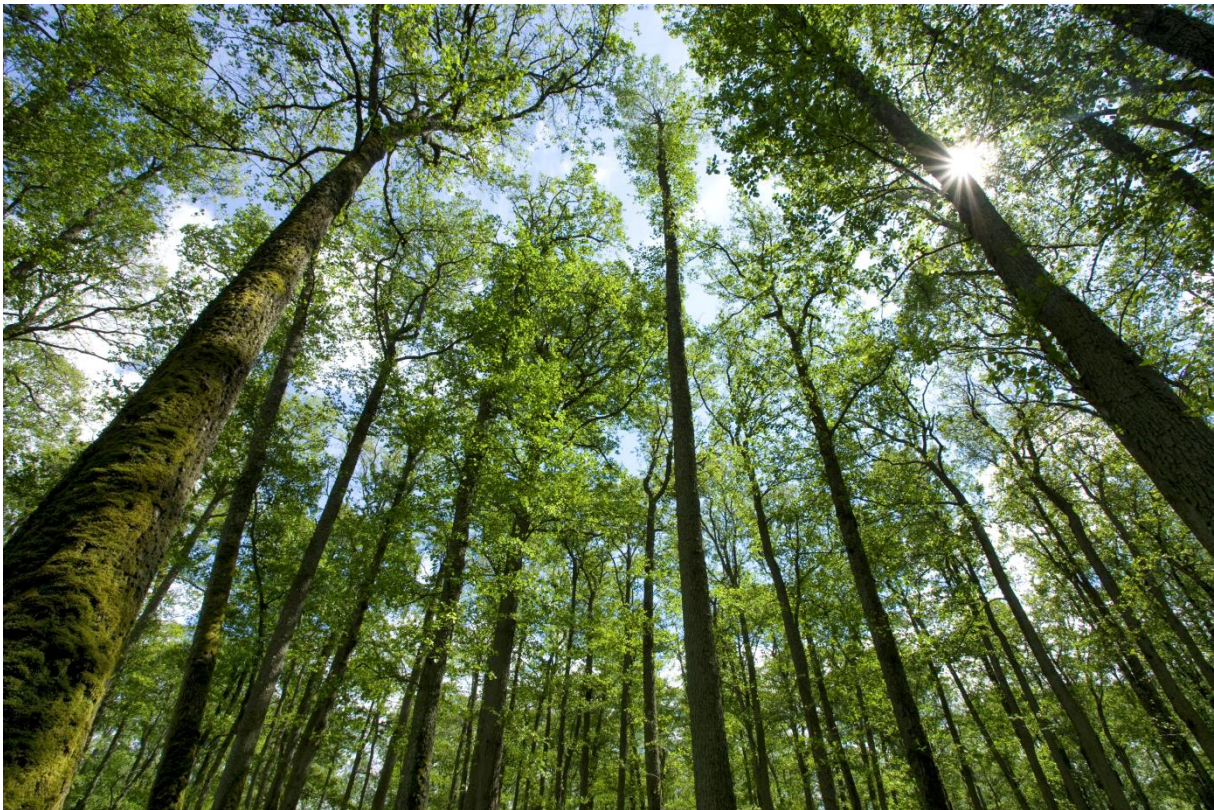




EUROPEAN  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
BUREAU

# GUIDANCE TO FOSTER GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT



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## 1. GPP on the EU level

### Introduction

We are living in the age of sustainable development. Every respected private company is trying to show that they are doing something in this regard. In the most cases, private consumers are being encouraged to buy more sustainable products. That choice can be a really powerful tool. For the moment we can only imagine a situation when all consumers buy only paper products made from sustainable managed sources or the most energy efficient office equipment.

There are plenty of environmental labels on products and services, including the EU Ecolabel or German Blue Angel that were created to help consumers make more sustainable choices. All actions and schemes improving sustainable production among companies and sustainable consumption among consumers are necessary and should be encouraged, but what about the biggest single consumer in the European Union?

Public authorities spend 2 trillion Euros annually, which is equivalent to 19 % of the EU's gross domestic product<sup>1</sup>. They are big consumers who can influence the market in several ways. If public authorities decide to purchase products and services that are kinder to the environment they not only boost production of those goods directly but also influence the accessibility of those products and lower their price. Additionally, by purchasing green products and services public authorities provide incentives for businesses. Public authorities buy buses, tons of printing paper and millions litres of all kinds of cleaning products. The impact of the decision to buy more environmentally friendly versions of these products, can be huge. If European Union Member States adopted the same environmental criteria for lighting and office equipment and office equipment as the City of Turku, Finland, operating costs would be halved and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions cut by around 15 million tonnes p.a.<sup>2</sup>.

Green Public Procurement is "a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured"<sup>3</sup>.

This publication will try to help you with answering the following questions:

- What can I do to promote GPP?
- How can public authorities be encouraged to introduce GPP in their purchasing activities?

