

Gender Responsive Procurement as a lever for change - GenProcure Action Planning Network



 9 EU Cities

Public Procurement

Action Planning

Introduction

Over two years, nine European cities took part in the URBACT Action Planning Network [GenProcure](#) aiming to leverage the power of local procurement to improve gender equality. Through exchange, learning and development of local action plans, each partner focused on embedding the concept of equality at the heart of the city's spending decisions. The aim was to transform procurement into a powerful, practical strategy, to position it as a key instrument for promoting equality and inclusive public policies.

[Problem Statement]

Public procurement represents around 14% of GDP in the European Union and offers significant opportunities to drive equality. But low awareness of these possibilities, combined with a lack of confidence to use equality clauses, means it is still an untapped resource. Cities are missing out on the chance to address equality challenges such as: the gender pay gap, under representation of women in leadership positions, growth of women-owned businesses, and even brain drain where women don't see opportunities in their cities. One solution is to reshape the approach to public procurement by prioritising gender equality and inclusivity.

“Without action every euro spent risks reinforcing inequality instead of reducing it” Alcoi (ES)

[Implementation and Actions]

The nine partner cities and regions in the EU network piloted actions to change the culture of their procurement practice with concrete results. These actions were [based on the six steps](#) in URBACT's training. Some examples include:

- **Satu Mare (RO)** introduced gender disaggregation in spend analysis for the first time, including measures to demonstrate how many women-owned businesses were taking up opportunities. Over the two years this already improved several percent points.
- In **Újfehértó (HU)** a women's council was established that is now consulted before key decisions are made. Information days are held for entrepreneurs to encourage gender equal measures.
- In **Zagreb (HR)** a local park is now being redeveloped with gender equality at the heart of its design. It reflects the needs and wishes of the surrounding community, with new benches, accessible entry/ exits, lighting, planting and playgrounds.
- For **Vila Nova de Famalicao (PO)** there was a shift from price being the only relevant factor to the principle of value for money — a balance between cost, quality, and social and environmental impact. This change comes from the 2014 European directives, which were important in creating the legal basis that allows us to incorporate social and environmental considerations to public contracts.

[Lessons Learned]

1. **Gender responsive procurement is about going beyond legal requirements.** This requires training, tools, confidence and political will.
2. **What gets measured gets done.** Adding gender equality metrics, for instance from the gender equality plan to the procurement strategy and regularly publishing spend data disaggregated by gender will guide progress.
3. **Templates and standard clauses make the job a lot easier.** The [GenProcure catalogue](#) is a useful resource.
4. **Build strong partnerships with women-led organisations.** The people most affected by inequality must have a seat at the table.
5. **Continuous collaboration among all stakeholders in the procurement ecosystem will make equal opportunities a reality.** This includes as businesses and civil society.
6. **Mid-sized city, like those in GenProcure, can inspire EU practice.**

[Key Takeaways]

- ❖ Empower municipal staff to become the agents of change. Give them the confidence for instance by creating a practical guide for daily work and regular training. *“It’s people who make the system work.”* Zenica-Doboj (BA)
- ❖ Integrate mandatory gender criteria systematically into every tender. *“Gender responsive procurement is not an add on, it’s a given.”* Umea (SE)
- ❖ Communicate the power of public money shaping public values. *“By integrating gender equality into procurement, we’re not just buying goods and services - we’re investing in a fairer, more inclusive local economy.”* Messina (IT)
‘Public money has to work for everyone.’ Koszalin (PO)
‘It is about buying the future we want. Let’s make our contracts count - for all.’ Alcoi (ES)

[+] Learn more about this Project

Visit the Network’s webpage: <https://urbact.eu/networks/genprocure>