



Report

Ecolabel promotion project – Procurement Solutions 2008

Date: 13 June 2008

From: Philipp Tepper (ICLEI)

To: Jill Michielssen (EC DG Environment), Simon Clement (ICLEI)

CC: Mark Hidson (ICLEI), Amalia Ochoa (ICLEI), Charles Cox (Defra)

Content

1. Summary
 2. Procurement Solutions 2008 – General impression and visitors' assessment
 3. The European Ecolabel stand
 4. The European Commission seminar session
 5. Main outcomes
 6. Recommendations for further activities
-

1. Summary

As part of the Ecolabel promotion project, ICLEI on behalf of the European Commission presented the European Ecolabel at the Procurement Solutions 2008 event, 10-11 June 2008, London.

An expected 5000 visitors, mainly from public procurement departments from Central and Local Governments visited the fair (detailed figures to be delivered by the organisers approximately end of June 2008). The stand of the European Commission was well visited: More than 30 individual contacts with more than ten minutes communication, more than 70 contacts between one and ten minutes communication and more than 900 short-time contacts (less than one minute) have been managed by the stand team consisting of Philipp Tepper (ICLEI), Charles Cox (Defra, UK Competent Body for the Ecolabel), Roger Gardner (Aquadros Ltd. - cleaning products) and Nick Ward (Sharp UK Ltd. - television).

The seminar session on 11 June 2008 included presentations about the link between the importance of GPP, the European Ecolabel as source for criteria and verification and the EC GPP training toolkit as well as a local government presentation of Warwickshire City Council on their approach and activities regarding the use of trustworthy and third-party verified Ecolabels such as the European Ecolabel. Philipp Tepper spoke on behalf of the European Commission and was followed by Janet Chapmen from Warwickshire City Council (see attached presentations).

In the fully booked seminar room more than 80 participants attended and discussed with the speakers the role of GPP and the European Ecolabel in the UK. 12 follow-up individual talks after the seminar showed the high interest and successful presentation to a key audience for promoting the Ecolabel.

2. Procurement Solutions 2008 – General impression and visitors' assessment

General impression

- The Procurement Solutions 2008 exhibition and conference was a good place to promote the European Ecolabel and GPP activities to key target groups. Many exhibitors promoted their products and services using a specific “green” wording such as “Carbon neutral”, “Carbon negative”, “sustainable” or “99% recyclable stand”.
- It was impressive to see that many conference seminar sessions focussed on environmental, but also on social-responsible procurement. They were generally well attended and appreciated by the audience.
- Procurement Solutions 2008 was professionally organised and was managed to the full satisfaction of the exhibitor and speakers (ICLEI, Warwickshire City Council).

Visitors' assessment

The stand of the European Commission was visited by Central Government and Local Government procurement strategy managers, procurement managers, heads of procurement units, procurement officers, procurement lawyers and solicitors, procurement trainers and advisors, equipment specialists, media analysts and other from different Government departments.

They purchase a broad range of products and services (main products/service groups include: furniture, transport, water, ICT, cleaning products and services, paper products, textiles, healthcare equipment, food and catering, business travel, and investment and financing).

The number of visitors and individual contacts made was impressive – also compared to other stands at the fair. It can be said that there was a high interest in specifically the EC GPP agenda and future activities as well as on practical tools and guidance that are useful for procurers.



3. The European Ecolabel stand

The stand was well situated, next to a main entry corridor that channelled the visitors directly to the stand. As a corner stand with access to two main corridors and situated next to coffee break facilities and toilet services it was strategically well-located at a key crossing point.

The stand team consisting of Philipp Tepper (ICLEI), Charles Cox (Defra, UK Competent Body for the Ecolabel), Roger Gardner (Aquados Ltd. - cleaning products) and Nick Ward (Sharp UK Ltd. - television) was very effective to respond to the needs and demands of the visitors. The co-operation with Ecolabel holders and the display of products promoted with the European Ecolabel have been very successful.

