

## **PROCESS APPROACH TO SUPPLIES AND ORDERS IN A PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION**

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### ***Abstract***

The article presents a concept of a process approach to the supplies of goods and services in a public higher education institution. The presented processes include also the internal orders and the external ones. The supplies are implemented in line with the public procurement law. It introduces a limitation for the proceeding which follows the ISO 9001 norm. The presented divagations are a development of the basic concept based on a pure process approach which has been implemented for a few years in public higher education institutions. After the first experience the concept evolved into a new one due to the necessity to aggregate the orders and a reluctance to single source procurement procedure.

**Key words:** process approach, quality management, supplies processes

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Public organizations in Poland have a functional approach to management. Public higher education institutions are also in the majority of cases oriented on the management in the functional approach which leads to a situation when the achievements of the modern management and the advantages of a system approach to the permanent improvement of the organization are not available for them. In the functional approach the employees are highly specialized within their duties and they concentrate on their function and not on an efficient and effective implementation of processes which bring an added value for the organization (Wiśniewski & Mnich, 2016, p. 432). Such an approach facilitates the planning and supervision of the implementation and facilitates the cost calculation in the place where it is made. The employees specialize in the tasks and responsibilities which were given to them. The organizational discipline enforces a vertical communication maintaining the official procedure (Wiśniewski, 2015, p.42). The functional orientation impedes the total optimization, lengthens the time of the realization of tasks, increases the costs and decreases the flexibility of operation. The process orientation in which the single

participants, implementers are responsible for the effect of the executed work rather than for executing it is in the opposition to the functional approach.

The article presents the results of the mapping of the supply process in one of the selected universities. The main research problem can be defined as follows: what are the main problems related to applying public procurement law in a public higher education institution? The purpose of the discussion is to analyze the way supply system works in a public higher education institution and to try to improve the procedures. The identification of the system irregularities is the basis for the improvement. One can hypothesize: the application of public procurement law is the most important principle in public higher education institutions and excludes the possibility of applying qualification procedures for suppliers based on quality management system. The research was conducted in the form of a case study at one of the largest public higher education institutions in Poland. The obtained results can be extrapolated to other public HEIs in Poland as they operate on the basis of the same mandatory regulations. The university had a defined aim: to prepare a process description in such a way as to identify the structure of the processes which take place and to optimize them. While mapping, the process of the supply of goods and services was identified. Thanks to a process approach, which is the main aim of the activities in this university, it was possible to obtain effects which could not be achieved in a traditional, functional approach.

The first iteration of the process approach to supplies in this university was created in a non-optimized configuration. Its aim was to reveal a real structure of the realization of tasks (Wiśniewski & Mnich, 2016, p.432). The current iteration can lead to an improvement of the process. An excessive allocation of the purchase tasks in the units of the organization instead of concentrating them on the central level was one of the disadvantages of the presented process. The supply process did not benefit enough from the scale effect.

## **2. PROCESS APPROACH**

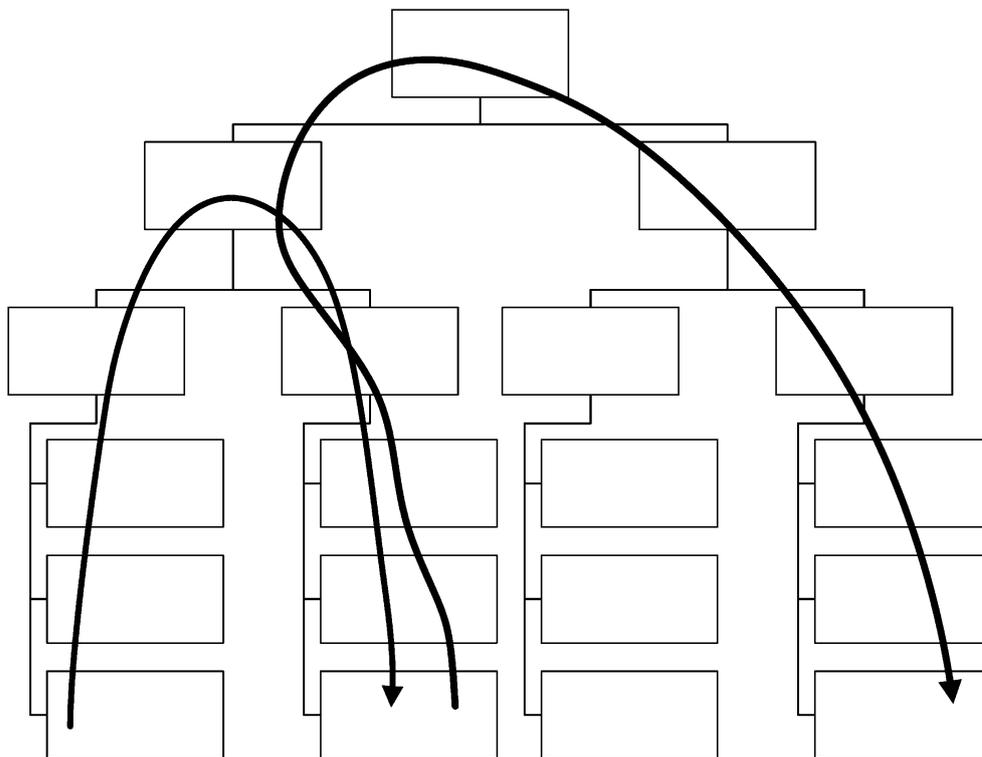
In the organizations with a functional approach there is a high level of bureaucracy, considerable problems with coordinating the activities around common aims since the knowledge on the functioning of the organization as the whole one and its parts is dispersed. It is dispersed among the specialists of the different areas. Many units or even many departments are implemented in the given process. The coordination of the activities is tedious since there are the rules of communication which require the acceptance of the direct superiors. None of the employees is responsible for the sequence of activities but only for the fragment which is attributed to them. It is almost impossible to react in a flexible way to the changing needs of the environment and the needs of other units within a given organization. However, the worst is the fact that the decisions are not taken in the place where the problem appeared because in this kind of organization there is a clear division between the decision makers and the executors (Figure 1).