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/what\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/what_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Green procurement makes a difference price examples from the Nordic countries (Nordic Council 2009) page 5; [http://www.mim.dk/NR/rdonlyres/47888C72-7152-4D04-8376-66A3D7875D7F/0/COP15\\_GC\\_41030\\_GronUpphandling\\_UK\\_3K.pdf](http://www.mim.dk/NR/rdonlyres/47888C72-7152-4D04-8376-66A3D7875D7F/0/COP15_GC_41030_GronUpphandling_UK_3K.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Communication (COM (2008) 400) "Public procurement for a better environment"

- Where to start and how to do it?

- This publication is addressed to all people who would like to get involved and help introducing real sustainability into the actions of public authorities.

## 1.GPP on the EU level

Green Public Procurement is present in EU legislation in several forms. There are some obligations set on Member States as well as voluntary incentives.

### 1.1. Communication (2008) 400 - Public procurement for a better environment - starting point

In the EU, Green Public Procurement was first mentioned in the 2003 Commission Communication on Integrated Product policy. Member States were encouraged to adopt national action plans for GPP by the end of 2006. The next step was the European Commission`s Communication on GPP from 2008. This is currently the main document in the European Union on Green Public Procurement. **The Commission proposed that by 2010, 50% of public procurement in the EU member countries should be green**<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, the scheme for developing common GPP criteria was proposed.

### 1.2. The EU GPP

Additionally the European Commission is developing common GPP criteria in the framework of the "GPP Toolkit". The idea behind the toolkit is to provide Member States with clear, verifiable, justifiable and ambitious environmental criteria based on a life-cycle approach and scientific base<sup>5</sup>.

The GPP toolkit prepared by the European Commission consists of 3 modules. The first module (An action plan for GPP) helps in setting and developing an action plan for introducing Green Public Procurement. The second module provides legal guidance on EU law for public authorities who want to introduce GPP. The last part of the toolkit contains ready sets of criteria which can be included in technical documentation of the tender document<sup>6</sup>.

The criteria can be used by public authorities who lack the knowledge and resources to establish their own. The GPP criteria are divided into two sets - "core" and "comprehensive". The "core" set is group of basic criteria which focus on the main environmental factors of the product or service. The "comprehensive" set consists of more ambitious criteria and takes into account other environmental factors. Both sets of criteria are based on data and comments collected by the European Commission from stakeholders (including environmental NGOs, consumers' organisations and industry representatives) and Member States.

The details of the process of setting the EU GPP criteria are explained in this graph from the DG Environment website<sup>7</sup>:

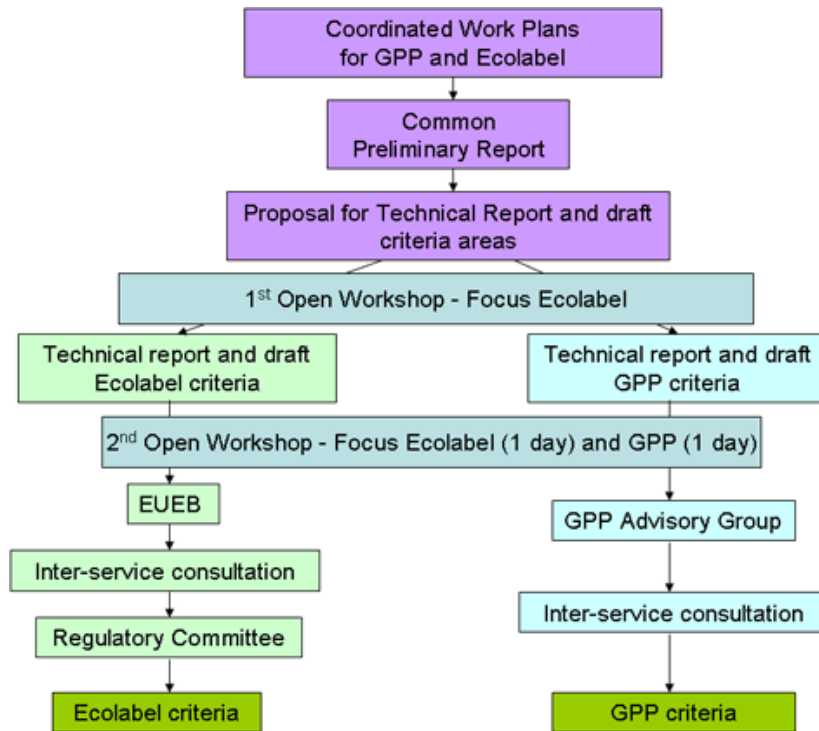
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<sup>4</sup> Communication (COM (2008) 400) "Public procurement for a better environment"

<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/gpp\\_criteria\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/gpp_criteria_en.htm)

<sup>6</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/toolkit\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/toolkit_en.htm)

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/gpp\\_criteria\\_procedure.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/gpp_criteria_procedure.htm)



Currently there are 19 sets for different groups of products and services including transport, office IT equipment, construction, cleaning products and services or food and catering services.

