

How local authorities spend their budgets responsibly

GREEN PURCHASING GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE



Praxisleitfaden Umweltfreundliche
Beschaffung

Guide de bonne pratique des
achats verts

Guia de bones pràctiques en la
compra verda

Guia de buenas prácticas en la
compra verde

Guida delle buone pratiche per gli
acquisti verdi

Miljöanpassad upphandling
– goda exempel

Hyviä toimintatapoja ympäristöä
säästäviin hankintoihin

Gids van Beste Praktijken voor
Milieubewuste Aanbestedingen

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Foreword

Public procurement represents 14% of GDP for the EU as a whole – over 1000 billion Euro. Publicly purchased items come from every sector of the economy – from pencils to power stations – and public procurement can thus have a considerable impact on the marketplace and on sustainable consumption. It is therefore very important that public authorities set an example in this field and seek to procure goods, services and works that do not harm the environment.

As Commissioner responsible for the Environment, I am committed to action in this field, in order to clarify and promote the integration of the environment in public purchasing. I am convinced that a deep integration of both areas is possible, without endangering essential Community principles such as those of transparency and non-discrimination. For these reasons I welcome the publishing of this Green Purchasing Good Practice Guide. I appreciate the practical way in which it is written and I hope that other public authorities will be inspired by the examples of concrete action contained in the guide. Local authorities in particular will find the best practice from the seven towns and cities referred to in the guide useful – 80 % of the EU's population live in towns and cities, and their local authorities can reduce environmental impacts significantly through managing their administrations, public procurement and amenities in an environmentally friendly way.

At the start of the guide you will find a description of the EU legal framework which governs public procurement in EU Member States. On 10 May 2000 the European Commission adopted two Proposals to modify this existing legislation. These amendments will both make the system simpler, and, for the first time, incorporate an explicit reference to environmental considerations. This will make it clear that public authorities, just like private operators, are entitled to strike a balance between factors such as price, quality, aesthetic criteria and environmental needs.

This is not the only action we have taken to play our part in facilitating the greening of public procurement. The European Commission intends to issue an Interpretative Communication on Public Procurement and the Environment. This should clarify how and when environmental considerations can be taken into account in public procurement. Other actions are currently being examined and, for me personally, greening of public procurement will remain a priority.

Greening of public procurement can make a major contribution to sustainable development. It is an area in which every public authority, no matter how large or small, can play its part. I regard this guide as helpful for anyone who wishes to know how to integrate environmental considerations into the purchasing policy of a public authority. I trust that you find that it is a source of useful information.



Margot WALLSTRÖM,
Commissioner for the Environment



“For me personally, greening of public procurement will remain a priority”

*Margot Wallström,
EU Commissioner for the
Environment*

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Executive summary

In a number of environmental fields, traditional environmental policy has led to significant achievements. There are, however, a range of environmental problems still waiting to be solved by the industrialised societies: greenhouse effect, continuing acidification, loss of soils and growing health problems due to air pollutants and dispersed toxic substances. It is obvious that this cannot be done by hierarchic “command and control” protection alone. Therefore environmental experts and recent policy documents unanimously call for integrating the consideration of environmental aspects throughout society and in all fields of policy.

Public purchasing, as one of the environmentally most significant fields in direct responsibility of governments, plays a significant role in this respect. The present guide provides information on how to turn this notion into action. It comprises the experiences and recommendations of practitioners who are participants of BIG-Net (“Buy It Green”- Network of European municipal purchasers).

In Chapter 1, purchasers will be provided with information on a number of **instruments** relevant for green purchasing. First, the chapter describes methods used for identifying “greener” products: Life Cycle Analysis (LCA), eco-labelling and direct environmental assessment. The chapter continues by discussing the relationship to environmental management systems (EMS) in two ways: How can an EMS within a local authority reinforce green purchasing and how can requiring an EMS from suppliers have a positive environmental impact? Thirdly, Local Agenda 21 processes are identified as an important stimulus for green purchasing.

Chapter 2 sets out the **legal obligations** purchasing has to fulfil. It clarifies that, within the scope of European legislation, taking environmental criteria into account is possible as long as the internal market principles of non-discrimination, objectivity and proportionality are met. In addition, the EU Treaty principle of a high-level environmental protection calls for integrating environmental criteria into public purchasing.

Chapter 3 explains **how to start** with green purchasing in a modest way. By taking the example of the City of Dunkerque, France, where recycled paper was introduced into the administration, a six-step procedure for thorough testing of samples was recommended.

Chapter 4 highlights an example where parental concern about health issues resulted in the **green procurement of canteen food**. In the City of Ferrara, Italy, this initiative was taken further to the Local Agenda 21 process currently carried out by the local community.

Chapter 5 leaves the field of single-product initiatives to one of the most extensive initiatives currently taken by a local authority in Europe. The City of Kolding, Denmark, decided in 1998 to achieve a 100% rate of public procurement taking environmental criteria into account by 2002. To this end, the **environmental unit and the purchasing department** agreed on an **advanced co-operation scheme**.

While the previous example shows how procurement may be centralised by assigning it to one department, Chapter 6 describes how the City of Pori, Finland, works with **decentral purchasing structures**. A working group of all departments for eco-procurement was established. Another characteristic of this project was the set-up of a local “Re-use” agency, which enables departments to make use of devices not needed by other departments.

Chapter 7 is focused on an important aspect in the context of stakeholders concerned with purchasing applying environmental criteria, i.e. **training**. The City of Göteborg has applied a systematic training schedule not only for purchasing officers, but also for politicians, suppliers and users of the purchased goods.

Exchange among colleagues is another precondition for motivation. This is the topic of Chapter 8, which describes the **networking activities among local authorities** in the State of Vorarlberg Austria. Following a survey on the needs of the purchasers, a manual was developed, the application of which is discussed in meetings of purchasers from different municipalities. The smaller local authorities in Vorarlberg are additionally motivated by a prize to be awarded to the most successful purchaser.

The final example integrates a number of aspects in describing the **overall strategy** the City of Copenhagen, Denmark, has formulated and is executing currently. Based on a general green purchasing policy stating the principles to be followed, the City defined a number of concrete targets to be achieved for certain products. Results are monitored, so that appropriate action can be taken within appropriate time limits.

The seven municipalities' experiences are collated in a concluding Chapter, which summarises the key elements of a **green purchasing strategy**. It also provides a list of rules to be remembered and mistakes to be avoided.

The final Chapter provides an **outlook** on topics likely to gain more importance for green purchasers in the future, which are on the agenda of the BIG-Net. Committed purchasers are invited to join the discussions and to support the movement for an eco-responsible way of spending public funds.

Introduction

Green purchasing means basing all purchasing decisions and allocation of contracts on environmental criteria along with other criteria such as price and quality. Not only does green purchasing positively contribute to environmental protection at a local level, it also creates a powerful market demand for greening the production and serves as a model to influence the behaviour of companies, private institutions and households.

European local authorities can, to a significant extent, “green” the hundreds of billions of Euro they spend every year for product and services. The key to it is integrating environmental requirements in the procurement of buildings, food for public canteens, health care and cleaning products, fleets, the IT sector, office equipment, material or furniture. In more concrete terms, this implies direct cost savings, avoiding follow-up costs due to a better management, enhancing the quality and the lifespan of products and services and improving staff and citizens’ health.

A survey conducted in 1996 by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) found out that most municipal procurement officers lack product information on green goods and services. They additionally face legal and technical problems concerning the integration of environmental criteria in calls for tender.

This is why ICLEI and the City of Copenhagen, at that time chair of the “Buy It Green”-Network of Municipal Purchasers in Europe (BIG-Net), developed the concept of this Green Purchasing Good Practice Guide. The authors based the contents of this document on inputs from the local authorities portrayed, but also on the discussions going on within the Network.

The guide addresses public purchasers and aims at assisting local and regional authorities in realising green procurement as part of their sustainable development process and helping them to comply with the European Union (EU) framework at a local level.

The first chapter describes how the environment can be taken into account when purchasing products and services. Chapter two sets out the European



Using bio-oil in the forestry industry, Pori, Finland

“Greening of public procurement can make a major contribution to sustainable development”

*Margot Wallström,
EU Commissioner for the
Environment*

Today, our Earth’s resources are being consumed at a rate which does not allow our planet to replace them quickly enough. The output of human activities (waste or emissions) has reached a level our natural environment can no longer compensate. The footprint of human activities on Earth not only endangers the survival of natural ecosystems or human health but is also responsible for the following global problems:

- The greenhouse effect causes the serious danger of the oceans and air temperatures rising.
- The hole in the ozone layer increases the amount of dangerous solar radiation penetrating through the atmosphere.
- Acidification impacts forests, lakes, watercourses and groundwater, causing the extinction of many animal species, affecting human health and endangering the existence of vast forest areas.
- Eutrophication depletes the oxygen from water, endangering sea life as well as freshwater organisms.
- Toxic substances put the health of all living organisms at risk, including human beings, by impacting the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat.
- Noise and air pollution decrease the quality of urban life.

The production, use and disposal of the goods we consume largely contribute to all these “environmental problems” mentioned above.

Being responsible for spending some 15% of the European Gross National Product, public purchasers can contribute considerably to decreasing the environmental impact of the goods and services they procure and foster an orientation towards a more sustainable relationship between human beings and their natural environment.

Box 1: Why do we need eco-responsible purchasing?



The cleaning service team uses eco-products, Dunkerque, France

and national legal framework for green purchasing. Chapter three presents innovative examples of green purchasing activities, describing the practical experiences and methods developed by Dunkerque (France), Pori (Finland), Göteborg (Sweden), Kolding (Denmark), Ferrara (Italy), Vorarlberg (Austria) and København (Denmark). The main part of the guide concludes by stating the lessons learned by using the presented tools in practice, and provides conclusions on the best green purchasing practices. The final chapter presents an outlook on the future agenda of the Network, inviting purchasers to join in.

The authors have collected and translated the most relevant practical information, adjusted it to the European context and redistributed it. Finally, they added a presentation of the European and national legal provisions applicable. The result is a practical tool for product evaluation and selection, and for integrating environmental criteria into calls for tenders and tendering procedures.

The project has been co-funded by the European Commission DG Environment, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, the City of København (Denmark), the City of Göteborg (Sweden), the City of Kolding (Denmark), the Stockholm MFO AB (Sweden), the Swedish Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Procurement and Efektia Ltd. (representing the Finish Association of Local and Regional Authorities). The authors would like to thank these institutions for their generosity.

1 Focussing on the environment – the toolkit

1.1 How to identify an “environmentally preferable product”

Eco, green, greener, environmental, environmentally friendly, eco-responsible... The number of qualifiers used to define products and services, which do not impact the environment as strongly as their conventional counterparts, seems endless and confuses purchasers.

On the assumption that each product always impacts its environment, it is quite difficult to find a definition to suit a substantial variety of goods and services. This guide, however, will not enter into a linguistic debate but provide some hints on how to identify “environmentally preferable products” and use this basis as a working definition.

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), as the scientifically most reliable method, studies the environmental impact of a product from its design to its disposal, taking into account all the steps in between: raw material extraction, manufacturing, packaging, transport, storage and utilisation. In this sense, an “environmentally preferable product” is a product which has an overall minimum environmental impact throughout its lifespan, in comparison to other products or services serving the same purpose and having the same functional qualities.

This method of identifying green products is quite sophisticated and, hence, has its limits in that there is a lack of availability of LCAs for each product group and in each particular situation. What’s more, going so much into detail, as a rule, LCA can hardly be seen as an appropriate tool to be considered in the whole diversity of purchasing decisions.

A second and more straightforward way for a purchaser to identify a green product are eco-labels. Purchasing a product labelled “Blue Angel”, “Nordic Swan”, “Austrian Tree” or “EU flower” - to quote only some of the most famous and reliable eco-labels - is a good hint that the purchased item is, in its category, environmentally favourable.

You may find criteria for eco-label awards on the following Internet sites:

<http://www.gen.gr.jp/members.html> - Overview on eco-labels and their Web sites provided by the Global Eco-Labeling Network (GEN).

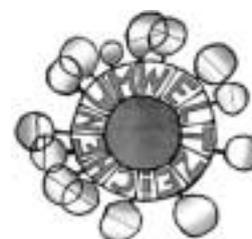
<http://www.snf.se/bmv/english/criteria.htm> - Provides lists of the criteria applied for granting the Swedish eco-label “Bra Miljöval” (Good Environmental Choice) to the product groups: cleansers, dishwasher detergent, laundry detergent, soap and shampoo, stain removers and bleach, toilet cleansers, washing-up liquid, electricity, textile and public transport.

<http://www.gealabel.org> - Provides information on which brand of TV and audio appliances to buy in eight European countries, according to energy saving standards.

<http://www.blauer-engel.de/Englisch/index.htm> - Offers information brochures detailing the experiences gained in 20 years of German eco-labelling and lists the Blue Angel criteria for a range of nearly 100 products of the following groups: “Paper, office supplies and furniture”, “Electrical products and appliances”, “Heating plants and solar technology”, “Build and renovate”, “Sanitary and hygiene supplies”, “Canteen and kitchen supplies”, “Horticulture”, “Traffic”, “Batteries”...

