

**European Commission Green Public Procurement  
(GPP) Training Toolkit  
- Module 1: Managing GPP Implementation**



# **Developing a Green Public Procurement policy**

## **Fact sheet**

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# 1 Introduction

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Having the necessary political support for the implementation of Green Public Procurement (GPP) is critical to success. Experiences across Europe demonstrate very clearly that without political backing it can be difficult for those committed to GPP implementation to get effective co-operation from other colleagues.

The existence of a written GPP policy provides a useful basis on which to build a coherent, well co-ordinated approach. Elected officials should be responsible for maintaining political commitment to GPP. Without such a policy, efforts tend to be rather piecemeal. Furthermore, encouraging those with purchasing responsibilities to include environmental considerations in their procedures without a clear GPP policy statement in place can be difficult to achieve and monitor.

A policy should provide a statement of commitment, specific targets to be met, actions to be undertaken together with assigning responsibility for meeting these and a framework for monitoring progress.

Depending on the context and political priorities of contracting authorities, the green public procurement policy can be:

- Broad - covering all the aspects, dimensions and procurement practices of the authority, or
- Focussed only on one environmental aspect such as, for example, energy consumption, timber procurement, recycled paper, etc.

Nevertheless, the policy statement should cover the same points (described in the next section) independently from its scope.

## 1.1. Procedural structure

Although conventions may differ across Europe as to the way in which contracting authorities present and structure their internal “policies”, this fact sheet uses the assumption that a policy would typically consist of two elements:

- A high level “Strategy/Policy Statement” outlining the goals set and commitments made
- An “Operational Implementation Plan” outlining how the policy would be implemented

## 1.2. Using this fact sheet

This fact sheet is designed to complement the [EC GPP Training Toolkit: Module 1 Reference Document](#). The reference document was designed for use by any contracting authority.



## Factsheet – Developing a GPP Policy

This fact sheet aims to help those authorities that intend to develop a policy, and demonstrates an easy to follow step by step approach. Much of the information presented in the aforementioned reference document is of relevance here, and is referred to where appropriate rather than duplicating the text in this fact sheet.

## 2 First Steps

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### 2.1. Clarify your basic objectives

Before preparing a GPP policy, it is important to define what the main objectives of the policy should be. For example, the contracting authority may already have other policies or decrees in place, which cover some of the aspects of the proposed new GPP policy. By identifying any such policies and analysing their content, you will be able to ensure that your proposed policy does not conflict with the contracting authority's other objectives.

Once you have identified synergies with any other policies, your main objectives can be defined more accurately.

### 2.2. Define the scope of the policy

As outlined in the [EC GPP Training Toolkit: Module 1 Reference Document](#), it is important to consider the scope of the policy, i.e. which product/service groups and which departments should be covered:

- You may consider whether to apply the system to the whole authority or in just one department. Starting with just one or two departments may be more appropriate if the authority is big or is new to GPP and wishes to pilot the activities first.
- Consider how many product/ service groups you wish to cover. Again, it may be more effective for authorities new to GPP to select initially just one or two product/service groups. Pilot activities are very helpful in demonstrating the practicality and benefits of GPP and to support the case for wider implementation. For those more advanced in GPP implementation, the management cycle may be applied to all procurement activities of the contracting authority.

### 2.3. Identify relevant stakeholders

Three types of relevant stakeholders should be identified:

- **Those who need to be involved/consulted on the drafting of the policy**

This group should include, for example, elected officials who are likely to be involved in promoting the policy externally and technical experts as they will be able to help define



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objectives and timeframes. The content of the policy should be agreed by this group and, most importantly, must be agreed at the necessary level within the contracting authority's overall decision making structure.

- **Those who will be directly affected by it**

This group should include anyone who is responsible for procurement within the scope of the policy (see 2.2). Involvement in procurement ranges from identifying a need through to approving expenditure, developing GPP criteria for tendering documents, specifying the terms of a contract, managing the procurement tendering process, through to contract management and performance monitoring. In some authorities, these activities are centralised whilst in others they are carried out by different departments.

