Results of first reporting exercise on Strategic Procurement from the EC

On 20 May 2021, the European Commission (EC) published a report on the Implementation and Best Practices of National Procurement Policies in the EU Internal Market. The report reflects the contributions provided by the EU Member States (MS) in monitoring actions which took place during the entire year of 2017.

The report mentions that a quarter of the MS cited difficulties with purchasers formulating proper and meaningful Award criteria, including those involving strategic public procurement (green, socially responsible and innovative), and establishing a relevant link with the subject matter of the procurement. Clear patterns were also observed showing: preference of using lowest price as an award criterion (seen as simpler and more objective) with best price-quality ratio used in limited cases, due to fears of risks in compliance audits; no or little prior market research resulting in non-realistic or outdated specifications; use of shortest possible deadlines for submitting tenders or requests to participate, and short deadlines for contract execution; imposing too many selection criteria or not imposing any at all.

In terms of green public procurement (GPP) specifically, one of the main challenges cited is the difficulty to foster GPP practices due to the missing legal obligation for contracting authorities to use environmental criteria in tendering procedures. Many MS reported the absence of data on the use of GPP, and although many have included guidance on how to incorporate green criteria in procurement procedures, only some of them explain how to assess those criteria in the evaluation stages.

Preparing the groundwork to improve action on GPP in Lithuania

Arūnė Andrulionienė is a Senior Advisor at the Public Procurement Office (PPO) in Lithuania – the body which implements and supervises policy and implementation of the law on public procurement. Arūnė is an enthusiast and promoter of sustainable public procurement in Lithuania.

Can you briefly tell us about the level of implementation of green public procurement (GPP) in Lithuania currently? The total value of public procurement was €5.6 billion in 2020 (€6.2 billion in 2019) – which makes up 11.4 percent of Lithuania’s gross domestic product (GDP). There are about 4,000 contracting authorities in Lithuania. It’s a large number for as small country, so only 31 percent (by value) of public procurement are above the thresholds.

According to the Government’s National Green Procurement Implementation Programme, set up in 2017, Lithuania had a target of reaching 50 percent GPP by 2019 and 2020. But these goals were not achieved. The absence of progress provides clear evidence of insufficient policy implementation actions concerning GPP.

To read the interview in full, click here.

Interview

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GPP News Alert

Issue no. 106 | July 2021

GPP good practice

Kantoor2023: a sustainable and circular building in Brussels (Government of Flanders, Belgium)

In 2017, the Agency for Facility Operations from the Government of Flanders launched a Competitive Procedure with Negotiation for the procurement of the design and construction of a building for city employees. The resulting project is a renovation – of the two towers of the World Trade Centre (WTC) in Brussels - with construction of a new block annexed between the towers. From 2023 onwards, 3,900 civil servants will work in Kantoor2023 – a residential-work complex which showcases sustainability and circularity. The site will cover approximately 110,000 m², split between office, residential and hotel accommodation, sports areas, leisure areas, catering and retail businesses.

In terms of circularity, the existing buildings are being used to the maximum. The underground floors and the circulation cores will be preserved, but what will be demolished will be given a new lease of life. In total, this means that 62% of the current building will be reused or recycled. The parts that are broken down are given a new life – for instance, 30,000 tonnes of the broken concrete is going to be used as recycled granulates in the new concrete, and will be Cradle-to-cradle (C2C) certified.

Download the full case study here.

Poland’s first swimming pool meeting passive energy use standards (Municipality of Sulejów, Poland)

In 2018, the small town of Sulejów began a procedure to build Poland’s first ‘passive’ swimming pool – that is, a pool with ultra-low energy requirements for heating and cooling. This was achieved through a combination of high thermal insulation and air-tightness, as well as the use of heat-pump technology and installation of light emitting diodes (LED) lighting.

The building was completed in March 2021, and the desired passive design standard has been achieved. The building has an air-tightness of 0.16 l/h (exceeding the 0.20 l/h required). Its primary energy demand is only 54.91Kwh/m² per year, with lighting making up 55% of the energy demand, air heating and ventilation 36.4%, and hot water 8.3%.

The swimming pool will be officially opened in September 2021.

Download the full case study here.

To read more GPP examples, visit the European Commission’s GPP website. Previous issues of the GPP News Alert are available here.