Life Cycle Assessment

Eco-labels





<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ecolabel/prodgr.htm> - Gives the environmental criteria to be complied in order to be awarded the EU Flower eco-label. Products listed: washing machines, refrigerators, tissue paper, dishwashers, soil improvers, mattresses, indoor paints and varnishes, footwear, textile products, desktop and portable computers, laundry detergents, detergent for dishwashers, copying paper and light bulbs.

<http://www.svanen.nu/Nordic/Kritindex.htm> - A Web site providing the criteria fulfilled by the products and services of 24 product groups, which have been assigned the Nordic Swan eco-label.

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/office/html/Default.htm> - Criteria for green offices.

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/procure/index.htm> - Gives product information for about 40 products of the product groups construction, landscaping, paper, park and recreation, transportation and vehicles.

Box 2: Internet sites on eco-label criteria

The high efficiency of this method is however limited by the large quantity of products without eco-labelling, by the existence of many confusing and more or less significant so-called eco-labels and by the legal restrictions to requiring eco-labelled products in tendering procedures.

Contacting all responsible organisations in order to find out whether an eco-label is available on a certain product category would be a rather strenuous task. A much faster alternative is offered on the Global Ecolabelling Network's Web site. Here you can find a database,¹ to be searched by product groups, displaying the existing eco-labels.

When using eco-labels in tendering processes, some preconditions have to be regarded in order to avoid excluding some environmentally preferable products while fulfilling the legal requirements. This is because eco-labelling schemes as a rule are voluntary, and not all companies fulfilling their criteria apply for participation. For example a company offering organic food produced under very strict environmental conditions might not have applied for getting an eco-label which has been designed for mainstream producers and therefore provides more compliant conditions.

Because of this, when demanding an eco-label always add the words "or similar requirements" and attach the criteria of the eco-label asked for to the call for tender.

Eco-labelling criteria are generally published by the awarding institution. Many of them are already available on the Internet. Even if there is no eco-label exactly matching the sort of product you want to purchase, it can be useful to draw on the criteria set up for a similar product.

Box 3: How to use eco-labels in purchasing

Practical hints

When unable to refer to a Life Cycle Analysis or an eco-label, purchasers may also identify a greener product by carrying out a simplified study of the product's life cycle as suggested in Table 1. The two first columns of this table represent the product's characteristics and some of the ecological alternatives proposed to green a product at each stage of its life cycle. The third column identifies the environmental area (material, energy, emissions, waste) on which the choice of environmental alternatives has a positive impact. The last column proposes practical examples of environmental choices to be initiated by purchasers.

No matter from where the environmental criteria are taken, a green product/service has, of course, to fulfil its functions as well as its conventional equivalent.

¹ <http://www.gen.gr.jp/product.html>

Green products should not be chosen just for the sake of it, but also for economic reasons. This implies a strict assessment of the need they are supposed to fulfil and an evaluation of their cost. The latter goes beyond the very purchase cost taking into account the cost of using and disposing of the chosen item. It may also entail a decision to reduce the amount of products purchased or to fall back on an existing product, instead of purchasing a new one.

Product characteristics	Ecological alternative	Environmental consequence ²				ACTION - Examples -
		MATERIAL	ENERGY	EMISSIONS	WASTE	
Material composition	Recycled material	X	X		X	Use recycled toilet and towel papers. Procure refuse sacks made of recycled plastic.
	Renewable material	X				Choose recycled concrete or crushed rock rather than gravel as a construction material.
	No toxic substance			X	X	Use chlorine-free paper, PCB-free electronics or PVC-free floor coverings.
Transport	Short distance		X	X		Buy your fruits and vegetables from local producers.
	Transport means		X	X		Make use of rail and boat versus road and plane transport.
Manufacturing	Taking into account the environment	X	X	X	X	Choose a producer which has an environmental management system.
Packaging	Reduction	X			X	Prefer recyclable, easily returnable or, if possible, no packaging at all.
Product use	Durability	X			X	Buy long-term guaranteed carpets.
	Repairability / Upgradability	X			X	Choose computers which can be upgraded and do not need to be replaced completely when becoming outdated.
	Compatibility with equipment / user habits	X	X	X	X	When changing for a recycled paper, test its compatibility with copiers and printers before distributing it throughout your organisation.
	Energy requirements		X			Choose low energy light bulbs to save energy (and reduce your annual cost by up to 70%).
	Safety for users	X	X	X	X	Use alternative pesticides or alternative methods of pest control.
End of life	Re-use potential	X			X	Buy refillable toner cartridges for laser and ink jet printers.
	Recyclability	X	X		X	When buying white goods, make sure that they can easily be dismantled and their material recycled.
	Disposal			X	X	Use biodegradable synthetic vegetable-based hydraulic oil for fleet maintenance.

Table 1: Simple approach of identifying the environmental impacts of products along their life cycle

² The decrease in the consumption of material, energy use and the production of waste and emissions is part of the way towards sustainability. The „X“ shows the kind of influence each purchasing decision can have on those environmental factors.

1.2 How can green purchasing benefit from EMAS or ISO 14 001?

1.2.1 Self-commitment to an environmental management system

An increasing number of public authorities are implementing an environmental management system (EMS). Having been adopted from the private sector, the central idea of this approach is to motivate and enable all parts of administration to improve the environmental performance of their operations. EMS generally follows a management cycle, as shown in Figure 1.

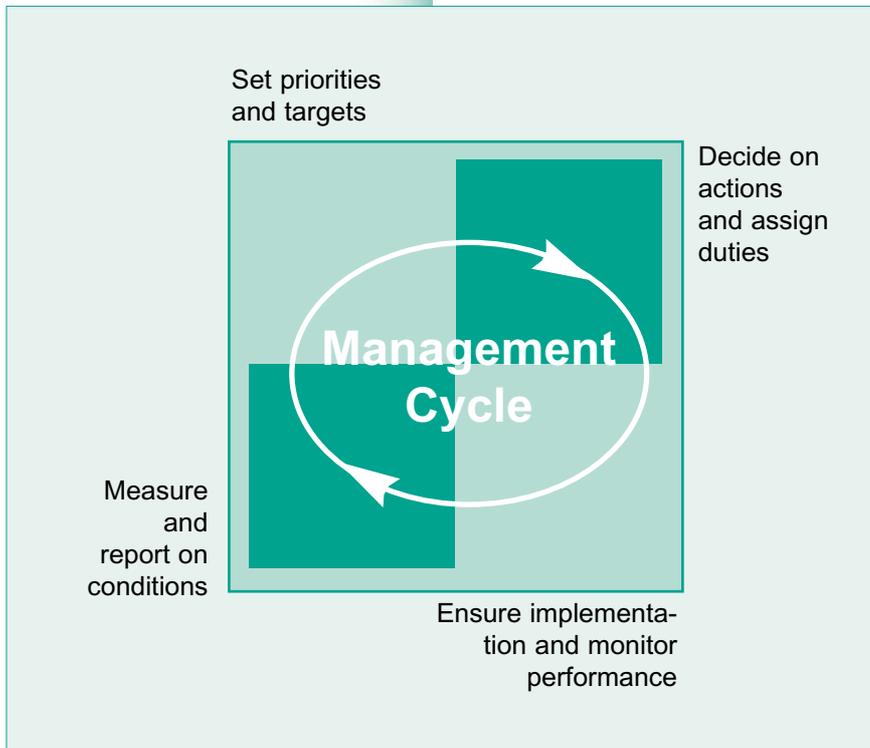


Figure 1: The environmental management cycle

The central achievement of EMS consists in increasing the coherence between political priorities and targets, steps taken and reporting mechanisms on these steps. Without EMS, putting the policies into practice is left to individual officers.

Especially with decentralised purchasing structures, it is important that the purchasing policy be implemented at all levels.

EMS can have a large impact on the public authority, especially concerning issues of purchasing. Buying goods and services is something that almost everyone is involved in at some time, and awareness is rising continually as policies are being implemented systematically across the whole municipal council. Also,

if there are "pockets of resistance", pioneers can use EMS to boost "greener" purchasing.

1.2.2 Obligation for producers

Apart from the authorities' commitment to implement an EMS, contractors may be obliged to achieve an EMS certificate during the term of the contract. Such certificates are granted for those registering according to a public norm, the two relevant being EMAS and ISO14 001.



ISO 14 001 Certificate, Göteborg, Sweden

The legal framework for an "Environmental Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)" was set up by the European Union. It can be applied to private businesses in the industrial and the service sector as well as to units of public administration, such as technical services, utilities, schools or departments. The 14 001 standard of the "International Standard Organisation (ISO)" contains similar requirements. In both cases, an external auditor certifies that the organisational structures set up are suitable to achieve the environmental targets defined by the organisation and to comply with the existing environmental regulations.

Box 4: EMAS and ISO 14 001

Large contractors are quicker in taking up the requirements to implement an EMS. Many small contractors, however, still need support. Public authorities

can support this process by providing advice on environmental policy and practice to small and medium-sized enterprises.

Erdmenger, Christoph / Burzacchini, Andrea / Levett, Roger: Local Loops – How Environmental Management Cycles Contribute To Local Sustainability, Office for official publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg 2000.

Box 5: Further reading on EMS

1.3 Green purchasing and Local Agenda 21

Promoting green purchasing independently of other environmental fields or without including it in an overall sustainable development strategy could lead to confusion within environmental departments. This chapter aims at assisting environmental managers in local authorities to establish the link between the Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) process and green purchasing activities.

These two areas might appear to be competing for two reasons. On the one hand, starting environmental activities requires prioritising the areas of action, and LA 21 and green purchasing usually do not come as “one package”. On the other hand, the EU Common Market principles (cf. Sub-section 2.1) and the number of producers offering environmentally preferable products encourage trade with geographically spread contractors, at the cost of the LA 21 preference for local producers.

The implementation of a LA 21 process and of green purchasing activities however seeks to achieve the overall aim of sustainability. They can therefore benefit from each other in several ways.

The integration of environmental considerations into the purchasing procedures of the local authority can be identified as one of the (priority) goals of the LA 21 process.

The promotion of green purchasing among municipal staff and suppliers can benefit from the experience gained through the communication and participation methods used in the framework of the LA 21 process (and vice versa if green purchasing precedes the LA 21 process). Moreover, public support expressed through LA 21 activities can convince municipal staff to green the practices of their administrations and particularly their purchases. From the opposite perspective, the exemplary role of public authorities which green their purchases can motivate citizens and suppliers to get involved in the LA 21 process.

Far from discriminating against local producers, the enlargement of calls for tender to a larger number of firms is an incentive for them to become more competitive by greening their activities and offering more environmentally preferable products. By this, they additionally contribute to environmental protection. LA 21 and green purchasing activities can be started off in parallel, demonstrating the commitment of a municipality and its staff to save their environment.



The city of Ferrara is regarded as the bicycle capital of Italy

Integration of green purchasing in the LA 21 process

Benefit and experiences to be transferred from one to the other

Motivation for local suppliers to offer green products



2 Legal provisions and framework

Public purchasing is a strictly regulated area, and introducing specific (i.e. environmental) criteria for choosing a certain product or tender must respect the established European and national legislation.

Once the purchaser has decided to implement green purchasing, it is crucial that his/her activities comply with the legal conditions. First and foremost, the question is: Am I legally allowed to buy and to require environmentally friendly goods and services?

2.1 European policy and legal framework

In EU law, the main principles governing public procurement are the following. Basic Treaty provisions on non-discrimination, transparency, and proportionality apply to **all public procurement contracts**. In addition, the rules governing public procurement contracts for goods, works or services above a certain value are harmonised in European Directives. The thresholds from which these Directives apply depend on the type and purpose of the contract.

2.1.1 Rules applying to all public procurement contracts

The principle of **freedom of contract** means that a contracting authority is free, in defining the goods or services that it intends to purchase, to choose products and services that correspond to its environmental policy. Of course, this freedom has to be exercised in line with the provisions of the EC-Treaty. These are, notably:

A city is free to decide that it wants to buy non-polluting buses for its public transport, as long as this is clearly mentioned in the subject-matter of the contract.

- The obligation not to discriminate on grounds of nationality
- The promotion of sustainable development and environmental integration.
- The free movement of people, goods and services across the Community.
- The principle of proportionality

All of these principles need to be weighed and borne in mind by the public purchaser for all contracts covered by EU law.

There is a considerable body of case law from the European Court of Justice which clarifies the interpretation of these provisions of the EC-Treaty.

“Public authorities... are entitled to strike a balance between factors such as price, quality, aesthetic criteria and environmental needs”

*Margot Wallström,
EU-Commissioner for the
Environment*

There is extensive case-law on “mandatory requirements”, i.e. requirements which can justify interference in trade/free movement of goods between Member States. This case-law gives a broad interpretation of possible exceptions to free movement of goods in the context of Article 28 (former 30). The initial reference case is “Cassis de Dijon” (120/78) of 1979. Environment has been explicitly mentioned on the (non-exhaustive) list of “mandatory requirements” in the “Danish bottles case” (302/86) of 1988.

There are also many cases on the explicit exceptions to free movement of goods authorised under Article 30 (former 36) of the EC-Treaty and, amongst them, environmental exceptions. When Article 30 applies, even not indistinctly applicable measures may be justified.