Those criteria sets are accessible from the European Commission website:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/toolkit\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/toolkit_en.htm)

### 1.3. Targets reached in 2012

As mentioned previously, the European Commission encouraged Member States to establish National Action Plans for introducing GPP. Such NAPs should "contain an assessment of existing situation and ambitious targets for the situation in three years time"<sup>8</sup>. NAPs are not legally binding, but should provide political impulse for GPP. Information on GPP National Action Plans can be found on the following website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/national\\_gpp\\_strategies\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/national_gpp_strategies_en.pdf)

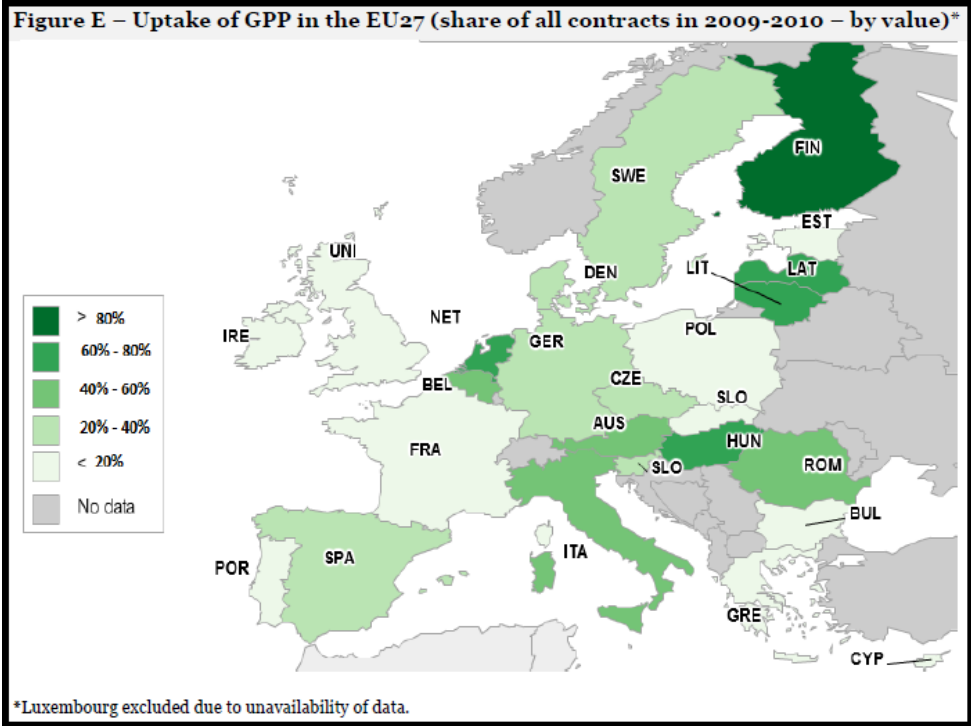
Unfortunately, in many cases ambitious declarations remained on paper. Where is the EU now with the uptake of GPP? At the beginning of 2012, the European Commission published a report "The uptake of Green Public Procurement in the EU 27"<sup>9</sup>. The main findings of the report are not encouraging. According to the authors of the report the update of EU core Green Public Procurement criteria is at 26%. The surveys showed that 26% of the last signed contracts in the group of ten products/services, included all EU core GPP criteria<sup>10</sup>. It is worth

<sup>8</sup> Communication 2003 (302) from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Integrated Product Policy - Building on Environmental Life-Cycle Thinking

<sup>9</sup> "The uptake of Green Public Procurement in the EU 27" <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/CEPS-CoE-GPP%20MAIN%20REPORT.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> "The uptake of Green Public Procurement in the EU 27" page 5

remembering at this point that in 2008, the European Commission was proposing that by 2010, 50% of public procurement in the EU should be green. This means that we are only half way to achieving the target two years later than the original deadline. Although according to the study the uptake is increasing, there is still a lot of to do in order to reach the 50% target. It is also worth underlining that GPP uptake differs significantly between product/service groups and between countries.



Source CEPS 2012

The report shows that only one product group –transport- meets the 50% target set out by the EU. On the other hand four product groups - furniture, textiles, food products and catering services, and construction) have very low level of uptake - below 20%<sup>11</sup>.

Additionally, the study showed that public authorities still have problems with including green criteria and life cycle costs in their tenders and evaluations.

<sup>11</sup> " The uptake of Green Public Procurement in the EU 27" page 16

**Table A- Criteria for evaluating proposals, by Member State**

<b>Top 10 countries purchasing mainly according to</b>			
<b>Purchasing Cost</b>		<b>LCC/TCO</b>	
PT	86%	IE	25%
RO	82%	NL	22%
PL	76%	UK	19%
GR	69%	SK	17%
MT	67%	SI	10%
CZ	65%	BG	10%
EE	63%	DK	9%
HU	62%	CY	9%
LV	61%	GR	8%
BE	59%	HU	8%

Source CEPS 2012

#### 1.4. Sustainable vs. Green Procurement

At the end of 2011, the European Commission adopted its proposal<sup>12</sup> for the modernization of public procurement. The idea is to revise two directives: Directive 2004/18/EC that covers public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts and Directive 2004/17/EC which covers the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors. The Directive focuses on procedure rather than on the subject matter - it regulates how public authorities should proceed with public procurement rather than what they should buy.

