



**Project GPP-STREAM “Green Public Procurement and Sustainability Tools for  
Resource Efficiency Mainstreaming”**

**IMPROVING THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, APTITUDES  
FOR PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PURCHASERS IN THE FIELD OF GPP**

**ACTIVITY: POLICY BRIEF**

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## 1. Overview

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### RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC

In Romania, as in the rest of the European Union, public authorities spend between 18% and 20% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The introduction of ecological criteria in procurement processes can generate an important effect on market supply in terms of energy efficiency, use of natural resources, biodiversity, waste management, and reducing the impact on climate change. The Green Public Procurement (GPP) can play a central role in the transition to a green and circular economy, giving rise to virtuous practices in society at the level of purchasers and suppliers, in the long run, through the power of example, among private purchasers, organizations and citizens.

In present, the main challenge in conducting GPP by the Regional Operational Programme`s (ROP) public and private beneficiaries is their lack of knowledge and skills in relation to applying the green criteria in their procurements. Therefore, addressing beneficiaries learning gaps on GPP is a crucial step in the process of greening public spending related to the ROP.

### RELEVANCE OF THE SECTORS OF REFERENCE

By improving the knowledge in the GPP field, opportunities and challenges are generated.

There are identified some solutions with which we can successfully prepare training sessions:

- Digital courses: online courses with GPP expert trainer, with a flexible schedule, divided into skill levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced) and opportunities to level up the level of knowledge and appliance of the criteria in the procurements;

Courses with a limited number of participants per session, in which technical aspects of GPP implementation will be discussed, and organization of round tables for the practical part of the course.



## RELEVANCE OF THE SECTORS OF REFERENCE

In the North-East region, a training program in the field of green public procurement is already being implemented. This program aimed exclusively at public purchasers, who are at the level of beginners. In addition to those purchasers from local public administrations, representatives of school inspectorates also participate.

The GPP training program addresses both strategic and practical topics in the field of green public procurement, which will allow participants and source institutions to consistently integrate GPP criteria into their practices.

## 2. Introduction

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With the help of the GPP-STREAM<sup>1</sup> project, we were able to form a group of relevant stakeholders, public and private institutions, who provided us significant insight into their knowledge and applicability of green public procurement.

During the activities carried out within the project, we were able to assess the state of knowledge they have related to GPP.

Thus, we shared a feedback questionnaire in which we asked them to express their opinion on the applicability of the green public procurement law and guideline.

The feedback questionnaire included questions such as:

1. What are the benefits of the project for you?
2. What are your expectations from this project?
3. What are the difficulties you have encountered when applying green criteria in procurement procedures?
4. What are your needs in order to implement GPP policies and approaches in your institution?

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<sup>1</sup> The GPP-STREAM project aims at improving the management, implementation, and monitoring of policy instruments that integrates green public procurement (GPP) approaches so as to ensure that resource efficiency gains can be maximized and that resource efficiency objectives are institutionalized through GPP.



The answers to the first question helped us to figure out on which aspects we need to focus more, so that our stakeholders have real benefits from the project. The following answers were structured:

- more expertise in the field of GPP;
- broader view of GPP;
- exchange of useful information;
- learning from the good practices identified within the project;
- solidification of existing concepts;
- implementation of measures in the municipality's strategy on green energy;
- implementation of more green projects within the municipality;
- putting in practice the issues discussed within the working group in order to improve the methodology at the level of the contracting authority.

Regarding their expectation (question 2), the answers to the second question revealed that the project would be helpful to:

- correlate the public procurement in accordance with green procurement;
- make a reconfiguration of award criteria without entering the area of "restrictive criteria";
- a more explicit guide;
- a good practice manual;
- a GPP support office;
- existence of a technical support offered by the North-East RDA for the subsequent application of GPP.