This jurisprudence gives many opportunities to green public procurement, if certain basic conditions are respected. The approach has to be distinctly applicable to domestic and foreign products, it has to be necessary and proportionate in order to achieve the environmental objective (no alternative measures less restrictive to free movement of goods should be available).

The position of the Commission should also be considered. This position is stated in several documents (Green Papers, Communications, etc.) and is binding on the Commission.

The Commission Communication on public procurement in the European Union of 1998 (COM [98] 143) contains a chapter on environment. The Commission Communication on Single Market and Environment of 1999 (COM [99] 263) contains a chapter on public procurement.

2.1.2 Rules applying to contracts covered by the Public Procurement Directives

The harmonised field is mainly covered by four European Directives: Council Directives 92/50/EEC (services), 93/36/EEC (supplies), 93/37/EEC (works) and Parliament and Council Directive 97/52/EEC (amends the former Directives). These Directives establish obligations and procedures regarding public procurement (rules governing specifications and contract documents, rules on advertising and transparency, conduct of the procedure, etc.). They do not contain explicit references to environment. This does of course not mean that environmental requirements can not be integrated into public purchases covered by the Directives. Authorities may opt for environmentally sound products or services by specifying what they require in the call for tender.

A local authority is free to buy window frames in wood instead of PVC, simply by specifying that that is what they require.

Other phases of the public procurement procedures also allow taking into account environmental concerns, but the specific wording of the relevant provisions in the Directives and how they apply to the relevant call for tender must be checked very carefully.

According to the Directives, any supplier who has been convicted of an offence concerning his professional misconduct may be excluded from participation in tender procedures. Non-compliance with environmental legislation could be qualified as an offence concerning professional misconduct.

When award of the contract is made to the most economically advantageous offer, various criteria can be taken into consideration by the contracting authorities: quality, price, technical merit, etc. The list contained in the Directives is **not exhaustive**. Environment can be an award criterion under certain conditions. The current interpretation is that there needs to be an economic advantage for the purchasing authority attributable to the product or the service that is the object of the procurement. This would definitely allow aspects such as the costs of maintenance, or the treatment of waste to be considered as an award criterion.

Environment can be integrated in the contract clauses relating to the execution of the contract. A city may require beforehand that a work will be executed in line with certain environmental requirements (the construction of a road with the obligation to erect anti-noise walls).

The jurisprudence of the Court of Justice clarifies the possibility of greening public tenders to which the public procurement Directives apply. In addition, the EC-Treaty rules prevail on the Directives. This signifies that all relevant provisions of the EC-Treaty, including both environment and internal market

A recent judgement in Commission/France of 26 September 2000 opens the door more widely to the integration of social requirements (and, by analogy, to other criteria like environment) in the contract award criteria.

provisions, apply to the Directives³ (see above). Nevertheless, public authorities should act with due care, because the current position of the Commission is that the purpose of public procurement is essentially economic.

2.1.3 Leeway offered to green purchasing



The opportunities to green public procurement are real, but not unlimited. There is more freedom to do so in situations where the public procurement Directives do not apply. The Commission has announced that it will adopt an Interpretative Communication clarifying the possibilities for taking environmental considerations in public procurement into account. On 10 May 2000, the Commission adopted two Proposals for Directives on public procurement that simplify and restructure the public procurement rules. Once adopted by Parliament and Council, these Directives will replace the existing Directives on public procurement. If the Proposals are adopted as such, the Directives on public procurement will, for the first time, contain an explicit reference to environment in the contract award criteria.

2.2 Green procurement in national legislation

The European directives and the Interpretative Paper co-ordinate procurement procedures for contracts, whose financial value exceed a certain threshold. Below this threshold value, which may vary according to the nature of the purchase, purchasing operations are subject to national procurement rules.

Denmark

The Danish Environmental Protection Act (June 1994) requires public authorities to use, to the extent possible, goods or products which contain recycled or recyclable materials or which, for other environmental reasons, are to be preferred to other goods or products fulfilling the same purpose. As a consequence, national purchasing departments take environmental considerations into account on an equal footing with other considerations such as price, quality or worker's protection. Local authorities are encouraged to act likewise.

Germany

In Germany, the federal waste law "Kreislaufwirtschafts- und Abfallgesetz" requires public institutions to buy green products rather than other goods. Additionally, state governments and municipalities have enacted directives, which require the use of environmental criteria in procurement procedures, on the condition that those criteria appear in the product description part of the call for tender. In the evaluation phase of the tender, principles of overall economic efficiency and saving must be respected.

Netherlands

Since the publication of the first National Environmental Policy Plan (NEPP) in 1990, the Dutch government has explicitly recognised public procurement as an instrument of environmental policy. Additional environmental requirements to the framework legislation on public procurement are stated in several governmental environmental plans. These requirements are in principle non-binding, but the government has provided some strong incentives to stimulate compliance. The Memorandum on Products and Environment, issued in 1996, recommended the addition of environmental clauses to invitations to tender and terms of delivery.

France

French public authorities can mention environmental criteria in calls for tender as long as the object of the contract strictly keeps to the nature and extent of the needs to be satisfied. Environmental requirements are more likely to be inserted into technical requirements rather than in the selection criteria of the call for tender.

United Kingdom

In Great Britain, environmental criteria can be inserted in the procurement procedures at different stages and councils are free to decide on their own

³ Article 30 does not apply where harmonising legislation has been passed, such as the public procurement directives.

technical criteria to be mentioned in the call for tender, which, however, must not prevent competition. Each local authority decides on how much emphasis it will put on environmental criteria when allocating the contract.

As early as in the 1980s, Austrian national, state and local authorities began to implement activities on green purchasing. The Austrian Federal Procurement Act⁴ and the Austrian Norm on Procurement of Services⁵ set the legal obligation to take environmental criteria into account when issuing calls for tender.

According to Finnish and Swedish legislation, tenders are selected in the light of overall assessment considerations such as cost, delivery times, regular costs, quality, aesthetic, functional and technical characteristics, service, technical support, environmental impact etc. Those considerations must, if possible, be ranked in order of importance for the tender evaluation or at least indicate which ones will be given a special priority.

The differences described above are summarised in Table 2.

Aspects of national legislation in nine European countries	Greener purchasing is			The environmental criteria is		Prevailing criteria for tender evaluation			
	Legally required	Advised	Allowed	A selection criteria	Part of the technical specifications	Autonomy of municipality in choice	Env criteria have same weight as others	Functional need of the product	Economic efficiency of the product
Denmark	X			X			X		
Germany	X			X					X
The Netherlands		X		X					
France			X		X			X	
United Kingdom			X	X	X	X			
Sweden		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Austria	X				X	X			
Finland			X	X		X			
Italy			X	X	X	X			

Table 2: National legal differences in the field of green purchasing

It can be stated in general that national legislation allows the integration of environmental criteria in the purchasing procedures as long as they are compatible with the four basic principles of non-discrimination, mutual recognition, proportionality and transparency. Environmental criteria specified usually appear as part of the technical specifications, which define the most economical product.

⁴ Bundesvergabegesetz, cf. BGBl. 462/1993, i.d.F. BGBl 56/1997.

⁵ cf. ÖNORM A 2050 (Vergabe von Aufträgen über Leistungen - Ausschreibung, Angebot und Zuschlag - Verfahrensnorm, 1.3.2000).

Austria

Finland / Sweden

General trend

European good practice

The following sections present green purchasing tools put into practice by the municipalities highlighted on the map below. Their goal is not to give an exhaustive description of each municipality's strategy but to learn from their particular experiences. It starts with an example of greening the purchases of a few products (Dunkerque, France) and ends by setting out a municipal strategy (Copenhagen, Denmark). Other topics discussed are: a parents' initiative on organic food (Ferrara, Italy), evaluation tools such as questionnaires (Kolding, Denmark), training instruments (Göteborg and Stockholm, Sweden), regional co-operation on purchasing activities of several small municipalities (Vorarlberg, Austria), and decentralisation of the greening of purchases (Pori, Finland). In describing such a variety of examples the authors hope to cover the full range of issues likely to be raised whenever a local authority opts for greening its procurement activities.

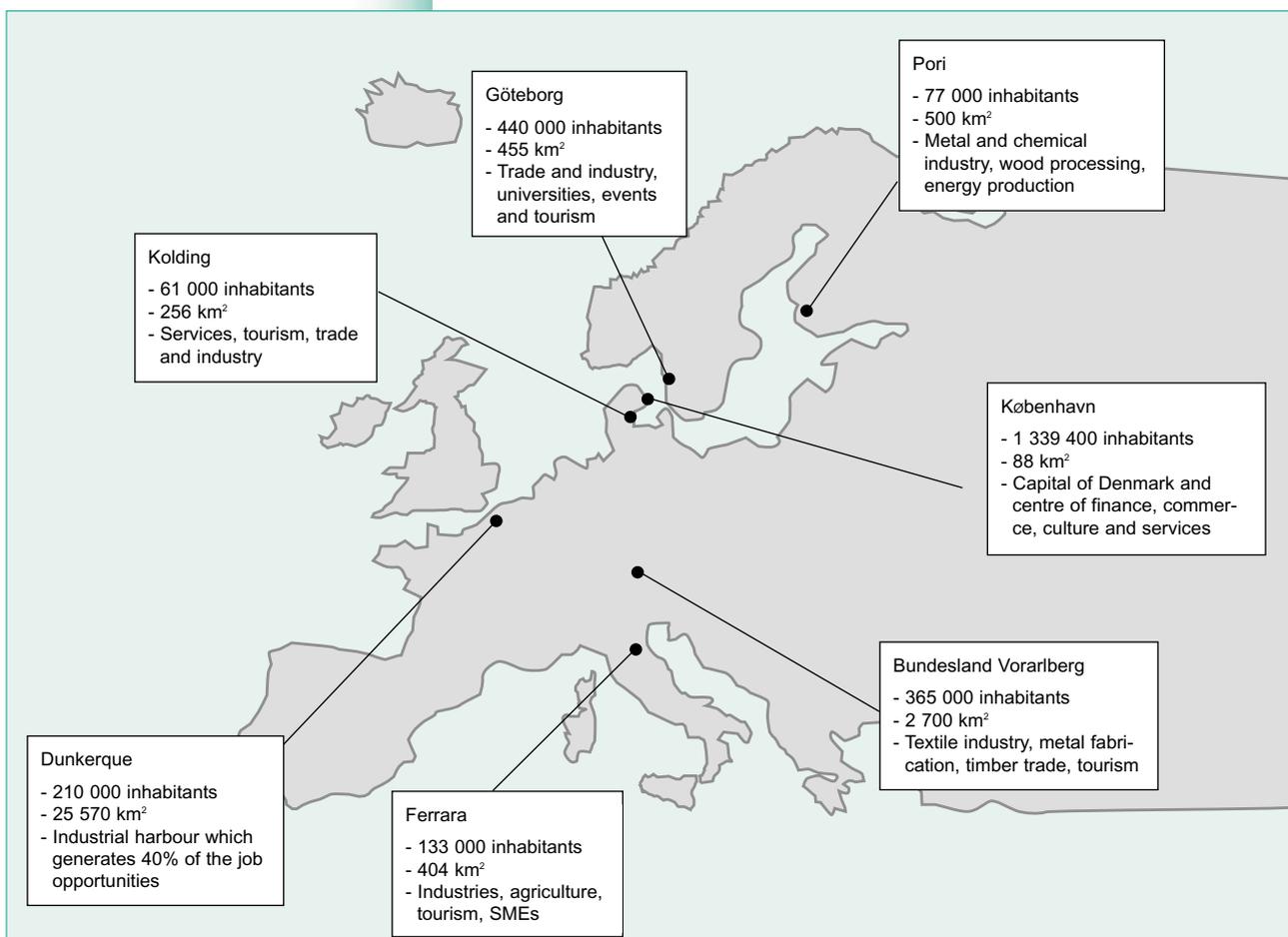


Figure 2: Overview map of the good practice examples

3 It started with a few eco-products... - Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque, France

Getting started can be the hardest step. The range of opportunities is big and running the risk of the green products eventually not being accepted seems too heavy a burden to carry, so there is no clear point where to begin. Without any experience at all, it may also be hard to convince one's colleagues.

The present chapter describes how the Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque started its efforts by concentrating on only a few eco-products.

3.1 Background

Dunkerque is located in France and has 70,000 inhabitants, the Communauté also including the direct surroundings, which make up for another 210,000 inhabitants. At the end of the 1980s, economic difficulties affecting the two main local industries, metallurgy and shipbuilding, led to a high unemployment rate which had severe impacts on the economic, social and urban life of the City.

The Urban District, Region and French State reacted to this situation by joining forces in an approach combining the economic and social development, urban project and environment. The municipality installed an environmental department and the City set about conducting a Local Agenda 21. In 1996, Dunkerque received the European Award for Sustainable Cities.

3.2 Strategy and objectives

The use of more environmentally friendly products is one of the activities initiated within the framework of Dunkerque's sustainable development project. Starting with three target items – cleaning products, paper and paints – the objective is to use a maximum of products not only presenting ecological but also social qualities, such as “fairly traded” goods.

