



10YFP Sustainable Public Procurement & Consumer Information for SCP Programmes

Working Group 4b2

Improving collaboration between sustainable public procurement and eco-labels and sustainability standards

Summary Report of the annual meeting 2017

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Summary Report — Annual Meeting WG4b2

Sustainability standards and ecolabels have been enabling both sustainable public procurement and consumer information initiatives. Vice-versa, sustainable procurement policies are key drivers for standard- and eco-labelling initiatives, as they increase their reach and positive impacts within the private sector and across global supply chains.

Under the [10YFP programme](#), working Group 4b was established as a space for knowledge sharing and interaction between public procurers on the one hand, and private standard or ecolabel organisations and users on the other hand. It currently consists of 50+ members, including procurement practitioners and experts from national and subnational bodies, independent experts, and various ecolabel- and standard- organisations.

This year's annual meeting took place in the side-lines of the [Global Sustainability Standards Conference](#). As before, it brought together a diverse range of stakeholders to share their information about their efforts, how these connect sustainable public procurement (SPP) and private standards and ecolabels, and which common obstacles and opportunities they are facing.

This summary document provides

- A short background on this year's annual meeting
- An overview of the presentations and 'good practice examples' discussed at the meeting
- Concluding observations and a 'look forward' on challenges and opportunities

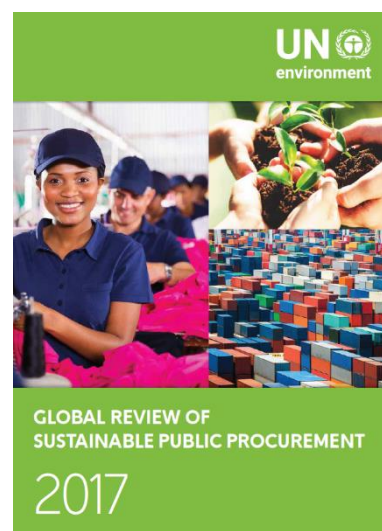
In addition to this document, all presentations from the meeting are available on the exchange space of the working group on the [SCP Clearinghouse](#).

Background

Sustainable public procurement (SPP) is progressively embraced by both national and local authorities across the world. This is one of the conclusions of [the 2017 Global Review of Sustainable Public Procurement](#) undertaken by UN Environment. This is no surprise; the implementation of SPP, together with ensuring people have access to information about sustainable products and lifestyles, is part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which have been adopted by 193 countries.

Based on a large scale survey of key stakeholders, the SPP global review identified ecolabels and standards, together with monitoring and reporting, as an area of increased importance for procurement.

This is encouraging for the working group, as it is dedicated to fostering synergies between public procurement, standard systems and ecolabels.

