COREADO
connecting consumers and producers to rebalance farmers' position

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D4.1
Good practices for sustainable public food procurement

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Abstract

Public procurement has the potential to drive transformative change in the contemporary food system. The procurement system holds great potential as a change agent toward a more sustainable food system, and it is a valuable tool to drive positive change. The work of this report has contributed to the understanding of good measures that are already being taken but also revealed several challenges that should be of focus when trying to increase the sustainability of public procurement. An overview of the challenges faced by small-scale producers aspiring to participate in public tenders is provided. These challenges collectively limit the participation of small-scale producers in public procurement. A combination of strategies can be employed, including dividing contracts into smaller lots, implementing Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS) for increased supplier flexibility, providing adequate resources to procurement officers, enhancing their understanding of the task at hand, and developing the local market for sustainable food procurement through education of kitchen staff to demand more fresh products in season. The establishment of local facilitators is recommended in order to implement these recommendations, as the actions are interdependent. By adopting these recommendations and embracing a holistic approach, regions and municipalities can contribute significantly to the local development of social and environmental sustainability while promoting equitable opportunities for small-scale farmers and encouraging a well-functioning and resilient local food system, as well as increasing the sustainability of our food systems.

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List of abbreviations

DPS	Dynamic Purchasing System
EU	European Union
F2F	Farm to Fork
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPP	Green Public Procurement
IPES-Food	International panel of Experts on sustainable Food Systems
JSI	Institut Jozef Stefan
LCA	Life Cycle Assessment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organsation
SME	Small and medium Size Enterprise
SPP	Sustainable Public Procurement
UCPH	University of Copenhagen

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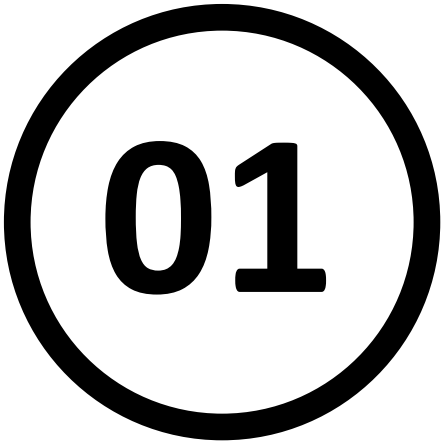

1. Introduction

Key Learnings

- Our current food and agricultural system are unsustainable due to significant carbon emissions, environmental damage, and depletion of natural resources.
- Organic growing practices can lower the environmental impact of food production e.g., by eliminating the production and use of chemical fertilisers.
- Small-scale farmers and agroecological practices can provide several benefits and participation of these suppliers and practices should be supported in public procurement.
- Organic conversion of menus lower the carbon emissions, as the share of meat is lowered and share of greens are raised in order to stay cost-neutral
- Procurement officers are one of the keys to sustainable tenders and dialogue between kitchens and suppliers can help achieve political sustainability goals.
- The European Commission intends to mandatory Green Public Procurement in the food sector.
- Public procurement has the potential to drive transformative change through its substantial purchasing power.

1.1 Public procurement in the food system

1.1.1 Our current food system

The primary objective of food systems is to sustain human populations by ensuring an adequate food supply. Unfortunately, most food systems have large negative implications on the surroundings, with significant carbon emissions, environmental damage, and depletion of natural resources (Campbell et al., 2017). They are major contributors to biodiversity loss and climate change on a global scale (UNEP, 2021; Crippa et al., 2021). Food production impacts the environment in several ways. Conventional agriculture involves the use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides, and herbicides, which can have

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detrimental effects on soil health, water quality, and biodiversity. Additionally, large-scale farming contributes to deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions, and water scarcity, putting immense pressure on ecosystems, biodiversity and contributing to climate change.

Food systems are complex systems that encompass a wide range of activities, including the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal of food. These activities involve various actors such as producers, consumers, and intermediaries, and the activities are influenced by economic, societal, physical, and environmental factors (Nquyen, 2018; von Braun et al., 2021). Consequently, food systems are not isolated but intertwined with trade practices, available resources, cultural influences, and the impact on the environment. There is evidence that today's food systems are far from achieving sustainability.

To change this, the simple conclusion would be to simply eat more sustainably. But because of the high level of complexity, the work ahead is equally complex.

1.1.2 Farm to Fork strategy

The European Commission's 'Farm to Fork' strategy explicitly aims to create fair, healthy, and environmentally friendly food systems. The adoption of Green Public Procurement is envisioned as one of the mechanisms to achieve the goals outlined in the 'European Green Deal' (EC, 2020). The Commission has also expressed its intention to introduce mandatory Green Public Procurement criteria, including those specific to the food sector (EC, 2021).

Figure 1 - Farm to Fork Strategy (European Commission, 2022)

The European Parliament agrees with the ambitions and goals of the Farm-to-Fork strategy, as a way of ensuring a sustainable, fair, healthy, animal-friendly, more regional, diversified, and resilient food system (European Parliament, 2021). It is emphasised that the strategy is essential in bringing the food system including animal and crop production within the planetary boundaries.

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Public procurement has the potential to drive transformative change in the contemporary food system. Through its substantial purchasing power, which amounts to approximately 12% of the global GDP, public procurement can influence markets and, consequently, impact the environment and society (Hafsa et al., 2021). Governments, at various levels, can shape markets through their demand-side choices among bidders. It involves integrating sustainability criteria into the procurement process to promote a different dietarian focus, sustainable agriculture, reduce environmental impacts, support local economies, and ensure ethical practices along the supply chain.

However, driving change and transitioning to sustainable food systems is a significant challenge and it is important to acknowledge that public procurement will always play a supporting role. In many cases, regulations and enforcement related to food production will be more appropriate in addressing the current shortcomings of food systems.

1.1.3 Small-scale farmers and agroecology

IPES-Food points to small-scale farmers and agroecological production as a solution to these multiple challenges (IPES-Food, 2016). Agroecology takes on a holistic approach to cultivation and applies both ecological and social principles to the structure of sustainable agriculture and food systems. When redesigning an agricultural system considering the maximisation of biodiversity and stimulation of interactions between different plants and species should be of utmost priority (FAO, n.d.). As opposed to a monoculture that relies on chemical inputs to retain a certain yield, the holistic strategy aims to build a resilient agricultural system with sustained soil health. There is no one path to agroecology, it can be achieved in different ways. We need to ensure that small-scale farmers and their ability to grow agroecological are supported by securing a market for their products and supply not only to the market but also to the greater good, giving back to nature.

1.1.4 Moving further from local as a strategy

The promotion of a local food strategy has been on the political radar for an extended period, based on the argument that locally sourced food can be a means to improve the environmental footprint of the food system (Stein & Santini, 2022). However, it is not possible to equal "local food" to "sustainable food". There are cases where just switching to locally sourced food will not improve the environmental footprint and in some cases will worsen it. The last case often relates to farmers producing in more favourable environments having the advantage of higher productivity without any extra input. Local food systems refer to production, processing, and retailing within a specific geographical area, often resulting in less transport and its negative impact on the environment. It is worth noting, however, that the environmental impact of transport accounts for only a fraction of the total environmental impact of food, and even less if air travel is excluded as a mode of transport (Ritchie & Roser, 2020). It is crucial to focus on the other aspects of the food system that are responsible for a larger part of the environmental impact (see e.g. Quantis (n.d.)).

1.1.5 Organic farming

It is challenging to find a target or a solution that can solve all aspects of our unsustainable food system, but a focus on the reduction of animal products and enforcing organic production could create a more holistic approach.

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The aspects of sustainability can revolve around different areas, and it is important to consider which area to improve before incorporating sustainability criteria into a tender (usually this focus would be provided from a political decision or strategy). If the wish is to purchase foods with a focus on increased environmental sustainability, the environmental impact of food production needs to be lowered. However one-sided focus on either e.g., reducing the climate impact, food waste, health aspects, or improved working conditions has the risk of creating other issues. Some of these targeted areas can be reached without ensuring overall increased sustainability.

An opportunity to lower the environmental impacts of food products can be found in organic production because of the elimination of chemical fertilisers used in conventional agriculture. Often soil health is highly prioritised in organic farming because of the lack of synthetic fertilisers. Furthermore, organic production emphasises the preservation of biodiversity e.g., by avoiding synthetic pesticides and using a wider range of plants in and around the farm. Including a level of organic certification is an objective and straightforward method to increase the sustainability of public food procurement.

1.1.6 Utilising public procurement

We have a perfect opportunity in the public sector to lead the way to sustainable, organic food production and meals, and through this improve the process of how we purchase goods, by acquiring food products while considering environmental, social, and economic sustainability considerations. The public institutions have a significant self-interest in investing in these changes as it is a public responsibility to take care of the challenges a broken food system causes – the results of extreme weather conditions such as droughts and storms, soil deprivation, wildfires, and pollution of groundwater as well as rivers and lakes, not to mention the health issues caused by the current Western diet with a high consumption of meat and low diversity. At the same time, expenditure is already planned in procurement budgets and can be targeted to achieve a broader outcome for the region, for environmental improvements, resilience, and thriving rural areas with better employment opportunities than is possible by buying food from a global food system.

Procurement officers are one of the keys to sustainable tenders because they are the ones who set the criterias and assess the market. Small changes that are written into the tender documents may be the decisive factor that contributes to the improvement of the food value chain moving in a more sustainable direction. In addition, dialogue between kitchens and suppliers can be crucial to meet everyone's needs and achieve sustainability goals: organic produced and plant-based food with a reduced carbon footprint. The public food procurement system holds great potential as a change agent toward a more sustainable food system.

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2. Background

Key Learnings

- Collaboration between procurement officers, kitchens, and actors of short supply systems is crucial for a successful transformation of food supply systems.
- A set of four criteria is used to assess whether a case can exemplify good sustainable public procurement, including I. Value of the public contract, II. Price-Quality, III. Clearly described sustainability criteria and IV. Contract management measurement.

2.1 Finding good practices for sustainable procurement

This report aims to collect good examples of public procurement practice in Europe and to derive common solutions that can be implemented in future sustainable public procurements. Unfortunately, it is too difficult to compare the different tenders and needs in the different areas. At the same time, it will in all cases require more than one set of procurement criteria. It will also require changes or even development of entirely new concepts in the kitchens. In addition, close collaboration between procurement officers, kitchens, and actors of a short supply system is needed to align their interests and enable the successful transformation of food supply systems.

For this reason, we have focused on all these aspects to give the best possible overview of the possibilities to implement more sustainability in food procurement.

1) What should procurement officers consider setting a new range of criteriums for the tenders?
2) Which barriers exist for the small-scale producers to participate in the tenders, even with new criteriums?
3) How would we recommend the abovementioned factors result in more sustainable procurement?

In the search for good practices for sustainable procurement, meetings have been organised with the European sister projects COACH (n.d) and agroBRIDGES (n.d) and active participation took place in conferences, seminars, and meetings. In addition, input was gathered from relevant stakeholders e.g.,

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public procurement officers with real-life experience in the field of creating new sustainable changes to the procurement of food. The work has shown that procurement officials, as well as small producers, who wish to participate in public tenders, face various challenges that hinder their overall participation. The work has contributed to the understanding of good practices that are already being implemented but has also revealed several challenges that need to be addressed when trying to increase the sustainability of public procurement of food.

2.2 Examining examples of sustainable procurement

For this reason, it was first investigated whether there are good examples of sustainable procurement among the project partners. All partners of the COCOREADO project were asked to collect cases that represent good examples of public procurement. Cases were received from Belgium, Finland, Latvia, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria, Slovenia, and Denmark. It seems, that green and sustainable public procurement is generally not a priority at the local level across the EU. Stakeholders involved in the tendering process lack the necessary knowledge to assess the characteristics of sustainable and green local food production systems. They also lack knowledge about what and how to prioritise in a tender.

Some cases were not examples of public procurement, but rather other types of public food initiatives, such as labelling schemes. An important finding is that there are not many cases of sustainable public procurement. Also it is important to understand, that public procurement as a driver for sustainable products from small-scale farmers is not a quick fix. To steer public procurement in a sustainable direction, a cultural rethink, change of working-, procurement- and eating habits, as well as an expanded understanding of the food system are required.

To assess whether a tender and a contract are an example of good sustainable public procurement, the following four criteria were used:

- Value of the public contract
- Price-Quality
- Clearly described sustainability criteria
- Contract management measurement

Criterion I: Value of the public contract

Many European municipalities procure food via large single procurement contracts or through a catering service supplier. Whenever a public contract exceeds a certain amount, it must be tendered following the European Procurement System. Large single procurement contracts are usually always above the thresholds and thus fall within the scope of the Procurement Directive. A tender under € 500,000 may be exempted from the application of EU procurement law if there are objective, coherent reasons why the procurement was designed in this specific way.

