



Beschaffungsamt
des Bundesministeriums
des Innern



KOMPETENZSTELLE
für nachhaltige Beschaffung

Competence Center for Sustainable Procurement





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Foreword

There is no stopping the trend towards sustainability – and that’s good! Sustainability criteria are becoming more and more important for public procurement as well. Government and public administration often take a pioneering role and serve as models, for example when it comes to conserving resources or ensuring good working conditions at production sites. But actually putting policy goals on sustainability into practice can still be a major challenge: There are so many different aspects to consider.

To offer effective help to those responsible for public procurement, the Federal Government created the Competence Center for Sustainable Procurement (KNB). It advises all public procurement offices in Germany with regard to environmental, economic and even social criteria. This broad scope is what sets the KNB apart from other advisory services. It was designated the 2013 Flagship Project of the National Sustainability Strategy. We are of course very pleased with this distinction, which serves as an incentive for new projects and collaboration in future.



The more people who become involved, the better. This is why the KNB promotes the sharing of knowledge and ideas, helping each individual project and the overall goal: more sustainable procurement.

Find out more about our services in the following pages. We look forward to hearing your questions, ideas and suggestions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Settekorn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Birgit Settekorn

Director
Procurement Office
of the Federal Ministry of the Interior



Sustainability:

We make it simple!

An emphasis on greater sustainability

Buying products and services more sustainably

Sustainability has become a key policy aim. Even our Federal Chancellor agrees: At the 14th session of the Council for Sustainable Development, Chancellor Angela Merkel stressed that public procurement plays a key role in the Federal Government's sustainability goals.

Accounting for about 13% of gross domestic product, public procurement wields significant influence in the market. Each year, the Procurement Office of the Federal Ministry of the Interior alone buys goods and services worth more than €1 billion. So it can help influence whether and how many sustainable products and services are purchased in Germany.

Setting the right course

What happens when policy goals meet reality? There is a wide divide between the desired economic, environmental and social aims on the one hand and the legal and budgetary constraints on the other. It is often difficult to meet sustainability criteria in public procurement, because many aspects, from environmental

protection to acceptable production conditions, are not always easy to evaluate. Such obstacles are to be reduced in future: In its programme of 6 December 2010, the committee of state secretaries made clear that the guiding principle of sustainable development should also apply to public administration. This is why the Competence Center for Sustainable Procurement (KNB) was created.

Involving the community

Sustainability is a task for society as a whole. Public procurement also needs the support of other stakeholders in order to achieve its sustainability goals. These stakeholders include non-governmental organizations, some of which are part of global networks with extensive knowledge of current sustainability issues. And stakeholders in industry should implement environmental, economic and social aspects to provide sustainable products and services. Making the most of our partners' knowledge and skills to benefit sustainable procurement – that is the goal of policy and thus also of the KNB.



Good advice from the very start

History and tasks of the Competence Center for Sustainable Procurement

Informing, explaining and developing new ideas: Since 5 December 2011, the Competence Center for Sustainable Procurement (KNB) at the Procurement Office of the Federal Ministry of the Interior has been the central point of contact for all the federal ministries, states, local governments and other government offices responsible for procurement when it comes to sustainable public procurement.

The KNB has a variety of tasks: It offers information, training and advising on sustainable public procurement for federal, state and local government procurement offices and other public agencies with a telephone and e-mail hotline as well as advising and on-site training. It works with other organizations to draft procurement guidelines and produces information brochures and newsletters on sustainable procurement. It develops new ideas in collaboration with representatives from public administration, industry, NGOs and associations. It operates a web-based information platform that serves all those involved in public procurement as an information, communication and network hub. The platform helps in building up a national expert network and in communicating with companies and NGOs.

2012: Building up: From project group to KNB

The Project Group on Sustainable Procurement at the Federal Ministry of the Interior was active from August 2012 to September 2013 to coordinate among the federal ministries and the state governments and to plan the KNB. After the web-based information platform went live and contact with the federal ministries and state governments had been established, the work of the project group was done. So the project group was dissolved and the KNB took over.



The KNB team



An alliance for sustainable procurement

The KNB has been active in the Alliance for Sustainable Procurement and its expert groups since May 2012. The Alliance is an expert body set up by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) that advocates sustainable procurement in the public sector. The KNB sees itself as a channel of communication for the Alliance and works closely with the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy. It is represented on most of the Alliance's expert groups and chairs the groups on electromobility and resource efficiency.

