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support • GPP training • policy recommendations

GreenS - green public procurement supporters for innovative and sustainable institutional change

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DELIVERABLE

Report on specific multi-level GPP approaches and strategies and implementation of G.PP.S

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As a part of the Horizon 2020 project H2020-EE-2014-3-MarketUptake GreenS, green public procurement supporters for innovative and sustainable institutional change, SEP-210165885. North Sweden Energy Agency (former NENET) will perform two evaluations. The first is to analyse the outcomes of benefits and challenges for introduction of multi-level GPP approaches and strategies. The second is evaluation of implementing G.PP.S. green public procurement supporters in all partner countries. North Sweden Energy Agency will deliver this specific report to all partners as work package leader for deliverable 6.2.

Description of Task 6.2 from proposal SEP-210165885

Report on specific multi-level GPP approaches and strategies and G.PP.S. – Green Public Procurement Supporters in Energy Agencies: The work package leader North Sweden Energy Agency (Nenet) furthermore elaborates a specific report about the benefits and challenges in the introduction of multi-level GPP approaches and strategies and of implementing *G.PP.S. – Green Public Procurement Supporters in Energy Agencies*. To this end, North Sweden Energy Agency includes a dedicated section on this issue in the evaluation templates (see Task 6.1). Partners provide analysis of specific benefits and barriers to the implementation of multi-level GPP approaches and strategies and identify policies and measures implemented to overcome challenges. They will also define in which cases a technical assistance and multi-level approach are the most useful and helpful and which role *G.PP.S.* can play. North Sweden Energy Agency will provide all partners with the report in English.

In deliverable 6.2 there are two actions to be evaluated. The first is the benefits and challenges of multi-level GPP approaches and strategies and the second is evaluation of implementation of G.PP.S. green public procurement supporters. North Sweden Energy Agency has prepared this report for all partners where benefits and challenges of multi-level GPP approaches and strategies is analysed together with evaluation of implementation of G.PP.S. green public procurement supporters. This report is the evaluation and analyse of the outcomes described as benefits and challenges. The first part is the evaluation of the Multi-level approach and strategies described as benefits and challenges. Thereafter the report will describe findings from the implementation of the G.PP.S. also described as benefits and challenges.

North Sweden Energy Agency, Luleå 2018-02-26
Project manager Isabella Katsimenis

Multi-level GPP approaches and strategies

Benefits:

The evaluation found that the multi-level approach has been mostly used by the partners in the steering committee meetings. Some of the partners have identified, as a key factor to success for multilevel cooperation, that there is a certain need to retain relations with stakeholders. Many of the partners are working in an ongoing process to assure this. The multi-level approach has been found as a useful and helpful tool for the G.PP.S. to assure this. Both to develop relations and collaboration and overcome barriers. In this multi-level approach, it was easy for the G.PP.S. to include technical assistance and the project GreenS was for most of the energy agencies a natural step since many has been officially assigned in the past to have a responsibility of providing SEAP technical assistance and found this multi-level approach to be a good way to expand further with assistance on the GPP issues.

The steering committee meetings have served as excellent platform to facilitate multi-level approaches and strategies for GPP implementation on all levels. There were many benefits identified in these meetings. One was that the participants got a much better understanding about GPP and participants also could indicate the actual challenges for GPP implementation. Here combined with technical assistance the G.PP.S. was working well. When these challenges were identified the work to overcome these barriers could start and a greater learning took place. Also, the participants could discuss future policy framework and actions for implementing GPP. Different stakeholders could share different experiences and pass on knowledge between organisations. The participants also found cooperation possibilities among each other and new collaboration between different stakeholders could accrue. These meetings were also a platform to disseminated good practices, GreenS project results, lessons learned and other findings of importance of GPP.

Multi-level GPP approaches and strategies

Challenges:

The evaluation of the multi-level cooperation also found some challenges in this approach. Like that to further proceed in the transition to a green economic there are many projects going on dedicated to GPP/SPP. GreenS is one of them. GreenS is different in the way that it has a more ambitious goal to cover the whole country. For the partners in GreenS, who in most cases was an energy agency, this is a new way of work since energy agencies most often work at regional level. This was a challenge for some partners, to both cover this large field and at the same time take care of the relations and synergies from other ongoing projects. Some partners decided to have a strategy to work both on national and regional level to get most valuables kept from the project.

