

2019 Southeast and Northeast Asia Policy Dialogue and Training on “Harmonizing SPP practices and Measuring SPP benefits”



Date: 23,24,25 October 2019
Suzhou, China

Flash report

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Venue: Suzhou, China. Four Points, By Sheraton Suzhou

The activity took place back to back with the International Workshop on Ecolabelling and Green Procurement organized by the China Environmental United Certification Center (CEC) and International Symposium on Green Consumption hosted by Environmental Development Center (EDC) of MEE of China, with over 20 participants from ministries of environment and finance coming from 10 northeast and southeast Asian countries, including Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philipines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Objectives

The main objective of this policy dialogue and training was to ensure that “no one will be left behind” in the region in relation to SPP in Northeast and Southeast Asia. The 3-day event focused on exchanging technical knowledge on SPP policy development and on measuring the benefits on SPP.

To achieve this main objective, the specific objectives were:

- Discuss the possibility of harmonizing the process of developing SPP policies including SPP criteria, monitoring, etc.
- Build capacity on: i) measuring of benefits achieved through SPP; ii) Indicator SDG 12.7.1 monitoring and reporting.
- Showcase good practices of countries measuring the benefits of SPP.

Implemented by

Highlights

- During the 3-day event, participants engaged in discussions and shared lessons learned on the importance of measuring Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) and/or Green Public Procurement (GPP) practices and benefits.
- The SWITCH-Asia SPP/GPP Survey's results were presented during the event showing that countries are not reporting as much as they could on Sustainable Public Procurement (SDG 12.7). According to the results, while only 2 out of the 19 SWITCH-Asia countries have reported to have included SPP in their national documents/guidelines or policies in their VNRs, the survey, which only covered 9 countries, found that 8 of them had done so. Moreover, while only 3 countries have reported to be implementing some type of initiative to introduce Eco-labeling or some type of accreditation system, while 7 out of 9 countries from the survey have indicated to have some type of eco-label or certification system linked to SPP/GPP in place; and while only 1 country has reported to be implementing some type of project/s to promote sustainable/green public procurement, the survey showed that 6 countries out of 9 already have a dedicated GPP/SPP policy (or policies), regulation(s), law(s) and/or mandate(s) in place that promote GPP/SPP.
- One of the issues discussed in the policy dialogue was the degree of importance of aligning some of the aspects of the procurement processes in the region, such as certain criteria or labels, and the main conclusion was that, despite it was very relevant, the priority should rather lay on ensuring that when it comes to GPP/SPP, "no one will be left behind" in the region. That is, the idea of harmonization should have a strong focus on helping countries which are least advanced in implementing SPP to reach the same level of development as countries which are more advanced.
- There was a focus on the importance of monitoring and measuring different aspects of SPP (institutionalization, level and benefits) as a way to 1) track policy progress, visualizing policy results and impact; 2) raise compliance, keeping each agency accountable; 3) target support, identifying areas for improvement; and 4) legitimize actions, demonstrating political commitment and encouraging others.

- All participants understood the importance of measuring institutionalization, level and benefits of GPP/ SPP, in order to push the process forward. To have the “buy in” from the people working with public procurement was the reason highlighted for most of the participants to justify the importance of measuring the benefits of GPP or SPP in their respective countries.
- Another strong emphasis was made on reporting on SPP at the international level. During the event, SWITCH-Asia RPAC team presented on the different mechanisms that governments can use to report on SPP, highlighting its importance and comparing the results of the SWITCH-Asia SPP/GPP Survey to the information provided on SDG 12.7 in the VNRs, which showed that countries are taking several positive steps towards SPP/GPP that they are not reporting.
- During the event, countries like the Philippines, China, Korea, Japan, shared their knowledge with the rest of the countries by presenting their experiences, challenges and achievements in regards to SPP and GPP. Some European cases with GPP were also presented as good examples that could be implemented in the Asian region.
- Through organizing back to back with the relevant workshops, the participants learned about more experiences and practices on eco-labeling as an existing tool for GPP/SPP, and they were had the chance to enlarge their networking with some international initiatives, such as Global Eco-labeling Network (GEN) and International Government Procurement Network (IGPN) .
- The presentations showcased that going green does not work without financial incentives and a distortion of the market taking place. In this context, SPP and GPP are very powerful tools (as public procurement accounts for a 10-30% of the GDP in the counties) to support manufacturers that are willing to produce environment friendly products competitively, if markets are willing to buy/procure green products. SWITCH-Asia RPAC assumed the commitment to continue to support countries represented in the event in promoting SPP and GPP. To do so, 2 specific activities will be carried out during 2019. First, the development of a publication to illustrate how public authorities in Asia have successfully measured SPP and/or GPP. Secondly, a follow up training will be carried out in Bangkok in December 2019.

SWITCH-Asia's Visibility at the events

Digital Backdrop and Rollup banners