The proposal refers to "life cycle costing". It also regulates in a more detailed way the possibility of referring to labels in tender specifications. Together with the discussion on modernizing the public procurement, the issue of promoting sustainable public procurement was raised by a group of NGOs. This document focuses on the current legal situation and does not analyse future regulatory possibilities.

<sup>12</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/publicprocurement/modernising\\_rules/reform\\_proposals\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/modernising_rules/reform_proposals_en.htm)

## **2. GPP political opportunities**

### 2.1. Broad picture

According to the new article 194.1 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union: "Union policy on energy shall aim, in spirit of solidarity between Member States, to: c) promote energy efficiency and energy saving and the development of new and renewable forms of energy". Furthermore the Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth <sup>13</sup> indicates GPP as a one of the measures for achieving such growth. Green Public Procurement is mentioned in a few Directives, which can be used to promote the concept of purchasing greener products and services by public authorities.

### 2.2. Directives 2004/17 and 2004/18

The biggest political opportunities are provided in two, previously mentioned Directives: 2004/17 and 2004/18. Directive 2004/18 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts clarifies how the authorities may contribute the environment protection via public procurement. According to recital 5 of the Directive 2004/18, the Directive itself "clarifies how the contracting authorities may contribute to the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development, whilst ensuring the possibility of obtaining the best value for money for their contracts". More importantly, recital 6 of said Directive states that "nothing in this Directive should prevent the imposition of enforcement of measures necessary to protect (...) health, human and animal life or the preservation of plant life, in particular with a view to sustainable development, provided that these measures are in conformity with the Treaty. Furthermore, the Directive regulates technical specifications for public procurement: "Contracting authorities that wish to define environmental requirements for the technical specifications of a given contract may lay down the environmental characteristics, such as a given production method, and/or specific environmental effects of product groups or services (...) The technical specifications should be clearly indicated, so that all tenders know what the requirements established by the contracting authority cover"<sup>14</sup>. More details about the technical specification and environmental consideration is provided in art 23 of Directive: "Without prejudice to mandatory national technical rules, to the extent that they are compatible with Community law, the technical specifications shall be formulated: (...) or in terms of performance or functional requirements; the latter may include environmental characteristics". Technical

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<sup>13</sup> Communication COM (2010) 2020 Europe 2020 – A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

<sup>14</sup> recital 29 of Directive 2004/18



parameters should be sufficiently detailed to allow tenders to determine the subject matter of the contract.

Less experienced authorities might have difficulties in specifying technical requirements. Some of them might be lacking the human resources to do so. Furthermore, setting technical requirements basing on life cycle approach might cause additional costs. The solution for such problems might be to use Ecolabel in tenders. The Directive provides a legal basis for use of labels. Contracting authorities can use technical specifications that are defined in eco-labels, such as the European Eco-label. The condition for using eco-labels is that requirements for them are set on the basis of scientific information, in a process where different stakeholders, such as governmental bodies, consumers, manufactures, distributors and environmental organizations can participate<sup>15</sup>. There is also a requirement that a label is "accessible and available to all interested parties"<sup>16</sup> (please read more about ecolabels in section 4), According to art 23(6) of Directive 2004/18 contracting authorities may specify that products and services with eco-label are presumed to comply with the technical part of the tender. However, they must also accept any other appropriate means of proof, such as a test report from a calibration laboratories, and certification and inspections bodies which comply with applicable European Standards. Similar conditions for eco-labels are set in Directive 2004/17<sup>17</sup>. The last part of said Directives that might be useful for the promotion of GPP is article 53 of Directive 2004/18. It states that: "the criteria on which the contracting authorities shall base the award of public contracts shall be either:

(a) when the award is made to the tender most economically advantageous from the point of view of the contracting authority, various criteria linked to the subject-matter of the public contract in question, for example, quality, price, technical merit, aesthetic and functional characteristics, environmental characteristics, running costs, cost-effectiveness, after-sales service and technical assistance, delivery date and delivery period or period of completion, or

(b) the lowest price only.

Therefore, Contracting authorities may choose to award the contract with the lowest price, or to the most economically advantageous one.

