Procurement for the Planet

Policy approaches to greening public spending

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Contents

Executive summary 4

1 Introduction 6

1.1 Key findings 7

1.2 Methodology 9

1.3 Structure of the report 10

2 Opportunities and challenges in greening public procurement 10

3 Implementing green public procurement 13

4 Greening what governments buy 14

4.1 Ecolabels and standards 15

4.2 Rewarding environmental performance 17

4.3 Buying less 18

5 Greening who governments buy from 19

5.1 Requirements in tenders 20

5.2 Requirements in contract delivery 21

6 Greening how governments buy 22

6.1 Rethinking the state–market relationship 22

6.2 Rethinking the green potential of contracts 24

7 Sector spotlights 25

7.1 Food, beverages and catering 26

Greening what food governments buy 26

Greening who governments buy food from 27

Greening how governments buy food 27

7.2 Construction and embodied carbon 29

Greening what construction materials governments procure 29

Greening who governments buy from 30

Greening how governments procure construction 31

8 Conclusion 33

References 36

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year, 13–20% of global GDP is generated by governments purchasing goods, works, and services from private companies. These decisions do more than deliver public services: they create demand, influence supply chains, and shape investment in the technologies, industries, and productive capacity that economies will rely on in the future.

This role is taking on renewed importance. Faced with geopolitical tensions, trade disruption, and fragile supply chains, governments are strategically engaging their procurement to strengthen domestic industries and build economic resilience. But the environmental implications of these choices are significant. Public procurement is estimated to account for 15% of global GHG emissions, and investments made today could lock in carbon-intensive infrastructure and production for decades. Aligning public procurement with climate and environmental priorities is increasingly important to building economies that are both more resilient and fit for a low-carbon future.

Drawing on cross-national policy tracking from the Oxford Climate Policy Monitor, and over 60 interviews with procurement officials and experts worldwide, this report examines green public procurement (GPP) in practice. There are encouraging signs of progress: since 2020, the number of GPP policies in G20 countries has more than doubled, with all but two G20 countries having some kind of policy in place. Governments are also moving beyond voluntary commitments towards implementation, with innovative approaches to bring green objectives into public purchasing decisions. This report identifies three complementary approaches through which governments are greening their spending:

- **Greening what governments buy**, through tools like ecolabels, standards and life-cycle assessments that shift demand towards greener products and services.
- **Greening who governments buy from**, by using access to public contracts to encourage stronger corporate green governance among suppliers.
- **Greening how governments buy**, through earlier market engagement and innovative contracts that reward green outcomes and help innovative solutions reach scale.

There is no single model for successful GPP. The right combination of approaches depends on what a government is trying to achieve, the maturity of the market, and the characteristics of the sector. What is clear is that the effectiveness of these approaches is heightened when GPP is connected to, rather than pursued apart from, wider policy efforts. Used strategically, GPP can do considerably more than reduce the environmental footprint of individual purchases: it can shape markets, communities, and the climate.

There are signs of such impact. The Netherlands is mainstreaming circularity into its purchasing and using its CO_2 Performance Ladder to encourage suppliers to compete on corporate climate outcomes. Canada's federal government is focused on reducing its construction sector emissions, engaging industry in its development of standards on embodied emissions in cement and steel. The US General Services Administration's Green Proving Ground has helped emerging technologies move from demonstration to commercial deployment by testing them in Federal facilities, with more than 100,000 CO_2 avoided and $28m saved each year.

Examples from food procurement demonstrate how governments can pursue environmental objectives and promote health, social value and local economic development. Brazil uses school-food purchasing to direct substantial, aggregated public demand towards family farms and indigenous communities; Copenhagen has achieved nearly 90% organic food in public kitchens without increasing budgets.

In construction, there is potential for procurement to accelerate change in harder-to-abate industries. In Oslo, for example, a coordinated policy approach that strategically uses procurement has helped the city electrify 85% of its municipal construction sites. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is supporting Cambodia, Loas and Viet Nam through its Sustainable Construction Materials Market Survey, identifying regulatory and market opportunities in relation to concrete, cement and reinforcing steel.

Progress nevertheless remains uneven. Government procurement systems are complex, risk-averse, and capacity-constrained. Financial pressures and legal barriers can favour upfront cost over long-term value; purchasers may be uncertain about what markets can deliver; and requirements for maximizing competition and minimizing corruption can limit opportunities for innovation. Moreover, limited procurement data presents a barrier to assessing GPP implementation and environmental impact, making it harder to tell the story of success. The strongest examples examined in this report show, however, that these barriers can be overcome. Clear and usable standards can reduce the burden on procurement officials; early engagement can improve market readiness; contracts can shift risk and reward innovation; and complementary regulation and financial support can reinforce the demand signal created by public purchasing.

The conclusion is that GPP is not simply about buying a greener version of the same product. It is about using public demand more deliberately. Aligning government purchasing power with climate and environmental objectives can ensure that public spending does not lock in the industries of the past, but helps build the resilient and sustainable economies governments will need in the future.

1 INTRODUCTION

Public procurement is the 'sleeping giant' of finance and innovation policy (OECD, 2024). Each year, 13–20% of global GDP is generated by governments as they procure goods, works and services from private companies (World Bank Group, 2020). This spending is directed towards a diverse range of activities: building new roads and hospitals, feeding school children, equipping and fuelling militaries, furnishing government offices, lighting public spaces and much more. Given its scale, this spending has the capacity to influence markets and supply chains. By providing long-term, predictable demand, public procurement can give domestic firms the confidence to invest in new facilities, skills, technologies and production processes.

