

D2.2 Combined report on existing SPP/PPI networks



**PARTNERSKAB FOR
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Introduction

The SPP Regions project

SPP Regions is a new European project promoting the establishment of regional networks of municipalities collaborating on the topic of **sustainable public procurement** (SPP), and the **public procurement of innovation** (PPI).

SPP Regions aims to:

- Establish new, and expand existing SPP/PPI regional networks of municipalities to:
 - Collaborate directly on tendering for eco-innovative solutions
 - Promote capacity building and knowledge transfer
- To strengthen networking and exchange at the European level by launching a European SPP network
- To establish European best practice exchange on the topics of market engagement, LCC, performance-based specifications and circular procurement

Best practice reports on existing SPP/PPI networks

The project aims to ensure that the lessons, experiences and success stories of the few existing regional SPPI networks are captured and promoted – both internally to the new networks to be established, and externally throughout the EU.

Therefore, six reports documenting the experiences of three existing networks within the consortium and three other successful networks have been published:

- **ÖBS**, ÖkoBeschaffungsService Vorarlberg (EcoProcurementService), Austria
- **RGO**, Réseau Grand Ouest commande publique et développement durable (Western France Network of public procurement and sustainable development), France
- **APE**, Acquisti Pubblici Ecologici (Green Public Purchasing), Città metropolitana di Torino, Italy
- **Sardegna Compra Verde** (Sardinia Buying Green), Italy
- **Xarxa de Ciutats i Pobles cap a la Sostenibilitat** XCPS (Network of Cities and Towns towards Sustainability), Barcelona, Spain
- **Partnerskab for Offentlige Grønne Indkøb** (Partnership on Green Public Procurement, Denmark)

Below the general information of each of the six networks is summarised.

Introduction to the report

This combined report focuses on aspects relevant to potential replication when creating, expanding or redefining SPPI networks in other regions – related to the organisational structure, network financing, main activities and tools developed, monitoring of activities and results, major successes achieved, key success factors, hurdles identified and strategies to overcome them.

Full reports have also been prepared on each of the six networks, which are available on the

SPP Regions project website.

ÖkoBeschaffungsService Vorarlberg, ÖBS (EcoProcurementService)



Vorarlberg

Austria

2002



All 96 municipalities of the province of Vorarlberg are members of the network.

www.umweltverband.at

Réseau Grand Ouest commande publique (procurement) et développement durable



Basse-Normandie, Pays de la Loire, Bretagne, Poitou-Charentes, Limousin and the department of Indre et Loire

France

2006

The network consists of about hundred public authorities (municipalities, EPCI, local, general and regional councils) from the regions Lower-Normandy, Brittany, Pays de la Loire, Poitou-Charentes and Limousin, and most recently the department of Indre-et-Loire. Since 2012, the association is also open to other public legal entities such as the Regional Natural Park, a public housing association, hospitals etc.



<http://reseaugrandouest.fr/>

**Xarxa de Ciutats i Pobles cap a la Sostenibilitat XCPS
(Network of Cities and Towns towards Sustainability)**

Catalonia

Spain

1997

280 participants in total:

246 Local Authorities: 217 from the Province of Barcelona,
29 from the rest of Catalonia

16 Supralocal Authorities

18 Observers

<http://www.diba.cat/web/xarxasost/>

<http://xarxaenxarxa.diba.cat/>

**Partnership on Green Public Procurement**

Denmark

Denmark

2006

13 Partners:

Municipalities: Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense, Herning,
Sønderborg, Egedal, Frederiksberg, Gladsaxe and Roskilde

Regions: Central Denmark Region, South Denmark Region

VCS Denmark

State: The Environmental Ministry

www.groenneindkoeb.dk



Organisational structure of the networks

Framework and history of the SPPI networks

SPPI networks might be **created with the specific aim to promote and implement sustainable procurement** (RGO, Sardegna Compra Verda and the Danish Partnership on GPP), or they might evolve from existing initiatives and networks that **promote sustainable development at local level** (linked to Agenda21, as in the case of Xarxa Barcelona) or that are dedicated to implement specific environmental policies (as waste prevention, in the case of ÖBS Vorarlberg). APE Torino was born in the context of Agenda21, but with the specific aim to promote and implement GPP.