3.3 Successful introduction of eco-products

The environmental department developed a six-step methodology for the introduction of greener products in its administration. This methodology (see box 6 below on “recycled paper”) is applied to each target product which should be purchased green.

Step One: Ask usual suppliers for environmentally preferable products.

About 20 suppliers of recycled paper have been contacted in the Dunkerque region and at the national level. Their addresses could be found in an annual guide “Buying recycled products”⁶, and by contacting several paper mills. Each supplier could offer between one and several recycled papers containing 50 to 100 % recycled materials.

The suppliers had no experience at all with administrations demanding recycled paper. Some of them did not know the official eco-labels and indicated that recycled paper was much more expensive than virgin paper, which is not always true.



The offices of the „Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque“, France



Municipal staff use recycled paper, Dunkerque, France

⁶ „Les produits recyclés, catalogue 99: Prendre aujourd'hui les bonnes décisions pour demain en achetant des produits fabriqués à partir des matières recyclées“, more information at <http://www.produitsrecycles.com>

Step Two: Inform and raise awareness among employees as to the objectives and conditions of the change and the employees' role in it.

The employees and head of the reprography services were orally informed about the proposed use of recycled paper. The head of the printing service was already willing to use recycled paper and aware of the problems which might occur in the copy machines when using this kind of paper. It was suggested he test different sorts of recycled paper.

Some of your colleagues already are in favour of using eco-products. Find and contact them in order to involve them in your green purchasing project.

Step Three: Test the eco-product samples over a few months in order to assess their efficiency, quality and user friendliness and compare them to conventional equivalents.

In Dunkerque, the copy department tested at least one ream of each kind of recycled paper. All the results proved positive.

Step Four: Elaborate a diagnosis from the test results.

The recycled paper to best suit the needs of the Urban Community of Dunkerque was chosen according to the following five aspects:

- Copier/printer compatibility
- Eco-label
- Content of recycled elements
- Price-performance ratio
- Shade of colour

Step Five: Introduce a purchasing procedure aimed at progressively replacing conventional products by eco-products.

First, several documents (fliers, internal information sheets) were printed on recycled paper and distributed to all municipal services. Then, a stock of 400 reams was left with the copy service to be used by all employees of the urban district.

When first introducing the eco-product, employees were not informed of the paper being a recycled one, in order to avoid a priori reactions. Nobody realised that they were using recycled paper.

Step Six: Communicate the results in the municipal newsletter.

"...the most important result has been obtained in the use of recycled paper. At least half of the 77 kg of paper used every day in the municipal administration is of recycled origin. With the same quality and a cheaper price (3 Francs per ream), that was worth it. The goal of the Mission Environment and Sustainable Development for the year 2000 is to increase recycled paper rates up to 100%."

Translated from InterCOM, n°46, Feb. 2000 (Internal magazine addressing the employees of the Urban Community of Dunkerque)

Box 6: The six step methodology developed by Dunkerque for green purchasing

The environmental department is responsible for initiating the above mentioned actions, carrying out the tests and following up the action with the concerned municipal services. One person is employed full-time to research, test, initiate and support technical services on new projects.

Financing and resources used

The overall work on eco-products is carried out in co-operation with the French Ministry of the Environment, the French Agency for Energy and the Environment (ADEME), an employment agency, the regional association of local authorities and consultancy firms.

3.4 Results

For the three tested product groups – paper, cleaning products and paint – the concerned units chose eco-products of a particular brand showing the same quality as the conventional products previously used.

It could be proven that recycled paper no longer provokes dysfunction in printers or copy machines, as opposed to what several French municipalities had previously experienced, and it is cheaper than conventional paper. The price difference is of about half a Euro per ream, which corresponds to savings of 16%, approximately. Therefore, Dunkerque's procurement of recycled paper keeps increasing as shown in figure 3.

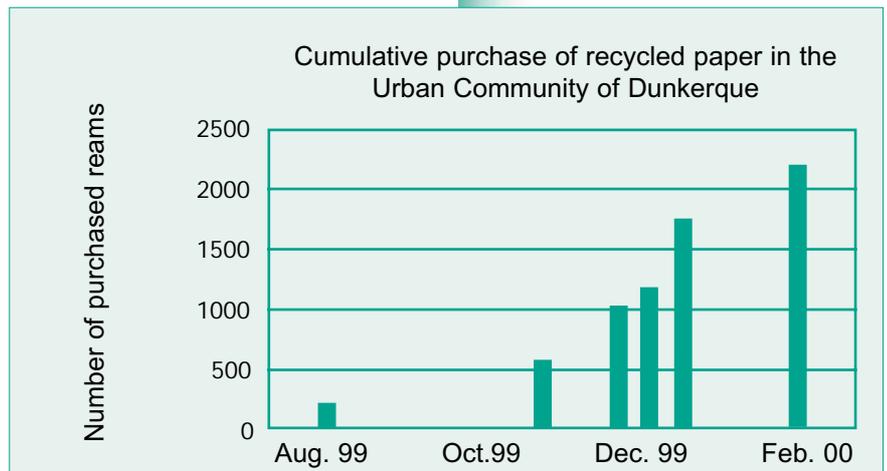


Figure 3: Procurement of recycled paper in Dunkerque

The municipality of Dunkerque purchases three categories of paper: simple for everyday use, medium for colour copies and high quality for important mail. The percentage of recycled paper used in the first category currently amounts to 60 to 65%. The aim was to increase this to 80 to 100% by the year 2000.

Eco-products can have a better price-performance ratio than conventional products and in the long run do not prove more expensive. Thus, it may even happen that preference is given to an eco-product rather for its functional than its environmental qualities, just because they prove better than the conventional product's features, such as quick drying, good wearing resistance or the less harmful effects of eco-paints on users' health. For these reasons, some departments of the urban district took the initiative on their own to procure eco-products.

Dunkerque experienced several difficulties in the first step to green its purchases:

- For some product groups, suppliers are not easy to be found, and there is a lack of information about eco-labels.
- Purchasers have difficulties in differentiating and assessing the guarantees given by the many different eco-labels.
- Municipal employees have a negative view of recycled products and lack information concerning their quality and characteristics.

One important restriction to expanding green purchasing in Dunkerque is seen in French legislation regarding public markets. The legal principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment are perceived to require that green products have, at least, the same level of price and quality as competing products while discriminating the use of environmental or social issues as a first selection criterion.

The Urban Community of Dunkerque systematically fights those difficulties by innovative approaches and keeps working with enthusiasm to extend the purchase of eco-products to other areas, including office furniture and catering.

Barriers and difficulties

Future plans



The team of the Environment and Sustainable Development Mission, Dunkerque, France

Transferability

This is Dunkerque's message to other European municipalities:
„It is not very difficult to apply the methodology we developed for the introduction of greener products in the municipal administration. If you still do not find the excellent functional qualities of modern eco-products convincing, just test them!“

Dunkerque's methodology is easily transferable to a municipality where a few people are committed to environmental issues and one person is ready to promote green purchasing.

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4 From health concern to a green purchasing programme - City of Ferrara, Italy

In some countries, the concept of green purchasing is not commonly used, and these countries often lack practical experience in the field. However, there are always a number of citizens who are concerned about the quality of life and well-being of their children, trying to provide them with healthy foodstuffs.

Read how parents in Ferrara got the school canteens of their town to purchase organic food, thus initiating the integration of a municipal green purchasing programme in the city's Local Agenda 21 process.

4.1 Background

Ferrara, situated in Northern Italy with 133,000 inhabitants, is developing its local sustainability tools at a lively pace. After having initiated some isolated initiatives such as extending the network of cycling lanes and convincing people to use bicycles more often, the municipality has now entered into a phase of systematising its sustainable development approach through a "Special City Project".

The green procurement of foodstuffs, which was a first step towards a further development and systematisation of green purchasing, began in 1994 when a group of parents showed some concern about the quality of the food being served in the municipal kindergartens' canteens. Convinced that organic products are healthier than conventional ones, they launched a process aimed at providing school canteens with food produced in organic or mixed agriculture.

4.2 Starting in a consensual area

The first and quite simple step consisted of establishing a commission in charge of studying the possibility to introduce organic foodstuff in schools' canteens and evaluating the compatibility with existing cooking practices. The commission was established on parental request and had a public health sector representative, a chemical analysis expert and a provincial agricultural sector representative as members. Families were involved continuously and actively.

The commission found out that introducing organic foodstuff in municipal canteens was feasible and set up a list of foodstuffs, mostly organic, biodynamic or from mixed agriculture, to be served without increasing the costs too much.



The city centre of Ferrara, Italy

Establish a multi-stakeholder commission

The canteens (27 kindergartens of which 2 are state-owned, 25 schools, 5 high-schools and 5 summer leisure centres) began to green their procurement practices mainly by:

- Giving preference to organic packed products rather than fresh ones, because their being less perishable, better available and only a little more expensive than their conventional equivalents. In a first contract, the supply of certified organically produced bread, pasta, rice, dry legumes, canned tomatoes, mashed tomatoes, flour, jam and semolina was agreed to.
- A second contract allowed the introduction of fresh organic foodstuff like potatoes, carrots, lettuce, apples and bananas.

With the introduction of organic food, the price of a full meal has changed from 7263 Liras to 8233 Liras, i.e. a 13,4% increase.



In 1998, the procurement of organic foodstuff for canteens was systematised by launching a special call for tenders on “foodstuff supply to the canteens of municipal nursery and kindergarten schools”. The idea was to oblige the supplier to be contracted to give preference to typical and traditional foodstuff, fruits and vegetables from mixed or organic agriculture, milk products, processed organic food, and other kind of foodstuff qualitatively and quantitatively controlled. The environmental impact of food transport and delivery was also taken into account.

After a two-year successful experience - 50% of food requirement for children was covered by organic food between 1998-2000 - it was decided to follow this track by issuing a second call for tenders (with identical requirements) for the 2000-2002 period, which will cover all municipal schools.

4.3 Incorporating green purchasing in the Local Agenda 21 process

In 1996, the City of Ferrara signed the “[Aalborg Charter](#)”, committing itself to initiating a Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) process. One of the three strategic objectives of Ferrara’s LA 21 process consists in launching a “Programme of Green Procurement Activities”, with the aim of adapting municipal procurement to sustainability requirements. The other two pillars of the LA 21 process are the activation of a LA 21 forum and the production of a “State of the Environment” report.

The challenge is to replace all products, which do not meet environmental protection and sustainability requirements. To this aim, Ferrara will carry out a full monitoring of its purchasing practices by 2002 and particularly study the legal and technical possibilities to integrate environmental criteria in the procurement procedures.

4.4 Step by step ...- towards greening all purchases

Encouraged by the full political support received by LA 21 and by its procurement programme, Ferrara has extended green purchasing activities to several of its municipal departments. Environmental requirements are developed based on the criteria set for acquiring the European Eco-label or on experiences of other European local authorities. The following examples show the diversity of the sectors concerned.

- A “green purchasing” representative has joined the commission which annually updates the specifications of the call for tender for cleaning products. He succeeded in including, as a first step, the following criteria in the tender: “Producers have an Environmental Management System”, which was awarded 15 points out of a total of 100, in case of positive answer.
- The supply of organic food, making up 80% of the food served in kindergartens’ canteens, will be extended to other schools.
- A programme for the substitution of motorised municipal fleets has been launched.
- Two pilot projects are under way greening the energy source used for heating and assessing the overall performance of ecological paints in order to systematise their use.

4.5 Drawing on success

Ferrara’s innovative and pilot approach for the procurement of organic foodstuffs for kindergartens has proven very successful: the specific recommendations developed in 1994 by the “organic foodstuff” commission and the list of recommended foodstuffs are still in use.

From a community perspective, the parents are satisfied with the food their children eat and under the citizens’ pressure the local administration has adopted more sustainable ways of working. Green purchasing activities have been



extended to all municipal schools and to a greater range of organic products. Its success and the climate of confidence it generated have made green procurement of foodstuff the base for enhancing the green purchasing programme, which citizens and local administration trust in.

The participatory and bottom-up approach to carry out this initiative can be considered as the main element of its success.

A number of eco-labels identify organic food, among others the recent EU label and the IFOAM certificate.

The EU label (see picture) marks products consisting of a minimum of 95% organically grown raw materials. During the whole cultivation and production process a continuous supervision must be guaranteed. According to the EC regulation the label is voluntary and can be combined with other existing national and private labels.

The private International Federation Of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) certifies the quality of (national) labelling services by the phrase "IFOAM accredited". More information is available at <http://www.ifoam.org/>



Box 7: The European eco-label for organic food

Success did not come that easy. At the beginning of the initiative, one of the main obstacles was the lack of continuous availability of organic products. This problem has now been solved, but, the lack of price competitiveness of organic food is still an issue. The ever increasing demand for organic products however suggests that prices will keep falling.

Ferrara currently is facing a second challenge caused by its actual development stage, which now requires a systematic green purchasing method. The development of such a method, which will give consistency to the sustainable procurement programme, is under way and will draw on different research results and European exchange of experience in the field.

Transferability

In spite of the common prejudice of organic foodstuffs being overpriced, Ferrara's long-term success shows that the procurement of organic products is viable.

The experience developed by the Italian city may serve as an example at the European level: its transferability is ascertained by the fact that Ferrara's idea of developing a green canteen initiative draws on similar projects carried out in the Italian region of Emilia-Romagna.