The Procurement Directive restricts the contracting authority from directly requiring local goods or imposing other direct geographical requirements on the origin of the goods. Instead, the contracting authority should set objective and indirect demands related to the goods' methods of production and delivery. In our opinion, this is a fair and good legal principle, because 'local' is often not very well defined and does not necessarily include sustainable production.

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However, it is encouraged and allowed for contracting authorities to divide tenders into smaller lots to promote the participation of small and medium enterprises in public procurement. At a joint conference between COACH and COCOREADO on the 18th of April 2023, Johannes Baad Michelsen explained that Preamble 78 initially states that: ”Public procurement should be adapted to the needs of SMEs” (Urgenci, 2023). As it was learned, small producers very often produce much more sustainably than large producers. It is therefore of interest to find ways for small producers to participate in public tenders. The logical consequence of this is that local small producers will be interested in participating in the tender, as they rarely have the logistical capacity to provide services far away. So, involving small-scale farmers and SMEs is a goal that can be pursued in accordance with the procurement directive. The important thing is that it is done in the right way.

The EU legislation allows a range of reasons to divide the procurement into smaller lots. This can include special needs in the market or for instance at schools, where the food serves an educational purpose as well as being prepared for meals. This provision authorises procurement officers to request and appreciate suppliers and producers who go beyond merely providing goods. Specifically, it encourages those who are willing to not only deliver goods but also deliver presentations at schools or even facilitate visits to their farms. At the Copenhagen Hospitality College in Denmark, the procurement tender has been divided into smaller lots for exactly this reason. The suppliers must provide in-depth knowledge of their goods and participate in educational sessions for the students. Before this new design of the tender, the contract consisted of all the goods the vocational school needed. Now it is divided into specialised contracts, for instance, one only for dairy, making it possible for a dairy specialist to arrange education in cheeses and arrange visits to a dairy. This case of dividing the contract into smaller, specialised lots can be replicated in other educational institutions. The school has found 15-20 smaller producers, who provide the college with goods, 80% of this food is organic. This method requires changing procurement habits at the school, as it is more complicated to place orders from 15-20 suppliers and to communicate with suppliers so the relationships are sustainable and beneficial to both parties. Copenhagen Hospitality College prioritises this extra workload, as the educational purpose and sustainability goals are crucial to their strategic ambitions and goals.

A good procurement case must be a case that shows deep understanding in following the regulation regarding threshold and be an example of how to either promote the participation of small-scale farmers successfully or divide the tender into smaller lots the right way. See also examples of Växjö, East Ayrshire Council, and Helsingborg (Table 1*)* obtained from desk research in the EU database on Green Procurement (Sustainable Procurement Platform, n.d.-b, n.d.-a).

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Table 1 - Examples of good procurement cases from Växjö, Ayrshire, and Helsingborg.

Annex number/ Contract holder	Tender	Size	Good practice
1: City of Växjö	Goods: Supply of eggs for schools, daycares, and nursing homes	€ 661,000 (SEK 7 mill.)	In this case, we see a clear focus on organic share and animal welfare, and by focusing on only one product, it is possible to get the entire supply. The argumentation for dividing the tender into different lots is important. When the result is only one bidder, but with a higher organic share it seems to be a successful way to develop the market. Animal welfare demands are ambitious and go beyond organic. Only one bid was received. The bidder must prove that it meets the conditions, and the performance of the contract will be verified.
2: East Ayrshire Council	Goods: Supply and delivery of food to schools	€ 480,000 /year in total (All lots)	The division into 9 lots for attraction of several small suppliers. Award criteria: Quality and range of food (15%). Food handling (10%). The use of resources was evaluated on a range of parameters e.g., environmental impact, waste, sustainable development etc. (10%).
3: Helsingborg Each user of the solution acts as her/his contracting authority, selecting food from a webshop	Goods: Food for schools and nursing homes	€ 690,000 (SEK 60 mill.)	Transparent supply chain and information about animal welfare. The right to carry out local control is included in contract management. Suppliers must submit a written declaration showing that items meet requirements.

Criterion II: Price-Quality

When designing and evaluating a tender for meals, it is important to focus on the quality of the food in the meals, and if it encourages the meal provider to buy from small-scale farmers. A sustainable healthy meal has a certain cost. In other words, you cannot expect the best quality from a private catering company if you require the lowest price for the meals. The cost of organic food production, or production from small-scale farmers is often mentioned as a barrier by procurement officers or by the catering services who apply for service tenders in public kitchens. In many kitchens, both insourced and outsourced, the concept heavily relies on food, that has already been preprocessed, e.g., washed, peeled, cut, pre-cooked, or even ultra-processed. This kind of product differs a lot from the products that small-scale farmers can deliver.

This way of working is a direct consequence of the existing tenders for food or meals where the lowest possible price is the dominant selection criterion. The kitchens or catering services are almost obliged to cut costs in all possible ways, ultimately buying raw produce of the lowest quality, animal products with the lowest degree of animal welfare, and a high rate of ultra-processed food that doesn't require a qualified workforce in the kitchens. This leads to concepts and kitchens, that would not be able to implement goods from small-scale farmers. This corresponds to the low meal price that we noticed in the gathered examples from COCOREADO project partners.

In order to enable catering services and kitchens to incorporate sustainably sourced ingredients into their food production, the tender descriptions need to be changed. The revision should expressly

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demand a heightened meal quality standard. This emphasis should particularly highlight the utilisation of highly seasonal ingredients and the creation of meals crafted extensively from raw components. Achieving this transition could potentially be succeeded without incurring additional costs by significantly reducing the dependence on meat (replaced by legumes and other plant-based proteins, excluding pre-prepared, highly processed meat substitutes). Furthermore, a pronounced shift toward procuring seasonal produce should be a focal point.

All of these solutions require changing of both habits in the kitchens as well as eating habits for the recievers of the food. A focus is also needed on the reduction of food waste. The outcome would be healthier meals as a larger share of vegetables on the plate will be aligned with nutritional recommendations and e.g., the EAT-Lancet diet. If kitchens will not make this transition which should be aligned with the modifications of the procurement, there is a risk that the kitchens will not become a potential market for small-scale farmers. An example of this is the small-scale farmer Camilla Varming Nielsen from Fyens Økologi in Denmark who has experience in bidding on a public tender and has shared her valuable insights on how to get small-scale farmers to supply food to public institutions. Camilla was involved in a market dialogue process, where she succeeded in changing e.g., the conditions for delivering. The prepared tender e.g. asked for a provider, who could deliver every early morning. But through dialogue, the contract terms were altered, and giving access to delivering Fridays afternoon, making it possible for the farmers to avoid working Sundays with extra salary issues to make the produce more expensive. She ultimately signed the contract with a municipality after much effort and time. Unfortunately, the individual kitchens did not demand the products, and she didn't receive any orders from the kitchens. It is not in depth investigated, why the kitchens did not place any orders, but it is very likely that the kitchens were not ready to produce food from scratch, did not have the ressources to wash, peel, or cut the produce, or were not sufficiently prepared for placing orders Fridays afternoon – or a combination of all of the above. This example emphasises the importance of collaboration between procurement officers and kitchens.

In the context of service catering, a good procurement case should express clear and measurable requirements for fresh, high-quality, seasonal menus, as well as a substantial level of professional expertise in the kitchens and a sustainable framework encompassing criteria such as animal welfare and organics within the tender documentation. To ensure these requirements are fulfilled, a well-defined approach to contract management must be outlined.

No such cases were part of the procurement material, but through a review of the cases of procurement in the EU database, we have found such examples in Helsinki, Rome, and Turin as shown in Table 2. See also an example regarding 'earthy vegetables' from Vienna.

When Copenhagen Municipality organised the organic conversion of the public kitchens, the political goal was to convert all meals in the municipality. A number of these meals were outsourced to private catering services (7 canteens for employees). For this reason, the conversion to 90 % organic for this part of the meals had to be done through new requirements for the catering service in the tender process. Instead of demanding strict compliance with certain requirements right from the start of the contract, Copenhagen Municipality transformed these requirements into ambitious goals that needed to be achieved throughout the contract's duration. This shift was facilitated by collaborative efforts

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and open dialogue between the municipality and the catering service. This approach led the catering service to innovate solutions, including a reduction in the required quantity of meat on their menus. This effort and collaboration have led to new standards for private catering service companies in Denmark, making it a new standard to be organic, and competing in sustainability measures.

Moreover, this change in approach had a ripple effect on the catering service industry, where new actors emerged, bringing fresh perspectives and ideas to the table. The new standard mandated that meals served in the canteens of all public institutions must consist of a minimum of 60% organic ingredients. This proves, that public procurement can have a significant role in developing the market.

Table 2 - Cases of good procurement practices from Rome, Helsinki, Turin, and Vienna.

Annex number/ Contract holder	Tender	Size	Good practice
4: Municipality of Rome	Service: Catering school food	€355 mill. - €5.28 per meal	Staff training, products from social cooperatives, fair trade
5: City of Helsinki	Service: Catering to public kitchens	€22 mill. a year	CO2 emissions: (CO2e/meal, CO2e/kg, CO2e/kcal)
6: City of Turin	Service: Catering school food	€40 mill. (8 areas distributed to 3 suppliers)	Calculated carbon footprint of "five of the most commonly consumed foods": Potatoes, carrots, apples, pears, peaches. Transport was 5-25% of the carbon footprint.
7: City of Vienna (nursing homes order independently)	Goods: Supply and delivery of "earthy" vegetables to nursing homes	€700,000 for the purchase of 635,648 kg of vegetables bought annually	Earthy vegetables, 50% grown in the bidder's nursery using renewable energy. All bidders offered only certified organic.

Criterion III: Clearly described sustainability criteria

To achieve sustainability in public procurement, it is crucial to establish clear and well-defined sustainability criteria within the tender documents. Unfortunately, current public procurements often lack knowledge or ambition in addressing sustainability criteria, with a focus on minor contributors to food sustainability, such as transportation and packaging, while overlooking the primary contributor, i.e., the actual production of food.

To effectively measure the fulfilment of sustainability criteria and manage contracts, a precise definition of these criteria is essential. While local experiences can provide valuable insights into meaningful sustainability criteria for farmers in public tenders, their applicability at an EU level remains limited. For instance, in Denmark, the national organic certification enjoys high trust among farmers, as they are assured of recouping their investment in farm conversion through price premiums on organic produce. On the other hand, the European organic certification, while valuable, lacks the same level of trust as its local counterpart.

This has led to a desire to favour local products over organic ones in public tenders where local certifications exist. However, incorporating local certifications into EU procurement regulations

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requires a clear definition of what qualifies as 'local,' often resulting in a narrow perspective that primarily considers distance or kilometres travelled. Such a limited understanding of 'local' overlooks crucial environmental aspects of sustainability and may inadvertently support nearby producers without adequately addressing overall sustainability criteria. And as aforementioned, the term 'local' is not applicable under EU-procurement regulation when accepting contracts above the threshold.

Defining terms like 'local,' 'short supply chain,' or 'small-scale producers' proves challenging, yet it remains an essential consideration. Relying solely on criteria like CO_2 emissions per transport for goods may inadvertently favour larger producers or wholesalers capable of providing detailed life cycle assessments (LCA) for transportation, while smaller suppliers may lack the administrative capabilities to do so.

A notable case demonstrating strong sustainable public procurement is the conversion of all public kitchens in Copenhagen Municipality. In this case, a joint food procurement contract required the possibility of delivering 100% organic products across approximately 1,000 kitchens, covering sustainability criteria beyond just packaging and quality. The case discussed in the EU database (Table 3) pertains to 80 kitchens, with the contract being divided based on the sizes of these kitchens. However, it is essential to note that the entirety of food contracts encompassing approximately 1,000 kitchens in the city of Copenhagen reflects a remarkable accomplishment, wherein all these kitchens have successfully achieved an above 85% organic status on average. This achievement was possible through a decade-long commitment by Copenhagen Municipality to prioritise education for kitchen staff, develop meal concepts, and focus on reducing meat consumption, preventing food waste, and maintaining high meal quality. This dedication resulted in over 85% of the total procurement budget of 40 million € per year being spent on sustainable products. Such long-term vision and ambition have significantly improved the market for organic farmers, providing a replicable solution for other regions to follow.

In conclusion, to make public procurement truly sustainable, a well-defined set of sustainability criteria is essential. Drawing from both local experiences and best practices, while considering the unique context of each region, can help pave the way for successful and ambitious sustainable public procurement efforts.

Table 3 - A case of good practice demonstrating strong sustainable public procurement from Copenhagen Municipality.

