**Supplementary materials**

Table S1 and S2 report robustness checks of the study’s main analysis. The check supports the study’s main results. Table S1 reports significance tests based on stratified (country) bootstrapping with 90% confidence intervals for all estimates in the regression model with private provider performance index as dependent variables and with the interaction term for country × standard contract features included.

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| **S1.** OLS regressions with stratified bootstrapping: Private provider performance (index) a |
|  | Coefficient (unstandardized) | SE | p-value | CI90%  |
| *Model constant* | *3.204* | *.955* | *.003* | *[1.711;4.765]* |
| Country dummies (Denmark = reference category) |  |  |  |  |
|  Norway | -.453 | .251 | .075 | [-.877;-.027] |
|  Sweden | .029 | .189 | .892 | [-.286;.334] |
| Competitive environment | .075 | .035 | .033 | [.017;.136] |
| Standard contract features b | .151 | .073 | .045 | [.024;.264] |
|  Standard contract features b × Norway | -.164 | .099 | .088 | [-.328;.024] |
|  Standard contract features b × Sweden | .042 | .093 | .653 | [-.104;.197] |
| Partnership contract features | .037 | .042 | .390 | [-.037;.110] |
| Collaborative relationship | .475 | .056 | <.001 | [.383;.564] |
| Contract mgmt. capacity | .161 | .051 | .002 | [.073;.256] |
| Local government size (LN) | -.176 | .073 | .016 | [-.305;-.060] |
| Service dummy (parks = 0, roads = 1) | .202 | .168 | .229 | [-.067;.485] |
| F-test = 20.347 (11, 213), p < .001, R2 / Adj. R2 = .499 / .473. |
| *Notes:* N=225. a.Bias corrected stratified (by country) bootstrapping with 90% confidence intervals based on 2,000 samples.b Mean centered.  |

Table S2 reports significance test of conditional effects at the country level of standard contract features for private provider performance (index) based on bias corrected stratified (by country) bootstrapping with 2,000 samples.

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| **S2.** Simple slope tests for conditional effects of standard contract features on private provider performance (index) a |
|  | Coefficient (unstandardized) | SE  | p-value | CI90% |
| Denmark | .151 | .073 | .045 | [.024;.264] |
| Norway | -.013 | .077 | .878 | [-.126;.132] |
| Sweden | .193 | .069 | .007 | [.083;.308] |
| *Notes:* N=225. a Bias corrected stratified (by country) bootstrapping with 90% confidence intervals based on 2,000 samples. |

Table S3 reports abbreviated results for six OLS regression models testing the statistical significance of country differences for different contingencies (e.g. competitive environment). Only the model with the interaction term “country × standard contract features” results in a statistically significant improvement (p = .09). The results reported in S3 is congruent with the robustness check reported in S1 and S2.

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| **S3.** Abbreviated results for regression models with interaction terms: Performance index as outcome variable.  |
| Model / interaction term | F-test for term | Δ *R2* | F-test for full model | Model *R2* |
| Country × competitive environment | F(2, 213) = 1.24, p = .29. | <.01 | F(11, 213) = 18.84, p < .01. | .49 |
| Country × standard contract features  | F(2, 213) = 2.39, p = .09. | .01 | F(11, 213) = 19.25, p < .01. | .50 |
| Country × partnership contract features | F(2, 213) = .13, p = .88. | <.01 | F(11, 213) = 18.44, p < .01. | .49 |
| Country × relationship quality | F(2, 213) = .09, p = .92 | <.01 | F(11, 213) = 18.43, p < .01. | .49 |
| Country × contract mgmt. capacity | F(2, 213) = .17, p = .85 | <.01 | F(11, 213) = 18.46, p < .01. | .49 |
| Country × local government size (LN)  | F(2, 213) = .37, p = .69 | <.01 | F(11, 213) = 18.53, p < .01. | .49 |
| *Notes:* N=225. Country variable is entered as a multi-categorical variable. Regression models include all variables in the study’s main model (Model 1, Table 4) with a single interaction term added.  |