

Fourth semester

A24 - Fifth transnational learning event 31 March - April 2

**Organized by the Municipality of Gabrovo and CSEG (online,
due to the pandemic emergency)**

Capacity building session online meetings - methodology and report

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1. Methodology of the capacity building online sessions

The capacity building programme, which was initially supposed to be organized face-to-face within the fifth transnational learning event in Gabrovo (Bulgaria), was instead delivered through three online meeting sessions held between March 31 and April 2. The re-modulation of the activity was due to the travel restrictions linked to the outbreak of the COVID-19 and the consequent cancellation of the event in Gabrovo.

As the programme was delivered at the beginning of the second half of the fourth semester when the partners had already made some progress with the development of their Action Plans, the capacity building sessions were focused on enabling the partners to mutually exploit their respective individual skills and experiences on GPP to further develop or improve the content of their plans.

To this aim, the partners were split into two working groups which met online in two separate sessions to discuss some of the actions already included in their Action Plans and considered to be strategic for a wider uptake of GPP in their territorial context. The discussions allowed each partner to identify the potential space for improvement of the action presented and to receive useful suggestions and observations for the further development of their Action Plans.

The two working groups were organized according to the type of strategic action presented by the partners and by taking into account also the type of policy instrument addressed. In this way, the partners could discuss similar actions and learn from the interesting elements included by each of them. The identification of the type of action was based on the categorization made for the example measures included in the deliverable A13 Action Plan guidelines. The two tables below show the details of the two working groups, including the type of action discussed, partners involved, policy instrument addressed and actions presented.

WORKING GROUP 1		
TYPE 5 ACTION: Support the dissemination of GPP at all levels of PA		
<i>Partner</i>	<i>Policy instrument</i>	<i>Presented action</i>
<i>CSEG</i>	ROP South Central Region - Bulgaria	<u><i>Regional Environmental Help Desk</i></u>
<i>FVG</i>	ROP FVG Region	<u><i>Map of environmental certifications</i></u>
<i>ADR NE</i>	ROP North-East Region - Romania	<u><i>Improved green public procurement monitoring system for ERDF – funded projects</i></u>
<i>LAZIO REGION</i>	Rural Development Plan	<u><i>Improve the communication to citizens regarding GPP and its environmental and economic benefits</i></u>

WORKING GROUP 2		
TYPE 3 ACTION: capacity building of public administrators		
<i>Partner</i>	<i>Policy instrument</i>	<i>Presented action</i>
<i>AURA</i>	National Action Plan on GPP	<u><i>Coaching on the job</i></u>

<i>MINISTRY OF ENVIR. ROM.</i>	National Action Plan on GPP	<u><i>GPP training for public procurers</i></u>
<i>MANRA</i>	ROP Valencian Region	<u><i>Capacitation and Training of local administration staff</i></u>
<i>GABROVO</i>	Urban Development Plan	<u><i>Creation of a network for exchange of experience in the field of GPP</i></u>

To ensure a common structure for the discussions, before the online meeting, each partner was provided with a PPT template and was asked to prepare a presentation (on the chosen strategic action included in their Action Plans) based on the guiding questions included in the template, which are the following ones:

- Which is the policy instrument addressed, and how is your action plan supposed to improve it? (i.e., the main goal of your action plan)
- Does your action plan contribute to improving the design, implementation or monitoring of other policy instruments at the national, regional or local level? If yes, which ones and how?
- Which is the name of the action presented?
- What is the link of this action to the lesson learned during Phase 1 through the interregional exchange of experience with the other partners?
- Which is the need/barrier (to the integration of GPP into your policy instrument) addressed by this action? How is this action supposed to fulfil the need or overcome the barrier?
- Which are the expected outcomes in terms of greater uptake of GPP tenders and increased supply of green goods and services in your territorial context in the next two years?
- Which are the specific activities through which your action will be implemented? (provide a brief description of each activity, including name, objective, timing and costs)
- Which are the stakeholders involved in the implementation of the action? Were they involved in the definition of the action? Have you already obtained from them a first commitment to the implementation of the action? Which role do they have?
- Which are the costs related to the implementation of the action and will they be financed?
- Is your action measurable? Have you already identified the indicators to monitor its implementation throughout Phase 2?

