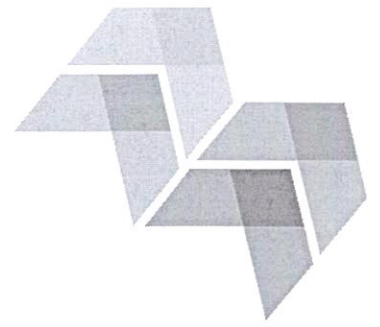


Interreg  
Europe



GPP4Growth  
Interreg Europe



European Union

# ACTION PLAN WITH MEASURES FOR PROMOTING THE INCLUSION OF GREEN CRITERIA IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

STARA ZAGORA REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

\* The contents of this document are based on the lessons learned from good experience and good practices from Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency (SZREDA) as a partner in the GPP4Growth project co-financed by INTERREG Europe. The proposals made have been identified as a useful experience by other project partners and according to the needs of the public contracting authorities in Bulgaria and the business organizations applying for green public procurement.

## **Content:**

**I – General information – 3**

**II – Context of the policy<sup>1</sup> – 6**

**III – Details of key activities envisaged – 6**

**IV – Monitoring – 14**

**V – Signature of a representative of the partner organization and signature of a representative of the responsible institution – 14**

---

<sup>1</sup> a set of ideas or an action plan, followed by a business, government, political party or group of people (Cambridge English Dictionary)

## I. General information

### Green public procurement for resource-efficient regional growth – GPP4Growth

The GPP4Growth (Green public procurement for resource-efficient regional growth) project aims to promote sustainable development based on eco-innovation, a circular economy, and resource-efficient public services. Survey results show that the European Commission confirms that green public procurement is an ideal tool to achieve these objectives, as it allows the pooling of green criteria as a cost cycle in the production and consumption processes of the public sector. The idea behind the GPP4Growth project has been developed to address these challenges through international cooperation, exchange, and evaluation of good practices in the regions, to influence policies at both regional and national levels to improve resource efficiency in regional economies.

The project brings together 9 partners from 9 countries, including managing institutions and regional bodies influencing regional and national policies, sharing experience and good practices and improving their capacity to implement resource-efficient policies that promote eco-innovation and green growth through green procurement.

Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency (SZREDA) is a non-governmental organization for public benefit, established in 1995 by the Municipality of Stara Zagora in partnership with other municipalities and organizations in the region. During this period, SZREDA has successfully implemented over 75 projects in favor of sustainable regional development.

Since 2017, SZREDA has been a partner in the GPP4Growth project, funded by the INTERREG EUROPE program. The leading partner is the University of Patras, Greece. The project involves partners from 9 EU Member States (Greece, Italy, Poland, Belgium, Spain, Latvia, Bulgaria, Ireland, and Malta).

The main objective of the GPP4Growth project is to improve the capacity of local authorities and institutions to implement policies that lead to resource efficiency and to promoting eco-innovation and green growth through the effective implementation of green public procurement. The project aims to increase by 7% the business organizations in the partner consortium regions, which take into account environmentally friendly factors and incur costs in the production, delivery, and provision of services.

The identified project stakeholders are representatives of local and regional authorities, businesses and organizations working to improve nature conservation through resource efficiency and eco-innovation.

Based on the work of SZREDA and the partner consortium of the GPP4Growth project co-financed by the INTERREG EUROPE program, recommendations will be made to help achieve the goals set in the project.

The recommendations listed in the document are identified as good practices at the EU level, which would have a positive effect on their correct implementation in Bulgaria by institutions at national, regional and local levels.

## Context of the policy

In Bulgaria, regional development is supported by national operational programs. The relevant policy instrument in the context of the project is the Operational Program Environment 2014-2020 (OPE).

The main objectives of OPE are:

- protecting the environment, reducing emissions and preventing biodiversity losses;
- development of new green technologies;
- building a more competitive and resource-efficient economy.

Green public procurement can further improve the implementation of measures under the following priority axes of OPE:

- PA 1 "Water": improvement of quality parameters in urban wastewater treatment.
- PA 2 "Waste": Improvement of municipal waste management and infrastructure.
- PA 4 "Flood and landslide risk prevention and management": Construction of fortification facilities, drainage structures for groundwater reduction and/or structures for leading surface water.
- PA 5 'Improving ambient air quality': reducing urban transport, industrial emissions.

