

Sardinia's Regional Action Plan for GPP

Background

Sardinia is an island region forming part of Italy, situated in the Mediterranean sea, with a population of just over 1.6 million people. The government of Sardinia has invested significantly in the implementation of green public procurement (GPP) in its regional offices since 2009. The region's interest in GPP came about in January 2007, as the result of a Regional Committee Resolution. A successful relationship was established between the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Procurement as a result of this resolution. The Resolution led to the launch of the [Regional Action Plan for Green Public Procurement](#) (PAPERS) in 2009, part of which included the [Sardinia Buy Green](#) campaign, a communication campaign aimed at raising awareness of GPP. The Action Plan included workshops on GPP for regional officials, and the establishment of GPP information and technical support desks.



Development of Policy

The Action Plan was initially launched for the period 2009-2013, however, it was later extended to cover 2014 also. The Action Plan looked at the necessary actions which needed to be taken in order to streamline the needs of the region, to identify the product and service categories for which GPP criteria should be applied, and also to raise awareness and support for procurement staff in the regional and local authorities.

The Plan set out the following goals for the regional government. These goals were to be achieved on the basis of two primary objectives:

1) Get GPP activities underway within Sardinia's own administration. This was to be carried out via:

- Encouraging the use of renewable energy sources, increasing energy efficiency measures, and encouraging investment in renewable energy sources;
- Requiring minimum GPP criteria in at least 50% of all tenders for goods/services published for the day-to-day operation of the regional administration, as well as ensuring that 20% of works contracts awarded by the Region include sustainability criteria by 2013.

2) Promote and support GPP in the local and provincial governments within the region. This was to be carried out by:

- Encouraging the procurement of renewable energy, reducing spending, increasing the energy efficiency of public buildings by at least 50%;
- Spreading the practice of GPP among all public entities in the region to achieve the adoption of GPP policies by all provincial governments and park authorities, in 50% of the region's municipalities, and in 30% of all other public bodies by 2013.

The Action Plan had a budget of 3.2 million Euro, which was funded by the European Regional Development Fund (2007-2013), the regional administration of Sardinia and the Italian government.

Implementation of policy

In order for the Action Plan to be implemented, continuous collaboration was necessary between various departments, agencies, local authorities and other public bodies. Support was provided to encourage public authorities to rethink how they purchase and consume, while trying to jointly address the need to reduce the economic costs and the environmental impacts of their procurement.

GPP information and technical support desks were established in each of the eight provincial administrations. This greatly assisted the implementation of the Action Plan as each province had access to staff who were responsible for the promotion and implementation of GPP in their area. The GPP information and technical support desks delivered free support to municipalities and local businesses, and also supported the provincial administration. This support was provided through the following activities:

Training

Training workshops were organised throughout the region to train public procurers on how to carry out GPP procedures, and prepare GPP policies and strategies. Some of the topics tackled during these workshops included: relevant legislation; market analysis; operating tools: life cycle assessment and eco-labels; environmental management systems; definition of green criteria for each product category; greening of tenders for goods, services and works contracts; identification of environmental benefits; and monitoring.

Creation of interdepartmental working groups on specific topics

GPP working groups were established in the regional administration: One group was established for buildings, one for sustainable tourism, and a third for canteens. The working group for canteens, for example, included representatives from the regional Environmental, Agriculture and Health Departments, as well as from municipalities, hospitals and universities. The group exchanged information and experiences, and developed a guide for sustainable canteens and a "Sustainable Canteens Network", amongst others.

Tools and guidelines

- Production of information brochures and technical glossaries on GPP for public authorities and their suppliers; guidelines for the application of GPP in works contracts; guide, criteria and checklist for sustainable canteens; templates for Council Resolutions, Plans of Action and Service Orders to be used by local authorities to formally adopt a GPP policy.
- Practical manuals were created to facilitate the interpretation and use of minimum environmental criteria approved by the national government for: municipal waste management services; printers, toner and inkjet; cleaning products and services; vehicles; textiles; furniture; lighting; catering and food; and exterior joinery.

Outcomes

The variety of activities undertaken and support tools launched enabled real support to be provided to regional and local officials.

Prior to the implementation of Sardinia's Action Plan, the regional government itself was the only public authority carrying out GPP in Sardinia. As a result of the Action Plan, all of Sardinia's eight provincial governments carried out at least one green tender over the course of three years, while 67% of regional public bodies published one green tender. Unfortunately, only 23% of Sardinian municipalities carried out a green tender, despite the fact that half of all municipalities participated in the initiatives undertaken by the programme (training, etc.). Nevertheless, these 23% published 178 green tenders as a result of the Action Plan, while a total of 76 green tenders were published by the provincial governments during the same period.

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Sardinian authorities published green tenders for a variety of goods and services including: IT products, paper, furniture, cleaning services, management of waste services, event organisation, and school canteen services. In total, over 50 tenders were carried out for sustainable canteen services, including a tender published by the Municipality of Cagliari worth 9.5 million euro, and a tender published by the University of Cagliari worth approximately 6 million euro.

Furthermore, the regional government is currently preparing a follow up plan for the period 2016-2020, based on the outcomes and lessons learned from the 2009-2013 initiative.

Lessons learned

Feedback received from public authorities indicated that they greatly appreciated the technical support provided by the regional support desks. This feedback also provided valuable insights into why certain public authorities did not adopt a GPP policy. Reasons included: GPP is not compulsory; authorities did not understand how GPP works and did not wish to commit; many authorities were comfortable carrying out green tenders but did not wish to formally commit to GPP; and finally, many authorities feared that buying green would result in paying more for goods and services.

The Region found it very useful to involve local businesses in the Action Plan as it enabled companies to better understand the change in approach the region was taking to public procurement, and it allowed public authorities to better understand the key issues for businesses as regards the provision of sustainable products and services (such as: ecolabels, certified supply chains, social responsibility, etc.).

The Region recognises that in order to be successful in this area, behavioural changes require the investment of time, the support of tools, and targeted actions. Furthermore, the Region has observed that although the Action Plan has resulted in significant improvements, for example the increase in the number of authorities carrying out GPP, in order to ensure the continuous uptake of GPP, training and information need to be available to public authorities on a more long term basis.

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