



# Implementing sustainable procurement

Lessons learned from evaluation of action plans

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# CE Delft

- Independent research and consultancy since 1978
- Transportation, energy and resources
- Combining economics, technology and policy issues
- 60 employees, based in Delft, the Netherlands
- Not-for-profit



## Clients



Industries  
(Small and medium size enterprises, transport, energy and trade associations)



Governments  
(European Commission, European Parliament, regional and local governments)



NGOs

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# RSP action plans

- **Manifest MVI:**
  - Dutch national agreement to take action on responsible and sustainable procurement (RSP)
  - Commitment to bring RSP up to speed in their organization and set up an action plan
- **Manifesto signed by different public actors:**
  - 6 ministries, 5 provinces, >80 municipalities, >20 water authorities, and 5 other organizations

# Evaluation of action plans

- Assignment by Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
- Objective: Help organizations learn from each other in setting up or improving their Action Plan
- Approach
  - Study of 72 action plans
  - Online survey with 79 respondents
  - 12 telephone interviews

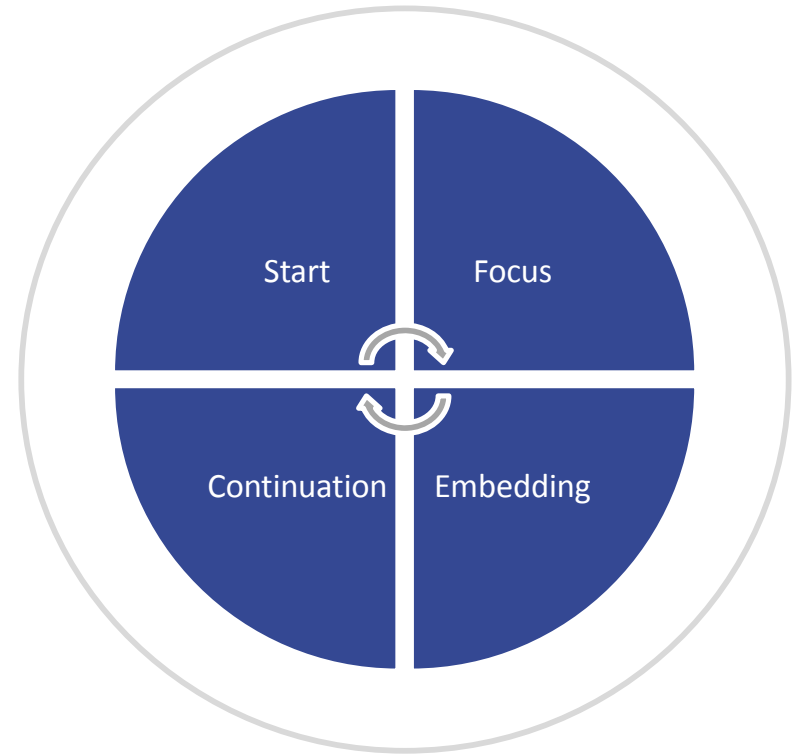
*Large and small municipalities, provinces, ministries, water authorities, university, ...*

This presentation:  
Lessons learned for **implementation** and **embedding** of  
sustainable procurement



