The European Commission’s green paper on the security of energy supply highlights that if no action is taken, the European Union’s dependence on external energy sources will increase from 50 per cent to 70 per cent by 2030 according to current estimates. At the same time, the EU is continuing to produce more and more CO₂ and other greenhouse gases. Directive 2006/32/EC proposes green public procurement (GPP) as one tool to achieve the EU’s 20 per cent energy efficiency target. Green procurement is defined as a process whereby purchasers seek to procure goods, services and work with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared with goods, services and work with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured.

Uptake of green procurement in Europe

Total public procurement in the EU is estimated at about 19 per cent of the EU’s gross domestic product, or two trillion euros. Its importance varies significantly between Member States and product groups, ranging from 11 per cent to 20 per cent of their gross domestic product.

However, according to the results of the European Commission’s recent study entitled “The uptake of green public procurement in the EU27”, only 26 per cent of public purchases in 2009 and 2010 can be considered “green”, whereas the EU aimed to have half of the tenders carried out with environmental criteria by this time. Furthermore, it was found that Member States applied GPP criteria to a very different extent. Generally, more than 50 per cent of the surveyed contracts included at least one green criterion. Nevertheless it appears that purchasing costs are still the dominant focus whereas the life cycle approach is rarely used.
Benefits

Green purchasing is about setting an example and influencing the marketplace. By using their purchasing power when choosing goods and services that respect the environment, buyers can make an important contribution towards sustainable development. Regular demand for eco-efficient products can motivate suppliers to offer more products and services that comply with modern quality and environmental requirements.

For companies, innovation-driven procurement will become one of the key competences to keep the pace of innovation sufficiently high in the ever faster changing world.

In GPP, the selection of offers is based on an evaluation of life cycle costs (purchasing, operating and disposal costs) and not only on the lowest price. Although they may be more expensive at the time of purchase, environmentally friendly products can work out cheaper in the long term. Calculation tools help to accurately define life cycle costs by including various parameters such as electricity, supply materials, and maintenance costs. Green purchasing procedures make procurement decisions and criteria applied clear and comprehensible to suppliers, customers, and society. This is especially important for institutions and companies where purchases are partly or fully financed by the state.

Moreover, green procurement helps solve environmental issues by reducing toxic and greenhouse gas emissions. By choosing green products and services, less hazardous substances are released and natural resources are conserved. A reduction in the environmental impact generally results in less damage to health. Procurement is also a powerful instrument that public authorities and companies can use to reduce their CO₂ emissions and advance their climate change objectives.

GPP step by step

Step 1: Win political and management support
Develop a green procurement policy for your institution or company. Have it approved by your municipal council or company senior management.

Choose a green title to communicate the policy to your staff and the outside world.

Step 2: Assess your actual needs
Decide on the products or services you really need to purchase. Describe your needs in a functional manner so as not to exclude alternatives.

Step 3: Define the subject matter
The contract subject matter relates to what product, service or work you want to procure. Purchasers are free to determine an environmentally friendly product or performance-based product definition.

Step 4: Establish the technical specifications
Technical specifications describe the contract to the market and constitute minimum compliance criteria. Apply environmental criteria to save resources and energy as well as to reduce waste and pollution. Criteria can be taken from the GPP toolkit on the European Commission’s homepage (http://ec.europa.eu) or from the EU energy label or other environmental labels like the Ecolabel.

Step 5: Define award criteria
Determine award criteria, e.g. better eco-efficiency and their weighting when evaluating the tenders. The award criteria must relate to the contract subject matter. Describe how you will calculate the life cycle costs and how they will be weighted.

Step 6: Set contract performance clauses
Use contract performance clauses as a means of setting further relevant energy efficiency and environmental conditions for the green contract.
Step 7: Award the contract
From all offers fulfilling the technical specifications, the contract will be awarded to “the economically most advantageous tender” based on the results from the Buy Smart+ life cycle cost calculation tool and degree of compliance with award criteria.

Green procurement in practical implementation – the Buy Smart+ project

The issue of how to translate green procurement ambitions into actions is addressed by the “Buy Smart+ Green Procurement in Europe” project funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe EU programme and coordinated by the Berlin Energy Agency (BEA). Climate Alliance is project partner for communication. The project’s main objectives are to consolidate and establish green procurement on a broad basis in eight Member States (Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Slovenia, Sweden) and to transfer the know-how to seven EU countries where green procurement is still at an early stage (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania and Romania). The main focus is on energy-related technologies, whereby building components, green electricity, household appliances, lighting, office equipment and vehicles are the main product groups the project is focusing on.

