

XPRESS CASE STUDIES ON BARRIERS TO INVESTMENTS IN RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

– PORTUGAL –

Por-PA-1 is the national agency that establishes all the environmental policy in Portugal, such as climate actions, pollution, noise, etc. In this case, there is not a concrete public procurement case. Nonetheless, it is worth highlighting that Por-PA-1 oversees the National Portuguese Strategy for Green Public Procurement 2020.

Analysis of the current situation:

a. Current sustainability strategies (overall goals, practices)

ENCPE (National Strategy for Ecologic Public Procurement) is the translation of these criteria according to the national needs. This is done with the organization of working groups with the participation of several entities, such as municipalities and companies. Municipalities are represented by the national Portuguese association of municipalities.

In this context, Por-PA-1 has produced guidelines for the acquisition of priority groups of products, such as paper, catering, transport, buildings, etc. Currently, they are working in another 7 product groups (cleaning products, sanitary furniture, textile, public lighting, public space maintenance, and road construction).

Although Renewable Energy is not a working group, Portugal possesses a national criterion for energy contracting (that was approved in April 2020). This is not mandatory for municipalities, but it is mandatory for public national organizations.

b. Public procurement strategy

Given that Por-PA-1 is not a municipality, public procurement is not conducted. However, as mentioned, ENCPE tackles GPP by delivering useful directives and guidelines for municipalities to adopt such strategy. Currently, in alignment with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Action, they are promoting partnerships/working groups between ecological criteria and circular procurement.

There are criteria included in the “Acordos Quadro”. These are the directive for central/national organizations as the one already mentioned for electricity purchase. These directives usually include environmental criteria. These serve as a support to municipalities and public companies. For example, for the purchase of energy 100% renewable. There are “Acordos Quadro” for electricity, natural gas, renting of vehicles. They are very recent (2019-2020).



c. Public procurement and supplier engagement. Public procurement and SME

At national level, this is done through the working groups where relevant stakeholders participate. There is negotiation between members to establish which will be the criteria to be included in the “Acordos Quadro”. Within the working groups, Por-PA-1 tries to involve all the interested parts: suppliers, purchasers and even academia. The actors are represented by associations, so SMEs are also included this way. This participation is not exclusively to SMEs representatives, but to all types of private actors.

Besides this, Por-PA-1 supports municipalities that ask for information and guidance to improve the tender process. This could involve the contact of private actors to learn about the solutions that a municipality might be looking for.

Barriers and drivers

Identified barriers and drivers

- The identified barriers are linked to the high volume of paperwork that is required sometimes. In one hand, the cost and human resources needed to handle these PP processes and, in the other, a low level of digitalization from a big share of the SMEs spectrum.
- The main driver is the innovation that SMEs might offer.
- From the public side, the reduction of bureaucratic requirements might impact positively SMEs. Big companies usually have specific departments to deal with legal requirements.

Summary and Discussions

Por-PA-1’s activities are quite necessary to translate the GPP objectives of the European Commission into the Portuguese context. The effort required to bring together all the interested parts, including municipalities and SMEs, is rather high. However, given that their operation is done at national level, it is hard to know at first hand all the particularities than municipalities face when launching PP processes.

This top-down approach is highly required to be aligned with the European Directives, but a bottom-up approach is equally necessary to boost green PP practices at municipality level. This is the gap XPRESS should focus on.