Those networks which have been created to promote SPPI are more recent (2006 to 2009), whilst the SPPI networks that have evolved from other regional networks have existed longer (2002, 2003).

Membership of **municipalities** is voluntary in all cases except for ÖBS Vorarlberg. In most cases the networks are open to other public entities from the region. Only in the case of ÖBS Vorarlberg all municipalities of the region are members of the network, because the network was created initially as a community of purpose for waste management and disposal.

The **initiative to create the network** might come directly from the participating municipalities (RGO) or might be promoted by a provincial or regional government (APE Torino, Xarxa, Sardegna Compra Verde). In the case of Danish Partnership on GPP, the initial partners were the Ministry of Environment and the 3 largest municipalities, as a strategic choice to get more market influence.

The **number of participants** might vary: Danish Partnership on GPP has 13 partners, APE Torino about 40, RGO and ÖBS around 100, and Xarxa Barcelona more than 200 (some of which are only partially involved in SPPI activities).

Policy Priorities

The political priorities of the networks are more or less aligned to SPPI, according to the individual framework conditions and origins of the network:

- **Promotion of networking among members** to improve environmental management and increase sustainable development efforts (Xarxa Barcelona, 1997)
- **Waste reduction and prevention through procurement** as policy priority, over the time including also energy efficiency, social and other environmental criteria (ÖBS Vorarlberg, 2003)
- **Promotion of sustainable consumption and production** through implementation of GPP (APE Torino, 2003)
- **Support participants in SPP implementation** as policy priority (RGO, 2006)
- Strengthen the specific work with green procurement and send a strong signal to suppliers on the market by setting and using **joint, mandatory green procurement criteria and targets** (Danish Partnership on GPP, 2006)
- Commitment of the autonomous region of Sardinia to **adopt a GPP policy and to start a joint process with regional and local entities**, leading to the adoption of a Plan for Ecological Public Procurement in the Sardinia Region (Sardegna Compra Verde, 2009)

These policy priorities might be reinforced by specific policy commitments of the network participants.

Specific policy commitments of participants

APE Torino and Danish Partnership on GPP have **clear policy commitments** for their participants:

- in both cases the **participants have the obligation to integrate common procurement criteria and goals** in around 10 priority product groups. The product groups include in both cases: building, transport, food, IT, furniture, paper, cleaning products.
- in the case of the Danish Partnership on GPP **additional commitments are to approve and publish a procurement policy** with environmental concerns and to participate actively in the meetings and working groups.
- in the case of APE Torino participants have to **report on their results annually** (see monitoring).

In the case of Sardegna Compra Verde the commitment and political objectives are set by the Region of Sardinia themselves, and through participation in the activities the provinces and municipalities share these objectives, formulated as "*Introduce green public procurement policies in all the provincial governments, in 50% of the municipalities, in all the regional park authorities and in 30% of the other public bodies*", and they are fostered to approve their own political commitment to GPP.

The Xarxa Barcelona approves an **annual institutional statement**, renewing the member's commitment to sustainability values.

The two networks ÖBS Vorarlberg and RGO don't have individual commitments, each member organisation is free to set its own targets. The networks are perceived as a **supporting organisation for its members**, or directly as a service provider (in case of ÖBS), and both networks are financed by membership fees, in contrast to the other four networks (see also section on fees).

Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives of the networks are summarised in the following table:

ÖBS Vorarlberg	RGO France	APE Torino
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assure broad implementation of SPP criteria • create legal security for procurers • create economic advantages through joint procurement • create added value for regional economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a common culture in sustainable development through responsible purchasing • awareness raising • exchange of experience between stakeholders • training and capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce the impacts of public purchases on environment and health • reduce resources consumption and waste • promotion of processes and products with a reduced environmental impact
Sardegna Compra Verde	Xarxa Barcelona	Danish Partnership on GPP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exchange and knowledge sharing • promotion of energy efficiency, renewable energy, responsible consumption • capacity building • legal requirements for GPP in other sectoral policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotion of a new sustainable city model • support, interchange and promotion between actors and government levels • collaboration with third sector and business • Specific sectoral objectives include amongst others waste prevention, energy management, electric vehicles, local water cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic use of public procurement to drive green growth • strengthen GPP in the Partnership members organisation • knowledge sharing and cooperation with relevant actors • expand the circle of stakeholders to achieve a greater impact on suppliers and manufacturers • implement procurement objectives efficiently • update existing purchasing goals

