InnoBuyer

FAST TRACK TO INNOVATION PROCUREMENT

REPORT ON THE STRATEGIES FOR TOR ADOPTION

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REPORT ON THE STRATEGIES FOR TOR ADOPTION

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Authors	Lucas de Bont, Anna Tórz (Civitta)
Reviewers	Filipa Sousa (F6S)
Abstract	This report analyzes 14 InnoBuyer ToR to outline strategies for transitioning innovations to public sector adoption. It identifies four uptake pathways: Agile Direct Awards, Open Tenders, Co-Development, and Advanced Innovation Instruments. Highlighting the pilot phase for evidence-building, it provides an SME-friendly framework regarding documentation, administrative processes, and fair IPR distribution, offering a blueprint for effective innovation procurement.
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- o * R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)
- o DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs
- o DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.
- o OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the diverse strategies developed by InnoBuyer procurers to transition validated pilot solutions into sustainable public sector adoption. Analysing 14 pilot cases from the 14 public institutions onboarded on InnoBuyer Action 4, it identifies four primary pathways for solution uptake: Agile Direct Awards for low-value or maintenance contracts, Open Public Tenders for mature large-scale deployments, Structured Co-Development for solutions requiring further clinical or technical validation, and Advanced Innovation Instruments like Innovation Partnerships for complex R&D.

The document highlights how the pilot phase serves as a critical evidence-building mechanism—validating impact, refining technical specifications, and securing stakeholder buy-in. Additionally, it provides a practical framework for enabling SME participation through clear documentation, streamlined administrative processes, realistic timelines, and fair distribution of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), offering a blueprint for effective innovation procurement.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The InnoBuyer project operated at the intersection of public need and private innovation. Its primary mission was to facilitate a "fast track" to innovation procurement, helping public organisations (Challengers) and innovative SMEs (Solvers) co-create solutions that solve real-world problems. However, a successful pilot is only the beginning. The ultimate measure of success is their adoption into the public sector's regular operations, which is set to occur outside the InnoBuyer programme.

This report, showcases the diverse and practical strategies developed by the InnoBuyer Challengers to translate their pilot projects into long-term, adopted solutions. Rather than prescribing a single path, it highlights a portfolio of procurement approaches tailored to different contexts, budgets, and levels of solution maturity.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) developed by each Challenger serve as the blueprint for this transition. By analysing the 14 pilots within the InnoBuyer cohort, we have identified four primary strategic pathways for adoption: Agile Direct Awards, Open Public Tenders, Structured Co-Development, and Advanced Innovation Instruments. This report details these strategies, offering a practical playbook for public sector leaders aiming to move innovation from a promising pilot to an integrated, impactful practice.

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2. USING THE PILOT TO BUILD THE CASE FOR ADOPTION

For the procurers in the InnoBuyer program, the pilot served as a mechanism for generating concrete data, stakeholder buy-in, and refined specifications necessary for a confident, justifiable procurement decision. It transformed the abstract potential of an idea into a tangible, validated solution, systematically de-risking the path to long-term implementation.

2.1. VALIDATING IMPACT AND FEASIBILITY

Challengers leveraged the pilot co-creation phase to generate hard, data-driven evidence demonstrating a solution's value. By tracking key performance indicators (KPIs), they could quantify the impact on efficiency, user satisfaction, and cost savings, creating a robust business case for decision-makers. As examples:

- **PREPLEX (Hospital Universitario del Sureste):** The pilot validated a demand prediction model with 90-95% accuracy and demonstrated a 22 percentage-point increase in the schedule occupation index, confirming its ability to optimise hospital resource allocation.
- **OptiDrive (JSC "Klaipėdos paslaugos"):** Data analysis from the electric bus pilot showed a potential 8-10% reduction in energy consumption per kilometre, indicating a clear pathway to significant operational cost savings.
- **Safe-stay (Olsztyn Hospital):** The pilot exceeded expectations, increasing patient satisfaction by 65% and staff satisfaction by 57% (above the initial targets).

2.2 REFINING THE SOLUTION FOR REAL-WORLD USE

The pilot phase served as an iterative refinement loop. Real-world feedback and unexpected operational challenges were used to adapt and improve the solution before full-scale procurement.