According to the answers to question 3, the difficulties encountered by stakeholders in order to apply the green criteria are:

- lack of information from the procurement office;
- delays in contracting;
- exceeding anticipated budgets;
- discrepancies between supply and demand (lack of market);
- appeals on procedures and financial corrections;
- lack of expertise in the field and not once using the green criteria;

Based on the answers received for question 4, we have identified that to implement GPP policies and approaches, the stakeholder needs support for the:

- internal procedural support having a very well defined legal framework;



- training the public procurement staff within each institutions;
- consolidation of information;
- financing (projects);
- simple and coherent legislation.

Taking into account the answers received from our stakeholders, from which it can be clearly concluded that they need clear and concise legislative support, solid knowledge of the application of GPP criteria in procurement procedures. Thus, investing in theoretical and practical courses, in our region, and especially for the next programming period, requires that the knowledge of purchasers be extensive.

### 3. Policy Context

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#### NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK:

In a similar way to the European legislation which is divided into 3 categories (directives, list and regulation), the Romanian national legislation is divided into 4 categories, such as: primary legislation, secondary legislation, tertiary legislation and guidelines.

As far as the national legislation is concerned, the Law 69 on green public procurement was published in the Official Journal of Romania in 2016. This law aims at establishing the legal framework for conducting green public procurement in Romania.

The purpose of this law is:

- promoting environmental protection and sustainable development;
- promoting sustainable consumption and production, as well as the efficient use of resources;
- encouraging the development and application of clean and friendly environmental technologies;
- promoting social progress that favors economic development;
- ensuring the efficient use of funds, by promoting products, services and works with minimal impact on the environment;
- improving the quality of services and optimizing costs for short, medium and long term public procurement;



- development of the internal market of green products, services and works technologies.<sup>2</sup>

In order to support this law, the Order No. 108/1652/2018 for the approval of the Green Public Procurement guide was issued two years later. The issuers of this order (which was also published in the Official Journal of Romania) are the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests along with the National Agency of Public Procurement.

The guide includes the minimum requirements for environmental protection for green public procurement, related to certain groups of products and/or services, required in the technical specifications. Its main purpose is to provide contracting authorities/entities with information on the minimum mandatory environmental protection requirements that must be taken into account when preparing, in accordance with the law, the documentation for awarding public procurement contracts/framework agreements, related to product categories and/or existing services in the guide.

The priority product and service group selected for this guide are:

- copy paper and graphic paper;
- new indoor and outdoor furniture, furniture renovation/ reconditioning services and collection and reuse services of the furniture stock at the end of their life cycle;
- food and catering services;
- transport vehicles;
- cleaning products and services;
- office IT equipment.<sup>3</sup>

#### GPP-STREAM PROJECT AS A SOLUTION

The ROP aims at promoting smart sustainable and inclusive growth, and the Thematic Objective 4 (TO4) is supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors.

In view of these, The North-East Regional Development Agency targeted them in the Regional Action Plan, having as support the 6 projects already in implementation, under the Investment Priority 4.2 (Carrying out actions aimed at improving the urban environment, revitalizing cities, regenerating and decontamination of disused industrial land (including conversion areas), reducing air pollution and promoting noise-reduction measures) in the region.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.mmediu.ro/app/webroot/uploads/files/2016-08-04\\_LEGE\\_Nr\\_69\\_din\\_2016.pdf](http://www.mmediu.ro/app/webroot/uploads/files/2016-08-04_LEGE_Nr_69_din_2016.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://anap.gov.ro/web/ordinul-nr-1068-1652-2018-din-4-octombrie-2018-pentru-aprobarea-ghidului-de-achizitii-publice-verzi-care-cuprinde-cerintele-minime-privind-protectia-mediului-pentru-anumite-grupe-de-produse-si-servic/>



The Regional Action Plan that can help us to solve the problem of the topic addressed in this document is action no. 2: ***GPP and circular economy awareness online campaigns.***<sup>4</sup>

Through this action we will be responsible for 12 online campaigns, in order to promote useful information related to the implementation of GPP and circular economy, together with indications on their benefits for both economy and society.

