



# THE GREE NER TOOL BOX

## *Orientation to VET providers on designing I-VET and C- VET programs*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Definition
GPP	Green Public Procurement
CPP	Circular Public Procurement
PA	Public Authority
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
VET	Vocational Education Training
ICVET	International Centre for Vocational Education and Training
I-VET	Initial Vocational Education Training
C-VET	Continuing Vocational Education Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
MEC	Minimum Environmental criteria
EQF	European Qualification Framework
NRP	National Resilience Plan

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# 1. Introduction

The Greener Toolbox aims at gathering tools and resources to support the participation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Green and Circular Public Procurement (GPP/CPP). SMEs have a great role to play in the transition to a more circular economy. Indeed, SMEs are central to local economies and local employment and GPP is a central instrument for the EU to achieve its objective to become carbon neutral for 2050. But engaging SMEs to participate in GPP present several challenges, which will be introduced in this document.

This reports section gives orientation to VET providers on designing I-VET and C-VET programs. It includes a list of reasons highlighting the importance to train SMEs on Green Public Procurement, and how a VET provider could design and implement the GREENER training course. Moreover, you will find the description of the learning outcomes of each of the GREENER training modules.

The full GREENER toolbox is completed with a report that gathers the main barriers and drivers for SMEs to apply for GPP, and 17 factsheets of good practices on supporting SMEs to participate in GPP in the different countries of the project and also at international level.

## 2. Orientation to VET providers on designing I-VET and C-VET programs

The purpose of this section is to orientate vocational training providers on how to enhance and increase training for SMEs on the topic of Green Public Procurement. Moreover, this section also aims at providing answers to the following question:

### 2.1. Why should a VET Provider promote the GPP training course?

Public spending in Europe accounts for 14% of European GDP. This means that public purchasing power is an important lever guiding the sustainable goods, services and works demand. Therefore, the GPP European regulation framework is a strong stimulus for eco-innovation and the circular economy.

Despite the impact of the GPP market opportunity, the companies, and especially SMEs, have difficulties in answer to the GPP request, in participating to the green market. The GREENER project highlighted elements that hinder SME participation in GPP, including:

- The lack of knowledge of green procurement procedures;
- The difficulty of understanding the requirements formulated by contracting authorities in calls for tenders;
- The complexity of SMEs in responding to the technical characteristics required by tenders;
- The lack of awareness of the role of certifications in responding to tender constraints;
- Other factors that hinder SME participation in GPP.

Therefore, training for SMEs on GPP is a winning strategy for:

1. Increase awareness of the GPP system, both for public and private tenders;
2. Deepen the technical knowledge to be able to participate in GPP and increase the level of success of SMEs;
3. Highlight how business participation in GPP increases corporate performance in economic and social responsibility terms.

To sum up, among the many motivations to train on GPP we would focus on these:

#### a. Green Public Procurement is an emerging skill need

The demand on how to implement the GPP policy at SMEs level is increasing. In fact, by creating lead markets for green, companies' procurement officers are demanding supporting information on how to draft tender documents with environmental criteria and incorporate life cycle impacts into bid evaluation.

Education and capacity building through training programs are promoted by the Chambers of Commerce, Sectorial business association in cooperation with VET Providers, Technical and Research Agency operating at national and local level.

The GREENER training program deal with this need, promoting SMEs' awareness and ability to find, analyse the GPP tender and its green criteria.

**b. GPP is a priority for upskilling and reskilling adult workers in SMEs**

The green transformation provides scope for productivity improvement in the SMEs, but large adoption gaps exist compared to larger firms. Ensuring that SMEs keep pace with the green transition means engaging SMEs in upskilling and reskilling workers. To train the administrative profiles is a priority to scale-up innovation procedures of e-procurement, green procurement and product markets.

**c. GPP is a lever for green technologies innovation enhancement**

GPP stimulates producers to invest in developing green technologies. In line with the investment priorities of the Green Deal, and thanks to the funding provided in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans, companies engaged in participating in GPP increase the level of innovation in production and improve the quality of the supply chain. This quality improvement leads into increased marketing potential for the SME.

The GREENER training program could be part of a wider supporting scheme for SMEs innovation program.

**d. GPP is a driver for social responsibility**

GPP can be a major driver for social responsibility, providing companies with incentives to develop environmentally friendly works, products, and services.