During the two online meetings, each partner was given 5 minutes to present the chosen action. Each presentation was then followed by a discussion to explore more in-depth the actions presented. The discussions were structured in two phases: a 10 minute-round of questions addressed by the other participants to help the partner to better focus on the problem setting (i.e., the main strengths and weaknesses of the action); and other 10 minutes dedicated to the exchange of suggestions to improve the action (problem-solving time). The table below shows the session timing of both WGs meetings.

<i>Duration</i>		<i>Section</i>	<i>Type</i>
20'		Introduction to the online working group: methodology and objectives	-
100' (4 rounds of 25')	5'	Presentation of the selected action of the partner's Action Plan	Partner 1 Partner 2

			<i>Partner 3 Partner 4</i>
	10'	Problem setting: round of questions by other partners to better focus on the action	<i>Groups</i>
	10'	Problem solving: suggestions from the other partners to find or improve the action's content and the links to both the lesson learned and the policy instrument addressed	<i>Groups</i>
30'		Wrap up	<i>Plenary (2 April)</i>

The conclusions of the two online working groups were merged and presented in a plenary wrap-up session which involved all the staff of the GPP-STREAM partners who had participated to the capacity building programme. In the wrap-up session, the points of strengths and weaknesses of the actions presented were highlighted by Fondazione Ecosistemi (which facilitated both the WGs meetings) based on its previous experience on the Action Plans for GPP, and the further space for improvement was pointed out.

The programme was targeted at the key staff of the partners, even though it was also open to the partners' stakeholders who had been involved in the elaboration of the presented action, or will be involved in its implementation. Both meetings were facilitated by a representative of Ecosistemi.

2. Report

The working group 1 (WG1) and working group 2 (WG2) online meetings were held on March 31 and April 1, respectively, and both lasted approximately 2 hours. The registrations of the two meetings can be found at the following links:

- WG1 online meeting: <https://youtu.be/qwQuGqF2aVY>
- WG2 online meeting: <https://youtu.be/9NMogQmwufQ>

The wrap-up session was organized within an online plenary meeting held on April 2. The session was aimed at sharing with all the partners the common weaknesses regarding the development of the Action Plans emerged during the WGs online meetings and at providing general suggestions to improve the plans in terms of content, link to the policy instrument and link to the lesson learned.

The main common weaknesses observed during the WGs online meetings are related to the following aspects:

- **Link between the actions and the policy instrument:** in some cases, the link is too generic, e.g., "the action improves the integration of the GPP approaches into the policy instrument".

The questions to be kept in mind are:

- o "How does the action contribute to the improvement of my policy instrument?";
- o "Why is it strategic within the administrative and policy context of my Country/Region/Municipality?"

At least one of the actions of the Action Plan has to be strategic, i.e., it contributes to fulfil a major need or overcome major obstacles to wider adoption of GPP within the partners' respective territorial context.

The policy instruments might be improved in different ways:

- from a technical point of view (e.g., the definition of minimum environmental criteria for certain product or service categories to be included into the ROP as a compulsory requirement to receive the funding; introduction of a monitoring system to monitor whether or not the GPP criteria are applied within the procurement procedures carried out under the interventions funded by the ROP)
 - in terms of financial resources allocated to GPP (e.g., reallocation of part of ROP budget to interventions which include GPP criteria)
 - in terms of effectiveness in stimulating a market of goods and services with a reduced environmental impact.
 - Other...
- **link between the actions and the lesson learned:** in some cases, the link refer to a best practice without mentioning the specific experience that inspired the action.

The description of the lesson learned should include some details of the experience of the other partner and the explanation of the reasons why it inspired the partner's action.

References to experiences from public entities external to GPP-STREAM project (e.g., Municipality of Barcelona) should be avoided unless they were discussed among the partners during the international learning process of phase 1.

Inspiration for your actions can be taken from following sources: online BPs database; presentations/discussion during the transnational learning events; on-site visits; EU GPP-STREAM conference within the Forum Compraverde Buygreen 2019; stakeholder group meetings.

- **type of content of the action:** in some cases, the content is related more to a strategic document rather than an Action Plan.

The Action Plan should not be considered as a strategic document or a vision statement but a very practical to-do-list of how each partner is going to put into actions the lessons learned during the project.

It should be a practical document ready to be put into practice once it is approved. Starting from June, the actions will have to be implemented as detailed in the version of the document approved by the JS.

