



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

**THE ROLE OF GPP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TERRITORIAL
AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM**

ACTIVITY: POLICY BRIEF

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1. Overview

Food, through its ability to federate socially, to forge identity and culture, to support the local economy and create jobs is one of the pillars of territorial development. The challenge is to promote healthy, environmentally friendly and quality food that is accessible to as many people as possible, while bringing the places of production closer to the places of consumption in the respect of people and environment.



OUR INSPIRATION

This policy brief is partly based on an event organised by AURA-EE during the GPP-Stream transnational learning event in Lyon from the 3rd to the 5th of December 2019. A conference sharing experiences was planned on the second day on the subject of the exemplary role of local and regional authorities in territorial and sustainable food. The aim was to understand how public procurement can be used in the development of territorial food systems with the presentation of good practices by local authorities. The target audiences were the public authorities of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region (e.g. offices for territorial planning, agriculture/food, public procurement, waste, sustainable development) and also associations and networks that can support them in their approach.

Collective catering, public events, bio waste prevention and recovery and food waste reduction are fields in which public authorities can act to accelerate the development of sustainable food in their territory. In this document we chose to mainly focus on public collective catering. The key solutions to promote sustainable food through public procurement, presented during the conference, are listed along with example of successful initiatives.



2. Introduction

Total greenhouse gas emissions from the food system as a whole, including processing, distribution and consumption, account for approximately 35% of total global human-induced emissions. Today, our food systems are mainly dependent on non-renewable resources such as oil and prices fluctuate with these markets. With growing consumer demand, more and more decisions are being made to return to a more local and sustainable production and increase the resilience of the territories in case of crisis. Public authorities play an essential role in mobilizing the different actors, driving the necessary changes.

Food is a priority topic for several reasons:

- Culture/identity: image of territories, products and know-how;
- Health/well-being: the nutritional values of our diet and its links to health;
- Social/society: food is one of the foundations of our society, closely linked to our education and to the values we transmit;
- Food security: resilience of territories in the event of an incident on the supply chains, to face the diminution of non-renewable resources and environmental and social impacts (e.g., climate change);
- Economy: food is one of the main part in French economy and in the world, creating local jobs who can't be exported;
- Environment: food and agriculture is one of the main source of pollution, has huge impacts on landscapes and is one of the main consumption of fossil fuel.

3. Policy Context

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

Public procurement:

The National Action Plan for Sustainable Public Procurement (PNAAPD) is the framework document for public buyers in France. It aims at giving the public bodies guidelines for integrating sustainable development into its purchases.

Sustainable food:

The French law of 30 October 2018 on agriculture and food, known as «Egalim», provides for a set of measures concerning public and private collective catering. This sector is an essential lever for action



under the new National Programme for food (2019-2023) to promote access to healthier food for all, safe and sustainable. One of the main obligations is to attain at least 50% of quality and sustainable products (with labels) on January 1, 2022, of which at least 20% of organic products.

The third National Food Program 2019-2023 insists on two levers to accelerate the food transition:

- Mobilize collective catering to ensure the supply of organic, quality and sustainable products
- Unite local forces for better nutrition through the Territorial Food Projects

Territorial food projects, part of the Future Agriculture Act, are intended to relocate agriculture and food to the territories by supporting farmers' set-up, short circuits or local food in canteens. These collective projects bring together producers, processors, distributors, local authorities and consumers to develop agriculture sustainable in the territories and the quality of food, for the benefit of all. They are therefore a tool for mobilize to achieve the objectives of the Egalim Act.

MAIN BARRIERS AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED

The French public procurement code does not allow products to be selected on the provenance criterion: under the principle of equal treatment of candidates, any geographical preference would constitute an offence of favouritism. However, the code allows the contracting authority to draft and communicate on its contracts so that as many companies as possible can respond to calls for tenders, including small or medium-sized local enterprises. It also makes it possible to take into account all the technical, quality, social or sustainable specificities that one wishes to associate with its collective catering (sourcing, a fine allotment and a balanced weighting of the criteria, promoting the freshness and seasonality of the products, with emphasis on less energy-intensive production methods).

The main problem encountered for the supply of quality and sustainable products is their availability in sufficient quantity in the territory. Public authorities, through their supply, also have a role to play in supporting the development of agriculture and production in the territory. Unfortunately, many public bodies do not know how to integrate appropriate demands into their food procurements, and producers in the territory are often unable to meet them.

HOW CAN GPP-STREAM HELP TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM?

