

Procuring sustainable forest products

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF TOLEDO, SPAIN

Procurement objectives

The province of Toledo in central Spain has a population of approximately half a million. The provincial council works together with municipalities to deliver a wide range of services and infrastructure. It carries out procurement procedures to meet these needs. The procurement of forest products from sustainable sources has been a priority for the council, with an emphasis on paper, outdoor furniture and the cork used for bottles of wine. The approach taken has encouraged certification by suppliers under internationally-recognised forest schemes.

Background

The province's Environmental Service began implementing SPP in 2004. Environmental criteria were included in technical specifications for forest products in a number of tenders, with good results. In 2010, the Provincial Council adopted a declaration on SPP, which established an action plan and a committee to oversee implementation. SPP criteria are being extended to further product groups and advice and assistance provided to other public authorities in the province.



Criteria used

In 2011 a tender was issued (below EU threshold) using the open procedure. Due to the non-application of the EU Procurement Directives, Toledo was able to insist on third-party certification for the wood being purchased.

Subject matter of the contract: Procurement of outdoor furniture (benches)

Technical specifications: Benches with two boards on the seat, of approximate dimensions 2,000 x 150 x 45 mm, and one board on the back, of approximate dimensions 2,000 x 200 x 45 mm, with stainless steel screws.

Wood: Solid monolayer wood for structural use, with at least 70% of wood being certified as originating from sustainable sources. The timber should have the following characteristics:

- Density: 750 kg/m³
- Humidity: Moisture content between 10% and 15%
- Treated with protective fungicide, insecticide and repellent.

Verification: [PEFC](#), [FSC](#) or equivalent certificates will be accepted as proof of the sustainable origin of wood. Wood density and moisture must be demonstrated by submitting test reports carried out by accredited laboratories. These reports must include the scientific name of the species of wood used.

Results

A total of 9 tenders were received in response to the procurement. The cost per bench is €150.98, of which 50% is paid by the council and 50% by the municipality where it is installed. Aimed at all municipalities in the province of Toledo with less than 50,000 inhabitants, in 2011 this campaign offered 779 certified wood benches, which meant a total investment of €118,000. 127 municipalities were interested in participating in this program. The procurement is being repeated in 2012.

Environmental impacts

Sustainable forest management aims to prevent deforestation, protect biodiversity, prevent erosion and soil degradation and ensure that future generations can benefit from forest resources. Certification under FSC, PEFC or equivalent is one way of demonstrating that sustainable forest management principles have been put into action, as well as ensuring the traceability of all wood to legal sources.

While cork is an organic product, in recent years caps made of artificial materials such as plastic or metal have become more common. These can have negative environmental impacts and the switch away from cork can lead to lack of forest management, increasing fire risk.

Lessons learned

Under Toledo's SPP plan, sustainability criteria will be introduced for the procurement of cleaning services, catering, IT equipment and vehicles. The Environment Service is providing detailed guidance and support to local councils to help implement the criteria. An information day specifically on the procurement of sustainable forest products was held and experiences from tender competitions is being shared.

For more information, please see European GPP criteria for [Copying and graphic paper](#) and [Furniture](#).