Accession to WTO Government Procurement Agreement: Challenges for Vietnam*

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Vietnam joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in January 2007 but opted not to be a signatory to the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA). Currently, Vietnam is actively involved in negotiations for procurement liberalisation under the Trans-Pacific Partnership and it is reported to be interested in applying for an Observer status to the WTO GPA. This case study presents an insight into Vietnam’s current procurement framework, and comments on potential benefits and challenges of its GPA accession. Findings reveal that Vietnam’s existing public procurement system has shortcomings, which include a fragmented legal structure, low transparency and capacity constraints such as inadequate procurements expertise and database, an inefficient state sector, and high levels of corruption, that pose as major challenges and impact on Vietnam’s ability to negotiate procurement liberalisation under the GPA.

Keywords: Vietnam, Accession, GPA, WTO

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