Annex number/ Contract holder	Tender	Size	Good practice
8: Copenhagen Municipality	Goods: Supply and delivery of food to schools	80 kitchens with an average budget of € 70,000	Limit packaging, "least possible" environmental impact. Award criteria: Quality (35%), range of goods, points awarded according to have many varieties of a product the bidder could supply (25%).

Criterion IV: Contract management measurement

The contracting authority plays a crucial role in ensuring the evaluation and enforcement of agreed-upon criteria outlined in the terms and conditions of awarded public contracts. Neglecting to adequately consider or specify this criterion in the tender documents can lead to challenges in contract management and evaluation. This issue becomes particularly relevant in large-scale food procurement

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and service contracts, where the contract holder may face difficulties in monitoring and verifying compliance with the specified requirements.

In Denmark, a promising approach to address this challenge is the implementation of a certification programme for kitchens based on their organic share. This programme facilitates contract management by enabling the inclusion of specific organic share requirements (e.g., 30%, 60%, or 90%) in service contracts. The national certification programme employed in Denmark is well-defined and subjected to regular audits on a monthly or quarterly basis, ensuring its reliability. In 2023 Germany decided to replicate this system.

A notable aspect of successful sustainable public procurement is the existence of clear and measurable sustainability indicators, accompanied by a well-structured scheme for contract management. Unfortunately, such cases were not observed in the procurement material under review, primarily due to the lack of a clear and universally accepted definition of sustainability. In this context, it is again relevant to consider and learn from the comprehensive, holistic model implemented in Copenhagen, which emphasises the interconnectedness between procurement, economics, kitchen operations, and stakeholder engagement (including national-level institutions and organic farmers associations).

As a result of this exercise, raising awareness regarding relevant aspects of sustainable public procurement emerges as a significant takeaway. Knowledge sharing and experience exchange among public procurement officers and policymakers become crucial in fostering sustainable practices. COCOREADO, and its ambassadors, can contribute to advancing Green Public Procurement (GPP) by highlighting the deficiency in genuine sustainability measures in procurement tenders, enhancing understanding of short supply chains, and advocating for procurement models that facilitate the participation of small-scale farmers.

In conclusion, adopting sustainable public procurement practices requires a holistic approach that integrates various stakeholders, incorporates clear and measurable indicators, and promotes knowledge dissemination to drive positive change toward more sustainable and responsible procurement practices.

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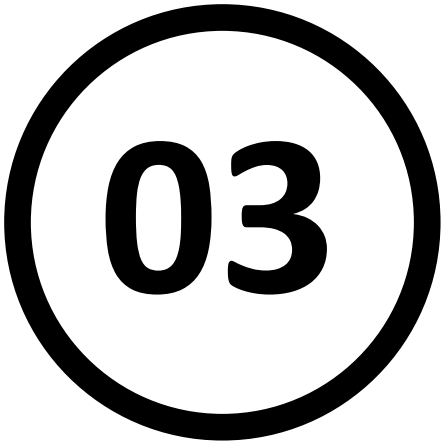

3. Experiences

Key Learnings

- The public sector must take responsibility for changing the market and enforcing structural changes that enable food supply from small-scale producers that inherently can be more innovative, and secure efficiency, resilience, and risk management.
- Several barriers inhibit the participation of small-scale producers in public procurement including priority by politicians, the content of tenders' terms and criteria, restricted allocation of necessary resources, solution-oriented cooperation, trust-related issues, and lack of motivation from farmers.
- Unless all relevant barriers are tackled through comprehensive changes, the outcomes are likely to fall short of expectations. A holistic approach is required that involves robust communication among the various stakeholders.
- A transition from traditional food procurement to the utilisation of a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) could be a part of the solution to increase the sustainability of the current food system.

3.1 Introducing Small- and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs)

Small-scale producers can be more innovative and solve issues, secure efficiency, resilience, and risk management. Small producers are agile, as they own smaller lots and typically have a higher diversity in crops, can test new ideas and methods, and most often will be able to lead the way for a larger producer, who needs more time to accommodate a changed market or circumstances. At this stage, it seems that the market itself will be too slow to respond to the climate changes and environmental

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crises we are experiencing. Instead, we need a public sector that takes responsibility for changing the market and enforcing structural changes. The SMEs are responding to the public sector in a much more direct way than the industrial food system because of their inherent agility. Procurement procedures are a key factor in enforcing this by ensuring that barriers are overcome.

3.2 Barriers to small-scale farmers

Drawing upon the knowledge gained from the initial desk research and the examination of sustainable public procurement examples, the focus is redirected toward addressing the challenges related to the redefinition of measurable sustainability criteria. How small-scale farmers can be included in tenders for public procurement was sought to be explored. The goal was twofold: to devise a set of demands or definitions that not only encouraged the participation of small-scale farmers but also facilitated the establishment of transparent and quantifiable sustainability indicators.

It was decided to uncover this through an analysis among the small-scale farmers, who had experiences with participation in tenders for public food procurement. The analysis showed, that certifications and sustainability criteriums are one of the barriers small-scale farmers experience. On one hand, acquiring the necessary certifications often proved to be a challenging and costly endeavour, and the farmers do not have the necessary resources (administrative resources, payment for certification, etc.) to achieve the certifications, even though their farm or production already live up to the requirements of the certification. Other tenders did not ask for certifications but instead demanded e.g., documentation for CO_2 emissions from transportation or for catering service providers CO_2 emissions pr. meal. Such data requires extensive administrative capabilities which the small-scale farmers cannot provide.

By conducting interviews with various stakeholders across different countries, including representatives from farmers' organisations, consultants, procurement officers, NGOs, and other relevant actors, we identified common barriers faced by small-scale farmers when attempting to participate in public procurement. The countries involved in the research were Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Latvia, and Portugal. The insights gained from these interviews showed some of the challenges hindering the involvement of small-scale farmers in procurement processes.

Barriers to sustainable public procurement accessible for small-scale farmers can be grouped into six main themes:

i. Priority
ii. Terms and criteria
iii. Resources
iv. Cooperation
v. Trust
vi. Motivation.

All countries have barriers to public procurement that fall into all six main themes. The most prevalent barriers are that i) tenders are written and constructed for wholesalers or usual suppliers, i) logistics are a major challenge for farmers, and iii) price is too important as a selection criterion for getting a public contract.

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i) Priority

Priority is a crucial aspect encompassing both political support and long-term commitment to new sustainability targets. However, farmers and other respondents have reported encountering political barriers that hinder sustainable public procurement and restrict farmers' access to procurement opportunities. Such barriers are exemplified by the absence of food strategies at various administrative levels and the lack of prioritisation for sustainable farming practices.

At the procurement office level, priority-related challenges persist in many of the reviewed countries. Procurement officers often lack the necessary skills, training, and knowledge to formulate tenders that effectively promote sustainable food and enable small-scale farmers to participate as suppliers. Furthermore, a significant gap exists in establishing the required framework for regulating, monitoring, and supporting efforts toward sustainable procurement. Furthermore, the organisational structure of public authorities, with a single purchaser managing multiple contracts, worsens these challenges. The emphasis on minimising administrative tasks results in a preference for larger contracts, as managing numerous smaller contracts demands more time and effort, leading to increased paperwork.

Moreover, transition sustainable procurement practices and habits require significant resource allocation and investment in various areas. Successfully adapting the procurement approach and encouraging collaboration with farmers, farmers' organisations, and kitchens while understanding the market dynamics requires substantial resources and efforts. Such investment should be part of the implementation of a comprehensive food policy. While the outcome in Denmark demonstrates the successful maintenance of the substantial organic share within the current budget, this achievement necessitated ongoing investments. These investments encompassed allocating extra time for procurement officers, providing training for kitchen staff, fostering partnerships with farmer organisations, and undertaking kitchen renovations. With these efforts, it was possible to implement a novel food concept, marked by significantly more decentralised productions from the ground up.

It is therefore essential to address priority-related challenges to advancing sustainable public procurement. This involves providing political support, enhancing the capabilities of procurement officers, and allocating adequate resources to foster effective collaboration among stakeholders. By recognising the significance of these factors and incorporating them into comprehensive food policies, we can pave the way for more successful and inclusive sustainable procurement practices that benefit both farmers and the broader community. Small-scale producers' engagement in public procurement can benefit the broader community by bringing the producers and consumers closer together, the positive side-effects for environment and climate as well as a thriving rural community with job opportunities around small-scale farms.

ii) Terms and criteria

Terms and criteria are criteria used to select eligible bidders and award supply contracts. The selected terms and criteria can hold small-scale farmers back from engaging with public customers and ultimately prevent political sustainability targets from being met.

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As mentioned earlier, public procurement tenders are usually about selecting the cheapest bidder who meets the minimum requirements. This leads to a race to the bottom, where the food in public kitchens is largely cheap, packaged, processed food with a long shelf life. This makes the implementation of sustainable practices very challenging for fresh produce bought from small-scale farmers.

In cases where sustainability criteria are included measurably, the tenders are often written in a way that makes them inaccessible to farmers as we described with examples of CO_2-calculations. The documentation and bureaucratic process of public procurement is extremely demanding, and ends up preventing small-scale farmers from participating. This is important to keep in mind when formulating the tenders, keeping them as short as possible and reducing the number of technical terms that are only known by procurement officers.

iii) Resources

Resources include all barriers that prevent the preparation and serving of public meals due to the restricted allocation of resources. Resources can both correspond to the value of the meal, but also proper equipment in public kitchens.

Public meals are often supplied by catering service companies, and not prepared on the premise of the public institution. This can be due to the lack of equipment in a kitchen, and sometimes because the public institutions are constructed without any kitchen facilities at all. If public institutions lack facilities to prepare fresh food, this limits them to purchasing produce directly from farmers. If catering services supply the meals, the procurement officer can require, that the meals are prepared with a specific share of fresh produce from small scale farmers, but will then need to require documentation that this happens either by specifying share of fresh produce, share of self-produced meals etc.

Many kitchens rely on wholesalers for their food demands. The wholesalers have a tendency to deliver the produce, which are the cheapest, leading to instances where they would provide e.g. green beans grown in greenhouses in Kenya, even though the same product is available in season, more sustainable produced in Europe. This means the kitchen staff needs to put a lot of effort in asking for seasonal, local products, yet they might lack the expertise to discern seasonal availability and other relevant details. This lack of skills and knowledge, as well as habits, makes it difficult for small-scale farmers to consider becoming suppliers. This issue highlights the opportunity to enhance the sustainability of food procurement through the allocation of resources aimed at educating kitchen staff. The focus would be on equipping them with the skills to incorporate considerations of seasonality into their menu planning and effectively handle fresh produce.

iv) Cooperation

Cooperation includes all barriers that prevent successful cooperation between public authorities and farmers, including strict demands that fit poorly with the variability nature of food production.

One significant obstacle faced by farmers seeking to become suppliers to public kitchens is the logistical challenge of delivering goods to multiple locations simultaneously. Farmers often lack the

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resources and means to plan and implement comprehensive logistical solutions. This is a critical aspect in ensuring the success of purchasing and maintaining logistics schemes. Existing solutions, even when available, are perceived as unpredictable and risky by farmers, deterring them from engaging in deliveries to public customers.

Financial constraints also pose a considerable challenge for farmers when dealing with public customers. The procurement process typically favours large suppliers with substantial financial reserves, placing small-scale farmers at a disadvantage position.. In addition, the financial conditions specified in public tenders can be difficult for farmers to meet, which further exacerbates the problem. This could be in regard of appliers for tenders needs to show financial stability for a period in the past, or that payment condition in the contract is not possible for the farmers to fit in their economical situation

Many of the barriers encountered in supplying food to public kitchens are related to the expectation that all food is or should be always available. This expectation has been found to be achievable through many years of working with large wholesalers who can supply all types of products under a single supply contract. Public procurement requires long-term planning and often requires abandoning or reducing existing channels that farmers use for sale. Farmers might also be reluctant to participate in public procurement out of fear of more scrutiny of their farming practices.

Addressing cooperation-related barriers in sustainable public procurement requires a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by farmers and public authorities. By implementing more flexible and inclusive procurement practices, facilitating access of farmers to logistical support, and providing clearer and farmer-friendly bidding mechanisms, we can foster meaningful collaboration between farmers and public entities, ultimately advancing sustainable food procurement.

v) Trust

Trust includes barriers related to the lack of trust of farmers in the procurement system. It can occur at three different levels, from not being met and seen by the contracting authorities, to experiencing fraud and in more serious cases, corruption.

