



FFI Norwegian Defence
Research Establishment

From Policy to Practice – Drivers of Acquisition Reform

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Norway and the security context



- Small NATO ally bordering Russia
- Prolonged post-Cold War de-prioritization of defense
- Fundamental shift in the security environment over the last decade

Need to build capability fast!

- Promoted policy tool: off-the-shelf acquisition

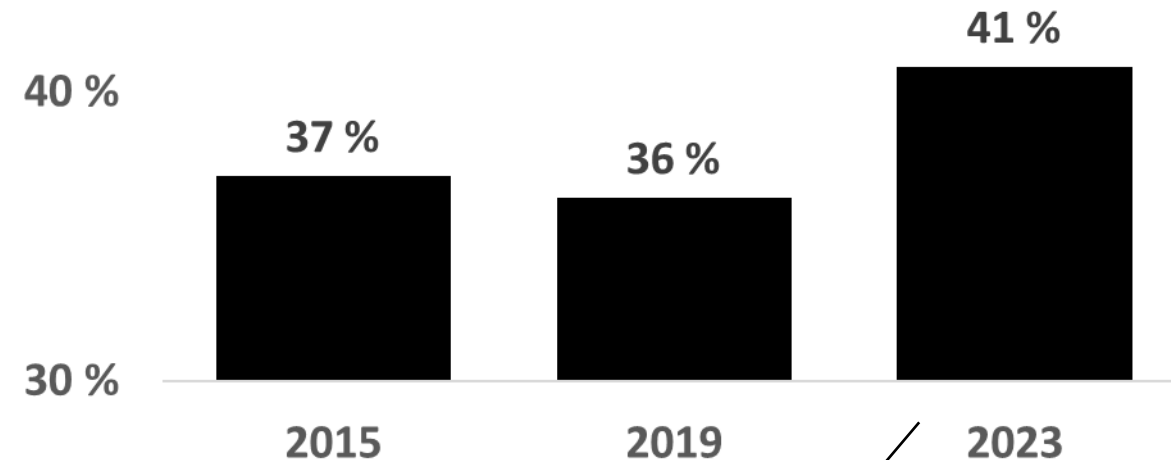
From policy to implementation – change is hard

- Persistent acquisition challenges, repeated policy responses – difficult implementation
- Years of off-the-shelf policy push; change materialized only after 2019

Research questions

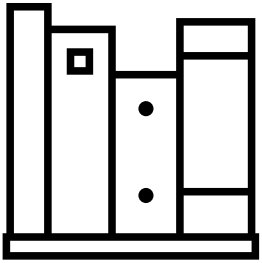
1. What conditions shaped policy implementation?
2. What lessons can be drawn for future reforms?