In the face of geopolitical tensions, trade disruption and fragile supply chains, many governments are reframing their approach to public procurement to build stronger domestic industries. For example, in June 2026, the UK's then-chancellor Rachel Reeves described a shift in policy, noting the government would be 'using the power of public procurement to protect our national security and strengthen the UK's economic resilience' (UK Cabinet Office, 2026). A similar approach has emerged in Canada, where changes in its global trade relationships have prompted the government to think more strategically about its own spending.

As governments react to such geopolitical and economic flux, there is a risk that the investment incentives created in the short term could lock-in carbon-intensive industries in the long term. For instance, UK public procurement rules now deprioritise environmental benefits of public spending in favour of job creation (UK Cabinet Office, 2026). A similar shift has occurred in New Zealand, where rules related to emissions have been softened, replaced instead by a greater emphasis on domestic economic benefits (New Zealand Government, 2025).

The scale of public procurement spending carries considerable environmental cost, accounting for an estimated 15% of global emissions (Gonzales Escalada Mena & Dassu, 2026). The key, therefore, is using public procurement to build future-proofed economies.

Many governments recognise the potential of their spending to stimulate sustainable innovation, and growing attention has been paid to green public procurement (GPP) (Rejeb et al., 2023). The challenge is to connect the green procurement agenda with the renewed emphasis on procurement as an instrument of resilience and economic strategy.

This report identifies key barriers and highlights successful strategies being deployed across different sectors and regional contexts. Its aim is to promote learning and

knowledge exchange among public officials and build confidence among policymakers seeking to transform public spending for people and planet.

Box 1: What is green public procurement?

A range of terms are used to describe efforts by governments to mainstream environmental considerations into their purchasing, including GPP, sustainable public procurement, and climate-aligned or climate-proof public procurement. While overlapping, these concepts are not synonymous. Sustainable public procurement, for example, encompasses a broader range of objectives beyond just environmental sustainability, including social considerations such as labour rights and inequality. In contrast, climate-aligned or climate-proof procurement (Bernardini et al, 2025) focuses more narrowly on emissions-related outcomes. In this report, we use the term 'green public procurement' (GPP) to capture the broader range of public sector efforts to embed environmental considerations into their purchasing, reducing the environmental impact of goods, works and services throughout their life cycle.

1.1 KEY FINDINGS

1 *Innovative green public procurement is about more than just greening what governments buy: it is also about who they buy from and how they buy.*

GPP has traditionally emphasised greening the goods and works purchased by governments. While this remains a key area of focus, this report has found innovative examples of public purchasing that go beyond such efforts to make like-for-like green swaps. For example, the UK and Canadian governments are focusing on the climate and environmental credentials of their vendors. The Netherlands and Brazil are strategically rethinking their systems, engagement practices and contracts. This trifecta — focusing on the 'what, who, how' — provides a toolbox for policymakers to develop bespoke strategies suited to their contexts, capacities, and sectors.

2 *The transformative power of public procurement is enhanced when it is coherently connected to broader policymaking efforts.*

The efficacy of green public procurement can be enhanced when aligned with broader regulation and policy. Regulatory requirements for climate-related disclosures mean that public purchasers can leverage corporate environmental data when setting eligibility requirements or evaluation criteria. Subsidy schemes and GPP strategies can be complementary by pairing supply-side support with demand to derisk green investments in the private sector. However, a lack of existing climate or environmental regulation has not precluded governments from pursuing GPP. In these cases, GPP is sending signals to the market about forthcoming regulation, rewarding early adopters and green-leading companies and indirectly subsidising green investments.

To align purchasing decisions with climate and environmental policy goals, green priorities need to be integrated earlier in and throughout the procurement cycle. For example, better solutions can be found when purchasers carefully assess their needs (e.g., Do we procure a data centre or do we procure the storage of data? Do we procure vehicles or do we procure mobility services?) and engage markets earlier to communicate priorities and capitalise on emerging innovations. Market readiness assessments and supplier engagement can help public purchasers learn about and from the market, refine their needs and specifications, and increase the likelihood that contracting processes are successful.

3 *To understand the transformative power of public procurement and how it is being implemented, better data is required. Stronger data, measurement, and accountability can support political buy-in.*

Current efforts to track GPP progress and implementation are insufficient. Fragmentation and decentralisation across procurement systems hinder governments' understanding of the degree to which GPP is being applied and with what potential benefits. Where data does exist, metrics are mainly focused on the number of tenders with green attributes or the number of procurement professionals trained in GPP. Wider system reforms (e.g., shifts to digital procurement systems) offer an opportunity to integrate better metrics and indicators for tracking GPP. Case studies and success stories can provide lessons for procurement officials in the near term. Better data on GPP is critical to increase political and bureaucratic buy-in for greener spending.

Internationally, renewed tracking of UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.7 on sustainable public procurement is needed to provide a global picture of progress and possibility.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

This report distils insights and lessons from governments strategically harnessing public procurement as a tool for climate action. It draws on more than 60 interviews with public procurement experts from:

- national and subnational governments in Brazil, Canada, the European Union, Finland, the Netherlands, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States;
- international organisations and multilateral development banks, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the World Bank; and
- over a dozen leading think tanks, NGOs and professional service providers worldwide.

The interviews covered sectors including buildings and construction, food, healthcare, defence, and transportation.

