



MAPS

Methodology for Assessing
Procurement Systems

Guidance: Climate in the MAPS framework

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INTRODUCTION

Public procurement is increasingly viewed as a key tool for governments in their work on sustainable development. This means that policy areas that have not traditionally been considered relevant for public procurement or even public financial management are becoming more and more relevant. These policy areas include combatting climate change, fostering gender equality, promoting socially inclusive economies and many more.

PURPOSE

This guidance note deals with the issue of **combatting climate change** in public procurement and is meant to support users or prospective users of the MAPS framework in integrating climate change considerations into their assessments.

I. Relevance of climate considerations in public procurement

Public procurement is a forceful tool in any government's arsenal to engender societal change. This is both because government behaviour, including its behaviour as a consumer, often sets the standard for society at large, and because government expenditure on procurement can in many cases be market moving consumption.

The potential of public procurement for supporting governments' socio-political objectives is especially apparent when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as mitigating and adapting to climate change in general. In itself, public procurement activities contribute significantly to emissions, whether through the process to obtain the concrete and steel used for construction, the textiles and plastics used in clothing and equipment in the health sector, the rare earth metals in computers, servers and other electronic infrastructure, large transport fleet procurement, or by acquiring services like transportation for their teams and electricity for their operations.

Additionally, however, governments can exert considerable influence on markets at large through their procurement behaviour, whether by being first-movers on emerging green and circular technologies, by setting climate-friendly standards for common goods and services, or by honouring official industry phase-outs of high-carbon polluting goods and services.

Integrating considerations related to environmental issues and climate change into public procurement is frequently referred to as green public procurement (GPP). Indeed, governments often combine environmental and climate change issues in their efforts at "greening" public procurement. Briefly put, GPP means that governments purchase goods, services and works with a lower impact on the climate and environment throughout their life cycle than the products that would otherwise have been bought. As such, GPP focusses on substituting certain types of consumption with alternatives that are friendlier to the climate, the environment, and ultimately to the end-users.

However, governments can also harness public procurement to address climate change by:



- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through efforts at reducing consumption by way of demand management and energy optimization, and through directing consumption at emerging, innovative green and circular (recovery and reuse) technologies.
- Increasing resilience of target groups to physical climate risks and related disasters through climate-proofed products and services.
- Identifying specific climate-friendly (low carbon or carbon-neutral) product.

As such, there can be many benefits if governments deploy their public procurement activities in a strategic manner with a view to mitigate climate change and foster environmental action¹. Green procurement can:

- Be a major driver for innovation, providing industry with incentives to reduce their ecological and carbon footprints and develop climate friendly and circular economy products.
- Can provide financial savings for public authorities, especially if the full life-cycle costs of a contract are considered rather than just the purchase price.
- Can equip governments to meet evolving challenges, for example by maintaining ecosystem services, promoting low carbon development paths and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving standards to better climate change adaptation (e.g., construction standards), or moving towards a more circular economy.
- Contribute to the implementation of green and climate policies and strategies

II. Climate change as a core sustainability issue within the MAPS framework

In the MAPS framework, sustainability is defined as a three-dimensional process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimizing damage to the environment. As such, the three dimensions of sustainability are: economic, social and environmental.

Climate change is primarily perceived as relating to the environmental dimension of sustainability. However, as outlined above, integrating considerations on climate change into public procurement can also be conducive to sustainable economic development. Additionally, climate-friendly public procurement is also likely to have a positive impact on the social dimension, as it is well known that the adverse effects of climate change hit already disadvantaged groups the hardest.

From the viewpoint of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), MAPS is related directly to two:

- SDG Target 12.7: “Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities”
- SDG Target 16.6: “Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels”

¹ OECD, [*Green Public Procurement*](#), 2022.



However, public procurement is indirectly essential for many more SDGs. Health and well-being, quality education, clean energy, food systems and infrastructure, to name but a few aspects of the SDGs, are all dependent on public procurement for realising the goals in practice.