Organisational structure of the network

Three of the networks are organised as **associations of municipalities**: ÖBS Vorarlberg, RGO and Xarxa Barcelona. They all have a Board and / or Governing Council composed by political representatives, and they are elected for one mandate after the municipal elections. The General Assembly meets annually, and the network's secretariats are operated by dedicated staff of the association (in case of ÖBS and RGO) or, in case of Xarxa, by the Environmental Department of the Barcelona Provincial Council.

In the **other three cases** there is **no independent legal structure established** for the networks: collaboration is based on an agreement or Terms of References signed by the members, and the network is coordinated by the promoter of the network (Città metropolitana di Torino, Region of Sardinia and Danish Environmental Protection Agency).

In the case of APE Torino and Danish Partnership on GPP, there is a Monitoring or Steering Committee composed by all members of the network, which approves the activities and follows the implementation of the actions. Both of them, APE Torino and Danish Partnership on GPP, count with external support organisations for leading the secretariat and for expert input.

Sardegna Compra Verde is a special case, as the network was created as part of the **European Project GPPinfoNET**, which settled the operating rules of the Regional GPP Networks for all the partners. Additionally, 8 provincial support offices (GPP Ecosportelli) were created, acting as technical secretaries at provincial level. After the GPPinfoNET project, the framework of the regional and provincial networks stayed the same thanks to the ERDF funds, but the organizational structure became more flexible.

Working Groups on specific topics are a core element of the activities in all six networks.

Leadership

Direct leadership of bigger municipalities has not been detected in any of the six networks, although larger municipalities sometimes give more expert input in working groups. In the case of RGO one of the specific aims is to allow smaller public authorities to benefit from the help and good practices of bigger public authorities. In all six networks larger and smaller municipalities or organisations show the same level of cooperation and commitment.

Network financing and resources

Fees

Only two of the six analysed networks have **membership fees: ÖBS Vorarlberg and RGO France.**

ÖBS has established additional fees for the services used by the members, and in some cases technical assistance is paid on a hourly basis.

In the four other analysed networks participation is free of charge, and the networks are financed by the lead organisations (Città metropolitana di Torino, Barcelona Provincial Council, Danish Environmental Protection Agency and Region of Sardinia).

Other Resources

The main **additional sources of finance for networking activities** is funding from the **National Government or the European Commission.** Most networks have received in the past or are receiving currently European funding from different programmes (for regional development, environmental or energy-related projects). ÖBS has received project-related funding from the Austrian Climate Fund, and RGO receives a grant from ADEME (French Environment and Energy Management Agency). Partnership on GPP has not received EU funding until now.

Recruitment of members

Most active in recruitment of new members is RGO. They are promoting RGO membership through participation in events and sending invitations to public authorities who are not yet participants. RGO additionally uses an **online tracking tool for customer relationship management** which helps to manage contacts with potential participants.

The **Danish Partnership on GPP is interested in recruitment of new members to increase market impact.** Therefore, for new members a transition period of 18 months is foreseen for the fulfillment of the procurement goals. The procedure for admission of new members is very well defined in terms of goals and benchmarks they have to meet and new members get active support in the development of their GPP implementation plans.

APE Torino is searching for new adherents by looking for synergies with other projects, e.g. through participation in meetings of the Covenant of Mayors.

In the case of the other four networks there is **no active recruitment of new members:** in two cases the reason is that the network already covers all municipalities (in the case of ÖBS) or almost all municipalities of the region (in the case of Xarxa Barcelona).

Potential new members have been identified in the case of APE Torino and include additional municipalities, associations of municipalities, schools, regional agencies of the National Health service and hospitals. In the case of ÖBS Vorarlberg potential new members include some Departments of the Regional Government that are using ÖBS services; in Xarxa Barcelona other public bodies (regional government, provincial councils and other public entities) can participate as observers.

Network secretariat and external assistance

ÖBS Vorarlberg and RGO France operate the network secretariat with their own staff, and external technical assistance is mostly limited to experts participating in meetings.

