

Tool A: Developing and implementing a green procurement policy

Objectives of the tool

- to help public authorities to develop and implement a **Policy for Green Procurement**

Benefits of implementing a Green Procurement Policy

- a more effective and systematic way to introduce Green Public Procurement (GPP)
- promotes the participation and motivation of local officers in implementing GPP
- promotes co-operation and dialogue with the supply chain, the stakeholders and the public in general
- influences the market: promoting sustainable production
- helps public authorities achieve more legitimacy

Dresden – benefits of the Green Procurement Policy

- Optimising the management and procurement in the organisation
- Reducing the storage of dangerous substances
- Reducing waste and emissions, the consumption of drinking-water, energy, and generally reducing the stress on the environment of the city's activities
- More certainty that all the important laws are systematically being identified through the policy

What does this tool do?

After analysing the different green procurement policies that are in place in a group of public authorities with notable green procurement practices, a table was produced with all the aspects that a policy should cover in order to be more accurate and efficient. This table should help any public authority with the drafting of their own green procurement policy (independent of its scope: general green procurement policy or product/ topic focused policy).

Quick actions

If you don't have time to go through the whole document, here you'll find the aspects that a green procurement policy should cover:

The Public authority is committed to the following green procurement policy:

1. It should start with a general commitment:

➤ *By implementing this policy we intend to procure our goods, services and works in a way that we have a continual, measurable progress in our environmental performance, by reducing our environmental impacts, whilst maintaining the city's economic viability.*

2. Then the statement should become more specific, including possibly objective targets and concrete product commitments:

➤ *The Public authority aims to reduce the purchasing of new goods, and procure them only when essential, by cutting down on waste and repairing or reusing existing products.*

- *The Public authority aims to introduce environmental criteria in 50% of its procurement practices by 2010.*
- *No products shall be procured which contain ozone-depleting chemicals, non-independently certified tropical hardwood, or pesticides on the EU 'Black list'.*
- *Service contractors working for the public authority will undertake their services in line with the public authorities' environmental standards.*

3. Indicate how you will implement this policy:

- *A Technical advisory group will be set up to promote the implementation of the policy. A representative of each Area will constitute the advisory group. The advisory group will prepare an annual report on the activities carried out and a work programme.*
- *Technical criteria will be developed to use in the Call for Tenders of public authority contracts for works and supplies.*

4. Indicate how you will communicate and deliver the policy within the organisation, the supply chain and the public in general and provide training:

- *The Public authority will provide supporting guidelines and resources to allow effective implementation of the policy, provide environmental training and awareness raising tools to our staff and to politicians, and ensure there is effective communication between our central purchasing unit and the individual departments.*
- *The Public authority will work with our suppliers and contractors to help them improve their environmental performance (e.g. to reduce, reuse and recycle their packaging) and so spread good environmental practice through the supply chain.*
- *The policy will be promoted to other Municipal Public authorities and to the community by various actions (e.g. leaflets, promotional website).*

5. State how you will monitor the implementation of your policy and how you will improve it:

- *Once a year a management-review will be undertaken in order to control results and review and update our policy, setting new and stricter targets wherever possible and as the old ones are met.*
- *The Public authority will continually improve the procurement policy and our guidelines by regularly reviewing contracts and suppliers and benchmarking this strategy with others, integrate the municipality's procurement standards and process with our EMAS or ISO 14001 environmental management system (where it exists), and monitor our performance using environmental performance indicators.*

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1. Introduction

Green public procurement practices can be carried out at an individual level by public officers and/ or departments committed to environmental protection and sustainable development.

If a generalised and efficient approach wants to be undertaken, it will be necessary to have a reference framework and guideline a green public procurement policy that will require all areas in the public authority to introduce green criteria into their procurement activities.

In order to have such a general policy it is necessary to have political commitment at the highest level in the organisation.

This is relevant not only for the elaboration of the policy itself but also for its enforcement.

Depending on the context and political priorities of each authority, the green public procurement policy can be:

- broad, covering all the aspects, dimensions and procurement practices of the organisation, or
- Focussed on only one environmental aspect such as energy consumption, timber procurement, recycled paper, etc.

Nevertheless, the policy statement should cover the same points (described in the next section) independently from its scope.

This tool has been designed to compliment the [Procura+](#)⁺ Campaign implementation framework which is ICLEI's Sustainable Procurement Campaign. The Milestone Process and key criteria are also outlined in *the [Procura+ Manual, A guide to cost-effective sustainable public procurement](#)*

2. Drafting the Green Public Procurement Policy

After analysing several green procurement policies from different public authorities recognised as being advanced in this area (some of these can be found in the case studies section), some standard elements were identified as relevant in a procurement policy in order to make it understandable and efficient.