More importantly, Buy Smart+ established green procurement helpdesks in all 15 partner countries, supplying information on green procurement, newsletters, good practices, and well-tested tools in the national languages. The latter include technical guidelines on several product groups, life cycle cost calculation tools and training materials. A wider uptake of green procurement is achieved through directly consulting and training purchasers for free. Through assisting pilot projects, a critical mass of successful green procurement cases will be compiled and subsequently widely communicated. Also Climate Alliance members can contact the project team for free of cost trainings or if they want to take part as pilot projects.

During its period of implementation and beyond, Buy Smart+ will contribute to the EU’s efforts to achieve a significant uptake of environmental criteria in procurement procedures among all Member States while triggering direct energy savings through its pilot projects.

Vanessa Hübner, Berlin Energy Agency, Germany
v.huebner@berliner-e-agentur.de

Public procurement of LED lighting in the EU

Light emitting diodes (LEDs) are a promising emerging technology with high energy saving potential. Given the rapid development of LEDs, public authorities have an opportunity to act as pioneers and to enhance market transformation towards highly efficient lighting systems. However, at the same time, it represents a challenge for public authorities to establish a baseline for the performance of LED lamps and to define criteria for their public purchases.

In cooperation with the European Commission’s Photonics Unit (DG Information Society and Media), the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC) prepared a study on the public procurement of LED lighting in European Union Member States. The report provides a detailed overview of the current state of green public procurement (GPP) activities in European Union Member States based on the analysis of the present situation and future plans in individual countries.

The main conclusions reached by the study are that in many countries, LEDs – and lighting in general – are still not among the priority product groups covered by the respective GPP documents. So far, some form of LED requirements have been adopted in just 11 of the 27 EU Member States. However, all EU Member States have good practices for the use of LEDs.
The original street lighting system of the city of Lippstadt was highly inefficient and very maintenance intensive. Hence 178 mercury vapour lamps and fluorescent tubes in three residential areas were replaced with LED lights.

Measurements confirm that energy consumption decreased by 70 per cent, i.e. over 67 MWh/year, with the new installation. The measurements also show that the intensity of illumination increased, however the uniformity of lighting has decreased slightly. Given its colour, the new technology is also more insect-friendly than conventional bulbs.

Procurement specifications

According to the study, the specifications for LED lighting relate to both indoor and outdoor lighting, while specifications for outdoor LED lighting are less common. The specifications for LEDs mostly cover the lifetime of the lamps, luminous efficacy, colour rendering, and power factor. However, the specifications tend to vary in their level of stringency. For example, in different countries, the required lifetime varies from 15,000 to 35,000 hours for indoor lighting and 35,000 to 65,000 hours for outdoor lighting, and the required luminous efficacy from 25 to 55 lumens/watt for indoor lighting and from 40 to 80 lumens/watt for outdoor lighting. The dimming function offers further savings potential, hence inclusion of the dimming capability in addition to compatibility with the main dimmers available on the market is foreseeable in future specifications.

Only a few countries have so far included traffic lights, even though the replacement of incandescent traffic lights with LEDs can be considered one of the cases with high replicability potential, offering high and certain energy savings. Traffic lights are among the specifications developed by the European Commission within the GPP Toolkit.

At the same time, the study points out that there are countries and organisations such as public organisations, which specifically omit LEDs from their public procurement specification documents because they believe that LED technology is still too immature to be included in public tender requirements. LED technology is included in their GPP plans only gradually, especially in terms of outdoor lighting systems.

LEDs – the future of lighting

Nevertheless, the future of lighting seems to be in LEDs. According to the EU green paper entitled “Lighting the future”, they are already as energy efficient as their most advanced counterparts, fluorescent and halogen lamps. They are expected to become even more efficient in the coming few years, thereby allowing for significant energy savings and contributions to CO₂ reductions. LEDs have long lifetimes with decreased maintenance costs and do not contain mercury. They offer high quality lighting and visual comfort. And in terms of design and aesthetics, LEDs allow for almost unlimited freedom for new lighting concepts. Public organisations play an important role as pioneers in introducing the new technology and enhancing market transformation.


Michaela Valentová, SEVEEn, The Energy Efficiency Center, Czech Republic michaela.valentova@svn.cz

LED lighting in the city of Lippstadt, Germany

The original street lighting system of the city of Lippstadt was highly inefficient and very maintenance intensive. Hence 178 mercury vapour lamps and fluorescent tubes in three residential areas were replaced with LED lights.