In the case of **ÖBS** the staff consists of three experts working on a full-time basis with core competences in conducting procurement processes, and the knowledge about environmental criteria is brought into the process through contacts with environmental bodies and other external experts.

The **RGO** staff were three persons until April 2015, two on a full-time basis and one part-time (80%). In April 2015 a fourth person was recruited. External technical assistance is used only for invitation of experts to meetings.

Città Metropolitana di Torino has three persons of their own staff, responsible for the coordination, promotion and support of the network, spending about 100 working days per year in the secretariat. From 2003 to 2014 Città metropolitana di Torino paid technical assistance to the network (Arpa Piemonte, about 18,000 Euros per year).

In the case of **Sardegna Compra Verde** one person from SAVI¹ is responsible for implementation at regional level. External technical assistance for the implementation of PAPERS² is provided by RTI Ecosistemi-Poliste (650,000 Euros for 3 years). At provincial level, one staff member from the provincial administration and one external expert are working at each of the eight provincial support offices (800,000 Euros for 3 years)

In the case of **Barcelona Provincial Council** 2 persons are working part-time (80% and 50%) for the network, and also the Head of the Technical Secretariat, who coordinates political agreements and evaluation meetings. External assistance is used for specific projects or working groups, depending on budget availability.

The Secretariat of **Danish Partnership on GPP** is headed by the consultancy PlanMiljø ApS. Together with the Danish EPA they provide assistance for the development of new targets and they are in regular contact with the steering committee and the members.

Level of involvement of network participants

The level of involvement of participants is directly related to the specific commitments of participants: in the case of APE Torino and Danish Partnership on GPP, where the participants have individual policy commitments, all participating organisations are involved in the networking activities and working groups.

The time spent by each partner is estimated with about 22 days per year in the case of **APE Torino; Danish Partnership on GPP** reports a similar level of involvement, with each member participating in two working groups each with three to four annual meetings and in two steering group meetings, and some additional work between the meetings and for monitoring.

ÖBS Vorarlberg counts with 20 working groups with an average of five participants, spending between one and seven working days per year (which equals at least 2,500 additional working hours from networking participants).

RGO France estimate that on average, a third of the members participate in the working groups. Currently they have five active working groups with 10 to 15 participants each, and four to five annual meetings.

In the case of **Xarxa Barcelona** 60 to 70% of the members participate actively in working groups, the number of attendants in the different network's activities is included in the monitoring report.

¹ Servizio Sostenibilità Ambientale, Valutazione impatti e Sistemi informativi Ambientali (SAVI). Autonomous Region of Sardinia

² PAPERS - the Plan for Ecological Public Procurement in the Sardinia Region (DGR 37/16 of 30.7.2009).

Sardegna Compra Verde reports a high level of participation during the first phase of the implementation and the GPPinfoNET project, with more than 200 public authorities participating in activities. There is no estimation of individual time spent per participant.

Professional profile of participants

In most of the networks, the professional profile goes from the **political leaders to managers and purchasing and environmental officers**, depending on the roles in the different levels of participation.

In the case of the Danish Partnership on GPP, the **Mayors and the Danish Environment Minister are acting as "Ambassadors"**, guaranteeing the political support and the alignment of the Partnership with overarching policies, whilst the Steering Committee members are procurement and / or environmental managers mandated to take decisions for their own organisation, and finally the members of the Working Groups are purchasers, environmental experts or employees from areas that are relevant for the specific target of the Working Group.

Similar to that, in the case of RGO France each member has to be represented by both a **political representative and a technical expert**.

In all cases, the professional profile of the participants in networking activities, and especially in the working groups can be different depending on the participating public authorities and the topics of the working groups.

The professional background of working group members is therefore mainly procurers with specific knowledge in different sectors and product groups. ÖBS Vorarlberg and RGO France reported that the participants in the Working Groups are procurers or product group managers; the members of the Working Groups of APE Torino are experts on environment and energy and the procurement offices of each participating organisation; in the case of Sardegna Compra Verde about 70% of the participants came from the procurement side and 30% were from environmental departments and policy makers. The participants in networking activities carried out by Xarxa Barcelona include mainly environmental experts and municipal councillors of environment and territory, but also experts from other fields like procurers, economists etc.

