



Governance of major sporting events: an analysis of the public tender processes for the ‘Alicante Starting Port of The Ocean Race’ in the 2017 and 2023 editions

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Abstract: This study analyses the public tender process conducted by the regional government for the management of the ‘Alicante, Starting Port of The Ocean Race’ event in its 2017 and 2023 editions. The objective is to identify the main factors that influenced the awarding of the contract to a specific company. A documentary and comparative analysis was performed using data obtained from the Spanish state contracting platform. The findings reveal that most of the budget was allocated to infrastructure and logistics. Additionally, both editions had similar overall budgets, and the procurement process resulted in savings of more than 10% of the initial estimated budget.

Keywords: call for tenders; public procurement; public administration; outsourcing; sport governance; major sport events; the ocean race; TOR.

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1 Introduction

A tourist attraction may refer both to the physical characteristics of a destination and to the events held there. The fundamental aim of the latter is to capture the attention of citizens, new residents, visitors, entrepreneurs, and investors (Kotler et al., 2007). In this regard, major sporting events act as tourism catalysts, attracting thousands of visitors to host cities and generating both positive and negative impacts that directly affect various stakeholders (Mao and Huang, 2016; Parra-Camacho et al., 2014).

National, regional, and local governments play a leading role in attracting such major events. However, they often lack the necessary infrastructure, human capital, and services to host and deliver them effectively. As a result, outsourcing or indirect management becomes a key strategy to coordinate and implement these events.

Given this context, the aim of this study is to analyse the tender process conducted by the Valencian regional government (Southeastern Spain) for the management of The Ocean Race (TOR) in its two most recent editions (2017 and 2023). The objective is to identify the key characteristics and parameters that influenced the awarding of the public tender to a company.

This article is structured into four main sections. The first section provides a review of the literature on sporting events, focusing specifically on TOR and its interaction with public administration through outsourced service management. The second section outlines the methodology applied to analyse the tendering processes carried out by the regional government for procuring the necessary services and supplies.

The third section presents the findings of the study. Finally, the last section discusses the main conclusions, outlines the limitations of the research, and proposes future lines of inquiry. This study offers, for the first time, an analysis of the tendering process conducted by a Spanish public administration across two editions of a major sporting event. As such, it contributes to a clearer understanding of the complexity of public procurement procedures and the actual needs of public administrations in managing large-scale events through tenders tailored to real operational requirements.

2 Literature review

2.1 *Sporting events*

The practice of sport has grown significantly over the last decade, resulting in a sharp increase in the organisation of sporting events at the local, regional, national, and international levels – particularly in Spain. These events are often used strategically, at various scales, as tools for positioning tourist destinations and promoting local development, either through the bidding process or the execution of the event itself (Abujamous et al., 2019; Bull and Lovell, 2007; Hallmann and Breuer, 2010; Parra-Camacho et al., 2015; Schlemmer et al., 2020; VanWynsberghe et al., 2012). Such events generate a wide range of economic, tourism-related, environmental, sociocultural, psychological, and political-administrative impacts in host municipalities (Cerezo-Esteve et al., 2022).

Sporting events are also deeply linked to tourism, one of Spain's most significant economic sectors, accounting for 8% of the national GDP (INE, 2022). This intersection is known as sports tourism and includes both participants and spectators of sporting

events (Sánchez et al., 2013; Sánchez-Sáez et al., 2020; Schlemmer et al., 2020). In this sense, it could be said that there are events that attract spectators, mainly mega events (e.g., Olympic Games, World Championships or Formula 1) or large events (e.g., TOR), where participation as a practitioner of the sporting activity is restricted due to its federative nature and the need to qualify for certain places, and events that attract participants but not spectators (limited influx), generally medium and small events of popular scope and free registration (races, duathlons and popular triathlons).

Regardless of the organising body – be it public administrations, consortia, private companies, marketing agencies, federations, associations, or clubs – sporting events are key drivers of tourism in certain regions (Getz, 2008; Kim et al., 2021; Rapoport et al., 2021). This generates, within a specific location and timeframe, a tourist motivation towards the site – not only among spectators, but also among participants and the travelling organising staff (Sánchez et al., 2013; Wallstam and Kronenberg, 2022). At the same time, they generate added value for the tourist destination, urban or rural, especially those dependent on a seasonal tourist offer, such as the increasingly depleted sun and beach offer (e.g., the city of Alicante). In this way, the long-term economic and social viability of the sector and the quality of life of the residents, as well as the reputation of the host locality, can be guaranteed (Ladhari and Souiden, 2020; Pianese, 2021).

It is true that, due to the temporary nature of sporting events (taking place over one or several days, weeks, etc.), structuring tourist destinations solely around them would be rather fragile from the perspective of tourism supply; however, it becomes an effective tool for the development of other products on offer (e. g.: highlighting the cultural, heritage or gastronomic offer of a locality through sporting events), as well as for breaking the seasonality of visitors (Daniels and Tichaawa, 2021). e.g., highlighting the cultural, heritage or gastronomic offer of a locality through sporting events), as well as to break the seasonality of visitors (Daniels and Tichaawa, 2021; Higham, 1999).

Sporting events are therefore capable of attracting new visitors, of creating a legacy for the host community, of motivating the construction and improvement of infrastructures and of building a sense of pride and identity in local inhabitants. They become very valuable instruments for solving the problems of some towns where tourism is exclusively seasonal in nature and are beginning to be considered a key element in territorial marketing policies. Likewise, they will be a tool for the application of socially responsible management policies (e.g., promotion of the heritage and history of a locality, social integration, promotion of physical activity, environmental awareness, etc.) since, thanks to the cross-cutting nature of sport, they will have a place and good acceptance (Crompton and Lee, 2000; Malfas et al., 2004; Preuss, 2006; Preuss and Solberg, 2016; Sánchez et al., 2013; Sánchez-Sáez et al., 2020; Waitt, 2003).

The repercussions that hosting a spectacle of these nature beyond the purely sporting dimension (Sánchez et al., 2013). As a result, there has been a growing trend in the organisation of sporting events- such as the one analysed in this research – conceived as global events with significant costs and both positive and negative social and environmental impacts (Añó, 2003; Sánchez-Sáez, 2020). These events enable organisers, promoters, public administrations and communities to attract large numbers of visitors on-site, promote their municipalities, and generate economic benefits for the local population. When strategically planned and implemented, they become powerful tools for local development, contributing to the broader socio-economic fabric of the territory (Higham, 1999; Parra et al., 2014; Taks, 2013).

