

**DRIVING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH PROCUREMENT:
THE PROCURA⁺ CAMPAIGN**

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ABSTRACT. Procura⁺, ICLEI's Sustainable Procurement Campaign began in January 2004. Procura⁺ supports public authorities in implementing sustainable procurement and helps promote their achievements in order to bring about real change on the market in the supply of cost effective sustainable products and services and provides a launching pad for new sustainable technologies. To achieve this the Campaign provides practical assistance, purchasing criteria and instruments on how to integrate sustainability into procurement, exchanges information on sustainable procurement and engages with manufactures and suppliers to develop sustainable products and services.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable public procurement (SPP) is about improving the efficiency of public procurement and at the same time using public authority market power to bring about major environmental, social and economic benefits locally and globally. Communities all over the world are facing the dramatic consequences of climate change, excessive use of natural resources, threats to biodiversity and increasing poverty. These problems cannot be tackled without making the shift to more sustainable production and consumption practices. If the billions of public Euro,

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Pounds or other were spent on products and services that foster sustainable development, a huge step forward could be made.¹

Within the European Union and internationally the introduction of new policies and strategies related to GPP is indicative of strengthening political support, and is providing an increasingly encouraging legislative framework for implementation. However a number of barriers still exist, and currently implementation is lagging considerably behind national ambitions. Significant barriers include a lack of knowledge, expertise and training on GPP, the perception that green products cost more, and a remaining lack of local political support.

As a response to these barriers ICLEI launched the **Procura⁺ Campaign**. Procura⁺ is designed to help support public authorities across Europe in implementing SPP, promote their achievements and mainstream SPP throughout Europe. A growing number of public authorities across Europe are taking the opportunity to join the Campaign to demonstrate their commitment to SPP implementation, and receive support in their activities.

GPP POLICY FRAMEWORK: BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

EU Policy Context

The new European legal framework for public procurement has clarified how public purchasers can include environmental considerations in their procurement processes and procedures. These are covered in the following:

- Directive 2004/17/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors
- Directive 2004/18/EC 18 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the

¹ The EcoProcura Call for Action - Moving the Market, Barcelona, September 2006

award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts. There is also a number of policy and strategy. There is also a number of policy and documents that support the development and implementation of GPP, example of these include:

- Regulation (EC) No 106/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008. A Community energy-efficient labelling programme for office equipment stipulates (in Article 6) that central government authorities as well as the European Commission and other community institutions may only purchase office equipment meeting the ENERGY STAR standards.
- The Commission's Environmental Technologies Action Plan ETAP has also identified Green public procurement as a priority action.²
- Directive 2006/32/EC on energy end use efficiency and energy services obliges Member States to ensure that energy efficiency improvement measures are taken by the public sector and proposes a list of eligible energy efficient public procurement measures.³
- The European Commission's Action Plan for Energy Efficiency of October 2006 frequently refers to public procurement as an instrument for tackling the unprecedented energy challenges currently faced by the EU.⁴
- The renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy (June 2006), sets out the ambition to bring, by 2010, the average level of EU green public procurement up to the standard currently achieved by the best performing Member States – this forms the mandate for the Directorate General for Environment' remit with regards to the proposed GPP Communication 'Public Procurement for a Better Environment' and the creation of a GPP Training Toolkit.⁵

There are still significant differences between Member States in the level of political support for GPP and in the actual application of green purchasing practices. As of today, only 13 Member States have adopted national action plans recommended in the Communication on Integrated

² http://ec.europa.eu/environment/etap/actionplan_en.htm

³ http://ec.europa.eu/energy/demand/legislation/end_use_en.htm

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/energy/action_plan_energy_efficiency/index_en.htm

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/clwp2007_roadmap_priority_initiatives.pdf

Product Policy in 2003, 11 more Member States are working towards the adoption of a plan or strategy for GPP. Details relating to GPP National Action Plans you can find at the EC GPP website: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm

International Context⁶

SPP has been embraced by public authorities across the world, especially in the OECD countries, with the USA, Canada, Japan, and Australia all particularly active. The OECD itself has recommended that "Member countries [should] take greater account of environmental considerations in public procurement". The Plan of Implementation from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, 2002 also encouraged public authorities at all levels to "promote public procurement policies that encourage development and diffusion of environmentally sound goods and services"

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) generally considers that there should not be, nor need to be, any policy contradiction between upholding and safeguarding an open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system on the one hand, and acting for the protection of the environment, and the promotion of sustainable development on the other. A Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) has been signed in the framework of the WTO. It is a so-called plurilateral agreement, characterised by a narrower group of signatories than general WTO agreements.