Being a universal tool to analyse public procurement systems in a holistic manner, the MAPS framework enables the integration of any horizontal policy objective into the assessment depending on the needs and ambitions of the country in question. In the case of combating climate change, integration is done through the sustainability considerations in the core MAPS framework, and, in more detail, in the Supplementary MAPS Module on Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP).

As such, while MAPS does not evaluate the outcomes specific to climate change of procurement policies and operations, it can be used to assess how the procurement system as a whole enables and supports procurement regulations, policies and practices that address climate change emissions reduction and circular economy issues.

Climate considerations should be one of the aspects that the assessment team should study when analysing SPP. The core MAPS framework has several sub-indicators that directly relate to SPP, for which elements of climate-related policies and examples would serve to substantiate the assessment, as a fundamental aspect of GPP:

- Sub-indicator 3(a), dedicated exclusively to sustainability, assesses:
 - Whether a national SPP strategy is in place
 - Whether the legal framework allows for sustainability considerations
 - Whether tools are in place to operationalize SPP
- Sub-indicators 9(a)-9(c) looks at whether procurement practices achieves objectives, including in a number of aspects relevant to SPP, e.g.:
 - Whether sustainability criteria are used in a balanced manner
 - Whether contract clauses include sustainability considerations where appropriate

III. Climate change and the MAPS Sustainable Public Procurement module

The MAPS SPP module has 12 indicators and 29 sub-indicators analysing SPP in depth, including SPP-specific quantitative indicators (6 minimum and 29 recommended). As considerations related to climate change are a part of the concept of sustainability as understood in the framework, MAPS SPP can be tailored to look specifically for climate change aspects if this corresponds to the needs and ambitions of the assessed country. Making this explicit is something the assessment team should include at the planning stage, and thus in the concept note, in close dialogue with the assessment steering committee.

Generally speaking, for any MAPS assessment, assessors should strive to make their analysis as granular as possible. This enables the formulation of recommendations with greater specificity, which in turn makes the recommendations easier to act on and get implemented. For MAPS SPP, this means that the presence or absence of particular aspects of sustainability, such as considerations related to climate change and circular economy practices, is an important part of the assessment, because it allows for tailoring recommendations to the specific strengths and weaknesses of the assessed country. This is



particularly important when the evaluation of climate-friendly procurement is one of the assessment's objectives.

In practice, all indicators in the MAPS SPP module can accommodate the assessment of considerations related to climate change and green or circular economy practices and standards. The tables below offer suggestions for what factors the assessment team can look at:



Pillar I – Legal, Regulatory, and Policy Framework		
1	The public procurement legal framework covers sustainable procurement principles	
	1(a) – Coverage of sustainability criteria	Considerations related to climate change specifically constitute important evidence for 1.a.b. that the environmental dimension of sustainability is covered.
	1(b) – Procurement methods	Any specific policies reserving contracts with reference to considerations related to climate change could be analysed in the assessment of 1.b.b.
	1(c) – Rules on participation	The specific application of any climate-related qualification or exclusion criteria could be analysed for all criteria.
	1(d) – Procurement documentation and specifications	Climate-related criteria or specifications would constitute evidence for 1.d.a.
	1(e) – Evaluation and award criteria	Any climate-related attributes and quantifications of them could be evaluated for all criteria.
	1(f) – Contract management	Considerations related to climate change would constitute important evidence for assessing 1.f.c.
2	Implementing regulations and tools support SPP	
	2(a) – Implementing regulations to define sustainable procurement processes and procedures	Specific regulations relating to climate change considerations and how they work could be analysed in the assessment of all criteria.
	2(b) – Model documents for sustainable procurement and standard contract conditions	The presence of considerations related to climate change in model documents and/or standard contract conditions, and the existence of climate-specific standard clauses could be included in the assessment of all criteria.
	2(c) – Tool kit to support sustainable procurement	Tool kits related specifically to low-carbon & climate-resilient criteria can be part of an overall tool kit and should be listed as evidence, even if an overall tool kit does not exist.
	2(d) – Sustainable Procurement Manual	The presence of considerations related to climate change in the manual is important evidence to include in the assessment of all criteria.