The measures proposed in this action plan will encourage the implementation of green public procurement by contracting authorities in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Another tool was identified in the course of the project - the "National Program for the Energy Efficiency of Multifamily Residential Buildings".

The National Program for the Energy Efficiency of Multifamily Residential Buildings is aimed at renovating multifamily residential buildings with the main objective - through the implementation of energy efficiency measures, to provide better living conditions for citizens in multifamily residential buildings, improved thermal comfort and higher quality of life.

The implementation of the program is accomplished precisely through the awarding of public procurement by the beneficiary municipalities.

### Details for "ACTION PLAN WITH MEASURES FOR PROMOTING THE INCLUSION OF GREEN CRITERIA IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT"

This document guides how best practices in interregional cooperation can be used as a development tool with the potential to influence the achievement of project objectives. It defines the nature of the actions to be taken, their timing, the participants, the costs associated with them (if any).

The project will increase the capacity of regional administrations to effectively implement resource efficiency policies through the implementation of green public procurement. It will also improve the implementation of national/regional resource efficiency policies and unlock new investments in green public procurement to encourage the development of new green products and services.

<p>The Action Plan aims to influence: (Choose one of the following):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Invest for jobs and growth program</li></ul> <p>European territorial cooperation program</p>	
---	--

➤ Other programs for regional development	
Name of policy instrument addressed:	1. Operational Program "Environment" 2014-2020 (OPE) 2. The National Program for the Energy Efficiency of Multifamily Residential Buildings

### Summary

Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency (SZREDA) presents in this action plan measures to stimulate increased use of green criteria in public procurement.

The recommendations in this plan are based on the following activities implemented in the period 01.01.2017 - 31.08.2019:

**1) Four reports in different directions, prepared by partners from the international project partner consortium after studies in the following directions:**

- Report on the needs of procurers of Green Public Procurement (GPP) in the countries that are part of the project;
- Good Practice Report on the preparation, award, and implementation of the GPP;
- Report on existing policies, measures and plans to promote the implementation of green criteria in public procurement;
- A report on the factors that encourage or discourage businesses to apply for the implementation of the GPP.

**2) Five regular working meetings with local stakeholders from Bulgaria with the participation of business representatives, local authorities, national institutions, representatives of the scientific and academic circles and experts from the non-governmental sector in the area of the GPP.**

**3) Workshop in Sofia (Bulgaria) to discuss and exchange useful experience in similar projects to enhance the implementation of green criteria in public procurement.**

**4) Three international workshops for exchanging experience in Lodzkie (Poland), Stara Zagora (Bulgaria) and Jelgava (Latvia) on the promotion and the implementation of GPP, which follow the topics of the above mentioned reports, as well as two meetings thematically aimed at exchanging useful experience in the area of good practice in the preparation, award and implementation of GPP in Antwerp (Belgium) and Wexford (Ireland).**

Based on all of this, the team of SZREDA has prepared this Action Plan, which aims to increase the implementation of GPP by the contracting authorities in the Republic of Bulgaria at national and regional levels.

Project title	Green public procurement for resource-efficient regional growth – GPP4Growth
Partner organization	Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency (SZREDA)
Other partners (if any)	N/A
Country	Bulgaria
NUTS2	BG34 Yugoiztochen Region

Contact Person	Rumyana Grozeva PhD.
Position within the organization	Executive Director
E-mail	<a href="mailto:office@szeda.eu">office@szeda.eu</a>
Phone number	+359 42 60 50 07
Website	<a href="http://szeda.eu">http://szeda.eu</a>

## II. Context of the policy<sup>2</sup>

Name of policy instrument addressed:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Operational Program "Environment" 2014-2020 (OPE)</li> <li>2. The National Program for the Energy Efficiency of Multifamily Residential Buildings</li> </ol>
--------------------------------------	--