The GPA itself does not contain any reference to environmental protection. However, the Sixth Recital of the Preamble to the WTO Agreement recognises the need to act in accordance with the principle of sustainable development and to protect and preserve the environment. Therefore, it is broadly accepted that the GPA allows contracting entities to take into account environmental considerations when defining technical specifications (including process and production methods) and selection and award criteria, on condition that they are not discriminatory, and are sufficiently objective and verifiable.

⁶ Information from the EC GPP website: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/international_policy_framework_en.htm

Potential Benefit of SPP

Public and semi-public sector organisations, from local to national government offices, from universities and schools, to hospitals and utilities, control huge budgets and purchase vast amounts of products and services each year. The Commission estimates that €1.5 trillion is spent each year by European Union (EU) public authorities, which represents approximately 16% of EU Gross Domestic Product⁷ – in some countries the figure is even higher. This includes, for example, 2.8 million computers and monitors purchased each year by EU public authorities.

TABLE 1
Public Procurement as a Percentage of GDP – Selected Countries
(2002)

Country	%
Germany	17
Italy	12
Netherlands	21
Spain	13
Sweden	20
UK	18
EU 15	16

Source: European Commission, 2004⁸

With such significant market power, public authorities are not only able to achieve substantial direct environmental, financial and social improvements, but are also able to exercise considerable influence in shifting the whole market towards the supply of more sustainable products and services.

⁷ A report on the functioning of public procurement markets in the EU: benefits from the application of EU directives and challenges for the future. (2004)
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/studies_en.htm

⁸ A report on the functioning of public procurement markets in the EU: benefits from the application of EU directives and challenges for the future:
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/docs/public-proc-market-final-report_en.pdf

Direct impact:

- The public sector in the EU is estimated to buy approximately 150,000 GWh of electricity per year, representing about 6-7 % of the market. Shifting to green electricity could save up to 60 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions – 18% of the EU Kyoto commitments, and equivalent to the emissions of a city the size of London.⁹
- The Autonomous University of Barcelona uses 6,500 Kg of Fair Trade coffee each year in vending machines. This provides a good living for 15 to 20 families from Tanzania.¹⁰

Whole market impact:

- Following a Federal ruling in the US that public authorities must only buy Energy Star¹¹ compliant computers, the demand for such models was so large that within a few years almost all products available on the market met these standards. Manufacturers realised it didn't make sense to run parallel production lines, and so phased out less efficient models.

Furthermore, public procurement can be a key driver of innovation on the marketplace, providing a vital launching market for new products.

Driving innovation:

- Following a political decision to pursue energy efficiency and resource saving measures, the city and state of Hamburg procured new energy-efficient lighting systems for all of its 1,500 public buildings. It was made compulsory for all investments in energy equipment to be cost-effective in the long-term – i.e. considering full life-cycle costs.

⁹ Figures taken from the European RELIEF project, co-ordinated by ICLEI, which calculated the potential environmental benefits through sustainable procurement: www.iclei-europe.org/relief

¹⁰ Taken from the Buy Fair Guide, included in the CD-ROM: www.iclei-europe.org/buyfair

¹¹ An international product label certifying the product has high energy efficiency standards - www.energystar.gov

- The sheer volume of demand ensured that procurers' strict requirements on energy efficiency were met by the market through innovative approaches. As a result, the market for new energy efficient lighting systems and related services in Hamburg has been substantially expanded, and the results have spilled over into the private sector, with many local companies now making similar investments¹².

To assess the potential benefit of SPP in quantitative terms, identify barriers to implementation and develop model strategies to overcome them, a group of experts and local authority pioneers with experience in the field of SPP developed a project in 2001 called RELIEF¹³. The RELIEF project (Environmental Relief Potential of Urban Action on Avoidance and Detoxification of Waste Streams through Green Public Procurement) was funded by European Commission Directorate General Research and co-ordinated by ICLEI.