### 2.3. EU Energy Star Regulation 106/2008

The Energy Star is a voluntary scheme - a specific label that helps to identify equipment that meets certain standards regarding energy efficiency. Energy Star is the programme originally set up by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy<sup>18</sup>. In the European Union the Energy Star<sup>19</sup> is introduced by the EU Energy Star Regulation 106/2008<sup>20</sup> which

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<sup>15</sup> recital 29 of Directive 2004/18

<sup>16</sup> recital 29 of Directive 2004/18

<sup>17</sup> article 34(6) of Directive 2004/17

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home.index>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.eu-energystar.org/en/index.html>

is the next piece of legislation that can be used as legal basis for green public procurement. According to article 6 of the Regulation central government authorities specify minimum energy efficiency for office equipment at least on the level of the minimum requirements of Energy Star. The Energy Star can be used in technical specifications of tenders called by the other public authorities, not only on the central level.

#### 2.4. Clean Vehicles Directive 2009/33

Directive 2009/33/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles is another piece of legislation that can be used as a basis for the Green Public Procurement. According to article 1 of this Directive, public authorities, when purchasing road transport vehicles have to take into consideration the lifetime energy and environmental impacts, including energy consumption and emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>. The obligations apply to contracts for the purchase of vehicles by:

(a) contracting authorities or contracting entities in so far as they are under an obligation to apply the procurement procedures set out in Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC;

(b) operators for the discharge of public service obligations under a public service contract within the meaning of Regulation 1370/2007<sup>21</sup>.

Data for the calculation of operational lifetime costs of road transport vehicles are provided in the Annex of the Directive. In the context of this Directive, the International Association of Public Transport recommends to calculate environmental impacts on the basis of real drive cycles, such as SORT<sup>22</sup>.

#### 2.5. Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2010/31

Besides the Clean Vehicles Directive and the EU Energy Star Regulation another piece of legislation dedicated specifically to one branch of economy is the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive<sup>23</sup>. The Directive promotes the improvements of the energy performance of buildings, taking into account outdoor climatic and local conditions, indoor climate requirements and cost-effectiveness<sup>24</sup>. According to the Directive, after 31 December 2018, new buildings occupied and owned by public authorities should be nearly zero-energy buildings. The same requirement will later, by 31 December 2020, cover all new buildings. Already from 2013, new buildings owned by public authorities

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<sup>20</sup> Regulation 106/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 on a Community energy-efficiency labelling programme for office equipment

<sup>21</sup> Regulation 1370/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road

<sup>22</sup> "European Union Environmental Legislation. Existing and Proposed Legislation and the Potential impact on Public Transport", UIPT EuroTeam, June 2009, p 25

<sup>23</sup> Directive 2010/31/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 on the energy performance of buildings

<sup>24</sup> art 1 of the Directive 2010/31

must meet certain energy performance requirements. Similar requirements are set for the existing buildings owned by public authorities. When such buildings undergo a major renovation, the energy performance has to be upgraded to meet the energy performance requirements. The definitions of major renovations and details of the energy performance requirements are provided in the Directive.

## 2.6. European Resource Efficiency Platform

Green Public Procurement is promoted in the European Union not only by legislation, but also by initiatives. One of them is the European Resource Efficiency Platform. The aim of this high-level initiative is to provide guidance for a more resource-efficient economy and establish clear recommendations for the implementation of the Resource Efficiency Roadmap finalized September 2011<sup>25</sup>. The members of the Platform are representatives of Member States, the European Commission, industry federations and NGOs, including the European Environmental Bureau. This fresh initiative that was launched in 2012 will advise among others on key barrier and opportunities to progress at the EU, national, regional and sectoral levels on resource efficiency agenda<sup>26</sup>.

## 2.7. The Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27

Article 6 and Annex III of the EED (2012/27/EU) establish energy efficiency requirements in public procurement. According to Article 6 products purchased by central governments should be of high energy-efficiency performance in so far as that is consistent with cost-effectiveness, economical feasibility, wider sustainability, technical suitability as sufficient competition and as referred to in Annex III of the EED. Annex III provides details on what is to be considered the high energy-efficiency performance for some particular products as well as in case of services and buildings. Public bodies at regional and local levels shall also be encouraged to purchase only products, services and buildings with high energy-efficiency performance.

More comprehensive analysis has been performed by our partner NGO ClientEarth, within the work of the Coalition for Energy Savings (Guidebook for good implementation of the EU Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU accessible at: <http://energycoalition.eu/> from May 2013 )

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<sup>25</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/resource\\_efficiency/re\\_platform/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/resource_efficiency/re_platform/index_en.htm)

<sup>26</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/resource\\_efficiency/re\\_platform/about/objective\\_mandate/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/resource_efficiency/re_platform/about/objective_mandate/index_en.htm)

### **3. GPP on local level - opportunities to act**

This chapter is an attempt to provide to local campaigners a step-by-step guide on how to promote the Green Public Procurement on the national and local level. This is a proposition on increasing uptake of GPP in your municipality, region or country. It should not be treated as an exhaustive list of available means to reach the aim, but rather as a starting point for your own experiences.