## III. Details of the key activities envisaged

<b>Key action #1:</b> <b>Online platform for sharing experiences on green products and services</b>	
Context of the proposal:	<p>Creating an online system to help contracting authorities exchange information about their green products and services. These good examples can be shared between institutions and serve as a valuable information resource when preparing marketing surveys and research for potential contractors. Information about them can be disseminated through special green bulletins to public procurers who have access to the online system.</p>
Why is this key action needed?	<p>One of the main factors limiting the effective implementation of green procurement not only in our country but also within the EU countries is the lack of information on appropriate green solutions that can be provided by suppliers of goods/services in favor of the administration. The proposal is based on good practices from Latvia and Malta.</p>
Proposal for Key Action # 1	<p>The proposal of the team of SZREDA is to be created an online information system for exchange of experience through which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assist different institutions in exchanging information on green products/services and their quality.</li> <li>• Create and distribute green bulletins that are published periodically and contain information on good green solutions that are appropriate for green public procurement.</li> <li>• A database of products/services from green businesses that are easily accessible for review by various interested</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup>a set of ideas or an action plan, followed by a business, government, political party or group of people (Cambridge English Dictionary)

	<p>contracting authorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information campaigns/competitions to promote good practices in the field of green public procurement, to serve as an example for contracting authorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Engaged participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Executive Environment Agency;</li> <li>➤ Public Procurement Agency.</li> </ul>
<b>Time frame</b>	2019 - 2020 (with the option to be transferred to the new programming period 2021 - 2027)
<b>Budget required</b>	N/A
<b>Sources of funding</b>	Operational Program "Environment" 2014-2020 (OPE) or its successive operational program for the period 2021-2027.
<b>Expected results</b>	Increase the number of public procurement contracts with green criteria.
<b>Next steps for implementation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initiation of workshops with responsible institutions and stakeholders.</li> <li>2. Identifying sources of funding.</li> <li>3. Defining a specific platform framework.</li> <li>4. Preparing a tender assignment to create the platform.</li> <li>5. Conducting an information campaign for the promotion of the online platform among the contracting authorities at national and regional levels.</li> </ol>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created an online platform for sharing experience in green public procurement;</li> <li>Number of contracting authorities registered in the platform.</li> </ul>

<b>Key action #2:</b>	
<b>Incentives for contracting authorities which include green criteria in public procurement</b>	
<b>Context of the proposal:</b>	<p>The proposal was developed based on useful experience from the countries in the GPP4Growth partner consortium, which have successfully implemented incentive measures for the inclusion of green criteria in public procurement by contracting authorities. This action was coordinated with local stakeholders in Bulgaria and further commented on with project partners during international workshops and exchanges of experience within the project. Similar good practice was seen as part of the program of the international workshop in Jelgava, Latvia.</p>

<b>Why is this key action needed?</b>	A large part of the measures promoting the active use of green criteria in public procurement are encouraging and stimulating for the administration to stimulate their more active involvement and use in public tenders.
<b>Proposal for Key Action # 2</b>	Providing incentives to suppliers for the implementation of GPP will increase the percentage of environmental criteria in public tenders. The proposal of SZREDA is to be created a working group with experts from public institutions, non-governmental organizations, universities and businesses working in the field of green public procurement in order to create incentives (including financial ones that are measurable with the savings from implementation of green criteria in public procurement from single Institution), which will encourage institutions to apply environmental criteria in their tenders, as well as specific incentives for organizations that apply environmental criteria in public tenders in EU funded projects.
<b>Engaged participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Executive Environment Agency;</li> <li>➤ Public Procurement Agency;</li> <li>➤ Universities and higher educational institutions;</li> <li>➤ NGOs in the field;</li> <li>➤ Business;</li> </ul>
<b>Time frame</b>	2019 - 2020 (with the option to be transferred to the new programming period 2021 - 2027)
<b>Budget required</b>	N/A
<b>Sources of funding</b>	Operational Program "Environment" 2014-2020 (OPE) or its successive operational program for the period 2021-2027.
<b>Expected results</b>	Increase the number of public procurement contracts with green criteria.
<b>Next steps for implementation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initiating workshops with responsible institutions and stakeholders on the framework of the proposal</li> <li>2. Setting up an expert working group to develop adequate incentives for institutions awarding green procurement and businesses investing in green solutions.</li> <li>3. Defining a specific framework of incentives for contracting authorities.</li> <li>4. Preparation of conducting a pilot edition of the measure for a certain number of public contracts.</li> </ol>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of incentives introduced for GPP for</li> </ul>



	<p>contracting entities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of contracting entities that have received incentives to apply GPP.</li> </ul>
--	---