The project, which ran from 2001 to 2003, focused on a number of key products procured by local authorities; key in terms of their budgetary and environmental importance, and the availability of appropriate alternatives. The findings of the project demonstrated the huge savings that could be achieved through SPP and provided clear figures, which allow this to be communicated to decision-makers. For instance, the project calculated that if all public authorities were to purchase green electricity, the savings in greenhouse gas emissions would represent 18% of the EU's Kyoto commitments. There are also significant potential savings relating to many other product groups - the purchasing of exclusively organic food by public authorities would, for example, lead to a reduction in nutrification impacts equivalent to that produced by over 2 million Europeans. What the figures from the RELIEF project demonstrated is that public authorities have the potential to play a very significant role in reducing greenhouse gases, and other environmental effects through SPP.

¹² ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/innovation-policy/studies/full_study.pdf

¹³ Environmental Relief Potential of Urban Action on Avoidance and Detoxification of Waste Streams through Green Public Procurement - www.iclei-europe.org/relief

Since the RELIEF project a number of further studies and case studies¹⁴ have highlighted the benefits of SPP and its potential is now more widely recognised. However, a number of specific challenges remain in implementation.

Challenges in Implementing SPP

A number of key challenges to the implementation of SPP have been identified in the RELIEF project and European Commission survey and subsequent report study on “Green Public Procurement in Europe 2006”¹⁵. These challenges include:

- *Lack of political support.* According to the “Green Public Procurement in Europe 2006” report, the high percentage of public authorities stating that lack of management support as a barrier shows that senior officials within the public sector across Europe do not have a high awareness of the importance of the Green Public Procurement (GPP) agenda or their awareness is not explicit to their purchasing staff.
- *Green products are perceived to cost more.* A key challenge identified by many public sector organisations is changing behaviour within purchasing departments. In particular using purchase price alone to decide between offers, rather than the full life-cycle cost of the product or service.
- *Lack of expertise in developing environmental criteria.* Many purchasers within public authorities do not and should not be expected to know all the environmental and social impacts of purchasing particular products or services. In some cases purchasers still struggle to define what an “environmentally and/or socially preferable” product or service is, and how to include demands in tendering.
- *Lack of practical tools and information.* 25% of the respondents to the EC’s 2005 survey¹⁶ believe there is a lack of practical tools and information.

¹⁴ Costs and Benefits of Green Public Procurement in Europe - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm

¹⁵ Green Public Procurement in Europe 2006 Conclusions and recommendations, Take 5 Consortium.

¹⁶ Green Public Procurement in Europe 2006 Conclusions and recommendations, Take 5 Consortium.

- *The need for systematic implementation and integration into management systems.* Decentralised organisations require effective management systems to ensure the consistent application of environmental and social initiatives.
- *Lack of training.* Staff responsible for carrying out specific tasks do not always have the skills, or are provided with the appropriate training. Training is generally required for procurers on the technical aspects of SPP implementation, for financial staff on the concept of life-cycle costing and for end-users on the sustainable use of products.
- *Lack of co-operation between authorities* - there is still little in terms of systematic implementation across Europe, with the majority of local authorities acting alone, often on their own initiative.

Based on the quantified data showing the environmental benefits of SPP and having identified the challenges, the partners of the RELIEF project felt the time was right to build an initiative to promote the implementation of SPP and ensure its potential is realised. This initiative developed was called Procura⁺.

More Environment for your Money

The most commonly used argument against SPP is that green products cost more. However, upon closer inspection, this generalisation does not hold true. Undertaking SPP should in the medium term be cost neutral and in the longer term actually save money. In many cases the greener alternative is even available at the same purchase price as standard products, or at a marginally higher price. Energy efficient IT products, for example are generally no more expensive to buy than the less efficient alternatives, even ignoring the reduced costs during use. The same generally applies to greener cleaning products.

It is often the case, though, that the green product costs slightly more than the standard alternative, as the price will often include a premium for new technologies and design, and for many products economies of scale have so far not been achieved. Yet the real cost of a product for the buyer is much more than simply the purchase price paid by a procurer. In order to decide which alternative is the cheapest, the costs throughout the product's *life-cycle* must be considered i.e. the costs of purchasing, operating and maintaining, and disposing of the product.

