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GreenS GPP Policy Recommendations

**GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND EU-LEVEL**

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Introduction

This document elaborates on Green Public Procurement (GPP) policy recommendations for decision makers and practitioners at local, regional, national and EU-level. The recommendations are based on the findings of GreenS Steering Committee discussions and consultations, the partners' experiences throughout the project and different GreenS project reports, such as the partners' consolidated GPP strategies to institutionalize GPP through specific GPP Support Units (GPP.S) and GPP trainings.

The GreenS project was implemented in seven countries as Latvia, Slovenia, Italia, Spain, Cyprus, Sweden and Bulgaria in their energy agencies together with an institutional body. The project was supported by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, an international and European organisation with over 20 years of experience on sustainable public procurement.

This paper considers relevant legislation, such as the implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU - abbreviated EED) and the Public Procurement Directive (2004/18/EC), which had to be transposed in all EU Members States by April 2016, i.e. after the beginning of the GreenS project. This was both a challenge and an opportunity for the project partners. A challenge as public procurement legislation was in a transition phase and an opportunity because once the EU Public Procurement Directives had been transposed at national level, decision makers and procurers were very keen to receive more information.

Following a chapter on “The Power of GPP”, the “GreenS GPP Policy Recommendations” are divided in three progressive phases looking at the development, implementation and the sustainability (ex-post) of the GPP activities. Each of these three policy recommendation sections includes also a table illustrating the “GreenS Way” approach taken.

More information about the GreenS project can be found online at: www.greensproject.eu

The Power of Green Public Procurement

According to the European Commission, Green Public Procurement (GPP) is "a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured. (European Commission, DG Environment)."

Accordingly, to EU's public procurement strategy a substantial part of public investment is spent through public procurement (around 2 trillion EUR per year, representing 14% of EU GDP), and high quality public services depend on modern, well-managed and efficient procurement. Improving public procurement can yield big savings: even a 1 per cent efficiency gain could save 20 billion EUR per year. The public sector can also use procurement to boost jobs, growth and investment, and to create an economy that is more innovative, resource and energy efficient, and socially-inclusive.

Some additional benefits of Green Public Procurement are listed below.

LEGAL BACKING

The EU Procurement Directives of 2004 (2004/18/EC) explicitly allow and encourage "green" public purchasing criteria, i.e. the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) instead of the cheapest price. They had to be transposed by all EU Member States by April 2016.

Several other mandatory public purchasing requirements are included in EU legislation, such as:

- The Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU - abbreviated EED) that establishes a set of binding measures to help the EU reach its 20% energy efficiency target by 2020. The EED requires Member States to "ensure that central governments purchase only products, services and buildings with high energy-efficiency performance, insofar as that is consistent with cost-effectiveness, economical feasibility and wider sustainability (Art. 6)", technical suitability, as well as sufficient competition.
- The Clean Vehicles Directive (CVD) is currently under revision;
- The Energy Services Directive (2006/32/EC) that requires the public sector to apply the use of energy performance contracting or the purchasing of energy-efficient products, buildings and vehicles based on minimized life-cycle cost analysis;
- The Energy Labelling Directive (2010/30/EU) that requires contracting authorities to endeavour to procure only products belonging to the highest efficiency class, where such products are covered by delegated acts under this Directive;

- The Energy Star Regulation (106/2008/EC), which applies the same approach as Article 6 of the EED, namely that central governments must specify energy-efficiency requirements for public supply contracts of office equipment that are not less efficient than those set out under the Energy Star Programme.

MARKET POWER

As mentioned above, European public purchasing for products and services accounts for about 14 to 18 per cent of the EU Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Particularly product groups such as vehicles, most notably busses, ITC and buildings, are procured to a large extent by public procurers. In Germany alone, approximately 50 per cent of the busses and approximately 15 per cent of the ICT products are purchased by public authorities¹.

CLIMATE POWER

CO₂ emissions would be cut by 15Mio tonnes per year if the whole EU adopted the same environmental criteria for lighting and office equipment as the City of Turku, Finland – reducing electricity consumption by 50%².

If all IT purchases in Europe followed the example of Copenhagen and the Swedish Administrative Development Agency, energy consumption would be cut by roughly the equivalent of four nuclear reactors.

