



### What is GPP?

Green Public Procurement (GPP) is the process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life-cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured.

### What is GPP4Growth?

GPP4Growth brings together the experience and practices of nine public bodies from across the EU in a bid to improve those public bodies' capacity to implement policies that promote eco-innovation and green growth through 'Green Public Procurement' (GPP). 14% of the EU's total GDP is consumed by Europe's public authorities. This public expenditure on goods, services and works has a total estimated value of €1.8 trillion annually. This substantial public authority 'purchasing power' can be utilised to stimulate eco-innovation, resource efficiency and green growth by promoting environmentally friendly, resource-efficient goods and services.

Existing experiences: visits on GPP processes and results.

- Visit to Ireland -



### Executive Summary

On 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018, representatives from the nine public bodies which make up the GPP4Growth project partners came together for an experience visit in Wexford, Ireland. The visit was hosted by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment of the Republic of Ireland, a GPP4Growth partner.

Sharing experiences and information in order to learn from the policies and example of our European partners is a key aspect of any Interreg Europe project. The face-to-face and structured nature of the workshops which took place during this experience visit enabled GPP4Growth partners to do this in an in-depth and worthwhile manner.

This policy brief highlights the main lessons and discussion points relating to increasing GPP implementation that resulted from the workshops which took place during the Irish visit. The brief also summarizes some practical examples of GPP which were shared with GPP4Growth partners during the visit.

### Introduction

The first of two 'experience visits' to take place during the GPP4Growth project was the Irish visit which took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018 in Wexford, Ireland.

The content and structure of this Irish visit was informed by an input paper which, in turn, was informed by two GPP4Growth reports, A1.2 and A1.3, which identified successful GPP cases from the partner regions and analysed existing GPP policies across the partner regions respectively. This method of preparing for the Irish visit ensured that the topics covered during the visit's workshops would be most beneficial in terms of moving the GPP4Growth project forward.

The key learnings and issues raised during the Irish visit will be discussed further at the next experience visit which is due to take place in the province of Antwerp in Belgium.



## Sharing of Experiences and Uses of GPP Supports

The purpose of the workshop sessions which took place during the Irish visit were to enable the project partners to better understand the context and challenges associated with the implementation of GPP in each region. The sharing of experiences revealed what has worked well in the past and what the main difficulties are in relation to implementing GPP. They also highlighted the areas that attendees felt were the most worthwhile to give attention to in order to increase the level of GPP across the partner regions. Effective action planning was an area that many felt was critical to successfully implementing more GPP practices and this is addressed in more depth on the following page.

### 'What do we want to get out of the GPP4Growth project?'

When asked what they wanted to get out of the GPP4Growth project, attendees of the Irish workshops gave the following answers:

#### Action Plans

#### Help with Monitoring

Useful tools such as 'Lifecycle Costing' tools

#### Promotion of GPP

Long-term Strategic Thinking

### What has worked well in relation to successful GPP projects?

- Training
- Monitoring
- Focussing on small steps first
- High-level support for GPP within an organisation
- Certainty around GPP regulation
- Templates for issuing tenders
- A centralised 'one-stop-shop' approach
- Using the GPP4Growth project to drive engagement



### What are the main difficulties facing the implementation of GPP?

- Insufficient communication to all stakeholders about GPP (inside and outside of the organisation)
- Lack of monitoring once the tender has been awarded
- Poor high-level support for GPP
- Using Life Cycle Costing rather than the just Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) method of assessing tender submissions
- Lack of resources to aid the roll-out of GPP
- Fear within the organisation of embracing GPP and the challenges that come with it
- Managing change



### How to create an Action Plan?

It was highlighted at the workshops that a step-by-step approach should be taken to action planning and that the development of any final action plan should be an iterative process.

A ready-made and scalable action plan **template** (possibly devised by the GPP4Growth project partners) that could be used by different organisations to help them implement GPP was also discussed at the workshop.

### What is most useful to give attention to?

- Action Planning (More on this on the next page.)
- Monitoring to ensure that suppliers deliver on their green commitments; to track progress on GPP roll-out; and to enable each procurer to learn from their past GPP projects and those of their colleagues across the EU.
- Training to enable procurement staff within public bodies to confidently implement GPP; and supply-side training to raise awareness of GPP requirements and thus stimulate the market to provide more environmentally friendly solutions.
- Joint Procurement which would allow collaborating contracting authorities to save on administrative costs and share expertise.

Action Planning was a key topic for discussion during the Irish visit. The critical aspects of an effective action plan were identified as follows:

**Identify Who is Leading** **Organogram of Roles and Responsibilities**

**Establish Context/Rationale** **Legal & Policy Framework**

**Objectives** **Performance Indicators / Monitoring Procedures**

**Targets in line with National & Regional Plans** **Enforcement Procedures**

**Clarity around Finance and Resources** **Supports Required**

**Help and Support Database** **FAQs**

**Training Plan** **Communications Plan for Citizens, Staff & Market**

**Feedback and Improvement Procedures** **Implementation Forum**

The discussions related to action planning brought up many interesting ideas that could be incorporated into a plan to increase the level of GPP in an organisation:

- Templates for the tendering process for a particular product category, training courses and a simpler legislative framework for GPP would help improve the administrative capacity of each organisation to implement GPP.
- Expert technical knowledge is required in order to effectively use, assess and monitor green award criteria in the procurement process. An e-platform used to exchange such information between procurers may be a useful tool to develop.
- The (regional) centralisation of GPP may cut down on costs and duplication in sourcing goods and services.
- GPP could be stimulated by offering rewards for savings (economic and environmental) and incorporating GPP into the budgets and overall governance of the public body in question.
- Suppliers need to be encouraged to provide greener options in the market. This could be done by; publishing an RFI (request for information) before a tender is issued to gather information about available green solutions on the market; establishing a database of suppliers who offer greener solutions; hold 'meet the buyer' events where the GPP message is strongly communicated to suppliers.