Such a style of management was highly effective in the times of the intense development of the production structures based on the criterion of technical and

economic efficiency. Nowadays it is not beneficial at all when the new challenges are created which make it necessary to react quickly to the changing expectations of every stakeholder in order to satisfy the needs for which the given organization was created (Muhlemann et al., 2001; Kisielnicki, 2008; Wiśniewski, 2010).

It leads to a situation when none of the units and none of the employees have a need (resulting directly from their role in the organization) to identify their work and duties in the reference to the product or a service offered to the clients on the market. The employees do not distinguish from the whole the range of the executed tasks for which they are responsible and provide it to the further processing in other working positions. In the functional organizations the thinking in terms of the functions leads to optimizing activities of the parts to the detriments of the totality and absorbs the energy of the company for the coordination of the divided parts.

**Figure 1.** Official procedure of taking the decisions and solving problems – a distribution channel and a channel of taking the decisions goes through the supervisors of both stakeholders



Source: own elaboration

The processes are artificially divided by the borders of the units and the vertical division of work is in favor of the division into commanders and executors which separates the thinking from the execution.

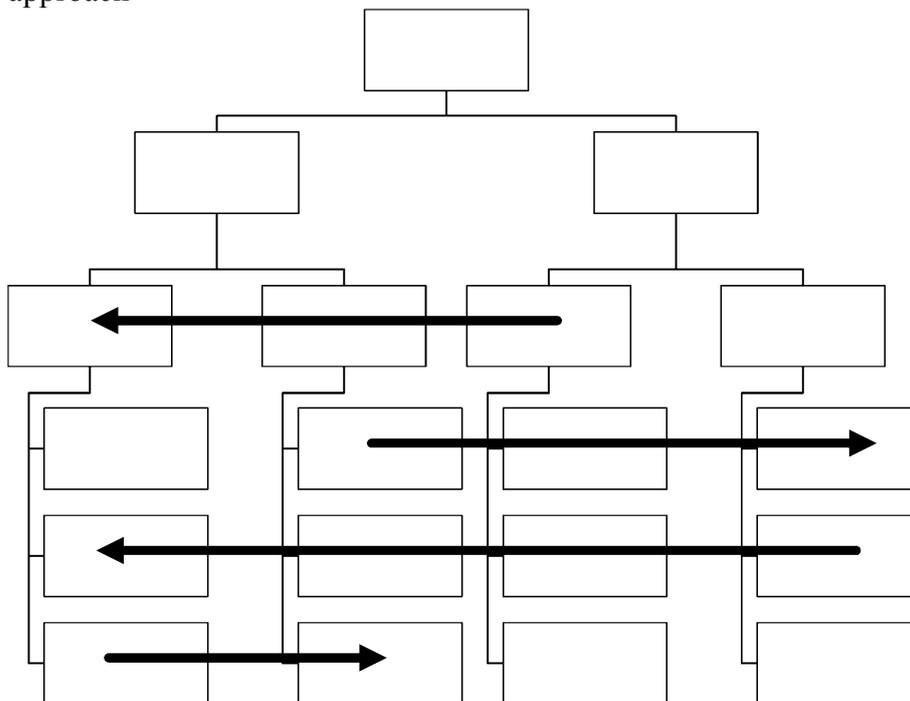
The information flow is long (Figure 1) and the decisions are taken in the places where the activities are conducted (Bitkowska, 2009).

The form of the cooperation and the communication between the positions and the processes is an important issue which is the obstacle in the effective usage of the

potential of the organization. If the employee is accounted for the work which is done and not for the process of making it, then the obtained effect is important. Therefore instead of not reacting to the wrongly prepared input stream to the process (as is the case in the functional structures) such as wrongly prepared documents, badly processed material, wrongly configured software which result in the work which is not done, the employee can take an initiative to submit a complaint to their supplier. Every stakeholder which executes work is a client for their supplier. The work cannot be done well if the supplier does not provide a source of a good quality for the entrance to the process. In order to make such a mechanism work, an employee must know the link between their process and the others: suppliers and clients. They will address the first group - the suppliers- when the raw materials of an improper quality is delivered and the second ones can be addressed in order to satisfy their needs in a proper way.

