

Debate on modernisation of EU public procurement

At a conference on 30 June, the European Commission (EC) presented the [results of the consultation](#) on the [modernisation of EU public procurement policy](#). Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, Michel Barnier, invited stakeholders interested in public procurement to discuss future orientations.

“Public procurement needs to play its part in helping us to protect the environment, to innovate, to improve jobs and living conditions, and to help us to fight against climate change”, said Barnier. Making the legislation more conducive towards other societal goals such as the environment evoked mixed reactions, with representatives from business, Member States and public authorities showing little support for reform in this regard, according to responses received by the EC on the Green Paper.

Heide Rühle, public procurement rapporteur in the European Parliament (EP) emphasised that “public procurement legislation currently has the wrong emphasis and is too focused on the cheapest bid, which a lot of people tend to go for if the legislation isn’t particularly clear” whereas the cheapest bid “isn’t necessarily the best one.” A number of solutions were mentioned

for addressing this issue, such as applying life-cycle costing in the awarding of contracts. This appears to be gaining greater support from both businesses and contracting authorities.

Arguments in support of minimal or no changes to the current legislative framework were also brought up, while Malcolm Harbour, Chair of the EP’s Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection argued in favour of substantial changes. He mentioned that cross-border purchasing activities are very low and that this is likely due to legislation being “very complex and consequently impossible to understand properly without the assistance of experts.”

Support measures to ease administrative burdens and improve efficiency in procurement were discussed, such as allowing greater use of the negotiated procedure, raising the EU procurement thresholds, reducing the amount of documentation to be submitted by tenderers and the use of digitisation and e-procurement. The discussions and feedback received will provide input into the preparation of the Commission’s legislative proposals – scheduled for the end of 2011. A video recording and more information can be found [here](#).

Zoom in on...Funding to support procurement of innovative solutions



A new call for proposals was published at the end of June by the European Commission to help support public purchasers in purchasing innovative products and solutions which contribute to tackling major societal challenges, such as climate change and energy and resource scarcity.

Deadline for submissions is 27 September 2011.

[More information...](#)

Securing support for GPP actions in Romania



Interview with Catalin Cornea, GPP National Expert, Ministry of Environment and Forests (Romania)

How would you describe the level of awareness of GPP among Romanian public entities?

Our Ministry and other relevant institutions regularly organise awareness-raising events, so most of the contracting authorities recognise the advantages of GPP. However, this awareness needs to be transmitted to decision-maker level.

What existing opportunities can help to increase GPP actions?

Due to the GPP trainings for trainers, there is a pool of people experienced in disseminating GPP tools, methods and good practice. There is also an increase in the contracting authorities using environmental characteristics in their tendering activities.

What type of national government support actions are planned for the future?

Contracting authorities have signaled that there are difficulties in using a life-cycle costing approach because their budgets have a one year time span. A system of support for GPP performance could be implemented so institutions that use environmental criteria know their work is appreciated.

To view the full interview, click [here](#).

Zoom in on... New procurement standards for Food and Catering in the UK



On 16 June new procurement guidance for food and catering services by the UK national government was published.

The guidance goes a long way in regulating the procurement of fish in particular, focusing on mandatory requirements, which come into force from September 2011 to ensure all fish come from sustainable sources.

[More information...](#)

Zoom in on... Energy Efficiency Directive



The proposed new Energy Efficiency Directive was published by the EC in June. It contains various measures to reach the EU's target of 20% energy savings by 2020.

For example Member States must ensure that from 2014 at least 3% of their public building stock is renovated each year to agreed minimum energy performance standards and that public bodies purchase products, services and buildings with high energy efficiency performance, as defined in an Annex to the Directive.

[More information...](#)

Zoom in on... GPP driving sustainable innovation



The end of June saw a number of European events take place on how public purchasers can best use their purchasing power to encourage greater market innovation.

Some of the latest initiatives in the field were [presented](#) at the [Public Procurement of Innovation](#) conference in Turin, Italy. While the [Smart Procurement – Reducing Costs & Saving Energy](#) conference in Brussels saw the launch of new guidance for how procurers can best engage the market to advance sustainable innovation.

GPP examples

Energy efficient lighting on Budapest's bridges (Hungary)



The Liberty Bridge is one of the key crossing points over the Danube, and an iconic site within central Budapest. In 2009 a procurement process was launched to install lighting that would fit the aesthetics of the bridge, allow for the safe transit of trams, cars and pedestrians and withstand humidity and heavy vibrations.

The sustainability and cost of the lighting solution were the key concerns for the city. The technical specifications included in the tender were in conformity with the core EU GPP criteria for street lighting, addressing lumen efficacy and ballast efficiency.

The results provided a win-win for reducing energy consumption and waste reduction with the installation of 584 (out of 800) LED lamps (light emitting diodes). Savings on electricity compared with the original halogen lighting are estimated at 40,000 euro annually, amounting to total savings of 100,000 annually.

Download the GPP example [here](#).

Sustainable energy supplies in County Waterford (Ireland)



Waterford County Council is implementing GPP as part of a broader move towards sustainable development across its policies. The city has prioritised focus the well-being and health of citizens, infrastructure for transport, water, waste and wastewater management and sustainable production and consumption of energy and food.

The city has made estimated savings of 2 million kilograms of CO₂ per annum by replacing electricity from non-renewable sources with electricity from renewable sources. The potential of localised renewable energy installations is also being harnessed in Waterford, with the installation of a number of micro wind turbines at remote water treatment plants, with the capacity to generate 7,000 kwh/annum each.

The electricity generated by these turbines will be used on site and will displace imported electricity from the grid. Heat pumps, wood pellet boilers and solar water heaters have also been installed in local buildings and in social housing.

Download the GPP example [here](#).

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