Main activities

The main activities of the networks are listed in the following table. Are more detailed description can be found in the annex.

	ÖBS AT	RGO FR	APE Torino	Sardegna CV	Xarxa BCN	Partnership DK
Main Activities						
Training	On demand	2 training sessions per year	Capacity building workshops on specific topic	"Technical Laboratories"	Specific SPPI workshops and seminars	No
Face to face meetings	Yes, follow-up of sustainable construction	Working groups and annual meeting	On demand	One coordinating meeting and GPP Ecosportelli's meetings	WG, monitoring and commission and annual meeting,	Ambassador, Steering Committee and WG meetings
Working group on specific topics	Core activity: 20 WGs for tender criteria development	Flagship activity: Criteria development and others.	Composed of several professional profiles	On buildings, canteens, and road construction	On different themes	On different themes
Elaboration of materials / tools	Criteria catalogues, Framework agreements and the online tool www.baubook.info/oea/	Guides on good practice as results of WGs, with legal recommendations , SPP criteria and examples.	Guidelines for environmental criteria, guidelines for LCC methodology and Online survey for annual monitoring	Information brochures, technical glossaries and documents, guidelines and practical manuals	Guidebooks and other technical material, specific tools and dissemination and awareness raising material	Template implementation plan for new members, best practices, criteria for the priority product groups, and guidelines
Support for SPPI tendering (helpdesk)	For the framework agreements and individually on demand	Participants can ask for guides, models,...	The helpdesk gives technical assistance	Eight Provincial helpdesks + Regional helpdesk	Technical support	Secretariat assists the partners with how to find information and who to ask

	ÖBS AT	RGO FR	APE Torino	Sardegna CV	Xarxa BCN	Partnership DK
Joint procurement activities	Yes	Yes, as pilot action	No	No	Yes, as pilot action	No
Best practice examples³	Establishment of Procurement Platform	Best practices: The City of Cognac, City of Rennes and City of Lorient	All best practice examples of tenders are published on the A.P.E. website	Green tenders' database; The Ecolabel "La Sardegna Compra Verde"	Specific tenders and models are shared between members of working groups	Regularly published on the web
Work with providers / market engagement	Contacts with main producers and providers. Market research for specific product groups done by experts	Each working group has meetings with suppliers to discuss challenges	Suppliers invited to some workshops. Consultation with trade associations for <i>printed paper</i> criteria	General activities on GPP for enterprises, stakeholders dialogues, implementation of pilot projects.	Providers invited to seminar and workshops; regular feedback with providers.	Dialogue with external parties, cooperation with Forum for Sustainable Procurement; Green Purchase Award 2015
Online forum / platform for internal exchange	Online webshop for purchasing of products	Discussion forum	No	Community of Practice	The virtual community 2.0 of the Network	Internal system for knowledge sharing.
Collaboration with other networks	Other regions and institutions in Austria, and ÖkoKauf Programme	National public procurement network and Procura+ campaign	GPPnet, PAN GPP	GPPnet, GPPinfoNet, GPP2020 project, Rete Cartesio	Covenant of Mayors, ICLEI and Procura+; Climate Alliance, networks from Catalonia, Spain and Europe	Forum for Sustainable Procurement, National Procurement Ltd

³ more information can be found on the websites of the networks

Dissemination

The main dissemination activities carried out by the networks are listed in the following table. Are more detailed description can be found in the individual reports.

	ÖBS AT	RGO FR	APE Torino	Sardegna CV	Xarxa BCN	Partnership DK
Dissemination						
Website	www.oebis-shop.at www.umweltverband.at/handlungsfelder/oekologisch-einkaufen	http://www.reseau-grandouest.fr/	http://www.provincia.torino.gov.it/ambiente/agenda21/acquisti_ecologici/	www.regione.sardegna.it/sardegnaompraverde www.ecosportellisardegna.it	http://www.diba.ca/web/xarxasost.	www.gronneindkoeb.dk; www.ansvarligeindkob.dk
Newsletter	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social media	Youtube videos	No	No	Facebook and Twitter	Youtube videos, Facebook and Twitter	LinkedIn group
Organization of conferences, exhibition, annual events	Events for clients of ÖBS	Conference and workshop	Conference and events	Informative Seminars, Prize, "Eco-Aquidity" competition	Forums, events and Campaigns	Annual conference, SP award, Nordic GP Week