Those elements are:

- A) Commitment towards environmental protection and sustainable development
 - a.1. General framework/ commitment
 - a.2. Specific commitment
- B) Accompanying measures
 - c.1. Implementation activities
 - c.2. Information, communication and training activities
 - c.3. Monitoring and reviewing process activities

A) Commitment towards environmental protection and sustainable development

a.1. General framework/ commitment

Green public procurement policies are often, confined to a more general sustainable development policy or strategy within a public authority, such as an Agenda21 strategy. The public authority or public authority may also have other sustainability policies that can be referred to in the procurement policy.

In order to be consistent across strategy documents, the introduction of the environmental and procurement policies should refer to any relevant more general framework that is in place.

Example from the Sustainable Timber Policy of Barcelona City Council:

One of the urban strategies that contributes towards sustainable development is the reduction of the environmental impact of the city on the planet, reducing the ecological footprint. In that sense, one of the objectives of the Citizens Commitment for Sustainability of the Agenda 21 of Barcelona, passed in 2002, is to contribute to the protection of the world's forest and promote the use of environmentally certified wood. Public authorities have a clear responsibility for the introduction of more environmentally friendly systems and products and, specifically, in the wood by-products, that are used in works, street furniture, parks and gardens, funeral services, offices, etc.

a.2. Specific commitment

In this section of the policy, the commitment should be further specified. There are different approaches to this.

One option is to be specific but **without fixing** any kind of **objective or target**. In such cases commitments are still a bit vague but on the other hand they never become outdated, as there are no fixed dates.

Example from the Green Procurement Policy of Barcelona City Council:

To buy environmentally friendly products and, in general, to consider environmental criteria, by introducing preference criteria in clauses for procurement and award of works and projects.

Another option is to **establish objectives and targets**, which the public authority will work towards. Those targets should be technically achievable, measurable, time bound and realistic but challenging.

In order to define them, the public authority should consider, among others:

- What are the environmental priorities of the public authority?
- Which regulations and legislation are in place and which targets they define (e.g. the Kyoto Protocol, etc.)?
- Which products/services are purchased in significant quantities and have significant environmental impacts?
- Are there more environmentally friendly options available on the market?
- Do I want to fix targets for certain products, services and works or targets for the procurement practices in general?

- What deadlines are appropriate?

Examples of time-bound targets could be:

General target:

- By the end of 2010 ensure that 50% of tenders include environmental considerations.

Specific targets:

- By the end of 2006 ensure that 10% of the electricity purchased is generated by renewable sources.

More guidelines on how to set targets for products, services and works can be found in the Procura+ Manual.

Policies can also include commitments **not** to do something, for example the purchasing of products containing ozone depleting chemicals, non- independently certified tropical hardwood, or pesticides on the EU 'Black list'.

An example could be:

- None of the cleaning materials purchased contains dangerous substances (Note: "dangerous" would need to be defined).

B) Accompanying measures

The accompanying measures that support the procurement requirements will help implementation and improvement of the policy. Those measures can be independent of the policy and be introduced in the action plan. Inclusion in the policy statement is recommended in order to highlight its importance.

The accompanying measures should include:

c.1. Implementation activities

The policy should also consider which actions are going to be carried out in order to implement the policy.

Examples of those actions are:

- To create a Working group/Technical Commission in charge of developing an action programme and guarantee the application of the policy.
- To integrate green policies into other municipal procurement systems, such as online e-procurement or product catalogues, so that non-green products are filtered out.
- To integrate green procurement policies and practices into the environmental management system of the public authority.
- To develop a monitoring and reporting programme.

c.2. Information, communication and training activities

Commitment to supporting the process is necessary both from the 'top-down' (e.g. the Chief Executive or Mayor/ politicians and their senior management team), as well as from the bottom-up, i.e. for staff lower down the hierarchy to have ownership of the process. This bottom-up commitment is particularly important, as it is very often staff at the lower end of the organisation who specify and order goods.

In order to achieve that support, **staff** need to be trained. The policy must include the provision of training sessions and communication/dissemination channels with employees. It could even include targets for the number of staff trained in green procurement.

Some tips on the content for those training sessions for procurement officers or those involved in letting contracts can be found in Tool H, section 1.5. Other examples of internal marketing to raise awareness within the organisation can be found in Tool H, section 1.6.

Suppliers, especially local providers, need to be aware of the green procurement practices of the public authority in order to adjust to the new requirements.

Example from London Borough of Lewisham's Environmental Responsible Purchasing Key Policy Statement

4.) Forming partnerships with suppliers to apply the public authority's principles in corporate procurement / purchasing activities, and to promote and encourage innovative improvement in environmental performance, through the development of environmental criteria in the award of contracts.

At the same time the public authority should communicate to **the public** and stakeholders the benefits of its green procurement strategy, also providing them with guidance to promote green procurement themselves.

c.3. Monitoring and reviewing process activities

Monitoring activities are not always considered a priority when drafting a policy. This is a key part of the policy, as without it authorities cannot know whether they are making any progress or even implementing the policy.