## **2.2. How could a VET Provider design and implement a GPP GREENER training course?**

The GREENER project allowed the development, piloting and validation of a training path based on these aspects:

1. Modularity: GREENER is a continuous training course (CVET) divided into 5 modules. This makes it possible to modulate the training course according to the specific training goals of the target group;
2. Target group of the profile working in SMEs, administrators, tender office managers, production systems technicians and production quality managers (as identified in the ESCO framework - categories);
3. Design consistent CVET standards for the definition of learning outcomes, for the transparency of learning credits via Europass;
4. The ability to fulfil the emerging skills for SMEs related to the development of the goods and services supply answering a higher level of sustainability.

The piloting phase results allowed to analyse the pros and cons of this training programme, and based on these, it has been possible to outline some key factors to guide VET Providers in adapting and implementing GREENER to get GPP training more comprehensive and successful.

### 2.2.1 Background elements and needs analysis

A first factor in making the GREENER training path fit for SMEs' and local PAs' needs is to detect the GPP adoption level under the national regulatory framework. The compulsory compliance with GPP standards generates the need for specific skills both on the demand side (contracting public administration) and on the supply side (enterprises).

In those situations where GPP is compulsory, the VET Provider could cooperate with the Chamber of Commerce system, Companies' associations, Research Centres and experts in product and process environmental criteria standards, to promote training on GPP as business services<sup>1</sup>.

Further factors contributing to outline the training needs at macro level are:

- The impact of GPP on the public administration expenditure: if GPP is frequently applied by the PAs, then the training offer could assume a more specialised approach on specific sectorial contents. If the GPP is applied at an early stage, more best practices could be presented to bring out the competitive factor that GPP generates for the enterprise and in terms of social responsibility of public procurement for the community;
- The implementation degree of Minimum Environmental Criteria (MEC) systems in specific production sectors;
- The widespread application rate of product and process certification systems in companies;
- Other factors that, at territorial (national and local) and economic level, affect the priority that GPP can take on for companies.

GREENER has been adopted in different contexts of GPP legislation implementation and the modularity of the pathway ensured the possibility of adapting the aims for a more informative or training level.

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<sup>1</sup> Some cases are:

Regione Piemonte (Italian Public Administration) in cooperation with Horizon 2020 XPRESS organises a online webinar cycle for SMEs on GPP (<https://www.regione.piemonte.it/web/temi/strategia-sviluppo-sostenibile/green-public-procurement-gpp-opportunita-per-piccole-medie-imprese-pmi>)

### MAIN PURPOSE OF THE GPP TRAINING

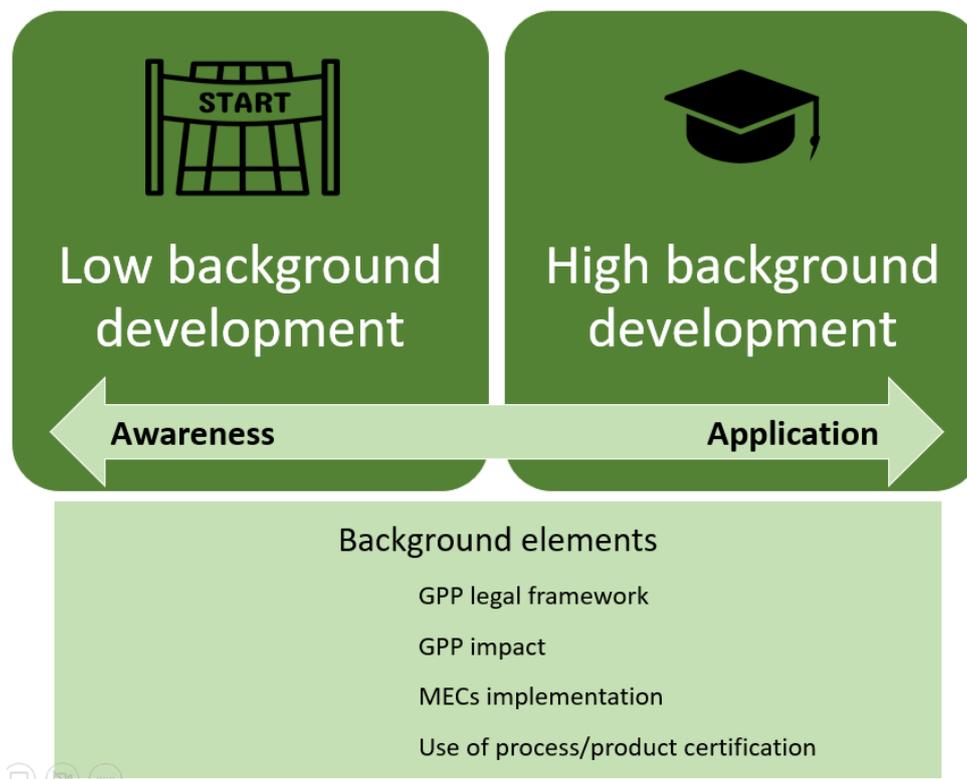


Figure 1. Main purpose of GPP training

#### 2.2.2 Target

Once the intervention priority of the training pathway has been defined; the identification of the target audience will guide the further customisation of the pathway contents through the Learning Outcome definition.