As four persons were available to manage the stand it left time for the team to promote the content and key messages to other exhibitors such as suppliers and manufacturers of paper products, furniture, ICT equipment, business travel and Carbon-offsetting companies.

Compared to other stands the set-up and design of the stand was simple but effective. The back walls were covered by banners with the European Ecolabel logo visible from far-distance. It was extremely useful that both Roger from Aquados and Charles from Defra had brought probes (Aquados) and a pocket guide on Ecolabels (Defra) that were successfully used to attract people to the stand and to get into communication. Next steps included the presentation of information leaflets and the targeted presentation of the Ecolabel webpage and the EC GPP toolkit webpages on notebook and widescreen LCD display (provided by Sharp and promoted with the European Ecolabel). With long-stay visitors contact details have been exchanged.

4. The European Commission seminar session

In order to promote the European Ecolabel to a broad expert audience from Central and Local Government a seminar session was carried out on 11 June from 13.15 – 13.50. In a fully booked seminar room more than 80 participants were informed about the possibilities to use the European Ecolabel in tendering procedures.

Philipp Tepper (ICLEI) presented in detail the links between the importance of GPP, important activities in the UK regarding the implementation of GPP, the role of the European Ecolabel and Janet Chapman (Warwickshire) talked about the experience in GPP, environmental criteria development and supplier-purchaser dialogues of the Council.

The follow-up contacts after the seminar (at the seminar as well as at the stand) were of high quality. The seminar session was a full success and contributed to spread detailed information on GPP and the European Ecolabel to key multipliers of the public sector.



“Dear Philipp, I just wanted to thank you for the excellent information that you provided to me through your presentation at Procurement Solutions 11th June 2008 at Earls Court, London. Your speech was interesting, excellently presented and provided a practical approach to implementing sustainable procurement into our Councils Procurement activities. Thank you very much and well done.” (Sean Missin, Procurement Officer, South Cambridgeshire District Council via email, 13 June 2008)

5. Main outcomes

- Promotion of GPP and the European Ecolabel to more than 1000 individual contacts of which (>30 over ten minutes, >70 between one and ten minutes, >900 less than one minute)
- Comprehensive communication with more than 100 Central and Local Government procurers with a respective percentage of high level decision makers (estimated 15%)
- Great interest from the visitors to learn how to green their procurement activities
- Special interest in the EC GPP toolkit and the copy-and-paste criteria sets for 11 product and service groups
- Awareness raised regarding the legally approved use of Ecolabel criteria for specifications, award criteria and verification in public procurement (approximately 90% of the visitors of the stand did not know the European Ecolabel)

- More than 30 named contacts for follow-up communication
- High visibility for Aquados cleaning products and shown demand from mayor public sector buyers
- Promoting the European Ecolabel to other business (paper, travel, appliances etc.) displaying at Procurement Solutions

6. Recommendations for further activities

Procurement Solutions is a key event in the UK with a good target group to promote GPP and the European Ecolabel. The cost-benefit-ratio has to be analysed more in detail but a positive tendency can be estimated at this date.

For further activities it is recommended:

- to follow the same approach and include Ecolabel holders to display their products at the stand,
- have a team of minimum three persons that manage the stand,
- organise a seminar session on a topic that is of similar practical interest of public procurers
- actively approach the people walking by the stand
- KISS: KeeP It (the design of the stand) Smart and Simple, but effective and visitor-friendly. A major success factor is the location of the stand. It should be allocated along the main corridors visitors use.
- Prior getting in touch with specific visitors you know will come to the event, to discuss certain aspects more in detail (side meetings)
- Better organise the data storage (named contacts), e.g. by renting a data pen (~140 GBP) that automatically scans the visitors' contact details and provides you with an Excel file by end of the day

London and Freiburg, 13 June 2008
Philipp Tepper