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Identification of Effective State-of-the-art Green Public Procurement Policy and Practice for the Irish Public Sector (GAPS)

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What did this research aim to address?

The EPA-funded **GAPS** (Green Public Procurement: Analysis and Support) project aimed to close the gap between GPP policy frameworks and practical implementation in Ireland. Although strong EU and national GPP policies exist, adoption in the Irish public sector lags behind other European countries. The project sought to understand why and offer practical solutions to improve uptake.

Key objectives included:

- Identifying barriers and enablers of GPP adoption.
- Supporting climate goals by aligning procurement with sustainability targets.
- Developing tools and resources tailored to the Irish public sector.

What did this research find?

The research used a participatory approach, engaging public bodies, policymakers, and suppliers through expert surveys, case studies, and stakeholder workshops. A major outcome was a user-focused toolkit, including a **carbon footprint calculator** and a **GPP case study finder**, designed to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

The project identified a range of factors influencing GPP adoption:

- Barriers:** Limited political will, unclear criteria, lack of training, and insufficient supplier readiness.
- Enablers:** Strong policy mandates, standardised procurement criteria, capacity building, and market incentives.
- Supplier Needs:** Support in understanding and meeting GPP requirements, including training and guidance.

Insights were gathered through Irish and EU-wide engagement, helping to shape recommendations grounded in real-world

challenges. The project analysed over 270 case studies and developed:

- A **carbon footprint calculator** covering Scope 1, 2, and 3 greenhouse gas emissions to support procurement decision-making.
- A searchable **GPP case study finder** tool to promote replicable good practices.

These tools address key data and knowledge gaps, enabling evidence-based, climate-conscious procurement.

How can the research findings be used?

The GAPS findings support both **policy refinement** and **operational improvements**:

- Policy:** Strengthen implementation mechanisms, introduce supplier incentives, and update procurement standards.
- Practice:** Use the carbon footprint calculator for training, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions tracking, and improved reporting and transparency. The GPP case study finder tool empowers procurers to confidently adopt innovative GPP approaches by providing targeted case studies that align with specific objectives, sectors or sustainability priorities.

Public bodies and suppliers can apply the tools to align procurement with climate targets. Pilot projects, such as sustainable procurement at the University of Galway, offer scalable models for wider adoption.

Next steps include integrating tools into national procurement systems, expanding workshops, and enhancing cross-sector collaboration. Further work is needed to explore sector-specific cost-benefit analyses and better understand the supplier perspective.

By applying these insights and tools, Ireland can enhance its GPP performance and make meaningful progress towards its climate action goals.

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