

## City of Barcelona's + Sustainable City Council Programme

Barcelona City Council (Spain)

### Background

Barcelona is the capital of the region of Catalonia and the second largest city in Spain, both in terms of size and population. 1.7 million people live in the city, with its urban area including a population of 4.7 million people. Barcelona's City Council manages around 2,000 buildings and has about 12,000 employees, organised into a number of departments and divisions which manage decentralised budgets for contracting services. The City Council has increasingly included sustainability considerations in its purchasing practices since 2001. These practices have been driven by and form part of the [City's Local Agenda 21 policy and goals](#), defined in the [Citizen Commitment to Sustainability](#) (2012-2022), the Sustainable City's Roadmap, which now boasts of a network of over 800 organisations.



The coordination and expansion of the strategy on sustainable procurement to encompass the whole municipal institution is one of the biggest challenges of the [+Sustainable City Council Programme](#) (+SCC) – the City Council's responsible procurement programme. The main goals are to:

- Reduce the institution's environmental and social impact.
- Promote a green economy and production system, using the administration's potential as a responsible consumer.
- Make the City Council more coherent environmentally and socially, and thus encourage change by setting an example.

Two local government Acts are in force which set the framework for Barcelona's actions in this area, with the +SCC Programme (which is within the Department of Urban Ecology) being the main driving force to ensure that sustainability criteria are integrated into decision making processes affecting public procurement. In terms of the framework, the Government Measure and the Instruction issued by the Mayor's office for Responsible *Public Procurement with Social and Environmental Criteria* (2013) and the [Technical Instructions for the Application of Sustainability Criteria](#) (2015) define the municipal framework in this field.

### Barcelona's targets for responsible procurement

The 12 Technical Instructions for the Application of Sustainability Criteria (2015) establish that:

- The purchase of work uniforms respecting the [conventions of the International Labour Organisation](#) (ILO) and with restricted presence of chemicals, according to [OekoTex](#);
- The acquisition of certified sustainable wood;
- 100% of electricity supplies stemming from renewable energy sources or high-efficient cogeneration;
- All school catering services including food from ecological agriculture;
- All computers complying with at least the Energy Star standard, and respecting the conventions of the ILO;
- 100% of recycled paper;
- Priority for acquiring electric vehicles;
- Public buildings and public spaces with the highest energy, water and environmental self-sufficiency;
- Public events organised following a greening plan;
- Communication products include eco-publishing criteria and more sustainable materials and practices;
- Eco-designed or eco-labelled office furniture: Produced using recycled or sustainable raw materials, free of toxic substances, durable, etc;
- Selective waste collection and the use of green cleaning products and other materials.

## Development of policy approach

Barcelona City Council is firmly committed to promoting social action and respect for the environment through its procurement. This municipal commitment, termed responsible procurement, has been consolidated through successive measures of government, mayoral decrees and other regulations that have reinforced the inclusion of environmental and social criteria in the purchasing decisions of certain products and services. The framework evolved as follows:

1995 - Barcelona City Council signed the [Aalborg Charter](#) – the first step to initiating the City's Local Agenda 21 process.

2001 - Approval of the (local) Government Measure for the Greening of Council Services, which then led to the creation of the Green Office Programme and the publication of the [Green Office Guide](#).

2002 - Adoption of Barcelona's Agenda 21, specified through the Citizen Commitment to Sustainability.

2006 – The City's Green Office Programme evolved to become the (current) +SCC Programme. Terminology was changed from 'office' to 'city council' so as to communicate that the new Programme not only concerned offices but also the tendering and contracting of services, supplies and public works. 'Green' became 'sustainable' because aspects of a social and/or ethical nature, such as fair trade, were also to be taken into consideration in purchasing processes.

2010 - The Sustainable City Council Convention was launched. The Convention was a participative process, which not only evaluated past actions, but also defined common future objectives and actions, and how to achieve them.

2013 - Enactment of the Municipal Decree for Responsible Public Procurement, where integrating sustainability requirements became compulsory for all contracting bodies

2015 - Adoption of the 12 Technical Instructions for the Application of Sustainability Criteria (2015), which establish the procurement requirements for 12 high priority procurement categories.

Several other council regulations and have been enacted related to Barcelona's responsible procurement framework. These are available [here](#).

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## Implementation of approach

Barcelona's commitment is put into action by providing council staff with appropriate technical support, awareness raising and training activities, and networking.

### Criteria and approach to different services and product categories

The inclusion of environmental and social criteria in all local authority contracts to reduce environmental impact and stimulate more sustainable production is one of the main work areas of the +SCC Programme.

Technical support, in terms of procurement criteria, guidance material, or direct help in implementation, is offered by the +SCC to all the departments and divisions of the organisation. Focus is given to products and services identified by the European Commission as a priority in order to implement green public procurement (GPP) (COM/2008/400), but also to other main contracts (in terms of budget) such as street cleaning or public lighting maintenance.