Another challenge for the partners was how to inform public staff and suppliers and all stakeholders at multi-level about green public procurement and involve them in a *behavioural change* to incorporate sustainable purchasing criteria in public procurement processes. Here again the technical assistance was a useful tool for all G.P.P.S.. Some partners mention problems with finding resources to meet these target groups on regular basis as main barrier for multi – level approach.

Another challenge that was found difficult for the G.P.P.S. to solve was how to make all stakeholders to agree on common legislation restrictions/ supporting mechanism for GPP implementation among different stakeholders on national level. Here was also a need to cooperate in organising trainings and providing technical support for GPP implementation. To continue to educate and inform society about GPP need and how to overtake a good practice from other countries/ best examples.

Another partner found that there was a lack of up to date knowledge on GPP products/services and procedures. Therefore, the online database with training material, news and useful links that was created on GreenS website to further support the procurers was very useful. The challenges for the energy agency was how to communicate this page and information to others. Here again the multi-level approach was useful to spread the information on multi-level. Many agencies supplemented and used their existing cooperation with local authorities and public administrations to promote this page, but at sometimes it was difficult for the information to pass through in a good way.

Some partners found barriers in communication. In the multi-level approach in steering committee meetings it could be found, for example, that some different views could hold stakeholders away from each other. But by using this multi-level approach, when different stakeholders sat around the same table and discussed the same subject. It was found that most of the participants, from all different levels, agreed on the same cause. So other factors became secondary to emphasize the need of a greener procurement. This was a greater learning, and, in this way, new collaboration was built and a unified approach to different things could be built. Another barrier that was found was the lack of knowledge and the courage, to include and put the right technical specifications for green tender in the procurement. Here again the combination of technical assistance with multi-level approach was a tool that worked well.

In the steering committee meetings where, multi-level approach was used. It was clear that all stakeholders such as governments, county administrations, municipality's, subcontractors, professional organizations and NGO's all could find new ways of cooperation. And the approach also addresses the lack of knowledge about green public procurement. As procurers in municipalities did not always have the right understanding and therefore could not set the right technical specifications for green tender or because they were not updated with the latest news from the field. Of course, also trainings were a useful tool in this matter. Another barrier that was found was that subcontractors did not always have employees working in the field of responding to public tenders. Another finding when working in this way was the importance of inviting all stakeholders to avoid any organization for not being included. Many partners found this approach being the best way to give technical assistance and support to local and regional governments.

Another of the biggest barriers founded to implement a multi-level GPP strategy was the non-effective coordination among different administrations levels in the region. Several public entities in the region are working towards GPP implementation though different actions (e.g. drawing up GPP criteria, preparing tender templates, launching green procurement processes, etc.) without any communication or collaboration between them. Most of the work developed could be easily transferred and used by other administrations, accelerating the GPP institutionalization process in the region. Here the G.PP.S. could play an important future role.

Although GreenS project has allowed identifying the main active administrations in the region and connecting them in common forums, it is necessary to continue the path started with the project to strengthen collaborations between different administration levels and push synergies to appear. For this purpose, efforts to maximize networking should be kept in the region (e.g. enhancing and promoting the GPP network set up under GreenS project). On the other hand, we found certain reluctance on municipalities to adopt GPP practices as a part of public administrations environmental policies because of different reasons:

- Daily work on procurement departments is overwhelming, there is no time and/or workers available to implement GPP;
- GPP is seen as a voluntary and optional, we haven't found the necessary support from policy makers.
- Other reasons like higher cost perception, lack of leadership, unclear responsibilities, lack of political support, lack of expertise and available tools, etc.

Given the barriers, one partner decided to follow a different tactic: instead of adopting an official GPP Strategy the GPPS decided to start developing some of the actions included on its action plan step by step, gradually increasing the activity to attract procurement departments' interest on GPP to finally propose the GPP Strategy approval. This new tactic has given good results and currently public procurement services are willing to continue with GPP institutionalization.

G.PP. S implementation

Benefits:

Some of the Energy Agencies has been providing technical support to local authorities in SEAP development and implementation. Therefore, establishment of the G.PP.S. unit was in line with the other activities as the agencies was ready for its organisational upgrade. This upgrade was in many cases to go from a regional responsibility to a national. Below is a list of benefits from the partners that was found from establishing G.PP.S.