When examining the case for SPP, as soon as the “hidden” life-cycle costs are taken into account, the economic advantages of purchasing green products become obvious. As Figure 1 demonstrates, despite the higher up-front costs (*price* in the diagram), for many green products the reduced operating and disposal costs (*use* and *waste*) mean that they offer a significant return on investment. For example, a more energy-efficient building may cost more to construct, however, due to the lower operating costs (e.g. heating bills) it would have a shorter pay-back period and a higher return on investment. In the case of energy efficient products, a “high” purchasing price is often more than compensated by even higher long-term savings. For example, the price of compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) is about 10 EUR each. These lamps are more expensive than conventional incandescent bulbs, but they last 10 times longer and use only a quarter of the electricity incandescent bulbs use. Therefore they offer savings of more than 40 EUR in utility bills during their useful life¹⁷.

FIGURE 1
Influence of Use and Disposal Costs on Overall Cost



¹⁷ Worldwatch Institute (2002). Vital Signs 2002 Highlights.

PROCURA⁺ - SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT CAMPAIGN

Procura⁺ is designed to help support public authorities across Europe in implementing SPP, promote their achievements and mainstream SPP throughout Europe. The initiative was established in 2004. Through participating, public authorities can contribute to a growing international movement and help bring about real change on the market. Any public or semi-public authority or agency in Europe can join, of any size and any level of experience. It is not necessary to be a big authority to make a difference through SPP. What is important is encouraging authorities to work together. It has been developed to assist public authorities to overcome the barriers for implementing SPP.

Procura⁺ provides both a platform for the sharing of experiences and also a good deal of practical guidance on how to implement sustainable procurement – in particular a set of ready prepared, and easy-to-use environmental criteria to the procurement of six high-priority product groups electricity, buses building construction and renovation, IT equipment, food, cleaning products and services¹⁸.

Participation in the Campaign and the guidance produced are built around a number of key principles:

- *Gaining political support.* It was concluded in the RELIEF project that without the appropriate political backing, little will be achieved on the ground. Without political backing it can be difficult for those committed to implementation to get effective co-operation from other colleagues. Therefore, to overcome this, authorities joining Procura⁺ are requested to make a political commitment to achieving self-set targets (e.g. 10% renewable electricity by 2012).
- *Cost-neutrality* - Applying the Procura⁺ criteria should not lead to significant cost increases, especially when considering whole-life costs
- *The need for systematic implementation* – Again, the RELIEF project indicated that to be effective over the long-term SPP must be applied systematically through integration into management structures. The

¹⁸ Clement, S; Defrancheschi, P; Hidson, M. (2007) The Procura+ Campaign – Driving sustainability through public procurement, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, Freiburg Germany

Procura⁺ Milestone process described below provides simple guidance on how this can be achieved.

Guidance and Tools

To assist participants in implementation, comprehensive guidance on many aspects has been produced by the Campaign. The two principle sources of this information are:

- *The Procura⁺ Manual – A Guide to Cost-Effective Sustainable Public Procurement* – which contains the key criteria and Milestones process, together with more detailed information on how to integrate environmental concerns into procurement and economic aspects. It has been prepared by people with years of direct experience in working in public sector procurement and in how to integrate sustainability considerations. It is based upon the first Procura⁺ Manual, written and printed in 2004¹⁹, and was updated and revised within the European Commission funded DEEP project²⁰
- *The Procura⁺ Website* (www.procuraplus.org) – which provides many further tools and sources of information

Procura⁺ Key Criteria

Six product groups have been selected as having a particularly high potential for SPP activities:

- Buses,
- Food and catering,
- Cleaning products,
- IT products,
- Electricity, and
- Building construction/renovation

For each product group a set of simple purchasing criteria have been developed addressing the most important environmental and/or social aspects for procurers. The criteria can be inserted directly into tender documents

¹⁹ Clement, S; Erdmenger, C (2003) *The Procura+ Manual: A Guide to Cost-Effective Sustainable Public Procurement*, ökom verlag, Germany.