Monitoring of activities and results

Monitoring and reporting on the overall network activities

Three of the networks report on the overall networking activities: in the case of **ÖBS** activities are reported periodically to the political board, but there is no classic monitoring system in place. In the case of **RGO** monitoring and reporting of the network activities includes both an analysis of time spent by employees in the different network activities and an annual activity report which is presented at the annual assembly; **Xarxa Barcelona's** reports cover the activities of the network and include monitoring results and is also presented to the assembly. Monitoring tools were developed to follow-up the implementation and the impact of the strategic plan for the network 2011-2015.

The contents of the activity reports include for example the number of meetings and number of participants, existing working groups and their specific activities, tools and materials developed, partnerships and participation in events at national and european level. **Xarxa Barcelona** also evaluates the CO₂ emissions generated by the networking activities (mainly travel and energy consumption of buildings) and compensates emissions through reforestation projects.

APE and **Sardegna Compra Verde** are focussing on the level of implementation of the individual participants, but not on the general networking activities. In the case of **Partnership Denmark**, the network secretariat reports annually to the Danish EPA on the progress of the strategic goals which are set up every two years and include for example the number of new members or new procurement goals.

Monitoring and reporting on participants activities

The spectrum of monitoring and reporting requirements on participants activities has a broad range, depending on the different levels of policy commitments of the networks.

ÖBS and **RGO** don't have monitoring requirements for their network participants, as there are no specific policy commitments made by the individual participants. **Xarxa Barcelona** does some follow-up of the activities carried out by municipalities, mainly by sharing and exchanging best practices from municipalities in the working groups and disseminating experiences through the webpage and the virtual community.

Sardegna Compra Verde prepares an annual monitoring report which compiles separately the implementation of GPP at regional level and in the local authorities and public bodies and includes at regional level the percentage of greened tenders; at local level and for public bodies the number of participants in activities, the number of green tenders, and the number of policy commitments are also recorded. Monitoring of the level of penetration of GPP policies in local authorities and other public bodies is done through questionnaires which are sent to a sample of entities to supervise the progress made in implementation.

All members of the **Danish Partnership on GPP** report once a year the level of achievement of their GPP goals. Each partner needs to fill out a questionnaire where they answer whether they implemented the concrete green criteria in their tenders and if and how they have implemented the process-oriented goals in their organisation. Additionally each year four of the partners develop a case study monitoring the effects of the GPP criteria in a specific tender in terms of energy, environmental and financial savings.

A distinctive characteristic of **APE Torino** is the monitoring system on the effective fulfillment of members commitments. Monitoring is done via an online survey based on expenditure in 12 product/service categories. Each year the results of both the Network's overall and of individual members performance, are published on the website of the network. For electricity, vehicles, IT equipment and catering services. Based on this data Arpa Piemonte carries out a first quantification of greenhouse gases (CO₂ equivalent).

Successes and hurdles

Main achievements

The most frequently mentioned achievements include an increase in participation and involvement of public authorities, increased awareness raising and knowledge sharing, which leads to a stronger policy commitment and implementation of SPP. A specific achievement of **ÖBS** is the establishment of the Procurement Platform as a vehicle for joint procurement and the inclusion of sustainability criteria in the framework agreements. **RGO** highlights the thematic guidelines of recommendations and good practices which are written as a result of each working group. **APE Torino** is the only Italian network that monitors GPP implementation and publishes results annually. **Sardegna Compra Verde** achieved the acknowledgement of Sardinian public authorities within the Italian GPP awards. **Xarxa Barcelona** has participation from outside the network area like other provincial councils and departments of the regional government. **Danish Partnership on GPP** innovates through handling implementation challenges, testing means of communication, and discussing the next generation procurement targets in the working groups, and introduced, as a novelty in Denmark, binding procurement targets.