Such a self-regulating system is the best solution which guarantees an adjustment of the single processes in the organization on the basis of the quality balancing and ensuring the quality of the single processes.

**Figure 2.** The process of taking decisions and solving problems in a process approach



Source: own elaboration

The thinking in the category of processes means a perception of the organizational system as a system in which the places and the roles are variable and defined by the activities (operations) which must be conducted in order to create a value expected by a client. This way of thinking helps to identify an own role in the strategic operation of the whole company and places an employee within the activities of the whole group and not within a closed space which specializes in the implementation of the homogenous tasks of the unit. It facilitates the understanding and a verification of the sense of own work taking into consideration its usefulness

for the client and not only the evaluations of the superior as the substitute of the client. It is also in favor of the adjustment changes by supporting the members of the organization in gathering the resources of knowledge and learning which can become a very important element of the competitive advantage (Bitkowska, 2009).

The process approach puts the emphasis of translating the strategic aims of the organization into the aims of processes, the satisfaction of the clients' needs, the decrease of the costs of company's operation as well as on the increase of the quality and shortening the time of the realization of the tasks. The place and the role of employees are variable and defined by the processes which must be executed in order to create a value which fulfils the clients' expectations. The employee is situated within the activities of the whole organizations and not in the closed, specialized space to implement the homogeneous tasks of the unit. The decision-making power is transferred to the place where the activities are done and the information flow is shortened (Figure 2).

Each process in the process organization is verified by the level of the values assessed by the client, contrary to the functional organization where the measure refers to the level of the realization of the tasks and is evaluated by the responsible managers.

Despite the advantages of the process approach over the functional management, it is not always easy to implement it in an efficient and an effective way. The attachment to the traditional way of management and a fear of change are the obstacle. In case of the public organizations, the resistance is even greater. This results from the fact that in such organizations which do not operate for the profit, it is difficult to define a role of employees for the success of the company.

The more so that the success is not measured with the size of the profit, the brand recognition or the level of the clients' loyalty. The public organizations are in the majority of cases monopolists on a given market and that is why they do not need to attract the attention of the potential clients. It is slightly different on the market of the educational services, particularly on the level of the higher education. There is a greater competition which results in a necessity to try to attract the attention of the clients- the students. There is a growing interest among university managers for a modern management approach. For them, the chain of value creation and the interrelation of elementary activities performed by staff with customer satisfaction are important. The higher education institutions have one more element which really strongly "protects" them against the usage of the modern approach. It is an "academic tradition". It is a collection of customs, rituals and even a management style which derive from a long tradition of universities. The universities have worked out during the dozens of years or even during the centuries based on approach attached to certain behavior which defines the identity of the institution. That explains the reluctance to implement new elements and what led to ineffective management. (Bogdanienko & Piotrowski, 2013; Morawski et al., 2010).

Many universities understand the burden of the academic tradition, face the challenges of the reality and try to operate in such a way to ensure a dynamic development. The application of the process approach is a very important element of challenge.

The article describes a situation of one of the biggest Polish higher education institutions in which the management is convinced about a necessity to boost the

activities, increase a flexibility, improve the internal flows, facilitate the building of relations with stakeholders and that is why it decides to gradually implement a process approach due to a desire to implement a system of the quality assurance (Piasecka, 2011). The very idea of the implementation of the system proves that the authorities understand the role of the organization in the business environment.

### **3. PROBLEM OF PROCUREMENT IN A PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION**

The public higher education institutions are the organizations in which it is very difficult to implement a quality management system which is in line with the norm ISO9001 which prefers a process approach. However, the application of the particular requirements of the above-mentioned norms could improve the functioning of the organization in many operation. In case of some processes the effectiveness of the functioning of the organization greatly depends on a good relations with the external partners. It is the case with the requirements which refer to purchase preferably to the so-called “strategic purchases” which are important for the university key processes – education and research.

In many higher education institutions, the internal units have a great deal of autonomy, including in the financial area. This means that the management of these units allocates financial resources at their discretion. This autonomy leads to the reluctance of managers to give the right to choose suppliers of goods and services of central administration. If goods and services were ordered globally for the entire university, then unit costs would be lower. The consequence is that the university as a whole suffers losses (Wisniewski & Mnich, 2016). The centralization of the purchase done within the higher education institution on a central and departmental level would give visible financial advantages and shorten supply chain eliminating the repeatable processes within the same organization. However, this approach often meets the resistance and the barrier in the form of the objection of people on the different levels of the management. The reasons for this situation can be found in a wrong conviction that the centralization of the purchase process in one place (unit) would significantly decrease the autonomy of the basic organizational units depriving them of a possibility to decide about the kinds, amount of purchase and the choice of the suppliers. The managers of the single internal units play the managerial roles due to their great achievements in the field of a given scientific areas. The competencies due to which they are the managers are not in line with the competencies which are required from the managers and what, besides others, generate excessive costs of the functioning of the companies.