The GPP-Stream project allows identifying the good practices of public authorities in the field of local and sustainable food. The conference on the particular subject of food supply and territorial and sustainable food territory allowed the participants to discover best practices and solutions that they can draw on in their structure. The next step is to support communities in integrating new innovations into



their procurements through GPP-Stream Action Plan, serving the development of more sustainable and resilient territories. Trainings on the subject and support in the drafting of the procurements are indeed interesting measures to propose on this topic. An online platform will also highlight the best practices of public bodies.

4. The way forward

PROMOTE QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD IN PROCUREMENTS

Throughout the presentations of the different stakeholders during the conference, it was demonstrated how different procurement tools can be used to promote a sustainable food supply:

- Defining your needs differently:
 - o Need of sourcing and relying on local experts and networks: agricultural organizations or associations can accompany public bodies in the study of local quality supply.
 - o Adapt your consumption, usage (e.g. seasonality)
- Choosing an allotment that is as “fine” as possible can be an effective way to address the issues of sustainable development linked to food consumption by offering the opportunity to small local producers to respond to one or more lots in the market.
- Providing for conditions of performance (technical specifications):
 - o Quality of the product (aspect, taste, seasonality)
 - o Development of short food supply chains, traceability
 - o Reference to labels
 - o Type of production, packaging, mode of transport
 - o Contracts reserved for 50% disabled or disadvantaged or to companies of the social and solidarity economy domain.
- Setting adapted criteria to compare offers:
 - o Important to take quality and sustainability criteria into account in weighting
 - o Take into account the overall cost: direct + indirect costs (environmental externalities)



OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- A quality local product procurement project must take into account a global organization and not just the drafting of procurements: awareness and support of the team of the catering site, awareness of the guests, fight against food waste...
- Creating platforms to connect producers and buyers can solve logistic problems and match the supply of quality local food products with demand.
- It is possible to legally favour the local without saying so formally. The solution is to combine procurement of supply (food for canteens) and services (visits to the farms) by asking in the procurement to be able to visit the farms precisely on the grounds that it corresponds to a different system of coherent values interesting to show to the students for example. Therefore, a farm outside of the territory could meet the procurement but its distance will make it expensive to visit and its offer will be less well placed.

But green public procurement alone cannot be enough to support these new territorial food systems. Real agricultural support policies, unrelated to public procurement, are also necessary, such as, for example, land aid for farmers, protection of agricultural land, promotion of local agriculture, financial aid, logistics, advice to farmers, etc.

FOCUS ON A GOOD PRACTICE: THE REGIONAL PROCUREMENT HUB OF AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES REGION

The Auvergne Rhône-Alpes regional council, a major stakeholder in GPP-Stream project, created a regional procurement hub as a facilitator service for the public buyers.

If we only consider the high schools of the region, 54 million euros of products are consumed every year and 27 million meals are served in 290 canteens.

Objectives:

- Promote access to public procurement by local suppliers, and thus be a lever for local development
- Facilitate the act of purchase, by making available to purchasers effective procurements, the Region taking over the work of awarding contracts
- Optimize spending, by pooling certain purchases and resources dedicated to them





Global strategy:

- Broad access to the hub: any regional public actor
- Global coverage: of the territory, products, types of public catering sites...
- Complementarity with existing local purchasing initiatives
- Securing contracts
- Simplifying the link between public buyers and suppliers:
 - o Sourcing field approach
 - o Facilitating access to public procurements: support to respond to calls for tenders + simplification of support
 - o Fine and adapted allocation
 - o Managing the supplier relationship
 - o A dedicated online ordering site
- Search for quality, sustainable and traceable products:
 - o Adapted criteria and weighting: valorisation of short circuits, signs of quality, animal welfare, weighting promoting quality and not price
 - o Search for quality and environmentally friendly products: Organic label requirements, no Gmos...
 - o Enhanced product traceability

At the end of 2019, after 20 months of operation, 160 procurements were available on the hub from 5 purchase families (fresh meat, creamery, fresh fruits and vegetables, grocery, frozen) representing more than 900 products. These products present a qualitative offer (mainly regional and sustainable products) at controlled costs.

5. Sources of Information

This policy brief is mainly based on the summary report of the conference meeting organised by AURA-EE on the 4th of December, on the subject of the exemplary role of local and regional authorities in territorial and sustainable food. The information is taken from interventions of experts and representatives of local and regional authorities present that day.



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For more information about GPP-STREAM project visit:

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