

## Short summary

During the hot-topic tables participants discussed practical AI use in public procurement, shared early pilots and use cases, and highlighted common obstacles and open questions. Key themes were: drafting and standardizing documents with AI, using AI for market discovery and brainstorming, security and energy impacts, difficulties keeping models up to date, and the need to coordinate across Europe. Several practical tips for using free AI tools and for designing human-in-the-loop procurement workflows were proposed, together with a pilot example of an AI-assisted tender drafting tool.

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## Detailed notes (expanded)

### 1) Meeting purpose & context

- Session aim: share examples of how AI can be applied in public procurement, start discussion about use cases, risks and opportunities, and explore collaborative approaches.
- Practical pilot highlighted: City of Ghent pilot to create an AI-assisted procurement tool that learns from historical documents, creates first drafts, and supports human ↔ machine interaction.

### 2) Main use cases discussed

- **Document drafting & standardization**
  - Use AI to reword, standardize templates and produce first drafts of tender documents, contracts, selection & award templates.
- **Market discovery & information gathering**
  - Summarize market intelligence, gather and condense supplier/solution information for early market engagement.
- **Brainstorming & inspiration**
  - Generate options, alternative specifications, evaluation criteria and creative approaches to procurement problems.
- **Evaluation support**
  - Pre-screening bids, compliance checks, automated cross-checks of quotes versus historic pricing, scoring assistive tools.
- **Forecasting & scenario planning**
  - Use historical spend + market trends to create best/worst/most-likely budget scenarios and predictive cost forecasts.

### 3) Risks & challenges

- **Technical knowledge gap**
  - Buyers understand use cases but often lack deep technical expertise to adapt models or train them for specific local needs. Lots of differences between organisations in

how they create & validate tender specifications, especially between different EU countries.

- **Security threats**
  - Data leakage, model access control, prompt injection and confidentiality of procurement documents.
- **Model staleness / updating**
  - Difficulty of keeping models up to date with new laws, policies or market conditions (obsolete vs updated info).
- **Energy & sustainability**
  - Concerns about compute cost and environmental footprint of running large models.
- **Supplier behaviour**
  - Increasing use of AI by bidders to draft proposals, raises questions about originality, fairness and how to evaluate AI-assisted bids.
- **Cross-country scaling**
  - Local legal, language and procurement rule differences make a single model hard to scale, need choices about localization, input templates and governance.
- **Governance & auditability**
  - Need clear audit trails, versioning and human-in-the-loop sign-offs for automated outputs.

## 5) Positions from the table

- Participants expect to use **RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation)** approaches for many real cases, i.e., combine local documents/data with generative models to get factual, grounded outputs.
  - Essential that only validated sources of information are used to generate outputs
- Green & strategic aspects were highlighted as prominent use cases, using AI to free time for strategic procurement and sustainability work.
  - Huge potential to implement sustainability or strategic clauses into tender specifications based on previous experiences of other organisations (going beyond your own experience)
- Broad agreement on the need for European cooperation (data/standards/tooling) to scale solutions and align governance.
  - Avoid that 100 separate tools are developed instead of pooling resources
  - Share anonymized best practices, template libraries and quality-checked RAG sources to avoid duplicated effort and increase fairness.
  - However very complex & high cost (European assistance needed)

## 6) This issue of AI-assisted supplier bids

More and more bidders use AI for writing their quotations. This causes possible issues like: bidders overpromising (they cannot provide what the AI wrote for them) or them not knowing what they wrote. **However** this is not 'AI's' fault, it's the tenders who are misusing the technology. Possible options to handle this:

- Require bidders to **declare AI usage** and describe what parts of their bid were AI-generated (EU AI Act).
- Organize training sessions to better instruct bidders on how to use AI responsibly.
- Use tools to detect if AI was used (F.E. GPTZero)

## 7) Question on how to better use already available free LLM models (like Copilot, ChatGPT, etc.)

There are a few practical tips I already shared with our own purchasers, like:

- Be as specific as possible. Vague prompts or questions receive vague answers
- Specify what type of document or input you want to receive (Specification draft, e-mail, policy note...)
- Include additional or limiting factors (like certain regulations, policy documents...)
- Use role assignments (Ask the LLM to act as a legal specialist, product owner, policy maker...)
- Limit the scope: Don't try to put every demand you have in a single prompt. LLM models can better focus if they are limited to one specific task prompt at a time
- Use a reward system: Some studies suggest that using a reward system (even if it's fake) makes LLM models think longer & better about the prompt you gave. F.E.: I will award you (Copilot or ChatGPT) with a financial incentive of 200 dollars if your input is immediately useful
- Want to avoid the typical AI language: prompt it to write in a fluent way but as a non-native speaker. In my experience this way you get a more readable text that avoids overcomplicated terms & the use of typical AI phrasing.