This is the reason why any locality or country, and especially regions that suffer from temporary tourism and are exploring new tourism models (e.g., Costa Blanca - Alicante), show great interest in hosting any type of sporting spectacle of varying magnitude, even competing to host the event (Añó et al., 2012; Bull and Lovell, 2007). Likewise, organising bodies are increasingly concerned that one of the main organisational strategies is the event's legacy. In other words, what the local community will receive in return before, during and after the event: facilities, new access, public transport, sports areas, housing, hotels, restaurants, regional, national and international exposure, increased leisure activities, increased sense of pride and identity on the part of residents, establishment of educational and health programmes, etc. Similarly, the participation of the private sector in the investment together with the public administration and the support and collaboration of all stakeholders (politicians, businessmen, citizens, local associations, institutions, promoters, sponsors, etc.), influenced by the perceptions of the potential costs and benefits that the event generates, becomes fundamental to be able to measure the success or failure of the event. In short, to achieve a dynamisation of the locality, which provides new leisure and recreation offers or develops a transformation, to a greater or lesser extent, as well as generating a renewed image where the new and modern services obtained promote a boost to the municipality, using the event location as a basis for regeneration and economic progress, thus taking advantage of the growth of the tourism sector generated by the events (Añó et al., 2010; Collins et al., 2018; Gursøy and Kendall, 2006; Hassanien and Dale, 2011; Parra et al., 2014; Preuss, 2006; Preuss and Solberg, 2006).

In this way, it is essential to define the dimension of the event under study:

- **Mega event – big event:** the large number of actions generated by the celebration of an event of this magnitude in a locality or network of municipalities must be taken into account, including the capacity to modify the urban structure through the construction, remodelling or improvement of facilities, public roads, stations, transport networks, as well as causing an increase in investment in the hotel sector, job creation, an increase in subsidies and sponsorship associated with sport by public and private entities and the development of tourism, which will subsequently serve for the enjoyment of citizens. Similarly, it also entails a series of related negative impacts such as increased taxes, higher crime, increased road traffic in urban centres, road closures, increased pollution, etc. (Añó et al., 2010; Ma et al., 2013; Preuss, 2006).

Therefore, the sporting activity understood from any of its possible manifestations, practising it or attending a sporting spectacle, constitutes a revitalising and revitalising tool for the environment in which it is carried out (urban life or natural environment), thus acquiring economic and social relevance, becoming a notable factor of development for local communities, integrating their residents in this activity, creating new tourist destinations, breaking holiday seasonality or even managing to recover or reconvert disused spaces in the municipality, e.g.,: such as the old arrival pier in the city of Alicante of the Ferry to Oran (Algeria) – (Davies, 2002; Higham, 1999; Parra et al. e.g., the old arrivals dock in the city of Alicante for the Ferry to Oran (Algeria) – (Davies, 2002; Higham, 1999; Parra et al, 2012; Parra et al., 2014; Sánchez et al, 2013).

In this sense, authors such as Dwyer et al. (2000) point out that the economic impact of major sporting events derives from the ability to maximise both visitor spending and visitor retention in the host area. And this is precisely what the host cities participating in

the *Round the World Yacht Race* are looking for, which is why the venues invest in these events to achieve the greatest media notoriety, and the greatest return on investment through the generation of tourism, employment, and wealth.

In short, events are more effective, not as isolated actions, but as opportunities to driver broader strategic interventions. This is why public administrations, aware of the transformative potential of events, seek to host them in their localities and use public tenders as instruments to structure these initiatives. A clear example is the city of Alicante and its organisation of the *Alicante, Starting Port of TOR* event – a series of activities held in parallel to the main event- as a prelude to the around-the-world sailing race known as TOR.

2.2 The ocean race event

TOR is the world's leading offshore team sailing competition, first held in 1973 under the name *Whitbread Round the World Race*. It was renamed Volvo Ocean Race (VOR) in 2001, and since 2018 has been known as TOR. The event takes place every four years (except for the 2005–2013 cycle, which followed a three-year interval) and includes stopovers across five continents. At each host city, the event integrates inport races and public-facing leisure activities lasting between one and three weeks.

TOR is described as one of the world's most prestigious international sporting events, attracting worldwide media attention and drawing millions of visitors to host cities (Collins et al., 2018). According to the latest Race Report prepared by VOR for the 2017–2018 edition, this event has been measured based on four main parameters (Volvo Ocean Race, 2018): sailing in numbers, people in numbers, media in numbers and sustainability in numbers.

Thus, in the edition analysed, this sporting event covered 45,000 nautical miles and lasted 263 days from the opening of the event in Alicante to the closing of the event in The Hague (Netherlands). It hosted 12 host cities (Alicante-Spain, Lisbon-Portugal, Cape Town-South Africa, Melbourne-Australia, Hong Kong-China, Guangzhou-China, Auckland-New Zealand, Itajai-Brazil, Newport-UK, Cardiff-UK, Gothenburg-Sweden and The Hague-Netherlands) and involved nine America's Cup winners, four Olympic Gold medallists, 16 VOR Winners and a total of 95 sailors (Volvo Ocean Race, 2018).

In terms of visiting public, the 12 cities hosted more than 2.5 million visitors, with a daily average of 16,774 people, generating an economic impact in Spain of €96.2 million (Volvo Ocean Race, 2018).

In terms of media impact, the event had more than 3,906 hours of television coverage, with an estimated television advertising value of €654 million. The TV News audience reached 2,197 million and Social Media impressions were 1.889 billion. 117,129 online articles were generated and 2.62 billion print readerships. 200.7 million social media video views and 13.7 million social media likes were reached. The most popular video on social media had at the time of the race report, more than 23 million views (Volvo Ocean Race, 2018).

Finally, in terms of sustainability, more than 94,000 children participated in educational programmes in 38 different countries, with 20,000 children taking part in workshops in the various Race Villages. The use of 388,207 single-use plastic bottles was avoided by using reusable bottles and seven Ocean Summits around the world were held, involving 1,827 people (Volvo Ocean Race, 2018).