Enormous energy saving potential can be found in the building (40% of EU energy consumption) and transport sector (1/3 of EU CO₂).

SIZE DOES NOT MATTER

Whether GPP is applied by a small town or a large city does not really matter. Larger purchaser might more easily be able to achieve a green offer through the larger tender volume. However, smaller purchasing bodies can consider a joint procurement with several smaller public authorities to save costs, promote innovation and reduce the administrative burden.

¹ McKinsey Studie: Potenziale der öffentlichen Beschaffung für ökologische Industriepolitik und Klimaschutz, Nov '09

² European Commission Buying Green Handbook 2016

COST-EFFICIENT PROCUREMENT

Green Public Procurement does not mean more expensive public procurement. The 2014 EU Procurement Directives clearly encourage requiring the most economically advantageous offers (MEAT) in public tenders to achieve the most with taxpayer's money.

Energy performance contracting (EPC) and asking for the lowest Life-Cycle-Cost (LCC) instead of the lowest purchasing price is just one of many measures which combining green public procurement with long-term visioning. Considerable amounts of money can be saved by reducing the running and maintenance costs of products. Joint public procurement and leasing are two other ways of reducing costs. Another possibility is smart and creative procurement:

- Cities such as the Swedish one of Malmo run 100 per cent organic school canteens by saving costs through long-term contracts with local farmers and having less meat in menus.
- The Danish city of Kolding, who is applying 100 per cent GPP in tendering, considerably reduced procurement costs through constant EU project involvement, market engagement and European exchange of good practice.
- By asking for innovative floor lamps and inviting manufacturers in the pre-tendering phase, the city of Zurich managed to have extremely low-energy lamps on the market and pay much less for the lighting products.
- The Procurement Agency of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Germany, used half of the water, energy and CO₂ when applying GPP on its tender for the supply of dishwashing machines. Further best practice examples on cost-saving procurement through GPP can be found here: www.gpp2020.eu

The GreenS GPP Policy Recommendations

The Green Public Procurement (GPP) policy recommendations listed below apply to different levels of governance ranging from local, regional, national to European level. The extent to which the policy recommendations can be applied depend among others on the resources, geographic scope and capacities of each organisation, the type and value of procurement procedures carried out, local and regional strategies, etc.

The policies are based on the experiences and expertise of the GreenS partners. -They are divided in three overall policy recommendations, which reflect at the same time the consecutive progress, and specific policy recommendations, which include “the GreenS way” that showcases the approach and main outcomes of the project.

1. Developing a GPP strategy

Successful GPP needs a strategy. Ad-hoc GPP, i.e. procuring a few green products such as electric vehicles or energy-efficient computers, may bring some publicity and reduce some greenhouse gas emissions, however, the risk is that this remains a one-off sustainable public purchase without any further impact. A thorough GPP strategy, on the other hand, has the potential to become an important driver for achieving several policy goals a public authority may have.

Making GPP an important driver within relevant policy targets

In line with the European sustainable policy agenda, many public authorities have developed strategies ranging from climate action plans to resource efficiency, energy efficiency strategies to circular and green economy policies. GPP is an important driver to achieve such national, regional and local targets, particularly by including high energy efficiency requirements in tenders for buildings, transport and ITC.

At a local level, thousands of cities are part of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy³, which requests signatories to develop and implement Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs) that go even beyond the EU climate mitigation and adaptation policy targets. Linking GPP to SECAP’s helps members of the Global Covenant of Mayors to achieve their ambitions climate mitigation and adaptation targets.

Any energy efficiency or climate-related policy should include GPP as an important measure to achieve the targets of such a policy.

³ www.globalcovenantofmayors.org

Mainstreaming GPP: multi-level and cross-departmental consultations

To achieve a meaningful shift to green purchasing all levels of governance ideally work together. This can lead to cross-fertilisation and fastening the process of setting up a good GPP strategy. Working together will also increase the visibility of the GPP commitment and send a strong signal to the market.

GPP is not the sole responsibility of the procurement or environmental or finance department. Best practices have in common that different departments within a public authority successfully worked together. Involving different departments can also be considered according to the specific product groups or services prioritised.