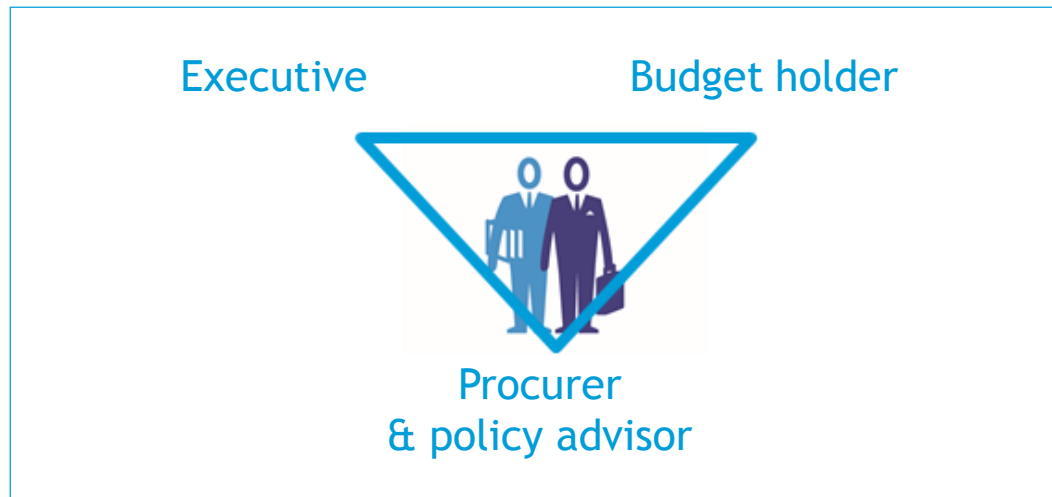
# Conclusions from the evaluation

- **Start**
  - Whom to involve and how?
- **Focus**
  - How do organizations determine the ambition (per purchase)?
- **Embedding**
  - How do organizations embed RSP into the procurement process?
- **Continuation**
  - How do organisations monitor their results and adjust their plan?



# Start

## Whom to involve?



- *Stakeholder analysis, organisational structure & procurement process*
- Commitment on executive level
  - Not only the procurement department

# Start

## How to involve the organization?



### Just begin

*“Focus on the people who are enthusiastic and start the process with them.” (large municipality)*

- **Budget holders / procurers**
  - Make contributor to (part of) action plan
  - Jointly determine level of ambition
  - Convincing: knowledge sessions; answer the “why”-question
- **Executive level**
  - Report results



# Focus

## Making ambitions specific per procurement

- Translation of ambition to specific procurement is not easy!
  - Quality (RSP) vs price
- Tools:
  - Tender calendar
  - RSP in early stage of procurement process
  - Instruments (NL):
    - [Ambitieweb](#);
    - [Omgevingswijzer](#);
    - [MVO-risicochecker](#)
  - Market consultation
  - Specific examples of tenders

### Dialogue with the market

*“A market consultation does not always need an extensive or formal process. After talking to a few important suppliers, you are often a lot wiser.” (HVC)*

# Embedding

## Embedding RSP in existing processes

### Change management

*For years, lowest price was the most important procurement requirement in Rotterdam due to the large cuts that were needed in all areas. Taking into account qualitative aspects in tenders isn't possible with merely process agreements. It is a form of change management. All employees now need to change their behavior.”*

(municipality of Rotterdam)



- Embedding in procurement process and -protocols
- RSP on the regular agenda
- Need to report RSP results to management and executives

# Embedding

## Awareness and responsibilities

- **Awareness of employees**
  - Internal communication is key!
- **Define responsibilities at all levels**
- **Free up capacity and budget**
  - *“You can’t just do SRP ‘on the side’.”*



# Continuation

## Monitoring, evaluating and updating

### Annual update



*“We see that it is necessary to update the plan annually because not everything is clear from the start. For example in the area of international social conditions: we didn’t know well what was possible and a lot has changed. (Province of Noord-Holland)”*

- **Updating and making adjustments**
  - Learning process

# Key lessons

## Start

- SRP and the action plan don't only belong to procurement. Budget holders have a deciding role.
- Start with who are already motivated

## Focus

- Be ambitious enough, but don't make it too big. You still need to be able to make it specific.

## Embedding

- Assign budget and capacity. Don't try to do SRP 'on the side'.
- Integrate SRP in existing processes and structures.
- Internal communication is essential.

## Continuation

- Evaluate regularly (e.g. annually) and adjust plans/goals.

## General

- Dare to ask: there is a lot of existing information.
- The process of making an action plan already leads to results.



# Publication (Dutch)

- **Publication:**

Responsible and sustainable procurement action plans (CE Delft, 2018)

Download via:

<https://www.cedelft.eu/en/publications/2214/socially-responsible-procurement-action-plans-review-and-lessons-learned>

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