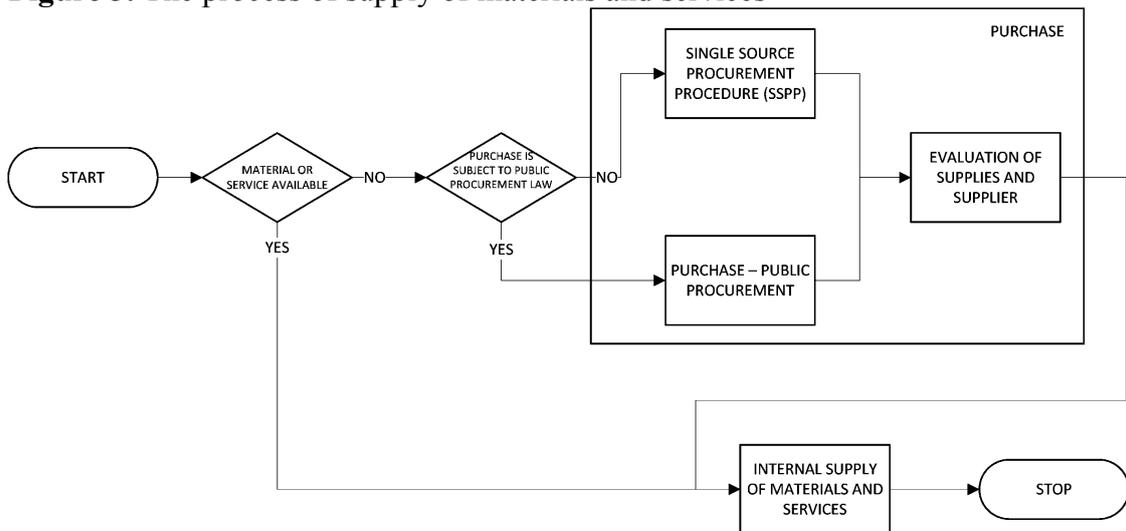
It is important for the authorities of the universities to be able to identify the groups of the goods and services important due to their share in the value of the whole structure of the purchase and make the organizational units conduct the purchase on the central level. It is very important for university authorities to identify the groups of major goods and services due to their highest costs of purchase and to make the units of the university purchase at the central level.

The procurement process in a public higher education institution is multi-level and multi-stage. It combines purchases for the levels of the central administration (rector and chancellor administration) and for all other organizational units (departments, institutes, colleges and so on). This causes many problems because the central administration of the higher education institution buys independently of the purchases made by the organizational units. The implementation of management decentralization of the higher education institutions in the 90s caused the situation when the university became a federation of the departments. They operate autonomously but in the reality they do not have the full independence. The strategic decisions are taken by the central authorities. The decisions referring to the staff management and the financial issues greatly fall within the responsibility of the central offices. That is why managers of the single units (departments, institutes, chairs) want to maintain their autonomy in the purchase of the goods and services. This leads to an increase of costs which was mentioned above. Each unit buys a big number of stationary, equipment and computer services, software, pieces of furniture, insurance services, cleaning services, protection services, laboratory equipment and chemical reagents, construction services and so on. The purchase are conducted separately for every unit. The managers of the units defend their autonomy in carrying out their purchases and therefore do not wish to pursue the concept of collective purchasing. This causes considerable shortcomings despite the introduction of a process approach to shopping (Mnich & Wiśniewski, 2016).

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS IN THE PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION**

The considerations listed below are based on the solutions used in a big public higher education institution. This organization, using a process approach in the management, did a mapping of the processes which function within it. According to the rules of the process approach, three main groups of the processes were distinguished within the organization: the managerial ones, the main ones and the supporting ones (Mnich & Wiśniewski, 2016). In the group of the supporting processes, next to the process of the management of human resources, infrastructure, finances, there was also a process of supply of goods and services. The need to ensure a continuity of the delivery of materials and services necessary to implement the main processes at the higher education institution is a basis of the process. The process of the purchase is done in parallel by the units of the central administration and the selected services in the basic organizational units. Looking at it by the prisms of the organizational scheme of the higher education institution, in the process of supply are engaged in parallel: the units which are placed in the chancellor administration (the unit of supply and public procurement) and people who are appointed to do so in every basic organizational unit.