Alicante has served as the starting port for the race on five occasions (2008, 2011, 2014, 2014, 2017 and 2023) thanks to agreements signed by the regional government – initially with VOR S.L.U., the entity responsible for the race during the first four editions, and later with TOR S.L.U. for the most recent edition. The regional government, through the ‘Sociedad de Proyectos Temáticos de la Comunidad Valenciana (SPTCV)’ has overseen the planning and execution of infrastructure, logistics, and programming in the port area, known as the ‘Race Village’ until 2017 and rebranded as the ‘Ocean Live Park’ in 2023.

The main economic and social impacts from both editions are presented below, based on 2017 and 2018 PWC reports (Table 1):

Table 1 Economic impact of the 2017 and 2023 editions

	<i>2017 edition</i>	<i>2023 edition</i>
Impact on national GDP	96 million €	71.6 million
Employment impact in Spain	1,700 jobs	1,232 jobs
Employment impact in the Valencian community	1,270 jobs	1,071 jobs
Visitors received during the days of the event	345,602 visitors	303,100 visitors
National tax revenue	41 million Euros	33 million Euros

Given these outcomes, it is not surprising that the city of Alicante wants to continue to be the starting port in the future. In fact, the next editions of 2027 and 2031 have already been signed between the responsible bodies. Furthermore, there is a proposal from the regional government to permanently host the start of this sporting event (one of the few sporting events that both left-wing and right-wing governments have wanted to keep in Alicante given the important impact generated in the city).

2.3 Public management of sporting events: calls for tenders

Many sporting events – particularly international ones – are increasingly offered to countries and regions, as they have the potential to generate short-term income and employment, and long-term gains in visitor numbers and related investments (Dwyer et al., 2000). In this context, public administrations are typically the leading agents in hosting such events due to their high costs and far-reaching impact on host communities.

However, managing events of this scale poses significant challenges for public institutions, which often lack the internal personnel and infrastructure required to organise complex, short-duration events that take place periodically, such as every four years. This has led to the widespread use of outsourcing – a key strategy in the governance of major events.

The legal basis for public management and outsourcing in Spain is found in the Spanish Constitution of 1978. Article 149 assigns the central government general responsibilities, including the promotion of sport and proper uses of leisure time. Meanwhile, Article 148 delegates authority to the Autonomous Communities over matters such as sport and tourism within their respective territories. As Rodríguez-Arana (2008, p.370) notes, this “composite state” model assigns the responsibility for organising and promoting tourism to regional and local governments.

Within this framework, the Spanish Public Sector Contracts Law (LCSP)¹ establishes, as a general rule, that public administrations must provide public services with their own

resources and that, only when they lack these, may they outsource the provision of certain services. And it is precisely outsourcing – a practice commonly used in Europe for the management of sport (András et al., 2022) – that is the tool used by public administrations for the organisation and management of major sporting events, since, undoubtedly, an administration cannot have all the infrastructure and services required to hold an event of this magnitude.

In order to outsource a service, the public administration must currently be governed by Spanish Law 9/2017, of 8 November, on Public Sector Contracts, which establishes as a limit that ‘services that involve the exercise of the authority inherent to public authorities may not be the object of these contracts’ (art. 17). Likewise, this law establishes two modalities for the outsourcing of services: the service contract (art. 17) and the service concession contract (art. 15), differentiating one from the other on the basis of operational risk. If the risk is borne by the administration, it is classified as a service contract; if the risk is assumed by the awarded company, it is considered a service concession contract.

Public procurement has undergone a significant transformation in both purpose and scope. It is no longer merely a tool to address administrative needs but has become a key instrument for achieving public interest objectives, with tangible impacts across social, environmental, and economic spheres (Véliz, 2025). In this evolving context, becoming an attractive public customer can bring significant benefits, including capacity mobilisation, joint innovation, and better overall procurement outcomes (Fridner, 2025).

However, realising these benefits is not without challenges. Authors such as Neumann et al. (2024) argue that ‘bureaucratic rules, like procurement laws, hinder the integration of agile into administrations since they conflict with the nature of agile development’. To overcome this obstacle, public institutions must ensure that their personnel receive adequate training to strengthen their procurement capabilities and adapt to new approaches (Changalima and Mdee, 2022; Mushi et al., 2024).

Moreover, as Karttunen et al. (2024) highlight, dynamic capabilities not only operate individually but also in combination to generate diverse forms of public value. Sensing and seizing capabilities – such as involving experts and managing the tendering process – are central to enhancing procurement efficiency and fostering innovation through early market analysis and active engagement with suppliers. Collectively, these capabilities support the development of well-functioning supplier markets and the achievement of high-quality outcomes.

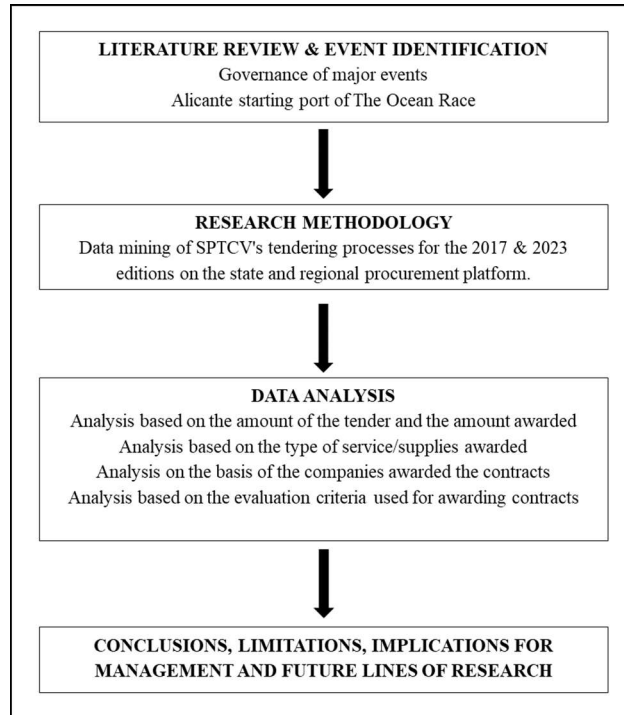
Furthermore, some research indicates that when national procurement bodies are granted greater discretionary power, this often results in fewer contract opportunities for SMEs, as evidenced by their reduced chances of winning tenders and maintaining that success over time (Hoekman and Tas, 2024). In this regard, digital procurement systems may offer a viable solution to mitigate this issue.