The first aspect of trust-related barriers is the feeling of exclusion. Farmers experience that the same organisations win the contract multiple times. Furthermore, when the farmers engage with procurement officers they experience a language barrier, where the procurement officer speaks with a different terminology and professional knowledge. The second aspect of trust-related barriers is fraud. Some respondents experience that public institutions do not have adequate ability to monitor the fulfilment of the contractual agreement with the wholesalers or catering companies, which leads to a lack of trust in the procurement process. The fear of corruption was experienced in one European country, where certain producers bribed officials in public institutions. If this is known to farmers, they would lose interest in bidding on public contracts.

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iv) Motivation

Motivation includes all the identified barriers that prevent the engagement of small-scale farmers in public procurement, due to the lack of motivation to participate. The lack of motivation can derive from a multitude of reasons e.g., feeling any effort to participate is a waste of time.

Public procurement tendering is a very bureaucratic process, and farmers experience that they have very limited influence over demands and requirements in the tender. Without support from specialists, the procurement process is too bureaucratic for farmers to participate in compared to other forms of trade. Farmers are sometimes not willing to devote time to public procurement if they already have a stable business. The time demand for administrative work doesn't stop once the tender is won.

The combination of a process that is difficult to navigate and a lot of pitfalls that can lead to their bid not being taken leads many farmers to conclude that it is not worth it. There are no rewards for the work invested, which is not sustainable for small farmers who depend on every decision on how to use their limited time.

It is important to state that public institutions have an interest in promoting the participation of farmers in their kitchens, but the major barriers holding them back must be broken down. Some farmers have contracts with public procurers even if they do not make a profit from them, which shows that farmers are willing to participate in public procurement.

In conclusion, barriers for small-scale producers to enter public procurement have numerous aspects but three takeaways that could help overcome the barriers would be to i) prioritise formulating and implementing clear targets, demanding executable national action plans with specific targets at various decision-making levels, ii) aid farmers in managing primary supply chain functions, such as processing, packaging, and transportation, which are currently dominated by larger wholesalers and service providers, and iii) keep in mind that complex contract and bidding interface between public procurers and farmers presents significant difficulties for farmers, including administrative burdens and the demand for high volumes of produce. The takeaways could help to overcome the barriers that currently hinder small-scale farmers from effectively participating in local sustainable public procurement initiatives.

3.2.1 Overcoming the barriers

It is essential to recognize that addressing just one or two barriers while neglecting others will not lead to effective results. Unless all relevant barriers are tackled through comprehensive changes, the outcomes are likely to fall short of expectations. For instance, if you allocated more resources to equip the kitchens with proper tools for handling fresh produce, without addressing the need for the kitchens staff capability and engagement transformation, it is most likely that not much would change. Thereby once more clarifying the need for a holistic approach that involves robust communication among the various stakeholders if the aim is to deliver substantial change. Such a holistic approach would require a strategy to address the complexity of procurement, short supply chain logistics, chef convenience, and value, training for the kitchen staff, political commitment, broad organisation

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engagement in sustainable food and farming, farmer training, and provision of data to enable farmers to respond to demand effectively.

3.3 Knowledge sharing and investigation of solutions

These interdependent challenges call for a more comprehensive and intensive exploration of potential solutions, the development of innovative tools, and enhanced collaboration among procurement officers who serve as exemplars in the field. For this reason, the Municipality of Copenhagen, COACH-project and COCOREADO project co-hosted a training event on the 18th of April 2023 with the title "Smart Innovation for Small-Scale Producers Accessing Markets". An overarching theme of the training event was sustainability and the search for key aspects of sustainability that could enable meaningful innovations for access of small producers to markets. The event included presentations from various actors and two visits to real-life examples of small-scale producers achieving public contracts, to increase the sustainability of public procurement, as well as incorporating small-scale producers into the supply chain.

Some of the conclusions and experiences discussed at the training were known from prior research on the topic, but some additional relevant examples of solutions and experiences will be further elaborated on in the following subchapters. One of the central topics was the possibility to change the form of food procurement from the traditional long lists of produce to a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).

3.3.1 New solutions, business to business and food hubs

Tina Storbjörk from Växjö, a municipality in Southern Sweden, contributed to the debate on a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) solution. In Växjö, the DPS is organised through a publicly funded transportation hub where suppliers can deliver their produce. The transportation hub is then responsible for distributing the food to various kitchens.

Tamara Bruning from Ghent, Belgium, shared her experience with short supply chain procurement and how she successfully focused on public tenders on fair trade and short supply chain products. Ghent has established a business-to-business platform, catering to restaurants and cafés, allowing small-scale farmers to provide contracts below the threshold. This platform handles all documentation, financial matters, and logistics and helps farmers substantially reduce their workload. As a result of this initiative, approximately 10% of vegetables are now supplied by small-scale farmers through an emphasis on specific criteria and fostering collaboration between producers and kitchens. Both Tamara Bruning and Tina Storbjörk stressed that this endeavour is very time-consuming for them as procurement officers. While the transformation into more sustainable procurement has yielded positive results, they both anticipated that obtaining more than 15% of the required greens from short supply chain providers might be challenging. This is mainly due to the time and resources involved in establishing contacts, managing various contracts, and coordinating between farmers, logistics, and kitchens.

Small-scale producers should be encouraged to supply food to the public sector as the contracts are stable and the demand is predictable. Furthermore, chefs must create menus that focus on seasonality and demand products of a certain quality.

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4. Closing the gap

Key Learnings

- Focus on supporting small-scale producers combined with specific criteria e.g., organic produce can yield several sustainability benefits.
- Dividing a tender into smaller lots can in some degree eliminate some barriers that inhibit small-scale farmer participation in public procurement, but contains the risk of being very time-consuming to handle for procurement officers.
- Dynamic Food Procurement aims to improve food procurement by acquiring a holistic approach, e.g. by promoting shorter and more transparent food supply chains and focusing on seasonality.
- Dynamic Purchasing System operates as a digital platform allowing suppliers to join at any time and it has been proven to increase the participation of small-scale producers.
- Regions and municipalities should prioritise opening local public food purchasing to small-scale farmers and focus on setting sustainability targets and roadmaps.
- To achieve the goals of the Farm-to-Fork strategy, public procurement should be divided into smaller lots, Dynamic Purchasing Systems should be implemented, and procurement officers should be better trained.
- Local facilitators should be established to assist farmers, foster collaboration between farmers, local public kitchens, and procurers, and evaluate the targeted sustainability levels.

Based on our research, one promising approach to enhancing sustainability lies in improving opportunities for small-scale producers to supply to public kitchens. In doing so, we suggest shifting away from a sole emphasis on "local food." While local sourcing is often advocated for its sometimes falsely presumed environmental benefits, it is essential to consider that contracting authorities are restricted from explicitly requesting local goods in contracts above the threshold, as per the EU directive.

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Instead, directing attention towards supporting small-scale producers can yield numerous sustainability benefits when combined with specific demands, such as e.g., an organic criterion. Prioritising organic produce can exemplify the positive impact of incorporating clear and measurable sustainability criteria. Nonetheless, we must address the challenges faced by small producers, who may find organic certification cost prohibitive. Implementing solutions to overcome this hurdle becomes crucial.

An indicator of a public body's commitment to sustainable development can be recognised through its approach to food procurement. By actively supporting and sourcing from small-scale producers, public entities can demonstrate their dedication to promoting sustainability in the food supply chain. Promoting the involvement of small-scale producers in public kitchens presents an opportunity to enhance overall sustainability. Rather than solely focusing on "local food," which poses limitations within EU regulations, incorporating clear and practical demands, like the organic criterion, can pave the way for meaningful progress. However, it remains essential to identify solutions for the challenges faced by small producers to ensure their active participation in sustainable food procurement.

4.1 New solutions

Implementation of Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) to advance Farm to Fork (F2F) targets is impossible without a novel approach to change the current purchasing systems and mindset. Present bureaucratic hurdles and the lack of essential primary supply chain functions, such as logistics and packaging, present insurmountable barriers for small-scale farmers seeking to participate in the public procurement bidding process. This preserves a vicious cycle that hinders the growth of rural economies through local public procurement initiatives. Innovative and pragmatic solutions for SPP are urgently required to effectively achieve the F2F targets. By fostering an environment that facilitates the engagement of small-scale farmers and overcoming existing challenges, sustainable public procurement can be utilised as a powerful tool to drive positive change in the food supply chain.

Dividing into smaller lots to promote small-scale farmers

- Smaller lots to lower barriers: legal and possible – but results in a lot of extra work for procurement officers e.g., Ghent and Växjö. But it is an excellent place to start and learn about the market and needed collaboration.
- A case in Bath and Northeast Sommerset Council, UK is an example of investing in the development of a digital platform that solves challenges for public procurement officers by incorporating the Dynamic Purchasing System (Dynamic Food Procurement, 2021).

4.1.1 Dynamic purchasing system

Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) has emerged as an innovative procedure in the public procurement of food, providing public sector entities with a versatile platform to identify suitable and qualified suppliers within the market. Unlike traditional public purchasing frameworks, the DPS operates as a digital platform that allows suppliers to join at any time throughout the year. This open submission timeframe grants small-scale producers greater flexibility, which is a key advantage over rigid tender deadlines that often inhibit their participation.

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Within the DPS, small-scale producers are actively encouraged to supply to public customers due to the system's adaptable nature. The application process is streamlined and digital, typically comprising simple yes or no questions that assess various qualification criteria and minimum requirements established by the buyer. The prompt feedback from the buyer allows for immediate adjustments and reapplication if the initial qualification is not met. When the buyer wants to conduct a more detailed tender, they are allowed to invite other participants from the DPS system. These invited suppliers are required to respond to additional questions related to quality and pricing, thereby facilitating the identification of the tender's winner.

For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the DPS is particularly attractive because of its flexibility. Often, multiple suppliers are contracted for a single tender, enabling the supply of smaller quantities, which enhances opportunities for SMEs. This overcomes challenges previously explained as barriers for small-scale farmers.

Introducing DPS represents a step towards improving accessibility for smaller bidders in the tender process. In many cases, the use of IT-based tools is a prerequisite for participating in the bidding process to address various EU and national regulations. The DPS system acts as a facilitator, reducing the complexities of bidding and contracting procedures for both procurers and suppliers. By engaging with previously qualified potential small suppliers, the DPS supports the objectives of regions and municipalities seeking to collaborate with small-scale businesses to enhance economic sustainability. This enables small-scale farmers, with limited tendering experience, to participate flexibly in the bid process through mini-competition processes. Educating procurers and producers on the use of the DPS system becomes an essential task for intermediaries who monitor the implementation of the system. The case only briefly noted above in Bath and North East Summerset Council is an example of a very advanced version of DPS, which both lowers the barriers for small scale farmers, lower the workload and complexity for both public procurement officers and the kitchens – and all of this without the need for dividing the tenders into smaller lots.

The adoption of DPS holds promise as a valuable tool to foster inclusivity and streamline procurement processes for small-scale producers, encouraging their active participation in public-sector food procurement.

4.2 Conclusion

Enhancing sustainable food procurement in the public sector requires a comprehensive approach encompassing national, regional, and municipal levels. To achieve this, the following recommendations are proposed**:**

1. Prioritise Sustainable Food Procurement:
Regions and municipalities can positively impact the local development of social and environmental sustainability prioritising sustainable food and opening the local public food purchasing to small-scale farmers. Municipalities and regions can strengthen farmers´ opportunities to distribute their produce in novel ways instead of depending on strong intermediaries most often deciding the price of their produce. They can focus on setting up national and municipal sustainability targets and a roadmap to

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reach the sustainability targets and interpreting the targets and roadmaps into concrete actions. Public procurement providing sustainable food supplied by small-scale farmers is included in the implementation of the F2F strategy. Policy objectives must be achieved through clear practice and ensure that EU recommendations are implemented at national, regional, and local levels.

To achieve these goals, a combination of strategies can be employed, including dividing contracts into smaller lots, implementing Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS) for increased supplier flexibility, providing adequate resources to procurement officers, and enhancing the procurement officers' understanding of the task at hand – developing the local market for sustainable food procurement.

2. Establish Local Facilitator Functions and Networks:

Given the complexity of sustainable food procurement, the establishment of local facilitators is recommended. These facilitators can take various forms, such as the Copenhagen House of Food, depending on local contexts. The primary roles of these facilitators are to assist farmers, foster collaboration between farmers, local public kitchens or catering service suppliers, and procurers, and evaluate the targeted sustainability levels.

The facilitators would be responsible for finding the locally suitable substituting procedures for the bidding system and for organising the required primary supply chain functions. This will require resources and co-operational skills to intermediate between farmers, procurers, kitchens, and politicians. Local facilitators should network nationally, regionally, and on the EU level to exchange novel innovations of the available possibilities to set up new supply chains for public food procurement and to bring together farmers and public kitchens. Local facilitators would need substantial knowledge of procurement and supply chain management. An important task of the facilitators would also be to promote and evaluate sustainability and support its further development.