Prioritising products and services

Prioritising products and services makes sense if in line with specific policy objectives. For instance, a strategy linked to low carbon or energy efficiency may list product groups and services that support the achievement of these types of targets such as buildings, energy, transport or ICT products and services. Without infringing with the principle of discrimination, a criterion for such a prioritisation could be the local and regional market and work force. Tackling unemployment or supporting small and medium-sized enterprises are objectives of common interest and legally valid if well elaborated and linked to local, regional or national policies and strategies.

Including a mix of awareness raising, multi-stakeholder and training activities

Focusing just on some awareness raising activities won't make the deal. A strategy may include a few basic points or objectives only and leave it up to the implementing authority to approach these. However, addressing already a balanced mix of support activities in the strategy could be very useful for the later implementation. Such activities can include a mix of awareness raising events or an entire campaign, capacity building, multi-stakeholder exchange platforms and more. This provides already a clearer understanding of the number of experts to be involved later.

Learning from and analysing other experiences

A public authority who wants to implement GPP as part of a wider strategy and policy does no longer have to reinvent the wheel. As outlined in the previous chapter on "the power of GPP", all the ingredients to apply GPP are there: legal backing, guidance, policies, good practice etc. Policy makers may want to learn from others who have successfully integrated GPP. These may include public authorities from the same region or country or public authorities from other countries. Besides field visits and bilateral meetings, learning from others or sharing experience is also possibly by analysing existing good practice. Joining relevant networks working on GPP such as ICLEI is another possibility to explore.

GPP strategy with GPP Action Plan

The most effective and efficient strategy will include an action plan with concrete steps, measures and targets to be achieved over a given timeframe. Such an action plan, if properly monitored, has the potential to effectively green the tendering of a local, regional or national public authority and to continue in the long term. It would include all the policy recommendations for a comprehensive strategy as illustrated in the following section on “Institutionalising GPP”.

The GreenS way – Developing a GPP strategy

A key deliverable of the GreenS project was to draft a *GPP Strategy Plan on actions and tools* by so called GPP Support Units (hereafter ‘GPP.S’) and to develop a detailed *concept on how to institutionalize GPP training* within the organisation’s portfolio, ensuring funding (e.g. structural funds) after the lifetime of the project.

- The strategy should ensure that the GPP implementation process is more successful and all possible stakeholders are involved in it.
- Multi-level collaboration was used by the GPP.S to set up networks of key stakeholders to sustain and enhance GPP.
- The GPP.S was also host for procurer’s trainings to consolidate and ensure a long-term GPP approach.
- The GPP.S unit could also give long-term technical support on GPP.
- A communication plan was developed including identification of target group and media strategy.

To success in GPP we started Green Public Procurement Supporters. Units within all the participating Energy Agencies. This to ensure long-term support as technical assistance on GPP to the public authorities. These units also brought forth a multi-level cooperation among different actors at national, regional and local level on GPP. Networks like this was crucial to build to address all stakeholders. After these GPP.S units was established each unit developed strategies with a set of actions and tools to implement their role as supporters on GPP to public authorities and other GPP stakeholders.

The GPP.S units also held trainings for procurers. In some of these trainings companies was invited to participate as speakers to show their green products, as one of the findings in the GreenS project was that when the public authorities raise the amount of green demands in public procurement. It is very important for the market to follow that demand of products and services. Trainings where corporate sector is invited is one way to start to build up this collaboration. This can further on strengthen the collaboration between business community and public authorities. The number of participants that attend the trainings in some of the countries in the GreenS project is an excellent indicator showing the need of this kind of technical support for procurers and the GPP.S unit as a structure and positive role to organise it.

The target group include procurers with different skill levels on GPP and a variety of administrative territories. Therefore, a technical assistance was included in the GreenS way to increase



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implementation of green public procurement. This technical assistance was what templates to use and help to address other issues that can occur in the procurement process. After trainings in evaluations also procurers mention this as a certain need for them. Companies and procurers also met each other in Face-to Face meeting a successful way to encourage municipalities to launch green tenders. Another need from the corporate sector raised, as how to meet increasing amount of green demands from the procurers. Here the G.P.P.S units performed some successful activities as the face-to-face meetings. In this meetings procurer meet one or many companies providing a certain product/service. Here procurers and suppliers could discuss and elaborate both sides situations. Procurer could describe future needs and what demands the public bodies was aiming at and corporates could describe their challenges and their future product development. Face to face meetings with main regional suppliers can both inform about the needs of the public administration as well as find out if their products can fulfil the EU GPP criteria and satisfy the green public demand but also identify companies needs and improvement proposals.



