

## Circular catering services for the Pļaviņu Gymnasium

Plavinu Municipality (Latvia)

### Background

Plavinu is a town in Latvia of 5,000 inhabitants with a municipal budget of 5.8 million euro.

Plavinu is taking part in the [Circular Public Procurement \(PP\)](#) project, and aims to introduce the principles of circular economy thinking in its public procurement strategies and practices. By doing so, the Municipality also wants to trigger shifts in the market towards circular models.

Plavinu Municipality is responsible for the Pļaviņu Gymnasium, a school with 410 pupils and 77 members of staff. In terms of catering, the gymnasium provides this for its pupils, with the state government providing lunch for the primary school.

The contract with the existing caterer ended in July 2018, and the municipality needed to procure catering services for the next three year period. The catering tender provided the opportunity to test circular economy aims, and is the first example of a circular public procurement supported by the Circular PP project.



### Procurement objectives

Pļaviņu Municipality wanted to sustain good quality catering in their school for a reasonable price. They also wanted to include circular aspects in the procurement in order to be more sustainable.

The catering contract also includes rent of premises at the gymnasium building, where the food shall be prepared. During elaboration of the tender Pļaviņu consulted with the Circular PP project team from the [Latvian Environmental Investment Fund](#). As well as price, the procurement criteria were designed to include aspects such as nutrition and health, organic products, waste minimisation and environmentally friendly transportation.

### Criteria used

#### Subject matter of the contract:

Catering services in the Pļaviņu region gymnasium.

#### Selection criteria:

The Applicant has not violated the terms of catering service contracts related to GPP during the previous three years. [Violations are based on Cabinet of Ministers regulations Nr. 353](#) 'Requirements for green public procurement and the procedure for their application'. These Regulations prescribe the requirements for public procurement using environmental criteria, and their application, as well as the applicable tender selection criteria for food supply and catering contracts. For further information on the Cabinet Regulations for public procurement of food in Latvia click [here](#).

**Technical specifications:**

Technical specifications relating to green public procurement included:

- The use of disposable plastic containers is not allowed.
- The supplier should use seasonal fruit and vegetables. Seasonal is defined by the Latvian Ministry of Agriculture calendar (link [here](#)), which the specification referred to.
- At least 50% of milk should be from organic sources.
- In cooperation with the client, the service provider evaluates at least twice per year client (pupils) detailed reviews of food and quality, and uses results for waste prevention.
- The service provider, at the request of the customer, ensures food distribution in a manner that enables the client to determine composition and size of portion (joint large dishes or voucher system).

“Prior to this contract the school estimated that food waste from the school canteen was approximately 10 kg per day, which is equivalent to 3.5 kg a year per child.”

Technical specifications relating to waste management included:

- The service provider sorts waste according to the waste manager’s instructions (biological, packaging, other).
- The service provider regularly (twice a year) carries out the inventory of waste generated in the kitchen and catering, analyses it and agrees with the contracting party on an action plan for waste reduction.
- The customer determines the use of surplus food.
- The service provider shall inform clients about the most important actions for the prevention of food waste (educational notes, etc.).

**Award criteria:**

The award was the done on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT). Points were awarded, out of 100, with the breakdown as follows:

Item	Points
Price (based on ‘a la carte’ menu).	30
Nutritional quality: Proposed menu is checked in accordance with the legislative requirements and <a href="#">technological cards</a> to determine that nutritional quantities correspond with the chosen products.	15
Compliance with healthy diet: comparative assessment, taking into account legislative requirements and use of seasonal food in menus. The bidder would lose points from maximum score in the case of inconsistencies.	15
Number of certified products in menu (organic or integrated): Organic is according to the regulation on biological agriculture certification (EK) Nr. 834/2007. Integrated are products originating from firms registered in special register according to Latvian national regulation (link <a href="#">here</a> ).	15
Environmentally friendly transportation: For example, for certain type of products, the distance from the production site less than 50 km.	20
Participation in the <a href="#">School Fruit, Vegetables and Milk Scheme</a> : The EU-funded scheme supports the distribution of fruit, vegetables and milk to schools across the EU. Suppliers registered on the <a href="#">Latvia scheme</a> have their eligibility assessed and approved by the Latvian Rural Support Service, based on criteria such as, integrated or organic production and distance of transportation of less than 300 kilometres to school establishments.	5

### Contract performance clauses:

The following performance clauses were included in the call for tenders:

- Attend meetings to consider the recommendations of teachers and parents and provide information about catering; immediately eliminate deficiencies in case of complaints.
- Written consent with the Municipality of Pļaviņu (the contracting authority) in case of changes in suppliers of certified products, prices or menu.
- Keep and record the delivery notes of the products in order to prove the origin of the products and percentage of organic products according to the quantity indicated in the procurement specification.
- Contracting Authority may carry out verification of the origin and quality of the food delivered, in addition to the information indicated by the service provider and the documents submitted.
- The Contractor pays a penalty in case of non-compliance.

### Results

The call for tender was published in June 2018, with two bidders competing for the contract with a duration of three academic years (September 2018 to May 2021). The decision was made in August 2018, with the winning bidder providing a service with a contract value of €361,638. This was 38% higher than the unsuccessful bidder, who was removed from the process at the exclusion stage. The tender resulted in the price of an 'a la carte' menu per pupil of €2.69. The previous contract gave a price of €2.63 per meal, so a small increase in price resulted in quality improvements in terms of environmental and health impacts.

### Environmental impacts

This procurement could reduce the amount of food waste generated from the catering service, as well as plastic waste by avoiding one-use dishes. Prior to this contract the school estimated that food waste from the school canteen was approximately 10 kg per day, which is equivalent to 3.5 kg a year per child. Examples from other schools show that by educating pupils, adjusting menus and allowing choice of portions, food waste from canteens could be reduced by as much as 50-70%, depending on the starting point which can range from 10-50 kg per pupil per year. In the case of this school, due to low amounts of food waste during the previous catering contracting period, food waste quantities would not be reduced by such high amounts, however, increases can be avoided. Dairy products (from 50% organic farms) lessen the use of pesticides for growth of animal feed, and increase animal welfare standards.

## Lessons learned

- The procurement contract includes requirements for analysing waste quantities. According to the technical specifications of the procurement (which are part of the contract), the supplier will need to analyse waste statistics, and together with the school, develop plans for waste reduction.
- After winning the contract, the supplier introduced a new dishwashing machine in order to manage without single-use dishes.
- Contract management will include access to invoices indicating origin of food products in order to verify the requirements for food products from organic and integrated farms are achieved
- In future the municipality will adjust how the comparative nutritional assessment of the menus is designed. The municipality does not have its own nutritional expert, so it was a difficult task to judge and the process was mainly based on legal requirements. On the other hand, there is still a need to have criteria regarding food quality to avoid low quality food for school pupils.

### Contact persons:

Ineta Kalva, Pļaviņas District Council, [ineta.kalva@plavinas.lv](mailto:ineta.kalva@plavinas.lv)

Zane Bilzēna, Latvian Environmental Investment Fund, [zane.bilzena@lvif.gov.lv](mailto:zane.bilzena@lvif.gov.lv)

For related information, please see [European GPP criteria for Food and Catering](#) and the [Technical Background Report](#). The GPP Criteria are currently being updated.