Success factors

The main success factors of the networks are summarised in the following table:

ÖBS Vorarlberg	RGO France	APE Torino
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPP is made easier than conventional public procurement participative approach and co-development of tender specifications integration of individual needs of the participants framework agreements ready for use, time-saving and cheaper ÖBS takes management of procurement process documenting achievements in economic terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> membership decision as an investment and guarantee for political involvement political involvement to decide strategic issues increasing number of members active common work, codevelopment of arguments to change attitudes and habits high technical quality of guidance documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuous coordination and animation of the Network continuous technical support of the Network heterogeneity of participants (not only municipalities, but different organisations) links with national and European networks and GPP strategies
Sardegna Compra Verde	Xarxa Barcelona	Danish Partnership on GPP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear planning framework through the regional Plan PAPERS high technical level of regional support operative approach: laboratories and helpdesk support offered by GPP Ecosportelli exchange and share of documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work planning through strategic plan and sectoral strategies increases efficiency tight relationship between Provincial Council and municipalities peer to peer learning and exchange between equals Best Practice exchange and technical support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> growing number of members support implementation of SPPI and influences the market joint learning and handling of implementation challenges in WGs cost-effectiveness through work with TCO methodology

Some of the most important aspects that make networks work are:

- A clear and strategic planning framework for networking activities and goals at political level with direct involvement of political decision-makers
- Continuous support by the networking secretariat, with a high technical quality and clear annual planning of activities and recruitment of new members
- A clear and participative working structure that allows the integration of individual needs, peer to peer exchange, and joint handling of implementation challenges
- Documentation of benefits and cost-effectiveness of SPP through development of specific tools, Best Practice exchange and joint development of tender specifications and / or joint purchasing

Hurdles identified and strategies to overcome them

ÖBS faced resistance from the private sector and politicians, as there was the fear of losing market share through centralised procurement. A study on the evaluation of results, the implementation of successful tenders, tender specifications that help to promote local business participation, and the voluntary participation in framework agreements helped to overcome the resistance. The collaboration with expert institutions and other contracting authorities like the City of Vienna, and a dialogue between parties helped to overcome the perception that the environmental criteria for the construction sector were too ambitious.

For **RGO** the geographical distance impedes the organisation of meetings, as the network is large. Videoconferences can help, but it is not always possible or appropriate. The organisation of events with suppliers (exhibitions) were a failure, as it needed too many resources and the results were not satisfying regarding the number of visitors and suppliers expectations.

For **APE Torino** the successful involvement of procurers and the use of environmental criteria by procurers needs the integration of GPP in the institution's strategic documents, and communication and training activities. Budgetary restrictions and the sectoral management of related budgets needs a strong impulse from the top of the institution. Other difficulties are insufficient market engagement and the assurance of compliance with SPPI criteria in ongoing contracts.

Sardegna Compra Verde faces instability through administrative changes, like the removal of the provincial level of administration in Italy, and the need of new funding after the end of the GPPinfoNET projects, which was solved through ERDF funding. Monitoring and getting feedback from all actors involved is seen as a problem. Procurers and politicians worry about the local market response despite awareness raising activities and market analysis.

The hurdles identified by **Xarxa Barcelona** include a lack of coordination between government levels. Participation in networking activities is time-consuming for municipal staff, in addition to their daily work. Finally, there is information missing on the implementation of best practices by municipalities.

In the case of **Danish Partnership on GPP**, one main hurdle is that the environmental criteria are integrated in a framework contract- but to get all decentralised procurers to use the contracts (i.e. the compliance level) is a general challenge for the public institutions. Therefore the Partnership is working on developing direct communication to the decentralised procurers.

Future challenges

Main challenges for the future

The main challenges of the networks are summarised in the following table:

ÖBS Vorarlberg	RGO France	APE Torino
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish ÖBS as the Expertise and Competence Centre in procurement and contracting for all public authorities in Vorarlberg. • increase cooperation with departments and institutions of the regional government (for example hospitals) and open new fields of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working group on indicators with two other networks in France • monitoring of impacts of GPP • strengthen the network and increase number of participants • set up joint procurement processes • offer support and expertise in tender greening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include social and eco-innovative criteria and review existing criteria • improve direct support and the monitoring system • implement monitoring of benefits (CO₂ and energy savings) • pilot system for internal audit procedures to prove compliance in ongoing contracts • exchange with market actors on eco-innovative solutions • Improve communication activities • work on joint procurement
Sardegna Compra Verde	Xarxa Barcelona	Danish Partnership on GPP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • find new funding sources to support local authorities • adapt to the trend of centralised procurement • define and implement a continuous communication and monitoring system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve communication, networking and exchange • compile all existing SPPI initiatives and extend good practices to a larger group of municipalities • optimise resources and existing structures • train local authorities • create a common communication platform with the EU to promote Covenant of Mayors policies • build synergies with other stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that standards, goals and stakeholder knowledge are used in decision making processes • develop tools and organisational approaches to reduce barriers • expand with new members and give direct support • ensure compliance of framework contracts • data collection on volume and impact, control of suppliers • ensure international exchange of experience • strengthen knowledge sharing and learning