Finally, contracting bodies generally adopt a similar approach, typically favouring open tender procedures and evaluating bids using multiple award criteria – beyond just price – to select the winning contractor (Rodríguez-Vela, 2023).

In the case of *‘Alicante, Starting Port of TOR’*, the regional government lacks the means to internally manage such a complex and large-scale event, which occurs only every three or four years. Acquiring and maintaining all the required infrastructure and personnel year-round would be economically unviable. Therefore, outsourcing through public procurement becomes essential.

In practice, this means that the Valencian government contracts out the necessary services and supplies – such as logistics, event production, security, staging, and communication – via public tenders. These procedures are governed by the legal principles of transparency, equality, and competition, ensuring that public funds are managed efficiently and that the selected service providers meet the specific needs of each event edition.

Figure 1 Design of the research



3 Methodology

3.1 Aim of the research

The main objective of this study is to analyse the tendering process carried out by the SPTCV for the management of the sporting event *Alicante, Starting Port of TOR* in its last two editions (2017 and 2023), with the aim of identifying the main characteristics and criteria that determine the awarding of the public contract to a company.

3.2 Design

The design of this study was structured into three phases. First, a review of the current literature on the public management of sporting events and their implications for host

destinations was conducted. Second, the event *Alicante, Starting Port of TOR* was identified as a case study of public management in the context of major sporting events. Third, data from the full publicly available tendering processes for the 2017 and 2023 editions were collected. Finally, this data was analysed, and the results were presented.

3.3 Procedure

To achieve this objective, and following the literature review, a search for tenders related to the event was conducted using the state contracting platform (www.contrataciondelestado.com). The acronym ‘VOR’ was used to locate the files related to the 2017 edition, while ‘TOR’ was used to retrieve those related to the 2023 edition. Additionally, since the platform originally used for the 2017 edition was that of the Generalitat Valenciana (regional government), the initial tenders for that edition were also searched using the same keyword (‘VOR’) on the regional contracting platform. These platforms provide detailed access to public tenders issued by affiliated entities, including the SPTCV.

Using these platforms, all available data on the event’s tenders were extracted, allowing for the creation of a summary table for each edition. A total of 47 tenders were identified for the 2017 edition (including one withdrawal and four unsuccessful tenders) and 32 tender lots for the 2023 edition (including one withdrawal and two unsuccessful tenders). The average number of bidders per tender process (excluding deserted tenders) was 2.60 in 2017 and 2.00 in 2023 – figures notably below the national average of 4.38 bidders per tender, as reported in the latest OirEsCON report (2022).

For each tender, information was extracted from the platform through tender notices, specifications, and award certificates. The data collected included: the platform where the tender was published, file reference, type of contract according to current public procurement legislation, description, total tender amount, amount per lot (excluding VAT), awarded contractor, award amount (excluding VAT), number of bidders, list of non-awarded bidders, percentage weight of qualitative and quantitative evaluation criteria, and the specific weight of price within the overall evaluation criteria.

In the case of concession contracts, the tender amount was recorded as negative, as it represented a fee to be paid by the awarded company to the SPTCV – thus constituting revenue for SPTCV rather than an expenditure. Unsuccessful tenders were not included in the total tender budget, as they did not result in actual expenditure by SPTCV. The dataset was further enriched with information regarding the province of origin of the awarded company, the percentage discount applied, and the cost ratio relative to the type of service or supply contracted.

Tenders were categorised by type according to the nature of the service or supply: catering, media and advertising, infrastructure, equipment and logistics, activities and content, management/organising committee, cleaning, security, healthcare, specific technical services, and others.

Once all data were compiled, new descriptive tables were created by cross-referencing variables, allowing for the analysis of metrics such as the number of tenders awarded per province, number of bidders per province, total amount awarded per province, and the percentage of the total budget represented (see Table 2).

Table 2 Data broken down by province of the winning bidder of the different tenders

<i>Ítem</i>		<i>2017</i>	<i>2023</i>
Alicante	Number of tenders awarded by province	25	15
	Number of awardees per province different	17	12
	Total amount awarded per province	1,627.974,12 €	2,366,257.76 €
	Percentage of total budget	52.79%	63.62%
Valencia	Number of tenders awarded by province	5	3
	Number of awardees per province different	5	3
	Total amount awarded by province	624,669.50 €	530,378.18 €
	Percentage of total budget	20.26%	14.26%
Castellón	Number of tenders awarded by province	1	0
	Number of awardees per province different	1	0
	Total amount awarded by province	25,750.00 €	–€
	Percentage of total budget	0.83%	0.00%
Madrid	Number of tenders awarded by province	4	4
	Number of awardees per province different	4	2
	Total amount awarded by province	545,008.51 €	523,707.61 €
	Percentage of total budget	17.67%	14.08%
Albacete	Number of tenders awarded by province	2	1
	Number of awardees per province different	2	1
	Total amount awarded by province	119,744.17 €	44,791.61 €
	Percentage of total budget	3.88%	1.20%
Jaén	Number of tenders awarded by province	1	0
	Number of awardees per province different	1	0
	Total amount awarded by province	34,900	0
	Percentage of total budget	1.13%	0.00%
Murcia	Number of tenders awarded by province	0	1
	Number of awardees per province different	0	1
	Total amount awarded by province	– €	7,135.00 €
	Percentage of total budget	0.00%	0.19%
Barcelona	Number of tenders awarded by province	0	4
	Number of awardees per province different	0	2
	Total amount awarded by province	– €	209,577.69 €
	Percentage of total budget	0.00%	5.63%

Table 2 Data broken down by province of the winning bidder of the different tenders (continued)

<i>Ítem</i>		<i>2017</i>	<i>2023</i>
Balears	Number of tenders awarded by province	1	1
	Number of awardees per province different	1	1
	Total amount awarded by province	39,900.00 €	37,800.00 €
	Percentage of total budget	1.29%	1.02%
International	Number of tenders awarded by province	1	0
	Number of different international awardees	1	0
	Total amount awarded per province	66,000.00 €	–€
	Percentage of total budget	2.14%	0.00%
Withdrawal/ abandonment	Number. of tenders awarded by province	7	3
	Number of different awardees per province	0	0
	Total amount awarded per province	0	0
	Percentage of total budget	0.00%	0.00%
Total	Number of tenders awarded by province	47	32
	Number of awardees per province different	32	23
	Total amount awarded by province	3,083,946.30 €	3,719,647.85 €
	Percentage of total budget	100.00%	100.00%