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Consip’s framework agreement on desktop outsourcing: energy efficiency and virtualization of IT solutions in Italy – A practical example

In November 2011, Italy’s national purchasing agency Consip SpA, which is owned by the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) – a Buy Smart+ partner - agreed the terms for a framework agreement (FA) on desktop outsourcing. The agreement is a public contract for the management of IT platforms, leasing of hardware (desktop and laptop computers, printers, multifunctional devices), software licenses and virtualization services. The framework agreement on IT services was launched for a total of 70,000 workspaces.

A framework agreement is an agreement between one or more contracting authorities and one or more economic operators. The agreement’s purpose is to establish the terms governing the contracts to be awarded during a given period. All the tender documents are available in Italian language at the following link: www.acquistinretepa.it (“Sei un’amministrazione”).

The framework agreement on desktop outsourcing is “incomplete”. It is an agreement with several economic operators whereby some terms of the contract still need to be agreed. Public bodies (PB) using this “incomplete” FA must accept the minimum requirements set by Consip. To specify the level of services they wish to obtain, they can determine further award criteria as well as additional technical specifications. In the case of desktop outsourcing, they can ask for virtualization solutions to rethink their workplaces, for example.

**The framework agreement – main features**

The main features of Consip’s 2011 framework agreement are the focus on energy efficiency and rationalization of the IT infrastructure, a reduction in staffing costs and routine maintenance such as upgrades and repairs to IT systems and servers. Moreover, suppliers must offer the following services:

- A system for the digital management of documents to avoid the use of paper, printers and related consumables, as well as the cost of renting archives;
- Management of electronic waste;
- Customer service to evaluate the service quality.

**Advantages**

Generally speaking, the incomplete framework agreement is a valuable tool since it:

- Provides public bodies with a high level of autonomy and flexibility;
- Makes several brands available;
- Is able to meet heterogeneous preferences by providing public bodies with different solutions.

With Consip’s support, additional advantages are available in comparison to an autonomously-managed tender process:

- Consip can manage the tender process through an e-platform, enhancing paper dematerialization and process savings.
- Litigation risks for PBs are reduced since many of these are managed centrally by Consip.
- Prices and minimum requirements are initially set by Consip and are valid for the entire duration of the framework agreement. This can facilitate repeat purchases and subsequent upgrades from public authorities. Public authorities can also use the FA as an example of joint procurement.

**Envisaged results**

- With the purchase of energy efficient ENERGY STAR certified desktop computers, this FA will generate savings of 2.5 million euros, which corresponds to the avoidance of 9,000 tons of CO₂ emissions. ENERGY STAR version 5.0 is a minimum requirement.
- Sparing use of print and copy services by public bodies can help save 9 million euros (see table on next page).
- Owing to process dematerialization, every order performed above EU threshold through Consip’s purchasing instrument allows for savings of 42,000 euros.
The different scenarios represent four possible combinations of print and copy services. The first assumes that every workplace has its own printer; the fourth one that there is one multifunctional device for every 60 workplaces. Scenarios two and three feature a mix of personal printers and multifunctional devices.

In terms of LCC, there is a difference of 9 million euros between the best and the worst case scenarios. Moreover, LCC has been calculated assuming that the double-sided printing mode is compulsory, and paper costs are reduced by 50 per cent as a consequence. Net savings on the whole LCC deriving from double-sided printing mode varies from 19 per cent to 50 per cent depending on the scenario.

Consip’s framework agreement was already used effectively by the Italian Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MIT) that purchased IT services for 10,500 of its workplaces as well as by the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) that purchased IT services accounting for 3,500 of its workplaces.


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### Table 1: Life cycle costs of printing services for 120 workplaces according to four scenarios (in euros)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>120 workplaces</th>
<th>HP 1 120 WG</th>
<th>HP 2 60 WG + 1 MF</th>
<th>HP 3 12 WG + 1 MF</th>
<th>HP 4 2 MF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leasing (1 yr)</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>2,918</td>
<td>1,238</td>
<td>1,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy consumption (1 yr)</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>1,145</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper consumption (1 yr)</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCC (1 yr)</td>
<td>9,600</td>
<td>7,163</td>
<td>4,523</td>
<td>4,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCC (3 yrs)</td>
<td>28,800</td>
<td>21,489</td>
<td>13,569</td>
<td>14,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCC FA desktop outsourcing</td>
<td>15,041,400</td>
<td>10,779,087</td>
<td>6,161,727</td>
<td>6,516,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCC (1 yr) with double-sided printing mode</td>
<td>8,100</td>
<td>5,663</td>
<td>3,023</td>
<td>3,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCC (3 yrs) with double-sided printing mode</td>
<td>24,300</td>
<td>16,989</td>
<td>9,069</td>
<td>9,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net savings from double-sided printing mode</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings in %</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to the differences between the best and the worst case scenarios in terms of LCC, public bodies should also take their needs that may go beyond LCC and that would justify an increase in costs into account.