²⁰ www.iclei-europe.org/deep

The six product groups covered were selected by a range of experts within the RELIEF project as having the biggest potential for environmental improvement through procurement. This was determined by assessing the environmental impacts through the product life-cycle, the availability of cost-effective environmentally preferable solutions and the importance of the product within the typical public authority budget.

The criteria have been designed to be legally compliant and straightforward for any procurer to apply and verify, requiring minimum time and effort and not lead to a significant increase in costs. They are regularly updated in close consultation with a range of European experts from relevant stakeholder groups (including industry representatives, procurers, scientific and market experts).

For each product group a summarised Product Sheet has been developed to provide a public procurer with all the information required to directly start tendering for a more sustainable product – including actual criteria which can be inserted directly in tender documents.

Each sheet contains 4 sections:

- Key environmental impacts: a quick summary of the most significant environmental impacts and how the criteria address them
- Procura⁺ key criteria: the criteria themselves, which can be directly inserted in tenders. These include a set of “Implementation Notes” providing any necessary further information on how to use them
- Further ideas: suggestions for authorities wishing to go beyond the Key Criteria, and address other aspects or take more innovative approaches.
- Relevant product labels: labels which may be used as the basis for developing further criteria

For each product group a more detailed guidance document has also been prepared, providing further information for those interested.

The building construction/renovation section is rather different from the other five Product Sheets. A number of factors make it impossible to set uniform criteria right across Europe, therefore a number of different options are presented, which cover a range of aspects related to sustainable construction. (The Procura⁺ criteria can be found at: www.procuraplus.org).

The Procura⁺ Milestone Process

A Milestone process has been designed together with a group of leading public authorities to ensure its practicality and effectiveness and is based upon the typical management cycle of “Plan, Do, Check, Act”. Figure 1 provides an overview of the steps to be taken. Following the simple steps will ensure a continuous improvement in environmental, social and economic performance based upon formulating and implementing an Action Plan for SPP, monitoring its implementation, reviewing progress and the making of necessary changes.

The Procura⁺ Milestone process is designed with flexibility in mind - applicable for any public authority no matter its size or structure. Each step can be applied as concisely or comprehensively as required. For example:

FIGURE 1
Overview of the Procura⁺ Milestone Process



- An authority may consider whether to apply the system for the whole authority or for just one department. Starting with just one or two departments may be more appropriate if the authority is big, is new to SPP, and wishes to pilot the activities first.
- The Milestone process allows an authority to consider how many product and service groups they wish to cover. Again, authorities just starting out may want to start with just one or two. Pilot activities are of course very helpful in demonstrating the practicality and benefits of SPP. For authorities further advanced, the Milestones process may be applied to all the procurement activities of the whole organisation.
- A 'Quick Start' approach has also been developed for those who wish to start right away in step 4 without a full management framework. There is of course no barrier to starting implementation immediately; however sustained and systematic implementation will eventually require a management system such as the Procura⁺ Milestones.

Further Practical Tools and Information

Further tools and information are also available at www.procuraplus.org, including:

- The Procurement Scorecard – to be used for recording SPP activities and monitoring progress year by year. The Scorecard is formatted in a simple Excel table for ease of use and understanding. When completed it shows the increase in the number of sustainable products and services purchased over time, and how spending has changed. It also incorporates spending on utilities (electricity, water, waste etc.) to give a more accurate reflection of changing costs as a whole.
- Buy Fair – Guidance on purchasing Fair Trade products
- RESPIRO – Guides to socially responsible procurement in the construction and textiles sectors
- Good practice examples of SPP from across Europe
- Examples of public authority tenders from across Europe that includes environment and/or social criteria for different products and services
- A series of case studies on SPP implementation

- Examples of strategies and policies from across Europe that are relevant for SPP activities.

Sharing Experiences across Europe

Throughout Europe, local authorities have developed individual SPP initiatives. Consequently, there is vast SPP know-how available. However, most of these initiatives are carried out in isolation and thus inaccessible for interested parties.

Procura⁺ aims at fostering co-operation amongst public authorities. To achieve this ICLEI has set up the “Buy it green” – Network of Sustainable Procurement Professionals in Europe (BIG-Net). The Network’s mission provides a forum for all professionals working in or with local authorities in Europe to share their sustainable purchasing know-how and to broaden their expertise. It is also the meeting point at the expert level of Procura+. Benefits for participants include direct exchange at practitioners' meetings and continuous flow of information via the Internet. There are over 350 organisations within the network, which consists of an English, French and German mailing list.