More than 10 years of successful experiences and good practices have led to the definition of the 12 Technical Instructions for the Application of Sustainability Criteria (2015). Throughout 2014, a highly participatory process, which involved more than 200 of the main procurement and sustainability stakeholders, has driven to the agreement and definition of the homogeneous compulsory criteria for all municipal contracting bodies in the procurement of electricity, computer equipment, cleaning and

selective waste collection in buildings, events, food services, paper, communication elements, textile products, timber, office furniture, public works projects and vehicles.

### **Awareness raising, training and involvement of municipal staff**

The efforts made to involve key players, regularly informing and raising awareness among staff (via the Council's regular e-bulletin, the +SCC Programme [website](#), training and targeted information campaigns, e.g. "Don't freeze!" posters, which promote the rational use of air-conditioning systems) have been decisive in ensuring the viability of actions.

The +SCC Programme includes several internal working groups that meet regularly to discuss topics, such as greening initiatives in general, the sustainable procurement of timber, construction and responsible procurement in general. Occasionally, other specific groups are set up to deal with certain priority issues. For example, the greening of events, and the innovation in contracting methods.

### **Involvement in networks and other strategic relationships**

Regarding the relationship with other external agents, Barcelona City Council is an active participant in the ICLEI's [Procura+ European Sustainable Procurement Network](#) (Barcelona was the vice-chair of Procura+ until 2012) and also in several networks set up to share experiences and good practices, as well as to promote local environmental initiatives such as the Network of Cities and Towns for Sustainability - [Xarxa de Pobles i Ciutats cap a la Sostenibilitat](#) (operated by Barcelona Provincial Council), [EUROCITIES](#) and the [Catalan Network for Ethical Public Procurement](#).

## **Results and outcomes from the approach**

### **SPP monitoring**

The +SCC Programme is working together with the Procurement Coordination Department in order to include the monitoring of sustainable procurement in the automatic procurement processing system, that will be in place in the near future. Meanwhile, the individual monitoring of different products and services has enabled the calculation of few statistics, such as the following:

- Approximately 72% of all wood purchases made (from 2004 to 2014) were of wood certified by the [Forest Stewardship Council](#) (FSC) or the [Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification](#) (PEFC).
- The inclusion of environmental criteria in the street cleaning and waste collection contract has reduced the environmental impact of vehicles: 35% of the fleet now runs on biodiesel, 35% on gas and 30% are electric or hybrid vehicles.
- 74% of paper consumption in 2014 was recycled. However, several district and departmental administrations are using over 90%, or even 100%, recycled paper.
- By establishing a framework agreement (in 2013) for the supply of electricity to all of the Council's buildings, installations and associated organisations, including public lighting, Barcelona will save 37,583 metric tonnes of CO2 annually through its purchase of 100% electricity from renewable sources and/or high-efficiency co-generation with a guarantee of origin certificate. More information is available [here](#).

### **Public recognition**

In recognition of its role as a pioneering organisation, the City of Barcelona won (in 2006) the award for best practice in GPP in Spain at a Green Purchasing conference in Avilés. It was also among the finalists selected for the [European Public Sector Award](#) (EPSA Award 2011) for best practice and obtained the 'Premio Diamante de la Compra', awarded by the [Spanish Association of Purchasing and Supply](#) (AERCE) in 2012 for Sustainability, and second place in the Public Sector category. More achievements from the +SCC can be consulted [here](#).

## Lessons learned

- \* The +SCC Programme owes its success to the participation and co-responsibility of all the stakeholders involved in the City's greening strategy - both internal and external. Two new initiatives are the best proof of this approach:
  - \* Some departments and divisions of the City Council promote and give support to concrete initiatives that demonstrate the same degree of commitment to sustainability along the +SCC Programme lines. [The Strategic Plans for Internal Sustainability of the Department of Security Management and Prevention and the Department of Urban Ecology are a good example.](#)
  - \* In the same direction, some departments and divisions are developing their own procurement guidelines, following Barcelona's policy and implementation framework. They are developing new 'Technical Instructions for the Application of Sustainability Criteria' for products and services which have not been addressed yet, such as the design and production of exhibitions or the acquisition of office supplies.
- \* The definition of a common regulatory framework for all municipal contracting authorities has contributed greatly to mainstreaming responsible procurement in the City Council. Compliance with one strategic regulation has led to an increased interest in many of the +SCC tools, services and initiatives.
- \* The continuous work and effort carried out over the past 10 years in greening the administration is now producing results. The change in the way of working from within the council, from the Programme office continually chasing staff with requests, to staff contacting the Programme office directly, is a clear sign of the general change in the awareness and internalisation of sustainability within the organisation.
- \* These results would not have been possible without the continuous and close work with providers (suppliers, etc.). Innovative solutions and initiatives (such as pre-procurement market engagement activities, application of new concepts and new tools for intelligent management of the City's resources, pilots, etc.) are fundamental to achieve sustainability goals and to use the procurement process to also drive sustainable innovation.

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