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# Deep Dive Parallel Sessions

## Transforming food systems through minimum standards



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#Procura2024



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

# Transforming food systems through minimum standards

## 2024 Procura + Conference

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**Luana Swensson, PhD**

Policy and legal specialist for sustainable public procurement

Food and Nutrition Division (ESN)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



# Sustainable public food procurement

Increasing recognition of food procurement as a development tool and as an entry point to trigger more sustainable food systems



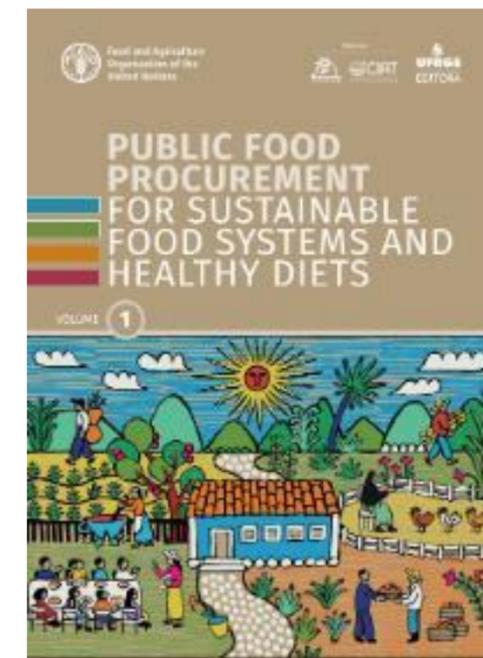
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**One planet**  
procure with care



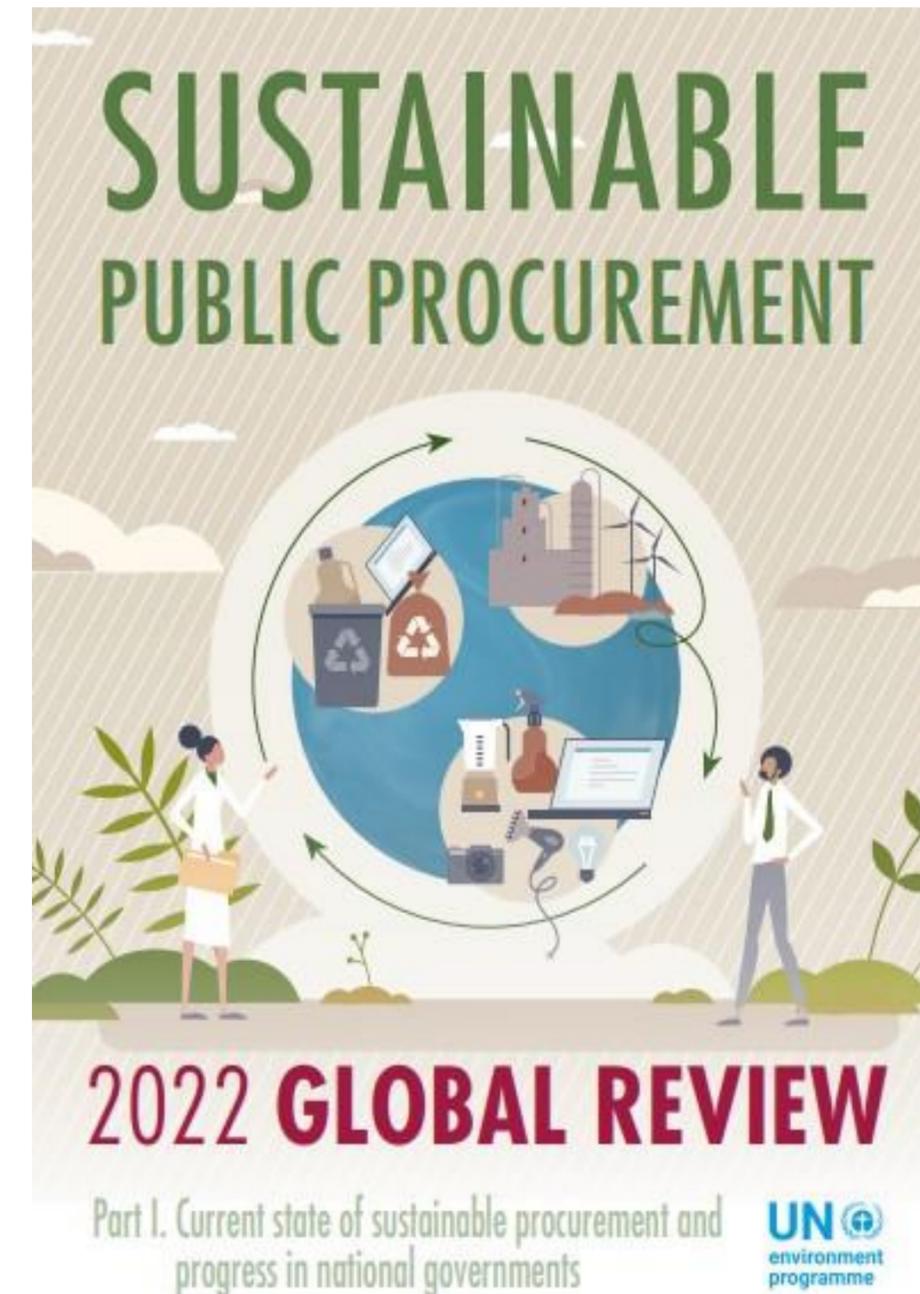
UNITED NATIONS  
FOOD SYSTEMS  
SUMMIT 2021