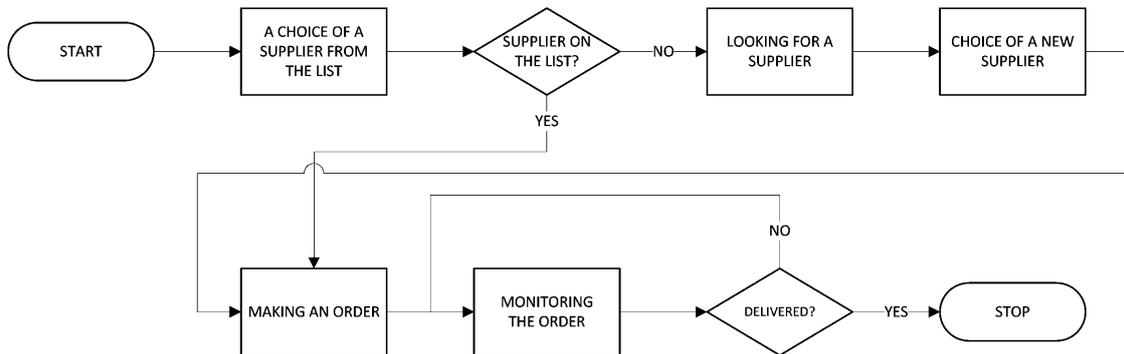
**Figure 3.** The process of supply of materials and services



Source: Wiśniewski & Mnich, 2016

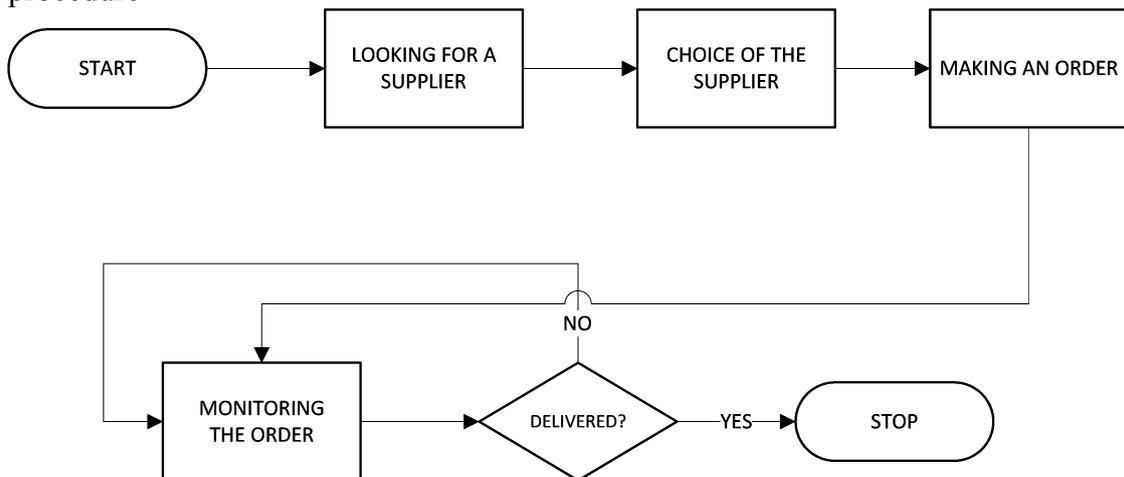
The unit of supply which functions within the chancellor administration ensures the purchase of goods for the rector administration and to a small extent for the basic organizational units. The central process of purchase presented in Figure 3 takes place in two ways and is conditioned by availability of a needed material or a service in a given moment. This solution is a good solution and allows to implement correctly the processes of the purchase of goods and services. The central administration serves all the departments of the university. Thanks to it, it is possible to implement a coherent policy of ordering which includes almost 50% of the people employed in the higher education institution. Unfortunately the value of the purchases (besides the construction investment) constitutes only 25% of all the purchase of the university. The remaining 75% is done by the departments which have a separate purchase policy.

The purchasing process implemented in accordance with the guidelines of the quality management system is based on purchase information, commonly referred to as the "specification" and on the subsequent verification of the purchased goods. These elements are intended to facilitate the organization's implementation of a quality management policy that communicates the need to build mutually beneficial relationships with suppliers. If there is a need to buy the materials or services by the supply unit, it starts the procedure which can be twofold. If a given purchase falls under the requirement of the law on public procurement, than the procedure of the purchase will be conducted by the Public Procurement Unit. When there is no need to launch the procedure of the public procurement, the process is implemented according to the requirements imposed by the system of the quality management. The procedure presented in Figure 4 starts together with the choice of the suppliers from the qualifying list. These are the suppliers which are accepted for the cooperation on the basis of the qualifications and the positive evaluations of the current cooperation. This list is a dynamic one which is updated all the time on the basis of the current cooperation and includes simultaneously the previous cooperation. If a possibility of a purchase goes beyond the choice of the proper supplier from the qualified list, the process of the search for a proper supplier starts.

**Figure 4.** Process of the purchase using the single source procurement procedure

Source: Wiśniewski & Mnich, 2016

Initially, this approach to supply was implemented. Unfortunately this scheme had to be verified due to the fact that although the list of the suppliers who had a long history of the cooperation with the institution, there were the fears whether the usage of the suppliers from the list will not expose the decision makers to the accusation of omitting the rules of sound competition. That is why this scheme after a practical verification was simplified (Figure 5).