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Barriers and conflicts

The future



Michele Ferrari,
Local Agenda 21 co-ordinator,
Ferrara Italy

5 Questionnaires, an easy way for identifying green products - Kolding, Denmark



The castle of Kolding, Denmark

Purchasing officers, as a rule, have never been trained to identify the environmental criteria related to their procurement activities. This lack of scientific knowledge makes them hesitate to apply environmental criteria to the products and services they purchase.

The following chapter describes how this problem can be overcome by having the environmental department specify environmental criteria in a way that they can easily be applied by the purchasing department. Questionnaires are the key to success.

5.1 Background

Kolding is a Danish city with 61,000 inhabitants. In 1994, its Town Council unanimously signed the Aalborg Charter and thereby committed the municipality to actively work towards a local implementation of the Rio Conference goals of sustainable development.

This commitment was confirmed in the Municipal Plan (1998–2009), which includes, as one of its five focus areas, the “green business” role of Kolding and obliges the municipality to strengthen its environmental efforts through environmental management and monitoring, green planning and purchasing. With around 6,000 employees, the municipality is the largest single business enterprise in the region.

5.2 Strategy and objectives

Kolding’s purchasing strategy is to ecologically reset its purchasing actions and integrate them in the City’s environmental management. Its aim is that the environmental criteria be assessed on a par with price, quality or level of service in tendering procedures.

As a tool for fulfilling this strategy, environmental questionnaires were designed. Since 1998, they have been developed for a wide range of product groups (wipe cloths, copy and printing paper, copy, fax and printing machines, office furniture and items, personal aids such as diapers, gloves, support stockings and breast prostheses, textiles, laundering textiles, food and toys).

5.3 Environmental questionnaires

The questionnaires were designed by qualified staff from the environmental department who closely co-operated with the central purchasing department in this matter. During their extensive research on environmental impacts of products and production processes, the developers used several sources of information, i.e. publications, Web sites as well as reports from international and national environmental organisations, such as the Danish Environmental Protection Agency (DEPA) and the criteria standards set by the Nordic Eco-labelling Council.

All questionnaires, such as the one presented in box 8, have the following structure:

- A preliminary question about the compliance of the product with environmental requirements such as the ones set by the EU or the Nordic Eco-label. If the answer is YES, the environmental impact of the product is directly and positively assessed. If the answer is NO, the supplier has to answer the following questions:

A structured tool

- General questions about the environmental quality of the supplier's business.
- Questions regarding the product's environmental impact.
- Questions regarding the environmental impact of the product's package.
- Assessment, a part of the questionnaire explaining to the purchaser how to interpret the answers provided by the supplier.

Kolding environmental criteria for office furniture

In this context, office furniture are desks, bookshelves, conference tables, chairs, swivel chairs, computer tables and other items to be used in an office.

To assess the environmental impact of the product the following questions are asked. Questions must be answered with yes or no, and positive answers must be detailed.

Preliminary questions

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Which country of origin does the wood come from? | | |
| 2. Which kind of primary energy sources are used for electricity and heating? | | |
| 3. Can the product in question, or part of it, comply with demands similar to the environmental demands of the Nordic Ecolabelling "Svanen" (Swan) or the EU eco-labelling? | YES | NO |

Questions No. 1 to 3 must be answered. If 3 is answered with yes, no further questions. If 3 is answered with No, please answer the following questions:

1. General questions

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Does the business have a policy of transport in the intention of reducing the impact of CO2 (e.g. by increasing load per truck, less transports, using alternative energy sources or forms of transportation)? | YES | NO |
| 2. Is the business certified according to ISO 14001 or EMAS? | YES | NO |
| 3. Does the business prepare a yearly green account? | YES | NO |
| 4. Does the business have a waste policy as to waste sorting, increased use of recycled materials, and reducing waste amounts? | YES | NO |
| 5. Does the business comply with the environmental demands of the local authority? | YES | NO |

2. Questions regarding the environmental impact

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Is the product made of renewable resources? | YES | NO |
| 2. Are recycled materials part of the product? | YES | NO |
| 3. Can the product be repaired, and will spare parts be available for a long time? | YES | NO |
| 4. Can the product, or part of it, be recycled? | YES | NO |
| 5. Can the product be separated into its single components? | YES | NO |
| 6. Does the product have a long lifespan in comparison with similar products? | YES | NO |
| 7. Can the product be cleaned easily with water and ordinary soap? | YES | NO |
| 8. Does the wood used come from sustainable forestry complying with FSC guidelines (Forest Stewardship Council)? | YES | NO |
| 9. Is the product produced without any use of organic solvents? | YES | NO |
| 10. Is the product produced without the use of heavy metal containing compounds? | YES | NO |
| 11. Is the product produced without adding chemicals from the "List of Undesirable Substances" from the Danish Environmental Protection Agency? | YES | NO |
| 12. Is the product produced without the use of PVC containing plastics? | YES | NO |
| 13. Are screws, plates and other metallic parts made without aluminium? | YES | NO |
| 14. Are screws, plates and other metallic parts made without chrome? | YES | NO |
| 15. Are screws, plates and other metallic parts made without nickel? | YES | NO |

3. Questions regarding the packaging of the product

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Is the packaging without chemicals from the “List of Undesirable Substances” from the Danish Environmental Protection Agency? | YES | NO |
| 2. The packaging is produced without the use of PVC containing plastics? | YES | NO |
| 3. The product is delivered unpacked or with only minimal packing means? | YES | NO |
| 4. The packaging is made of recycled or recyclable materials? | YES | NO |

4. Assessing the environmental impact (only for purchasers' use)

The more questions answered with yes, the more environmentally friendly the product. Minimum requirements for a product to be regarded as environmentally compatible are answering the following questions with YES:

1. General questions: No. 4,
2. Questions on environmental impact: No. 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12
3. Questions as to package: No. 1 and 2

Box 8: Kolding environmental criteria for office furniture

Environmental assessment

The questions are formulated in a way that positive answers, for which details have to be given, indicate positive environmental performance. For every product group, there is a set of mandatory questions, which, if negatively answered, exclude the bidder from the tendering process. All other questions provide the basis for comparing the product's environmental standards with the help of a scoring system.

5.4 Results

Within two years, Kolding managed to specify and integrate environmental demands in 40% of all calls for tender issued, i.e. 19 questionnaires, four of which are available in English. By the year 2002, the municipality will increase this rate up to 100% and will then have completely fulfilled the green purchasing policy, as set out in the Municipal Plan.

Barriers and conflicts

Two kinds of difficulties have been encountered in the design phase of the questionnaires. First, the availability of information regarding the contents and manufacturing processes of some products and, second, the application of environmental criteria to production methods and to the use of national eco-labels. Indeed, Government Procurement Agreements and EU legislation, on behalf of the free market and equal opportunities principles, forbid purchasers to:

- Impose environmental demands on production processes as this is considered to be discriminating.
- Demand eco-labelled products in connection with EU tenders.
- Attach any importance to the environmental impact of transportation processes, which implies that if two suppliers offer the same prices and environmental factors, the nearest supplier cannot be chosen just for simple environmental reasons.

Those questions are currently discussed within the national and European regulatory bodies.

Lessons learned

Beyond those difficulties, Kolding's experience has, so far, proved two things:

- Suppliers react positively to the environmental inquiry and easily fulfil the requirements.
- It could be disproved that the range of green products available on the market is insufficient and too expensive. Except for the field of organic food, additional expenses could be overcompensated by centralising procurement activities.

Transferability

Kolding's method and the underlying questionnaires can be used as a basis for green purchasing in other European municipalities as well. The creation of environmental questionnaires would prove easy for big municipalities, which already have environmental expertise.

The lack of environmental expertise and the limited number of eco-labelled (particularly "EU flower") products might hinder small municipalities from implementing this method, which in a long term perspective should be co-ordinated at the national level and enriched by international exchange. The companies would then no longer have to face additional work in order to document the environmental qualities of their products for each specific command.

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Karsten Andrup Pedersen,
Logistic Manager, Central
Purchasing Department,
Kolding, Denmark

6 Decentralising green procurement - Pori, Finland



The courthouse of Pori, Finland

Often, green purchasing, even though supported by a municipal strategy, is not implemented in all municipal departments, either because it is limited to goods of a certain range of financial value, or because the idea has only been initiated in a few municipal departments and therefore is too hard to spread.

Pori is special in that from the very start of its sustainable development project, green purchasing activities were supposed to include all kinds of purchases.

6.1 Background

Pori is a Finnish city located on the Baltic Sea and has 77,000 inhabitants. In 1992, its Procurement Operation Department, in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Department, initiated Pori's Municipal Project for Sustainable Development. The objectives of the project were to chart the City's procurement practices and their environmental impact in order to direct them towards sustainable development.

Since then, the Municipal Departments of Education (food sector), Cleaning, Health Care, Offices, Maintenance and Repair Operations (vehicles) and Construction have developed concrete "Principles for Product Choice", resulting in the availability of up-to-date environmental information for 55 different product groups.

Pori's procurement activities yearly amount to 25 million Euro and include about 2,000 calls for tender. Decision making in the procurement process is based on price, quality, logistic and environmental criteria, the latter being given main emphasis. Tendering for municipal procurement is centralised, while the municipal departments and institutions do the purchases themselves.

The following paragraphs show the structure set up by Pori to systematically spread green purchasing activities in all municipal departments.

6.2 Creating an eco-procurement task team

Pori sustainable development task team

Founded in 1992, Pori's sustainable development working team initially gathered 6 people, who did not meet on a regular basis but only when necessary. Today, the team is composed of:

- 6 persons for the sectors cleaning (foreperson of the cleaning department), food (head of the meal services), construction (building contractor), municipal health care (the hygiene nurse), office work (secretary of archive) and "maintenance and repair operations" (head of the repair workshop) sectors. Those persons are responsible for buying goods and have an influence on the environmental impacts of procurement.
- 2 meeting-leaders: the heads of the environmental protection and the procurement departments
- A liaison person for environmental co-ordination (the eco-consultant).

As soon as the political representatives committed to green purchasing, each municipal department appointed a person as liaison to cooperate in a sustainable development working team, chaired both by the head of the environmental protection department and the head of the procurement office. This team took over the responsibility for environmentally friendly procurement to be put into effect and in its everyday work focused on monitoring the efficiency of environmentally friendly products and linking the activities developed in each municipal department.

6.3 Appointing an eco-consultant

The eco-consultant was given the double task of:

- Environmentally assessing procurement operations, which mainly consists of evaluating and comparing the environmental characteristics of the different answers to a call for tenders. In Pori, the tenderers are essentially asked to clarify their environmental management systems and environmental policies and to offer environmentally friendly and eco-labelled products. The environmental information of the product is provided on an informal basis.
- Communicating with municipal departments on environmental questions, which includes giving information and advice on green purchasing (thinking in terms of product life cycles, recycling and sorting of waste...) and on global environmental questions (main issues, current scientific progresses and political decisions...). The environmental information focuses on the extension of the product's life cycle and requires the purchaser to particularly pay attention to the product's durability, reparability, recyclability and disposal characteristics as well as package returnability and recyclability.



Tanja Lohiranta,
eco-consultant since 1996,
Pori, Finland

Tanja Lohiranta is currently responsible for eco-consulting, a function which is part of the material office and was first assigned in Pori in 1994. She works "on the spot" in different municipal departments and states that it is efficient to communicate with the municipal employees via Pori's municipal electronic network "Team-Forum" and directly by personal emails to liaisons and employees.

6.4 Environmental contacts in the municipal administration

Environmental contacts act as a link between the eco-consultant and the municipal staff: they distribute the information provided by the eco-consultant and collect and communicate back to her/him the employees' feedback on the use of environmentally friendly products.

About 30 environmental contact people have been appointed in Pori's municipal administration linking the Environmental Department with:

- the Education, the Fire, the Leisure, the Health, the Social and the Technical Departments
- Pori's Energy, Port, Water Works and Sinfonietta
- the Colleges of Forestry, Service Sector and Technics
- Satakunta Polytechnic and Museum

6.5 Creating an internal reuse service

Greener purchasing not only being about procuring environmentally friendly products but also buying less in general, an internal reuse service for goods owned by the whole municipality was put in place. This service offers the following:

- All employees, no matter from which municipal department, can advertise if they have a product they do not use anymore to be given away to another department.

- Employees may advertise their needing a particular product supposed to have been purchased by the municipality already, but currently not in use.

The role of the eco-consultant within this reuse service is to update the “reuse list” and to act as a contact between the reuse service and the employees who sometimes directly contact him/her.

The reuse service is a way to avoid procuring expensive and new items and to extend the lifespan of products.

6.6 Harvesting the results of a multi-involvement green purchasing policy

Pori’s green purchasing strategy has induced many positive changes in the municipality’s procurement and working methods. One of the most important internal activities of this strategy has been changing the employees’ attitudes towards the use of eco-products, in providing them with appropriate information on environmentally acceptable procurement. Nowadays, the municipal employees in Pori have a very positive attitude towards green products and managed to well internalise environmental issues. This could only be achieved via a successful decentralisation of green purchasing activities.