Main findings

Based on the experiences of the six SPPI networks and the results of the Expert Workshop on SPPI networks held in Bristol as part of the SPP Regions project activities, the following main findings should be considered when establishing new SPPI networks or when expanding the activities of existing networks:

The initial circumstances when establishing SPPI networks may vary in each regions, depending on already existing political commitments and priorities that can or might be linked to procurement. SPPI networks might be created with the specific aim to promote and implement SPPI or might evolve from existing initiatives.

- Existing SPPI plans at national level should be identified; links should be established between GPP National Action Plans or regional SPPI Plans, regional networks can benefit from the work done by networks and platforms at national or European level
- The creation of synergies with specific policy targets and existing initiatives and networking structures in the region (e.g. related to energy, buildings, vehicles or food) should be considered.

SPPI networks might be created as formal associations of municipalities providing participants access to specialist skills or as more informal networks focussing on information exchange and capacity building.

In the case of financing of the networks through membership fees paid by all individual participants, the network is perceived more as a "service provider" for its members; the services can go from capacity building, best practice exchange, elaboration of tender specifications up to the organisation of joint procurement based on framework agreements, which is carried out by specialised experts with the collaboration of members.

In the case of financing of the networks by a supramunicipal, regional or national public authority, the participation in the network might be linked to a specific individual commitment of the participants, like the use of common SPPI criteria for prioritised product groups, or obligatory monitoring and reporting requirements. In that case, the number of initial participants is mostly limited to a small focus group of highly interested municipalities, and the network expands over time.

When the majority of the financing comes from European funding, the financial sustainability of the network beyond the project lifetime must be considered during the duration of the project.

The network secretariat in some cases is carried out directly by the staff of one or more of the network participants, and in other cases through an external assistant that acts as a network secretariat or procurement expert.

Regarding the professional profile of participants, what seems to work best is to have on the one hand a board with policy representatives, and on the other hand working groups with managers, purchasers and environmental officers.

A core activity of all networks is the establishment of specific working groups where SPPI criteria for different product groups are elaborated or specific SPPI related issues are discussed (monitoring, Life Cycle Costing or similar). The result of the working groups are normally guidance documents, tender specifications, identification of Best Practices, and only rarely joint procurement (such as in the case of ÖBS). Some networks collaborate with regional procurement agencies.

Nearly all networks offer helpdesk activities in form of direct support for SPPI tenders or specialised technical assistance, as well as capacity building activities.

Another key element for all networks are collaborations with other networks at national and international level, such as for example the Procura⁺ Campaign.

Dissemination activities include in all cases a webpage and regular newsletters. The use of social media is not so common. All networks organise annual events or conferences, and some have established specific awards.

Some of the main success factors for SPPI networks are the quality and continuity of the network coordination, secretariat and technical support, the identification and integration of the needs of participants, joint learning processes, the co-development of tender specifications and the exchange within and outside the network.

Future challenges of the networks include: increased coordination and cooperation at regional and national level, the strengthening of networks and expansion with new members, implementation of monitoring systems, improvement of direct support and international exchange of experience.

About SPP Regions

The Sustainable Public Procurement Regions (SPP Regions) project is a new European initiative designed to support public entities in their procurement. SPP Regions is financially supported by the EU's Horizon 2020 Programme, and co-ordinated by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability.

SPP Regions aims to:

- Promote strong networking and collaboration at both the European and subnational regional level on sustainable and innovative procurement (SPP/PPI)
- To help promote and embed capacity building and knowledge transfer
- At the regional level, networking will be promoted to build capacities and transfer skills in carrying out SPP and PPI
- Collaborate directly on tendering for eco-innovative solutions

SPP Regions Partners



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