

Press release
For immediate release

Handbook shows way for public authorities to successfully buy green

Freiburg, Germany, October 31 2011 - Over 2 trillion Euros is spent on public contracts on a yearly basis in the EU, translating to 19 percent of its GDP. It is clear that there is huge potential to make this spending more sustainable. ICLEI has been working with the European Commission to produce guidance on green public procurement (GPP) which will help public authorities to reduce their environmental impact, while complying with the procurement rules. The result is the new edition of the *Buying Green!* Handbook, published on 26 October 2011.

The Handbook is an indispensable tool for public authorities, offering step-by-step guidance to help them reduce the environmental impact of their purchases. It identifies strategies for GPP and explains in detail how these can be implemented at each stage of the procurement process. In addition to explaining how GPP can be put into practice under the EU procurement rules, numerous examples from cities and regions across the EU-27 illustrate its positive economic and environmental impacts.

For example, CO₂ emissions would be cut by 15 million tonnes per year if the whole EU adopted the same environmental criteria for lighting and equipment as ICLEI member city Turku, Finland, leading to a 50 percent reduction in electricity consumption. The authorities featured in the Handbook range from the small municipality of Beckerich, Luxembourg, which has switched to more than 90 percent renewable sources for its electricity, to the Central Procurement Directorate of Hungary, which awarded green contracts worth over €335 million last year.

By addressing factors such as energy and water consumption, reduction of hazardous substances, use of recycled materials and proper waste management, GPP can also help deliver cost savings across a number of product and service groups. Cities reaping the rewards of these savings include ICLEI member city Vienna, Austria, which saved €44.4 million and over 100,000 tonnes of CO₂ between 2004 and 2007, through its EcoBuy programme.

While it is intended for public sector procurers, the Handbook is also a useful reference for policy makers and businesses who are either implementing their own green purchasing or responding to tenders. Topics covered include: how to secure political and in-house support for greener purchasing; engaging with suppliers to ensure successful tenders, sources of information and criteria; legal and value-for-money considerations; life-cycle costing and comprehensive guidance for construction, timber, electricity and food and drink contracts.

A short summary document and the full *Buying Green!* Handbook are available at:
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp>

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Background:

Green Public Procurement (GPP) has been endorsed in a number of EU policies and strategies, reflecting its recognised potential to encourage more sustainable use of natural resources, establish behavioural changes for sustainable consumption and production and drive innovation. In addition, the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth highlights GPP as one of the measures in achieving such growth.

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organisations. ICLEI currently has 1,100 members worldwide and 200 in Europe. Founded in 1990, ICLEI provides technical consulting, training, and information services to build capacity, share knowledge, and support local government in the implementation of sustainable development at the local level.

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