- **AI4Justice (CTTI):** Direct feedback from magistrates was crucial for managing the unpredictability of Large Language Model (LLM) outputs. This collaborative loop refined prompts to mitigate "hallucinations," ensuring the tool delivered reliable legal drafts.
- **NAIAD (SMTBV):** The chaotic riverbed at the initial test site revealed operational limitations of LiDAR sensors. This critical learning helped define the service's real-

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world constraints and led to a strategic pivot to a more suitable location for the next phase.

3. Strategic Pathways to Adoption

There is no "one-size-fits-all" path to adopting innovation. The InnoBuyer procurers selected from a diverse portfolio of strategies, each carefully tailored to their solution's maturity, contract value, and regulatory landscape.

3.1 Strategy 1: Agile Adoption via Direct Awards and Minor Contracts

Mechanism: Using simplified procurement procedures (often called "minor contracts" or "direct awards") for low-value contracts or specific follow-up services. This pathway enables rapid adoption, ensuring momentum is not lost to lengthy procedures. It is ideal when the solution is validated, the contract value is below national thresholds for public tenders, or when the specific provider has unique capabilities verified during the pilot.

- **Hospital Universitario del Sureste (PREPLEX):** Opted for a minor contract to develop a specific microservice and API integration. This allows for immediate deployment of the validated predictive model without disrupting existing hospital IT infrastructure.
- **Olsztyn Hospital (Safe-Stay):** Utilised a minor contract for the maintenance of the wheelchair system. Because the value was below the national threshold, they could directly contract the solver to ensure service continuity, with plans for a larger open tender later for expansion.
- **LAA (Honey.AI):** Chose a minor contract to acquire the automated microscope and analysis credits. An exclusivity certificate supported this, as the solver is the sole provider of this specific automated pollen analysis software.
- **TUDelft (MDR-PREP) & Erasmus MC (HomeRUN):** Both projects utilised direct awards for prototype development services. This aligns with internal policies for low-value innovation procurement (<€50k), allowing for fast-track development of patient-centric devices.

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3.2 Strategy 2: Scaling through Open Public Tenders

Mechanism: Launching a formal, competitive Open Procedure where any interested supplier can bid. This is the standard route for high-value contracts and mature solutions ready for widespread deployment. It ensures maximum transparency, competition, and compliance with EU directives for large-scale purchasing.

- **Fundesalud (BLOODMANSYS):** Following a successful pilot in Badajoz, the Regional Health Service is launching an Open Public Tender divided into two lots: one to extend the pilot to other health areas and another for the full acquisition of the blood management technology.

- **JSC "Klaipėdos paslaugos" (OptiDrive):** To implement the eco-driving solution across its entire electric bus fleet, the organisation is initiating an Open Public Tender via the Central Public Procurement Information System (CVP IS). The ToR serves as the core technical specification for this tender.

3.3 Strategy 3: Structured Co-Development & Collaboration Agreements

The Mechanism: Signing a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Collaboration Agreement to continue R&D and validation before purchasing. Sometimes, a solution shows immense promise but requires more clinical evidence, regulatory certification, or technical refinement before it is ready for a commercial contract. This pathway bridges the gap between pilot and purchase.

- **IDIAP Jordi Gol (EndoPath):** Signed an MoU to extend the collaboration. The partners are continuing co-development to finalise biomarker validation and achieve regulatory alignment with the IVDR. This phase is supported by public grants, preparing the ground for a future Public Procurement of Innovation (PPI).

- **Hospital Getafe (FharmaVerso):** Established a Framework Collaboration Agreement to continue the multicenter clinical validation of their pediatric VR tool. This non-financial agreement allows the hospital to use the license free of charge during validation, transitioning to a paid licensing model once fully validated in 2027.

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- **SMTBV (NAIAD):** Signed an MoU to extend testing to a new river site. This allows the solver to refine their hydrological models in a different environment, ensuring the technology is robust enough for a future tender in 2026.
- **HGUGM (EarlyDel):** A Collaboration Agreement was chosen to integrate the delirium prediction tool into the hospital's live digital systems for final validation, a necessary step before launching a public tender for regional deployment.