Consip – GPP Team, Italy
lidia.capparelli@tesoro.it
www.eng.consip.it
Imagine a care home for elderly people. The staff are working hard to care for the physical and psychological needs of the often ill elderly people, as well as to help, comfort, chat or take a stroll with them. Besides all this, there is also contact with relatives, administration and documentation, washing and a lot of other tasks to perform. And as if this wasn’t enough, goods such as food, hygiene items, medicines, etc. must be purchased. All these deliveries from different producers interrupt the work with the elderly people about five to ten times a day.

Or imagine a school, or a nursery, with several food and consumables deliveries every day, delivered close to areas where children are playing, walking, cycling. Not only is this a traffic safety and environmental issue, but also a health one for the children, who have the right to breathe fresh air.

**Potential for coordination**

A municipality is a large purchaser of goods such as foodstuffs, office supplies, and all kinds of consumables imaginable. One of the Swedish municipalities, which has worked to make transport more efficient and environmentally friendly, is Växjö in south-eastern Sweden (85,000 inhabitants).

In Växjö, goods are distributed to more than 450 addresses such as homes for the elderly, schools, and day nurseries, and every day, around 20 tons of goods are delivered. In the past, there were almost 2,000 deliveries a week; now there are just 350. There was obviously extensive potential for the coordination of goods transport before 2011! With the help of a few competent enthusiasts, the municipality was successfully able to save kilometres, fossil fuels, facility staff’s time – and at the same time, to also purchase more locally-produced organic food and improve traffic safety.

**E-purchasing and purchase networks**

A real enthusiast behind this work is David Braic, Växjö municipality’s purchasing manager:

“Other municipalities have also coordinated the distribution of goods, but what is unique here in Växjö is that it is part of the e-purchasing system.”

The e-purchasing system enables control of the purchases and leads to more loyalty contracts. It also forces suppliers to use e-invoicing, a system that presents data from the supplier in a format that does not require any data input from the buyer’s administrator. Orders using e-invoicing lead to less invoice administration meaning that staff working at municipal facilities can focus on their core business. The system is user-friendly and a foundation for the good deal coupled with the supply chain in Växjö municipality.

After the e-purchasing system was introduced, the natural next step was to coordinate goods transport. The heart of the physical distribution system is the distribution centre that all goods pass through.

“I started by creating a purchase network. There must be a basis to the work. All our administrative units had to assign responsible persons who were
also a natural information channel out into the work units,” explains David Braic.

The change process took around three years and resulted in a supply chain that is now far more efficient. With an e-purchasing system and a joint distribution centre, the number of goods deliveries to municipal facilities in the Växjö municipality have decreased by more than 50 per cent. Estimates indicate a reduction in the number of transports by as much as 80 per cent. Dry goods are now delivered only once a week. Fresh food is delivered more often – about three to four times a week, which is still far less than the around five deliveries a day before the reorganisation. An optimised delivery plan with predetermined routes informs the facilities in advance when to expect deliveries, which helps them to plan their work and resources, and also saves a great deal of time.

Benefits

Although there is still potential for integration and development, and all this work naturally also involves effort being made to share information, the system’s advantages are already manifold and considerable. The municipality gains a better overview and can apply a long-term perspective in purchasing. The system is well suited to all kinds of enterprises – small, medium and large ones. And the whole process is managed via the internet.

Among the additional benefits of coordinated goods transport count:
- A more than 70 per cent decrease in CO₂ emissions, or 40–50 kg less CO₂ per ton of delivered goods;
- Greater efficiency and time savings – both for deliveries and work at the units;
- Lower costs, better use of taxpayers’ money;
- Option of choosing between more suppliers and local (organic) suppliers;
- Favourable for small companies and suppliers of local products that can deliver to just one centre;
- Possibility of fuelling trucks with green fuels such as RME or biogas;
- Possibility of running the refrigerators in trucks delivering food on (green) diesel;
- Increased traffic safety around schools and retirement homes.