2013: One for all: The information platform

The web-based platform www.nachhaltige-beschaffung.info is the KNB's most important tool. Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel activated the initial version in May 2013.





All documents, important dates and information concerning sustainable procurement are available online to staff of public procurement offices and to other interested persons. After an ongoing evaluation of the platform identified room for improvement in October 2013, the search function was modified and a discussion forum is being added.

International sustainability

Achieving sustainability goals is an international task. This is why the KNB works with other countries. Talks with representatives of Austria and Switzerland were conducted in 2013 and 2014 and will continue in the future.

Sustainability? We make it simple!

The KNB team



Sabine Poell



Michael Arenz

Position

Director

Administrative officer

Role / area of special expertise

Leading the KNB

Electromobility Resource efficiency Seminars

“I want my children and grandchildren to be able to live on this planet too. That’s why I am working for sustainability. I love my work because it has a lot of variety and challenges, and we deal with new challenges as a team.”

“From the start, working at the KNB has been an unusual challenge. We urgently need progress on sustainability: The earth’s resources are limited, so we have to use them carefully, also in public procurement.”



Martin Wünnemann

Administrative officer

Textiles and clothing Cleaning supplies and services Social standards (general) GPP2020



Ralf Grosse

Administrative officer

Information and communications technology Renewable resources Website contact person



Dagmar Kamlage

Office assistant

Telephone hotline and e-mail hotline

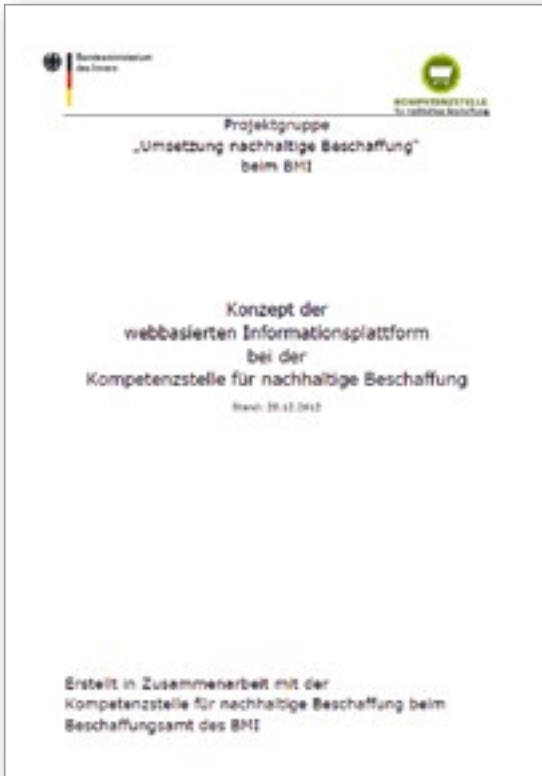
“I believe sustainability means accepting responsibility for society. Sustainability is a forward-looking challenge that offers enormous opportunities for shaping the world we will live in tomorrow.”

“For me, working in the field of sustainability is like winning the lottery! The work involves such a variety of interests and opinions that it is never dull, and the lively exchange of views also has a positive influence on my personal development. That’s like getting the bonus ball right too!”

“I’m very interested in the issue of sustainability. The tasks in this area are quite varied, which I like. I think it’s good for public procurement to pay attention to sustainability aspects.”







Because of different state laws on procurement, each state (Land) has its own web page and is responsible for its content. Federal Chancellor Merkel launched the web-based information platform on 13 May 2013 at the annual convention of the Council for Sustainable Development in Berlin.

A project with broad appeal

The Committee of State Secretaries for Sustainable Development in 2013 recognized the cooperation between the KNB, federal and state governments and the three major local government associations, awarding the KNB the distinction of being the Flagship Project of 2013.





Federal Chancellor Merkel activating the website in Berlin on 13 May 2013

Known and loved

The website is very popular with users, who downloaded more than 25,000 documents in a single year. The most popular download is the ILO statement by the Procurement Office of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the BITKOM high-tech industry association.

Second most popular is the guide to resource efficiency by the Alliance for Sustainable Procurement. The number of page views has also more than doubled since the website was launched. Downloads and page views have thus increased as awareness of the KNB has grown. Now the website content must continue to develop so that users

remain interested. Statistical analysis shows that the information sheets on the 12 product groups are very popular. The Federal Environment Agency helps the KNB with updating and developing additional content.