# Global Review of Sustainable Public Procurement

- Food and catering services are among the main sectors prioritized by governments to include sustainability criteria in their public procurement activities
- 2<sup>nd</sup> position of governments' priorities on SPP





# Sustainable public food procurement

SPP involves the incorporation of SOCIAL, ECONOMIC and ENVIRONMENTAL considerations into public procurement

**Sustainable Public Food** procurement: nutrition, health, food systems transformation

## **SPFP = Complex concept**

- No uniform definition
- Difficulties in determining:
  - **what is sustainable** in terms of social, economic and environmental considerations?
  - How can the **three dimensions** be computed?
  - How can **the trade-off** between different dimensions (e.g. social and environmental) be managed?
- May **vary** according to country contexts and policy priorities



# Minimum mandatory PP requirement

*“A minimum mandatory public procurement requirement is **a legal requirement that directs the decision-making process** of a national, regional or local authority, often in their role as a contracting authority, **in a mandatory manner by specifying a contracting authority's demand** in an environmental or social manner.”*

*Janseen, W. 2024. Shifting towards mandatory sustainability requirements in EU public procurement law: context, relevance and a Typology.*



**Objectives** (Law n. 11.947/2009 and FNDE Resolution n. 6/2020)

- the promotion of **health eating habits** (use of **diversified** and **safe** food that respects the **local culture and traditions**)
- support of **sustainable development** and promotion of **local food procurement**, particularly from **family farming**

**Mandatory requirement:**

- At least 30% of the federal budget for food procurement **MUST** be used for the procurement of products from family farmers and family rural entrepreneurs.
- At least 75% of the budget must be used for the procurement of fresh or minimum processed food

**Priority to (in this specific order):**

- Local
- Vulnerable producers ( land reform settlers, indigenous people, remaining members of *quilombola* communities)
- Organic (+price premium)
- Formal and informal women groups

