



# Eco-Procurement

## The Path to a Greener Marketplace

### Benefits in Facts and Figures

Over 2.8 million desktop computers are purchased each year by public authorities in the European Union. The purchasing of more energy efficient models would reduce electricity bills – and European emissions of greenhouse gases by over 830,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalents. Even more impressively, the purchasing of green electricity by the public sector would contribute towards one quarter of the European Kyoto commitments, if this

came from newly constructed renewable energy facilities. These are some of the findings of new calculations, which prove that eco-procurement by public authorities should play a key role in meeting environmental commitments. Facts that cannot be ignored.

Armed with quantified data on the environmental benefits of eco-procurement and a clear European legislative framework for action, now is the time to build a European movement to promote the implementation of eco-procurement and ensure its potential is realised.

# RELIEF

Research on Green Purchasing

A three-year research project, supported by EC-DG Research, to identify the environmental relief potential of green purchasing in Europe, is co-ordinated by ICLEI's Eco-Procurement Programme.

The findings presented have been researched by the Technical University of Wien (Austria), dk-Teknik Energy & Environment (Denmark) and the Technical University of Dresden (Germany).

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## What is Eco-Procurement?

Eco-procurement stands for economically and ecologically sound purchasing practices by public authorities. This involves the integration of environmental considerations into all stages of the purchasing process: from the identification and purchasing of greener alternatives to the avoidance of unnecessary purchases. Quality is key: green products have to supply the same (or better) quality and functionality.

In practical terms, eco-procurement requires procurers and environmental experts within public authorities to work together to identify, develop and implement a co-ordinated approach/strategy to the purchasing process. One only needs to look at certain practices taking place at the local level – the opportunities for cities to “green” their procurement practices are manifold and the environmental results are at times quite astounding.

## How is it implemented in practice?

Through applying strict environmental criteria to the tendering procedure for computers, Stuttgart, Germany, has achieved significant savings in energy consumption. The criteria developed were based on the German eco-label “Blauer Engel” and the Swedish radiation label TCO, and as computers with high environmental standards actually hardly vary in price from their conventional counterparts, the economic advantage is completely on the side of the City of Stuttgart through the energy savings.

An initiative undertaken by the Municipality of Kolding in

Denmark concerning the purchasing of environmentally friendly (or organic) food resulted in a change towards sustainable consumption and food preparation methods. The Municipality, in its efforts to meet its Agenda 21 commitments initiated a regional project amongst private and public kitchens where healthy food with minimum environmental impacts was prepared. The purchasing and cooking methods were examined and mapped in order to identify opportunities for economic savings which were then used to increase the amount of organic food products used, creating a cost neutral solution.

*Margit Vestbjerg*  
BIG-Net Chair,  
Environment &  
Planning Mayor  
of Kolding  
Kommune,  
Denmark



**BIG•NET**  
THE BUY IT GREEN NETWORK

*Is your City a participant of BIG-Net, the “Buy It Green”-Network of Municipal Purchasers in Europe?*

BIG-Net provides a forum for all municipalities and local authorities in Europe to share their green purchasing know-how and to broaden their expertise. Register your City's interest now and/or obtain more information on BIG-Net by completing the form on page 4.

## How was the Relief Potential Calculated?

The RELIEF project (see front page) has finally provided quantified figures on the environmental impact of public authorities “buying green”; in other words the “relief potential”. So how was this potential calculated?

It was recognised that a simplified approach was needed in what is a very complex subject. Therefore, for each product group studied only the most significant environmental impacts were considered, as it is here that most progress can be made. For each group a traditional product was compared with a “green” product already on the market, with substantially lower environmental impacts in the areas identified.

The next step was to discover the quantity of units in each of the product groups purchased annually in Europe, and also the quantity purchased by public authorities. Using these figures it was possible to quantify the result of both public

authorities and the whole European market switching entirely to the purchase of green products. The results (presented below) make impressive reading. In order to make the figures meaningful, the impacts found were recalculated into so-called “person equivalents”. One person equivalent is the emission of an average person (here either global or European). This gives the average “emission” per person, which can then be compared with the reductions generated by green purchasing. For example, from the table below we can see that switching to 100% organically produced wheat, meat and milk by public authorities would produce a reduction in nutrification effects equivalent to that produced by 3,676,492 people – the size of Berlin.

*The scientific results of the RELIEF project will be published by Greenleaf publishers in early 2003.*

*“Public procurement represents 14% of GDP for the EU as a whole – over 1000 billion Euro. Greening of public procurement can therefore contribute significantly to sustainable production and consumption patterns. This is an area in which every public authority can play its part.”*



Margot Wallström  
EU Commissioner  
for the Environment

## The Potential of Eco-Procurement

Product*	Impact category	Environmental relief through public eco-procurement	Corresponding person equivalents**
Buses	Photochemical ozone formation (tC <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> -equiv.)	-3,350	- 134,110 (European)
Sanitary devices	Water consumption (l)	-190,407,539	n/a
Computers	Greenhouse gas emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> -equiv.)	-832,320	- 101,503 (Global)
Food	Nutrification (tPO <sub>4</sub> -equiv.)	-41,560	-3,676,492 (European)
Electricity	Greenhouse gas emissions tCO <sub>2</sub> -equiv.)	-61,350,363	-7,481,752 (Global)

\* The measures needed to achieve these results are as follows: Buses – All new purchases comply with EURO IV emissions standards instead of EURO III; *Sanitary devices* – Replacement of standard 9l-flush toilets, with 6/3l-flushes, and the installation of water-saving taps; *computers* – All new purchases fulfill better than EnergyStar requirements with TFT monitors; *Food* – 100% of meat, wheat and milk produced organically; *Electricity* – 100% switch to renewable electricity.

\*\* European person equivalents describe the emission of an average European person. Global person equivalents describe the emission of an average person living anywhere in the world.

## All over Europe: Initiatives for green purchasing needed

The potential benefit of eco-procurement for society is impressive. But this potential has to be actively exploited, it will not happen on its own. Experience shows that even a legal obligation to consider environmental aspects in purchasing does not guarantee success. Rather each public authority should set up its own individual eco-procurement policy. Good information sources, training, networking and strategic joint procurement are also necessary.

For this to happen, promoters at the European, national and local levels are needed. To assist this process ICLEI and the RELIEF partners will be producing the following in the course of 2003:

- Easy-to-apply guidelines for six product groups: Electricity,

Construction, IT equipment, Cleaning, Food and Public Transport.

- Policy recommendations for European Internal Market policy, Urban Environmental Policy and Integrated Product Policy
- A Manual for local authorities, on how to purchase green and how to organise this within the administration

These initiatives will be presented at the next EcoProcura conference, which will take place from 8–10 September 2003 in Göteborg, Sweden. This will provide an ideal starting point for a European movement whereby interested individuals and organisations can join forces to promote Eco-Procurement at a national and European level.



*Christoph Erdmenger*  
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My  City  Institution  Company  NGO  Network  Other  
is interested in supporting/joining a European Movement on Green Public Purchasing

Please provide me with information on:

- "Buy It Green"-Network of Municipal Purchasers in Europe (BIG-Net)
- ICLEI's Eco-Procurement Programme (EPP)

I would like to register my interest in:

- EcoProcura®, Göteborg, 8-10 September 2003
- RELIEF Project update

### Imprint

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