**Figure 5.** The verified process of the purchase using the single source procurement procedure

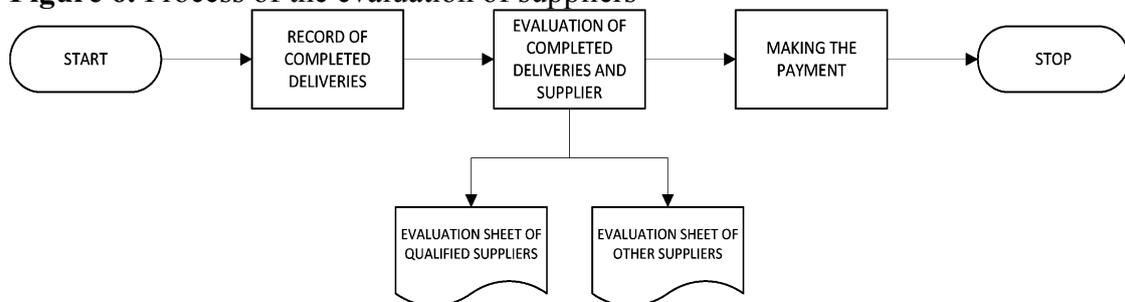
Source: own elaboration

If it is possible, it is beneficial to have delivered a sample batch of goods, have them tested in the conditions of functioning or eventually to choose a given supplier only on the basis of the general widely available knowledge on him. The formal submission of the order in the right form (a letter, an e-mail, a fax, a telephone, others) defined earlier with a supplier is the activity which initiates the purchase. Since this moment the monitoring of the execution of the order starts which depending on the specificity of the purchase can take from a few days up to a few months. A passage to the next stage is dispersed in time and finishes the moment when the purchased good is delivered or a service delivered. It can be assumed that simultaneously it is the moment of the beginning of the process of evaluation of a supply and a supplier.

## 5. EVALUATION OF SUPPLIERS

The supply of every purchased batch of goods is registered both for the accounting reasons and for a proper assessment. The evaluation of the correctness of the implemented service or a delivery should be based on the predefined, clear criteria. They should be measurable, the same for all the important features of the product or a supply as only then one can make an aggregated collective evaluation of the supplier. In the majority of cases the point evaluation is used according to the adopted scale e.g. from 0 to 5. This evaluation is the assessment of the delivered goods or a service but is also the evaluation of a given supplier. It is important to have a coherent system of the evaluation of supplies and suppliers which follows the same guidelines and enables the exchange of the information on evaluation in all the units of the higher education institution as only then it is possible to use the evaluations done by other participants of the process.

**Figure 6.** Process of the evaluation of suppliers



Source: own elaboration

The process of the evaluation of the supply and the supplier presented in Figure 6 is conducted both for the purchases which are made on the basis of the public procurement and all the others done within the higher education institution. Despite the fact that the law on public procurement does not provide a possibility to use the evaluation of the previous cooperation while qualifying the suppliers, it is a good practice (despite everything) to evaluate systematically the suppliers and their supplies. This evaluation should be used and can be helpful for other internal units of the higher education institution which in a given moment can purchase the goods from a given supplier omitting the procedure of the public procurement.

It must be noticed that the usage of the evaluation of suppliers for the choosing them for the second time is a breach of the Polish law. It is bizarre that while choosing a supplier of a service or of a good one cannot use the knowledge on the current cooperation since it is a violation of the rules of competitiveness. The interpretation of the provision is such that the bidder which has a history of cooperation with a given company would be treated differently than the others who compete in the tender. Therefore one cannot use the current knowledge on the cooperation regardless of the fact whether this knowledge speaks about a great fulfilment of the expectations so far or whether a given bidder was disgraced during the previous contracts. This troublesome for the quality of the development way of interpreting the provisions does not exclude completely the application of the knowledge of stakeholders. It is possible to include in the conditions of the call for tenders a requirement to deliver e.g. all the

opinions on the cooperation with the clients from the last year. However, it is a difficult casus which can be applied.

Despite these difficulties, the process of the evaluation of supplies which is at the same time the evaluation of suppliers is done in a parallel way in all the basic organizational units of the university which conduct the purchase process. The results of this evaluation are placed in the IT system which supports the management system. There are two different kinds of the evaluation sheets: the first group is used for the evaluation of the so called “qualified” suppliers, the second one for other suppliers. The evaluation forms are available in every organizational unit of the higher education institution for people who evaluate the supplies and allow at the same time to introduce the evaluations from the single supplies and delivered services and sum automatically the evaluations of the purchase done by the same provider. The evaluation which is permanently updated, available on the IT platform, allows for a current review of the evaluation by other units which also buy goods. This knowledge can and should serve the more cautious purchase decisions. Taking the decisions based on the facts is in reality the implementation of one of eight rules of management. Additionally, the permanent comparison of the processes of supply between the different organizational units of the same higher education institution can be another positive aspect of the transparency of the evaluations of supplies and suppliers. This internal benchmarking can and should lead to finding the most effective and the best solutions and coping them within the whole organization.