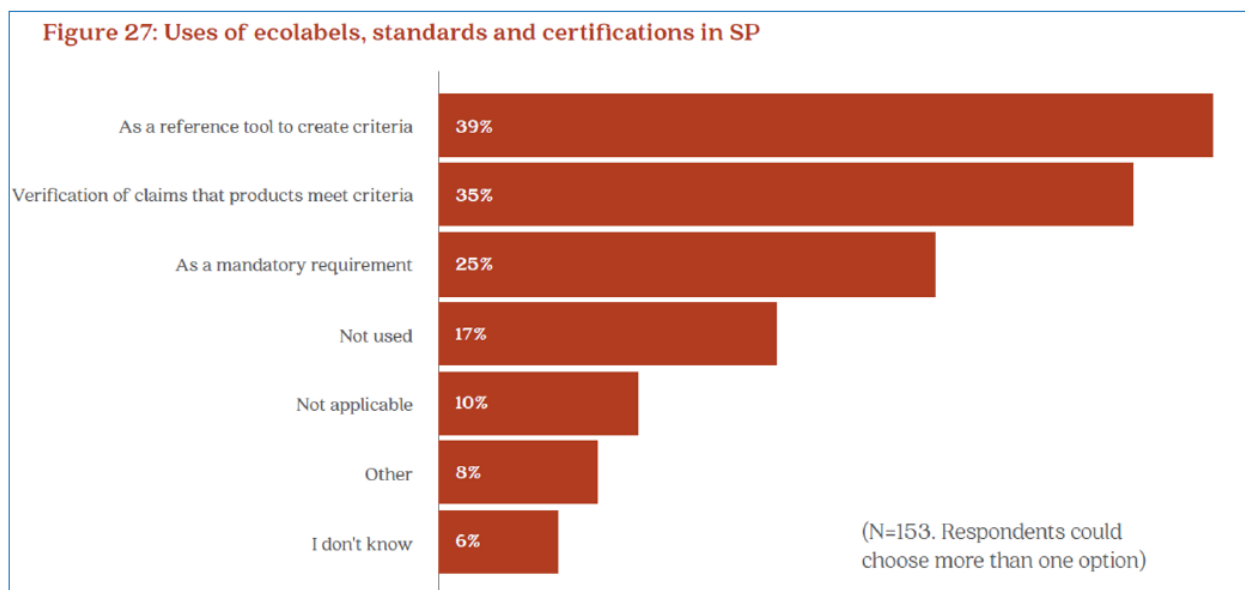


It's worthwhile recalling that, as stated in the SPP global review, ecolabels and standards allow public procurers to tackle three complex challenges:

1. Identifying environmental and socio-economic issues that are relevant to the purchase at hand,
2. Determining innovative, yet reasonable, sustainability specifications for a product or service, and
3. Verifying that the product or service procured actually meets the required specifications

(From the SPP Global Review 2017, page 39).

The global survey confirmed that procurement practitioners are indeed using standards and ecolabels in this way, and they are most often used to develop procurement criteria.



The survey also finds that, compared to 2012, a larger proportion of respondents are now using ecolabels as mandatory requirements in product or service specifications. However, survey participants noted that this varies greatly by product category and depends on the availability of relevant and credible ecolabels and standards, as well as the availability and cost of products meeting the standards and/or ecolabels. Some regional variation in the use of ecolabels can be noticed too.

It's also important to note that the impact priorities of procurers and standards systems are evolving and aligning. In addition to environmental outcomes such as preventing the use of chemicals or illegal deforestation, a new range of impact issues that both are addressing relate to working conditions, labour rights, and more specific issues such as modern slavery.

Apart from that, energy efficiency, circular economy, and climate change measures, are part of another set of shared priorities between procurers, standard systems, and ecolabels.