Having a good picture of all the actors involved in procurement is essential in drawing up the operational implementation plan and assigning responsibilities.

- **Those who will be indirectly affected by it**

Your policy will have an impact on a wider range of stakeholders than those directly involved in the initial procurement. For example, one important aspect to GPP is ensuring the efficient use of purchased products on a long-term basis. Certain user groups may be identified who may have a significant impact on improving efficiency, such as building occupants or IT equipment users.

It will be important to consider how the policy is communicated to these groups, to let them know how they will be affected, and how they can assist.

## 3 Preparing the high level Policy Statement

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The high level policy statement should provide the commitment framework for GPP implementation, outlining the key goals and targets which the authority will aim to meet, and against which progress can be judged.

### 3.1. Contextualising the policy

First of all the policy statement should provide the context for its adoption. This should include reference to environmental implications of public procurement activities, and the overall environmental aims of the policy.

**Factsheet – Developing a GPP Policy*****Example***

*Each year (Name of Authority) spends €X on the procurement of goods and services. Directing this spending towards the purchase of more environmentally sound alternatives will contribute to a direct reduction in the environmental impacts of our activities. Potential environmental benefits include:*

- the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through the purchasing of more energy efficient goods and the application of strict energy efficiency standards for construction work*
- improvement in local air and water quality through the purchasing of low-emission vehicles, less toxic cleaning products*
- supporting a healthy working environment through purchasing fresh, organic food and considering indoor air quality in construction work*
- contributing to a reduction in global deforestation through the purchasing of goods made from sustainable and legally harvested timber*

*(Name of Authority) commits to integrating environmental criteria into the procurement process, to ensure that all goods and services purchased by the authority minimise environmental damage and where possible maximise their beneficial environmental effects.*

The policy statement will need to take account of and appropriately reference any relevant national level policies/strategies, for example a GPP National Action Plan (where one exists). These may well contain specific targets and obligations for authorities, which would need to be adhered to and taken account of when developing internal policies.

***Example***

*In accordance with the GPP National Action Plan (Name of Authority) commits to achieving a target of applying GPP principles to 25% of its procurement activities.*

Where other local policies or strategies are in place, which relate to the overall scope of the GPP policy a clear reference to these should be made to ensure consistency.

***Example***

*In accordance with the climate protection policy of (Name of Authority), the authority commits to the consideration of energy efficiency in its procurement activities.*



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### 3.2. Setting targets

As the general policy statement indicated above leaves a good deal of room for interpretation when considering progress, an effective policy statement should also include more specific targets.

There are two different types of targets to consider within GPP:

- Those directly relating to purchasing activities
- Operational targets focusing on support measures

Section 2 within the [EC GPP Training Toolkit: Module 1 Reference Document](#) provides further advice on the setting of targets.

#### ***Example***

*X% of spending on IT products will be spent on energy efficient models by 2009*

*X% of spending on cleaning materials will be spent on green products by 2009*

*All procurement staff/relevant senior managers & finance officers will receive training on GPP by 2009*

*Standard environmental criteria for inclusion in all tenders will be implemented for X product/service groups by 2009*

## 4 Preparing the operational implementation plan

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The high level Policy Statement must be supported by a more in-depth plan of how the goals of the policy will be met in practice (either contained within it, or drawn up after the Policy is set).

Section 3 of the [EC GPP Training Toolkit: Module 1 Reference Document](#) provides guidance on preparing a detailed action plan. In essence, such a plan should cover:

- Tendering activities (such as the development of environmental purchasing criteria, their inclusion in tendering documents and processes)
- Training activities (for technical staff, and high level decision-makers)
- Communication activities – both internally and externally (with suppliers and the general public)
- Monitoring systems



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When developing the plan it is crucial to remember that any additional administrative burdens are kept to a minimum to ensure cost effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed new policies. Attention must be paid to integrating the tasks into existing working structures.