Public procurement, which represents on average 15 per cent of GDP in OECD countries and even higher proportions in developing countries, offers a remarkable opportunity to drive markets towards innovation and sustainability. Sustainable public procurement (SPP) is therefore emerging as a key policy instrument to support sustainable development and greener economies.

SPP has already transformed a number of sectors and have contributed to the emergence of more sustainable products such as recycled paper, sustainable timber, green building materials, electricity from renewable energy sources, sustainable agriculture and greener electronics. SPP is also generating social and environmental improvements across global value chains.

There are, however, a number of barriers to overcome, for example the perception that SPP is too complex and that it may increase the cost of public procurement. Other challenges point to the level of political support and the level of cooperation needed across ministerial departments as well as the potential impacts on small and medium sized enterprises.

All the aforementioned barriers point to the need to step-up international collaborative efforts on SPP implementation. Conscious of this need, UNEP, in cooperation with a number of Governments and international organizations has launched an International Sustainable Public Procurement initiative (SPPI) at the Rio + 20 Summit in June 2012. The SPPI builds on the work of the Swiss-led Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Public Procurement (MTF on SPP) which ended its mandate in May 2011.

Goal
The goal of the SPPI is to promote worldwide implementation of SPP through increased cooperation between key stakeholders and a better understanding of its potential benefits and impacts.

Objectives
The SPPI aims at bringing together representatives from governments, local authorities, business sector and civil society interested in collectively promoting the supply and demand of sustainable products through SPP:

1. Build the case for SPP: improve the knowledge on SPP and its effectiveness as a tool to promote sustainable consumption and production, support greener economies and sustainable development;
2. Support the implementation of SPP on the ground through increased collaboration and better access to capacity building tools.

Potential Activities and Outputs
1. Build the case for SPP: improve the knowledge on SPP and its effectiveness as a tool to promote sustainable consumption and production, support greener economies and sustainable development.
   a. Analyze barriers to SPP implementation and propose innovative solutions - The initiative will carry out research activities aimed at proposing innovative solutions and recommendations to address current barriers to SPP implementation (e.g. budgetary mechanisms, availability and prices of sustainable products, legal frameworks). Research activities will also allow a deeper understanding of the role of SPP in enabling green...
International Sustainable Public Procurement Initiative - SPPI

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economy and green job creations.

b. Measure the impact of SPP through the development of SPP indicators and improved monitoring systems - Through working groups and research activities, the SPPI will propose approaches to better measure and assess the impact of SPP on green economy and sustainable development including green jobs, green investments, resource efficiency, social inclusion, international competitiveness, etc.

The foreseen outputs related to this activity will be the development of indicators (on SPP impacts and processes) as well as guidance documents on the establishment of sound and cost effective monitoring systems.

c. Review and communicate on the progress of SPP policies at world level - The SPPI will survey the progress of SPP implementation at world level and will present the results in a biennial report. The report will also include a review of SPP-related concepts and methodologies as well as obstacles and challenges faced by SPP. It will present the outcomes and solutions put forward by the SPPI for a wider and more effective SPP implementation.

2. Support the implementation of SPP on the ground through increased collaboration and better access to capacity building tools

The SPPI will act as an incubator of joint projects and programmes through the identification of specific opportunities and needs

- Building synergies and improve coordination between the SPP implementation programmes: The SPPI will establish and manage working groups aimed at developing operational collaborations between its members at global, regional and national levels and within individual countries, such as:
  - Exchanges of capacity building tools and best practices,
  - Development of joint projects

SPP implementation will be support by increased South-South and North-South cooperation.

b. Increase collaboration between business sectors and public institutions on procurement practices

- Developing guidance to facilitate the access of SMEs to public procurement through SPP and design measures to mitigate the possible negative impact of SPP on SMEs (costs of certification, exclusion from the new markets).

c. Develop guiding principles for SPP implementation - A working group will analyze and benchmark the various SPP implementation methodologies.

d. Mobilize additional stakeholders to support and promote SPP - Engagement strategies will be defined in particular with:
  - Multilateral development banks, to promote SPP in the reform of procurement systems and in their lending procedures;
  - International donors, to increase their financial support to SPP and include SPP as one of their thematic priorities; and in particular involve national and international SPP experts in technical assistance schemes.

3. Cross Cutting Activities

a. Develop a web portal to facilitate the collaboration between SPPI members, present their activities and disseminate SPPI products

b. Organize a Sustainable Public Procurement Forum - Aimed to present and discuss the outputs of the SPPI as well as promote partnerships among SPPI actors.

Proposed Governance

Partners: Any organization, government or local authority agreeing with the goal and objectives of the SPPI and committing to contribute to its activities and/or supporting it financially can join the SPPI.

The SPPI Network is composed of all the participants of the Sustainable Public Procurement Initiative and meets back to back with the SPPI Forums to (i) discuss the work plan proposed by the Advisory Committee; (ii) review and recommend new activities in relation with the SPPI’s goal and objectives.

The Advisory Committee provides recommendations and guidance to the working group and various activities implemented by the initiative and to the elaboration of the work plan.

The Support Office manages the SPPI and is in charge of implementing the annual Action plan that will define and detail the activities to be carried out in the framework of the Initiative in collaboration with all the members.

SPPI Participants
(as of 24 August 2012)

- BigRoom
- ChileCompra (Chile)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - DEFRA (United Kingdom)
- Econstitut Barcelona
- Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa – UEMOA
- Environmental Development Center of Ministry of Environmental Protection – MEP (China)
- Forest Stewardship Council – FSC
- Green Purchasing Network of India – GPNI
- Green Purchasing Network of Malaysia – GPNM
- ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability
- Institut de l’Energie et de l’Environnement de la Francophonie - IEPF
- Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan (Lebanon)
- Instituto Nacional de Contratación Pública - INCOP (Ecuador)
- International Green Purchasing Network – IGPN
- International Institute for Sustainable Development – IISS
- International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization – ITC-ILO
- Korea Environmental Industry & Technology Institute – KEITI
- Ministerio de Ambiente, Energía y Telecomunicaciones (Costa Rica)
- Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible (Colombia)
- Ministerio do Meio Ambiente (Brazil)
- Ministry of Environment (Denmark)
- Ministry of Economic Development (New Zealand)
- Organization of American States – OAS
- Procurement Policy Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (Mauritius)
- Swedish Environmental Management Council – SEMCo
- Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (Switzerland)
- United Nations Development Programme/Procurement Capacity Development Centre – UNDP/PCDC
- United Nations Environment Programme
- United Nations Office for Project Services – UNOPS
- African Development Bank – AIDB (OBSERVER)