The information gathered through interviews was combined with systematic policy tracking of GPP rules and regulations through the Oxford Climate Policy Monitor (2025). The Oxford Climate Policy Monitor is a novel transdisciplinary research initiative tracking and analysing climate rules across 37 jurisdictions. Open-access data is generated through a global network of more than 60 law firms undertaking pro bono legal research to systematically map and analyse climate policy and regulation in select issue domains, including public procurement. Law firms identified and analysed public procurement policies and rules in their respective jurisdictions. Their legal and policy analyses were guided by a structured, English- language survey, developed by the Oxford Climate Policy Hub. The survey contains over 40 questions, specifically tracking and analysing different aspects of green public procurement rules and regulations. The resulting data enable cross-national comparison of public procurement policies, and is particularly valuable for widening the scope of comparison beyond English language policies.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report centres around the 'what, who, how' approach raised in **Section 1.1**:

- **Chapter 2** reviews opportunities and challenges in GPP;
- **Chapter 3** introduces the 'what, who, how' trifecta;
- **Chapters 4–6** examine the 'what, who, how' in turn;
- **Chapter 7** spotlights two distinct but critical sectors of public purchasing: food and construction; and
- **Chapter 8** concludes the report and looks ahead to the future of GPP.

2 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN GREENING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

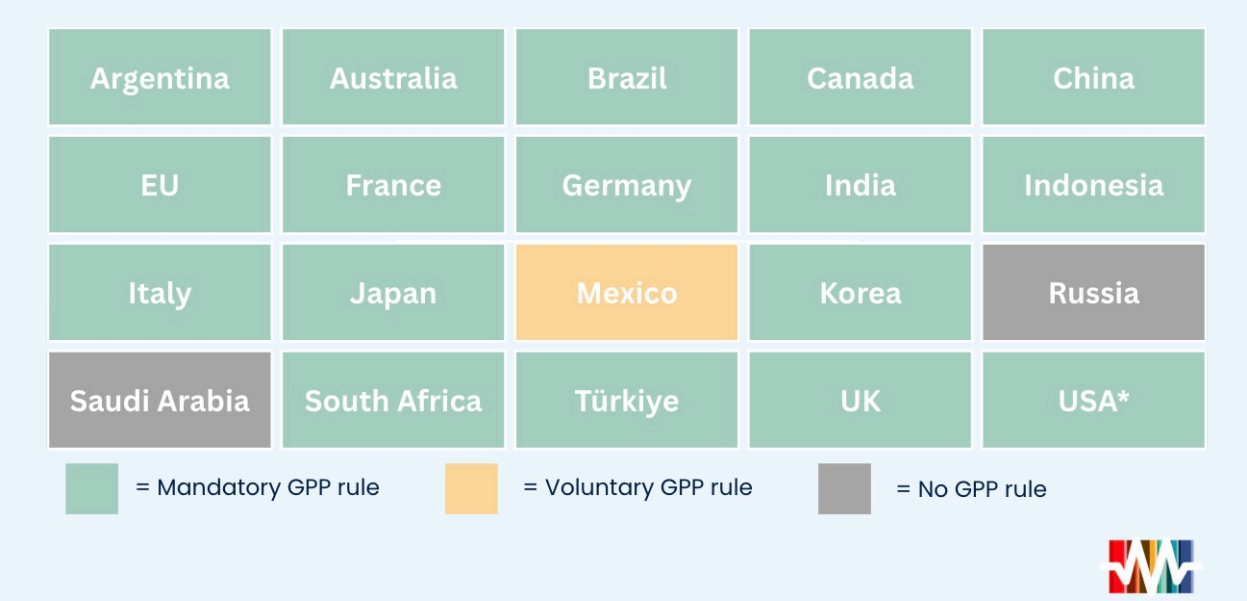
More than two thirds of emissions from public procurement are concentrated around six sectors: defence and security, transport, waste management services, construction, industrial products and utilities (World Economic Forum et al., 2022). Therefore, efforts to shift government spending priorities in these key categories could yield significant emissions reductions, while also acting as a tool for 'mission-oriented innovation' to achieve wider government aims including industrial development and economic resilience (Mazzucato, 2025; Draghi, 2024).

International support for GPP is growing. As part of the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, SDG 12.7 emphasises the power of public procurement, and UNEP has supported governments around the world in pursuing this goal under the One Planet Network. The Net Zero Government Initiative launched in 2022, with commitments from 19 countries to achieve net-zero government operations by 2050. That same year, UNIDO launched the Green Public Procurement Pledge, rallying national and subnational governments to procure green steel, cement and concrete to reduce their emissions and accelerate the solutions needed to decarbonise heavy industry.

Most recently, in 2025, the Brazilian government championed sustainable public procurement through its COP30 Presidency, forming a dedicated multilateral workstream on GPP (UNFCCC Climate High-Level Champions' Climate Action Agenda Group 22 and its Plan to Accelerate Solutions) and spearheading the Belém Declaration on Sustainable Public Procurement, through which national and subnational governments commit to learning about and implementing more sustainable purchasing in collaboration with peers.

Alongside these international efforts, greater numbers of national and subnational governments are incorporating sustainability objectives into their procurement rules. Policy tracking done by the Oxford Climate Policy Monitor shows that since 2020, the number of GPP rules and policies in G20 countries has more than doubled, with all but two G20 countries having some kind of GPP policy in place (see **Figure 1**). Fourteen G20 member states allow, recommend or require the use of life-cycle costing in public procurement to include climate and environmental costs in purchasing (Oxford Climate Policy Monitor, 2025).

Figure 1: GPP rules across the G20



Source: Oxford Climate Policy Monitor, 2025

Progress also extends beyond the G20, and the Philippines, Costa Rica, Singapore, Rwanda and other governments have made ambitious commitments to leverage their spending towards environmentally positive and socially equitable ends. These efforts are increasingly stringent and implementation focused. For example, Ireland made GPP a binding requirement for all public sector bodies in 2025 (IISD, 2026); Lithuania has seen GPP rise to 94% of public procurement by value (OECD, 2024).