In summary, by adopting these recommendations and embracing a holistic approach, regions, and municipalities can contribute significantly to the local development of social and environmental sustainability while promoting equitable opportunities for small-scale farmers and encouraging thriving and resilient local food systems. The commitment to concrete actions aligned with EU recommendations will move us toward a future with increased sustainable public procurement of food.

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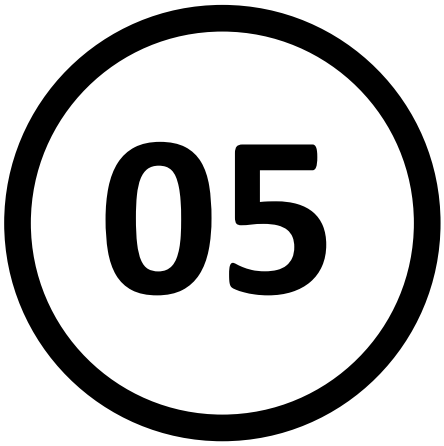

5. Annex: GPP cases

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European Commission

GPP In practice

Issue no. 93
December 2019

Increasing the share of organic food in public canteens – one egg at a time

City of Växjö (Sweden)

Background

The City of Växjö is a midsized city of 93 000 inhabitants, located in the Swedish province Kronobergs län. It has strong ambitions to achieve sustainability goals in all sectors. Växjö first committed to becoming a fossil fuel free city in 1996, which it aims to achieve by 2030. It was also one of the first municipalities in Europe to sign up to the Covenant of Mayors, and in 2018 it was awarded the European Green Leaf Award in recognition of its environmental achievements.

Image: Unsplash / Jakub Kapusnak

The city is responsible for food purchases to provide schools, pre-schools and nursery homes with daily meals. One of Växjö's environmental goals is to increase the share of organically produced food to at least 80% by 2020 while also reducing transport and packaging associated with food production and delivery.

Procurement objectives

Växjö has already invested in measures that enable procurers to choose organic options in as many product categories as possible when ordering food. For example, it introduced an electronic procurement system, which is used for all purchases regardless of product category. Suppliers can mark organic products with a green symbol to make it easy for staff to find and choose organic options. It has also set up a consolidation centre to distribute the food within the municipality, after it has been delivered by the suppliers. This approach makes the transport of food more efficient and thus less CO_2 intense.

In addition, in order to encourage smaller suppliers to bid for public food contracts, Växjö has chosen to split up the supply of meat and eggs from other wholesale food products. In early 2019, the city published a call for tender specifically for the supply of eggs. The tender covered a supply of about 69,000 kg of eggs, based on past demand. The tender was divisible – bidders could choose to submit bids that only cover some of the sub-municipalities demand, and several suppliers could win the tender.

Criteria used

Subject matter of the contract:

The supply of eggs for the city of Växjö and its sub-municipalities.

Selection criteria:

The tender process was divided in two stages. During the qualification stage bids were evaluated based on their eligibility to participate in the tender. Bidders had to meet the formal criteria to participate, and needed to prove their financial, technical and professional capacity.

As a proof of technical capacity, bidders needed to include a brief description of their capacity to meet the needs of the contracting authority under the conditions set out in the procurement document, and include an overview of the professional ability of the staff working on the contract.

All tenders that met the formal criteria were allowed on to the evaluation stage.

Technical specifications:

Tenderers had to meet all criteria listed in the technical specifications:

- The offered products needed to comply with all European and Swedish regulations on food packaging, labelling, safety and quality
- Products must have two thirds of their shelf life remaining upon delivery
- Bidders needed to provide proof of origin, indicating the country in which the eggs are produced
- Eggs have to meet the criteria of Regulation (EC) 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products, which could be verified with a certification system that meets this requirement, e.g. the EU Organic Production Certificate
- The eggs have to come from laying hens that do not receive feed containing synthetic dyes
- Laying hens cannot be subject to beak trimming (this requirement also includes the parent generation)
- The use of antibiotics for purposes other than the treatment of illness is not allowed, and any use of antibiotics needs to be documented
- In addition to the requirement for organic production, bidders also needed to ensure the following:
  - Chickens should be able to stay outside for most of the day for at least four consecutive months between May and September. The stall must be open at least 12 hours a day
  - Chickens should have access to overgrown pasture
  - Chickens should be able to sand (a natural behaviour for self-cleaning), for example outdoors or in a bed.
  - Laying hens need to have access to outdoor play during most of the day during the summer.

"Using the consolidation centre has reduced the number of all food and other deliveries from 1900 to 350 per week."

Award criteria:

The tender was awarded to the lowest bidder. Bidders could choose to bid for the entire tender or several lots within the tender. The lots were divided by sub-municipalities within the Municipality of Växjö. For each sub-municipality, the contracting authority could award up to three suppliers until the target volume for the supply of eggs was met.

Results

The City of Växjö received one bid for this tender. The low number of bids is was due to the immature supplier market, who in part lack the skills to bid in public tenders. The bidder, Växjö Partiaffär AB, was able to meet the selection criteria as well as the technical specifications and was therefore awarded the contract. The supplier committed to supplying 100% organically produced eggs and to fulfil the additional conditions as set out in the tender documents. The contract was awarded for a duration of two years. The supplier has to verify compliance with these conditions by showing that they have a quality management system that is in line with i.e. the Swedish "Svenska Egg" Animal Care Programme, as well as proof by means of certification that shows that the requirements are met. This can be certification such as the Swedish "KRAV organic" or equivalent. Contract performance will also be checked by regular visits to the egg supplier to collect samples. In addition, the supplier needs to supply monthly statistics about the purchases made by the City of Växjö.

The contract value is about 7 million Swedish crowns (over €661,000) for the entire contract, for about 69,560 kg of eggs per year (or around €0.28 per egg). This number can vary based on the actual amount of food ordered.

Environmental impacts

As a result, not only of this tender but of a wider procurement approach to increase the share of organically produced food, in 2018, the City of Växjö achieved a share of 42% organically produced products offered in public school, pre-school and nursing home canteens. Including other egg supply contracts, which do not yet supply 100% organically produced eggs, the total supply of eggs for the city of Växjö will be about 82% organic as of 2020.

Organically produced food is associated with a range of environmental and health benefits. It promotes the responsible use of energy and natural resources, contributes to maintaining biodiversity, enhances soil fertility, and can contribute to enhanced water quality.

The eggs, as well as other food procured by the city of Växjö and its sub-municipalities are transported to a local food consolidation centre, which the city uses to distribute food locally. Using the consolidation centre has reduced the number of all food and other deliveries from 1900 to 350 per week. The city estimates that 175 tonnes of CO_2 emission savings have also resulted from this approach, in combination with using a high quality transport car fleet fuelled with Hidrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), a synthetic diesel fuel which lowers CO_2 emissions further.

Lessons learned

Throughout the process of greening their food offer, the City of Växjö has learned that it is possible to use procurement to achieve sustainability goals. They realised that innovative tender procedures can be used to encourage smaller food producers to submit bids, while increasing the share of organic food offered. However, for this tender, only one bid by a major supplier was received. The city concluded that for upcoming tenders they should be more informative, write simpler tenders, and have more dialog with smaller suppliers.

The Municipality also realised that it is key to support their own procurers in making greener decisions by providing accessible information about products, which is currently achieved by marking them with a green sign in the electronic ordering system. This helps support the municipality's goal to increase the share of organic food products to up to 80% in the coming years.

The City of Växjö is also planning to put a second consolidation centre into operation to reduce food transport related CO_2 emissions as much as possible.

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For related information, please see the new European GPP criteria for Food and Catering.

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL, SCOTLAND

Procurement objectives

East Ayrshire Council is responsible for 44 primary and nine secondary schools, offering approximately 1.3m school meals per year. A contract was advertised in 2008 to cover the supply of food and beverages to 30 schools for a period of up to three years. The objectives were to transform the menus on offer to reduce reliance on processed food and ensure good nutritional standards. At the same time, reductions in packaging and a switch to organic produce were intended to reduce the environmental impact of school meals.

Background

The Hungry for Success initiative aimed to promote healthy eating in Scotland's schools through improved nutritional standards and a more integrated approach to school meals as part of the learning experience. East Ayrshire was one of the first councils in the UK to change its procurement practices to reflect the Soil Association's guidelines on sustainable food.

This focuses on reducing processed food, organic agriculture, using fresh ingredients and implementing nutritional standards and education programmes for schoolchildren. The Council has also taken steps to green other contracts, as set out in its procurement strategy.

Criteria used

The restricted procedure was used and the contract was divided into nine lots for the supply of meat, poultry, fish, fruit, vegetables, milk, eggs, cheese and dried/bottled goods.

Subject matter of the contract:
Supply and delivery of fresh/organic foodstuffs.

Technical specifications: Bidders are required to submit method statements detailing their approach to all aspects of supply, including:

- Organic certification
- Compliance with animal welfare standards (where relevant)
- HACCP systems or clear details of sourcing
- Production and transport arrangements

Award criteria:
Most economically advantageous tender in terms of:

- Net price – 50 %
- Ability to supply to deadline – 15%
- Quality and range of foods – 15%
- Food handling arrangements and facilities – 10%
- Use of resources – 10%

The evaluation of 'use of resources' looked at the suppliers' proposals for reduction in environmental impacts; contribution to sustainable development and biodiversity; minimising packaging; minimising waste; recycling and composting; and higher than minimum animal welfare standards.

Results

Following selection of tenderers, the number of offers received ranged from one to four per lot. Although the number of tenderers were low in some categories the standard and level of commitment to higher quality standards and ethical and environmental improvement was evident. One successful bidder initially did not have the required organic certification, but provided a commitment to do this and quickly adapted their supply chain and storage to meet the requirements.

The total value of all lots is approximately £400,000 (€480,000) per annum. Increased comparative costs were observed against alternative contracts that did not take the ethical and environmental requirements into account, however this has been mitigated partly by reviewing the menus and sales mix offered. It was also noted that the higher quality meat resulted in less being required in the menu and fewer off cuts of meat being wasted.

Research also established that taking a wider perspective and examining the social return on investment identified that for every £1 spent through this approach brought up to £6 back to the local community through employment, environmental, health and social benefits. As of 2011, over 90% of the food used for school meals is fresh and unprocessed and 30% is organic. At least 70% is sourced locally, although this was not a requirement under the tender. The uptake of school meals has also increased since the introduction of the strategy – contrary to a national trend downwards.

Environmental impacts

Food production has a massive impact in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, soil and water pollution, depletion of natural resources and biodiversity. The effects of industrial agriculture using pesticides and the production of meat in particular are carbon-intensive. Switching to organic agriculture, less processed food and minimising food waste can all help to reduce this burden. East Ayrshire's approach incorporated all these elements, and the food items used also have a shorter distance to travel. Independent research carried out by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency indicated that the CO_2 emission savings associated with the change in food sourcing for one school alone amounts to 37.7 tonnes per annum.

Lessons learned

As the contract involved smaller, local producers and distributors the direct relationship allowed improved cooperation. With a narrow product list per supplier quality, consistency and reliability proved better. This was evident both at the individual school kitchen level and in overall contract management. Overall satisfaction levels were high and further improvements were implemented by suppliers following encouragement to work towards SALSA accreditation.

In 2011-2012 East Ayrshire is repeating the tender process. This will include greater discussions with a wider number of suppliers prior to tender on the strategy and the process. The tender criteria and aspects of the evaluation will be adapted to more clearly identify requirements and guidance provided by the Soil Association's Food for Life Standard. It will also aim to establish a further commitment to consider improvements and identify benefits through all aspects of farm to fork process with an emphasis on supporting educational, health and social outcomes.

East Ayrshire participated in the Scottish Government's National Food and Drink Leadership Forum, leading to a policy on sustainable food procurement in hospitals, schools and prisons, which was approved with cross-party support in 2009. East Ayrshire was also the winner of an Association for Public Service Excellence award in 2011.

For more information, please see European GPP criteria for Food and Catering Services.
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European Commission

GPP In practice

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Wholesaler of sustainable food for schools and elderly care homes

City of Helsingborg (Sweden)

Background

The City of Helsingborg is located on Sweden's southern coast, with about 108 000 inhabitants. The city purchases food for the whole region, focusing on providing organic and good quality food to its citizens. Helsingborg is also working on reducing food waste and increasing the share of vegetables. Their ambition is to halve their climate impact from food consumption between 2018 and 2024.

Image: Pexels / Magda Ehlers

Procurement objectives

In 2016, Helsingborg needed a wholesaler who could provide €690,000 (60 million Swedish kroners) worth of food for schools and nursing homes. They used an open procedure for a framework agreement with an initial duration of two years - October 2016 to 2018 - with the opportunity to be extended for two further years.