Table 3 amounts awarded per company

<i>Company</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2023</i>
Sky helicópteros S.A.	39,900.00 €	37,800.00 €
Restaurante Juan XXIII S.A.	4,001.00 €	37,116.50 €
Puerta del mar y ocio S.L.	45,129.50 €	–€
Tecnología alimentaria catering 4 y 5 S.L.U.	45,976.75 €	–€
Telefónica España S.A.U.	45,650.00 €	–€
Eco W.C.S.L.	34,900.00 €	–€
Alquileres, módulos y casetes S.L.	57,030.00 €	–€
Esatur XXI S.L.	400,305.47 €	1,081,712.88 €
Krill generadores S.L.	39,982.54 €	–€
Mediterráneo servicios marinos S.L.	129,888.70 €	–€
Kraken disco S.L.	90,500.00 €	–€
Especial 25 S.L.	40,934.90 €	–€
Taxis y ambulancias habichuela S.L. ²	70,852.04 €	44,791.61 €
Suministros Crislavi S.L.	71,753.00 €	–€
Publicidad alicantina S.A.	175,650.45 €	–€
Sonido e iluminación limón S.L.	63,204.00 €	121,083.00 €

Table 3 amounts awarded per company (continued)

<i>Company</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2023</i>
Aerodium technologies L.T.D.	66,000.00 €	–€
Gestión integral de aparcamientos y servicios S.L.	35,525.54 €	–€
Valoriza servicios medioambientales S.A.	48,892.13 €	–€
Wester dynamics media S.A.	156,238.00 €	–€
Ute OHL servicios Ingesan S. A. U. – Sigma S.L. ³	184,751.32 €	253,707.61 €
Vectalia seguridad S.L.	153,931.77 €	104,846.91 €
Focs de artifici Europlá S.L.	40,736.50 €	–€
Actividades y servicios ingeniería constructiva S.L.	30,453.50 €	–€
Alavés montajes y realización S.L.	173,100.00 €	535,669.85 €
Editorial prensa alicantina S.A.U.	113,762.00 €	–€
Ernesto López Albero (autónomo)	36,600.00 €	–€
Bee ingeniería S.L.	25,750.00 €	–€
Federación de vela de la Comunidad Valenciana	60,000.00 €	66,112.00 €
Quicksail Valencia Charter ⁴ S.L.	381,380.00 €	420,883.33 €
Audeca S.L.U.	158,369.19 €	–€
Juan Luis Martínez Vallejo Fuster autónomo	70,800.00 €	–€
Jávea Ingeniería y Seguridad S.L.	–€	7,135.00 €
Prezero Gestión de Residuos S.A.	–€	38,261.92 €
Almarin, equipos y servicios portuarios S.L.	–€	198,000.00 €
Cabisuar Alicante S.A.	–€	31,120.00 €
Evealia S.L.	–€	35,210.00 €
Restaura gestión Forty S L.	–€	26,545.50 €
Morillo energy rent S.A.U.	–€	43,382.85 €
Expocom S.A.	–€	11,577.69 €
Vectalia Gias S.L.	–€	27,026.03 €
Avante comunicación S.L.	–€	270,000.00 €
Induze publicidad S.A.	–€	59,990.00 €
Eventos náuticos internacionales S.L.U.	–€	267,675.17 €
Total amount	3,083,946.30 €	3,719,647.85 €

As shown in the Table 2, the total value of contracts awarded amounted to 3,083,946.30 Euros in 2017 edition and 3,719,647.85 Euros in the 2023 edition, with the province of Alicante registering both the highest number of tenders and the highest amount awarded in both cases.

Following this, the awarded companies were analysed by edition in order to identify whether the same firms were contracted across both periods and to determine the amounts awarded to each (see Table 3). The analysis reveals that 10 companies were awarded contracts in both editions, out of a total of 32 companies in 2017 and 22 in 2023.

The amounts tendered and awarded in each edition were subsequently disaggregated by contract type – services, supplies, and concessions – in order to determine the

allocation of funds across categories (see Table 4). In the 2017 edition, 33 contracts were awarded for services, compared to four for supplies and two for concessions. In the 2023 edition, 23 contracts corresponded to services, four to supplies, and one to a concession.

Table 4 Amounts tendered by contract type

<i>Contract type</i>		<i>2017</i>	<i>2023</i>
Services	Tendered by	2,875,169.87 €	3,969,047.28 €
	Awarded by	2,547,384.30 €	3,544,190.02 €
	Total tenders	33	23
	Savings	11.40%	10.70%
Supplies	Tendered by	642,198.50 €	200,689.75 €
	Awarded by	545,063.00 €	180,457.83 €
	Total tenders	4	4
	Savings	15.13%	10.08%
Concessions	Tendered by	–5,000.00 €	–4,000.00 €
	Awarded by	–8,501.00 €	–5,000.00 €
	Total tenders	2	1
	Savings	8,501.00 €	5,000.00 €
Total tendered		3,512,368.37 €	4,165,737.03 €
Total awarded		3,083,946.30 €	3,719,647.85 €
Savings		12.20%	10.71%
Total cancelled tenders /dismissed/no data		8	3

Finally, Table 5 presents a breakdown by edition based on the type of contract – such as catering, media and advertising, infrastructure, and others. This categorisation was carried out with the aim of understanding the approach followed by SPTCV in tendering the various contracts required to organise and manage the event *Alicante, Starting Port of TOR*.