- The G.PP.S. is a great tool to to give public authorities technical advice and assistance on GPP
- To provide networking with local actors (business & local authorities)
- Organize training for technicians, engineers or energy managers
- Organize events, workshops, seminars
- Promoting Green Public Procurement (GPP)
- Assisting for the improvement of energy performance in buildings
- Accelerating implementation of RUE/RES projects/investments
- Providing energy Performance Contracting (EPC)
- Developing Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP) or other similar plans or activities
- Assisting/developing ESCO-type activities
- To sensitize and divulge information on local renewable energy sources and rational energy utilization
- To conceive and implement projects for sustainable development of new activities and job creation integrate energy efficiency and environmental protection in urban planning processes, contributing for the implementation of sustainable development in the region, to decrease the emission of greenhouse effect gases and to increase life quality of the population.

As mentioned before, the maintenances of certain relations are of most importance for partners to assure the G.PP.S unit. Therefore, many partners have built the G.PP.S on existing cooperation with local authorities and public administrations. This activity is also important to ensure the future operation of GPP department and for the G.PP.S to proceed after the end of the Greens project. Below are some suggestions from different partners on which cooperation that is of most importance: cooperation with the regional stakeholders, e.g. provincial government, other energy agencies, local authorities, professional organisations regarding energy and sustainability NGOs,

regional governments, universities, and companies offering green products/services are all mentioned as important. But also, authorities at national level is important like for example Ministry of environmental protection, Ministry of economics and National procurement monitoring bureau.

The G.PP.S units was also found to be a good link between public and private sector. Though the work developed with green product/services suppliers (market research, face to face meetings, green catalogue, etc.) G.PP.S has gained a good knowledge about the green market in the region and has also established contacts with the main stakeholders in this sector. These are useful resources and made the G.PP.S able to meet municipalities' green products demands and to balance public and private interests.

Another benefit that was found was capacity building of employees by increase local authorities' staff's skill capacity to develop green public procurement processes. The GPP training program was designed with the aim to build up the capacity of policy makers and municipalities employees as well as to provide them with appropriate tools (life cycle cost analys tool, EU GPP criteria) to make easier the green criteria inclusion in the procurement process. The training courses were also used as a tool for face to face dissemination and to encourage municipalities to launch green tenders under the pilot projects and on their own (direct contact with municipality has shown as the most effective tool to bring them to green procurement). All this activity led to environmental awareness rise. As an effective GPP dissemination helped to raise public bodies' awareness on the environmental impact of purchasing certain product/service. In this sense, the organization of GPP workshops, training courses and with the development of an exhaustive communication plan has promoted a behavioral change in public entities: decision-makers and public employees are noticeably more aware about environmental issues and the positive effect of green procurement.

Another activity from the G.PP.S was trainings. In most countries trainings had a high number of participants. That could be an indicator showing the need of such technical support for procurers and the G.PP.S unite as a structure and a positive way to organise it. Additionally, to that, trainings made by G.PP.S unit also ensures possibilities to receive technical assistance on GPP documents fulfilment, which is also indicated as a need for procurers. The templates from GreenS project is used as a good example to encourage procurers to elaborate on GPP. Dissemination and tailored training program also allows policy makers and public procurement staff in municipalities to enter in the topic in an easy and comfortable way and works to improve their skills on demand as personalized training sessions and face to face meetings address directly the knowledge gap.

GPP pilot experimentations was also a perfect demonstration tool to showcase the benefits of GPP and to encourage other public administration to develop similar initiatives. A proper dissemination of the results obtained at regional and national level will maximize the impact of the GreenS project and the replication of the G.PP.S model. This activity led to an environmental public commitment. Within GPP pilot experimentation, municipalities have included environmental criteria in their procurement process, allowing them to achieve its environmental and climate goals (e.g. energy and CO₂ reduction targets included in the Sustainable Energy Action Plans) as well as to reduce the environmental impact of their actions and finally to decrease economic costs.

Also, the establishment of the G.PP.S led to larger company engagement. Market is one of the main pillars in the public procurement process. Face to face meetings with main regional suppliers led us to inform on the needs of public administration as well as find out if their products can fulfill de EU GPP criteria and satisfy the green public demand but also to identify companies needs and improvement proposals. To achieve a better engagement of the market, companies were also invited to be part of the steering committees and to training courses as speakers to show their green products. This is also a part of the development of the industry and sustainable business community.

