



Sending a strong signal to the market in favour of 'green' heavy vehicles, Helsinki region

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Why did you develop common GPP criteria for heavy vehicles?

Heavy vehicles are responsible for carbon emissions and other air pollution, and are an important area of focus to meet our CO₂ reduction and other emission targets. That's why the public procurement specialists of several public authorities around the capital area of Finland recently joined forces to set up common environmental criteria for heavy-duty machinery, trucks and other similar services.

The benefit of this approach is that contractors feel more confident in improving their fleet and machinery accordingly, as they know the criteria will be the same regardless of the procurement unit in question. By meeting the criteria, suppliers support the cities in achieving their emission targets as heavy-duty machinery and related transport services are significant source of emissions.

The initiative has been formed by the [Urban Environment Division of Helsinki City](#), [Helsinki City Construction Services](#) [Stara](#),

How did you develop your common procurement criteria?

First, the public procurement specialists from the participating public authorities gathered their own data on vehicle and machinery use from within their organisations. This included volumes of use, current environmental requirements applied, as well as a list of present and potential contractors. At the same time, research into sustainability criteria for public procurement already available was carried out. The [EU GPP Criteria for Transport](#) were one of the sources used to help define the scope of the criteria we developed.

Based on the information collected from the public authorities, a process of market engagement

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with contracting organisations and associations - such as [Infra Contractors Association in Finland](#) - was carried out. We sent a questionnaire addressing the status of their present fleet and machinery, fuel types used and reporting systems in place. Suppliers were asked how quickly they were ready to purchase more environmentally-friendly fleets or machinery, change their fuel type or consider joining the [Responsibility Model for Road Transport Enterprises](#). The latter is a voluntary initiative run by the Finnish Transport Safety Agency addressing environmental and quality aspects, among others.

Following analysis of the results of the questionnaire, a set of minimum environmental criteria/requirements was drafted. This draft was sent to everybody involved for comments.

After this second round of market engagement, the final version of the environmental criteria was put together. The criteria include emission standards, fuel type used, fuel consumption measurements, use of the Responsibility Model for Road Transport Enterprises, and standards for washing tyres.

The criteria have been prepared for two temporal phases in the form of a roadmap - from 2018 to 2023. The first phase covers the years 2018 – 2020 and the second 2021 – 2023. The procurement unit decide which of the criteria to implement and whether these should be of a compulsory nature (as technical specifications) or as award criteria. Also, the weight given to each criterion should be determined on a case-by-case basis. After three years, the criteria should be more stringent, as provided by the roadmap.

The entire process took about six months to finalise - from the first

meeting to the publishing of the final roadmap version.

Could you tell us about the first results of the initiative?

Currently, all the cities, companies and authorities involved are marketing the criteria internally, as well as talking about its existence in their wider networks. There is also a plan to organise a bigger event where the procurers and the bidders will meet face-to-face to talk about the criteria, as well as past lessons learnt from each other and how to move forward. Implementing the criteria will take place in due course. For example, HSY is applying it to a current tender for sewer condition assessment.

The initiative has shown us that cooperation between different public procurers, contractors and other organisations is possible! Data gathering and analysis takes some time; however, it's also exciting to

realise how interested and motivated different players are to agree on the terms and conditions. Even if it was not the initial intention of this process, one can see that it could be fairly easy to apply it in other towns in Finland, or even across Europe.

Whilst I'm aware of the importance of market engagement when carrying out sustainable public procurement, this was the first time in my career that I used it with such a wide focus. This will encourage us at HSY, and the other authorities involved in the initiative, to carry out similar processes in future, as the experience was very fruitful indeed. In fact, our next initiative is already on its way: how public procurement can reduce the impact of detrimental chemicals in the environment.