**Only 3 Justification for non-compliance**

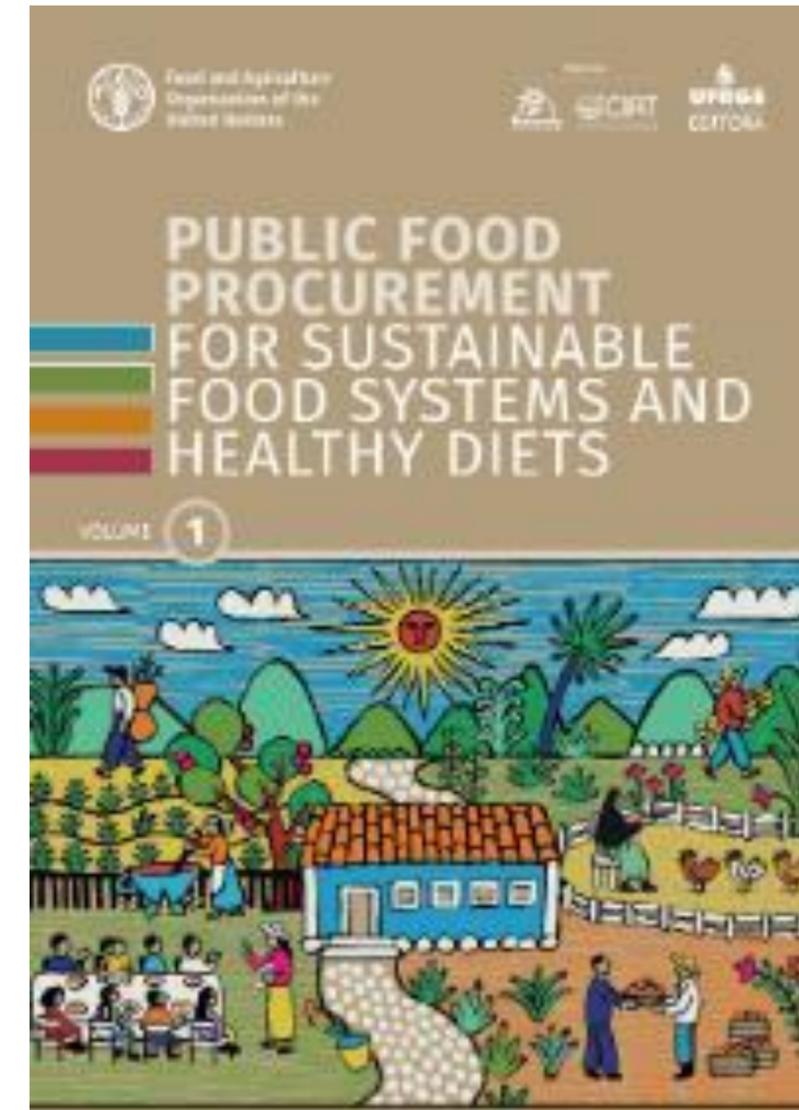
- impossibility of FF to provide a regular and constant supply;
- impossibility of FF to issue the necessary tax invoices;
- inadequacy of suppliers' sanitary conditions

## The example of Brazil





- Clear definition and verification instruments:
    - Family farmers and family rural entrepreneurs: Law 11.326/2006 + FF Registry
    - Local: FNDE Resolution 06/2020 (revised)
    - Organic and agroecological production: 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification + Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)
  - Link to support programmes and related policies
  - Assessed results in various domains
    - Product diversification
    - Increased incomes
    - Transition towards organic and agro-ecological production practices
- In addition to the traditional nutrition benefits to children.



## Minimum “Environmental” Criteria

“Contracting authorities can play an important social function by:

- **contributing** to the **health, well-being** of users and **protection of the environment**, supporting a **healthier and more sustainable agricultural model**,
- **encouraging the agribusiness sector** to play a **synergistic role** with national and EU agrifood policies that provide for an increase in agricultural areas cultivated using **organic farming methods**.