3	Policy and strategy provide an enabling framework for implementing sustainable procurement	
	3(a) – Sustainable procurement policy	Explicit mention of considerations related to climate change in a general SPP policy could be included in the assessment. If a general SPP policy does not exist, policies related to climate change specifically, such as a GPP strategy, can constitute evidence of partial compliance.
	3(b) – Sustainable procurement strategic action plan	Specific climate-related action plans, objectives, measures etc., can be evidence of partial compliance even if a general SPP action plan is not present, and constitute substantiating evidence of compliance.
Pillar II – Institutional Framework and Management Capacity		
4	Sustainable procurement is mainstreamed and well integrated into the public financial management system	
	4(a) – Budget laws and accounting procedures	The existence of frameworks for climate-related accounting systems could be considered in 4.a.b.
5	The country has institutions in charge of SPP	
	5(a) – Responsibilities, funding and staffing of normative/regulatory function	If the responsibility for general SPP is not centralised, and there are institution(s) responsible for considerations related to climate change and circular economy practices and expenditure in procurement, these should be analysed.
	5(b) – Certification function	The presence of climate-specific certifications would be important evidence in the assessment of 5.b.a and 5.b.c.
6	Procuring entities' policies and strategies embrace SPP	
	6(a) – Procuring entities' sustainable procurement strategy	The existence of climate-specific strategies and initiatives at the entity-level is substantiating evidence of (partial) compliance.
	6(b) – Centralised procurement body	Considerations related to climate change made by any CPB in the country would be important evidence to include to substantiate the assessment of all criteria.
7	Sustainable procurement is embedded in an effective information system	



	7(a) – Publication of information on sustainable procurement	The collection and publication of climate-related information would be substantiating evidence of (partial) compliance.
	7(b) – Use of e-Procurement to support sustainability	The presence of climate-related aspects (features, data etc.) would be substantiating evidence of (partial) compliance.
8	The public procurement system has a strong capacity to develop and accelerate the shift to more sustainable public procurement	
	8(a) – Training, advice and assistance on sustainable procurement	The existence of training programmes and advisory services related to climate change, and/or to climate-specific procurement tools and policies, would be substantiating evidence of (partial) compliance.
	8(b) – Monitoring of sustainable procurement	If considerations related to climate change are an explicit part of SPP monitoring, e.g. if climate-specific emissions and low carbon targets and circular economy product and service standards exist, this could be included as substantiating evidence in the assessment of all criteria.
Pillar III – Public Procurement Operations and Market Practices		
9	Sustainable procurement practices achieve stated objectives	
	9(a) – Sustainability considerations during the planning stage 9(b) – Sustainability considerations during the selection and contracting stage 9(c) – Sustainability considerations during the contract management stage	The presence of climate-specific considerations at all stages can be taken as evidence in the analysis of the sample of procurement cases (files) that are mandatory for the assessment of all three sub-indicators.
10	The private sector contributes to a more sustainable procurement market	



	10(a) – Dialogue and partnerships between public and private sector 10(b) – Private sector’s organisation and access to the sustainable procurement market 10(c) – Key sectors and sector strategies to improve sustainability	Climate-specific considerations taken by governments in their private sector engagement, e.g. initiatives for engagement of traditionally high-emission sectors, should be taken as evidence in the assessment of all sub-indicators.
Pillar IV – Accountability, Integrity and Transparency of the Public Procurement System		
11	Transparency and civil society engagement foster sustainability in procurement	
	11(a) – Civil society supports sustainability in procurement	Government initiatives to engage civil society specifically on the topic of climate change in procurement should be taken into account in the assessment, as should evidence that shows the government taking into account input received from civil society specifically on climate resilience (risk management) and climate mitigation issues in procurement.
12	The country has effective control and audit systems that cover sustainability in procurement	
	12(a) – Audit framework for sustainable procurement	Evaluations of climate change and circular economy standards and best practice, or the presence of considerations related to climate change in general SPP evaluations, should be included in the assessment, particularly of 12.a.e.