Part of the content will be referring to the importance of improving the level of knowledge, skills and aptitudes of purchasers within the North-East region in the field of GPP.

By promoting this kind of courses, the dissemination of the results to a specific audience (county schools inspectorates, universities, local public authorities) in order for them to make more informed decisions that ultimately lead to an increased number of procurements in which green criteria is used.

## 4. The way forward

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The first step will be to identify the stakeholders directly involved in writing the tenders with green specifications, start the public procurement procedures, and verify the public procurement. They are, in particular, experts in the procurement departments of local public authorities (city halls, County Councils, Environmental Protection Agencies). Other stakeholders interested in such courses will be purchasers from universities and schools. Besides these, the beneficiaries of the 6 projects (in the implementation phase) within the Investment Priority 4.2 will be especially interested, due to the object of their projects.

Of course, the dissemination of these courses will be done at the regional level. Even if, in the first phase, only the interested parties mentioned above are targeted, private purchasers, NGOs and maybe bidders can also participate in the courses. The interest is to increase the level of knowledge at the regional level, either public or private.

The training program in the field of GPP will bring more benefits, through:

- intensively and extensively integrate the GPP into the investment projects of the North-East Region contracting authorities by addressing the strategic and practical elements in the field of green public procurement and clearly identifying the criteria for selecting and awarding contracts;
- introduce social and environmental criteria in public procurement by drawing up specifications, developing a strategy and an action plan;
- analysis of needs in the field of GPP: identification of product and service categories;
- ensure compliance with the mandatory annual target expected for local public administrations to perform a quantum of at least 5% of green procurement out of the total annual public

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<sup>4</sup> The North-East Regional Action Plan





procurement, as this program can support you in achieving this objective to be regulated at national level.

After establishing the exact number of stakeholders willing to participate in the courses, we will decide the exact number of courses and their level, based on the demand. The target is to have an increased number of GPP courses. This action will lead to another indication that we have, such as extending the conventional courses in digital courses. Due to the current situation all around the world, we identified that the digital world is our most important tool to expand opportunities. These digital courses can be as e-learning, with a brief assessment at the end of it, in order to observe if after it is an improvement, or it can be live, with a trainer. There are a lot of tools in-store to develop digital courses, but it's important to identify the most attractive and interactive one for the courses and their needs. It will be a trial, after which will stimulate the potential stakeholders (mentioned above) using the power of the example.

Another important action is identifying and learning more good practices related to GPP from our project partners and outside the GPP-STREAM partnership. These must be disseminated and presented with concrete examples, with explanations, in order for everyone interested in GPP to understand how to apply green criteria in tenders. These can be a stimulating process and encourage purchasers to participate in courses, in order to learn how to apply the models presented in the good practice to their field of activity or their interests.

For the know-how into developing a strong curriculum, we must learn how to build a tailor-made curriculum, based and focused on the regional stakeholders. We must meet the needs of the purchasers in a way that ensures the material is clear and understood, maintained, and applied to public procurements procedures. Also, we must seek out skilled trainers to teach and discuss if our curriculum is covering all the gaps and will have a real impact on our stakeholders.

## 5. Sources of Information

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Informational sources are:

- <https://www.adrnordest.ro/index.php?page=gpp-stream>
- [http://www.mmediu.ro/app/webroot/uploads/files/2016-08-04\\_LEGE\\_Nr\\_69\\_din\\_2016.pdf](http://www.mmediu.ro/app/webroot/uploads/files/2016-08-04_LEGE_Nr_69_din_2016.pdf)
- <http://anap.gov.ro/web/ordinul-nr-1068-1652-2018-din-4-octombrie-2018-pentru-aprobarea-ghidului-de-achizitii-publice-verzi-care-cuprinde-cerintele-minime-privind-protectia-mediului-pentru-anumite-grupe-de-produse-si-servic/>
- [\*The North-East Regional Action Plan\*](#)



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For more information about GPP-STREAM project visit: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/gpp-stream/>