2. Institutionalising GPP

A GPP plan is a good start and provides a vision. What matters most is implementation to achieve the goals laid out in the strategy plan, and to monitor progress. To maximise the impact of the GPP application all stakeholders must be involved and together progress in the direction towards a greener public procurement. Following the GreenS GPP institutionalisation approach several policy recommendations have been identified.

Spreading GPP trainings to spread GPP

Although GPP is not a recent approach, like for instance circular public procurement, most of public authorities still mention lack of technical knowledge and expertise as main barriers to successfully implementing GPP. Due to ambitious sustainable development policies, many public authorities do aim to include such considerations in their daily activities. However, procurement is not necessarily used to achieve these targets or at least not used strategically. Having relevant personnel trained to carry out GPP activities and develop green tenders on a systematic basis helps to reach sustainability targets, to show leadership and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Training has shown as an excellent resource to be used both to build up capacity of policy makers and municipalities employees as well as provide them with appropriate tools like life cycle costing analysis tool and EU GPP criteria to make the green criteria inclusion in the procurement process. This will also help to increase local authority and staff's skill capacity.

Hence, foreseeing wide-spread capacity building on GPP will be important for any GPP institutionalisation process.

Establishing GPP experts: training the GPP trainers

Following up on the previous policy recommendations, however, it is not always easy to find GPP experts who can train public purchasers on GPP or who can train in the national language. A longer-term vision includes therefore train-the-trainer programs on GPP too to scale up the GPP process at local, regional and national level.

Making tender models and tender criteria for GPP available

Public procurers usually do not have the resources to engage in new or greener or innovative tendering procedures. Sometimes they also lack the content-knowledge. Hence, developing GPP tenders and 'GPP criteria' (tender requirements and evaluation criteria) for several product and service groups could be very useful for public procurers.

Meeting the market to learn and to be visible

Many policies, guidance documents, and ready-to-use procurement criteria are available to public purchasers who want to procure green. However, to ensure competition, and hence, a certain number of bids, it is recommended to engage with relevant market players, including suppliers and manufacturers in a non-discriminatory manner. This helps also to ensure that quality of the tender in line with the most innovative and advanced state of the art products and services.

Naturally, the market engagement is not bound to the GPP strategy development only but should be integer part of the whole procurement process to ensure the requirements are fully understood and applied. In addition, involving the market in the design of a GPP strategy provides also visibility to future green tender participants, who can adapt their portfolio.

Creation of regional networks has a crucial role to improve GPP

Supporting the regionalisation of GPP or at least the aggregation of interested public authorities has proven to be useful for the implementation of GPP. Regionalisation means collaboration in the same language, facing most of the time the same challenges, and involving a healthy part of competition between public authorities. Also, from a financial perspective, regionalising GPP makes it easier for procurers to engage as the geographical radius is shorter. Costs for travelling are easier to justify as personnel from neighbouring public authorities are involved to. Eventually, apart from stronger cooperation and other benefits, joint public procurement may be possible, leading to reduced administrative and purchasing costs.

Piloting and experimenting GPP

The G.PP.S (green public procurer supporters) units in the GreenS project have worked to bringing forth Pilot GPP experimentations. This has served as a perfect tool to showcase the benefits of GPP and to encourage other public administrations to develop similar initiatives. A proper dissemination of the results obtained at regional level and national level will maximize the impact of the model and are highly recommended.

The GreenS way - Institutionalising GPP

GPP.S units set up

According to GreenS working program, the energy agencies formally established a Green Public Procurement Support Unit within the energy agency to provide and give public authorities long-term support and technical assistance on Green Public Procurement at national, regional and local level. The GPPS is a key element for the development and the implementation of GPP institutionalization in the territory. In this sense, the GPPS unit plays a crucial role by supporting municipalities to overcome the main barriers and difficulties for an effective GPP implementation.