The GREENER path's elective target is adults, with prior experience in the administrative or commercial area of an SME. As a matter of fact, the SMEs have often a reduced level of specialisation of internal profiles. For such companies, the training on GPP allows to update skills with respect to a root change taking place in the European and international public procurement market (e-tender, application of MEC, etc.).

GREENER is, therefore, a Continuing Professional Development Training opportunity for administrative and business development personnel, fitting in as an upskilling activity, particularly suitable for those who identify with the profiles codified in the ESCO Classification:

- code 24 - Business and administration professionals (including both public and private sectors' profiles)
- code 33 - Business and administration associate professionals

The 5 EQF training level of GREENER and the modular nature of the training offer makes the course easily accessible and easy to integrate into training courses of any level of specialisation on the topics of business economics, supply chain management, business administration management, innovation in business management systems, product certification, etc.

GREENER also represents an update and completion of qualifying courses for business consultants and business service professionals. For this reason, GREENER can complement the training courses of Public Procurement Specialist, Procurement support officer, Supply chain manager, Quality expert, Business services specialist.

From the above, the flexibility of GREENER's target group, which embraces a broad spectrum of categories, is evident. The analysis of the incoming competences on the specific elements of GPP, and the identification of the purpose of the commitment of GPP knowledge (Public Administration and Private side) will allow to outline the level of learning outcome to be developed for each target category.

### 2.2.3 Training Priorities and Learning Outcome

The GREENER pathway is designed according to the European Qualification Framework principles defined for learning level 5<sup>2</sup>.

— Level 5 - learning outcomes		
Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others

Figure 2. European Qualification Framework principles defined for learning level 5

The skills profile description to be achieved by the learner at the end of the training course will guide the VET Provider training experts in identifying the Learning Outcomes most appropriate to the overall purpose of the training course. The declination of Learning Outcomes may be done using Bloom's taxonomy<sup>3</sup>.

GREENER develops Learning Outcomes addressing different priorities of training actions, including:

- **Introduction to GPP:** for companies having low knowledge and no experience of GPP. For this first level of GPP learning, the most appropriate learning outcomes will be those related to the Bloom taxonomy categories "Remember", "Understand" "Apply".
- **GPP strategy:** companies that are familiar with GPP but do not consider it a profitable investment and development priority for the company. In this case, the Learning Outcomes should be referred to the Bloom taxonomy categories "Apply", "Analyse", "Create" verbs categories.
- **GPP enhancement:** companies that participate regularly and know the importance of constant updating on technical components and possible alliances at territorial and supply chain level. The verbs categories in the Bloom Taxonomy as "Create" and "Evaluate" could support the generation of new contents for the GPP production and planning actions.

<sup>2</sup> The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a "translation tool to make national qualifications easier to understand and more comparable" <https://europa.eu/europass/en/description-eight-efq-levels>

<sup>3</sup> A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing : a revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives / editors, Lorin W. Anderson, David Krathwohl ; contributors, Peter W. Airasian ... [et al.], New York : Longman, 2001

GREENER's Learning Outcomes are reported below:

## Module 1- To know what is GPP and why could be an opportunity for SMEs

Module 1 of the Training Course presents the basis for working with GPP and is designed for procurers who are not familiar with the principles of GPP and the potential opportunities for SMEs when participating to Green Public Procurement.

When starting with Module 1, each procurer will have access to the following knowledge and information about Green Public Procurement:

- What does Green Public Procurement mean? – The power of procurement (economic, social and environmental impacts)
- Main characteristics of the Green Public Procurement – How does the Procurement process work? What are the advantages, coming from the implementation of the Green Public Procurement?
- Link between the GPP and Circular Economy and climate- how does GPP support the transition towards CE?
- What are the opportunities for SMEs, when applying for a Green Public Procurement?
- Green Public Procurement in practice – Case studies.

## Module 2- To understand and to find public tender

The second module of the Training Course builds on what was learned in Module 1. It is designed for procurers, who are already familiar with Green Public Procurement and clearly understand the opportunities it provides to the SMEs.