IV. Practical examples of considerations related to climate change in MAPS SPP

This section presents some examples of hypothetical situations related to combatting climate change and promoting green economy (markets), and how assessors should capture these situations when applying the MAPS SPP framework.

- A. **Mandatory use of green labels and climate certifications.** A country has implemented a road map to ensure that by 2030, a series of standard categories of goods and services must be eco-labelled or similarly certified to be eligible for purchase by public authorities. Decarbonisation and circular economy considerations are included in the eco-label standards that are accepted in the road map, and all label criteria are ISO 14001 compliant.



Such a policy would constitute important evidence in the assessment of sub-indicators 1(a) and 1(c)-1(e) in the MAPS SPP module.

B. A single point-of-contact for all GPP questions, including on climate change. A country has established a centralized knowledge centre responsible for a help desk function that cuts across typical government areas of responsibility, allowing public entities to get all their questions related to how to integrate circular economy and emission-reduction considerations in their procurement activities answered in one place. The help desk answers questions either in their own capacity or by bringing in relevant authorities on matters such as:

- Applying GPP criteria to specific purchases, including those related to low-carbon products and services.
- Understanding allowances for minimum climate change standards under the legal framework applicable to procurement.
- Deploying agile procurement procedures to foster green innovation in a way that incorporates low-carbon and/or climate-resilient criteria and standards.

Such a knowledge centre and help desk function would constitute important evidence in the assessment of sub-indicator 8(a) in the MAPS SPP module.

C. Measuring the climate impact of public procurement. A country has developed a method to calculate greenhouse gas emissions reductions resulting from public procurement at the level of overall procurement categories such as construction, foodstuffs, vehicles, textiles etc. Emissions are calculated annually as part of the country's general follow-up on their strategies related to their UN net-zero 2050 pledge and their obligations under the Paris Agreement.

Such a method for measuring the emissions resulting from public procurement and the integration of it into broader government strategies would constitute important evidence in the assessment of sub-indicators 3(a)-3(b), 7(a), 8(c) and potentially 10(c) in the MAPS SPP module.

D. A strategic partnership for green public procurement. A country has established a partnership between key stakeholders for public procurement with the mission to further the integration of considerations related to climate change into public procurement. The partnership is supported by a secretariat that annually publishes state-of-the-art guidance and best practices, and which provides input to updating the GPP manual maintained by the normative/regulatory function. Participants include representatives from:

- Municipalities
- Central government authorities
- The normative/regulatory authority
- Universities
- Business federations
- Civil society organisations

Such a partnership would constitute important evidence in the assessment of sub-indicators 2(d), 8(a), 10(a) and 11(a) of the MAPS SPP module.



V. Further reading on climate change and public procurement

The following resources are invaluable for assessment teams or governments seeking to know more about deploying public procurement for combatting climate change:

- [The OECD's collection of best practices for Sustainable Public Procurement.](#)
- [The World Bank's report Green Public Procurement: An Overview of Countries' Green Procurement Practices.](#)
- [The European Commission's resource directory for Green Public Procurement.](#)
- [The European Commission's guidance on public procurement and circular economy.](#)
- [The European Commission's handbook on buying green.](#)
- [The European Commission's Sustainable Public Procurement platform.](#)
- [The UN Environment Programme's central knowledge repository on Sustainable Public Procurement.](#)
- [The One Planet Network's programme on Sustainable Public Procurement facilitated by the UN.](#)
- [Background paper on the role of public procurement in low-carbon innovation by the OECD.](#)