Table 5 Amounts tendered and awarded by type of service/supply contracted

		<i>2017</i>			
	<i>Type of service/supply</i>	<i>Tendered by</i>	<i>Awarded by</i>	<i>Savings</i>	<i>Nr tenders</i>
1	Catering	90,025.00 €	82,605.25 €	8.24%	4
2	Media and advertising	523,038.29 €	471,400.45 €	9.87%	7
3	Infrastructure and logistics	1,132,673.68 €	1,001,032.56 €	11.62%	7
4	Activities and content	695,315.21 €	602,041.97 €	13.41%	7
5	Management/organising committee	107,405.00 €	107,400.00 €	0.00%	2
6	Cleaning, security, healthcare	372,564.85 €	309,201.48 €	17.01%	4
7	Specific technical services	322,570.84 €	312,026.69 €	3.27%	4
8	Other services/supplies	268,775.50 €	198,237.90 €	26.24%	4

Table 5 Amounts tendered and awarded by type of service/supply contracted (continued)

2017				
<i>Type of service/supply</i>	<i>Tendered by</i>	<i>Awarded by</i>	<i>Savings</i>	<i>Nr tenders</i>
9 No information				8
Totals	3,512,368.37 €	3,083,946.30 €	12.20%	47
2023				
<i>Type of service/supply</i>	<i>Tendered by</i>	<i>Awarded by</i>	<i>Savings</i>	<i>Nr tenders</i>
1 Catering	69,339.70 €	58,662.00 €	15.40%	3
2 Media and advertising	345,000.00 €	329,990.00 €	4.35%	2
3 Infrastructure and logistics	1,431,939.23 €	1,297,926.72 €	9.36%	9
4 Activities and content	1,225,891.69 €	1,086,712.88 €	11.35%	3
5 Management/organising committee	300,758.62 €	267,675.17 €	11.00%	1
6 Cleaning, security, healthcare	291,092.01 €	245,488.34 €	15.67%	5
7 Specific technical services	440,215.88 €	395,392.74 €	10.18%	5
8 Other services/supplies	61,499.90 €	37,800.00 €	38.54%	1
9 No information				3
Totals	4,165,737.03 €	3,719,647.85 €	10.71%	32

As shown in the tables above, in both editions the largest share of the tendering budget was allocated to infrastructure and logistics, accounting for 32.24% in 2017 and 34.37% in 2023. This was followed by content-related activities aimed at energising the event, which represented 19.79% of the budget in 2017 and increased significantly to 29.35% in 2023.

4 Results

The results obtained in the analysis of the bidding processes for the 2017 and 2023 editions of *Alicante, Starting Port of TOR* have contributed to a deeper understanding of how a public administration utilises public procurement as a strategic tool for the management of major sporting events.

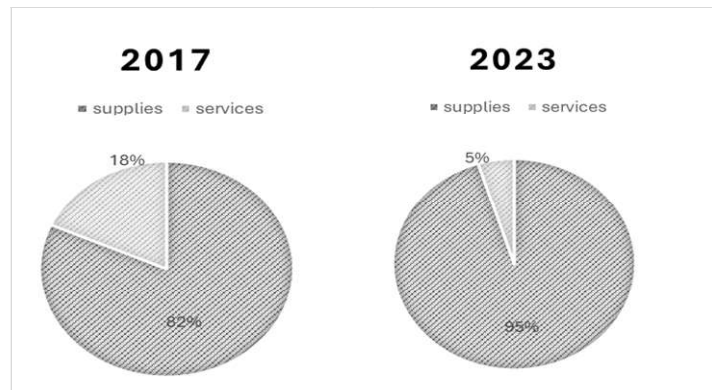
4.1 Analysis based on tender and award amounts

In 2017, a total of 47 tender files were published, with a total tendered value of 3,512,368.37 euros. In 2023, 32 tenders were issued for a total value of 4,165,737.03 euros, representing cost savings of 12.20% and 10.81% for each edition, respectively.

The reduction in the number of tenders in the 2023 edition compared to 2017 is primarily attributable to the consolidation of several contracts into single tenders. For example, in 2023, contracts related to pyrotechnics, ceremonies, branding, and structural supports were grouped into a broader content tender package.

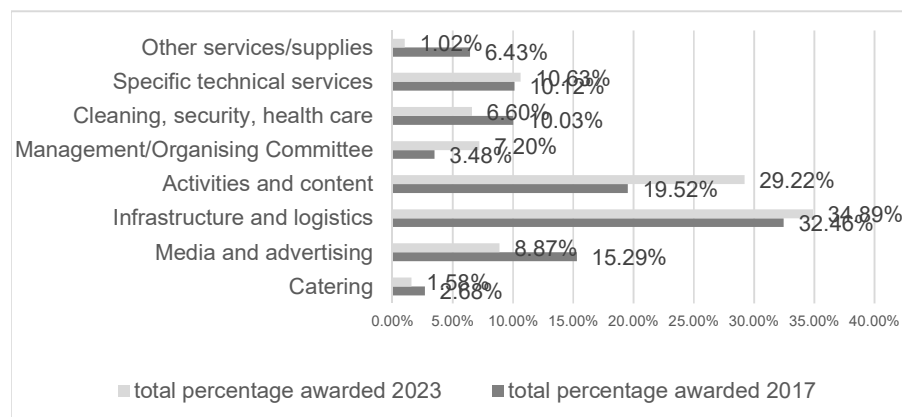
When disaggregated by service and supply contracts, as shown in Figure 2, notable differences emerge between the amounts tendered and awarded in each edition.

Figure 2 Percentage of the amount tendered for service contracts and supply contracts in each of the editions



In 2017, supply contracts represented 8.16% of the total number of tenders and accounted for 18.28% of the total budget allocated by the regional government. The remaining tenders corresponded to service contracts, which comprised 91.84% of the total and represented 81.85% of the overall tender budget. In the 2023 edition, supply contracts made up 12.5% of the total number of tenders but represented only 4.81% of the budget, whereas service contracts accounted for 87.5% of the tenders and concentrated 95.27% of the allocated budget.

Figure 3 Percentage of amount awarded by type of service/supply tendered



4.2 Analysis based on the type of service/supply awarded

If the analysis is conducted not by contract type, but rather by the nature of the service or supply contracted (see Figure 3), tenders related to infrastructure and logistics represent

the largest financial outlay – exceeding 30% of the total in both editions. These are followed by content-related activities, which accounted for approximately 20% of the budget in 2017 and nearly 30% in 2023. The most notable difference between editions is observed in tenders related to media and advertising: while these represented 15.29% of the tendered budget in 2017, the figure decreased to 8.87% in 2023.