#### 3.1. How to start - preparation

The first step on the road to increasing GPP uptake is to build up a baseline assessment on GPP. We propose to start with reading more about Green Public Procurement in your region/country. You could start with checking what have been already done in this area, what is planned in the near and further future. The website of the European Commission can be very useful in this regard. It has dedicated National Action Plans for EU Member States. Please visit:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/action\\_plan\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/action_plan_en.htm)

You can find there links to GPP Action Plans, as well as indication of national authorities responsible for the GPP. There is also information available with market analysis, communication and training on GPP. A good approach would be to contact your local authorities and check what has been done in the area of GPP, which department is responsible for implementing GPP and similar information.

#### 3.2. Research phase

The next step is the research phase. During this time, try to identify the decision process in which GPP can be decided. It is important to determine when your influence on the process can be strongest. The general rule is that the possibility for influence decreases as the process continues. Therefore one has the biggest influence over the process at the start. Once you identified phases where your influence can be the strongest, look for potential allies who can help you in achieving your aim of increasing/introducing the GPP in your region. The range of potential partners is broad. Think about entities that do care about raising environmental awareness (consumer NGOs), protecting the environment (green NGOs) or are interested in promotion of innovative green solution (green companies, innovative industry federations). Aligning with other entities will help to increase pressure on local authorities but can also help to raise awareness about the GPP in local communities.

#### 3.3. Identifying targets

The next step of the process is to identify realistic objectives. The general target you want to reach is of course to introduce/increase the GPP in your region/municipality. Nevertheless, Rome was not build in a day. We propose to start with small steps in order to achieve realistic aims at the beginning. You should know by now, if and how your local authorities have been handling the GPP issue so far. If they did not hear about the GPP before, it will not be easy to start with complicated criteria for office buildings for all premises owned by the local government. In such situation it would be much more effective to start with simple criteria for simple products than to begin with complicate sets of GPP criteria. We propose to check available criteria on national level or ready to use criteria prepared by the European Commission:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/eu\\_gpp\\_criteria\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/eu_gpp_criteria_en.htm)

It is good idea to start with product groups where there is already wide experience across Europe - such as paper related product groups. A number of reliable national/European eco-labels such as the EU Ecolabel can be also useful in spotting easy opportunities for 'low hanging fruit'. Another factor that can be taken into consideration is potential savings. In such case energy using product groups can be easy to start with, as they bring easy to calculate savings over the time of usage.

### 3.4. Preparing arguments

It is important to prepare good arguments for GPP in order to convince local authorities. The argument which convinced you as an environmental campaigner to promote GPP might not be good enough for public officials. We propose a set of arguments that can be used towards local authorities:

#### **Improving political image**

By implementing/increasing GPP public authorities are demonstrating a commitment to environmental protection and sustainable development<sup>27</sup>. More and more private consumers in the EU are taking into consideration the environmental footprint of the products while shopping, and more and more of them are expecting the same from public authorities. You can find interesting data about private consumers on the European Commission website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer\\_research/editions/cms8\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_research/editions/cms8_en.htm)

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<sup>27</sup> "The procura<sup>+</sup> Manual - a Guide to Cost-Effective Sustainable Public Procurement" edited by Simon Clement, Christoph Erdmenger, p. 22

## **Improving efficiency**

Public procurement is crucial in improving public authority's efficiency. As "sustainable procurement requires a careful analysis and management"<sup>28</sup> implementing GPP will result in better purchasing decisions.

## **Improving the quality of life in the local communities**

Some environmental benefits will be experienced directly by local communities. One example could be energy-efficient public transport which will result in the improvement of air quality<sup>29</sup>.

Furthermore, one can also argue that the EU legislation (compare chapter 1) is going in the direction of obligatory requirements for more environmentally friendly products. We can expect that in the near future those trends will be strengthened. Therefore, it is more efficient and cheaper to prepare for those requirements in anticipation and start implementing appropriate processes already now. Gained experience will bring benefits in the near future. Additionally it is worth mentioning that implementing GPP will raise awareness among local communities. This can be achieved when greener products/services are used by community members for example "green public transport, or water saving devices in public buildings"<sup>30</sup>.

All those mentioned above arguments are very important, but the most valid one and probably the most effective is the Life Cycle Cost expected benefits.

How to choose the best products in terms of environmental performance? The best you can do is look at the whole life-cycle - from cradle to grave of comparable products<sup>31</sup>.

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) is an internationally standardized methodology. LCA helps to quantify the environmental pressures related to goods and services (products), the environmental benefits, the trade-offs and areas for achieving improvements taking into account the full life-cycle of the product<sup>32</sup>. It takes into account data such as: emissions to air, water, waste generation and energy efficiency.

A good example can be office equipment. Buying more energy efficient office equipment, can be objected to because of more expensive upfront costs.