However, despite growing policy ambition, there are many challenges to implementing GPP (see Uyarra et al., 2014; Nemec et al., 2023). These challenges, reiterated by our interviewees, include:

- **Complexity.** Public procurement procedures are complex, highly regulated, and time-consuming for both civil servants and private vendors. Integrating additional goals, such as sustainability, can make it even more challenging for public officials. In addition to delivering value for taxpayers, they must also address wider public responsibilities to citizens and communities, all the while navigating budget constraints, legal ambiguities and risks, and transparency requirements (Hughes et al., 2018). Transforming the system of public procurement from one optimised for cost and compliance into one optimised for social value requires reform of organisational systems, frameworks, culture and strategy (Delmonico et al., 2018; Similä & Mwesiumo, 2024).

- **Financial constraints.** While win-win procurements exist that both save money and bring environmental benefits, delivering innovations at the cost and scale required by procuring officials still remains a challenge (Brammer & Walker, 2011). Often, public sector budgets cannot accommodate the 'green premium,' even when higher up-front costs mean lower costs over a lifetime of a product or service.

- **Market readiness and supplier capabilities.** Public purchasers often perceive a lack of market-readiness when it comes to greener products or services. Given the complexity of the process, procurement officials are reluctant to pursue purchases that may fail at the tendering stage. Incumbent suppliers are often reluctant to take on additional obligations, and new climate-aware suppliers find it too complex to bid for government contracts.

- **Institutional capacity and bureaucratic culture.** There is limited capacity and risk appetite among civil servants to use public procurement strategically as a driver for sustainable transformation. In a recent survey from the UK's Local Government Association, 69% of UK local councils expressed a need for further training related to low-carbon procurement; this was highest ranked area of sustainability for which local councils were demanding support (Local Government Association, 2024). However, public procurement is not widely recognised as a distinct civil service profession, meaning opportunities for professionalisation and training are limited (OECD, 2025).

- **Lack of data to measure impact.** Data gaps are a barrier to understanding current GPP practices, their impact and how to improve them. Emerging evidence demonstrates localised success stories in China (Sun et al., 2024) and Brazil (Mazzucato et al., 2024), but extrapolating these case studies into meaningful

frameworks of what works – and does not – remains elusive (Uyarra et al., 2023). While there is widespread recognition of the potential of public procurement to contribute to sustainability goals, there is only limited measurement of whether this is having a quantifiable impact on the environment, such as reducing carbon emissions (OECD, 2025) It is of course difficult to attribute environmental outcomes to public procurement policies given the complexity of the system (Halonen et al., 2021) along with the lack of consistent approaches for evaluating contract outcomes. What evidence does exist is often case-based and focused on the Global North (Kundu et al., 2024). The OECD has called for efforts to improve the measurement of GPP impacts (OECD, 2022a).

3 IMPLEMENTING GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

To analyse the range of approaches being taken to operationalise green goals through public procurement, this report presents the 'what, who and how' of GPP:

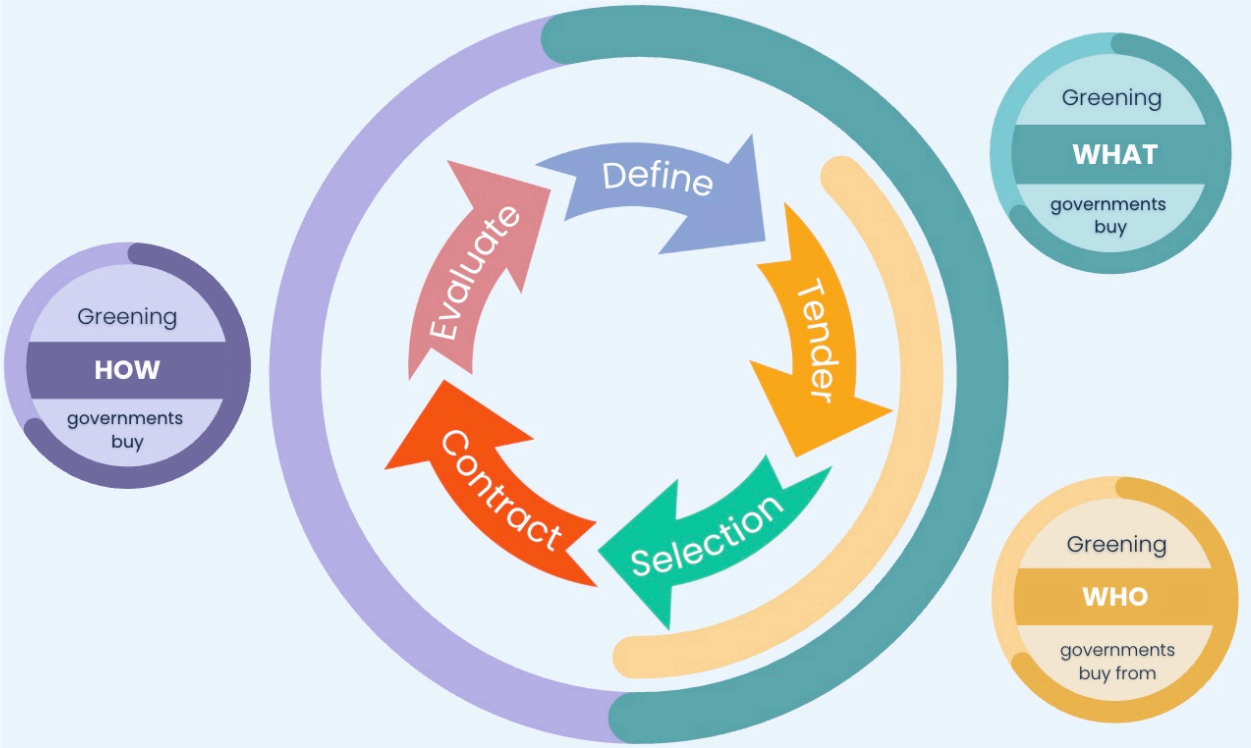
1. Greening **what** governments purchase (i.e., goods and services);
2. Greening **who** governments purchase from (i.e., suppliers and contractors); and
3. Greening **how** governments purchase, by changing relationships with markets and through contracts.