The City of Helsingborg has set a general target of serving a minimum of 40% eco-labelled food in public institutions (in cost terms). Each user of the framework agreement, however, acts as its own contracting authority, selecting the food that they want to serve from the list of approved products displayed on the wholesalers' webshop. The City wanted to ensure that the wholesaler was capable of providing sustainably certified food (i.e. organic or responsible produced palm oil), which is nutritious, ethical, and delivered in packaging that would be easy to recycle.

Criteria used

Subject matter of the contract: Food wholesaler for schools and nursing homes

Technical specifications:

A range of environmental requirements was included as technical specifications, including:

- All organic products provided should fulfil the requirements in the regulation (EC) 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products, with verification given to the procuring organisation.

  Verification: Certificate or equivalent showing that the product is approved by KRAV or controlled by an EU inspection body or by a body approved as equivalent to EU inspection bodies in accordance with Regulations EC 882/2004 and 889/2008 on organic production, should be sent promptly to the buyer upon request.

- The food packaging should be easy to recycle. If additional costs apply for one-time use packaging, this price must be included.

- Transport of food to the inner city can only be carried out by vehicles fulfilling the criteria for the city`s environmental zone. This zone imposes emissions requirements on heavy vehicles (over 3.5 tons), passenger cars, buses and light trucks that operate in the central city. Heavy vehicles must, as a minimum, meet emission standards of Euro V or Euro IV with retrofitted equipment, and light trucks must fulfil the emission standard Euro 5. If new heavy vehicles/ light trucks are purchased during the contract, emissions standard Euro VI / Euro 6 is required.

  Verification: The supplier should be able to present a list of registration numbers for the vehicles that will be used for the delivery, one month before the start of the contract. During the contract, the city may request that the supplier submit an updated list every 6 months. The list shall indicate which vehicles have been newly acquired.

- Products containing palm oil should be responsibly produced in line with the Swedish agency for public procurement`s 'Spearhead Criteria' on certified palm oil, which states that fats from palm oil used in products **must be produced** in a manner that satisfies the following:

  - Fair working conditions[1]
  - Protection of local peoples' land, rights and influence
  - Protection of primary forest and against the conversion of HCV (High Conservation Values) areas.
  - Wildlife protection on the plantations

  Compliance is assured through a separated value chain (principle Segregated[2] or Identity Preserved[3])

  Verification: Certification system that meets the above requirements, e.g. Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) Segregated or Identity Preserved, KRAV- certified or equivalent

"For success on your sustainability goals, you need to have political ambitions, the engagement of the kitchens and time to approach the issues in a broad way."

- Products branded as ethically produced in the offered product list should be produced in accordance with the rights and standards of the ILO and UN, and working conditions in the country of origin.

Requirements for transparent supply chain and animal welfare were also included:

- Information about which country the animals were bred in, slaughtered and processed is required for food products containing more than 10 % meat, and should be delivered upon request.
- Information about country of origin and production site for dairy products, eggs, fish and vegetables, and for products containing more than 20 % milk products, should be delivered upon request.
- All fresh eggs should come from free range hens, labelled in accordance with regulation 557/2007/EC.
- The transport time of animals for slaughter should be a maximum of 8 hours (12 hours for chickens).
- Requirements were also set for the usage of antibiotics, treatment of the animals and living conditions (including cage size, number of animals per m^2, restrictions on cruel practices etc.).

During the evaluation of the tenders and during the contract period, the tenderer and supplier must be able to submit a written declaration (supplier's self-declaration) showing that each individual product meets the requirements.

For contract management, the right to carry out local control of the requirements was included in the tender.

1 Minimum compliance with ILO's core conventions on forced labour, child labour, discrimination, freedom of association and right to organize (numbers 29, 87, 98, 100, 105, 111, 138 and 182) as well as the UN Declaration on Human Rights.

2 Sustainable palm oil from different certified sources is kept separate from ordinary palm oil throughout supply chain.

3 Sustainable palm oil from a single identifiable certified source is kept separate from ordinary palm oil throughout supply chain.

Selection criteria:

Tenderers should have an environmental management system like EMAS, EN ISO 14001 or equivalent.

Verification:
- Environmental policy
- Routines for constantly improving environmental measures
- Procedures to ensure compliance with laws and regulations

The contract was awarded based on lowest-price for the total of offered food products.

Results

The City of Helsingborg sees market engagement as an ongoing process; it has close contact with the market before and during the contract period. Based on the feedback they receive before a tender, the procurement team decides together with the organisations that are going to use the contract, which criteria to include in the tender. They do not want to set too low or too high demands to avoid excluding suppliers, or that the contract would be too expensive for the organisations. As a result of the market engagement before this food procurement, the procurers knew that they could include their desired sustainability criteria in the tender, and that the suppliers would be able to reach their organic food target.

Three bids were received for the contract, and all of them fulfilled the specified requirements in the tender. The framework agreement was extended by two years, running from 2016 to 2020.

Environmental impacts

By requiring organic food, the hazardous impacts from pesticides and stress on agricultural land are reduced. To ensure that the internal goal of 40 % organic food (in cost terms) is achieved, the amount of organic food ordered by the schools and elderly care homes is measured every four months. This percentage is calculated by dividing the value of purchased organic food by the total value of purchased food. In 2018, 45 % of the food provided was organic (higher than the city's target). The city of Helsingborg also demands certificated palm oil to make sure that its procurement does not contribute to deforestation and loss of biodiversity, and due to its requirements on ethically produced food, the supplier now provides Fairtrade certified bananas, cacao, tea and coffee.

Delivery of food contributes to local emissions. By including requirements for the transport of food, local air quality was improved as a result of reduced emissions from vehicles, while the supplier was encouraged to improve its transport fleet. And as it was specified that food packaging was recyclable, an overall reduction in the waste sent to landfill was also achieved.

More generally, Helsingborg has also began measuring the food disposed of in schools everyday in order to continuously reduce food waste. In 2019 they achieved a reduction of 40 % compared to 2017.

They are also working on reducing the CO_2-emissions from food used in the schools by reducing the amount of meat and setting up climate-friendly menus based on **RISE Climate Database**, in addition to reducing food waste. The goal of reducing the CO_2-emissions to 1.5 CO_2-eq/kg purchased food was achieved in 2019. Now, they are aiming to reach the target set in Helsingborg`s Climate and Environmental plan of 1.1 CO_2-eq /kg food.

Lessons learned

Over the last eight years, the City of Helsingborg has been using its procurement of food more strategically. The city has a Food Controller that controls the quality of the food, who is in contact with the schools and elderly homes almost every day. For monitoring their food procurement, Helsingborg has a dedicated person responsible for follow up of all contracts on food, with a total value of 10 million Euro.

For success on your sustainability goals, you need to have political ambitions, the engagement of the kitchens and time to approach the issues in a broad way. The employees in the kitchens receive training on how to make climate friendly food and how food waste can be minimised. You cannot focus on eco-labelling without thinking of quality or costs, you cannot focus on costs without thinking of nutrition content, and so on. While there are some differences in the price of organic food, actions such as reducing the total amount of meat served can reduce overall price increases, while also having environmental impacts. It is important to focus on how the contracts function on a daily basis in the kitchens, not only during the procurement phase.

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For related information, please see European GPP criteria for Food Catering services and vending machines and the Technical Background Report.

Sustainable food procurement for schools in Rome

MUNICIPALITY OF ROME, ITALY

Procurement objectives

The objective behind Rome's approach is to support organic agriculture and organic food chains, ensure food safety and nutritional balance, and encourage good environmental performance of current and potential suppliers, through its school meal service.

Since 2001, Rome has employed an incremental approach to designing its food and catering tenders and its food service, to gradually make these more sustainable and innovative. The most recent call for tender for the school food service covers the period September 2007 – June 2012 and has a base value of approximately €355 million.

Background

One million organic meals are served in Italian schools annually - a quarter of the total number of school meals (source: Italian Association of Organic Farming).

In Rome, the All for Quality food programme has been in place since 2001. In January 2010, Rome's Council adopted a decision on GPP for food and canteens. More than 144,000 meals are served daily across 550 nurseries, primary and secondary schools. 92% of the meals are prepared on site with 69% of them including organic food. A vast number of nutritionists and dieticians advise and monitor the service, which also counts on the involvement of canteen commissions comprised of parents and school canteen staff.

Criteria used

The latest tender published for Rome's school catering service (covering preparation, cooking, serving meals, cleaning and waste separation) included the following sustainability and quality criteria:

Technical specifications:

Non-food minimum criteria:

- Non-food and food waste to be separated for collection
- Detergents and sanitisers with a low environmental impact to be used
- Single use material (e.g. napkins) must be biodegradable and recyclable; use of ceramic plates and tableware, glass, and stainless steel for cutlery

Food minimum criteria:

- Food stemming from organic agriculture according to Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 for bread, legumes, cereals, olive oil, pasta and rice, cheese, fruit and vegetables, for example
- Ban on the inclusion of genetically modified food for the catering service or for animal feed
- "Guaranteed freshness" criterion for fruit and vegetables (e.g. chard, endives, celery, basil, green salad, strawberries and cherries) with no more than three days between harvest and intake. Products are required to be marked with information provided about the harvesting firm, harvesting date and the site of the food processing centre
- Meat freshness: Red and white meats delivered in vacuum sealed packs within four days of packaging. Introduction of 'protected denomination of origin' or 'protected geographical indication' products for meat (beef, pork, lamb, cold meats and some cheese) in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006
- Seasonality based on Rome's seasons, which are used as a basis for designing recipes and menu planning. Winter and summer menus are designed based on nine-week cycles using 160 different recipes. Meat is served twice a week (maximum) to further reduce the environmental impacts of the food service

The basis price is calculated at €5.28 per meal.

Award criteria

Contracts were awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender, whereby points were allocated according to the following:

- Economic offer (price of the meal): 51 points
- Technical offer (adaptation and improvement of kitchens and canteens, staff training, provision of products from social cooperatives, working to preserve "freshness guaranteed" criterion, etc): 49 points

Food produced according to fair trade principles (as defined by the European Parliament Resolution on Fair Trade and Development A6-0207/2006 approved July 6, 2006) such as bananas, chocolate and biscuits also form part of Rome's menus.

The framework of the contract divides Rome's municipal territory into 11 lots to encourage SMEs to tender.

Results

Organic food accounts for 69% of all food served in schools, except meat, fish and cold cuts. The switch to organic has raised the average cost of a meal by 8% (that is €0.40). Rome's approach has improved the market in terms of sustainability and quality. Companies are now aware that they face a public administration which requires strict compliance with all the requirements specified in tenders – they therefore take the bidding process very seriously and are encouraged to improve their own performance. Suppliers were able to meet the criteria and standards in the tendering process. The evaluation of bids was complex and support was needed from expert members of staff, but eventually achieved good results.

Environmental impacts

The impacts of industrial farming and food production are highlighted and recognised as having a massive environmental impact in the EU (EIPRO study, 2006), where this area of consumption is considered responsible for 20-30% of the various environmental impacts of total consumption, and in the case of eutrophication for more than 50%. Within this area of consumption, meat and meat products (including meat, poultry, sausages or similar) have the greatest environmental impact (4-12% contribution to global warming), followed by dairy products.

According to information about the life-cycle analysis of different types of meat, Rome estimates that 1kg of meat served in their schools accounts for 14kg of $C0_2$ equivalents. Based on the amount of meat served in Roman schools (maximum of twice a week), savings of approximately 8,887 tonnes of $C0_2$ equivalents are achieved in an annual school year. Savings in water consumption associated with the reduced consumption of meat are estimated at 5,783 m^3 annually. Plastic plates and other serving utensils were previously used to serve meals. These are now replaced with earthenware and other reusable material, resulting in savings estimated at 1,800 tonnes of plastic over an annual school year.

Lessons learned

In terms of monitoring, municipal dieticians carry out quality checks of the food on a daily basis to ensure that the terms of the contract are continuously respected. Moreover, another contract was made for monitoring in schools and has been awarded to two private laboratories which analyse some 15 samples of food and foodstuffs on a daily basis. Extending the school food practice to other public canteens (e.g. prisons, hospitals) in Rome is under consideration. The principles on which the latest contract is based will remain the same for future contracts.