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<sup>28</sup> "The procura<sup>+</sup> Manual - a Guide to Cost-Effective Sustainable Public Procurement" edited by Simon Clement, Christoph Erdmenger, p. 22

<sup>29</sup> "The procura<sup>+</sup> Manual - a Guide to Cost-Effective Sustainable Public Procurement" edited by Simon Clement, Christoph Erdmenger, p. 23

<sup>30</sup> "The procura<sup>+</sup> Manual - a Guide to Cost-Effective Sustainable Public Procurement" edited by Simon Clement, Christoph Erdmenger, p. 23

<sup>31</sup> "Buying into the environment - experiences, opportunities and potential for eco-procurement" edited by Christoph Erdmenger, p. 135

<sup>32</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ipp/lca.htm>

However, taking into account all the money that will be saved due to lower energy bills, makes this option much cheaper than buying and using cheaper and more energy-consuming devices in the short term. Another example can be water saving taps in public buildings. The money saved on water bills will be a clear indication of good decision during the procurement process.

The money savings argument can be among the most useful one when trying to convince public authorities to commit to the idea of green public procurement. But barriers remain to bring this common sense idea into reality, notably the duration of the mandate of elected representatives and associated administrative team taking decisions on green procurement, as well as the existing difficulties to access higher loans to enable purchasing green solutions (see below section on difficulties and barriers and possible ways to overcome them).

### 3.5. Action phase

After the research and preparation phase one can move to the "action phase". While approaching officers of public authorities it is important to build partner relations. Both public authorities and green campaigners have a common interest in implementing GPP - in many cases their goals and aims are very similar. The point is that both sides should also see that interest in implementing GPP. Using all the arguments above might not be enough. In many cases, public authorities lack of resources - both human and the funds. If you/your organisation can offer the relevant training or other means of help, it is most encouraged. If you cannot provide necessary expertise, try contacting other green NGOs in your region or country. There are also a few organisations specializing in the sustainable/green public procurement. One of them is the Local Governments for Sustainability:

<http://www.iclei.org/>

One good idea is to contact the financial department and show them the potential savings they could make due to implementation of the green public procurement - like those examples mentioned above. Having financial officers interested in implementing GPP will help the ones responsible for the procurement.

### 3.6. Media work

Another important piece of the puzzle is media work. Bringing local/regional media attention to the concept of GPP will help not only to convince public authorities but also increase environmental awareness among your communities. You can start with tools that are easily accessible and cheap such as social media and other internet tools.

### 3.7. Follow up

After all "action" work is initiated, the process is far from over. It is a good idea to maintain contact with officers and public procurement departments and monitor the progress made. Once you start with small and easy product groups, you can try to advocate for implementing more complicated criteria.

All that you have learned during the follow-up will be useful for other campaigners who also want to increase the GPP uptake in their local governments. Sharing experience is extremely important, although each community is different and has its own specific needs.



## 4. Difficulties and barriers

Entities which would like to introduce GPP are often facing similar problems and barriers. In this section, we propose how to deal with the most common ones.

### 4.1. Lack of technical expertise

GPP requires some expertise both in the legal and technical sides of procurement. The procurement department of the public authority often lack resources to deal with those two aspects. One solution would be to organise training for the relevant officers (see comments in section 3). This still might not bring relevant expertise needed to set technical criteria for green procurement. There are two options that can help solving this problem. One solution is to use ready-to-use criteria prepared by the European Commission (see comments in section 1). Another possibility is to use references to ecolabels in the tenders specifications. There are different classifications of labels for example mandatory/voluntary schemes. However, for GPP the most important is differentiation between environmental labelling done by the International Organization for Standardization. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) developed standards for three different types of voluntary environmental labels (ISO 14021, 14024, 14025): type I, II and III and in addition, ISO Type I-like. The most reliable and promoted by green NGOs type of environmental labelling is type I.

ISO type I programme: "a voluntary, multiple-criteria based, third party program that awards a license that authorises the use of environmental labels on products indicating overall environmental preferability of a product within a particular product category based on life cycle considerations"<sup>33</sup>.

The EU has its own type I label - the EU Ecolabel (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/>). Additionally there are few national labels that also fulfil ISO requirements and can be used in the GPP tenders:

Nordic Swan - <http://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/>

Blue Angel - <http://www.blauer-engel.de/en/index.php>

This is not to say that other labels are not reliable, but a programme that is run by a third party is independent. Additionally, there are some labels, which focus only on one specific issue. If those labels fulfil other requirements of the ISO standards, then they can be classified as ISO I-like type. The Forest Stewardship Council certificate is a good example of a type I-like programme. FSC certification is a voluntary tool that supports responsible forest

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<sup>33</sup> [http://www.globalecolabelling.net/what\\_is\\_ecolabelling/](http://www.globalecolabelling.net/what_is_ecolabelling/)

management. The FSC label makes sure that the forest products come from responsibly harvested and verified sources<sup>34</sup>

Another type of labels are graded product labels. Label grades rank products according to their environmental performance focusing on one specific issue. The EU Energy Label is a good example. This label takes into account the energy efficiency of the product. More information can be found on the website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/efficiency/labelling/labelling\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/efficiency/labelling/labelling_en.htm)

Ecolabels can be used in number of ways in GPP, but they are not allowed to require products or services to carry a particular eco-label (e.g do not specify a brand or a specific certification scheme). Public authorities can use ecolabels to help them to draft their own technical specifications of tenders or as a proof of compliance with those requirements.