This framework, illustrated in **Figure 2**, was developed through cross-national regulatory analysis and insights from over 60 expert interviews. Rather than being prescriptive, sequential, or hierarchical, these three approaches represent a toolbox of possibilities, each with their own strengths and drawbacks that may suit different governments, sectors, and purchasing contexts at different stages of maturity and commitment.

In **Chapters 4–6**, we detail these three approaches to GPP, including real-world examples to illustrate how they work in practice. Interviewees perceived these approaches as complementary, with benefits to governments who add and/or combine different approaches over time.

The choice of approaches is shaped by two overarching questions: 'why' and 'so what'? As governments pursue greener purchasing, they must first consider their 'why': what is the purpose of greening their purchasing? What broader goals or objectives are they seeking to accomplish? This should be closely tied to the 'so what'—that is, how a government might account for how its spending is meeting those objectives.

Figure 2: The Oxford Initiative for Green Approaches to Public Procurement's approach



The increase in GPP policies over the last five years provides many purchasers with a mandate to change their spending, though their objectives vary and, consequently, shape their approach. The key, therefore, is ensuring the who, what, and how are aligned to these broader goals, and that implementation and monitoring reflect these broader policy objectives.

4 GREENING WHAT GOVERNMENTS BUY

The most established approach to GPP is also the most intuitive: changing what governments buy. Governments can replace conventional products with greener alternatives, set minimum environmental standards for goods and works, or reward suppliers whose products perform better environmentally. It is widespread: 31 of the 37 jurisdictions tracked by the Oxford Climate Policy Monitor have rules or regulations aimed at greening what governments purchase (Oxford Climate Policy Monitor, 2025).

Governments use a range of methods, including:

- ecolabels and environmental standards, which identify products that meet environmental criteria;
- environmental product declarations (EPDs) and life-cycle assessments (LCAs), which provide information on environmental impacts; and
- performance criteria, which allow governments to specify the environmental outcomes they expect from a purchase.

4.1 ECOLABELS AND STANDARDS

One of the simplest approaches to GPP is to use ecolabels and standards to define what constitutes a greener product. Since the first ecolabel was established in 1978 – the German Environmental Agency's Blue Angel label – nearly 500 have been created (Ecolabel Index, 2026). Within these, many hundreds of thousands of products are regulated with climate, environmental, and biodiversity concerns in mind (Gruère, 2015).

Ecolabels, standards and product certifications offer public purchasers a ready-made way of articulating the green version of what they want to purchase. As one interviewee noted:

> *'We identify the most credible ecolabels and standards. And then [identify] products that meet those ecolabels and standards. Purchasers do not have to become experts… Others have that expertise that we draw on.'*

This illustrates the important role of off-the-shelf instruments in GPP. Rather than expecting government purchasers to become experts in a wide range of technologies and products – from clinker content in cement to energy efficiency in IT products – these instruments offer ready-made, expert-developed guidance that lower the administrative burdens of buying greener.

Governments are already using such schemes:

- Since 2011, Germany has required suppliers of wood products to demonstrate certification through the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification or a comparable standard.
- In Italy, mandatory environmental criteria introduced in 2023 allow Type I ecolabels, including the EU Ecolabel and Nordic Swan, to demonstrate conformity.
- The UK uses Marine Stewardship Council certification to demonstrate compliance with mandatory government buying standards for fish.

Ecolabels do not necessarily come with a price premium: recent research by French development agency ADEME found no significant price differences between products carrying the EU Ecolabel and comparable unlabelled products (ADEME, 2025).

However, there are limitations to the use of ecolabels in GPP. Their coverage remains uneven, and differences between labels can fragment markets or make it difficult for procurement officials to determine which standards are credible or equivalent. As one US practitioner noted, multiple—and at times, competing—ecolabels can be a problem:

> *'[I] wish we had more harmonization… if we all required the same [ecolabels], it would build awareness [and encourage] more manufacturers to get more certifications.'*

In response, some governments are taking a more active role, using national schemes to aggregate and orchestrate ecolabels. This can involve working directly with ecolabel schemes to enhance their integrity, as with the FSC certification scheme (Partiti, 2018). It can also involve creating national ecolabelling schemes that aggregate approved private labels or even individually certify products under a national label. Japan's government-backed ecolabelling scheme, Eco Mark, certifies over 45,000 products using life-cycle assessments and resource conservation principles (Global Ecolabelling Network, 2026).

Through orchestrating ecolabels in this way, governments can send signals to the market about its purchasing preferences and help establish common expectations around what constitutes a green product.

The potential impact of coordinating high-integrity ecolabels or certifications extends beyond government. Public purchasers are often buying products that are also sold throughout the wider economy, meaning that sufficiently large and predictable government demand can influence what firms produce for other customers. For example, following a US federal executive order in 1993 requiring government agencies to purchase only Energy Star-certified computers, manufacturers began offering increasing numbers of products with energy-saving sleep functions. This rapidly became a feature that consumers expected as standard on their hardware (Delmas, 2025). The lesson here is that the transformative potential of greening 'what' governments buy depends not only on the sophistication of the instrument alone, but on whether it changes purchasing decisions and creates a credible signal to the market

4.2 REWARDING ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

For complex purchases, governments are increasingly going beyond simple pass/fail standards and using environmental performance to distinguish between competing bids.