In addition the Campaign provides a platform for participants to present their achievements to a wide international audience – by showcasing information on the Procura⁺ website, through ICLEI’s regular publications such as the Sustainable Procurement Update, and at international conferences and workshops.

Management and current participants

Procura⁺ is managed by the ICLEI European Secretariat and is currently chaired by the City of Lille in France, with the City of Barcelona, Spain and the Province of Cremona, Italy acting as Vice-chairs.

ICLEI has taken the approach of working with national partners in each of the different European countries in which the initiative will run. These national partners are able to link in more effectively with ongoing policy debates in their country, work to promote Procura⁺ within the national media and other stakeholder forums, and provide support and advice for participants with broader local knowledge and in the local language.

There are currently 17 participants in 7 European countries: Denmark, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Participants Achievements

Zurich City Council, Switzerland

Zurich is the largest Swiss city with approximately 350,000 inhabitants and a public procurement budget of over €1.2 billion per year. The city has had sustainability as a specific target on its political agenda since 1998. The new procurement guideline (November 2007) is subtitled "Our Engagement with Sustainability" and states as vision/goals that "*The City of Zurich conducts its procurement activities according to the principles of sustainable procurement. With our economic, social and ecological commitments we lead by example*". Zurich has been a Procura⁺ participant since 2004 following the City's involvement in the RELIEF project.

The City has produced a number of notable achievements in the field. In 2002 the 7 Milestones for Energy and Resource Efficient Building Construction and Management were established, incorporating several energy standards used in Switzerland and across Europe, notably the MINERGIE standard. Between 2002 and 2005 approximately 70% of new buildings and 30% of refurbished meetings met the MINERGIE standards for energy efficiency.

From 2004 - 2005 over €3.2 million was spent on approximately 5,500 computers all meeting the Procura⁺ criteria. During the same period over €600,000 was spent on organic food for hospitals, nursing homes and homes for elderly people.

Kolding, Denmark

Kolding has 8000 employees and is the largest single business enterprise in the region. Kolding was the Chair of Procura⁺ from 2004 – 2007 and began the implementation of GPP in 1998 and the GPP policy was adopted in this year. Today GPP is integrated in the procurement of goods, services and construction, ensuring compliance to environmental demands as well as environmental award criteria. It has changed nearly 100% of its purchasing policies to include environmental considerations and green procurement has been implemented without supply of extra funds. The total budget has been reduced by 10% over the last 10 years.

Modifications of the procurement procedures were necessary to avoid an increase in the total procurement budget.

Barcelona City Council, Spain

Barcelona is the second largest city in Spain in both size and population. It is also the capital of Catalonia, 1 of the 17 Autonomous Communities that make up Spain. The city of Barcelona has a population of 1,700,000, but this number increases to more than 4,000,000 if the outlying areas are also included.

In 2002, the city approved Agenda 21, citizens' commitment to sustainability, in accordance with the guidelines of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) ('Earth Summit') of 1992. Within the framework of Agenda 21 Barcelona is now promoting the Sustainable City Council Programme²¹ in an attempt to spread the incorporation of good environmental and social practices throughout the organisation. Barcelona City Council has been a participant in Procura⁺ since 2004 and is currently the Co-Vice Chair.

Barcelona spends 16.2 million EUR each year on cleaning services and demands that the contractors only use non-toxic products meeting the Procura⁺ criteria. Barcelona in collaboration with the Municipal Institute of Parks and Gardens has introduced ethical clauses in the tender for the supply of high visibility clothing for summer and winter for the 2006 financial year. The introduction of the ethical clauses obliges the suppliers of work clothes to Parks and Gardens to respect the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work recognised by the International Labour Organization (ILO) throughout the process of production of items and regardless of the place of fabrication.

