GREEN PROCUREMENT GUIDE

The Oslo Way

A practical step-by-step guide to green procurement

Circular Economy

Circular economy measures should be considered early in the planning phase, prior to procurement. Opportunities for reuse, repair, refurbishment, and life extension should be evaluated alongside their budget implications. The ASI framework can help identify measures that reduce material use, emissions, and costs.

Process overview

The steps below shows the main steps in the green procurement process. Click a step to jump straight to its guidance.

AT A GLANCE

1. Need
2. Market
3. Tender
4. Publish
5. Evaluate
6. Contract
7. Manage
8. Learn

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1 Need & scope

Start by defining the public need and the environmental outcomes you want to achieve. A clear scope, baseline, and measurable objectives make it much easier to choose the right procedure, write verifiable criteria, and manage delivery without disputes.

- Describe the functional needs and what is in scope (volume, geography, timeframe, deadlines).
- Identify the main environmental factors (energy, materials, emissions, waste) and relevant requirements.
- Set measurable objectives and KPIs (targets, baselines, and how data will be collected).
- Assign roles and responsibilities (requirements, evaluation, contract follow-up).

2 Market dialogue

Use early market engagement to test what is feasible, what evidence suppliers can provide, and where you can raise ambition without reducing competition. Document the dialogue carefully and keep it open and non-discriminatory.

- Map out the market maturity, the solutions and the risks.
- Evaluate the feedback from the market to assess which requirements and criteria (award criteria or minimum requirement) are feasible for proportionality, verifiability, and competition impacts.
- Identify standards, certification labels and documentation criteria that are acceptable.
- Explore innovation options and implications for procedure and risk allocation.
- Summarize findings and refine scope, criteria, and monitoring needs.

3 Prepare tender documents

Choose the requirements that match environmental impact, market readiness, and your ability to follow up. Good green procurement is measurable: it states what is required, how it is checked, and consequences for non-performance.

- Decide an ambition level that is proportional to the purchase and your internal capacity.
- Define your minimum requirements.
- Define your award criteria (best price-quality ratio) evaluation model that reward better environmental performance beyond minimums: weights, scoring rules, and minimum thresholds.
- Select an appropriate procedure (open/restricted/dialogue/negotiated) based on complexity and innovation.
- Decide whether and how to apply life-cycle costing (energy, maintenance, consumables, end-of-life).
- Plan and specify accepted evidence and documentation (EPDs, test reports, plans) and verification steps to prevent greenwashing (evidence rules, realism checks, audit rights).
- Include clauses for KPIs, reporting, audits, corrective actions, effective breach of contract clauses, and data formats.
- Estimate contract-management workload and assign resources.

4 Publish & manage clarifications

Publishing is where clarity and fairness matter most. Make requirements easy to understand and manage clarifications consistently so all bidders have the same information.

- Publish clear requirements, evidence rules, and templates from day one.
- Consider a bidder briefing or written guidance for complex procurements.
- Manage Q&A consistently and update documents transparently with version control.
- Align the evaluation team on scoring and evidence checks before opening bids.
- Maintain a complete audit trail for clarifications and updates.

5 Evaluate offers

Evaluation should be evidence-based and repeatable. Verify minimum requirements first, then score award criteria using the stated methodology. Where you use Life Cycle Costs (LCC), apply assumptions consistently.

- Check compliance with minimum requirements and eligibility evidence before scoring.
- Score environmental award criteria using the published guidance and requested documentation.
- Apply LCC consistently (inputs, boundaries, discounting assumptions where relevant).
- Validate key claims within the rules and document any clarifications.
- Flag risk indicators (unrealistic plans, abnormally low bids) and handle per procedure rules.

6 Award & contract finalization

Ensure the winning bid's green commitments become contractual obligations. Define KPIs, reporting, verification, and consequences, and set a practical mobilisation plan for monitoring from day one.

- Translate bid commitments into contract deliverables, KPIs, and acceptance criteria.
- Agree on the monitoring plan: baseline, reporting cadence, data format, and sign-off roles.
- Set incentives and remedies (bonus/malus, withheld payments, corrective action deadlines).
- Define audit rights and access to evidence (site visits, data logs, third-party checks).
- Hold an environmental-focused kick-off meeting and confirm change-control rules.

7 Contract management

Most environmental outcomes are won or lost during delivery. Active contract management ensures requirements are not diluted by changes and that performance is measured and corrected.

- Track KPIs and require periodic reporting and evidence (including spot checks where appropriate).
- Assess environmental implications of variations before approving changes.
- Use corrective action plans when performance slips; use the stipulated breach of contract clauses when appropriate and necessary.
- Maintain a performance log to support learning and supplier management.
- Coordinate across procurement, operations, finance, and environment functions.

8 Learning & reporting

Capture what worked, what did not, and improve templates and criteria based on real delivery performance to strengthen future procurements.

- Collect experiences from the procurers and contract managers on what worked and did not work.
- Analyze and verify achieved performance vs baseline and targets (costs, benefits, compliance).
- Summarize outcomes and impacts where possible (emissions, energy, waste).
- Report results internally/externally and share learning with stakeholders.
- Update templates, scoring guidance, and training materials for next procurements.