However, when analysing the average amount per tender by type of service or supply, a shift in priorities becomes evident. In 2017, the highest average tendered and awarded amounts corresponded to infrastructure and logistics contracts, with an average of 161,810.53 Euros per tender. By contrast, in 2023, this category ranked third, behind activities and content – which had the highest average at 408,630.56 Euros – and media and advertising, with an average of 172,500 Euros per tender.

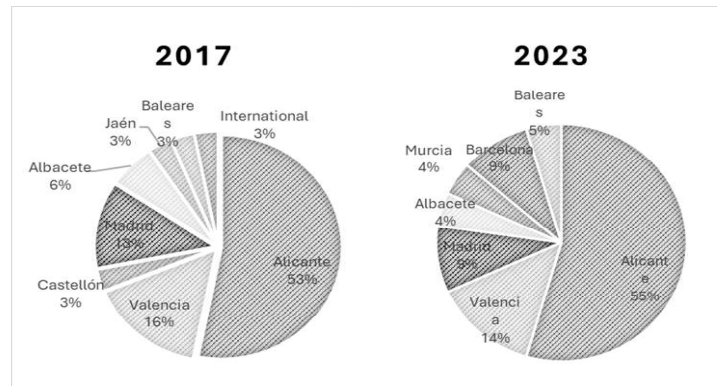
4.3 Analysis based on the awarded companies

Regarding companies awarded contracts, it is noteworthy that SPTCV contracted a total of 32 different companies in the 2017 edition, compared to 22 in 2023. The average number of contracts awarded per successful bidder remained relatively stable between the two editions – 1.47 in 2017 and 1.45 in 2023. However, the average award amount per company increased significantly, rising from 96,373.32 Euros in 2017 to 169,074.90 Euros in 2023.

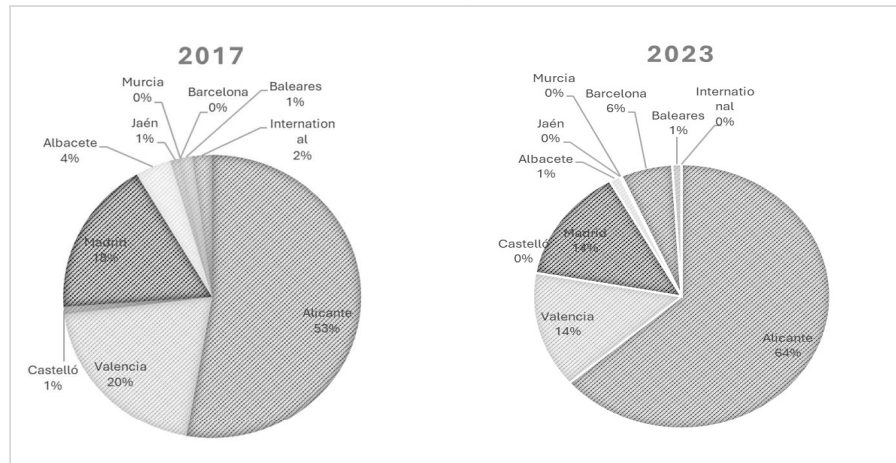
The average number of bidders per tendered file (excluding files declared void or lacking data) was 2.60 in 2017, dropping to 2.26 when voided tenders are included. In the 2023 edition, the average was 2.00 (1.87 including void tenders).

As shown in Figure 4, over 50% of the companies awarded contracts in both editions were based in the province of Alicante, followed by companies from Valencia (both cities within the host autonomous region) and Madrid.

Figure 4 Awarded companies by provinces



If we analyse the amounts awarded by province (see Figure 5), it becomes clear that the largest share was allocated to companies based in the province of Alicante, which received 53% of the total in 2017 and 64% in 2023. This was followed by the province of Valencia, with 20% in 2017 and 14% in 2023, and Madrid, with 18% and 14%, respectively. Together, these three provinces – Alicante, Valencia, and Madrid – accounted for 91% of the total awarded budget in 2017 and 92% in 2023.

Figure 5 Distribution of the amount awarded to companies by province

In terms of the number of companies awarded contracts, the 2017 edition saw only two companies receiving more than 10% of the total amount awarded, followed by five companies each securing between 5% and 5.5% of the total. The remaining portion was distributed among 25 other awarded companies. In contrast, the 2023 edition revealed a higher concentration: one company was awarded 29% of the total amount tendered, followed by two others receiving 14.40% and 11.32%, respectively. Additionally, three companies obtained between 5% and 7.5% of the total amount each.

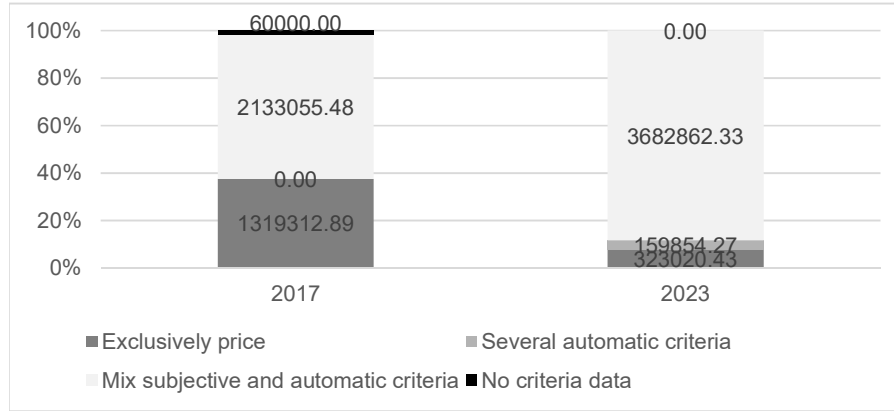
The top seven awarded companies in 2017 received 52.85% of the total amount awarded, while in 2023, the top seven accounted for a significantly higher share – 81.40%.

Across both editions, a total of 44 different companies were awarded contracts. Of these, 22.72% were awarded contracts in both editions. Among them, 13.66% saw an increase in the total amount awarded in 2023 compared to 2017.

4.4 Analysis based on the evaluation criteria used for awarding contracts

With regard to the evaluation criteria used for awarding contracts (see Figure 6), and excluding withdrawn or deserted cases, it is worth noting that in the 2017 edition, 56.76% of the tenders were awarded based on a combination of value-judgment-based and automatic (formulaic) criteria. These accounted for 60.73% of the total tender budget. The remaining 43.24% of tenders were evaluated solely on automatic criteria – specifically price – which represented 37.56% of the total tendered amount.

