

## Environmental Policy Office, Cyprus University of Technology

### Background

The Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) is based in the City of Limassol (Lemesos), on the island's Southern coast. Roughly 2,500 students attend the university each year. CUT's mission is to become a center of excellence in university education and research, while contributing significantly to the economic and technological development of the country. An integral part of this aim is striving to become a pioneer "green" university in Cyprus, through raising environmental awareness and implementing environmental policy within all functions and departments.

CUT established an Environmental Policy Office in 2010. It is coordinated by the Planning and Design Department's Estate Management Service and is the office responsible for GPP implementation across the university.



### Development of procedure

The CUT has been using environmental criteria within its public procurement activities since its launch. The Environmental Policy Office is responsible for the university's Green Public Procurement (GPP) Procedure, which is based on the National Green Public Procurement Action Plan (GPP NAP). Cyprus's GPP NAP was established by the Department of Environment within the Cyprus Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment.

The aim of the university's GPP Procedure is to transform procurement and related procedures into more sustainable activities and cultivate increased environmental consciousness amongst the university community; tailoring Cyprus's NAP into a more targeted framework that satisfies the needs of the institution.

### Implementation of procedure

The implementation of the GPP Procedure was a comprehensive task, which required a great deal of communication and cooperation with different tiers of the university community.

One of the most important steps taken was to get the GPP Procedure approved by the University Committee. Once this was achieved and the message was conveyed by senior representatives of the Committee to the entire university community, it helped to secure buy-in amongst all departments. To begin with however, many stakeholders were not familiar with the environmental impacts associated with their procurement activities. With support from the Environmental Policy Office, they began to use appropriate GPP criteria and now the majority of purchases undertaken include these environmental aspects. Lower budget tenders are managed under the Green Office Programme, which individual departments must adhere to in order to achieve a 'Green Office Certificate'.

Another success factor in terms of implementation of the GPP Procedure was the creation of the University's Green Public Procurement Consulting Committee (GPPCC), which consists of a spectrum of representatives; from academics to administration staff. This committee is responsible for providing input on environmental aspects in the highest value tenders. The University's Public Procurement Office, which manages these tenders, informs the Committee when such a tender is coming up in order to allow enough time for effective consultation.

Although the university has always strived to obtain low environmental impact products, the market was not always developed enough to respond to these requirements. Environmentally preferable products often carried a significant price premium due to the lack of availability and competition amongst suppliers. The university persisted in asking for relatively simple environmental parameters - for instance recycled paper - and gradually the market started to evolve. Nowadays, every importer of paper has at least one brand of recycled paper on offer.

The overall vision is that the GPP Procedure will raise awareness of the importance of GPP and provide a sufficiently supportive framework so as to allow devolved procurers to feel motivated and competent enough to undertake GPP with increasingly less active input from the GPPCC.

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## Outcomes of procedure

The establishment of the Green Public Procurement Consulting Committee was a major milestone for the Environmental Policy Office and the university. Its suggestions on what to implement in order to achieve GPP are sent to the coordinator of the relevant tender and the Public Procurement Committee. The university community is now familiar with the use of environmental specifications and with the committee itself, which has made the GPP Procedure a success - not to mention the fact that the majority of procurement activities now include at least some environmental aspects.

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With the creation of the GPPCC, the evaluation and monitoring of the GPP Procedure has been made possible due to the transparency on how many products or services are procured that include environmental specifications. For the time being this committee does not have the ability to stop any public tender being published for not doing so, but the advice and guidance offered, along with effective communication of the goals behind this policy, have led to an increase in the inclusion of environmental criteria in public procurements undertaken by the university.

One of CUT's primary policy goals concerns sustainable development within the city. One tangible outcome in terms of the implementation of the GPP Procedure was the renovation of old historic buildings in the town centre of Lemesos, which will now be used by the university. A number of buildings have already been restored and the university is currently undertaking two further renovation projects.

## Lessons learned

The Cyprus market realised that products with environmental specifications are in demand.

The guidance and input offered by the GPPCC and Environmental Policy Office has so far been integral, but as the GPP Procedure progresses, it is hoped that GPP will be implemented more as a matter of routine, especially if the university committee increases its level of support for the initiative.

Suppliers across a range of categories have now responded to environmental demands placed on them and are now offering greener products. For other markets, it is recognised that there is more work to do and that the GPP Procedure must be broadened to include categories such as food and catering, and consider other aspects of GPP such as targeting the carbon footprint associated with products and services. Advice from CUT to newcomers rolling out a GPP policy is simple:

- include aspects that are practical to implement;
- allow flexibility in case the market for certain products or services is not currently developed enough;
- take steady, methodical steps;
- ensure good communication and share the overall vision and goals with all key stakeholders.