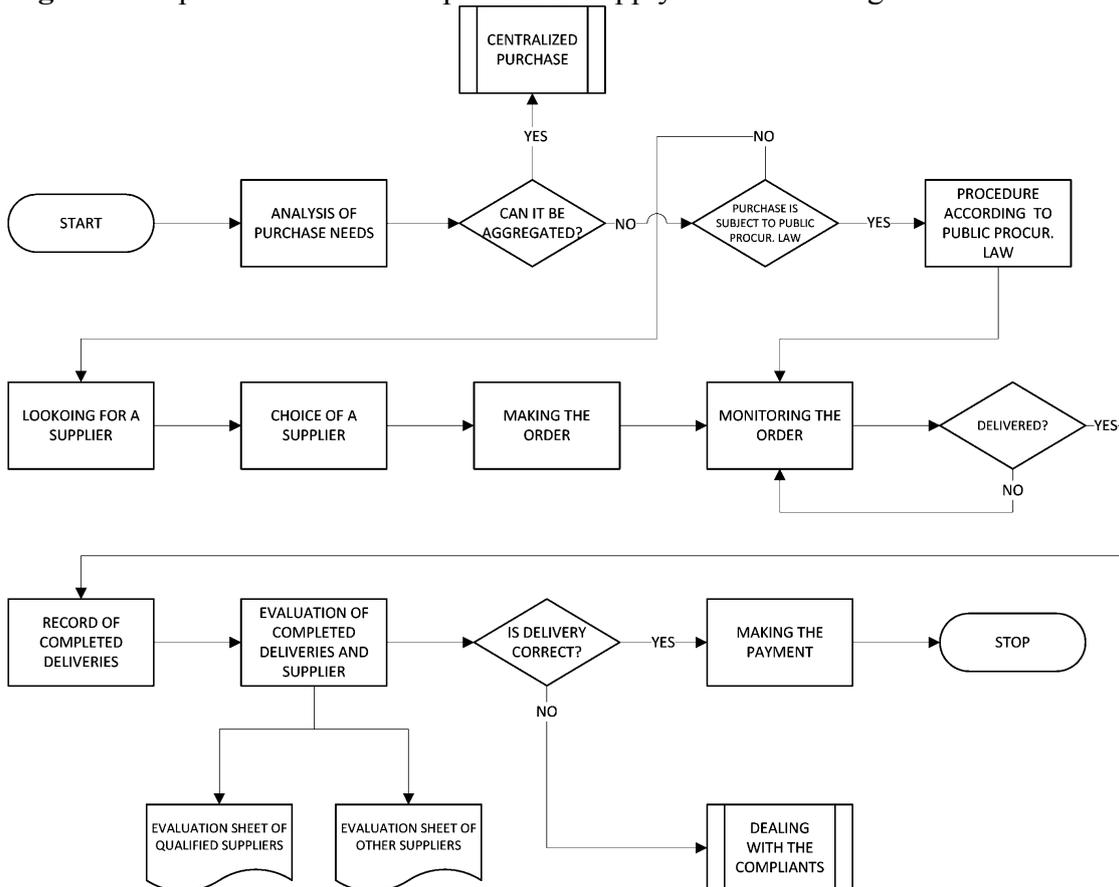
The usefulness of using the evaluation forms of suppliers and the whole knowledge on the proceeding which took place which is gathered refer mainly to the proceeding which are conducted outside of the law on public procurement but this constitutes a small part and due to the evaluation of the purchase towards the scheme presented in Figure 5 - the less and less common.

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION OF SUPPLIES IN THE UNITS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OUTSIDE OF THE CENTRAL SYSTEM OF SUPPLIES**

In single organizational units the purchase is done independently, parallel and analogically as in the central part. The implementation of the purchase by the basic organizational units is divided into: the purchase which does not require the application of the procedures connected with the law on public procurements and the supplies of goods and services which require the application of the procedures described in the law on public procurements, the detailed internal regulations and the regulations of the concerned unit. The scheme below (Figure 7) does not include the purchase done by the organizational unit in a different organizational unit of the same institution on the basis of the internal financial documentation. The first common stage is the analysis of the relevance of a given purchase. On the level of the units, in this place it is necessary to answer a question whether a given purchase will follow the procedure of the law on public procurements or can be done on the basis of single source procurement procedure. If a purchase is done on the basis of the procedure of the public procurement, another important issue is taking the decision whether the

procedure is done within the very unit. If within the basic organizational unit there are no human resources able to conduct such a procedure according to the guidelines of the law on public procurements, the need for such a purchase is directed to the unit of public procurements which is a unit of the chancellor administration. If the procedure of the purchase is done within the unit, than the central unit only gets a plan of the purchase for the given time approved by the manager of the unit; it should be also approved centrally.

**Figure 7.** Implementation of the process of supply in the basic organizational units



Source: own elaboration

The purchase using the procedure of single source procurement procedure is conducted on the basis of the guidelines included in the system of management and include the usage of the qualified suppliers or the purchase from the new supplier to make the order. As it was mentioned earlier, in practice on the central level the list of suppliers from which the orders can be made again is not used. The fear of the failure to comply with the rules of the competitiveness causes that the rules similar to the ones imposed by the law are used. They are implemented in a simplified form. There is even a possibility to use partially the knowledge on the current cooperation, that is the evaluation form, but in a limited way.