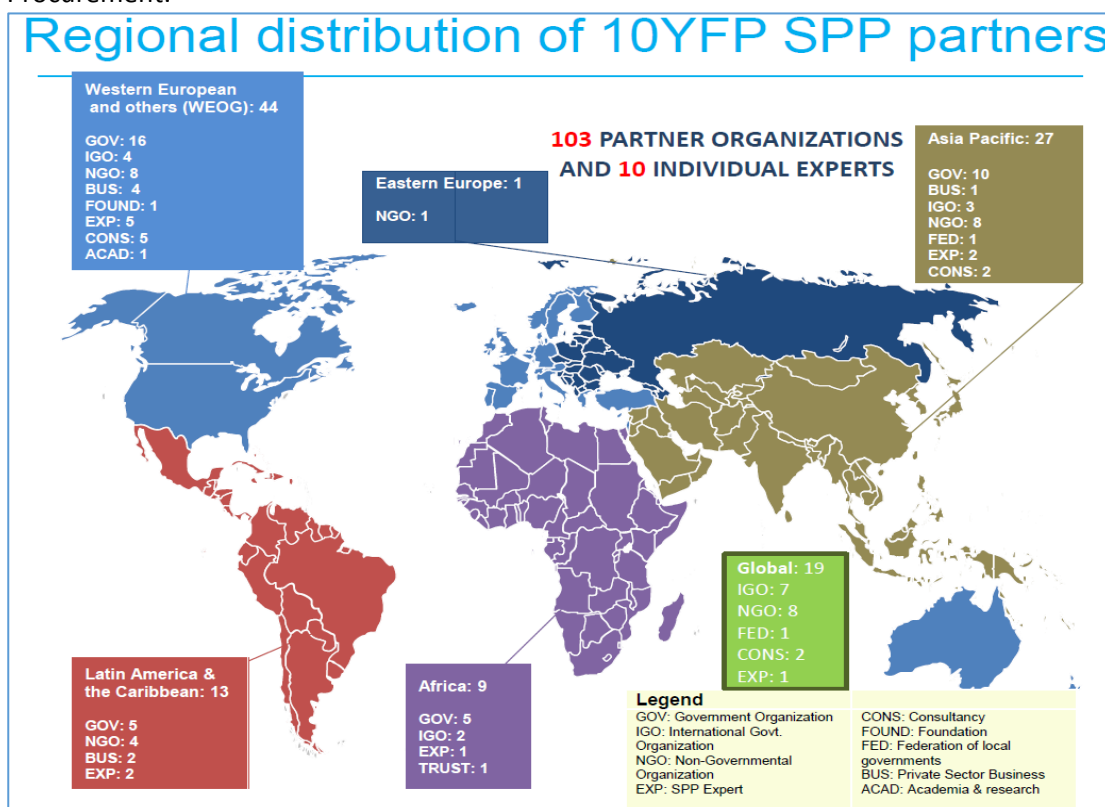
In this context of shared outcomes and increasing interaction, the working group's 4th in-person meeting took place in the sidelines of the Global Sustainability Standards Conference, hosted by the ISEAL Alliance in Zurich, Switzerland.

Achievements and good practices presented at the WG meeting



UN Environment – Examples, experiences, and updates from the 10YFP SPP and CI-SCP programmes

At the start of the meeting, UN Environment provided updates and insights into the various ongoing workstreams within the 10YFP [SPP](#) and [CI-SCP](#). **Mr. Farid Yaker** started by highlighting that the 10YFP SPP programme now brings together 103 partner organizations worldwide. He also brought to attention the new SCP Clearinghouse website, which acts as a resource center for all themes under the 10YFP programme, and the recent publication of the new 2017 Global Review of Sustainable Public Procurement.



Moving to practical implementation, Mr Yaker provided insights into some of the achievements of the Sustainable Public Procurement and Eco-labelling (SPP-EL) and EaP-GREEN projects, which provide policy support and technical assistance for the development of SPP/Ecolabelling policies, which is currently operational in 16 countries. Good practice examples include Brazil and Colombia, where governmental efforts to develop sustainability criteria development have taken off.

To learn more about the 10YFP SPP programme, please contact Farid Yaker farid.yaker@unep.org

Ms Bettina Heller, introduced the latest development under the 10YFP Consumer Information programme (CI-SCP), in particular the development of [the Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information](#). This new international guidance document aims improve the reliability of

consumer information for sustainable consumption by developing an international consensus and setting minimum requirements that remove the potential for greenwashing. After a multi-stakeholder drafting process, the Guidelines will now be road 'tested' to ensure their requirements are applicable and useful across regions, sectors and target groups.

To learn more about the 10YFP SPP programme, please contact Bettina Heller Bettina.Heller@unep.org



European Commission DG Environment - *The EU Ecolabel and SPP framework*

The EU has been a key driver of more sustainable procurement practices. At the working group meeting, **Ms. Kristine Dorosko** introduced the basic elements of the [EU's green procurement framework](#) and explained how the revision of the EU Directives on public procurement in 2014 made it easier to integrate ecolabels into procurement processes. She also focussed on the role of the EU Ecolabel, and how in developing new criteria for the [EU Ecolabel](#), the European Commission has recently looked into integrating existing voluntary standard systems.