This aspect could be included in the implementation programme, but it is better if it is included in the policy in order to make it more relevant.

The process of reviewing the public authority's performance against its targets, will help to identify any barriers, and will help to improve the green procurement policy by identifying what has been achieved and which should be the appropriate corrective actions to implement the policy in those areas where it hasn't been implemented already.

Monitoring should occur on a continuous basis with internal reviews and an appointed person responsible for collecting information and preparing internal reports on achievements of targets¹.

The appointed person or 'reviewer' should look for answers to the following questions:

- Have the planned measures and procedures been implemented?
- What has been achieved?

¹ If possible, using the municipalities' internal financial audit staff would be valuable as they would have a degree of independence from the process and their reports are usually respected in the organisation.

- What were the barriers?
- Is it possible to further improve the integration of environmental issue into procurement operations?
- Which should be our corrective actions?
- What kind of new targets could we set?

The control, record and monitoring of contracts can be done by following the steps specified in Tool B of the Tools package, even if the public authority does not have an EMS in place

Identifying organisational barriers and the way they can be overcome are addressed in Tool C of the Tools package.

More guidelines on monitoring can also be found in the Procura+ Manual (see Section1).

3. Policy statement

The policy statement can then be produced, which includes the targets set. This policy will help to raise awareness, educate and communicate the public authorities' commitments to stakeholders. An example of a municipalities' green procurement policy has been included below.² Further examples of such policies can be found in Case Studies 1-5

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2. Then the statement should become more specific, including possibly targets and commitments NOT to do something:

➤ *The Public authority aims to reduce the purchasing of new goods, and procure them only when essential, by cutting down on waste and repairing or reusing existing products.*

➤ *The Public authority aims to introduce environmental criteria in 50% of its procurement practices by 2010.*

➤ *No products shall be procured which contain ozone-depleting chemicals, non-independently certified tropical hardwood, or pesticides on the EU 'Black list'.*

➤ *Service contractors working for the public authority will undertake their services in line with the authorities' environmental standards.*

3. Indicate how you will implement this policy:

² Public authorities might also consider adding a section on "re-use" in their policy; before deciding to purchase they can examine whether other departments have relevant goods that they do not need (such as furniture or highway material), perhaps even creating an inventory for that purpose.

➤ *A Technical working group or Commission will be set up to promote the implementation of the policy. A representative of each Area will constitute the Commission. The Commission will prepare an annual report on the activities carried out and a work programme.*

➤ *Technical criteria will be developed to use in the Call for Tenders of municipal contracts for works and supplies.*

4. Indicate how you will communicate and deliver the policy within the organisation, the supply chain and the public in general and provide training:

➤ *The Public authority will provide supporting guidelines and resources to allow effective implementation of the policy, provide environmental training and awareness raising tools to our staff and to politicians, and ensure there is effective communication between our central purchasing unit and the individual departments.*

➤ *The Public authority will work with our suppliers and contractors to help them improve their environmental performance (e.g. to reduce, reuse and recycle their packaging) and so spread good environmental practice through the supply chain.*

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5. State how you will monitor the implementation of your policy and how you will improve it:

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4. Action plan

The policy by itself won't make things change. An action plan or working programme will need to be defined in order to guarantee its enforcement.

This action plan should apply to the specific needs and purchasing practices of the public authority. An ideal action plan should contain:

- Base line data,
- a description of the implementation measures and procedures,
- a description of the assigned responsibilities,
- relevant performance / progress indicators, and
- a timeframe.

More specifically:

Implementation measures and procedures: All implementation activities, training sessions, dissemination activities, monitoring and accountability actions, etc. need to be

defined, be given a time for their execution and, whenever applicable, who in the organisation will be involved or affected.

Responsibilities: The authority should decide who will be responsible for the overall co-ordination of the green procurement efforts, for the policy implementation, and who will be responsible for each target achievement.

Indicators: they need to be fixed when the targets and actions are defined, in order to design the monitoring activities. They can be general, for the whole organisation or by department in order to benchmark them but they must be linked to the targets as they will indicate the progress towards the targets.

Timeframe: When developing the timeframe, the authority should be realistic and practical, and take the size, structure and available resources into account.

Targets: If they haven't been defined in the policy, targets should be set in the action plan. If they have been set, the action plan should define targets for a shorter time scale and in more detail. Those targets can be not only for the achievements in procurement practices but also for training of staff, dissemination, etc.

More information on drawing up an action plan can be found in the Procura⁺ Manual.

5. Case studies

The following real examples of Green Procurement Policies may assist any public authority in developing their own policy:

Case Study 1 Environmental Purchasing Policy of Leicester City Council, UK.

Case Study 2 Policy Statement of the London Borough of Lewisham, UK.

Case Study 3 Green Public Procurement Policy of Barcelona City Council, Spain.

Case Study 4 Policy Statement for the procurement of wood of Barcelona City Council, Spain.

Case Study 5 Environmental Policy Statement of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, UK.