LCAs and EPDs can support this approach. Rather than certifying that a product is 'green', they provide standardised information on environmental impacts across lifecycles. This is particularly relevant in construction, where EPDs are increasingly used to compare the embodied carbon of materials such as cement, concrete, steel, aluminium, glass and asphalt.

There are promising signs of what this can achieve in the Netherlands. The Dutch government's Environmental Cost Indicator (MKI) translates environmental impacts reported through EPDs into a single monetary value. This allows environmental performance to be more easily incorporated into bid evaluation. As an official from the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management explained:

> *'Since 2017 [we say that] we're going to evaluate bids on their carbon potential... You come up with solutions that give us a carbon price, and the lowest carbon price wins, so it focuses their efforts on finding solutions that have a low carbon intensity attached to them.'*

This approach means that instead of having to clear a minimum environmental threshold, suppliers have an incentive to compete on environmental performance itself. Where procurement rules allow lifecycle or whole-life costing, tools such as the MKI can shift markets to compete on not only upfront price, but also the wider impacts of a project.

Similar approaches emerged in the United States under the General Services Administration's Buy Clean Initiative, launched in 2021. This used EPDs to establish Global Warming Potential specifications for carbon-intensive construction materials purchased through federal and federally-funded projects. There are early signs of how strong demand signals like the Buy Clean Initiative can change market behaviour: within the first year of the policy, over 23,800 additional EPDs were published by private companies, including 153 publishing EPDs for the first time (White House, 2025). And while EPDs are informational tools rather than substantive obligations, they are also an important first step to catalysing greener purchasing decisions.

There are still practical barriers. EPDs can be technically complex, data may not always be comparable, and methodologies differ across jurisdictions. As one interviewee put it, *'your contracting folks need to understand how to read it if you're looking at it as a point for awarding a contract'.* The Dutch experience is useful precisely because the MKI

attempts to translate complex environmental information into a metric that procurement officials can actually use.

4.3 BUYING LESS

Greening what governments buy does not always mean substituting one product for a greener equivalent. In some cases, the more sustainable procurement decision is to purchase less – or not purchase something new at all. This can involve reusing existing materials or considering fundamentally different solutions.

This matters particularly for circular economy objectives. Requirements designed to encourage sustainable products can sometimes inadvertently disadvantage reuse. In Canada, for example, interviewees noted that refurbished office furniture was not eligible for purchasing under federal rules. This is a de facto result of complex legal rules related to mandatory product testing, conformity requirements, and the ways in which the chain of custody on FSC certification is broken when furniture is refurbished. This example highlights the ways in which laws and regulations create legal barriers to *purchasing* refurbished products.

Some jurisdictions have re-regulated to enable the purchasing of refurbished products. The City of Helsinki is one example, having recently tendered for suppliers capable of providing used and refurbished office furniture (European Commission, 2025).

Other jurisdictions have, alternatively, focused on responsible ownership. Canada's Office Furniture Supply Arrangements do provide funding for the refurbishment of existing furniture. The UK's Department for Environment, Food, & Rural Affairs (Defra) also negotiated an end-user services contract in 2026 that does away with periodic replacements of technology and instead contracts a supplier to refurbish or remanufacture 90% of Defra's 72,000 devices for the next five years. This contract also links the vendor's remuneration to end-user experience, meaning that the supplier must not simply refurbish devices, but is incentivised to maintain and enhance their performance (Defra, 2026). Both examples highlight ways in which procurement rules can support lower consumption by providing for the responsible maintenance and care of existing purchases.

The key to buying less and bringing circularity into public procurement is integrating these considerations earlier in the acquisition cycle. As one procurement official explained:

> *'The Dutch approach to circular economy… [is about] taking the focus away from the tender. By the time you got to the tender, you've got very limited opportunities*

in order to deliver change. So the real focus has been around looking at how you can be more strategic in the pre-tender stage.'

Higher-level planning and policy coordination can ensure that green spending objectives do not simply substitute conventional products with greener alternatives, but are genuinely transformative, prompting a more fundamental reconsideration of how public needs are defined in light of sustainability goals.

5 GREENING WHO GOVERNMENTS BUY FROM

While the focus in green public procurement has largely been on **what** is purchased, governments are increasingly re-considering **who** they purchase from. This goes beyond supplier diversity requirements to consider more specific questions related to companies' environmental governance and/or performance, including upstream in their own supply chains.

Supplier-focused procurement allows governments to influence corporate behaviour beyond the specific product being purchased. Notably, corporate sustainability is often embedded in the requirements of ecolabel and green certification schemes. India's GreenPro Certification, which covers building and manufacturing products, materials, and technologies, considers not only the life cycle of products, but also a corporation's ongoing resource efficiency gains related to water an energy (Global Ecolabelling Network, 2026).

However, governments are increasingly making the focus on supplier's corporate governance more explicit. The theory of change when it comes to greening suppliers is, as one official noted, that it catalyses broader corporate transformation:

'It has the potential to impact all of the company's output. Even if we're only buying a small percentage of [the company's product]... there's always been a hope for a much broader indirect effect from it.'

In practice, interventions at different stages of the procurement cycle can be used to attract or incentivise greener suppliers: some can be at the tender stage, and others requirements in contract delivery. In other words, corporate sustainability practices can be used as a qualification for public procurement and/or a performance outcome from public procurement.