Starting from the stage of the monitoring of the implementation of orders, the following activities include a record, an evaluation of the previous supplies and a

possible complaint procedure which is done jointly, regardless of the unit and the purchase procedure.

The scheme which is presented in Figure 7 is different from the model included in the original project presented by Wiśniewski and Mnich (2016). The difference comes from the elimination of the part of checking the availability of suppliers while acting outside of the law (just as is the case of the modification of Figure 5 in comparison to the original presented in Figure 4) and as well as from the duty to aggregate the purchases.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of the way of functioning of supply services in a public higher education institution allows to draw the following conclusions.

The public procurement law forces higher education institutions to apply the principle of free competition, which means that all tenderers must have equal opportunities when choosing a supplier of goods or services.

If a supplier has previously cooperated with the higher education institution and failed to fulfil the contract, then in case of a re-selection, the higher education institution has no right to use that knowledge against them.

On the other hand if this institution has a quality management system implemented it is required to gather knowledge about how suppliers meet their obligations and, at the next selection of suppliers, to use this knowledge reasonably. The aim is to avoid unreliable suppliers. If the higher education institution does not centralize the supply, it further increases the risk that the dishonest supplier can sign again a contract with one of the university's internal units, because the knowledge of the bad history of collaboration is the knowledge accumulated in each unit separately.

The centralization of strategic purchases is the solution proposed on the basis of the divagations discussed here.

This results in the accumulation of knowledge on the reliability of suppliers in one place of higher education institution. The second step which is possible on the basis of a procedural approach, is to establish clearly exceptions to the application of public procurement law - in such cases the higher education institution can freely use the knowledge on existing partnerships with suppliers in the framework of the quality management system.

And finally, the third step is to apply the rule that each supplier must provide references from their recent contracts, including those made with the higher education institution. In this way, the university has the right to use the knowledge on the existing cooperation with a supplier who is re-applying for a contract.

The above principles make it possible, under Polish law, to apply the public procurement law using the knowledge gathered in the processes of the quality management system. This means that the hypothesis presented in the introduction of this paper is untrue as long as the system approach is followed, preferably based on a quality management system.

The presented concept of supply process and its sub processes in a public higher education institution boils down to the description of the reality in a process approach.

The presented map of the process shows all the possible variations of the supply process in such a complex environment. The identification of a real structure of the supply process and the knowledge on the methodology of optimization of processes give an opportunity to improve this aspect of the functioning.

Figure 7 presents this very important change which is supposed to make the managers of the single organizational unit check whether a given purchase is on the list of central purchase. This plan includes also the needs from the different organizational units and they are aggregated for the whole institution. It is valid to make the plan for a long period of time (one year). Then it becomes possible to use the effect of scale and to submit collective orders. This undermines the autonomy of the units but brings significant savings within the whole higher education institution. It turns out that in case of such orders as property insurance the savings of 13% per year can be made and for cleaning services up to 7 %. This does not mean that such an aggregation is obligatory and it must be always applied. The economic rationality sometimes involves the need to fragment the purchase. The insurance can be mentioned as an example. It is a common practice of the insurance companies to increase insurance premiums when in the previous period the payment of compensation was made (e.g. because of a threat, fire, flood and so on). In such a case, a small organizational unit such as a department should choose a purchase in a company in which so far no compensation was claimed. It turns out that in such a case the insurance purchased outside of the central system will be less expensive than if the scale effect was used when the situation is unfavorable for the units within the higher education institution. The optimization taking into account the economic criteria should always be the choice of the supplier. But not the only. The second example refers to security services. If every department purchases this service in a different company than on the junction of the protected areas there is no cooperation between the different protecting companies. In this case the supply of the service done in the complex way is more beneficial for the economic reasons.

The presented processes revealed many aspects of the supply in the higher education institution unknown before. The process approach made the managers of the higher education institution verify the current basis of the purchases. The very usage of the process identification allows to understand people who implement the tasks in this area what the relations between their work and the realization of tasks in the different positions are. The process approach made also the managers of higher education institutions verify the current basis of purchases. The aggregation gives a lot of saving so it is necessary to “deprive” the internal units of the university a part of autonomy in order to conduct centrally the strategic purchases. It is necessary to take into consideration the long-term economic situation which can show that just as it was the case with the insurance, that the diversification of supply can give more benefits than the centralization.

An analysis of the readiness of the public administration staff to adopt a new standard for selecting suppliers should be the next stage of research. The choice made using the current knowledge of suppliers is a very good option but higher education institutions managers have concerns about whether this approach is in line with the law of public procurement.

According to the authors of the research the answer is yes, but the problem of failing to apply a solution lies in the long tradition of using classic solutions. Few public HEIs can be proud of implementing a process approach in management.

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