For example, the new EU Ecolabel criteria for floor coverings, furniture and paper-based products both stipulate that sourced material should come from sustainably managed forests, and certification by a private sustainability standard e.g. FSC, PEFC is recognized as such.

Similarly, the new criteria for detergents and cosmetics require any palm oil present in the product to be sustainably certified, including through RSPO certification. Such new interactions between voluntary certification schemes not only reduce the complexity for businesses in the EU, they can also accelerate market transformation and positive impacts on a large scale.

To learn more about the EU Ecolabel and the EU's work on SPP, please contact Ms. Kristine Dorosko Kristine.DOROSKO@ec.europa.eu



German Development Agency (GIZ) and Engagement Global – *The German Sustainability Compass for Public Procurers*

A lack of information and guidance on sustainability standards has long been a barrier for public procurers in using them. The [Sustainability Compass](#) developed by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, is an online tool developed to address this information barrier - and it has recently been made available in English.

Mr Max Mangold from GIZ presented the how the Compass provides an online tool tailored to the needs of procurement officers who want to purchase sustainably. Besides comprehensive information on the possible integration of social and environmental standards in tenders (according to EU Directives), the Compass also integrates a Sustainability Standards Comparison Tool which provides detailed analysis of existing standard systems and ecolabels. This analysis covers both, performance against different sustainability areas as well as the underlying credibility of the label- or standard system based on data developed in collaboration with ISEAL and the ITC.

How can I integrate sustainability into the procurement process?
Sustainable procurement can help you make more cost-saving, solution-oriented and energy- and resource-efficient purchases.
[LEARN MORE](#)

Which labels can be used?
Social and environmental labels can serve as a means of proof of sustainability. If you are looking for labels based on certain social and environmental criteria, please select whether you wish to see a list of all labels or search for the label of a specific product.
[PRODUCT SEARCH](#) [ALL LABELS](#)

How can municipalities introduce sustainable procurement?
The Sustainability Compass for municipalities offers practical examples for all German States (Länder): tender documents, city council decisions, directives and much more. Benefit from the experience of active municipalities.
[LEARN MORE](#)

Why sustainable procurement?
By integrating social and environmental criteria in procurement processes, buyers can contribute to their organisation's sustainability strategy and at the same time stimulate the market for sustainably manufactured products.
[LEARN MORE](#)

Ms Felicitas Schuldes from Engagement Global explained how they are supporting German Municipalities in the use of the tool and the implementation of SPP in general. Recent tendering practices by the City of Bonn and the City of Dortmund we're highlighted as leading examples for integrating ambitious ecological and social criteria in tender processes.

The objectives and functions of the Sustainability Compass are also explained in two informative videos available on Youtube; Information Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwYS17zJONc>
Navigation Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FM80xJucqI>

To learn more about the GIZ's work, please contact Max Mangold max.mangold@giz.de

Caption of the Sustainability Compass' main menu

To learn more about the Engagement Global's work, please contact Felicitas.Schuldes@engagement-global.de



Push Switzerland - Tools and Experiences from supporting SPP implementation in Switzerland

The NGO [Pusch \(Praktischer Umweltschutz\)](#) has worked in Switzerland to provide information and capacity-building for sustainable procurement. **Ms Eva Hirsiger** from Pusch explained that to this end, it has developed a Swiss 'Kompass Nachhaltigkeit' (similar to the GIZ Compass) for procurers and small businesses. The online tool provides product-specific factsheets, best-practice examples (for example on how to draft tender documents) and further general information.

For individual consumers, the long running website Labelinfo.ch (also developed by Pusch) provides information on labels and standards.

This tool is also increasingly popular with professional procurers – in addition to providing information on 150 labels and standards, it also integrates more in-depth ‘label ratings’ for specific product groups; a food label rating was carried out in 2014 and a textile-label rating (in collaboration with GIZ) is planned.