Share of «off-the-shelf» in acquisition portfolio

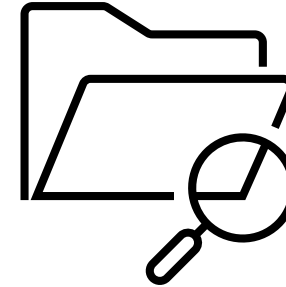


2023: 54% of new projects were «off-the-shelf» projects

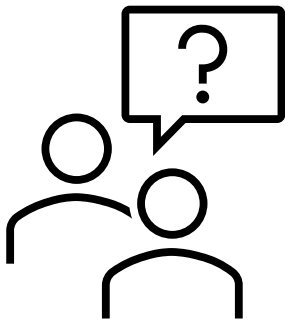
Methodology



Literature review:
Develop hypotheses
based on policy
implementation theory



Document analysis:
Structured review of
official documents
regarding policy



Survey data:
Analyze data from
acquisition workforce
survey from 2014 and
2023

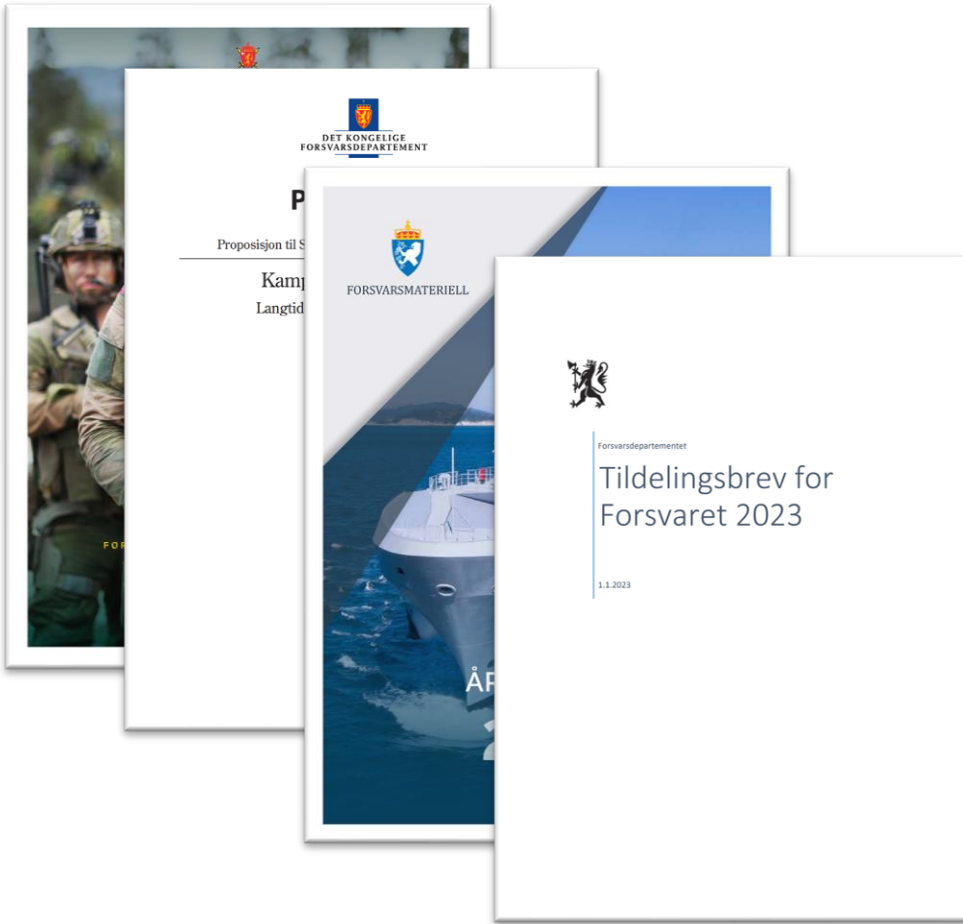
**What made implementation
happen?**

Hypothesis 1: changes in external conditions explain implementation



- Developments in market conditions for off-the-shelf solutions unclear
 - Norway's acquisition portfolio has become less "off-the-shelf-friendly" over time
- Weak alignment

Hypothesis 2: changes in structural conditions explain implementation

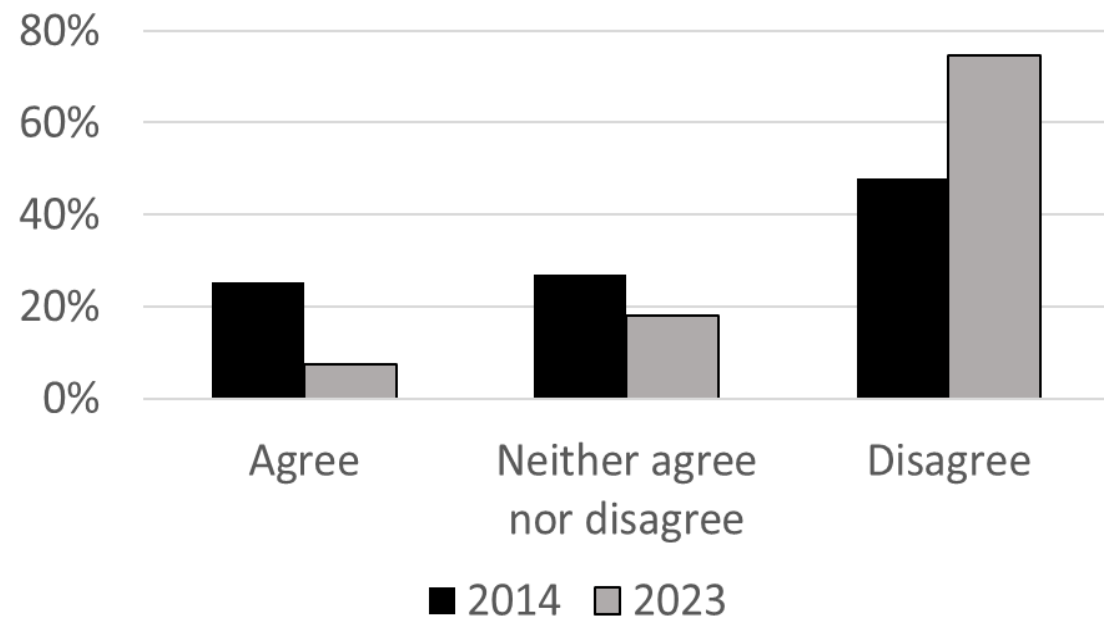


- Policy guidance remained broad and inconsistent, lacking goals and milestones
- Policy process and governance complexity remained over time
- Changes in incentive schemes do not match observed implementation

➤ Weak alignment

Hypothesis 3: changes among implementing actors explain implementation

"When we procure major weapon systems, we must opt for development programs, not off-the-shelf solutions"



- Shift in how actors view the policy over time
- 2023: Actors are well-informed, confident in the policy, and act on it regardless of top-down pressure

➤ Stronger alignment

Plausible mechanism: increased meaningfulness

- Emphasis on rapid operational effect
- increased actors' willingness to use policy

Conclusions and recommendations

- Policy existed for years, changes occurred only after 2019
- Evidence aligns strongest with changes among the implementing actors
 - Implementation may succeed without major structural reform if policy is perceived as meaningful

Recommendations:

- Link policy clearly to goals that can be perceived as meaningful
- Do not rely on structural reforms alone; focus on implementation ownership
- Invest in knowledge and experience
- Allow reforms time to take effect, avoid constant redesign
- Evaluate

Thank you!



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