<p><b>Key action #3:</b>  <b>Increasing the expert support for contracting entities that want to include green criteria in public procurement</b></p>	
<p><b>Context of the proposal:</b></p>	<p>The provision of expert assistance and support to contracting authorities for the implementation of GPP will increase the percentage of environmental criteria in public tenders. In many cases, contracting entities with less administrative capacity wish to award a contract with green criteria but do not have the expertise to do so.</p> <p>This proposal was developed based on useful experience from the countries in the GPP4Growth project partner consortium, which have successfully implemented the expert assistance measures to support the contracting authorities. This proposal was coordinated with local stakeholders in Bulgaria and further commented on with project partners during international workshops and exchanges of experience within the project. The proposal is based on good practices from Belgium and Malta.</p>
<p><b>Why is this key action needed?</b></p>	<p>Perhaps the biggest obstacle to the possibility of a more active inclusion of green criteria in public procurement is the lack of administrative capacity and complexity in the preparation of such public procedures. There are cases in which a local authority awards a green procurement without ever realizing that it is doing it and without considering it as such.</p>
<p><b>Proposal for Key Action # 3</b></p>	<p>The proposal of the team of SZREDA is to be created an advisory expert body for green public procurement - possibly within the Public Procurement Agency, to assist all public and private contracting entities wishing to apply environmental criteria in their tender procedures, but need additional support in the preparation of the tender documents.</p> <p>Expert support should be free of charge and should include providing advice on the preparation of the full tender documentation as well as the creation of template documents for the most commonly awarded purchases of products, goods, and services including green criteria. In this way, the work of the advisory expert body will be facilitated and the</p>

	contracting authorities will have the opportunity to receive the necessary support. Another activity of the advisory body in question should be the organization of specialized trainings for contracting authorities at all levels for more effective implementation of GPP. The financing of the expert advisory body can be made from the budget of OPE 2014-2020 or the Operational Program, which should inherit it in the new programming period.
<b>Engaged participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Executive Environment Agency;</li> <li>➤ Public Procurement Agency</li> </ul>
<b>Time frame</b>	2019 - 2020 (with the option to be transferred to the new programming period 2021 - 2027)
<b>Budget required</b>	N/A
<b>Sources of funding</b>	Operational Program "Environment" 2014-2020 (OPE) or its successive operational program for the period 2021-2027.
<b>Expected results</b>	Increase the number of public procurement contracts with green criteria.
<b>Next steps for implementation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initiating workshops with responsible institutions and stakeholders in the framework of the proposal.</li> <li>2. Identification of sources of funding for the activity of the advisory expert body.</li> <li>3. Designation of a specific framework and members of the advisory expert body and its services, role and functions.</li> <li>4. Preparation for the launch of the Advisory Expert Body.</li> </ol>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of an advisory expert body,</li> <li>• Number of contracting entities that have used the services of the advisory expert body.</li> </ul>

<b>Key action #4:</b>	
<b>Methodology for the conservation of protected species of bats and birds in buildings assigned to be renovated under the National Program for the Energy Efficiency of Multifamily Residential Buildings</b>	
<b>Context of the proposal:</b>	To the extent that maintaining a family home and providing a comfortable environment in it is one of the main spending points in the family budget, households desire to reduce energy consumption at the expense of modern appliances and technology, as well as at the expense of

	<p>improving the energy efficiency of the home. This also leads to lower carbon emissions and a higher quality of life, especially in big cities. This endeavor at a national level was reflected in the adoption of a National Program for the Energy Efficiency of Multifamily Residential Buildings. The implementation of the program measures contributes to reducing energy costs, improving the performance for extending the life cycle of buildings, providing living conditions by the criteria for sustainable development, reducing the costs of household heating, improved housing infrastructure. and a change in the appearance of cities, a cleaner environment through reduced greenhouse gas emissions. The good practice is influenced by useful experiences from Slovakia and Germany.</p>
<p><b>Why is this key action needed?</b></p>	<p>The implementation of the program does not envisage the presence of animal species inhabiting cavities or peripheral parts in buildings, with most of these species being protected. For this reason, the implemented projects do not spare animals and there is a killing of legally protected birds and bats, as well as permanent loss of nesting places and hiding places. The drastic decrease in the populations of these insectivorous species, as a rule, leads to a drastic increase in the number of insects in the urban environment. As a result, measures are already being taken to address the new problem with chemical agents, ie. tackling a problem, which certainly has an environmental aspect, is at the expense of creating another of the same nature, directly reflecting on the quality of life, human health, and household costs. All of this prevents the National Energy Efficiency Program for multifamily residential buildings from being a truly environmentally friendly measure.</p>
<p><b>Proposal for Key Action # 4</b></p>	<p>Stakeholder cooperation is needed to address this serious situation, starting with construction companies, public authorities and residents of buildings that need to be renovated. The proposal of SZREDA is to be adopted the methodology proposed by Green Balkans to deal with the problem, which has the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring the conservation of protected species inhabiting buildings and compliance with the Biodiversity Act;</li> <li>- Offering actionable measures to mitigate the damage to individuals and their colonies;</li> <li>- Depending on the findings, propose appropriate timeframes for implementation of construction activities and consistency in the implementation of measures to reduce the</li> </ul>