### **Mandatory GPP?**

The effect of including compulsory GPP targets in action plans was discussed during the workshops. The impact of this on local SMEs must be considered - would they be able to fairly compete with larger suppliers? A sudden move to a mandatory model of GPP may be met with lack of willingness to adapt to the new practices on the procurers' side too. Perhaps a first step would be to have some mandatory green awarding criteria apply to the tendering of certain categories of products to stimulate the market and familiarise the procurers with using such award criteria.

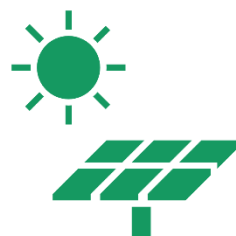
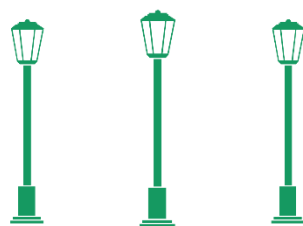


Attendees of the Irish visit heard about a range of successful, practical examples of GPP. (See the next page.)

### **Monitoring GPP**

- Monitoring can be difficult as the procurer is often not involved in the management of the product/service that has been tendered for in the first place.
- What is considered 'green' needs to be defined along with some determined targets. Critically, to have comparable statistics across regions within the EU, these definitions and performance indicators need to be the same across the EU.
- It was noted at the workshops that monitoring may be easier in a centralised procurement system.
- The monitoring of GPP should be included in existing accounting systems and in existing reporting structures such as the annual report of each public body.

## Practical Examples of GPP in Action



### **Wexford County Council**

Wexford County Council provided details of three projects which build trust in a green procurement agenda. These were:

- An ongoing Street Lighting Upgrade programme where, to date, 3,430 bulbs have been replaced with LEDs, reducing maintenance costs by 87% per year.
- A revision to the designs for Flood Defence Works in the town of Enniscorthy, based on the public's feedback and concern for environmental issues surrounding the initial designs. The revised design included tree planting, a nesting wall, re-design of a bridge to reduce impact on flight path of birds, fish refuges, spawning areas, habitat creation and the construction process has been designed to reduce impact on fish and lamprey migration. This demonstrates that the public cares about green issues when it comes to the work that public authorities do.
- A project to upgrade the energy efficiency of a small estate of 12 one-bed houses owned by Wexford County Council. These houses received internal and external insulation, heat pumps, solar PV panels, demand-controlled ventilation and new windows and doors. While energy costs have significantly decreased there were other significant benefits such as reduced maintenance costs, better air quality and better health outcomes for those living in the properties.

### **An Garda Síochána (The Police Service in Ireland)**

The GPP4Growth group toured the new, state-of-the-art police headquarters in Wexford which was designed by architects from the Office of Public Works (OPW). The OPW take energy efficiency, ecology, repair and renovation costs, material use, transport and water into consideration when planning national public building projects. Information about the police's attainment of ISO 50001 was also circulated to the group. An Garda Síochána are the first police service globally to attain this standard.

### **The Irish National Heritage Park**

The GPP4Growth group visited the Irish National Heritage Park (INHP), located in Wexford where they learned about the park's energy efficiency upgrades, installation of solar panels, its adoption a zero-waste policy within the organisation and its participation in various environmental campaigns. The INHP is run as a not-for-profit enterprise so costs and value for money are a key concern. This case study demonstrates that these concerns can be satisfied when aligned with an environmental improvement programme.

### **EcoMerit**

EcoMerit is a business based in Wexford, Ireland that works with public and private organisations to help them 'green' their organisations. EcoMerit noted that, in the private sector, environmental certification for suppliers is becoming increasingly important in terms of winning tenders so this should be considered more often in terms of public sector contracts as well. It was also suggested during EcoMerit's presentation that measurement of GPP in the public system could be kept simple at first by tracking straightforward measurements such as the % of suppliers with a credible environmental certification, and the % of annual spend going to these particular suppliers.

The case studies presented in Ireland demonstrated the importance of choosing pilot projects where GPP can assist in delivering on organisational priorities e.g. local authorities using GPP to excel in their priority areas such as housing and public infrastructure.

### **More Information**

This policy brief is provided by Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment of the Republic of Ireland / Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithe ar son na hAeráide agus Comhshaoil, and is based on a report prepared by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in Ireland, a GPP4Growth partner. The full report is called 'Existing experiences visits on GPP processes and results - Report on Irish Visit. Wexford 3rd & 4th of October 2018' and is available on request.