Even if co-operation and interest prevailed, some municipal employees were reluctant to adopt the idea of green purchasing, for example in the maintenance and repair service. The information work and convincing done in Pori however managed to get all employees to take into account the environmental aspects of the products they are buying, using and disposing of. Read the next chapter for more information on motivation and training.

This success is partly due to the advantages (compared to more traditional training programmes and green purchasing tools) of the structure developed by Pori, which has the following characteristics:

- It systematises green purchasing by establishing a permanent and multi-sectored structure.
- Through the eco-consultant and the departments’ “environmental contact persons”, it provides municipal staff with free access to environmental information whenever they need it.
- It creates a framework for training activities in order to adapt them better to local needs.
- It involves all municipal departments in the greening of their purchases at an early stage.



Kari Annala,
Head of procurement
operations, Pori, Finland

Transferability

The idea of integrating green purchasing in all municipal departments from the beginning implies that politicians and municipal staff already are convinced of its power, necessity and feasibility. In most European municipalities, this precondition is far from being fulfilled and therefore could make it difficult to transfer the structure developed by Pori as such.

If full greening of purchases is to be achieved, decentralisation is an indispensable step. The method developed by Pori should thus be kept in mind and implemented as soon as municipal green purchasing activities reach a suitable level for this advanced step.

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Find out more about Pori's eco-procurement work on the Web site of the Material Office of the City of Pori:

- In English at <http://www.pori.fi/hat/eng/eng.htm>
- In Finnish at <http://www.pori.fi/hat>

And by reading the publication: Environmentally acceptable procurement: Review of the situation 1996, Working party on the sustainable development of the city of Pori, Finland 1996.

Box 9: Further reading on the City of Pori's eco-procurement scheme

7 Training and motivation - City of Göteborg, Sweden



Statue of Poseidon in the main street of Göteborg, Sweden (source: Göteborg & Co.)

The idea of greening municipal purchases often originates from a small group of people, who personally care for the environment and, for this reason, strive to convince their colleagues to procure and use environmentally preferable products. Products and services in a municipality, however, concern thousands of people. In a first step, these persons will have to be motivated to accept green products (and therefore must be taught the underlying environmental concern of the matter). In a second step, they will learn how to use these products properly and, at last, to request them in future acquisitions.

Introducing environmental criteria in purchasing procedures therefore always requires a parallel step of training and motivating the stakeholders. As a trend-setter in terms of green procurement, the City of Göteborg has developed a full training scheme for its staff, purchasers, politicians and suppliers.

7.1 Background and objectives

Göteborg is a very experienced city in the field of green purchasing. More than ten years ago, its procurement authority developed, in co-operation with the Environmental Protection Office, a model for environmentally aware purchasing. This model, which systematically assesses the ability of tendering companies to supply environmentally adapted products on a par with price and other delivery issues, was designed to include training activities. It was the municipal staff who initially requested such activities in order to get an idea of the municipal environmental policy.

7.2 Setting up a full training scheme

Ideally spoken, training is an integral part of the purchasing strategy and begins soon after the strategy has been launched. Trainers may be appointed by the green purchasing manager among his/her professional acquaintances and come from diverse backgrounds: municipal staff, lawyers, consultants, non-profit organisations or university researchers.

Göteborg initiated its training activities in 1990, one year after having launched its green purchasing strategy. Trainers are chosen according to their personal qualities to carry out the job. 80% of them are employed with the municipality, the rest coming from external bodies (such as the Swedish Committee for Ecologically Sustainable Procurement). They are put in contact with the Göteborg Procurement Authority via its networking activities.⁷

When to start training and how to choose trainers?



Municipal staff attending a seminar about organic food, Göteborg, Sweden

The Committee for Ecologically Sustainable Procurement is appointed by the Swedish Government. One of the main tasks for the Committee consists in setting up a common Swedish Guideline for green procurement. The guideline will be ready in spring 2001. It will be available in English on the Internet. For more information contact: Secretary Erén Andersson: eren.andersson@environment.ministry.se or visit the Web site: <http://www.sustainable-sweden.gov.se>

Box 10: Committee for Ecologically Sustainable Procurement

⁷ Göteborg Procurement Authority participates in eight local, regional, national and international networks: Göteborg's Green Purchasing Network, Miljösamverkan Västra Götaland, Swedish EnviroNet, Grip Senter, Grønt IndkøbsNet, Committee for Ecologically Sustainable Development, ICLEI European Municipal Green Purchasers' Network and Eurocities.

From the very start, the training scheme is focused on all purchasing stakeholders including local politicians, municipal staff (purchasers, end users) and suppliers. The first training unit should deal with general environmental questions and can be presented in the shape of seminars, the length of which has to be adapted to the target group.

Table 3 shows Göteborg's first attempts at training for specific groups and the lessons learned for setting up a regular scheme.

WHO	TRAINING TYPE		FINANCING OF TRAINING
Politicians	First	Political representatives showed only little interest in a first half-day seminar on general environmental issues.	Purchasing Department
	Regular	Regular half-day seminars are now proposed twice a year as a general environmental update which is most appreciated.	
Suppliers	First	Suppliers were generally not interested in their first half-day seminar on general environmental issues.	Suppliers
	Regular	Suppliers can attend five hearings/courses a year on environmental protection. They take part in multi-stakeholder working groups (several times a year) which aim at exploring how suppliers and Göteborg can co-operate to develop greener products and services. Their reaction to the training is positive.	
Municipal Staff	First	The first two-day seminar on general environmental issues was welcomed with great interest. A second training on specific areas (cleaning, office equipment...) was carried out as a two-day seminar and focused on general purchasing agreements.	Each Municipal Department
	Regular	Twice a year, staff attends half-day seminars on general environmental issues. Two to three times a year, two-day seminars on environmental questions are proposed (by the procurement authority to the municipal staff), on subjects referring to particular product groups and environmentally related topics such as energy. Purchasers are additionally trained on legal issues and the leeway left to the use of specific environmental demands.	

Table 3: Göteborg's Training Scheme

Regular training has to be adapted to the needs, expectations and activities of the different actors. The training units may be held as seminars for about 100 participants, giving them the opportunity to share experiences and directly learn from each other. Other forms are lectures, workshops, hearings (where a background document is prepared and the 75-100 participants discuss it during the hearing), meetings, courses (20-25 people), conferences or multi-stakeholder working groups.

All those training activities are carried out with the main goal to promote collaboration, enhance know-how and exchange experiences. Moreover, they

Examples of issues to be included in a green procurement course, as proposed by the Federation of Swedish County Councils (LfU):

- Legally viable environmental requirements
- Tools for green procurement
- Evaluation of suppliers' answers to environmental requirements
- Environmental Management Systems and procurement
- The role of the procurement officer
- Best practice examples of Swedish County Councils

Box 11: A green procurement course proposed by the Federation of Swedish County Councils

One-day green procurement course

should get the target groups to adopt the idea of green purchasing and bring it home finally.

7.3 Motivating people to participate in training courses

In order to announce the seminars and to keep people informed and motivated between the meetings, green purchasing has to be widely advertised. The challenge is to get purchasers, environmental experts and end users to volunteer for the training.

To this end, Göteborg's Procurement Authority uses various tracks.

- Invitations to the meetings are communicated via the municipal mailing system and supplier lists, which include all suppliers having answered a tender at a certain stage.
- "Fördelen" ("Advantages"), a quarterly published by Göteborg's Procurement Authority regularly informs its readers about green procurement.
- Göteborg's Procurement Authority Web site is a source of environmental information for all stakeholders.

The direct contact between stakeholders, however, remains the most efficient way of communication.

7.4 A general commitment to green purchasing

The environmental policy in Göteborg and the different environmental projects launched by the municipal departments raised the interest of politicians. Although they did not seem very enthusiastic about the topic at their first environmental training, their interest grew during the following seminars, and today these politicians can be described as being very committed to the environmental question.

The high interest of the municipal staff in being trained on environmental and green purchasing issues is motivated by its close link to concrete purchasing issues. Part of the training consists in explaining the criteria for choosing a certain supplier.

The first training boosted the interest in green purchasing, resulting in a general demand for further (project-related) seminars on the topic. Today the City of Göteborg proudly states that 80 to 90% of its municipal staff have been trained on green purchasing according to their needs as purchasers or end users.

Small and medium-sized companies quickly understood that green purchasing (and supplying) is an opportunity to make a breakthrough in the market and will become a necessity in the future.

The big companies did not instantaneously become aware of the importance of green purchasing, but realised it two to three years after their first training and came back to Göteborg's municipality for more information.

Göteborg's Procurement Authority has experienced two types of difficulties in its training activities:

- The demand for training on green purchasing is so high that organisers have to refuse people because of sessions being fully booked. A satisfying training scheme, therefore, would require more resources than are currently available.
- The continuous character of the training requires an extraordinary amount of positive energy from the trainers. In a City such as Göteborg, staff turnover is high due to the high number of municipal employees (45,000), implying that there are always new employees to be trained. Trainers therefore must neither cease to motivate themselves in order to motivate "newbies" nor give up when facing their hard everyday work, always keeping in mind that the achievement of results takes time.



"Fördelen" ("Advantages"), the quarterly published by the Procurement Authority, Göteborg, Sweden

Political representatives

Municipal staff and specific purchasers

Suppliers

Barriers and difficulties

"Awareness and understanding of environmental work requires that the staff is informed and committed."

Berit Westbjerg, Senior purchaser, Göteborg

Transferability

A differentiated training scheme for politicians, suppliers and municipal staff is vital for the successful implementation of eco-procurement within decentralised procurement structures.

The Göteborg case illustrates clearly the relationship between convincing the political decision-makers of the importance of green purchasing and expanding activities step by step. Training is only possible if significant resources are allocated to this effort. Vice versa, training will also contribute to convincing politicians to support future schemes and to motivate them to stick to their commitment.

The City of Göteborg model for "Green purchasing" is based on political decisions, established working methods and information/education strategies. The model or part of it, for example the information/education strategy, can be adjusted and used in any other European local authority.

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Berit Westberg,
Senior purchaser, Procurement
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8 Motivating purchasers via regional networking - Vorarlberg, Austria



Municipality of Dornbirn in the state of Vorarlberg, Austria

Co-operation of small municipalities

Can green purchasing be fun? Checking tables with environmental data, calculating follow-up costs and advertising smarter solutions to colleagues is actually not always too exciting. What's more, the benefits of all the effort may only pay off much later and, in terms of environmental relief, in some other place and some other production line.

In order to convince each of its purchasers that green purchasing is worth it, the Austrian State of Vorarlberg developed an innovative strategy, the core element of which is a regional network.

8.1 Background

The state of Vorarlberg includes a total of 96 municipalities with 365,000 inhabitants and spreads over a surface area of 2,700 km². Its main economic activities rely on tourism, textile industry, metal fabrication as well as traditional and industrial wood/timber trade.

Pushed by legal obligations, Austrian national, state and local authorities began to implement activities on green purchasing already in the nineteen-eighties. In 1998, the Environmental Agency of the State of Vorarlberg decided to actively advertise green purchasing among the more than 100 local authorities in the region and to provide systematic support to answer the need to take environmental criteria into account with practical advice.

8.2 Strategy: covering the region as a whole

Vorarlberg developed its green purchasing concept from the fact that small municipalities often do not employ a full-time professional purchaser, the mayor or some municipal employee buying products and ordering services instead, and this in parallel to dozens of other activities.

This implies that purchasers particularly need to be supported in their green purchasing activities, a fact that was addressed by the Austrian State by creating a regional network and adopting a strategy, which focuses on two points:

- Technically assist purchasers by simplifying the application of environmental criteria as much as possible.
- Motivate purchasers by trying out new ways of communication and reward.

8.3 Surveying purchasers' expectations

Vorarlberg's green purchasing activities concretely started with a regional survey carried out among the municipalities. The questionnaires reached a return rate of 50% and were complemented by personal interviews made by a student.

This gave insights into the existing experiences and expectations as to supportive activities at the State level. As a first follow-up of the survey, the State of Vorarlberg started a series of "eco-guidelines" ("Ökoleitfaden") which were summarised by an environmental consultant to form an Eco-Guide.

The first issue of these eco-guidelines on office equipment was distributed to all local authorities as a convenient

Purchasers in 98 municipalities received a questionnaire inquiring about:

- the share of responsibilities for purchasing
- the kinds of tendering processes applied for different sums
- the products environmental criteria are applied to and the kind and extent of those criteria
- experiences acquired in concrete calls for tender
- their expectations as to the regional project

48 % of the questionnaires were answered.

A4 folder, which makes updating of pages easy, while offering high-quality layout and information. A similar issue on green building has just been published.

The eco-guidelines answer the technical needs of purchasers, who still have to be motivated to actively implement green purchasing.

8.4 Networks: a cornerstone of regional activity

To convince purchasers of taking action and to support them in their efforts, Vorarlberg took the initiative to establish a network of purchasers. Its concrete aims are to foster the exchange of experience and to organise training activities. The network currently is linking 25 purchasers for office material and 15 officers for buildings. Network members discuss the desired contents of the eco-guidelines, exchange on how to apply the information and are assisted in designing calls for tender, in that workshops are organised, experts are invited for presentations and excursions are undertaken.