To learn more about the Pusch’s work, please contact; Eva Hirsiger Eva.Hirsiger@pusch.ch



Stadt Zürich
Umwelt- und Gesundheitsschutz

City of Zurich – Zurich’s achievements and commitments to implement SPP

Cities are some of the most successful public authorities implementing sustainable procurement. The City of Zurich is internationally recognized as a leader on sustainability, and at the working group meeting some of the city’s recent projects and achievements were presented by Ms **Sonja Gehrig**, a scientific adviser for the Environmental and Health Protection Service of the City of Zurich. The city’s ambition is illustrated by its commitment to reduce the primary energy consumption of its inhabitants from now 3900 watt to 2000 watt per person by 2050.

In terms of sustainable procurement, the adoption of ‘Guidelines for fair and environmentally friendly procurement’ in 2010, and 2014 as well as a new ‘Code of Conduct for Suppliers’ in 2016

Organic Cotton
2009 Police shirts
2010 Care centres’ polo shirts, sweatshirts, trousers
mix fabrics (polo/sweatshirts also fair trade)
2017 Bus/tram drivers’ shirts, polo shirts



provide a strong policy foundation for the City’s sustainable sourcing practices. This includes, for example, the use of recycled concrete for new construction. As for textiles, the city has also progressively required more uniforms and fabrics to be made from organic and certified cotton, thereby relying on various standard- and certification systems such as GOTS and Fairtrade labels.

Another ambitious policy relates to Zurich’s policy on sourcing natural stones. A declaration of a stone’s origin is always required, and when imported from outside of Europe, contractors need to give proof that they are using stones from 3rd party certified sources which recognise the ILO core labour standards. In using sustainability labels and standards, Ms Gehrig also explained how various challenges have emerged relating to the market conditions (e.g. lack of supply and price) on the one hand, and lack of information on the reliability of certain standard systems (e.g. no information on comparison and validation of living wages in third-party countries) on the other hand.

To learn more about the City of Zurich’s work on SPP, please contact; Sonja Gehrig (UGZ) Sonja.Gehrig@zuerich.ch



Green Electronics Council – Bringing responsible procurement and end-of-life management of electronics to India

The [Green Electronics Council \(GEC\)](#) is a non-profit whose mission is to achieve a world in which only sustainable IT products are designed, manufactured, and purchased.. GEC is well known for EPEAT, the leading global eco-label for ICT products. The uptake of EPEAT has been driven by sustainable public procurement practices in the US and other mature markets.

However, uptake in emerging markets has remained difficult, in part due to challenges in meeting EPEAT's end-of-life criteria. To address this challenge, GEC's **Melanie Bower** presented the working group with an innovative new project to develop a solution for the realities of e-waste in India. The project aims to develop a set of end-of-life management and capacity building criteria which would be part of a new IT Products Sustainability Standard for the Indian market.

India-specific end of life criteria will enable the use of electronics life cycle standards in India, while creating opportunities for international procurers. Because much of the current e-waste processing occurs through the informal sector, the project and new standard would focus on ensuring capacity building processes are in place for a gradual transformation and formalization of the Indian e-waste industry.



*Informal sector processing used electronics in India
Photo credit: Verena Radulovic*

To learn more about GEC's work and this initiative, please contact; Melanie Bower, EPEAT Program Director, MBower@greenelectronicscouncil.org



Good Environmental Choice Australia – New strategies and tools for the use of ecolabels

Closing of the meeting, [Good Environmental Choice Australia \(GECA\)](#) presented a range of new and ongoing initiatives. Ms Shaila Divakarla from GECA explained how the organisation, as Australia's national, not-for-profit Ecolabel, has been well-placed to develop tools that are useful for both governments and businesses in their procurement activities.

In addition to the development and revision of product standards, a new type initiative GECA is launching aims to make businesses and government bodies adopt a Positive Procurement Pledge. By

signing the pledge, companies make a public commitment to the pledge to develop, document and implement a positive procurement policy to govern all purchasing decisions by 30 June 2020 – or sooner.

