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Development of Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria

Type of support / service available

Guidance on how to complete public procurement tenders can encourage the provision of environmental beneficial goods and services.

This guidance consists in providing product- and service-specific green public procurement criteria. These ready-to-use criteria are developed in close co-operation with all interested stakeholders, namely industry, NGOs and Member States, and represent the state-of-the-art description of how specific goods and services can be purchased in a more environmental friendly way.

In order to be of use in all EU regions, GPP criteria are downloadable for free in all official EU languages¹.

Relevance for regional authorities

Public authorities across Europe purchase works, goods and services equivalent to around 14% of European GDP/year, respectively EUR 1,8 trillion in 2015.

This important volume of consumption can be a powerful driver for moving products, sectors and markets towards a better environmental performance. In other words, the objectives of this support are reducing the environmental burden of publicly purchased goods and services, plus encouraging companies to develop environmentally better performing products and services in order to comply with green public call for tenders.

Guidance on how public procurement tenders can be formulated in a way to incentivize the provision of environmental beneficial goods and services is provided by the European Commission for a broad range of sectors, spanning from IT equipment to office buildings and road construction.

Where needed and possible, GPP criteria are developed with a view to local or regional conditions, i.e. in the GPP for road construction where the use of locally available material is favoured.

Policy context

In its Communication “Public procurement for a better environment” (COM(2008)400), the European Commission defines Green Public Procurement as “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.” The Communication serves as framework legislation, as no specific sectors, goods or services are mentioned.

On behalf of DG Environment, JRC develops Green Public Procurement criteria for a broad range of goods and services, including, for example, Office Buildings, Road Construction, or Computers. These criteria are based on a scientific analysis of the technical, economic and environmental characteristics of the specific good/service in question. From this analysis a set of criteria is derived that is best suited to address the environmental best performing products on the market.

The criteria development process is carried out in a permanent exchange with stakeholders from industry, NGO and Member States in order to ensure a high degree of real world applicability of the criteria. Close contact with the final target group – procurers at regional and municipal level – helps to maximize the added value of the criteria.

1. European Commission GPP site: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm

How to use

Criteria are available for a broad range of product groups, which have been identified with the help of procurement practitioners across EU28. An overview can be found at:

- European Commission GPP site²
- Joint Research Centre Product Policy Support³.

The criteria are developed as core criteria, with some environmental ambition, and comprehensive criteria, for those procurers who aim for environmental excellent performing products and services.

The criteria are available in all official languages of the EU so that procurers throughout EU28 can make use of them. The criteria are designed so that procurers can use the set as a whole, or just chose those criteria best fitting the intended objectives and adapting them to local or regional conditions. In the case of Office Buildings it is, for example, stipulated that for setting GPP criteria:

- The specific conditions of the local market for construction material need to be taken into account
- The criterion for low carbon energy sources could be varied based on the local context
- The share of recycled or re-used content needs to be adapted to local availability of those materials.

Impact

The impact of the policy is twofold. Firstly, GPP criteria have a direct impact through reducing the environmental burden of publicly purchased goods and services. Secondly, GPP criteria have an indirect impact through encouraging companies to develop environmentally better performing products and services in order to comply with green public call for tenders. This is particularly relevant for sectors which are, to a large extent, depending on procurement such as, for example, printers, which make up for far more than 50% of sales for the most important companies.

Procurers are supported by GPP criteria to implement the environmental objectives of their respective organization, with the possibility to adapt them to their specific local or regional needs.

1. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm

2. http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/product_bureau/index.html