



Special Session Proposal

Leveraging Public Procurement for Regional Sustainability Transitions

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Abstract

Public procurement is the acquisition of goods, works and services by public sector organisations. It accounts for approximately 16% of GDP in the European Union and holds significant potential to drive sustainability transitions at regional and local levels. The size of public sector purchasing gives a strong potential for shaping markets to increase the proliferation of products and services with enhanced sustainability performance, which can include job creation, equalizing income distribution, addressing environmental measures. This is reflected in the role of Public Procurement in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 12, target 12.7 “Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities”).

Of importance is how this spending power can be leveraged to promote sustainable development across business sectors, and the subsequent impact on local economies. This can include the involvement of SMEs, social enterprises and formation of purchasing consortia on behalf of local governments, as well as using procurement strategies to support and facilitate circular economy transitions, climate adaptation and regional development.

We are interested in how public procurement is handled within organisations – e.g. the selection of suppliers, the engagement with stakeholders; the designing of policies and regulations aimed at increasing sustainability performance from procurement decisions; and the experiences of companies engaging in the procurement process. We invite papers that examine the spatial, governance, and institutional dimensions of sustainable procurement. Topics may include supplier and stakeholder engagement, legal frameworks for sustainable public procurement, social value, monitoring and evaluation criteria, and empirical case studies. Public Procurement is more than an administrative process and touches multiple disciplines with regional development implications. Contributions are therefore welcomed (but not limited to) from the perspective of public management and administration, regional planning, environmental management, and supply chain studies, as well as practitioner insights from municipalities, SMEs, and civil society.