Also as part of the Green Office Programme Barcelona and the Environmental Management System certified under ISO 14001:04, the Urban and Environmental Services Area applies its Environmental Policy to the companies that it contracts. As such, the Urban and Environmental Services Area has introduced environmental requirements

²¹ www.bcn.cat/agenda21/ajuntamentsostenible. The objectives are: reduce CO₂ emissions, water consumption and waste production; promote a social and sustainable local economy; exclude products and services which cause social injustice; and create a culture of social responsibility and environmentally friendliness.

into the schedule of conditions for contracts, such as the Schedule of conditions for cleaning and conservation of drinking water fountains and ornamental fountains.

Barcelona City Council has also introduced sustainable criteria for public timber purchasing. These criteria aim to promote acquisition of timber from more sustainable managed sources that are compatible with the preservation of biodiversity.

There are also a number of other achievements and positive outcomes of the Campaign these include for example:

- Procura⁺ has achieved relatively widespread recognition throughout Europe.
- Procura⁺ has generated political awareness and has been a contributor to the political advancement of SPP in Europe
- Some of the leading European public authorities are participants.
- The Campaign has an up-to-date website which has 7,000 hits per month

Problems and Barriers Encountered so far

There have been some initial problems and barriers encountered. For example although participant numbers are steadily growing, the Campaign would have had a greater impact on moving the market and potentially making sustainable products and services cheaper if in the first few years the number joining would have been more and with a wider distribution across Europe. A number of factors can be highlighted:

- Typically, public authorities look first for guidance from the national level, and may therefore be wary of participation in a European Campaign without a supportive national framework.
- Many see the implementation of SPP as an additional burden to regular procurement work, and may be unwilling to take this on without it being a statutory duty or without additional resources being provided. This is also at a time when many public authorities feel overburdened with new initiatives and are struggling to cope with providing existing functions and services and in many cases are also having budget cuts.

- Achieving political/executive approval for participation can be a lengthy process within public authorities. This is complicated by the requirement to pay a fee – although the size of the fee itself is not a problem, any expenditure of this nature requires formal approval procedures to be followed. This process may need to be repeated each year. Political changes can also of course lead to shifts in position, and very few decisions are taken when elections are near.
- It is proving challenging to kick-start exchange/networking activities at the regional or national level given the time and funding-constraints for the Campaign. As such, the potential for sharing knowledge has not yet been fully utilised. This is also linked to the fact that working across 39 countries requires a large number of staff to be able to speak the national language and also to know the different political structures, policies and legislation. Currently the majority of work is undertaken in English and where possible we translate the work into other languages.

What's Next for Procura⁺?

Interest in the work and guidance offered by the Campaign has grown rapidly in recent years, and there has been a steady, if unspectacular, increase in participation. The aim over the next few years is to increase participation numbers to ensure that there is a critical mass of participants to send a signal to both the market and policy makers that there are local governments wanting to purchase SPP products and services. The Campaign must look to ensure that good practices and lessons on SPP are effectively shared across Europe.

There has also been interest expressed from countries outside the European Union, in which Procura⁺ mainly operates. As the procurement framework in most countries around the world is very similar, this provides the opportunity to expand Procura⁺ and its experiences to other regions of the world. ICLEI is in the fortunate position to pursue this as it has offices in all regions of the world experienced in working with public authorities and familiar with procurement legislation and policy in their regions.

The number of products and service groups will also be expanded in 2008. ICLEI has been developing the EC's GPP training toolkit, and as part of this contract has developed green purchasing criteria for 11 product and services groups. These criteria will be recommended/

incorporated into Procura⁺ to ensure that one set of European wide criteria is available. The product groups covered will include: paper, cleaning products, office IT equipment, construction, transport, furniture, electricity, food and catering services, textiles, gardening services and equipment used in the health sector. As part of another EC funded project, guidelines will also be developed for the purchase of biofuels in a sustainable manner.

Implications of the Findings of Procura⁺ for Policymakers, Practitioners and Research

SPP (or green purchasing) is not a new concept, and has been implemented by pioneer public authorities across Europe, and indeed the world, for many years. A great many positive experiences exist and a number of these are presented within Procura⁺. Authorities have found SPP a useful, market-based tool in moving towards their environmental and social objectives.

Is Procura⁺ Effective?