The KNB also has international connections: It is the German partner for the EU project “Green Public Procurement 2020” (GPP 2020) which aims at reducing CO2 emissions in public-sector procurement. Results and documents from the GPP 2020 project will be posted on the website.

**We'll make you
strong!**



We're here for you

The KNB offers a broad range of services

How do I formulate sustainable aspects in the description of specifications? Where do I include sustainability criteria in the call for tender? Where can I find product information related to sustainability? The KNB can help with all questions about sustainable procurement – by phone or e-mail.

It can also help with questions related to product groups and with the use of life-cycle costing (LCC) modules. The online platform offers modules for life-cycle cost analysis for many different products, from motor vehicles and consumer electronics to household appliances.

The KNB has produced information sheets on 12 product groups prioritized by the Alliance for Sustainable Procurement. Information sheets on the following product groups are available on the KNB website:

- interior lighting
- heating systems
- road gritting material
- pest control
- cleaning supplies and services
- paper products
- food/catering
- toilet paper and paper towels
- office machines
- gardening tools and machines
- energy contracting
- office furniture



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These sheets provide information on the relevant laws and environmental certificates, as well as easy-to-understand examples of best practices and guides.

The information sheets are constantly being updated, and additional product groups will be added.

Our help is welcome

The following procurement offices have already taken advantage of the KNB's services:

- Hamburg: in drafting tenders for sustainable dishes
- FernUniversität Hagen: in purchasing recycling paper
- Freudenstadt: with a framework contract for CO2-neutral mailing
- Procurement Office of the Federal Ministry of the Interior: in purchasing environmentally friendly power generators

Feedback we have received

"Perfect! That is exactly the information I need. Thank you very much!"

"Thank you! I think the second link is exactly what we need."

"Thanks for the great example. I am thrilled and will certainly be able to use it."



Questions?

We have the answers!

Sustainability training

The KNB offers seminars on a wide range of topics

How can I buy climate-friendly products? What legal aspects should I have to pay attention to? What examples are there at local level? The KNB offers training for public-sector bodies on all aspects of sustainable procurement and is always ready to help.

Sustainability in a single day

The KNB offers one-day seminars for public-sector contracting authorities.

KNB training covers the following modules:

- **Introducing the KNB**

This module focuses on sustainability in general and the Competence Center for Sustainable Procurement. This introductory module is part of every seminar.

- **Sustainable procurement: strategic and innovative**

From initial idea to implementation: This module explains the official and policy framework conditions and demonstrates specific approaches to implementation. Course content is illustrated with examples from German communities.

- **Legal framework for sustainable procurement**

This module presents the legal framework for sustainable procurement, starting with current laws and regulations and extending to the implementation of the new EU directive.



KNB training at the Baden-Württemberg State Ministry for the Environment, Climate Protection and Energy

- **Climate-friendly procurement**

This module focuses on climate-friendly procurement, in particular life-cycle costing (LCC).

- **Focus on specific product groups**

These modules provide training in sustainable procurement for specific product groups. Here the focus is on special characteristics of products, labels and certificates and on how to write calls for tender.

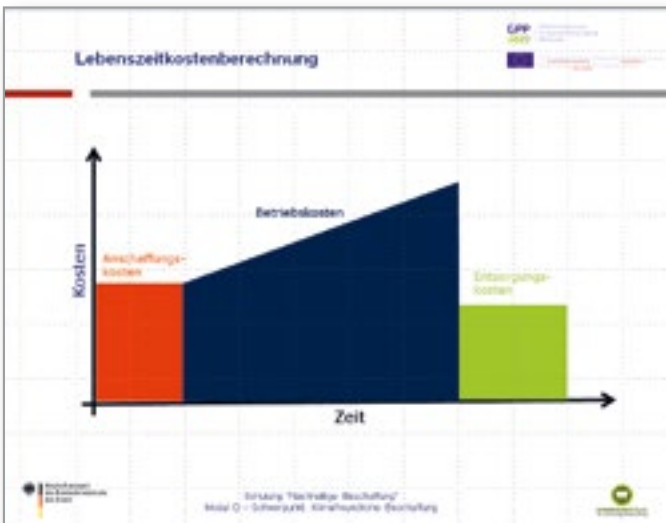
The theoretical part is illustrated using examples from federal, state and local contracting authorities. The KNB offers modules focusing on the following product groups:

- office/multifunctional equipment
- office furniture/wooden furniture
- food/catering
- textiles/work clothing

Interested procurement and contracting authorities may contact the KNB directly to find out more about its seminars. The training modules desired can be indicated on a form. The KNB and client agree on the further details of the agenda, schedule and date. The entire range of training offered can be found on the KNB website.