Networking activities are supported by Internet-based tools. A discussion forum, with limited access to purchasers, has been established in October 2000 on Vorarlberg's Web site, providing the possibility to share confidential information on a direct basis. Apart from sharing technical information, there are plans to add a cultural component by e.g. offering network members to attend "real world" meetings.

As part of the networking activities, Vorarlberg additionally strives to keep its municipalities active by fostering innovation and rewarding pioneers, e.g. via a regional contest on the "most environmentally friendly town hall". The competition will take into account both quantitative and qualitative criteria, such as the number of implemented guidelines of the Eco-Guide, the most impressive achievements as assessed by a jury, and the pioneering role taken by some municipalities.

8.5 Benefit from networking activities!

Beyond setting political priorities and stringent calculations, green purchasing helps to act more efficiently and cut down on expenses through joining purchasing powers. This is a common vision, which unifies purchasing activities in Vorarlberg.

Arranging for procurement officers to directly communicate among each other provides the opportunity to informally exchange information on economic benefits, experiences with suppliers and products, complaints by users – and also the application of environmental criteria.

Another asset of the project is that it makes purchasers familiar with the Internet. This is especially important, as an increasing number of tenders will be made through the Internet, giving access to a wider range of suppliers and offering opportunities to save money.

Implementing an innovative strategy will have to face all typical hurdles for green purchasing activities.

Communication and motivation, be it among purchasers, towards suppliers or external groups like architects and planners, is a crucial but difficult task, which makes it necessary to adapt the message of green purchasing to its specific target. Technical details have to be translated into a generally comprehensible language and small local retailers have to be supported in their efforts to cope with new requirements.



Network members at a meeting

Networking tools

Resources used

The two-year project, including conducting the survey and the eco-guides, establishing the network and arranging the contest, required investments of 200,000 Euros. The sum was provided by Vorarlberg's Environmental Agency, the State government, and the Federal Ministries for Environment and Science. There were also private businesses sponsoring the project.

Barriers and conflicts

Other difficulties depend on municipal structures.

- Decentralised procurement structures make it hard to implement co-ordinated efforts.
- The limited power of environmental officers as to strategic decision-making, which depends on their persuading qualities, delays the implementation of green purchasing.

To break down this barrier Vorarlberg advises to try as much as possible to promote green purchasing among opinion leaders. Once a few of them are convinced, they will perform a huge job in winning all the purchasing stakeholders over.



Fritz Studer,
Executive Director of the
"Umweltverband Vorarlberg",
Austria

Transferability

The model of Vorarlberg especially addresses the needs of rural regions with small municipalities. A supra-local network of purchasers not only fosters the exchange of experience and makes the organisation of training events easy but also increases purchasing power.

Regional networking can successfully be transferred when the politicians in charge wholeheartedly support the project and when municipal purchasers are provided with tools such as questionnaires, checklists, guidelines etc. Also, network communication should be promoted on a personal i.e. emotional level.

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9 A municipal strategy - København, Denmark

Previous chapters have described single steps towards green purchasing. In all cases, these steps have not been isolated activities, but part of a coordinated process. Especially in bigger municipalities a thought-out strategy is needed to implement the full potential of green purchasing.

The next chapter will describe how the City of København met this challenge.

9.1 Background

The Municipality of København employs approximately 40,000 people, about 1,200 of them having purchasing authority and spending 400 million Euro annually on goods and services. Purchasing is characterised by a central purchasing department contracting purchase agreements on the one hand, but on the other, decentralised structures can also be found in that a series of purchases are undertaken outside the purchase agreements in individual institutions.

In 1992, København prepared a purchasing regulation calling upon all municipal buyers to consider environmental aspects when purchasing, which proved not always to be the case at that time.

In order to create the overall framework for greening its purchases København adopted a purchasing policy, which partly centralises the purchases and partly demands the integration of environmental and energy concerns, as outlined in Box 12.



City of København, Denmark

Environmentally correct purchasing basically involves choosing products that, from a life cycle perspective, affect the environment the least possible. This means that the Municipality of København chooses products and services that:

- are produced in the most environmentally friendly way possible
- are distributed in the most environmentally friendly way possible
- cause the least possible damage to the environment
- can be removed in the most environmentally friendly way possible
- involve ethical considerations in their choice

Suppliers chosen should have an internal environmental policy for the company - and preferably an actual environmental certification such as EMAS or ISO 14001.

Environmental considerations normally require selecting those products which fulfil the requirements of one of the publicly controlled environmental and energy labels (The Swan, The Flower, Blauer Engel and EU energy label).

As for product areas which are not covered by environmental label criteria, the environmental impact of the product is assessed to the extent possible via the Environmental Protection Agency guides or information and guidance from other sources.

Box 12: Purchasing policy of the Municipality of København regarding environmental issues

9.2 Selecting areas of effort

In September 1998, this green purchasing policy was put into effect via a plan of action, which in a first step only covered the København Energy, Water and Environmental Protection Agency. The aim of the plan was to launch a process, which ensured taking into account environmental requirements systematically when purchasing goods and services, on equal terms with traditional requirements like quality, reliability of delivery and price.



Bio-Station,
København, Denmark

With its intention to properly anchor a philosophy of environmental purchasing, which would serve as a basis for the incorporation of more complex problems, the plan of action set about identifying easily accessible areas of effort, where less environmentally harmful products should particularly be procured. The criteria for choosing those areas were the following:

- Knowledge of the environmental impact of the product is available.
- Less environmentally harmful products are available.
- Environmental effects can be achieved.
- The large quantities ordered have a potential to influence the market.
- The effort is visible to citizens, enterprises and/or staff.
- The effort is quantifiable.

As areas of effort to serve as a model for the incorporation of green purchasing in all other areas, København selected the following fields: electronic products, office supplies, cables and pipes, transport and maintenance of buildings.

9.3 Defining concrete targets

For each area of effort, concrete targets to be met within two years were outlined. They can be seen in Table 4.

Goods/ Products		Targets
Electronic Products	Computers	An institution jointly replacing more than 10% of its computers or undertaking purchases to a corresponding extent should take care that the computers purchased belong to the 10% of the least environmentally damaging brands in terms of production and that they operate at the lowest energy consumption standard available. Finally, it should be possible to dismantle the computers after use in order to recycle them / their materials.
	Printers	All printers are required to perform double-sided printing and should fulfil the state-of-the-art minimum performance demands for printers.
	Photocopiers	All photocopiers are required to use 100% recycled paper and should fulfil the state-of-the-art minimum performance demands for photocopiers.
Office supplies	In general	All office supplies have to be PVC-free. No organic solvents in office supplies.
	Paper	Paper and stationery should be unbleached and consist of 100% recycled paper. Paper for photocopiers unable to use 100% recycled paper has to contain at least 50% recycled fibres.
	Ring binders and magazine cassettes	At least 50% of ring binders and magazine cassettes have to be made of recycled cardboard.
	Toner	All toner cassettes have to be reused. All inkjet cassettes have to be reused.
Cables/ Pipes		All cables purchased have to be PVC-free. Purchasing PVC-free cables, however, should not considerably reduce the competitive power of the institution and may not lead to significant additional expenses. After January 1, 2005, however, all cables purchased have to be PVC-free. All pipes purchased have to be PVC-free under the precondition that less environmentally damaging substitutes exist. Purchasing PVC-free pipes, however, should not considerably reduce the competitive power of the institution and may not lead to significant additional expenses. After January 1, 2005, however, all pipes purchased have to be PVC-free.

Goods/ Products		Targets
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of means of transport (cars, trucks, electric cars, bicycles). • Fuel consumption and main tenance of the means of transport. • Transport associated with work, inspection and meeting activities. • Transport when on official journeys. 	<p>Specifically damaging means of transport are pointed out in order to achieve rapid effects.</p> <p>A survey of the environmental damage caused by the existing fleet should be conducted and the modal split during working hours should be ascertained. Furthermore, the survey should give an idea of which means of transport are used on official journeys. The survey should point out effort areas likely to produce significant environmental effects as a result of environmentally concerned purchasing.</p>
Building maintenance		No specific targets

Table 4: Selected products and targets for purchase

9.4 Involving staff

In order to support the implementation of the project, a task group consisting of a co-ordinator with professional environmental knowledge and a representative (purchaser) from each institution was appointed. Its role was to point out areas of effort, establish targets, gather experiences, arrange thematic meetings, communicate information about environmental considerations when purchasing and undertake documentation of the enterprise within the area. Its strength lies in the management of a forum for handling tasks shared by institutions.

Prioritise staff training

9.5 Providing training

Training was provided in order for staff to learn how to think and act environmentally consciously in the field of purchasing.

All staff engaged in purchasing attended a two-day course in order to learn how to formulate environmental and energy demands and which tools to apply in everyday environmental work. Thematic meetings (duration 2-4 hours) were held for purchasers who are in charge of more technically related activities.

9.6 Documenting approaches

To make their daily work easier, central purchasers can find information in 50 purchase guides prepared by the Danish Environmental Protection Agency (DEPA). The guides contain a series of product-specific environmental demands based on life cycle assessment. Also available are environmental check forms for transport and building maintenance prepared by the task group and a general environmental questionnaire for the evaluation of products and manufacturers.

9.7 Monitoring results

Purchases within the effort areas are evaluated in relation to the targets established, which have to be fulfilled in January 2001. Table 5 shows that fulfilment rates vary both at the institutional and product level.

Experiences show that green purchasing is most easily implemented via a centralised purchasing structure because this eases staff training and continuous communication.

Fulfilment of targets, year 1999	Computers	Printers	Copiers	Paper	Ring binders and magazine cassettes	Toner cassettes	Cables	Pipes
Fulfilment rate	100%	9%	100%	30%	11%	100%	63%	93%

Table 5: Target fulfilment rates of the green purchasing objectives, København, 1999

The degree of success of introducing environmentally concerned purchasing additionally depends on the employees' motivation and know-how of the environmental effects of products. To ensure a systematic incorporation of the green purchasing routine, the staff has to be provided with clear signals concerning the areas of priority and the mandatory character of the operation.

Use of framework agreements

Definition of targets



Jørgen Dahl Madsen,
Planning Officer, Københavns
Kommune, Denmark

9.8 Barriers and conflicts

The wide and varied range of potential suppliers for a special product increases the workload of the purchaser, who has to gather environmental information and can only get a quite superficial idea of the general environmental trend of suppliers. In order to reduce this workload, the task group has agreed with the suppliers that they deliver environmental information about all products bought during the previous year. This should also help to solve the documentation problem raised by the range of purchasers being so wide.

9.9 The future

Introducing environmentally concerned purchasing in the entire municipality also requires the commitment of the over 1,000 employees who undertake purchases outside the purchasing agreements. In order to achieve this goal, København will centralise purchases by falling back on the use of framework agreements, including environmental and energy concerns. Thus, purchasers can do without demanding environmental requirements from suppliers. The purchasers will specify those agreements in co-operation with the Environmental Control, which possesses the environmental know-how.

København will additionally work on a definition of clear-cut targets, which cannot be misinterpreted by purchasers and allow their degree of implementation to be documented. Information on environmentally acceptable products will be provided via the Intranet.

Transferability

The Copenhagen model is based on a philosophy of having an "Action Plan" with political commitment at the highest municipal level. It is crucial for the responsible purchasing unit to have access to many municipal players. Green purchasing with clear politically approved targets is easier to administrate though it might still be difficult to reach the targets. The use of framework agreements with suppliers complies better with a centralised than with a decentralised local purchasing structure.

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City of København: <http://www.kobenhavn.dk>

10 Experience gained from case descriptions

The variety of experiences presented in Chapter 3-9 and the underlined necessity to adapt any environmental action to local conditions show that there is no one-size-fits-all way to initiating green purchasing activities. Respective strategies, however, will always be composed of certain basic elements, most of which are listed below following the experience of European cities. The steps towards green procurement in European local authorities, presented in box 13 can help you organise those elements in a chronological way. The key problems to be remembered or avoided throughout the process are presented in Table 6 (page 48).

Keep yourself informed on eco-responsible products and services

When implementing green purchasing you need access to up-to-date information concerning green products/services and the legal framework concerning the integration of environmental criteria in purchasing procedures. The green product you will introduce has to be environmentally less harmful, but must stand up to its conventional equivalent in terms of function. In case of failure end users will not easily give you a second chance.

A number of eco-product guides have been published in different countries and should be available at your national Environmental Protection Agency, from your Ministry of the Environment and from non-governmental organisations. Environmental criteria for products can also be found on Internet sites on eco-labelling (see URLs in Box 2) and general information can be obtained by searching the Internet in general. Concerning particular products, your usual suppliers should be able to inform you about their environmentally preferable product range.

Once your search is completed, do not hesitate to conduct internal information documenting the environmental impact of the studied product or service.

To check the legal compliance of your environmental request or to keep updated on the evolution of the legal framework, contact national (such as the Swedish Committee for Ecologically Sustainable Procurement) or international organisations (such as ICLEI) for general questions. If you have a very specific question, contact a lawyer.

Gather information on tools to implement green purchasing and on other municipalities' experiences

Tools and methods on which to base green purchasing activities have to fit your local situation. Use the purchasing procedure already in place and design locally adapted tools. Contact other local authorities to study their methods and co-operate with them by networking. This will make things a lot easier.

