

The Netherlands examines sustainable procurement



How can the impact of sustainable public procurement (SPP) on the environment, market and public administration be measured? The Dutch Ministry for Infrastructure and the Environment has commissioned two studies to evaluate the impacts of its own SPP programme – which targets 100% of public procurement meeting defined sustainability criteria by 2015.

The first report, carried out by PwC Sustainability, looks at the financial impact of SPP. Two product groups were chosen, IT equipment and construction of office buildings, and the life-cycle financial impact of applying the Dutch SPP criteria was analysed. For computer monitors

and building works, the application of the criteria resulted in lower life-cycle costs - whereas for laptops and desktops higher purchase prices were not fully compensated by energy savings.

The second report focuses on the environmental impact of applying the SPP criteria, carried out by DHV consultants. This covers the 45 products and service groups included in the Dutch SPP criteria and results are presented in terms of CO₂, NO_x, particulate matter and energy savings. The potential savings in terms of CO₂ are particularly striking – up to 3 megatons per annum, representing 5% of the national reduction target. The potential for savings is even greater if large-scale innovative projects are realised, and the private sector follows the government's lead.

The recent commitment by 17 major public and private companies to make their purchasing sustainable is a step in this direction.

Zoom in on... White Paper on Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area



On 28 March, the European Commission adopted a roadmap of 40 concrete initiatives for the next decade to build an efficient and integrated mobility system that continues to innovate for the future.

Public procurement is addressed as one of the strategies to ensure rapid take up of new technologies; as is joint public procurement, for increasing take up of low-emission vehicles in commercial fleets.

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SPP and efficiency should go hand in hand



*Interview with
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Would you agree with the statement that SPP/GPP is becoming more of a political priority for Spanish public authorities?

Yes, ten years ago there were only a few pioneers amongst Spanish local authorities, such as the City of Barcelona. Since then more regions have become involved and there has been support at national level since 2006 when an Inter-Ministerial Commission was set up, leading to the adoption of Spain's [GPP National Action Plan](#) in 2008. In 2011, a monitoring exercise is being undertaken to measure the level of inclusion of environmental criteria in tenders by central government authorities.

What do you see as the main opportunities for SPP/GPP in Spain?

Due to budget cuts, it is important to make the connection between efficiency or austerity and environmental gain. For example, reducing electricity consumption offers benefits on both fronts. In particular, the use of energy service contracting is expected to increase over the next few years – supported by national policies and funding for regions.

What factors would you identify for success?

The existence of positive examples and the opportunity to network at local, regional and national level has been important for the implementation of SPP. One successful example is the support for ecologically designed products in the Basque region through joint initiatives of buyers and suppliers. There has also been an increase in the number of eco-labelled products on the Spanish market and in the use of environmental management systems, for example, in cleaning services.

Zoom in on... Catalan guidance for including green selection criteria in tenders



In response to requests for guidance on including environmental requirements in selection criteria for public tenders, the Catalan Government (Spain) published a guide for contracting bodies on how this can best be done.

One of the issues tackled is how to include references to ownership of an environmental management system, on behalf of the supplying company.

[More information in Spanish...](#)

Zoom in on... Sustainability criteria for biofuels



The Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels (RSB) announced the launch of the RSB Certification System in March. The certification system aims to ensure that biofuels demonstrate compliance with stringent social and environmental criteria.

Biofuels have the potential to contribute to climate change mitigation but their production should not be at the expense of ecosystems or human rights, including food security.

[More information...](#)

Zoom in on... Report on SMEs and the environment in the EU



This study, prepared for the European Commission, reveals the impact small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) have on the environment and the impact of EU environmental measures on SMEs.

Although GPP is considered big business for SMEs, demand for green products in the public sector is viewed as still very limited or connected to larger contracts, particularly in newer Member States.

[More information...](#)

GPP examples

Consip's procurement of integrated energy management services (Italy)



A market demand analysis performed by the Italian central purchasing body (Consip), in 2006 found that heating services accounted for 38% of the total energy consumption of the Italian public administration (costing about 2.4 billion euro per year).

The implementation of a framework contract for integrated energy management services covering some 5,000 public buildings has resulted in significant energy, cost and CO₂ emission savings to date. Consip tendered for and established the framework contract.

The framework included award criteria and contract performance clauses specifically aimed at reducing the primary energy consumption of the buildings included. These savings have been achieved by substitution of hot-water heating systems, insulation, use of renewable thermal sources and other measures. The savings have been certified by Italy's Regulatory Authority for Electricity and Gas.

Download the GPP example [here](#).

Sustainable wood procurement in Cognac (France)



In response to the discovery of unsustainably sourced timber in some of its street furniture, the City of Cognac decided in 2005 to implement a procurement policy addressing this problem. Tenders implemented in 2010 and 2011 included detailed technical specifications regarding the sustainable sourcing of timber, as well as the finishes used on various items of furniture.

Bidding companies were able to meet the various requirements included in the tendering process. This policy to date has resulted in a reduction in the cost of wood products purchased by Cognac, with the city saving 5% in purchasing costs compared to the same purchase carried out in the previous year, which did not include the sustainability requirements.

The success of this procurement approach has led it to introduce similar criteria for paper products, and to share its experience with other French authorities.

Download the GPP example [here](#).

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