



## B5 Promoting sustainable public procurement in the south

### The Marrakech Task Force's Approach to SPP - capacity building for sustainable Public Procurement in Latin America and Africa

#### Part 2: Farid Yaker, UNEP DTIE

**Farid Yaker**

**Programme officer**

**Sustainable public procurement**

**Sustainable Production and Consumption branch.**

15, rue de Milan 75441 Paris Cedex 09  
France

**Tel:** +331 44 37 76 34

**Fax:** +331 44 37 14 74

**e-mail:** farid.yaker@unep.org

**www:** www.unep.org

#### **Organisation : UNEP DTIE**

**Short description:** Based in Paris, the Division of Technologies, Industry and Economics (DTIE) of UNEP encourages decision makers in government, local authorities and industry to develop and implement policies, strategies and practices that are cleaner and safer, make efficient use of natural resources, ensure environmentally sound management of chemicals, reduce pollution and risks for humans and the environment, enable implementation of conventions and international agreements, and incorporate environmental costs.

The Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch works to promote sustainable resource management in a life cycle perspective for goods and services produced and used by governments, business and civil society.

## Executive Summary of your Abstract

The Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Public Procurement (MTF on SPP) led by Switzerland has developed a methodology to implement SPP in either developed or developing countries (called MTF Approach on SPP). The Swiss government and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have established a partnership to implement - in up to 14 countries worldwide this methodology. A project entitled "Capacity building for sustainable public procurement in developing countries" has started in January 2009 with the support of the European Commission, Switzerland and the financial participation of six partner countries (Costa Rica, Chile, Mauritius, Mexico, Tunisia, Uruguay). Its main goal is to accompany the development of SPP in the countries by promoting capacity building activities and supporting the development of a national policy on SPP. Other outputs of the project include (i) an update version of the above mentioned methodology after testing in the 6 partner countries and (ii) policy conclusions to be presented to the Commission for Sustainable Development (2010-2011). The early phase of the project implementation points

to the importance of setting up SPP policies in developing countries that minimize their risks (worsening trade balance, increasing procurement costs, negative impact on local producers of non green products, etc.) and maximize the benefits expected from the application of SPP which should be economical as well as social and ecological.

## **Abstract**

In 2005, at the second international expert meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in Costa Rica, Switzerland launched the Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Public Procurement (MTF on SPP). With the help of its members, the MTF on SPP developed a methodology for SPP implementation (called MTF Approach on SPP) which goes as follows: countries first assess their procurement status through an online questionnaire. Then the project identifies the legal framework for procurement in the country and the possibilities to integrate SPP principles. A country based "Market Readiness Analysis" accompanies the legal analysis to define a list of sustainable products /services that could be progressively incorporated in the procurement system. After successful completion of this first phase, the country develops an implementation plan for SPP and sets up a training program for procurement officers. UNEP/MTF experts assist the implementation of the SPP policy during the first year.

The Swiss government and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have established a partnership to implement the MTF Approach in up to 14 countries worldwide. A project entitled "Capacity building for sustainable public procurement in developing countries" has started in January 2009 with the support of the European Commission, Switzerland and the financial participation of six project partnering countries (Costa Rica, Chile, Mauritius, Mexico, Tunisia, Uruguay). The main goal of the project is to accompany the development of SPP by promoting capacity building activities and supporting the development of a national SPP policy. Other outputs of the project include (i) an update version of the above mentioned methodology after testing in the 6 partner countries and (ii) policy conclusions to be presented to the Commission for Sustainable Development (2010-2011).

The implementation of SPP in developing countries faces specific constraints and challenges as they usually suffer from tight procurement budgets, leading them to favour the price factor to the detriment of social equity, environment or quality. In addition, the procurement system of developing countries and their budgetary procedures are in general not compatible with the use of life cycle costing approaches. These countries also fear the impact that increased imports of sustainable products could have on their trade balance and on the local production of conventional goods, which could be pushed out of the market if public procurers stop purchasing them.

Furthermore, smaller developing countries face the additional challenge of low profitability of their recycling and green products industry due to the limited size of their market. For these countries, solutions can only be found at the regional level.

Given these various challenges, it is important to design policies which will on the one hand reduce the risks attached to SPP (worsening trade balance, increasing procurement costs, negative impact on local producers of non green products, etc.) and on the other hand maximize the benefits linked to the procurement of selected sustainable products. Sustainable public procurement policies should not only bring ecological or social impacts but should also yield various economic benefits such as increased employment or the adoption of new technologies.

## **Resumé**

Trained as an agricultural economist, I worked for 15 years with the international NGO Enda (Environment Development Action) where I was in charge of the European office from 2000 to 2007. In December 2008, I joined UNEP DTIE where I manage the EC/ Switzerland funded Capacity building for Sustainable public procurement project.

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[www.iclei.org/ecoprocura2009](http://www.iclei.org/ecoprocura2009)

**Recommended reading:** (<http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/taskforces/procurement.htm> books, articles, webs

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