

PROJECT PROPOSAL

TITLE/THEME

“Circular economy for green and sustainable public procurement”

PROMOTER: Province of Parma www.provincia.parma.it

The Province of Parma is a public administration, located in the western part of the Emilia Romagna Region in the north of Italy.

The Province of Parma includes 44 Municipalities, which are very heterogeneous as far as the number of inhabitants and the morphological characteristics. In fact, we have big centres as well as rural and mountain areas, medium size cities on the big road Via Emilia and smaller villages on the river Po.

The territory is rich of cultural heritage (castles, historical Italian-style theatres, roman Catholic cathedrals, birthplace of Maestro Giuseppe Verdi) and world wide known gastronomic products (Parmesan cheese, Parma ham...)

The main functions of the Province concern: construction, maintenance and regulation of the road system (1340 km of roads with 895 structures such as bridges, tunnels, viaducts), secondary schools (planning, construction and maintenance of school buildings, programming of the school network, in compliance with regional planning.), land use planning, operative actions for environmental protection and enhancement, public transport, private transportation permissions, equal opportunities in the employment field, contrast to discriminatory phenomena.

Another function is related to technical assistance to municipalities, including access to EU funds and public procurements. In the field of the Province would like to develop a project on **circular economy and public procurements**.

EU PROGRAMME/CALL: Erasmus + programme Small-scale Partnerships in the fields of vocational education and training Deadline 4th October 2022

BACKGROUND

The circular economy (CE) is a building block of the European Green Deal, which contributes to accelerating the transition to sustainability.

Circular economy means that the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible and the generation of waste is minimized.

Public authorities, whose purchasing power accounts for 14 % of EU GDP, would become **circular economy enabler** and powerful driver for the demand for sustainable and more circular products and services in the European market.

However, although European law provides for some legal obligations for green procurement, these are still limited to specific sectors (in particular waste management, school canteens, construction), there are still no binding obligations for all sectors and no comprehensive set of requirements to ensure that all products placed on the EU market and all services provided become increasingly sustainable and pass the circularity test.

Background in Italy

Legislative Decree No. 50 of April 18, 2016, “Public Contracts Code” identifies minimum environmental criteria to respect for 11 categories:

- furniture (office furniture, school furniture, furniture for filing rooms and reading rooms)
- construction (construction and renovation of buildings with emphasis on building materials, road construction and maintenance)
- waste management
- urban and land services (public green management, street furniture)
- energy services (lighting, heating and cooling of buildings, public lighting and light signals)
- electronics (electrical and electronic office equipment and related consumables, telecommunications equipment)
- textiles and footwear
- stationery (paper and consumables)
- catering (canteen service and food supplies)
- building management services (cleaning services and hygiene materials)
- transportation (transportation means and services, sustainable mobility systems)

Other rules are compulsory in the field of collective catering and food supply.

The confrontation with procurement officials revealed that in other fields the circular economy has not yet entered the common practice guiding the procurement of goods and services in public administrations.

The use of optional criteria to further support environmental sustainability, in addition to the mandatory ones, is also not widespread

Circular economy principles are not consistently part of the design phase of all public procurement (except in areas where this is an obligation and within the limits imposed) and civil servants are not yet used to incorporating circular economy principles into most procurement-related work

European local administration would have a **stronger impact in fighting climate change** and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030, if the principles of the circular economy were systematically included in the preliminary stages of every public procurements, small and big procedures regardless of their economic value.

This would also enable European civil servants to move in the direction indicated in the European Commission's communication of March 2020 'A new Circular Economy Action Plan For a cleaner and more competitive Europe'.

OBJECTIVES

General Objective:

support the fight against climate change by making public procurement more sustainable through the inclusion of circular economy principles in the largest part of procedures

Specific Objectives:

providing officials and manager of European local authorities, involved in public procurements, with **expertise and competences** aimed at incorporating circular economy principles into the larger part of purchase of goods and services

- inspiring a **new way of thinking and designing public procurements** that overcomes the concept of 'take, make, use and dispose' and it is based on using services, sharing, renting and recycling, instead of owning.

- giving civil servant **instruments and toolkits** that can be used for more aware choices in public procurament designing

EXPECTED RESULTS

A larger amount of public procurements incorporating circular economy principles

Professional development of civil servants

Guidelines with training material to help European local administration to design “circular” public procurements

Identification of sets of criteria to define circular products and services

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Coordination transnational meetings (the first face to face and the other online)
- Guidelines for civil servant. A toolkit to help civil servant to think, design, write and implement more sustainable public procurements to purchase goods and services (exchange of good practices, inspiring success stories, thematic instructions, set of reusable examples and award criteria)
- transnational seminar about toolkit presentation and concrete ways to develop internal methodologies, in order to incorporate circular economy in public procurements' procedures
- multiplier events and dissemination activities