Under the project GreenS, the Cyprus Energy Agency has taken the decision to establish a Green Public Procurement Support Unit within the energy agency (hereafter called G.PP.S), to provide and give public/local authorities long-term support and technical assistance on Green Public Procurement at national, regional and local level. For that reason, the amendment of the statute of the Cyprus

Energy Agency including the promotion of the Green Public Procurements and the Green & Circular Economy, is agreed by the Members of the Management Board.

Training in Brussels

Was important and a unique possibility for the energy agencies to meet field experts and gain the newest arguments to motivate procurers realise GPP as well as excellent possibility to learn the best methods and ideas for GPP realisation possibilities.

On spot visits

The main objective of the meeting was to present to the local stakeholders the EU policies and Strategies on GPP, the circular economy and circular procurement as well as an introduction of key criteria for the GPP categories vehicles and office equipment. Experiences from the invited key experts from ICLEI were shared among the participants and a roundtable discussion was followed on the topic.

Afterwards, a study visit was realized in this example to the recent energy refurbished public building of the Department of Electrical and Mechanical Services of Cyprus where GPP was used for the upgrade of the building to Energy Class B+. To the building, energy efficiency improvement measures were applied like thermal insulation of the roof and the facade, installation of high efficient double-glazing windows, installation of smart meters, automations to the lighting system, replacement of conventional lamps with efficient led bulbs, installation of photovoltaic system and green roof.

Pilots

21 GPP pilot experimentations were successfully implemented under GreenS project, in 7 different EU countries: Italy, Sweden, Cyprus, Spain, Latvia, Slovenia, Bulgaria. The impact from the realised GPP pilots was more than 6.400 tCO₂ emissions reductions.

Regional network

This versatile cooperation made all bodies work together in the same direction that made the progress much faster. Also, there was an awareness of what other parties was doing along the way and collaboration could be found in many new ways. The key to success was these networks that were built upon the GreenS model of a multi-level approach. This means networks with main stakeholders was developed on a regional level that included participants both from local and national level. This stakeholder was public entities, companies and other organizations. This multi-level approach has assured progress and these regional networks has been the back bone for the development. The meetings were an efficient tool for knowledge/ experience sharing and a forum where public entities and companies could meet on regular bases and discuss the field actualities among different stakeholders in all levels.

As one of the main findings in the GreenS project was that an important tool to increase the amount of GPP, is to build a regional network. It is highly recommended to succeed in raised levels of GPP. Both because of the found cooperation and experience exchange with the main stakeholders but also to promote the GPP institutionalization that creates a better impact of GPP on both regional and local level.

Meet the market

Successful GPP needs to successfully dialogue with the market

One finding during the GreenS project was that in some places the market was not prepared to meet the requirements from the procurer. Market is one of the main pillars in the public procurement process. It is very important to involve the market and increase companies' engagement. But it is also important to have direct contact with municipalities which has shown as the most effective tool to bring them to green procurement. Business community and public authorities are equally important to get into cooperation for a successful outcome. Market players improved the understanding about green public procurement specific from the one hand and procurers improved understanding how to work effective with market players on the another hand after the GreenS project market research was done.

Multi level governance

Another thing which I didn't write in a comment as I was not sure it is relevant to this document - is multi level governance. If you see it useful, please free to use: In my case I can say that one of the project success was the round tables for stakeholders. Multi level stakeholders meet on regular bases and discussed actualities of the field. These meetings give a strong impact on building closer cooperation among governmental institutions which deal GPP issue on daily bases. In many cases many unsolved issues was discussed during these meetings and common understanding was found as well as many new ideas which was presented from GreenS project was afterwards used and promoted by governmental institutions. For example GreenS templates.

RESULTS AS NUMBERS:

- 49 training sessions have been developed under GreenS project
- 1501 participants have been trained
- 21 GPP Pilot projects have been implemented
- 6.400 tCO₂ emissions reductions because of this Pilots
- 6 different GPP Templates for Energy products & services has been produced for procurers to use in GPP
- 7 Strategies on GPP has been developed in each energy agency
- 7 market researchers have been developed in each energy agency

3. Ensuring GPP continuation/sustainability

A thorough GPP strategy is needed to avoid having a one-off GPP without any major impact. GPP institutionalising includes multi-level and multi-stakeholder engagement processes such as train-the-trainer seminars, GPP trainings, green tender piloting and market dialogue. Without a vision and a process designed to last for a longer timeframe, the risk is that the green purchasing process stagnates at a certain stage, with business as usual and no support and monitoring frame to ensure the sustainability of the GPP action.