In order to be immediately operative, the Action Plan should describe in details the specific activities through which its several actions will be implemented. For example, in the case of a capacity building action, it should be provided with a detailed description of the following eventual specific activities: publication of the notice to select external experts to design and implement the training courses (if trainers internal to your organization are not available); implementation of the training, including the format, target group and timing; issue of

certificates of attendance; inclusion of certain GPP criteria (which were the focus of the training) in real tenders by the officials trained.

- **identification of the stakeholders:** some actions refer to a generic list of stakeholders without specifying their specific roles.

Given the operational character of the Action Plan, each activity carried out under each action should specify the stakeholders who will be actively involved in their implementation. If these actors have not been involved so far, this should be done before the end of May. The first commitment from their side should be obtained as soon as possible to ensure their contribution to the implementation of the Action Plan.

- **the estimation of the costs and the identification of funding sources:** some actions lack of the estimation of costs or are provided with an estimation which doesn't reflect the actual costs related to the implementation of the action. So, in the latter case the estimation should be improved and should be broken down into the costs related to each activity of your actions.

To be taken into account: GPP-STREAM budget doesn't foresee any resources to be used for the implementation of your actions. So, if the actions are not to cost zero the resources must be taken from other funding sources.

- **the monitoring of the action:** in some cases, the description of the action doesn't specify the indicators which will be used to monitor the implementation of the action throughout the second phase of the project.

The actions are supposed to be measurable. If the indicators are lacking, it is very likely that the action is too generic and not measurable, so it should not be included in the action plan.

Very abstract description such as awareness-raising, lobbying activities, etc. should be avoided because they are difficult to monitor.

The number of actions should be kept low: the more actions the Action Plan includes, the more difficult will be to monitor its implementation.

3. Tailor-made feedback

In the table below, can be found the specific observations made to each partner regarding the action presented during the WGs online meetings.

Partner	Presented Action	Observations
CSEG	<u>Regional Environmental Help Desk</u>	The action is focused on the improvement and development of local policy by-laws and not on the improvement of the policy instrument, i.e., the ROP of the South Central Region of Bulgaria. This link has to be better explained. Does the improvement of these local by-laws translate into a higher uptake of GPP at the local level? And if yes, How?

		<p>In Italy, these local by-laws are addressed to the private. In this case, instead are we talking about local by-laws which are addressed to public authorities and are aimed at improving the energy efficiency of public buildings and the use of renewable energy sources (RES)?</p> <p>Will these local by-laws be linked to the ROP? So, will the funding calls of the ROP be addressed only to those public authorities which apply the local by-laws?</p> <p>Many regions are integrating the GPP criteria directly into the funding calls of their ROPs (also for those interventions aimed at improving the energy efficiency of public buildings and the use of RES). Why are you focusing on these local by-laws, instead of doing the same?</p> <p>The question related to the expected outcomes was not well addressed. The question is if through the implementation of your action you are expecting an increase in the market of the number of construction companies that are able to improve the energy efficiency of buildings or install renewable energy systems. Which is the impact of this action in this regard? Is it possible to make estimates/predictions?</p> <p>Other questions to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will you find staff with the different expertise needed? - What is the expected response of the municipalities? - How are you going to monitor the improvement of GPP in each local bylaw?
<p>LAZIO REGION</p>	<p><u>Improve the communication to citizens regarding GPP and its environmental and economic benefits</u></p>	<p>The name of the action should be reframed as it refers to the objective and not the content of the action.</p> <p>The link to the policy instrument has to be better explained. How is your action supposed to improve your policy instrument, i.e., the rural development plan.</p> <p>The expected outcomes have to be clarified. What is supposed to be the result of increased awareness? Is it supposed to translate into a higher number of green tenders? And if yes, which is your expected increase of GPP tenders? Take into account that your Action Plan should point out to what extent the Regional Development Plan will be improved in terms of green spending thanks to the contribution of this action.</p> <p>Once identified the expected outcomes you should also specify how you are going to assess if your action has met the established goal. Will it be through the local action plan?</p> <p>Specific indicators should also be identified to monitor the implementation of the action.</p>

