

Workshop on Green Public Procurement – GPP in practice

13 November 2024

Meeting summary

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Headlines

Interact organised this online workshop on green public procurement in collaboration with Valentina Schippers-Opejko, Coordinator of UAEU – Urban Agenda for the EU, and Patrikios Tymvios, Head of Procurement Office, The Cyprus Institute, on 13th of November 2024. This workshop was open for all programme staff from the MAs, JSs, NCPs, MC members, and other relevant bodies actively engaged in thematic work related to green public procurement (GPP).

The workshop aimed to provide participants with essential knowledge about green, sustainable, circular, innovative, and social procurement practices. We discussed the opportunities and challenges of implementing projects that minimize environmental impacts, emphasizing green public procurement as a crucial policy tool for achieving environmental objectives. We also shared successful project examples and lessons learned from Interreg programmes.

Interact has prepared this summary to outline the key points discussed during the meeting. This summary includes a recap of the presentations, messages and remarks, as well as the questions we debated. The objective of the workshop was to engage participants in discussions about green public procurement, exchange perspectives, and address common challenges related to the implementation of green projects. Please note that this document serves to present information and does not establish any new rules regarding public procurement.

A key deliverable of this workshop will be a brochure compiling project examples, which will be presented at the next public procurement event and made available on the Interact website.

Key topics discussed – presentations

1. Essentials of green public procurement (presented by Interact):
 - Key concepts and principles.
 - Green aspects and their integration within Interreg programmes

2. Case studies, challenges and solutions (presented by Valentina Schippers-Opejko, Coordinator of Urban Agenda for the EU):
 - Renewable energy procurement contracts.
 - Sustainable road and water works in Haarlem.
 - Innovative solutions addressing urban challenges.
3. Best practices and success stories (presented by Patrikios Tymvios, The Cyprus Institute):
 - Lessons learned from implemented projects
 - Life Cycle Costing models
 - Green Cleaning Services
 - IT infrastructure based on the lowest cost
 - Sustainable furniture supply

Key questions and insights

- What challenges might arise from transitioning to green procurement?
- How can beneficiaries be encouraged to include green criteria in tender documents?
- How do we highlight the added value of GPP to reluctant stakeholders?
- What practical steps bridge the gap between sustainability goals and current procurement practices?
- Ways of balancing environmental goals with cost considerations.
- Encouraging national laws to evolve alongside EU directives to avoid inconsistencies.
- Integrating sustainability criteria like carbon footprint reductions and life cycle benefits into tenders.
- Circular and green public procurement appear to have only positive aspects. Are there any negative aspects?
- Given the complexity of public procurement, how can we encourage beneficiaries to incorporate green criteria in their tender documents?
- If the "PROS" are more than the "CONS", how/why is green public procurement not the standard process?
- How to include a green criterion in procurement? - suggestions for using sustainable ways to ship items, using recycled materials, etc., but nothing was found for IT data centres.
- How do we present the added value of green public procurement to 'old-fashioned' beneficiaries who are reluctant to apply it?
- The Procurement Directive should envisage these new shifts from "lowest price" to higher quality, which may result in increased costs.
- Following this, it is essential that the Member States revise their legislation, as failing to do so would make the recommendation impractical. In practice, this approach may lead to financial corrections.
- Financial correction can still be applied if the national procurement law is breached due to restrictive and non-relevant selection criteria.

- Circular, sustainable, social, innovative, and green public procurement is procurement that takes into consideration the impact that the execution of a contract has.
- The impact is controlled by setting and monitoring certain goals in procurement, purchasing and supply chain.
- Green public procurement is essential for a better environment.
- Involves the relevant actors in a manner that is the least harmful for the living habitats
- Interreg programmes to consider using award criteria that give more weight to environmental factors in tender documents
- Interreg programmes to promote the use of life cycle costing in procurement evaluations
- The need for firm rules rather than recommendations to encourage beneficiaries to adopt greener practices
- Promoting as a good practice the development of a strategy by the programmes to push beneficiaries towards green procurement.
- Concerns about the potential negative effects of requirements on sustainability, suggesting a balance between inspiration and regulation.

Conclusions and next steps

For Interact:

- Update and share with the programmes the 50 Q&A document and include cases from green public procurement
- Plan and organise a technical meeting with the Interreg programmes and experts in public procurement from DG Growth
- Organise future workshops, including a physical event next year in Valencia, to discuss practical solutions for green public procurement
- Publish a brochure that compiles project examples and best practices, projects that are currently in implementation or have already been implemented, and good practices in Interreg, along with relevant cases on how GPP processes are implemented.

For Interreg programmes:

- Develop strategies and action plans for green public procurement.
- Include environmental and social criteria in tender documents, awarding more points for green features
- Emphasise life cycle costing in procurement evaluations
- Promote awareness of green procurement through newsletters and training for beneficiaries.