Ensuring a GPP vision with longer-term implementation and concrete targets

To maximise the impact and ensure sustainability of the GPP action, any effective strategy should include a longer vision, shared by most stakeholders, with agreed objectives and targets going beyond the next election period. Such a strategy could for instance entail targets for the years to come (e.g. 50% organic agriculture in food procurement by 2022 or energy from 100% renewable energy sources by 2023).

Allocating accessible funding and support programmes

Allocate financial support for GPP, represents another enabler for the transition to GPP, at the stage where cities consider piloting such activities for future uptake. The financial support can address local or regional governments, specific product groups and services or existing policy targets at local, regional, national or European level.

Having clear and functioning monitoring in place

Without proper monitoring it will be impossible to measure success and difficult to explore whether or what improvement will be needed to bring the local, regional or national green procurement to the next level. Monitoring can be very complex or rather simply with annual reporting and benchmarking on the financial volume of GPP or the number of products and services purchased.

Planning regular meetings and fora with all GPP stakeholders

Establishing regular fora where GPP or public procurement-related activities are being discussed and improved is another way to support the consolidation of GPP practices. Some countries have national or regional GPP conferences where procurers hear about latest legal and political developments, meet GPP experts, engage with private business (manufacturers and suppliers) and share experiences. Some countries have GPP Awards where the GPP best practices of each year are awarded (e.g. Italy and Cyprus).

Ensuring GPP spreading through effective dissemination

The project deliverable and activities had been tested with good results. Efficient promotion and dissemination led not only to increasing GPP levels but also to a greener mind shift and a raising public bodies' awareness on the environmental impact of certain products and services. The synergies with all stakeholders can leads to greater collaboration between corporate business and public authorities. Further it could also improv the speed of the transition to a green economy. By all certainty this can assure environmental awareness rise. Both workshops and training courses was used as a tool to promote a behavioural change in public entities together with other activities that will be described below.

Linking Green Public Procurement to innovation and circular procurement

Public procurement of innovation is future-driven as it is about using public procurement as a driver for developing new approaches, products and services. Circular public procurement tries to close the public procurement circle by considering a move from linear to circular production and consumption. By linking GPP to circular economy and innovation policy makers ensure a continuous improvement and up-scaling of the green public procurement process.

The GreenS way

To continue the GPP expansion, here are some examples from the energy agencies around Europe on how they will continue the work.

- North Sweden Energy Agency – is building project preStratus, a project to support municipalities and region to achieve national energy- and climate targets where GPP is having a central part and the GPP.S will support all stakeholders in procurement to succeed in the transition to a green economy.
- APEC will continue giving GPP support to all local administration in the Province, for example, introducing green criteria on the Sustainable Development Urban Equipment
- BSRAEM – the Agency staff will focus on creating additional contacts with other energy agencies or G.PP. Structures by participating on various international energy related events, such as EU Sustainable energy week (once a year, Brussels), The Eastern Partnership Platform on Energy Security (twice a year – participation upon decision of the Management board and in dependence of the project schedules), World Sustainable Energy Days, Citizens Energy Forum, etc. Improvement Provincial Program. On the other hand, the Spanish Network of Cities for the Climate launched a pilot project to promote green public procurement among Spanish municipalities using GreenS project as a model for replication. APEC will coordinate the working group in charge to implement this pilot project.
- Cyprus Energy Agency will support the Local Authorities of Cyprus to implement effectively GPPs through their new energy sustainable action plans-SECAPs. Cyprus Energy Agency is the official agency for the promotion of the "Covenant of Mayors" and the "Pact of Islands" in Cyprus. Also, the Department of Environment (Competent Authority of GPP) together with the Cyprus Energy Agency will continue organising the CY GPP AWARDS as a mean to support and reward green actions in Cyprus.



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