Another important area of for GECA has been the development of the ISO20400 guidance on Sustainable Procurement – a new international reference point which can steer, support, and provide consistency to all types of organizations who want to develop a sustainable procurement policy. GECA is currently developing additional guidance which can help organisations who want to use ISO20400 to integrate the use of ecolabels.

To learn more about GECA's work and this initiative, please contact; Dr. Shaila Divakarla Standards & Technical Manager, shaila@geca.org.au

WG-related initiatives and partners

The following tools and initiatives we're not presented in person at the annual meeting, are included here as they provide useful insights and examples for the working group.

US Environmental Protection Agency - *EPA Recommendations of Standards & Ecolabels*

Over the past years, the US EPA developed a set of *Guidelines for Environmental Performance Standards and Ecolabels for Voluntary Use in Procurement*. These are used to develop [recommendations on the use of standards and ecolabels](#) which will be followed in procurement by US federal agencies. The framework gives preference to effective multi-attribute standards and ecolabels for which EPA has been able to confirm the availability of a competent certification body.

For further information, contact Alison Kinn Bennett –Kinn.Alison@epa.gov

Forest Steward Ship Council - *FSC's support webpage on sustainable public procurement*

The FSC is a leading standard and certification system for sustainable forest management that is widely used in procurement frameworks of both private and public procurers. To facilitate the use of the FSC in public procurement, FSC has brought together relevant information on one webpage <https://ic.fsc.org/en/choosing-fsc/public-procurement>

For further information, contact John Hontelez -j.hontelez@fsc.org

International Learning Lab on Procurement and Human Rights - *Introduction to the Learning Lab*

The Learning Lab is a new network of public procurement policy makers, procurement officers, NGOs, NHRIs, academics, and other relevant actors. It aims to provide a platform and mechanism for generating knowledge about public procurement law and policy and human rights and experience-sharing among procurement actors on approaches to integrating respect for human rights. See <http://www.hrprocurementlab.org/>

For further information, contact Nicole Vander Meulen-Nicole@icar.ngo

Concluding Observations and a look forward

It is clear that sustainability standards, ecolabels and certification systems are already enabling and strengthening SPP implementation. As interactions and synergies increase, they provide both shared opportunities and shared challenges.

The 4th annual in-person meeting of the Working Group illustrated the breadth and scope of how public procurers can use, integrate and collaborate with private sustainability standards and ecolabels.

A broad message emerging from the different examples was that **better alignment and harmonization between public procurement and standards and ecolabels used in the private sector can not only create greater sustainability impacts, but also remove duplication and ensure more cost-efficient approaches.**

However, a number of challenges towards achieving greater impacts also emerged from the meetings' conversations;

- As private standards and ecolabels are increasingly used as a proof-of-compliance in procurement processes, the reliability and credibility of their systems are becoming more important.
 - Despite notable efforts, a better 'shared' understanding of the differences in both performance and credibility or 'trustworthiness' is needed for procurers to effectively navigate the marketplace of labels and standards.
- Better outcome and impact information on core sustainability themes (SDGs, deforestation, human rights, labour conditions, climate action and greenhouse gas reductions, water efficiency, etc) is needed to start measuring the impacts of SPP
 - New 'impact partnerships' to identify the sustainability impacts jointly achieved by public procurement bodies and ecolabels and standards can provide new opportunities in this area
- One of the key barriers remains sustained political support and public interest. Changes in the political climate can compromise implementation of SPP
 - Embedding citizen and consumer awareness on sustainable consumption and production needs to be an overarching goal, that is championed by both policy-makers, procurement practitioners, and private standards or ecolabels

The Working Group will remain an open space to share information and further discuss these issues and other key topics that are relevant to its members, and the broader 10YFP SPP and CI-SCP programmes.