For more information, please see European GPP criteria for Food and Catering Service and Background Report.
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European Commission

GPP In practice

Issue no. 47
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Calculating the environmental impact of catering services
City of Helsinki, Finland

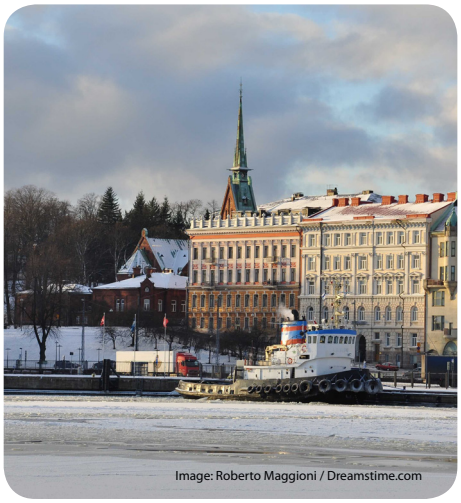
Image: Roberto Maggioni / Dreamstime.com

Background

Palmia catering services, a municipal enterprise owned by the City of Helsinki, provides catering services to the cities' schools, daycare centers, staff restaurants, hospitals, social service centers, retirement communities, and also delivers warm meals to homes. The catering service serves approximately 22 million meals per year.

During the course of the City of Helsinki's Culinary Culture strategy in 2010, the City realised that the global food chain has a much higher impact on climate than traffic and logistics. As a result, the "Responsible Meal 2012-15" project was launched. Calculating the CO_2 emissions of the catering services of the City was part of this project. The overall aim of this multidisciplinary project is to raise awareness of the climate impact of food amongst Helsinki's and Palmia's food service customers, stakeholders, and personnel.

Development of approach

Senior management from both Palmia and the City of Helsinki's environmental center were involved in the project steering group, and involved in delegating and providing contact information for data collection. Particularly when there was no data available, experienced experts from Palmia were able to provide qualified approximations.

Additional resources and expertise that contributed to the project were:
- Palmia employees (from the operational level, as well as planning and strategic departments)
- Helsinki Environment Center (for general Helsinki climate information, environmental strategies and general expertise)
- City of Helsinki, Procurement centre
- Agrifood Research Finland (MTT), The Finnish Environmental Institute (SYKE) and the Food Information Association (Ruokatietory) experts contributed to the work (e.g. in the steering group and providing feedback and comments)
- Natural Interest Ltd was responsible for the CO_2 calculations, visualizations, and calculation platform (Footprinter.com)

The suppliers of Palmia Catering were not directly involved in the work. Part of the information as regards food procurement came from Palmia's ERP system's (Aromi) recipe database, and part was directly requested from suppliers.

Implementation of approach

Calculation of the City of Helsinki's food services' climate impact was the first step in the entire food chain climate impact evaluation. The calculation boundaries were set based on the international GHG protocol (control approach), adding the following criteria:
- Possibility to determine the best information sources
- Possibility to repeat the data collection without bigger resource needs or investments
- Data availability in the necessary format for calculation (compatible with CO_2 factor data)

The process of turning food procurement information into a carbon footprint: data from food service suppliers –> procurements statistics –> consumption data (kg/year) –> emission factors (kg CO2e) –> carbon footprint.

The CO_2 calculation was based on:
1. Food procurement
2. Direct energy consumption of food production
3. Internal logistics

Energy consumption was estimated by scaling the actual data from earlier research, and the quality was satisfactory. The quality of logistics

data was good, for it was based on the actual kilometers, transportation vehicles used, and the data collected during this project. Each one of the information sources was evaluated systematically so that the further development of a calculation was simple and transparent. The calculation tool used was a cloud based service called Footprinter.com that is developed by the consultant's partners.

Approach Results/Outcomes

Anticipated outcomes:

- Decrease in the climate impact of the City of Helsinki's/Palmia's food services (Helsinki Culinary culture strategy 2010). The City of Helsinki will use the results of this study, to procure catering services which produce less CO_2 emissions and have a lower environmental impact in future.
- Increased awareness of the carbon footprint of an average meal; understanding the largest emission sources of the food services value chain.
- Development of CO_2 as an indicator and an action plan on how to decrease the climate impact of food services; strategic decision-making to decrease the climate impact of the food services value chain.
- Communication as regards the climate impact of City of Helsinki's/Palmia's food services.

Catering services encompass a wide range of activities, stakeholders and information. In addition, the decision making process is multidimensional. This means that no single action or directive will reduce the carbon footprint, but rather a series of interrelated activities. The available information needed to calculate the carbon footprint calculation was relatively disjointed, so it was not possible to define one single indicator for the climate impact of Palmia catering services.

Food purchasing and ingredients were responsible for the largest proportion of the carbon footprint (58%). Of this, 35% came from meat and 46% from dairy products. Direct energy consumption accounted for 41% of the carbon footprint. Logistics accounted for only 1% of the whole. Although it was difficult to define "average" meal for the catering services, the carbon footprint per meal was calculated at 1.1kg CO_2 emissions, with contained the main raw materials. This "average" meal varied from lunch at a school, to a breakfast in a retirement community.

In order to access the impact of this study, the CO_2 emissions not only of the kitchen needed to be taken in consideration, but rather for the full decision and planning processes, including procurement, contract terms and conditions, and long term guidelines (i.e. strategies, city council decisions).

Lessons learned

- Carbon footprint is an indicator that provides information on how to proceed towards various goals - not a goal in itself. There should always be some follow-up and clear targets that guide the climate work, i.e. a calculation or indicator is not enough. These targets should be aligned with the other targets and strategies that apply to CO_2 related work, such as political strategies and organic food quotas.
- The focus of carbon footprint work should be on long-term strategic sustainability goals, not just on the immediate facts (such as in this case the carbon footprint per an average meal). This is the only way to get real advantage of the work, and make it "produce" fun facts (for communication, campaigns, etc.) down the line, not just as a result of a project.
- A multidisciplinary, systems approach is needed to integrate CO_2 work to larger actions and strategies. This means that a wide range of experts is needed to provide input on what is relevant and what is outside the scope of the project. Also (preferably) a visual working method for an efficient sharing of understanding is valuable (e.g. MEI diagrams, flowcharts of the procurement process, understanding the decision making system and customer feedback loops).
- Several indicators are recommended to be used (CO_2/meal, CO_2/kg, CO_2/kcal etc.), so the follow-up will be easier (these are developed in Helsinki).
- An easily achievable databank/statistics of raw materials, energy consumption, customers, etc. eases the calculation a great deal.
- An effectiveness and reality analysis of different measures could be a good way to proceed towards the goals of reducing carbon footprint in a real life situation (one of next phases for Helsinki).

For more information, please see European GPP criteria for Food and Catering.
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European Commission

GPP In practice

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Monitoring low carbon, sustainable catering services

City of Turin, Italy

Image: Alessio Maffeis / Flickr / CC BY 2.0

Background

The City of Turin, located in the north-western Piedmont region in Italy, has a population of just over 900,000 people. The City Administration employs almost 11,000 people and is strongly committed to becoming a 'smarter' city, fostering sustainable, intelligent and inclusive urban growth. The City joined the Covenant of Mayors in 2009 and then developed Turin's Action Plan for Energy the following year. In 2011, the City's 'Smart City Initiative' was launched - a new innovation policy framework for sustainable, energy, environment, planning, mobility and ICT, achieved through social cohesion and innovation.

In 2013, the City of Turin and its Smart City Foundation launched a strategic planning process. Together with a technical partner, they produced 'Smart Mobility Inclusion Life & Health and Energy' (SMILE) - Turin's Smart City Master Plan, identifying 45 actions to be implemented in the short to medium term, together with relevant KPIs to measure its impact. One specific area of focus in the Master Plan was to achieve low carbon school catering services.

School catering represents a significant part of the procurement budget for the City of Turin. Approximately 8 million meals are delivered annually, with a total value of approximately 40 million EUR per year. The school catering services present an opportunity to educate children on sustainability policies, as the Turin School system (kindergarten and primary schools) includes about 71,500 children between the ages 0-13 years. Taking into consideration the teachers and families of these children, between 230-250,000 citizens are affected by the school catering services.

Sustainable, low carbon catering

The current school catering service began in September 2013 and will continue until August 2016 with the possibility of extension for a further two years. The procurement for the overall school catering service is subdivided into eight lots, with each lot covering a different geographical area in Torino. The lots were awarded to three different suppliers.

Turin introduced a number of measures and included various criteria into their current school catering contract aiming to reduce the associated carbon footprint. These included energy efficient appliances bought for schools, the utilization of mains tap water, the use of low environmental impact transport and a significant reduction in packaging and waste. Bidders were encouraged to favour low environmental impact packaging, including reusable, refillable or biodegradable products. One requirement for contractors to shift from using plastic to reusable dishes will result in an estimated reduction of 157 tonnes/year of plastic waste - as this criterion was applied to over five million meals delivered annually.

Management of separate collection of waste material had to be provided at each production or distribution unit, beyond mandated waste management regulations and a procedure had to be put in place so that, where appropriate, waste food could be redistributed to consumption as part of social projects in the city.

Additional criteria were used to lessen other sustainability impacts associated with the catering contract, such as requiring the use of ecological cleaning products and awarding points for bidders offering a wider range of organic or fair trade products than were specifically requested.

Approach to monitoring

In order to ensure that the City was on track to achieve a low carbon catering service and to identify areas for continuous improvement, Turin made the decision to monitor its current catering contract and evaluate the carbon footprint of the school catering service. Senior management from the School Catering Department and the EU policies and Innovation Department were involved in defining the

scope of these activities. Expert scientific advice was required to define the methodology and to undertake the calculation of the carbon footprint. A scientific study was then commissioned and the service was awarded to the University of Torino.

The study focuses on the calculation of the carbon footprint of the main environmental aspects of the catering services provided to schools in the City of Turin. Suppliers were involved in order to provide relevant data for the calculation system. The cooperation with suppliers worked very well.

The carbon footprint calculation methodology uses a LCA approach (according to the guidelines and recommendations of the ISO 14040 series), expressing the quantity of CO_2 equivalent (a harmonized unit for all molecules that contribute to climate change) released, directly and indirectly, during all stages of the system under examination. From a LCA point of view, the carbon footprint corresponds to the impact category known as 'global warming potential'.

The carbon footprint of five of the most commonly consumed food products (potatoes, carrots, apples, pears and peaches) was calculated as part of a pilot exercise to test the use of the calculator. In these five supply chains, the production processes accounted for between 75% and 95% of the total carbon footprint, revealing the significance of agricultural practices. In fact, during the school year 2013/2014 for just these five products, the requirement to provide food from integrated and organic production resulted in a reduction of 66.1 tCO_2 equivalent (about -26% of the carbon footprint of the whole supply chain of these five products) compared with providing the same amount of food from conventional agricultural systems. Interestingly, the transportation of these five foods, from the farm gate to the table, accounted for between 5% and 25% of the carbon footprint. Emissions from urban transportation, were in all five cases less than 1% of the carbon footprint. This highlights that GPP measures applied in this part of the supply chain have less of an impact on reducing GHG emissions than other aspects.

Future development

The first results of the study on calculating the carbon footprint of the catering services were presented at a public event in Turin on the 19 November 2014, which was attended by various stakeholders from the school catering supply chain. The reactions from various stakeholders were positive and as a result the introduction of GPP criteria for e.g. packaging, cleaning products, paper, transport will be further developed and utilised.

In the future, depending also on budget availability, the City will decide whether to apply this evaluation model more widely, to calculate the entire environmental footprint (ecological, carbon, water) of the catering service. This will take into consideration the full process, from the procurement of raw materials, to the preparation, distribution, and delivery of meals, to the disposal and removal of waste. Within the INNOCAT - Procurement of Eco-innovative Catering project, the City will monitor and calculate the carbon footprint of the actual contract and will work to redesign the school catering service towards a "zero emission model". This will be carried out with the view to not only reduce environmental impacts and improve efficiency, but also to make the service more socially responsible Turin sees that potential benefits could be achieved by aggregating demand for low carbon catering solutions with metropolitan local authorities and other public institutions in the Piedmont region.

The City of Turin emphasises the importance of baselining emissions before implementing new GPP requirements within catering tenders, so that other public authorities wishing to undertake a similar approach can see the impact that green public procurement can make on the carbon footprint of such services.

European Commission

GPP In practice

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Procuring healthy and sustainable vegetables for Vienna's nursing homes

City of Vienna (Austria)

Background


Image: Unsplash / Arnaldo Aldana

The City of Vienna's Sustainable Procurement Programme (SPP), Ökokauf Wien, began as a project in 1998 involving the cooperation of various departments and services of the City administration. Over 20 years later, it continues to be one of the main drivers of Vienna's Climate Protection Programme (KliP Wien), which was enacted in 1999 and updated at the end of 2009.

An important, early action of KliP Wien was setting an "organic quota", which required at least 30% of all food purchased (based on the quantity purchased) for public canteens and events in the city of Vienna to come from organic agriculture. In several areas, the share of organic products has been raised above the minimum of 30%, including in nursing homes, where currently about 35% of products are organic.

