

SLOVAK REPUBLIC¹

The “National Action Plan on Green Public Procurement in the Slovak Republic for years 2011 to 2015” (NAP GPP II) was prepared by the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic and approved by the government on 18 January 2012. Its goal is to reach 65% of green public procurement in all tendering procedures at the central government level and 50% at the local level by 2015.

In order to fulfil the objectives laid out in the NAP GPP, the Ministry of Environment co-operates with an expert agency, the Slovak Environmental Agency’s Centre of Waste and Environmental Management (SEA COHEM).

The first NAP GPP in the Slovak Republic was approved in 2007, when the foundations for GPP were laid and documents and procedures were adopted. The focus for 2012-15 is on educating public authorities, purchasers and suppliers.

Objectives

In order to achieve the strategic goals of the NAP GPP II, it is necessary to involve public organisations, as well as municipalities, in the educational process. Their involvement can be increased by an active approach towards the implementation of educational activities for contracting authorities, including dissemination of technical information on GPP and related issues (such as eco-labelling, environmental management systems, energy labelling, green offices) to the widest possible group of stakeholders. The target group for educational activities are contracting authorities of central administration bodies and their subordinated organisations, at the level of regional governments and local authorities.

The framework is set in Government Resolution nr. 22/2012, which approves the NAP GPP II, and Government Resolution nr. 1091/2007, which approves the Strategy of Voluntary Environmental Policy Instruments.

Actions under the NAP GPP II aim to increase contracting authorities’ awareness of the possibilities of applying environmental criteria in procurement, to regulate the environmental performance of publicly funded organisations and to increase the level of implementation of GPP in the Slovak Republic, thereby contributing to the protection of the environment. Actions also link to the eco-labelling of products, the European Community Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), sustainable consumption and production. Stakeholders include the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, public administration, local governments and organisations, and the European Commission.

Between March and October 2012, training sessions in eight regional capitals were organised by the SEA’s Center of Landscaping, Environmental Improvement and Education. Lecturers from the Ministry of Environment and the SEA COHEM gave lectures on the NAP GPP in the Slovak Republic for 2011-15; the benefits of green public procurement; environmental characteristics; and methodological guidance for completing the questionnaire for monitoring and assessing the level of GPP in the Slovak Republic. The seminars included practical exercises on using environmental characteristics in procurement.

The trainings were attended by a total of 166 participants in 2012 and are part of an on-going education campaign.

1. Case study submitted by the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic.

Impact and monitoring

The realisation of this education project was a success. The evaluation of the NAP GPP I stated that although GPP is a voluntary instrument of environmental policy, it plays a key role in efforts for a resource-efficient economy. Using GPP, public authorities can provide industry with incentives for developing environmentally friendly technologies and products. In sectors where contracting authorities have a large market share (like in public transport and construction, health and education), their decisions have a significant impact. Thus, using their purchasing power to choose environmentally friendly products, services and works can significantly contribute to sustainable consumption and production. To achieve these objectives, it is necessary that all stakeholders are informed of the actions to be taken to support GPP.

Based on the monitoring and evaluation of GPP in the Slovak Republic, which took place by distributing 450 questionnaires to respondents including contracting authorities of the central government, regional authorities and cities, the following results were measured:

1. the proportion of green procurement in the total number of procurement contracts rose from 2.1% in 2011 to 5.0% in 2012, i.e. by 2.9 percentage points
 2. the proportion of the value of green contracts in the total value of procurement contracts declined by 21.6 percentage points
1. The data demonstrate that GPP rose in number, but declined in value, which could be due to the economic recession.

Challenges and risks

The project was also carried out in 2013, following a few small adjustments, as only part of the contracting authorities and entities had been trained in 2012. Workshops will continue to be organised in regional towns free of cost for participants. The items presented are continuously updated, so that participants receive up-to-date information that will help them to implement GPP.

Key lessons learnt

Education is a successful way of supporting institutions/offices that want to deepen their competence in GPP because it provides practical guidance and answers to basic questions, like:

- Why use GPP?
- What are the guiding principles and methods of application of GPP?
- How can GPP be implemented?