		<p>Other questions to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you define the topics to be discussed and how will you do your awareness campaign? • When you relate with private stakeholders do they express concerns towards GPP? What kind of concerns? • One of the barriers you highlighted is that the market is not ready. Do you think that this is a real barrier or more simply a goal of GPP? Maybe the problem is more related to how to recognize green product rather than whether they exist on the market.
ADR NE	<u>Improved green public procurement monitoring system for ERDF – funded projects</u>	<p>The action is very well defined and the targets are clear. Ideas for further development of your action could be taken from the best practice of Lazio Region shared in Alzira and named “Energy 2.0” which is similar in some ways.</p>
FVG	<u>Map of environmental certifications</u>	<p>The link to the lesson learned should be better explained by specifying the context of the discussion during which the issue of environmental certification emerged as a priority.</p> <p>The expected outcomes have to be clarified. The objective is to have clear rules for the certifications. Does that mean that the expected outcome is a reduced number of appeals in the procuring processes or a higher number of tenders awarded without delays?</p> <p>As the problems of the ROP is to spend the allocated resources within a certain time frame, is it possible to say that the action improves the spending of resources in a given time because it reduces the delays due to appeals?</p> <p>Other questions to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the call for experts addresses organizations or single professionals?
AURA	<u>Coaching on the job</u>	<p>Regarding the policy context, it would be useful to keep into account that some other policy instruments can benefit from your action plan (i.e., regional action plans on GPP; sectoral plans at the national level).</p> <p>The link to the lesson learned should be better explained by specifying the source of inspiration for this action. Potential links to this action can be found in some discussions held during the GPP-STREAM international conference in Rome (within the Forum Compraverde Buygreen 2019). The lack of skills of the public procurers was one of the main aspects pointed out by some of the speakers of the conference (e.g., the presentation of the OSCAR GIMÉNEZ GRAS, Provincia</p>

		<p>de Alicante (Spain), Director of the regional waste management consortium; CRISTIANA BOBBIO, Autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia (Italy), Central Purchasing Body of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Region). Can you refer your action to a specific experience you learnt of at this event?</p> <p>Other questions to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you reach out people and on which scale (national or regional)? - Concerning the costs, the external bodies have already committed to co-finance the action?
MANRA		<p>In terms of contribution to other policy instruments, apart from mentioning the aspects of the improvement, you should also specify which are exactly the policy instruments that can potentially benefit from your Action Plan, if there are any (e.g., circular economy plans, waste management plans, bioeconomy strategy roadmap).</p> <p>Regarding the expected outcomes in terms of increased uptake of GPP and greater supply of green products and services you should specify how are you going to monitor/account for them. As for the greater uptake of GPP, how do you chose the baseline to the measurement? Do you have already existing statistics?</p> <p>As a source of inspiration for your action you mentioned the guidelines elaborated by the Municipality of Barcelona and the Decree on SPP approved by the same city. Even though we are talking about the best practice of another region, the JS might object that this BP doesn't come from any activities carried out during phase 1 of the project. As your source of inspiration for your action we suggest you refer instead to the GPP-STREAM international conference held in Rome in October within the Forum Compraverde Buygreen. For the references, see the observations provided for AURA.</p>
MINISTRY OF ENVIR. ROM.		<p>The link to the lesson learned should be better explained. How did the action presented in Alzira inspire your action? Describe briefly the content of action presented in Alzira and explain why it inspired your action.</p> <p>The barriers should refer to the obstacles specifically addressed by your action and not to the ones that you are experiencing in general in the implementation of GPP in Romania.</p> <p>The description of the action is not focused on just one action but on several ones which are not related to each other. The action should be described in details and include the</p>



		<p>description of the various activities through which it will be implemented.</p> <p>Regarding the expected outcomes in terms of increased uptake of GPP and greater supply of green products and services you should specify how are you going to monitor/account for them. Do you already have a monitoring system in place at a national level to monitor the progress in this regard?</p> <p>Regarding the monitoring, you should specify the indicators which will be used to monitor the implementation of your action.</p>
GABROVO		<p>No information was provided regarding the policy context. How is your action or in general your action plan supposed to improve your policy instrument? And then, does your action plan contribute to improving other policy instruments at national, regional or local level?</p> <p>Regarding the stakeholders identified (i.e., lawyer as a coordinator and external experts), you should specify the specific roles they will have within the implementation of the various activities of your action.</p> <p>As a source of inspiration, apart from mentioning the European GPP-STREAM conference held within the Forum Compraverde Buygreen 2019, you should also refer to the specific partner experience that inspired your action. Try to be more specific by also referring to the presentations held during the conference. See the observations provided for AURA.</p>