In this way the combination of GPPS unit and multi-level approach is a tool that can play a significant role for gathering multi-level stakeholders and indicating the actions that are needed and finding resources for the actions realisation. The establishment of the G.PP.S has also strengthened the energy agencies position on all levels as a support unit for the county, region and all municipality's and other stakeholders. The establishment of the G.PP.S has also strengthened the energy agency's in a positive direction towards better relations with key stakeholders. The G.PP.S set up has been a key element for the development and the implementation of GPP institutionalization in the specific territories and in this sense, the GPPS unit plays a crucial role by supporting municipalities to overcome the main barriers and difficulties for an effective GPP implementation. The long-term support and technical assistance on GPP offered by GPPS make municipalities feel more confident and secure when launching a green procurement. Without this backup many of the GPP initiatives started in the territory wouldn't have been completed.

G.PP. S implementation

Challenges:

In the beginning of the GreenS project some energy agencies conducted research in their countries to have a better understanding of the current situation of green procurement. In these findings it shows, in a clear way, that numbers of green procurement are very low. This was also found during the project in countries that could be foreseen as being in the front of implementation. There were still regions and fields where GPP was not high at all. According to data that was collected very few green tenders were initiated. And out of these few, only even less has been officially awarded. Hence, there is more to be done in all European countries to reach the targets for GPP implementation.

In some countries legislation is being introduced that helps the transition to move faster. These new legislations are in some countries in benefit to SMEs and their access to public procurement markets. In this cases aggregation of demands in the EU provides easier access for SMEs to the procurement market. This will be done by reducing the number of tender-related documents required and scrapping the need for potential contractors to demonstrate previous public procurement experience. It's believed that these are two of the main factors deterring and preventing SMEs from entering the public procurement market. The contracting authority must also now consider quality criteria when awarding contracts, rather than just accepting the lowest-price offered. This will allow SMEs to compete more with larger companies. Transparency in the decision-making process will also be improved to counter existing corruption.

A challenge for the G.PP.S was how to continue to make best use of the information that was collected and spread it to the right stakeholders. And also, how to reach the target group for GPP with the appropriate information. The flow of information that is competing for the attention of the audience is constantly growing, how to address the right message to the right group of people – be it policy makers or procurers – is always one key to success. Another challenge was how to keep the momentum for the shift from conventional procurement to green, energy-efficient and low-carbon purchasing procurement. The G.PP.S units puts in effort through the project by many of the mentioned activities for stimulating the green public procurement, but there is still a lot more that needs to be done to overcome the barriers towards a wide-scale implementation of GPP.

Here are some more of the challenges that was found in the implementation of the G.PP.S units during the project.

Main challenge faced during the G.PP.S implementation has been to get public administration involved, adopting GPP policies. Public entities didn't show interest on GPP despite the efforts done on dissemination and promotion. To solve this problem, we change the communication strategy, boosting the tailored training courses and personalized helpdesk (including face to face meetings and direct contact with public staff). This strategy has been effective in our case and led us to engage a relatively high number of municipalities on GPP institutionalization.

Challenges for the future of the G.PP.S is how to develop new methodologies for a more effective support to municipalities, this including a better engagement of stakeholders and efficient dissemination and training tools.

Some energy agency found the main challenge for G.PP.S. active work to be resources. In the work done by the G.PP.S. the resources can be found indicating common needs for actions among different multi- level stakeholders. G.PP.S. is taking leadership of multi – level cooperation and it can take leadership via cooperation to find an effective solution to overcome limited resources barriers.

Also, to maintain the G.PP.S, another challenge is how to improve G.PP.S staff skills on GPP. Employees at energy agencies needs to be regularly updated and trained in the field of GPP to have the capacity to continue to provide the right information to stakeholders in the future. Also, how employees can adapt and keep updated to future European and national regulation developments (e.g. new GPP criteria, public procurement normative amendments, etc.) is of most importance for the maintenance of the G.PP.S. As well as the employees needs to be continuously informed about the latest green products/services offered by the market. This is also important to further extend GPP support to other administrations in the region and to promote the G.PP.S model replication in other provinces/regions and strengthen collaborations and networking as is identified before as a key-factor to success for the implementation. The sustainability of the G.PP.S model is another of the future challenges. It is necessary and of most importance to analyze different financial solutions to keep G.PP.S activity funded after the end of GreenS project.