Daniel Uppsäll, Energikontor Sydost, Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden
daniel.uppsall@energikontorsydost.se

Green procurement and buildings – a general view

For the modern man, the natural environment is actually the built one. People spend most of their time living and working in buildings. It is thus vital to ensure suitable indoor comfort as well as acceptable investment, operational and maintenance costs. As buildings normally have a substantial technical and constructional lifetime, it is important to distinguish between components with a shorter technical lifetime, which can be replaced or upgraded without major interventions into building structure (e.g. boilers, solar collectors, etc.), and components for which any intervention would require more substantial work and higher additional costs (e.g. additional thermal insulation, new windows, not to mention load-bearing construction, etc.).

Green procurement – components and criteria

Green procurement in the building sector usually comprises more comprehensive sets of components, or procurement of one particular building component may even significantly influence energy and environment-related characteristics of the whole system. At the same time, one of the characteristics of the building sector is the variety of criteria in national and regional regulations both for quantitative and qualitative aspects, which are derived from the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). This is due to national geographic, climatic, economic and other particularities. In this way, criteria set as “basic”, i.e. absolute “musts” in one country can quantitatively already represent “target” criteria in another country, although the common general long-term trend is towards almost zero-energy buildings.
Complexity of building-related activities – green procurement options

One important circumstance to always bear in mind is the complexity of buildings and building-related activities. Procurement here does not necessarily start and end with selection of one particular product. As opposed to some other product groups, procurement in the building sector can be viewed in a much broader sense.

For example, green requirements can be included in the basic item of public and private procurement (“Construction of a new building”), in the selection of designers, engineers and contractors (require particular past experience and references from energy and environment-conscious design and construction, Eco-Management and Audit Scheme EMAS practices, etc.), as criteria describing the required overall design level with regard to national technical regulation (detailed technical specifications of particular energy characteristics, maybe even prescription of an advanced calculation methodology, etc.), as green criteria for the selection of materials (exclusion of certain materials for environmental reasons), through requirements for sustainable production and transport of materials and products, and numerous other options.

Interdependencies in the building sector

Green procurement in the building sector is often a more demanding task compared to in other sectors or product groups – not necessarily and not always from the point of view of complexity of procedures, but rather of possible interdependencies that decisions may have. For example, defining relevant criteria and selecting the type of material for the facade thermal insulation system with pre-defined technical characteristics or for interior paint is a relatively straightforward process, which normally does not imply the study of eventual influences on other building elements or on end users.

On the other hand, there are cases where green procurement actions can result in a need for adjusted or amended behavioural patterns or schedules, for instance. The timing and order of actions are very important too. A newly purchased construction product may be “green” and have excellent overall characteristics, but the performance can be far from optimal if the framework conditions are not appropriate.

Practical examples

Let us take a look at two examples:

Replacing existing outdated windows with state-of-the-art products is beneficial from the energy and environmental perspectives: reduced heat loss, less draughts, better indoor thermal comfort. However, as the airtightness of the envelope is increased, the indoor microclimate may be significantly impaired: lower overall air quality, higher air humidity, increased possibility of surface condensation on thermal bridges and consequent mould growth. The installation of simple humidity meters in rooms where water vapour production is above average (bedrooms, kitchen, etc.) is highly advisable, as is monitoring of the relative air humidity to be able to react in time by ventilating the spaces when needed. Usually the daily level of ventilation has to be increased – either by opening windows more frequently (change in usage patterns) or by installing a mechanical ventilation system (a hygro-sensitive one only to regulate air intake or one with heat recovery to further reduce heat loss).

Replacing old valves on radiators with ones with a thermostat is an excellent way of gaining more precise control over the indoor temperature and energy use for heating in general. At the same time, the temperature deviations in the rooms are far lower, which increases indoor thermal comfort. However, for all this to be practically realised, appropriate boundary conditions are needed, especially in larger buildings like office or multi-apart-
ment blocks. If the heating system (boiler, burner, pipelines, etc.) is already outdated and inefficient, the final result will be less effective. It will be even less favourable if the system is not hydraulically balanced because the distribution of heat and consequently of the operational costs will also be unbalanced. This shows that the time order or sequence of particular purchasing decisions is very important in order to maximise the long-term cost optimality of procurement decisions.

