

Audit Report 2/2022

“Public procurement of high-value items: Have they been sufficiently utilised in accordance with the initial plan or have they remained idle for a long time?”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public entities must be in a position to immediately use the items which they purchase. Otherwise, there is a waste of public funds. If the items purchased are not eventually utilised, then, either the need which they were intended to cover did not exist or the items purchased were not suitable to cover it. There are also other reasons for which purchased items remain idle, such as their defects or technical or operational weaknesses of the public entities.

The Hellenic Court of Audit through its Commissioners' Units carried out an audit regarding the aforementioned question.

The scope of this audit was to identify the reasons for which, high-value items which were found to be idle, were partially utilised or were not utilised at all.

The audit findings are the following:

I. Procurement did not take place in the context of a structured procedure for assessing and prioritising the public entities' needs; it was rather based on the availability of funds in the public entities' budget or it was led by the need to absorb funds from co-financed programmes, without any specific plan for the utilisation of the goods to be procured.

II. The audit identified several deficiencies in the initial planning of the procurement, related to the technical specifications of the items to be purchased and/or their accompanying equipment. Due to such deficiencies, the items procured were not suitable for their intended purpose.

III. The purchasing entities did not examine, prior to the procurement, the possibility of immediately utilising the items purchased, taking account of the public entities' available resources and infrastructure, such as qualified staff or appropriate facilities.

IV. There are instances where public entities took delivery of goods despite identified defects or, following delivery of the goods, they failed to take the measures necessary for the proper operation thereof.