Sustainability sets a good example

The Federal Chancellery’s procurement staff were the pioneers: They were the first to receive KNB training. Seminars at the Baden-Württemberg State Ministry for the Environment, Climate Protection and Energy and at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education Training followed. “This was the most specific training I have found in the field of sustainability,” one participant in Stuttgart noted. Together with the Federal Academy of Public Administration (BAköV), the KNB is currently planning an e-learning module on sustainable public procurement as part of the BAKöV’s e-learning system. Sustainable procurement is also being considered for inclusion in the training of future staff of public-sector institutions.





**Working together for the
community!**

Networking in progress

The KNB is constantly expanding its partnerships

Knowledge shared is knowledge doubled: In line with this motto, since it's founding the KNB has been working to build up an extensive network in order to increase awareness of the KNB through participation in KNB events and with the help of appropriate partners. Competent partners can also help answer questions and solve problems. One example of successful collaboration is the seminar on biogenic products organized in cooperation with the Agency for Renewable Resources (FNR) at the Procurement Office of the Federal Ministry in February 2014.



Visits pay off

The KNB works closely with federal, state and local procurement offices as well as associations and non-governmental organizations. Going together to events such as trade fairs, panel discussions and workshops further expands partnerships, such as at the “Modern

State” exhibition and the “Metropolitan Solutions” trade fair.

The KNB is in direct contact with cities and towns that are especially committed to sustainability, which have





provided the KNB with best practice examples, local regulations and other information on sustainable procurement posted on the KNB website.

A strong alliance

Since its founding, the KNB has been active in the Alliance for Sustainable Procurement and its expert groups. Representatives of federal, state and local governments, of non-governmental organizations and associations have worked together since 2010 in this alliance, which is chaired by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy and intended to help increase the share of sustainable products and services purchased by the public sector.

Expert groups are formed at the suggestion of the Federal Chancellery or

the Committee of State Secretaries for Sustainable Development. There are currently six expert groups.

The KNB chairs the expert groups on electromobility and resource efficiency. And their work is having an impact: For example, the two guides produced by the two expert groups have been downloaded from the KNB website by many procurement and contracting authorities. And they are demonstrably being used.

The annual report of the Alliance compiles the results of the individual expert groups and the Alliance as a whole and presents them to the Federal Chancellery. The report is also presented at meetings of the standing conferences of interior ministers and economics ministers.

Many irons in the fire

The KNB was active on the board of the EU project BuySmart+, which in Germany was coordinated by the Berlin Energy Agency (BEA).¹ The BuySmart+ project developed modules for life-cycle costing which are available on the KNB website. The KNB is also involved in the follow-up EU project Green Procurement in Action (Green ProcA), which is also coordinated by the BEA.

The KNB also supports the campaign “Grüner beschaffen” (greener procurement) of the Initiative Pro Recycling-paper (initiative for recycled paper, IPR) along with many other initiatives and projects.

Together with the BITKOM high-tech industry association, the Procurement Office drafted and signed a statement on the ILO core labour standards for purchasing IT hardware. The Procurement Office draws on this statement in its calls for tender. Additional statements are planned, for example in partnership with textile industry associations.

At European level, the KNB is involved in the project “Green Public Procurement 2020” (GPP 2020). The EU has set ambitious goals: By the year 2020, it intends to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20%, increase the share of renewable energy sources to 20% and improve energy efficiency by 20%. To achieve these goals, public procurement in the EU needs to become more

climate-friendly. For this reason, the partners in the GPP 2020 project are promoting low-carbon public procurement with the help of EU funding. The Procurement Office of the Federal Ministry of the Interior has been the German partner since the project began in March 2013.



¹ The BuySmart+ project ended in 2014.



It's better to share!

It's better to share

Sometimes only a few people know about sustainable procurement. The KNB will soon offer a discussion forum for public-sector contracting authorities to help those “in the know” share and discuss their experience and ideas with others.

We would like your opinion!

If you have suggestions for how we can add to our web-based information platform, please send us e-mail at nachhaltigkeit@bescha.bund.de

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