Start with a few eco-products

In order to test the quality of the newly introduced green products and to observe your staff's reaction to them, begin modestly. Green, for example, the purchases of two to three product groups, replacing only part of the stock with the new product, so that users can get accustomed to it. Alternatively, concentrate your green purchasing activities on one municipal department. Remember to keep your task accessible and manageable.

Do not modify purchasing procedures, so that purchasers still carry out the same tasks as usual save that they have to consider environmental issues now. And once you have chosen a model, do not change it.



Training is awarded by a diploma, Göteborg, Sweden



Green cleaning products, Dunkerque, France

Adapt each product's environmental requirements to local needs and conditions, keeping their definition as simple as possible. You will still have the opportunity to raise the standard of criteria later.

If your local conditions, apart from environmental issues, entail "social" requirements (e.g. fair trade goods), take them into account. Keep in mind, however, that the green purchasing approach as such should be kept as simple as possible. We advise you to restrict it to environmental considerations, at least in the beginning.

Involve the municipal staff

Generally inform all municipal employees about the current environmental questions which drive the necessity to buy green. Involve them in the decision-making process when it comes to choosing green products and design a specific training programme adapted to their needs, including hands-on demonstrations, so that they will use the new products properly. Benefit from the influence some individuals have to promote green purchasing among the whole staff.

If you face strong a priori reactions against green products within your municipality, you may, in a first stage, want to introduce those green products without informing the users, in order to make them realise that green products are as good as conventional ones.

In a long-term perspective, make sure that all individuals in charge of purchasing have understood how to procure green products and that employees have enough environmental knowledge available to answer their daily questions.

To this aim and as a main factor of success in your green purchasing strategy, design a training programme involving politicians, employees and suppliers. Use current purchasing projects as a basis to train staff and suppliers.

Systematise: Set targets and actions

Once you have practically introduced the green purchasing of some products in your municipality, define concrete quantitative goals and a method (be it questionnaires, tests...) to systematise the greening of all purchases. Base your targets on the knowledge you have gained as to the green product market, suppliers', purchasers' and end users' reactions, as well as other municipalities' experiences.

When defining environmental requirements, do not forget to make them easy to evaluate (provide an evaluation method) and to follow-up.

The use of a specifically introduced or already existing Environmental Management System (like EMAS or ISO 14001) will prove useful at this stage.

Win politicians for your targets

Try to convince political stakeholders of your green purchasing policy: commit them to signing official documents such as the Hannover Call – adopted at the Sustainable Cities and Towns Conference in Hannover, 11 February 2000, by 250 municipal leaders – and to include the green purchasing objective in the municipal plan, in a quantifiable way.

Written documents will allow you to pursue your green purchasing activities despite any political change.

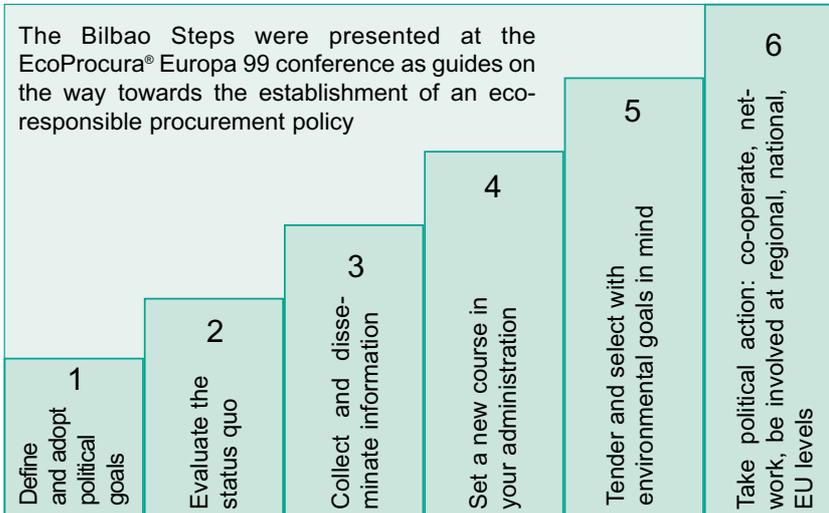


Electric car of the København Local Agenda 21 initiative

Involve suppliers

Explain your green purchasing policy and product requirements to suppliers in face-to-face meetings and seminars. Commit them in a first stage to providing the contracting documents on recycled paper.

You will generally observe that the availability of green products is greater than expected and that suppliers' reaction to environmental requirements is positive, once they have understood the concept.



Box 13: The Bilbao Steps towards green procurement in European local authorities

Monitor your results, market them and set new targets

Monitor your city's purchases to find out which products can be procured less often or in smaller quantities. Evaluate the functional qualities of the newly introduced green products and their environmental/financial relief.

Promote those results, emphasising both the financial and environmental relief gained, and communicate them to the municipal staff and politicians. All of them should be aware of what green purchasing is and what the particular activities carried out in their municipality are.

Spread it to all municipal departments and make it sustainable

Create a cross-sectoral task team involving staff of each municipal department, working on the implementation of green purchasing in the whole municipality. Keep updated on the evolution of the green purchasing legal framework, the technical and environmental quality of products and the practices developed by other municipalities.

Regularly monitor your city's purchases and the satisfaction of end users. Set new targets, as soon as the previous ones have been achieved or you realise that they are not to be reached. Always bear in mind the long-term goal to reach a 100% rate of green purchases.

Fight the barriers and conflicts you encounter with perseverance and do not hesitate to give up a futile method (e.g. a communication method), but propose a completely new approach instead.

Keep the process up and running and make it fun for purchasers and staff to participate in the adventure of green purchasing.



Natural paints used in Dunkerque, France

REMEMBER	AVOID
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eco-products should have a better price-performance ratio than conventional equivalents and their market availability usually is good. • Green purchasing makes you save money through the reduction of package and transport costs and a better use rate of products. • A green purchasing strategy also involves eliminating unnecessary purchases and extending the lifespan of products already in use. • Beyond the very price of the product, consider the long term costs of each purchase. • Co-operate with / involve all stakeholders (suppliers, users, purchasers...). • Quickly establish a close co-operation between the purchasing and the environmental departments. • An effective green purchasing strategy has the potential to integrate environmental considerations in 100% of the purchases within 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not go beyond legal limits. • Do not require an eco-labelled product without opening the tender also to products meeting equal criteria to the eco-labelled ones. • Be careful not to demand as a selection criterion the environmental qualities of the production process or origin. • Do not change requirements during an ongoing procurement.

Table 6: A few things to remember

Outlook

This guide is designed to provide purchasers in public authorities with some fundamental advice on green purchasing, its contents being based on the experiences of colleagues. It would be most appreciated if the information given proved useful to spread the concept of green purchasing to a growing number of public administrations throughout Europe.

The practical and hands-on approach of this guide, though, should not keep us from considering the underlying conceptual questions.

This document is not simply the product of one or two authors working their way through a technical topic, but presents the results of a project of the “Buy It Green”-Network of Municipal Purchasers in Europe (BIG-Net). While the most important aim of this network consists of sharing experiences among eco-responsible purchasers, further steps are also kept in mind. Three issues are listed in the network’s agenda:

One concept this guide could not give much attention to is the substitution of product-oriented procurement by services. For example, instead of buying the product light bulbs and the product electricity, you can also arrange for a service to provide lighting. In this case, it is up to the supplier to find innovative solutions. In general terms, this means that the purchaser does no longer define a certain product to be purchased, but the need to be met by the product. This concept is spreading continuously and has a high importance for purchasers. But there is still a considerable lack of experiences, even with pioneers. What’s more, respective research activities should be extended beyond product groups like copiers and lighting.

The second field entails the calculation of product follow-up costs. In many cases, purchasers opt out of environmentally friendly products because of their initially higher price, not taking into account that costs will pay back during the following years. Calculating these savings (or costs, respectively) is sometimes a quite complicated task. This fact calls for developing practical tools to take them into account.

A third task to be tackled is designing common green purchasing guidelines for Europe. It would ease and increase the effect of green purchasing, if different local authorities co-operated in applying the same criteria. This could also have an effect on the price of goods, because of the increased mass production.

It is not only purchaser tools that are still under development. Purchasing conditions, too, are subject to rapid changes. To an increasing extent, goods will be procured from European markets in the future. Even now, purchasing from outside national boundaries may lead to considerable savings in some products. This aspect has a special importance for green purchasing. A number of environmentally friendly products could be offered cheaper, if the demand guaranteed a certain amount of the product to be sold. Sometimes this is even a precondition for starting mass production. By acting on the European market and joining their purchasing power, public purchasers could create the necessary demand possibly leading to a cutdown on prices.

Last but not least, the European framework for purchasing is being improved continuously. This process clearly needs the powerful voice and support of green purchasers to point out the ways to more effective solutions. There is a need for and an opportunity in European networking. We would like to invite you to share experience between eco-responsible purchasers and explore further steps to develop green purchasing by joining the “Buy It Green”-Network of Municipal Purchasers in Europe.

“It is very important that public authorities set an example... and seek to procure goods, services and works that do not harm the environment.”

*Margot Wallström, ,
EU-Commissioner for the
Environment*

Substitution of product oriented procurement by services

Calculation of follow-up costs of products

Common European green purchasing guidelines



Pedestrian bridge to the leisure area Kirjurinluoto, Pori, Finland

“Buy It Green”-Network of Municipal Purchasers in Europe (BIG-Net)



BIG-Net Steering Committee meeting in Freiburg, Nov. 2000. From left: Géraldine Plas, ICLEI, Karsten Andrup Pedersen, Michael Damm, Peter Mogens Hee and Margit Vestbjerg from the City of Kolding.

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Mielisch, Arndt / Alix, Rozenn: Green Purchasing in Europe - Towards a Multi-Stakeholder Policy, published by the European Partners for the Environment, Brussels, May 1998.

Russel, Trevor (ed.): Greener Purchasing - Opportunities and innovations, Sheffield, England, 1998.

Green Purchasing in the Public Sector: Report from the Nordic Conference in Göteborg, 10-11 March 1999.

Sheffield Purchasing Organisation: Buying a Better Future: Sheffield City Council's Guide to “Green” Purchasing.

Box 14: General reading on green purchasing

Glossary of terms

Aalborg Charter (or Charter of European Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability): European convention on the engagement of local authorities to start a LA 21 process and set up long-term action plans towards sustainability. Read more on: <http://www.iclei.org/europe/echarter.htm>.

Austrian Tree: The Austrian eco-label, more information can be found on: http://www.bmu.gv.at/u_kennzeich_auszeich/oe_umweltzeichen/tmp_inhalt.htm.

Blue Angel: The German eco-label.

“Buy It Green”-Network of Municipal Purchasers in Europe (BIG-Net): Network of European municipalities which aims at fostering the exchange of eco-procurement experiences among municipalities and helps to integrate green procurement instruments in municipal purchasing procedures.

EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme): Systematic analysis of the environmental impact of a firm or organisation, which includes the analysis of current practices, the setting of goals and activities, the monitoring of results and setting of new goals and activities, etc.

EU Flower: The European eco-label.

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI): ICLEI's mission is to build and serve a worldwide movement of local governments. This movement aims to achieve tangible improvements in global environmental and sustainable development conditions through cumulative local actions. 350 local authorities and municipal associations have already joined ICLEI. In Europe ICLEI works with more than 160 members in 28 countries. Read more on <http://www.iclei.org>.

LCA (Life Cycle Assessment): Analysis of the environmental impact of a product all along its life cycle from the extraction of the raw material it is composed of to its final disposal (from cradle-to-grave).

Mutual recognition (principle of): Suppliers applying methods and having certifications different from but equivalent to what is nationally/locally known should be trusted and not required to demonstrate compliance with the specific tender's technical regulations.

Non-discrimination (principle of): One should not discriminate between trading partners and should treat imported and locally produced goods and services equally.

Nordic Swan (also called “White Swan”): The Scandinavian eco-label.

Proportionality (principle of): In a call for tender, the nature and extent of the selection criteria should be proportional to the overall aim sought for.

Sustainable/ Sustainability: Ensures that our present needs are met without compromising the needs of future generations, be it in the social, economic or environmental field.

Transparency (principle of): Any information having a significant impact on the purchase should be provided.

The “Buy It Green”-Network of Municipal Purchasers in Europe (BIG-Net)

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 Amaraoussion, Greece
 Barcelona, Province, Spain
 Bergstraße, County, Germany
 Bourgas, Bulgaria
 Bottrop, Germany
 Espoo, Finland
 Ferrara, Italy
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Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Procurement



City of Copenhagen
 EPA Copenhagen



Green purchasing is one of the most promising concepts for integrating economic with environmental demands. Being broadly discussed and recommended at international, European and local levels, the concept still has to prove its vitality by being put into practice.

There are already a number of promising experiences that have been made by the pioneers in this field, who are the participants of the "Buy It Green" Network (BIG-Net). This guide collates lessons from Dunkerque (France), Ferrara (Italy), Göteborg (Sweden), København and Kolding (Denmark), Pori (Finland), and Vorarlberg (Austria). Its aim is to give advice to purchasers in local authorities and other public institutions who did not join the pioneer front, but would like to profit now from experiences already made.