

STA CASE STUDY SERIES

Barcelona, Spain

Responsible Timber Procurement: From coffins to beach stands

Contextual background



The City of Barcelona can be described as one of the European forerunners in sustainable public procurement. Barcelona signed the Aalborg Charter in 1995. One of the goals of the City's strategic Local Agenda 21 framework 21, which will be updated this year, explicitly requires the inclusion of environmental criteria and social clauses in public tenders, to stimulate the green purchasing of the public administration (Objective 8.10).

Since 2001 the city has increasingly included sustainability considerations when purchasing goods and services such as recycled paper, IT equipment, cleaning services, food & drinks (Fair Trade), work wear, waste management and street cleaning. Over the past years the city has been engaged in some European projects on sustainable and innovative public procurement. In 2004 the City adopted 'Barcelona's Responsible Policy on the Procurement of Timber' in response to its wish to decrease the city's environmental impact by contributing to the rational management and sustainable use of forest resources. Pressure from NGOs lobbying against illegal timber was also a contributing factor¹.

The Municipal Decree on Responsible Timber Procurement (2004) makes it compulsory for municipal departments, districts and agencies to ensure that all wood products purchased stem from sustainable forestry according to the most demanding standards available. Barcelona has ensured wide implementation of the policy and a large share of the wood purchased by the Municipal Funeral Service Enterprise, the street benches procured by the Parks and Gardens Department (wood for benches, protective fences and boards), and the new beach stands are all made from FSC certified wood.



Municipal timber purchase is monitored by the internal committee, composed of representatives of all stakeholders departments. The Barcelona's Sustainable City Programme provides the municipal staff responsible for timber procurement with training and technical support.

¹ EC GPP Case studies - see online at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/casestudy7.pdf>

Tender implementation

Subject-matter: Supply contract for 'urban furniture'.

Technical criteria used:

According to Barcelona's Timber Procurement Policy (2004, above), all timber used in "urban elements" must be legally sourced and originate from sustainably managed forests:

- Qualitative preference is given for meeting the criteria of more demanding certification schemes in terms of sustainability, such as those provided by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), or equivalent. Other less demanding certification schemes are given secondary preference; followed by bidders that show commitment to sustainable forestry and start to implement measures through a declaration.
- These requirements are applied in the Award stage of the tender.
- In order to avoid illegal logging, certificates of country of origin are always requested. This requirement is included as part of the Technical Specifications.

Additional/complimentary measures

- The "+Sustainable City Council Program" (Programa Ajuntament + Sostenible) provides information for citizens and training for public servants responsible for wood-based products supply on forest certification and responsible wood purchasing policy of the City. Advice is also given to local authorities in Barcelona who move toward GPP policies.
- Questionnaire given to public procurers to assess the quantity and quality of the wood purchased by the municipal offices.
- A guide called "Become a Friend of the Forest" was created in collaboration with Greenpeace for environmental education and awareness raising. It suggests that citizens' daily actions can have a deep impact on forests and the environment and gives recommendations on how to be sustainable in this sense.
- Barcelona has joined "Cities for Forests", an initiative promoted by WWF aiming to take advantage of the impact institutions can have on the environment, and on public and private actors, when exercising a responsible purchasing power.²



Barriers encountered

- Difficulty in finding suppliers who meet sustainability requirements and give proof of the chain of certificates.
- Complex internal organisation: difficulties in gathering information concerning the procurement of wood from all departments and in the control of all the procurement made.

² See online at:

http://wwf.panda.org/who_we_are/wwf_offices/bolivia/our_work/forest_program/responsible_trade/cities_for_forests/

- It is necessary to continuously provide training, as the people responsible for the purchase may change over time.

Results achieved



The municipal institution “Parks and Gardens” bought more than 16 m³ of PEFC or FSC certified timber during the first year of the timber policy implementation. Between 2002 and 2005 the use of recycled paper went up from 7% to around 70%³ in the offices of Barcelona city council. In total, around 75% of timber acquisitions between 2004 and 2008 were FSC certified or were in process of certification.

Many regional suppliers of timber products now offer standard *and* “sustainable” products as a result of the Barcelona’s responsible timber procurement.

In 2005, the Barcelona City Council won the prestigious German award “Zukunftspreis Nachhaltigkeit” in recognition for the promotion of recycled paper use in the period 2000-2005.

Lessons learned

- Barcelona, frontrunner in Spain in sustainable timber public procurement, worked as a model inspiring other local authorities.
- New opportunities for producers and providers of sustainable timber-based products.
- Monitoring system in the public administration was not adequate and has been improved thanks to the implementation of the policy on sustainable timber procurement.

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For more information on the Sustainable Timber Action (STA) project please visit
www.sustainable-timber-action.org



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³ See online at: www.bcn.es/agenda21/ajuntamentsostenible/paper.htm#indicadors