5.1 REQUIREMENTS IN TENDERS

Most commonly, suppliers' green credentials are considered at the bid evaluation stage, where these characteristics weighted favourably in the decision-making process. Both France and Argentina have voluntary duties to consider the climate governance of potential suppliers at the selection stage:

- France encourages public buyers to consider whether a supplier has an ISO 14001 certification (see **Box 2**); while
- Argentinian law allows corporate climate criteria (i.e., net zero targets, plans and commitments; records of climate-related disclosures; certifications) to be included in the selection process.

A more recent development has been the emphasis on corporate climate governance as an eligibility criterion for bidding for contracts. In Spain, recent legislation (Royal Decree 214/2025) allows for a suppliers' carbon footprint to be included as a criterion in tender procedures (Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica y el Reto Demográfico, 2025) . In the UK, PPN 006 requires that vendors develop a Carbon Reduction Plan to be eligible to bid for contracts over £5m.

Canada provides early evidence that supplier requirements can shape corporate behaviour rather than just screen existing suppliers. Under its 2024 green procurement policy, federal contracts over CAD$25m require suppliers to measure and disclose their greenhouse gas emissions and adopt a science-based target. Interviewees suggest this requirement has had wider market-shaping impacts, having been a major driver of both large and smaller companies' participation in the government's Net Zero Challenge. As one Canadian official noted:

> *'The procurement rules have been the primary drivers of voluntary participation in the Net Zero Challenge, as companies aim to proactively align their organisation's climate governance with the federal government's stated policy.'*

In the UK and Canada, these rules go beyond what is asked of companies under broader domestic regulatory requirements, and yet experts indicated that many strategic suppliers were actively in favour of these supplier-focused procurement approaches. This is because these rules reward their voluntary ambition, or provide justification internally for investments in corporate and supply chain sustainability. One UK practitioner said:

> *'A lot of our strategic suppliers are more ambitious than we are in terms of environmental sustainability... So they're putting more pressure on us to make sure*

that we push them, because unless we ask them to do something, they're not going to be able to do it, or justify the funding that it will take to do it.'

Approaches to determining who governments buy from can also form part of a broader sustainability strategy aimed at supporting specific types of businesses, incorporating wider sustainability and equity considerations to drive systemic change. Perhaps one of the most ambitious examples, the Brazilian national school feeding programme, requires local governments to allocate 45% of federal school meal funding to products from family farms. This requirement is reinforced by prioritising organic and agroecological goods, which are frequently supplied by family farmers and Indigenous communities. Such approaches are increasingly embedded through the weighting of social value within public procurement regimes.

Box 2: The role of corporate standards in supporting public procurement

When focusing on the climate and environmental sustainability characteristics of vendors, governments can and should leverage an increasingly diverse set of private and international standards to enhance their specifications. The Science Based Targets Initiative and CDP, for instance, are referenced in Canada's supplier rules. The ISO 14001 standard on Environmental Management Systems is frequently referenced as a criterion in bid evaluations, including in France. Looking ahead, the ISO Guidance on Net Zero and the draft ISO 14060 – Net Zero Aligned Organizations can provide further support to procurement officials. High-quality standards are essential, as they can ensure governments are selecting suppliers with high-integrity corporate sustainability governance, rather than inadvertently rewarding vendors for greenwashing.

5.2 REQUIREMENTS IN CONTRACT DELIVERY

There can be a tension in supplier-focused approaches, with overly demanding eligibility approaches proving exclusionary to small and medium enterprises. As one expert noted:

'Small businesses have smaller carbon footprints, but don't have the expertise to understand how to calculate greenhouse gases. They don't have capacity for paperwork.'

This tension can be overcome by integrating corporate sustainability requirements at later stages of the procurement process. Rather than making demands of suppliers at the bid

stage, corporate sustainability efforts may be required as part of contract delivery – in effect, using the contract as a subsidy for corporate sustainability (see **Section 6.2** for more on the potential of contracts for GPP).

The Dutch CO_2 Performance Ladder is a strong example of this approach in action. Under this approach, suppliers commit to a particular level of emissions reductions performance as part of their bids, with these proposed commitments accounting for up to 10% of a tender evaluation. The level promised in the bid is then incorporated into the contract as a performance requirement, with financial penalties of up to 1.5 times the tender advantage should the contractor fail to meet it. Research suggests this approach is a powerful driver of change, with organisations certified under the Performance Ladder reducing emissions by about 3.2% annually, which is twice as fast as non-certified Dutch organisations (OECD, 2022b). This example evidences the way different approaches to GPP can be combined to great effect, as the 'who' and the 'how' are blended in the Dutch CO_2 Performance Ladder.

6 GREENING HOW GOVERNMENTS BUY

In addition to changing what they buy and who they buy from, governments are changing *how* they procure. This means rethinking state-market relationships and reconsidering how contracts can be used as an instrument for greener purchasing.

Changing the 'how' of GPP is almost always closely connected to the 'what' and the 'who'. Tenders, for example, are also the groundwork for contracts. As one procurement expert from an international organization noted:

> *'by the time you publish your [tender], you have your Schedule A for your contract… It might be tweaked a little bit at the end of the procurement process, but really those two things are the same.'*

As such, it is important to view all three approaches as not discrete or distinct pathways, but complementary and interconnected.

