Ökokauf Wien Celebrates its 15th Anniversary

The EcoBuy Vienna, or Ökokauf Wien, programme recently celebrated its 15th anniversary. Established in 1998, the aim of Ökokauf is to ensure that all of the procurement procedures carried out by public authorities in the City of Vienna comply with environmental requirements and include sustainability criteria. As the City of Vienna spends on average five billion EUR on products, services and works a year, ensuring that this money is spent on sustainable products and services has a significant environmental impact. Ökokauf has established an extensive reference framework which public procurers can avail of as part of their day-to-day work when preparing their procurement procedures. The framework includes detailed GPP criteria and guidelines for a variety of products, services and works categories ranging from construction to vehicles to green and open spaces. These criteria are binding within the city administration and must be taken into consideration in the preparation of all public calls for tender.

To date, Ökokauf has reduced on average 15,000 tons of CO2 and saves the City of Vienna approximately 1.5 million EUR a year. This has been achieved, for example, by procuring a high proportion of organic food, procuring only non-toxic products, eco-friendly building interiors and prohibiting PVC.

Zoom in on... Promoting Legal and Sustainable Timber

Chatham House recently published a paper titled Promoting Legal and Sustainable Timber: Using Public Procurement Policy. The paper looks at how by leading by example, governments can help decrease the levels of illegal logging while promoting sustainable forestry. It examines governments’ efforts to use public procurement policy to promote the use of legal and sustainable timber, and demonstrates that such timber procurement policies can provide valuable lessons for developing other sustainable procurement policies. Approximately 26 countries have established a national timber procurement policy.

GPP example

Furniture & white goods for public housing

VISESA is a public authority which is part of the Department of Employment and Social Policy of the Basque Government. The main objective of VISESA is to promote quality social housing in the Basque region, thus contributing to the determined efforts of the regional government to provide all sectors of society with their right to quality housing. Since its establishment in 1990, VISESA has completed more than 12,500 housing projects. VISESA launched an open tender in order to set up a framework agreement with up to four companies for the provision of kitchen furniture and white goods for its social housing developments. The total value of the framework agreement was estimated at €3,835,000. A total of 7 companies bid for this two year contract, which can be extended for one more year. As a result of the experience gained from evaluating these tenders, in particular evaluating the responses as regards the proposed environmental improvements, VISESA recognised that certain environmental improvements can be implemented easier than others. Examples included aspects relating to the whole product (such as eco-design), that are more regulated (such as the origin and composition of wood components) or widely implemented (such as recycled packaging).

Download the full case study here.

Zoom in on... Dundee, Sunderland and Northumberland Councils reaping the rewards of reuse – Warp It

Warp It is a reuse scheme, established in the UK in 2011, with the aim of reducing waste. The idea is that clients, among them public authorities, can find, give away or loan unused or unwanted equipment, furniture and other resources. The scheme has proven to not only reduce waste, but also to have a significant impact on procurement, staff time and waste management bills. Already three public authorities in the UK, Dundee and Sunderland City Councils, as well as Northumberland County Council, have saved almost €500,000 using the scheme.

More information...
WRAP strives to embed SPP in UK public sector

Mr. Tim Luckett is the Environmental Project Manager at WRAP, responsible for managing projects to develop and embed sustainable procurement across the UK public sector.

How does WRAP support GPP in the UK?

WRAP’s work on sustainable and resource efficient procurement has used both EU GPP criteria and UK Government Buying Standards for the various categories we support. We provide assistance to organisations to embed more sustainable or resource efficient requirements within the procurement process. Whilst our work in these areas continues, we are now focussing on how organisations can adopt and encourage a more circular economy. This offers considerable economic benefits, through cost savings, reducing resource use and creating employment and training opportunities. WRAP’s wider work, for example the Electrical and Electronic Equipment Sustainability Action Plan and the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan is about valuing products differently and creating a more robust economy in the process. By assessing how we design, make, sell, re-use and recycle products we can determine how to get the maximum value from them.

What have been the results of WRAPs GPP initiatives?

WRAP has worked on promoting sustainable and resource efficient procurement for some time through providing organisations with targeted assistance to embed sustainable and resource efficient requirements within their procurements for key categories.

The estimated impacts from the assistance total £39m cost savings and diverted 125kt of waste from landfill. WRAP has produced a number of resources to assist both the public and private sectors to procure in a more sustainably and resource efficient way. The resources we produce include model procurement wording for use within the procurement process providing they are proportionate and relevant to what is being procured. Examples include the Sustainable Procurement E-learning tool which is free to use and includes an introduction to a sustainable procurement module, as well as modules for key categories such as textiles, ICT, construction and furniture.

Additionally, we also have a Facilities Management (FM) toolkit which provides information, guidance and templates to assist you with realising cost and material savings by improving the resource efficiency of your FM services. We also prepare case studies.

Highlight quote:

The assistance provided to date has influenced 70 individual procurements with a total estimated contract spend of £5.3bn.

What are WRAPs goals for the future?

Our future procurement related work focuses on encouraging organisations to adopt a more circular economy approach to their procurement. This has included developing cost benefit analysis and business cases for alternative business models (such as leasing, managed services, incentivised return, reuse and ways to extend the in use life of the products). We intend to develop a series of case studies highlighting how organisations can replicate the processes to become more circular in their approach through procurement activities.

To view the interview in full, click here.

To read more GPP examples, visit the GPP website. Previous News Alerts are available here.