In the 2023 edition, the use of combined evaluation criteria increased to 62.07% of the tenders, accounting for a significantly larger share – 88.41% – of the total tender budget. The remaining 37.93% of tenders were evaluated exclusively using automatic criteria, representing just 11.59% of the total tender amount.

Figure 6 Distribution of the total tender budget based on the bid evaluation criteria used

5 Discussion and conclusions

5.1 Unique contributions of the paper

This research offers a significant and original contribution to the field of public management of major sporting events by providing an in-depth analysis of the public procurement processes involved in the organisation of *Alicante, Starting Port of TOR* in its 2017 and 2023 editions. The novelty of the study lies in its approach: unlike most existing literature, which tends to focus on the economic, social, or touristic impacts of major events, this work examines the internal dynamics of public contracting as a key mechanism for implementing and managing such complex operations. To the best of our knowledge, no previous study has undertaken a detailed comparative analysis of public tenders associated with a sporting event of this nature in Spain, which positions this work as an innovative contribution to both academic and policy-oriented debates.

One of the central findings is that, although a larger budget was allocated to tenders in the 2023 edition, this did not translate into higher economic or fiscal returns. On the contrary, the impact was lower compared to 2017. A plausible explanation for this lies in the seasonal difference between the two editions: the 2017 event took place in October, while the 2023 edition was held in January, a period typically less favourable in terms of public participation and associated spending. This insight highlights the importance of contextual factors – such as timing – in determining the overall return on public investment, even when procurement processes are efficiently managed.

Another key contribution relates to the structure of the budget allocations. In both editions, the largest share of the tendered budget was dedicated to infrastructure and logistics (exceeding 30%), followed by content-related activities designed to animate and energise the event (between 20% and 30%). Furthermore, the analysis confirms that service contracts were the dominant contract type, accounting for over 80% of the awarded budget in 2017 and rising to 95% in 2023. This finding reveals the strong reliance of public administrations on external service providers when managing

large-scale events and the strategic importance of services such as logistics, security, cleaning, and content generation in the success of such initiatives.

The study also identifies the core operational needs of a public administration in the context of event management. These include the provision of catering, security, cleaning, equipment, and technical services, all of which were reflected in the procurement structure. Notably, in both editions, the final amount awarded was more than 10% lower than the total estimated budget, indicating a high level of efficiency and competitive pricing in the awarding process. This outcome is closely linked to the widespread use of price as an evaluation criterion, although it was rarely used in isolation.

A particularly relevant contribution is the territorial analysis of contract awards. Despite being open tender procedures, the data reveal a clear geographical concentration of awarded companies, primarily from the province of Alicante, followed by Valencia and, to a lesser extent, Madrid. This suggests that the localisation of the event generates a natural competitive advantage for nearby companies, possibly due to lower operational costs or previous experience with the event. As a result, the territory hosting the event effectively recovers part of the public investment through local business activity, contributing to what may be considered a form of social profitability.

Continuity in supplier selection also emerges as a notable contribution. The analysis shows that 20% of the companies awarded contracts in 2017 were again awarded contracts in 2023, and that more than 66% of these repeated companies received larger awards in the latter edition. This trend may reflect a consolidation of specialised providers and increased trust or familiarity between the administration and these contractors, which could improve efficiency and reduce transaction costs over time.

Lastly, the study captures an evolution in the award criteria used by the administration. While in 2017 a substantial portion of tenders (43.24%) were evaluated exclusively on the basis of price, representing 37.56% of the awarded amount, by 2023 this percentage had dropped significantly to 20.69% of the tenders and only 7.75% of the budget. This shift illustrates a growing emphasis on multidimensional evaluation approaches that take into account not only cost, but also qualitative aspects of service provision, innovation, technical merit, and other factors relevant to event quality and public value.

5.2 *Limitation of the research*

Despite these contributions, the research presents several limitations. First, it is based solely on data obtained from public procurement platforms, which – although comprehensive in financial and administrative terms – do not capture qualitative information about decision-making processes, contractor performance, or strategic considerations by the awarding body. Second, the study is limited to a single event in a specific regional context (the Valencian Community), which may restrict the applicability of the findings to other territories or event typologies. Third, although the study discusses the potential economic and social impacts of procurement decisions, it does not measure them directly; instead, it infers such impacts from budget distribution and geographical origin of awarded companies. Additionally, external factors – such as political cycles, changes in public policy, or macroeconomic conditions – that may have influenced the number of tenders, bidder participation, or contract values were not analysed in depth.

5.3 Future research directions

Considering the findings and limitations, this study opens several promising avenues for future research. Comparative studies could be conducted across different regions or countries to determine whether the procurement patterns identified here are common or context specific. Moreover, integrating qualitative methods – such as interviews with public officials, contractors, or event organisers – would offer a richer understanding of the strategic and operational factors that shape public procurement in large-scale events. Future research could also explore the relationship between procurement decisions and the actual economic, social, and environmental impacts of events, helping to establish clearer causal links between planning processes and outcomes. Longitudinal studies tracking procurement evolution across multiple editions of the same event would also be valuable for identifying institutional learning and adaptive strategies. Lastly, examining the incorporation of sustainability and social responsibility criteria into procurement procedures would be a timely and relevant extension, especially in the context of growing international emphasis on sustainable public procurement and green event management.

Declarations

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Notes

- 1 SPAIN. Royal Legislative Decree 3/2011, of 14th November, approving the revised text of the Public Sector Contracts Act. Used in the tender process of the 2017 edition (Law repealed with effect from 9 March 2018).
- 2 SPAIN. Law 9/2017, of 8th November, on Public Sector Contracts in force for the 2023 edition (Law in force on the date this article was written).
- 3 Includes in 2017 the amount awarded in the UTE with Ambumar SYA.
- 4 Includes in 2017 the amount awarded to the UTE with Sigma Infraestructura S.L. and in 2023 the amount Awarded to the UTE with PROMED Consulting S.L.U.
- 5 Includes in 2017 the amount awarded to the UTE with Charter Valencia S.L.