Dealing with complexity

The nominal energy and environmental performance of individual selected building components may be outstanding, but to fully tap into this potential, other important prerequisites may be needed. As illustrated above, one action, which is undoubtedly positive if looked at in isolation, may negatively affect some other building features and thus prove detrimental to the overall result if additional measures are not taken in parallel. We not only need a clear picture of the current state, but also a good vision of the future new conditions. This is also true for the financial aspect: it is highly advisable to run analyses of various options to gain a more accurate picture of investment figures and to try to find an optimal balance between investments and short and long-term results. This aspect has also been strongly emphasised in the recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). The evaluation of life cycle costs analysis is a powerful and crucial tool enabling investors to get the best value for their money.

Miha Tomšič, Building and Civil Engineering Institute ZRMK, Slovenia, miha.tomsic@gi-zrmk.si

Twinning partnership – fostering green procurement in Hungary

In May 2012, Hungary’s Energiaklub, a Buy Smart+ project partner, hosted its first meeting of twinning partners as well as Hungary’s first national project workshop on green procurement (GP). The workshop that took place in Budapest covered specific product-related issues and general implementation of green procurement in the procurement process. With 39 participants – public procurement experts and authorities, lawyers, and private procurers, among others – the meeting was a great success. Useful links between professionals from different backgrounds, point of views and working methods were developed, and the meeting helped identify solutions to similar problems.

With its twinning approach, the Buy Smart+ project brings together partners from the previous Buy Smart project as well as new members in the project. As “advanced” partners, Regina Aufreiter from Energiesparverband Austria (Linz) and Michaela Valentová from Seven Czech Republic (Prague) took part in the meeting and provided their input during the Hungarian national workshop. To share knowledge and transfer important experiences, they also presented best practices from Upper Austria and the Czech Republic that are not only less harmful to the environment but also more energy and cost efficient in terms of the life cycle of products. As one key success of the Austrian-Bohemian-Hungarian twinning, the project’s “emerging” partners were not only able to find answers to specific procurement issues, but also to identify crucial questions to ask in the green procurement process.
Important meeting subjects were the definition of requirements for GP, difficulties in the procurement process and potential solutions, as well as possibilities to foster green procurement.

Requirements

In order to realise green procurement effectively, the steps that are needed to implement green procurement as well as the legal environment of green procurement need to be conveyed to all interest groups. Clarification of the legal environment is especially important for Hungary where the new regulations on public procurement are currently being developed. Its outcome is eagerly anticipated by Hungarian green procurement experts and other stakeholders.

Further important requirements are product specification and labelling. Although the state of legislation and implementation of labelling is – despite certain limitations – satisfactory in Hungary, general knowledge remains quite low in the circle of end users and public procurers. However, according to the foreign experts’ advice, better knowledge of product groups and the definition of problems related to each are essential for procurers and procurement advisors, as well as for legal and political decision-makers.

Difficulties and solutions

The workshop revealed difficulties that all the participating twinning partners encounter in GP and contributed to identifying solutions. Difficulties include a lack of information and experts, neglected life cycle costs, and lower purchasing activities due to the economic crisis. The ratio of green procurement processes is still very low in the Czech Republic, constituting barely half of the EU average. As past project experience from the Czech Republic and Austria shows, bottom-up programmes like BuySmart+ have proven essential to successfully amend public and also private GP initiatives. The same legislative problems such as the absence of a binding legal force are important similarities between Hungarian and Czech twinning partners. Stricter legal requirements and the future cooperation between the project partners can contribute significantly to improving the situation.

Fostering green procurement

Subsidies can constitute a highly efficient tool for the government to influence market decisions and create demand in a mostly price-oriented Hungarian society. Cooperation and continuous, open dialogue from every stakeholder are fundamental conditions to gain a better overview of all concerns and to help the idea of GP lay roots in every interest group. To further mainstream energy efficient procurement, Buy Smart+ includes national steering committees. As a core group of important participants were identified representatives from the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Environmental Information and Energy, from a national network of “healthy cities” (should these exist) and from NGOs dealing with GP.

However, participants agreed that changing the point of view of procurers and decision-makers from all sectors is essential by all accounts. The long-term way of thinking and practical solutions of the private sector should be transferred to the Hungarian public procurement sector. At the same time, sustainable green ideas should be included in more areas of consumer goods and energy. This could be achieved by creating more space for communication and cooperation between different interest groups and more opportunities to get to know other stakeholders’ points of view, as was successfully applied in the twinning workshop. With regard to procurement issues, switching to a long-term way of thinking could easily improve the judgement of energy efficiency investments.

Veronika Kollai, Energiaklub, Hungary
kollai@energiaklub.hu
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