Another way of dealing with lack of technical expertise and lack of resource can be joint procurement - with other units or departments of the same public authority entity. Joining forces in purchasing products or services can bring additional benefits<sup>35</sup>:

- more competitive prices and more favourable purchasing conditions when ordering bigger amounts

- lower administrative costs

An additional benefit is that the implementation of GPP is being coordinated between different departments/units.

#### 4.2. High costs and long time of return of investment

In many cases introducing GPP might be a political problem. Buying more sustainable products or services might be a more expensive option. Energy efficient heating systems are more expensive. They bring saving in energy bills over time however, as explained above. The problem is that too often public officials think in perspective of their own term of office, which is 4-5 years. If you care only about next 3 years, you may not buy a more expensive device which will bring saving over next 10 years. It is very hard to overcome such way of thinking. One solution could be trying to convince public officers that indeed buying energy efficient devices is showing that they are thinking long term about their communities. Seek to make a "political" benefit out of it rather than a mere budget issue. Additionally, requiring LCA in technical tender specifications will help them to show long term benefits of buying sometimes more expensive

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<sup>34</sup> Forest Stewardship Council, Official website, Available at <http://www.fsc.org/certification.html>, date of access 04.06.2011

<sup>35</sup> "The procura<sup>+</sup> Manual - a Guide to Cost-Effective Sustainable Public Procurement" edited by Simon Clement, Christoph Erdmenger, p. 57

device. As full LCA's are quite difficult to interpret for non experts, another option could be to ask for a summary comparing the proposed (more sustainable) product with a standard one, representing mainstream product type.

#### 4.3. Legal barriers

During the procurement process some legal barriers might appear. Please visit website of our partner NGO - ClientEarth to learn more about those obstacles:

<http://www.clientearth.org/public-procurement/publications/>

## 5. Examples across Europe

### 5.1. Green IT equipment

One interesting example of GPP comes from a city of Dunkerque, France. In 2008 the local government, representing 220 000 inhabitants, introduced a framework agreement for purchasing IT equipment and software. Until that point there had been two tenders published and agreed for a total of 330 000 Euros worth of equipment. In the technical specification, authorities required the Energy Star label<sup>36</sup>. Flat screens had to meet the requirements of TCO99 03<sup>37</sup> or equivalent. Through those purchases energy consumption gains were achieved. Buying green monitors limited the use of potentially harmful substances such as lead, cadmium and mercury. The local authorities of Dunkerque indicated a need to provide training to the staff on the energy use and efficiency rating of IT equipment.

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/news\\_alert/Issue5\\_Case\\_Study13\\_Dunkerque\\_IT.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/news_alert/Issue5_Case_Study13_Dunkerque_IT.pdf)

### 5.2. Working with the market

Another example comes from the Municipality of Cascais, Portugal which has around 190,000 inhabitants. The Council started by identifying appropriate product groups in order to select products with the most innovative potential. As a result energy efficient outdoor public lighting was identified. The next step was setting up a project team with representatives of Cascais Energy Agency, Cascais Urban Service Company, the Electricity and Public Lighting Division, Procurement Division and others units. The team focused on identifying the needs that the purchase must fulfil, performance requirements and possible solutions. A market study identified existing technologies and their suppliers were prepared. An interesting approach was taken towards companies which were invited to the seminar, where potential suppliers were informed about the project. Furthermore, individual meetings with eleven LED lamp suppliers took place in order to learn more about products, receive comments and gather LCA data. The market research allowed for the improvement of the technical specifications of the tender. The experiences showed the added value of involving the private sector in the early stage of the procurement process.

<http://www.smart-spp.eu/index.php?id=8286>

### 5.3. Green and healthy cleaning services

The Environmental Protection Agency for Tuscany, Italy provides an interesting example of GPP in the services sector. The Agency started in 2004 with a pilot introducing GPP for cleaning services in its offices. In 2009 green procurement was prepared for all 19 offices. The requirement was the use of environmentally

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.energystar.gov/>

<sup>37</sup> <http://tcodevelopment.com/about-us/advancing-sustainable-it/>

friendly and healthy cleaning products - with limited presence of volatile organic compounds, perfumes, dyes and surfactants. There was also a requirement to provide instructions for using cleaning products in a sustainable manner. The project showed the importance of training for the users. The cleaning services provider ensured that the staff were aware of usage guidance.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/casestudy9.pdf>

## **6. Useful Links**

EU GPP Toolkit - [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/toolkit\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/toolkit_en.htm)

GPP National Action Plans -

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/national\\_gpp\\_strategies\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/national_gpp_strategies_en.pdf)