	<p>expected impacts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To make recommendations for the establishment of compensatory asylums;</li> <li>- To make the public aware of the threats to the various species and practical methods and opportunities, with the help of which birds and bats can be assisted during the reconstruction and thermal insulation of buildings;</li> <li>- To mark texts that would serve to change the available regulatory documents to preserve biodiversity in the implementation of the National Energy Efficiency Program;</li> </ul> <p>The methodology in question can be applied by using green criteria from it when awarding public contracts by municipalities to construction companies.</p>
<b>Engaged participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works;</li> <li>➤ Green Balkans;</li> <li>➤ Municipalities in Bulgaria that are beneficiaries of the National Energy Efficiency Program;</li> <li>➤ Construction companies.</li> </ul>
<b>Time frame</b>	2019-2020
<b>Budget required</b>	N/A
<b>Sources of funding</b>	National Budget
<b>Expected results</b>	Conservation of the protected species of bats and birds currently endangered in construction activities. Compliance with national environmental legislation without prejudice to Bulgarian citizens. Creating a healthier environment in urban areas.
<b>Next steps for implementation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Resumption of consideration of the newly created methodology in the relevant unit of the MRDPW. Initiating workshops with responsible institutions and stakeholders on the proposed framework.</li> <li>2. Moving to the validation of the methodology (coordination with the MOEW, public discussions, etc.) Defining a specific framework for the implementation of the methodology.</li> <li>3. Changes in the texts of the NNPEA and the Decree № 18 / 2.02.2015, making the methodology a fact.</li> <li>4. Preparation for the launch of a pilot procurement with evaluation criteria that have been agreed in advance with the methodology and consulted with the organizations that prepared it.</li> </ol>

<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of procurement contracts awarded by evaluation criteria based on the methodology.</li> </ul>
-----------------------------------	--

#### IV. Monitoring the implementation of the action plan.

Subsequent monitoring of the planned activities within the framework of the prepared action plan will be done periodically, following the implementation steps and the KPIs envisaged.

**Table for monitoring activities in the action plan.**

Key action	Source of information for the monitoring of the action	KPIs
<b>Key action #1:</b> <b>Online platform for sharing experiences on green products and services</b>	Information for created online platform for sharing experience in green public procurement and number of contracting authorities registered in the platform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created an online platform for sharing experience in green public procurement;</li> <li>• Number of contracting authorities registered in the platform.</li> </ul>
<b>Key action #2:</b> <b>Incentives for contracting authorities which include green criteria in public procurement</b>	Information for the number of incentives introduced for GPP for contracting entities and the number of contracting entities that have received incentives to apply GPP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of incentives introduced for GPP for contracting entities;</li> <li>• Number of contracting entities that have received incentives to apply GPP.</li> </ul>
<b>Key action #3:</b> <b>Increasing the expert support for contracting entities that want to include green criteria in public procurement</b>	Information about the establishment of an advisory expert body and the number of contracting entities that have used the services of the advisory expert body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of an advisory expert body,</li> <li>• Number of contracting entities that have used the services of the advisory expert body.</li> </ul>
<b>Key action #4:</b> <b>Methodology for the conservation of protected species of bats and birds in buildings assigned to be renovated under the National Program for the Energy Efficiency of Multifamily Residential Buildings</b>	Information on the number of procurement contracts awarded by evaluation criteria based on the methodology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of procurement contracts awarded by evaluation criteria based on the methodology.</li> </ul>

V. Signature of a representative of the partner organization and signature of a representative of the responsible institution

Stara Zagora Regional Economic

Development Agency

Rumyana Grozeva PhD,

/Executive Director/



For Executive Environment Agency

Atanas Kaymaktchiev,

/in duty of Executive Director/