With targeted prescriptions, contracting authorities can also help **reduce food waste** and **spread a culture** about the **value of food, proper nutrition** and **environmentally friendly production and distribution models.**”

**Ministerial Decree n.65, 10 March 2020**

## The example of Italy





## Mandatory criteria

- Minimum levels of **organic or other quality marked foods** (e.g GI, Mountain food)
  - at least 50% of fruits, vegetables and beef (by weight)
  - Pork meat (only 10%), poultry meat (only 20%) – linked to market conditions
- **Seasonality** + specific **restrictions to processed food**
- Fish from **specific regions** and **species**. (safeguard biodiversity + social consideration) + rules on aquaculture.
- Vegetable oils: % **organic** + certification ensuring environmental sustainability for other types of oils (e.g palm oil)
- Tropical products must be certified **Fairtrade**

Additional criteria related to food waste, packaging, reusable tableware, electrical equipment/energy consumption, compliance check.

## Premium criteria

- **Short supply chains** and «km zero»
- Implementation of solutions to decrease the environmental impacts of **logistics** (green cars, central deposit)
- **Communication** (commitment to implement communication initiatives to convey information about the service's environmental sustainability, to encourage proper eating habits, etc.)
- **Additional environmental and social characteristics** of food products. (e.g., farms that practice social agriculture)
- Organic **aquaculture**, seafood from non-endangered species, fresh seafood caught in the nearest place to the cooking
- Verification of **working conditions** along supply chains



- Despite the name: **combination** of social (including nutrition and health), economic and environmental criteria



- Show how criteria (and their impacts) are **interlinked**
- Brazil and Italian experience: also show how criteria **may vary** according to policy priorities and contexts
- Importance of **market conditions / analysis**



## Seven minimum mandatory criteria for public canteens in Europe

1. **Healthy food** (100% of meals based on dietary guidelines that ensure sustainable healthy nutrition for all age groups and social contexts)
2. **Organic and other agro-ecological products** (at least 20%)
3. **Small-scale farmers support** (at least 10% of food from small-scale farmers, defined by turnover, agricultural area and number of employees)
4. **Climate Action** (25% GHG emissions reduction through more plant-based food, food waste reduction and a low-carbon food chain from farm to fork)
5. **Decent working conditions** (compliance with regulation + encouraging the employment of vulnerable workers in the farm to fork food chain)
6. **Fair Trade** (at least 25% from products typically sourced outside the EU)
7. **Animal welfare** (higher animal welfare + higher plant-based food content).

**Target + procurement criteria + verification**





# Implementation challenges and FAO work

Italy - National survey (2018) highlighted that key challenges hindering a smooth application of the implementation of Minimum Environmental Criteria regulation (to all kinds of products) were linked to:

- lack of **training and technical expertise**;
- difficulties in **designing and managing** “green” tenders and
- the **lack of potential economic operators available on the (local) market**.

(Botta, 2024)

Results are **aligned** with the broader **FAO work** on the implementation of sustainable public food procurement



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
World Food Programme

Operationalizing school meal nutrition guidelines  
and standard through procurement: a guidance  
manual



Regional Pathways on Sustainable  
Public Procurement for  
Sustainable Food Systems



# Some final considerations

- Minimum standards can be an important tool to promote food system's transformation through PFP
- It is key to consider a **holistic approach** and the **interlinkages** among different criteria: It is not “either” social “or” environmental
  - Greater impact – but also require the management of trade-offs
  - **Defining** which **criteria** and **verification instrument** can be **challenging**
    - nutrition, health, food systems: complex concepts
    - environmental sustainability: going beyond CO2 emission (biodiversity, land use, water use, nitrogen and phosphorus cycling)
    - It may depend on government priorities, contexts, and market conditions
  - Criteria and verification instruments **cannot exclude smallholder actors** (e.g. third-party certification schemes)
  - **Be aware that it is not enough:** Capacity building (procurement personnel and suppliers); guidelines (for designing and managing sustainable tenders) and other instruments (e.g. certification schemes) are key for proper implementation



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# Thank you!

[Luana.Swensson@fao.org](mailto:Luana.Swensson@fao.org)

More information on our webpage:

<https://www.fao.org/nutrition/markets/sustainable-public-food-procurement/en/#c858497>

**Food and Nutrition Division (ESN)**

**Market Linkages and Value Chains Group**

