

Developing a monitoring system for GPP in Rome

Integrating monitoring into accounting systems



Image: pixabay.com

Procura+ Participant:	Metropolitan City of Rome Capital
Policy/approach:	Province of Rome Green Purchasing Action Plan Launched: 2009
Targets/aims:	Target to reduce CO ₂ 20% by 2020 GPP Criteria included in over 98% of purchases CO ₂ reduction through procurement: 749 tons (2009-2014)

SUMMARY

- The Metropolitan City of Rome Capital has been monitoring GPP since 2009.
- Initial manual reporting system highlighted GPP and encouraged progress, but had drawbacks, including incomplete information.
- In 2016, the monitoring system was integrated with accounting systems.
- By centralising necessary GPP criteria, and requiring their inclusion in order to complete procurement procedures, Rome was able to improve its monitoring further.
- The new monitoring system was the first of its kind in Italy to link environmental monitoring to an electronic information system.

Background

The Metropolitan City of Rome Capital represents 121 municipalities and is responsible for a number of administrative functions, including transport, land use planning, and protection and enhancement of the environment.

In 2008 the Metropolitan City undertook a study into how it could rationalise its purchasing requirements, evaluate procurement actions, and identify priorities and purchase products and services with low environmental impacts. It began implementing this in February 2009, when it distributed an internal directive on green purchasing for certain product categories, including furniture, paper, prints, toner, and multifunctional printers.

In May 2009 a Metropolitan City Action Plan for Green Purchasing was approved by a Council Resolution ([Act n.269/15](#)). This set out: the objectives of the GPP Action Plan; ecological criteria for some goods and services; an organizational structure for the Plan's execution and diffusion; monitoring; and future steps and initiatives. The Action Plan also set specific targets around the more efficient use of natural resources, reducing use of dangerous substances, and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill.

An updated plan was approved in January 2014¹ which concerned the "Province of Rome Green Purchasing Action Plan and creation of a reserved area dedicated to GPP in the Information System for Decrees." This updated plan and subsequent integration of GPP monitoring into the accounting system of the Metropolitan City has meant that Rome has been able to increase transparency and improve verification of its GPP activity, collect data which allows smart decision-making, and provide the environmental and economic evidence on the benefits of undertaking sustainable procurement.

Development of the approach

Prior to 2016, monitoring of GPP was carried out manually. Departments were required to fill in a spreadsheet-based form each time a green purchase of goods and services was completed, which had to be sent to a GPP Coordination Office within one month following the award of the contract. The GPP Coordination Office then published a report every two years detailing the results of the monitoring process, and shared these findings through various communication channels, including on the City's website, through workshops and at internal meetings.

This manual approach to the collection of data which had some weaknesses, such as delays in the submission of reports or reports being submitted without all the necessary data. In addition, departments sometimes include environmental requirements which have not been checked by the GPP Office.

In 2016, the Metropolitan City introduced a new monitoring system linked to the public procurement electronic information system. This innovative, digital system (the first of its kind in Italy) allows the Metropolitan City to gather digital copies of all relevant decrees and legal acts. Through this, it is possible to require departments carrying out procurement exercises to attach the relevant environmental criteria to a procurement procedure (which cannot be concluded otherwise).

¹ Special Commissioner Act n.7/b

Implementation of the approach

This new monitoring system is managed by the Accounts department, who are well placed to carry out a first check on the inclusion and accuracy of environmental criteria. The GPP Coordination Office is then able to examine in further detail the inclusion of environmental criteria in technical requirements at any time, and create real-time reports according to several parameters/criteria (such as year, amount, department, awarding procedure, and product group).

The new monitoring system also aids calculation of environmental outputs, such as CO₂ emission reduction, thus helping the city to track its progress towards the [GPP 2020 Project](#) and [Covenant of Mayors Agreement](#).

In order to support staff responsible for purchasing, as well as those in the Accounts Department, a telephone helpdesk and training courses on the new functions of the GPP monitoring system were provided. An updated online library containing laws and regulations and a supporting guide was also compiled, and targeted support on checking suitability of certain products, particularly when no official eco-label exists, was made available.

Results

Under the initial manual monitoring system, GPP reports were compiled every two years (2009/2010, 2011/2012, 2013/2014). When monitoring commenced in 2009, 79.3% of procurement was fulfilling GPP criteria. This had increased to 98.25% in 2014.

Over a four year period (2011-2014) inclusion of green criteria in procurement resulted in a saving of 749 tons of CO₂.

Information on GPP can also be broken down into sectors as a result of the monitoring system. For example, GPP has been included in:

- 100% of tenders for office and school furniture, paper and cleaning services
- 80% of ICT tenders
- 50% of toner, copier, printed paper, cleaning products and air conditioning tenders
- 30% of car and fabric for uniform tenders.

The City began collecting data via the digital system in 2016, which should mean new figures will soon be available.

Lessons learned

Through the course of their engagement with GPP, the City of Rome has found the following principles to be useful guides for approaching sustainability:

- Train and update to reach the objective: the Ministry of Environment is continuously publishing new minimum environmental criteria or updating the old ones, thus it is necessary to constantly upgrade the knowledge of staff engaged in the procurement of goods and services.



- Small actions lead to big achievements: by behaving in the office like you would at home - for example, avoiding the waste of water, energy, paper and so on - it is possible to realise significant savings both in economic and environmental terms.
- Stimulate the market and citizens towards responsible behaviour: the public administration has the role of encouraging enterprises to produce better and of presenting a good example to citizens.

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Connect.



We are a network of European public authorities that connect, exchange and act on sustainable and innovation procurement.

Exchange.



Our combined knowledge and experience allows us to provide advice, support and publicity to any public authority that wants to implement sustainable and innovation procurement.

Act.



The Procura+ Network joins forces to champion sustainable and innovation procurement at the European level.

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