Module 2 presents the following opportunities to the procurer:

- To improve the understanding of the entire life- cycle of Public Procurement;
- Introduction to the key vocabulary, needed for successful handling of Public Procurement;
- Introduction to the principles and capabilities of E- procurement;
- Different types of Public Procurement and the specific requirements for each type of procurement;
- Tips for better understanding and handling of Tenders; How to prepare a winning offer?
- How to prepare a proposal in a proper way- differences between the public and private tendering?
- Typical mistakes, when preparing a proposal; Award criteria; Specific requirements;
- Searching strategies for finding a suitable public tender for your company- Platforms, strategies, etc.

## Module 3- To comply with sustainability requests from PAs

Module 3 of the Training Course follows the specific sustainability requirements and requests from Public authorities when implementing a Green Public Procurement. The sustainable public procurement aims to promote conversation and responsible management of resources by using renewable or recycled materials wherever possible and reducing waste.

Module 3 gives you an access to the following knowledge related to the sustainability requests from PAs in Green Public Procurement:

- Introduction to the key sustainability criteria when implementing of Green Public Procurement;
- Introduction to the process of determination of the specific sustainability requests from the PA in a Tender?
- Tips on how to meet the specific sustainability requests, written in the Tender?

## Module 4- To create awareness inside SME on the opportunity for GPP

Module 4 presents you the needed skills in order to be a „GREENER procurer“ and gives you the opportunity to access appropriate practices for promoting the Green Public Procurement in SMEs and presenting the opportunities that open up for companies to participate in GPP procedures.

The module offers you a 4- step plan, which will help you to raise awareness inside you company about GPP:

- Phase I „Preparation“ – to determine the current level of awareness and identify the areas in the company, that needs to be improve. Tips on how to set realistic goals and timelines.
- Phase II „Action Plan“ – internal communication channels as an instrument for raising awareness inside the company; Process of evaluating the most suitable person to lead the campaign;
- Phase III „Support“ – organizing regular campaigns to raise awareness among colleagues, events for sharing experience and knowledge inside the company;
- Phase IV „Special policies related to the topic“ – creation or adoption of policies, relevant for the topic and improving the level of awareness inside the company.

## Module 5- To improve the chances for a successful application

The last Module of the Training course helps you to improve the chances for a successful application by giving you an access to a specific methods for preparing the best proposal.

Module 5 presents an exclusive knowledge and opportunity for the „Greener“ Procurer:

- Introduction to the Sustainability and Sustainable development- Green Supply Chain Management;
- Green certifications – role, types of certifications, certification process, etc.
- Life Cycle Assessment and Life Cycle Cost – definitions and differences;
- Communicating „GREEN“ – an introduction to a good “Green” communication!
- Why is it important to communicate in a „green” way?
- Fundamental principles of the „green” communication
- “Greenwashing”

### 2.2.4 Teaching methodologies

GREENER provides for the development of basic notions and knowledge for the understanding of GPP and proposes design workshops to apply this knowledge in GPP response procedures.

This teaching methodology is delivered through:

- An **online training pathway**, composed by Open Education and Research in English. The online training pathway is reachable here <https://greener-project.eu/training-resouces>

The availability of an online training path exponentially increases the opportunity for a very wide audience to use the training content independently, at times and spaces decided by the participant.

- A preferably face-to-face training course to realise **project work experience**.

This methodology allows participants to have a guided path in applying the knowledge learnt online, as well as learning in peer educator mode through the interactions they will engage in with a group of project work participants

This hybrid methodology of online and in presence training is student-centric and allows participants:

- To know how and where to find a real Green Public Tender (they will foster their knowhow on selecting the public tender database, find the database complying with their interest, recognise all the legal documents of a public tender, etc);
- To recognise the Green indicators the Public Administration requires;
- To come up with a proposal to the public tender on their own;

- To check criteria and discuss the proposed action with the Teacher-expert in GPP.

### 2.2.5 Teachers

The teachers' selection should comply with competence constraints in both quantitative terms (at least 3-5 years of experience) and qualitative terms (previous experience in the field of GPP, with proven ability to teach adults).

Further factors which may be taken into consideration when selecting the teaching staff are:

- Integrate lecturers by choosing from GPP experts either from the university, private sector (technical consultants with expertise in the development of bids that are in line with the standards defined by the call, providing technical elements to understand the green value, etc.) and public sector (public procurement experts, PA managers for the writing of GPP calls, GPP criteria selection);
- Involve testimonials of successes and failures from both the demand (public administration) and the supply side (private testimonials);
- The teachers, in the case of the project work method, assume the role of a guide. They support participants in applying their knowledge and improve their abilities in answering to a GPP tender.

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