In a word: Yes. The implementation of Procura⁺ by public authorities has proved effective in achieving real changes - supporting greener alternatives and promoting innovation. Procura⁺ is not just a vital tool for achieving environmental, social and economic objectives such as reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, it offers a great many benefits to the administration itself. The careful analysis and management of procurement practices which SPP entails gives public authorities an opportunity to make improved purchasing decisions, increasing efficiency and allowing environmental, social and economic benefits to be realised without additional cost. Furthermore implementing Procura⁺ helps to improve the political image of an administration in demonstrating to the public the commitment of the administration to the goal of sustainability. In addition, European environmental legislation is becoming increasingly demanding - anticipating this and acting now through joining Procura⁺ will leave an authority well prepared to comply with future legislation.

What are the Benefits for the Local Community?

Beyond an improvement in the efficiency of public procurement activities, and consequently the better use of tax-payers' money, local communities will also benefit specifically. Many of the environmental impacts that can be addressed by SPP are felt locally. Cleaner public

transport, for example, would improve local air quality, a reduced use of toxic chemicals in cleaning provides a healthier working environment. SPP can also act as a useful channel for raising environmental awareness within the local community - by introducing greener products to the community and providing information about the benefits of the SPP.

Cost Benefit Ratio for Procura[±]

Implementing Procura[±] should not involve additional costs for a public authority - indeed money may often be saved. Although some greener products have a higher purchase price, if the whole lifecycle costs are considered, including use and disposal costs, savings may often be achieved. There are a number of other factors which can help to keep costs down, including a careful consideration of whether a product is really needed at all, and changes to the way procurement is organised and carried out (in some cases greater centralisation of procurement, the use of e-procurement, and joint-purchasing may offer substantial financial benefits).

It is important to also recognise that although costs may increase for certain products and services this will generally be balanced by savings for others. A price capping mechanism can also be applied within the tendering process to ensure spending does not increase substantially for certain products.

Procura[±] does not have to entail a lot of time and effort. It is advisable for authorities to take a step-by-step approach to implementation - it is too ambitious to aim to green all procurement in one go, but rather to start with just a few products or services, and gradually build on this depending on administrative capacities. It is important that authorities also build on existing experiences from other authorities rather than to start from scratch. A great deal of assistance in terms of criteria and procedures is available, which can greatly reduce the time and resources required. The Procura[±] approach has been designed so that it is easy to implement, with a minimum of time and resources, and is based around a few ready-to-use criteria for use in tendering.

What Are the Trends in Europe?

An ever increasing number of European public authorities are implementing SPP activities, particularly in the North of Europe, greatly assisted by the recent legal clarification, and encouragement from

international forums such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, 2002. However it is not yet a mainstream activity, and too often public authorities work in isolation from each other, unable to build on the experiences of others and sending confusing signals to the market. Procura⁺ aims to change this by bringing together a large number of public authorities acting in unison to send coherent market signals.

CONCLUSION

Procura⁺ has provided a platform to raise the profile and importance of SPP as well as playing a part in setting the framework at a European level. It was the first initiative to develop European-wide SPP criteria and one of the first to develop a management model focussing specifically on integrating sustainability into procurement. More importantly it has allowed new partnerships to be formed and has greatly encouraged the exchange of experiences, guidance, tools, news etc. through networking activities (events, website, mailing lists, newsletters). The free guidance developed by the Campaign has been widely appreciated internationally, with the Procura⁺ Manual one of the most well-recognised publications in the field in Europe.

It may be argued that the Procura⁺ participants may have undertaken SPP anyway but the benefits cited by participants are that it assists them in demonstrating their commitment to SPP and positions them as pioneers within Europe. It also allows public authorities to share information, learn from others, present their achievements and most importantly to build on the guidance and ready-made criteria.

Given the political support for 'green procurement' at the EU level there should be high expectation that procurement will be used as a quick and practical way of tackling many of the environmental problems we face today. At the local level however it is still only a handful of public authorities that are acting as pioneers for implementing SPP. Many public authorities are still waiting for the national government to signpost the way forward and provide the necessary guidance. Procura⁺ is in a unique position in that it can be applied across Europe, and can be applied now. Procura⁺ should be used as a stimulus for starting and further developing SPP at both a national and local level, in particular where guidance and tools have not yet been developed. SPP should be

seen as a solution to tackling environmental, social and economic issues and not a problem.

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