3.4 Strategy 4: Advanced Innovation Instruments (Innovation Partnerships, PPI, SDA)

Mechanism: Using specialised EU procurement instruments designed specifically for complex innovation, such as Innovation Partnerships, Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions (PPI), or Dynamic Purchasing Systems (SDA). These instruments are used when the public sector needs to steer the development of a solution that does not yet exist on the market (Innovation Partnership) or needs a flexible, long-term purchasing mechanism for evolving technologies.

- **Municipality of Cluj-Napoca (Access4All):** Selected an Innovation Partnership procedure. This allows the city to contract a partner to research, develop, and test 50 assistive devices for the visually impaired, and then progressively scale up to 150 devices within the same contract, without needing a new tender.
- **Las Rozas City Council (MOTINN):** Adopting a phased approach. A Direct Procurement will be used for immediate short-term expansion (2 stations), followed by a Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions (PPI) strategy to deploy the network regionally across the "Madrid Oeste" technological cluster.
- **CTTI (AI4Justice):** Plans to utilise a Dynamic Purchasing System (SDA). This electronic system remains open to new suppliers, enabling the government to procure evolving AI services for the justice system in an agile, ongoing manner.

4. Enabling Success through an SME-Friendly Process

The choice of a procurement model is a strategic decision, but its successful execution depends on a fundamental operating system. Across the InnoBuyer program, procurers adopted specific principles to ensure their ToRs were accessible to Small and Medium-sized

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Enterprises (SMEs), who are often the source of groundbreaking innovation but can be deterred by bureaucracy.

4.1 Clear and Concise Documentation

The foundation of effective adoption is clarity. Procurers ensured that ToRs were written in non-technical, accessible language.

- *Example:* Las Rozas ensured their ToR avoided unnecessary technical jargon, aligning strictly with national regulations to ensure potential SME bidders could easily understand the scope without needing extensive legal teams.

4.2 Streamlined Administrative Processes

To facilitate adoption, administrative burdens were minimised.

- *Example:* Erasmus MC utilised a simplified "direct award" template for their low-value procurements, removing the need for complex tender dossiers that typically discourage SMEs. Olsztyn Hospital leveraged internal regulations for minor contracts to bypass the lengthy procedures under the Public Procurement Act for its initial maintenance contract.

4.3 Realistic Timelines

Unrealistic timelines often lead to project failure. Procurers built "buffer periods" and realistic phases into their adoption roadmaps.

- *Example:* **Hospital Universitario del Sureste (PREPLEX)** established a 12-month execution period for its minor contract, deliberately designed to allow sufficient time for testing and user validation, acknowledging that SMEs need reasonable timeframes to deliver quality integration.

4.4 Fair IPR Distribution

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are often a roadblock. InnoBuyer procurers adopted a balanced approach: the Solver retains ownership of the foreground IPR (incentivising them to commercialise the solution elsewhere). At the same time, the Procurer secures usage rights (royalty-free licenses) for their internal operations.

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- *Example:* **IDIAP Jordi Gol (EndoPath)** explicitly stated that IP related to the biomarker panel belongs to the SME (MiMARK). At the same time, the public institution provides validation support, ensuring a symbiotic relationship in which the public sector gets the tool and the SME receives the asset.

5. Conclusion

The journey from a promising innovation pilot to a fully integrated public-sector practice is complex, but the experiences of the InnoBuyer procurers demonstrate that it is achievable. The key finding from this initiative is that successful innovation adoption does not follow a single, rigid formula. Instead, it requires a flexible and context-aware portfolio of strategic pathways, ranging from agile direct awards for mature, low-cost solutions to structured, long-term co-development for technologies that are still evolving. This adaptability allows public organisations to match their procurement approach to the specific needs of the solution and the realities of their institutional environment.

Summarising the key learnings:

1. **Agile Direct Awards** for low-cost, validated software or maintenance.
2. **Open Public Tenders** for high-value, mature fleet or infrastructure deployments.
3. **Co-Development Agreements** for clinical solutions requiring further evidence.
4. **Innovation Partnerships** for complex, phased R&D and deployment.

By selecting the mechanism that best fits the solution's maturity and the organisation's regulatory context, InnoBuyer participants have created a roadmap for sustainable public sector innovation.

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