The City of Vienna prepares about 100,000 meals every day for kindergartens, schools, medical and nursing facilities and home delivery for pensioners. ÖkoKauf Wien's criteria are applied in the procurement of food products. The City's aim is to continuously develop these criteria in terms of sustainability.

Procurement objectives

In 2019, the City of Vienna needed to award a new framework contract for the supply and delivery of "earthy vegetables", referring to vegetables growing directly in or on the soil, to supply the city-run nursing homes. A call for tender was published for the supply of vegetables to 31 nursing homes.

With this procurement, the City wanted to encourage food sustainability along the entire supply chain, from production to delivery. This included requiring the seedlings to be certified as organic, to encourage suppliers to grow young plants in their own nurseries, using renewable energy, asking for producers to only use organic compost as fertiliser, and finally to encourage bidders to reduce packaging and transportation distance as well as to use low emission transport.

Criteria used

Subject matter of the contract:

Framework contract for the weekly delivery of earthy vegetables to Vienna's city-run nursing homes. Earthy vegetables include Chinese cabbage, yellow carrots, carrots, various types of potatoes, garlic, savoy cabbage, red cabbage, cabbage, pointed cabbage, leek, parsnip, parsley, parsley root, red beet, chives, celeriac, red and white onion.

Award Criteria:

The contract was awarded to the most economically advantageous offer. Bids were evaluated using a points based system, with a maximum of 50 points that could be achieved. In each of the following five categories, a maximum of 10 points could be achieved. The five categories were then summed up in a weighed final score.

1. Price (30% weight)

2. Quality (40% weight)
   - Bidders have added product information sheets about each of their vegetables to their bid (3 points)
   - The product specifications fulfil the criteria for all products as defined by the contracting body (if yes: 5 points, if no: 0 points)
   - Voluntary hygiene audits (2 points)

3. Staff (5% weight)
   - A minimum of 15 employees

4. Logistical concept (15% weight)
   - Existence of a logistical concept (1 point)
   - 124 deliveries per year to all 31 locations possible (1 point)
   - Subsequent delivery possible within two hours of main delivery (1 point)
   - Reduction of transportation distance (bid with shortest delivery distance from production area to a reference location in Vienna: 5 points, second lowest: 3 points, third lowest: 1 point, all others: 0 points. This needed to be specified for all vegetables)
   - Own fleet certified EURO V, VI, or higher (European emission standards for vehicles (2 points)

5. Customer Service concept
   - Providing a point of contact for all 30 nursing homes (6 points)
   - Staffed office for taking orders by phone from minimum 7h00 to 15h00 (2 points)
   - Staffed office for making reclamations by phone from minimum7h00 at the latest to 15h00 at the earliest (2 points)

"Vienna's programme to promote green criteria in food procurement has resulted in suppliers who are able to supply high quality, organic food, using renewable energy and sustainable transport and reduces packaging as much as possible"

Product specifications:

For product specifications to be considered as fulfilled, all products needed to be organic certified (Austrian organic label[1], EU organic label, or equivalent). The tender also specified additional insecticides that were not to be used during production, such as spinosad. For all products, it was required that the seeds to also be from organic certified production, non-hybrid seeds, and free of GMOs. The specifications required the producers to use only compost of organic quality as fertiliser. Vegetables need to be delivered in as large a batch as possible, while still being carriable by the employees. This is intended to reduce packaging. At least 50% of the vegetables needed to be grown in the bidders own nursery, using renewable energy. This criterion refers to the heating systems used in the nursery green houses. As verification, bidders needed to submit a self-declaration, which is checked by the contractor through on-site verification several times during the contract delivery period.

Contract performance clauses:

If the bidder commits to supplying organic products, audit results of the organic production need to be submitted regularly, whenever an audit is conducted or the organic certification is renewed. Each nursing home needs to be able to order vegetables from the contractor independently. The contractor is required to ensure their packaging is recyclable and is responsible for the adequate disposal, meaning the contractor is taking back the packaging.

1 See also here: www.bio-austria.at

Results

All four bidders were able to fulfil the award criteria, and offered only products that are certified as organic. The framework contract was awarded to the Company "Grünzeug &Mehr" for a duration of 24 months. The approximate contract volume is €700,000 for an indicative amount of 635,648 kg of vegetables to be purchased annually. The products offered by the company are all certified organic.

Environmental impacts

Environmental impacts of vegetable production and delivery result from the production and use of chemical fertilisers, soil degradation and soil depletion resulting from agricultural practices. General impacts also include CO_2 emissions due to food production and transport.

Organic certified products as purchased through this tender reduce the environmental impact on the soil and groundwater resulting from pesticides and herbicides. Organic production also excludes the use of mineral nitrate fertilisers, which reduces the harmful impact on groundwater. The tender also rewarded the use of organic fertiliser only, which reduces the impact of synthetic fertilizer production and transportation, and promotes soil health. By rewarding the bidder with the shortest distance of food transportation, CO_2 emissions related to food transport could be minimized. The winning bidder uses renewable energy in their operation, which also contributes to lower CO_2 emissions.

Lessons learned

The procurement process was successful insofar as all bidders were able to comply with the award criteria.

The procurement demonstrates that Vienna's programme to promote green criteria in food procurement has resulted in suppliers who are able to supply high quality, organic food, using renewable energy and sustainable transport and reduces packaging as much as possible, because it is delivered in large batches and requires the supplier to take back and recycle/reuse the packaging used to deliver the vegetables.

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For related information, please see European GPP criteria for Food, Catering Services, and vending machines, and the Technical Background Report.

European Commission

GPP In practice

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Procurement of 100% organic, seasonal food

Municipality of Copenhagen, Denmark


Image: Miss Copenhagen / Flickr

Background

The Municipality of Copenhagen aims to serve 90% organic food in its public kitchens by 2015. In order to achieve this goal, the Municipality has been working together with the Copenhagen House of Food, an independent, non-commercial foundation which was established by the City of Copenhagen in 2007. The goal of the House of Food is to improve the quality of meals offered by the City of Copenhagen to its citizens and to create a healthy, happy and sustainable public food culture. The House of Food has been involved in a number of projects, including the Organic Conversion Project, The Kitchen Pledge: assessment and development of quality in public meals project, the EAT organic school food project, and the Organic meals in Preschools and Daycare project.

Procurement objectives

In 2013 the Municipality of Copenhagen published a public tender to provide 100% organic, seasonal fruit and vegetables, to supply 80 large kitchens (with an average budget of 70,000 Euro per year) in the City of Copenhagen, serving approximately 20,000 meals per day. These kitchens provide the food for the cities nursing homes, elderly homes, schools, day-care centres and homes for people with intellectual disabilities.

Criteria used

Subject matter of the contract: Framework contract for the provision of 100% organic, seasonal fruit and vegetables. The Municipality included the following requirements in the technical specifications.

Technical specifications:

Quality
If the bidder completed the documentation correctly and made it through the first evaluation, the bidder was required to provide fresh products of premium quality as part of their tender application. Exceptions to this requirement were individual fruit and vegetable varieties which are not available during this season. These products were then evaluated by a quality evaluation team. The products had to meet the requirements as specified in the tender documentation, and were evaluated according to this.

Minimum requirements for food
All fruit and vegetable products had to comply with the quality requirements of the EU's general marketing standards for fruit and vegetables, including the minimum requirements for quality and labelling requirements regarding country of origin. Products not covered by the EU's general or specific marketing standards, must be of sound, merchantable quality.

Labelling
All items had to be provided with labels that meet the statutory requirements for food labelling. These ensure that consumers have information about the product in terms of content, nutrition, sustainability and origin.
The supplier was responsible for ensuring that all products are labelled correctly and in accordance with applicable law.

Organic Certification
Items sold and/or marketed as organic had to be certified and labelled as such on the packaging or label. The supplier is responsible for verifying and documenting that all items are in fact organic. Products originating from Denmark must be in accordance with the rules of the organic label in Denmark. Goods originating from elsewhere in the EU must live up to the standards of the EU organic label.
Goods imported from outside the EU must meet current regulations for organic products from "third countries" as specified by Commission Regulation no. 1235/2008, or to the most recent amendments to this legislation. This approach ensured that equivalent requirements were applied regardless of the origin of the food items.

Packaging
The extent of the amount of packaging assumed had to be limited to avoid excess packaging of goods. Packaging could not contain PVC, and had to be recyclable.

Environmental zone
The supplier must help to protect the environment through the use of raw materials and vehicles which result in the least possible environmental pollution and impact.

Transportation:

Vehicles
If diesel vehicles with an unladen weight of over 3,500 kg are used, the supplier had to be able to demonstrate that these vehicles have achieved an environmental zone certificate as required for running this type of vehicle in the City of Copenhagen. Information on these environmental zones , and the requirements for vehicles is available here: http://www.miljozonen.dk/vognmand_baggrund.php

If vehicles with a weight less of less than 3,500 kg are used, the vehicles had to meet the Euro 5 standard for emissions. In the case of a diesel vehicle, this must be fitted with a particulate filter.

The supplier had to state in their offer what types of vehicles would be used including their make, model and year, and whether or not they met the above mentioned requirements. If at the time of submitting the tender, it was not possible for the supplier to specify exactly which vehicles would be used, the supplier must inform the Municipality which vehicles it intended to use, when it won the contract. The Municipality reserved the right at any time to carry out an environmental inspection on vehicles used to execute the delivery of food. The Municipality bears the costs if it turns out that the particle filter is working as it should be. If the particle filter is working in line with requirements the Municipality is required to refund the supplier for any loss of earnings, while the vehicle was being assessed. If the particle filter is not working in line with requirements, the supplier shall bear the costs including the costs for the repair or replacement of the filter.

Idle vehicles
Copenhagen Municipality adopted in March 1990 a regulation as regards idle vehicles according to which it is prohibited to keep an engine running when idle for more than one minute. Violation of the rules is a police matter and will be fined. The supplier was obliged to comply with the current rules as regards idling in Copenhagen. Further information on these rules is available here:
http://www.kk.dk/da/borger/trafik/luftforurening/hvad-kan-du-goere

Fuel consumption
The City of Copenhagen has adopted a Climate Plan which includes a number of initiatives to help reduce CO_2 emissions from city operations, including traffic. The supplier was obliged to document their fuel consumption –, provide this information on request and be able to explain their fuel consumption. This statement must at all times be available for the preceding year.

Award criteria:
Price 40%
Quality 35%
Range of offered goods 25%

Range of offered fruit and vegetables
The Municipality awarded the supplier points according to how many different varieties of for example: apples, pears, plums, potatoes, etc. that the suppliers could offer to the Municipality during a year. In this tender the seven bids in total offered 183 different types of apples, many of them from small and medium sized subcontractors.

Contract performance clauses:

Monitoring
Each institution may at any time during the contract sample the goods supplied. If it turns out that the product does not live up to the requirements specified in the technical specifications, including the requirements for transport and the delivery of food, the cost for the monitoring activities will be borne by the supplier. In case of doubt as regards quality and compliance with these conditions, the Municipality is entitled to obtain expert opinions from the Danish Environmental Department.

Results

Seven bidders applied for this tender, of whom two met all of the tender requirements. The tender was awarded to one bidder for an initial two year contract which can be extended by two years. The supplier supplies a wide variety of seasonal fruit and vegetables which are sourced from small to medium sized subcontractors from all over Europe. The contract has been running since August 2014.

Several bidders enquired during the bidding phase, what the Municipality meant by seasonal. The Municipality informed bidders, that seasonal referred to fruit and vegetables which were naturally grown and from any region.

Environmental impacts

By procuring seasonal, organic food the Municipality reduced:

- Eutrophication, acidification and toxic impacts on human health and the environment (plants and animals) due to the bioaccumulation and biomagnification of pesticides and fertilisers present in water, air, soil and food
- Soil erosion, forest destruction and loss of biodiversity caused by agriculture, intense animal production and fishing, and aquaculture practices
- Animal cruelty due to a lack of respect for animal welfare
- High energy consumption in food production and processing
- High water consumption and pollution in manufactured food production
- Packaging waste
- Negative impact on the occupational health of farmers due to the handling and use of certain pesticides and fertilisers
- Transport impacts in the carrying out of catering services

Lessons learned

Although the price of organic food tends to be more expensive than non-organic food, the Municipality ensured that this tender did not cost more than a tender for non-organic food, by making certain changes in their kitchens. For example, less meat and more vegetables are now used. In this way the Municipality has managed to ensure that the catering services do not cost more than they did previously.

The Municipality of Copenhagen has recognised as a result of this tender that for such a detailed tender, it would be easier to keep the tender process and documentation as simple as possible. Despite this, in future the Municipality will include more specific details on how they will monitor the tender.

For more information, please see European GPP criteria for Food and Catering.
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