

100% recycled paper for Bulgaria's Environment Ministry

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND WATER, SOFIA, BULGARIA

Procurement objectives

On 17 November 2009, during the National Conference on GPP held in Sofia, the Ministry of Environment and Water (MEW) announced its intention to award a fully green public contract. Paper was chosen as a product group suitable for greening due to its clear environmental impact and the possibility of switching to greener alternatives without increasing purchase costs.

Background

MEW has joint responsibility with the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Economy and Energy and Public Procurement Agency for GPP implementation in Bulgaria. A National Action Plan on GPP has been prepared and is in the process of adoption by the national government. In addition, practical guidance on GPP is distributed by MEW amongst contracting authorities in Bulgaria.



Criteria used

- **Subject matter of the contract:** Supply of 8000 packages of 100% recycled copy paper in A4 format
- **Selection criteria:** In order to prove their technical ability, tenderers should present a copy of their quality management certificate ISO 9001: 2000 or equivalent; test report issued within the last six months before the submission of the tender, as well as other documents proving their technical capacity
- **Technical specifications:** The paper is required to be:
 - ◊ Produced entirely from recovered paper fibres (post-consumer waste and pre-consumer recycled);
 - ◊ At least elemental chlorine-free (ECF) bleached. Totally chlorine free (TCF) bleached will also be accepted;
 - ◊ Compliant with the criteria of the [Blue Angel](#) eco-label and/or [Nordic Swan](#) and/or equivalent.
- **Award criteria:** Lowest price

Results

Apart from the environmental benefits, the public contract awarded for supply of recycled paper entailed financial benefits. The Ministry conducted a pre-procurement analysis of market prices of recycled and non-recycled paper for printers which revealed that comparable prices applied, and the recycled paper met the required technical characteristics.

As a result of the successful procurement, MEW has proposed to the recently established Central Purchasing Body (CPB, within the structure of the Ministry of Finance) in Bulgaria to procure fully recycled paper. CPB has now joined the initiative to foster GPP and award centralised contracts for the needs of Bulgaria's executive authorities. The procedure to establish a framework agreement for stationery and paper supply has been announced in the Official Journal of the European Union and the Public Procurement Register. The subject-matter of one of the lots is supply of recycled paper for copiers, printers, multifunctional devices, faxes and other printing devices.

Environmental impacts

The production of virgin pulp contributes to the global shrinking of forested areas and the associated loss of biodiversity, as not all forests are managed in a legal and sustainable manner. The purchase of 100% recycled paper addresses these impacts by reducing the volume of virgin pulp required. In addition, where post-consumer recycled fibre is used, the amount of water and energy required during the production process is significantly reduced.

Chlorine compounds used in the bleaching process for paper can react with existing organic substances in water, creating compounds which may be toxic and are poorly degradable in the aquatic environment. In order to avoid the production of such compounds, the bleaching process should be totally chlorine free (TCF) or elemental chlorine free (ECF).

Lessons learned

GPP does not necessarily mean spending more financial resources. This has helped to foster stronger political support for GPP in Bulgaria. In an interview, the Minister for Environment and Water identified further steps to be taken:

"GPP should become common practice for all public authorities. Maybe it would be useful to prepare a manual identifying possible areas of implementation of GPP. This would also encourage businesses to orientate themselves towards the needs of the authorities for environmentally friendly products and services."

For more information, please see European GPP [product sheet](#) and [background report](#) for Copying & Graphic Paper.