best convey LGAs observation regarding experience with similar assignments to include: Number of years carrying out similar assignments, Clients served by the SPs (bidders), Location of served areas, Contacts and physical address of service beneficiaries, Performance report from service beneficiaries (reference, reputation) and Magnitude of the service offered.

Some similar observations were noted regarding staff qualification to include: Number of qualified staff, Certificate attached and the Experience of proposed staff.

Study findings reveal that the experience of bidders is a strong indicator of their ability to efficiently deliver SW collection services, and as quoted from the evaluation report: *"Lack of experience results to the inability to provide the required service"* These findings is in line with Crimando (2005) who also recommends that the service provider selection criteria should include: Service cost and pricing structure, Qualifications of staff, Linkages between service provider and other stakeholders and Staff that is, client ratio and reputation of service provider. Apart from service



provider capabilities and experience, bidders' preliminary requirements include; business license and the company registration certificate which are required at the evaluation phase.

The two categories; capabilities and experience with the execution of similar tasks are considered as indicators of bidders' trust and commitment and as revealed in the RFPs:

*"We determine the bidder's trustworthiness through their past experience in providing similar services in terms of years, client involvement and recommendation from service beneficiaries"*

ACC and MDC also strongly considered the bidder's, commitment and as revealed in the RFP: *"bidders should indicate the qualification of their employees and also attach their professional certificate"*

As revealed, ACC and MDC yielded the main overarching criteria of preliminary responsiveness of bidders, capabilities and experience which led to several key perceptions as follows:

Relevant experience of the service provider and the staff of the firm are critical, Capability and competence are primarily assessed using "stiff" criteria, Perceptions like competence drive choices, Trust in PSP firm and commitment to SWM services is vital, Trust and commitment are considered (judged) in the evaluation process using softer criteria e.g staff qualification, with all other factors equal, staff qualification can be deciding factor and some LGAs recruiting competent SP owing to their adoption of inadequate criteria.

The most important insights derived from the study are that standard selection criteria are vital in the selection decision of a competent SWM service provider. These findings provide satisfactory answers to the discussion questions regarding the selection of a competent SP. Insightful questions to be answered prior to the service provider selection are provided by Mezak (2006) and these include; how can an organisation select a private service provider? Will a specific bidder be the best service provider? Is there a better service provider out there that is more experienced, works faster and costs less? Deriving accurate answers to these questions is complex and requires a rigorous process. In all RFPs and Evaluation reports reviewed in selected cases, the selection criteria are generally centred on bidder trust and commitment. The most fundamental components of trust are competence and service provider's capacity. Trust enables the client to assume that the agent will act in the best interests of the client's so-called stewardship.

The two concepts mentioned above have frequently emerged in the tendering documents and RFPs. Competence and capacity are primarily assessed in the second stage known as detailed evaluation in the selection process which is also referred to as technical professional and competence assessment. In deed for LGAs, the detailed evaluation of the selection process largely involves assessing impressions of the bidders and the staffs involved. It is at this phase of the selection process that bidders' trustworthiness and commitment are evaluated. For example proven staff qualifications contribute to trustworthiness, which is an important deciding criterion. The qualifications of the bidder's employees and LGAs are a critical differentiating feature of a selected service provider and the criteria provided for the detailed evaluation are controllable. Findings indicated that MMC and CCD lack criteria for the detailed bidder evaluation which can lead to failure in the selection of a competent SP. Contrary to current study findings however, Patricija and Danijela (2017) found that that flexibility, staff quality, service coverage, reputation and experience are strong determinants of a competent service provider.

#### **4.0 MANAGERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

As previously noted, the preparation of a detailed and efficient selection criteria guideline by LGAs will enhance their ability to secure a competent solid waste service provider, and this is clearly within the mandate of LGAs particularly, the procurement management unit and user department staff. LGAs should support service provider's efforts and increase their chances of first, being shortlisted and second being awarded the contract. We further recommend that LGAs should use the standard selection criteria provided in the Public Procurement Act of 2011 and its regulations of 2013. This will enable LGAs to go through the appropriate process of securing a competent and experienced service provider. The standard selection criteria currently focuses on bidders' expertise and experience however, it is worthwhile to conduct a cost/benefit analysis prior to advertising the tender. The standard selection criteria also differentiates the most competent service provider from other bidders and further provides justification for the selection of a particular SP, it is therefore recommended that LGAs develop a working partnership with the selected SP and also adopt a problem solving and client-oriented approach during the tender evaluation process.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The selection of a competent SP is an important activity in LGAs which ensures sustainability of service delivery and user satisfaction. Service providers-client cooperation is a central factor for successful outsourcing of any public service. According to Pressman (1995), the relationship between service providers and clients is understudied, under discussed and under narrated. LGAs have resorted to SWM service outsourcing in an intentional move to take advantage of competence and efficiency of the private sector. Due to the complexity experienced in the execution of SWM services, the Public Procurement Act of 2011 and its regulations of 2013 provide standard selection criteria, all of which are aimed at supporting LGAs efforts in securing competent service providers who will improve the quality of SW collection services. We found that the standard selection criteria include all the qualities of a competent solid waste collection service provider.

This paper focuses on LGAs which rely heavily on their collaboration with SWM service providers to deliver improved services in their area of jurisdiction. Sufficient data was on the selection of a competent solid waste service provider was accrued and analysed through this study and thus filled the knowledge gap regarding LGAs and solid waste companies, leading to several managerial implications. While lessons learned highlight the use of standard selection criteria in selecting competent SP, attention to ensuring that the selection criteria are effectively assessed remain critical for the successful provision of SW collection services. It is important for LGA decision makers to clearly describe and explain solid waste service provider selection process and further clarify bidder attributes which may result to desirable outcomes of tender invitations.

We recommend that further studies that will benefit the solid waste service providers seeking to win contracts be conducted, our study are of relevance and resourceful for not only SWM service providers but also for those desiring greater understanding of the selection criteria for competent service solid waste collection service providers. This study therefore adds to the existing literature and provides consistent understanding of the selection criteria of SWM service providers.

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