6.1 RETHINKING THE STATE–MARKET RELATIONSHIP

Rethinking state–market relations requires a significant culture shift –from prioritising compliance to undertaking market-facing procurement. Better market engagement, for example, can help governments clearly communicate green objectives and accurately understand what the market can provide. As one expert noted:

> *'There's a reluctance to include environmental requirements or environmental specifications for many reasons, but a big one [is] a lack of knowledge about whether the market can provide that solution or not, or if it's going to be prohibitive for the market. Then you end up in a situation where there are no bids... And that's the worst-case scenario.'*

Early market engagement was frequently mentioned as key to avoiding these kinds of setbacks in GPP. Officials from Canada noted the importance of engaging the cement industry in advance of setting green procurement rules for construction. Rather than undermining the rules, these industry consultations enhanced the government's ambition, demonstrating the viability of greener purchasing in this sector. As one official said:

> *'We've consulted with the concrete industry association and companies...they were like partners with us... saying, "yes, ask for the greener stuff, we can provide it."'*

In the words of one expert, the key to successful market engagement in GPP is not just understanding what the market can provide today, but asking the market what it could do and may be able to provide tomorrow.

Governments are also exploring alternative models of partnership. Advanced market commitments (AMCs) are promises to buy products not yet on the market, or on the market at scale. These are a potentially powerful tool through which to enhance market readiness, though legal limitations and low risk appetites among procuring officials mean that AMCs by governments are rare.

Nonetheless, emerging practice in the Netherlands, the UK and the United States shows growing promise. In the Netherlands, buyer groups have been established in priority categories of purchasing, pooling demand to create clearer signals for suppliers (RIVM, 2022).

A more explicit example of government using procurement to create markets for emerging green technologies can be found in the UK's Advance Market Commitment for next-generation low-carbon concrete (UKRI, 2026). Launched in November 2025, this initiative aims to aggregate forward commitments from public and private buyers to purchase up to 500,000 m^3 of low-carbon concrete. Scottish Water, a publicly owned utility, became the first purchaser to make a commitment, pledging to buy almost 20,000 m^3 – roughly a third of its annual concrete purchasing – over five years (Scottish Water, 2025). Pledges over the first 10 months of the initiative totalled 154,750 m^3 of low-carbon concrete, highlighting the interest and willingness of major purchasers to influence investment and production decisions to stimulate greener industry.

Finally, the Green Proving Ground (GPG) programme established by the US General Services Administration (GSA) has demonstrated the benefits that such commitments can have for both public agencies and the market. The GPG pilots emerging technologies within government facilities under real-world conditions. Technologies are deployed for a defined trial period and independently evaluated, with the government effectively underwriting performance risk during the testing phase. This approach generates robust evidence on operational performance, reduces uncertainty for procurers and uses public funds to help promising technologies avoid the 'valley of death', moving from pre-commercial potential to commercial-scale viability, potentially scaling these innovations across the public estate. Between 2011 and 2024, the programme evaluated over 100 technologies, with more than 20 successfully deployed across the GSA estate. According to the GSA, '*these already-deployed GPG technologies are avoiding 116,000 tons of carbon dioxide and saving $28 million*' each year (GSA, 2024).

6.2 RETHINKING THE GREEN POTENTIAL OF CONTRACTS

Contracts are a powerful but often overlooked lever. Pursuing GPP through contracts does not necessarily depend on earlier measures to green what is purchased or who supplies it.

First, contracts can integrate incentives for green performance**,** rewarding vendors for better environmental outcomes. Brazil's New Public Procurement Law (No.14, 133), for example, allows governments to use variable remuneration as a means of encouraging better environmental sustainability outcomes.

More innovative contracting mechanisms, such as performance-based contracting, are also used to enhance green objectives. For example, Energy Performance Contracts tie the remuneration of an energy service company (ESCO) to energy savings from renewable energy generation (Bregazzi et al, 2022; Hamdan, De Boer, & Hamdy, 2020). Such arrangements are successful not only because of the incentives they create for the ESCOs: while the saved energy equates to greater revenues for the ESCO, the contractual requirements shift technical and delivery risks from the public sector to the vendor.

Second, contracts can also be a means to shift to alternative purchasing models altogether. Leasing programmes, for example Defra's product-as-service policy noted in **Section 4.3**, can introduce alternative models of ownership, in which governments procure services rather than products or facilities. These approaches can create commercial incentives for vendors to repair and refurbish rather than to replace. Building energy performance can be similarly managed through lease contracts. The EU's Green

Buildings Directive, for example, directs governments to use green clauses in leases to encourage better energy performance of building stock.

Finally, contracts can be used to demand green investment. In Brazil, a 2024 decree mandated 1% of gross revenues from road concessions – i.e. privately-operated toll roads – be invested in making transport infrastructure more resilient (Ministério dos Transportes, 2024).

A key benefit of all these dimensions of green contracting is that they do not require public purchasers to specify the exact solution they require. Rather, the contracts act as incentives for firms to innovate or discover products, practices or strategies for improving environmental performance themselves. As one US procurement official described a model contract for IT services:

> *'what that contract did was not pre-select or close the market to companies that didn't meet a standard… What it said was, "you must, as a matter of the contract deliverable… disclose your emissions and set a target… This was a longer-term contract that said, "the market's wide open, anyone can come in and bid on this, you don't have to show any level of environmental performance when you get on the contract, but what you're signing up for, in exchange for us paying you, you're going to do these things [disclosure and target setting]". I think that… made it more workable than the broader policy… [of] putting a gate at the beginning of the process.'*

As this example highlights, green contracts can support vendors to enhance environmental performance over the course of the contract, implicitly building their capacity to provide greener products or services over time. Critically, by avoiding adding additional eligibility requirements or technical specifications at the tendering stage, green contracts can support governments that fear making public purchasing more complex and time-intensive.

7 SECTOR SPOTLIGHTS

This chapter examines how the three approaches to GPP are being implemented in practice, and the extent to which they operate in combination across two high-influence sectors: food, beverages, and catering and construction materials. These sectors were selected as areas in which public spending exerts significant leverage and where continued innovation is critical to advancing decarbonisation.

7.1 FOOD, BEVERAGES AND CATERING

Governments purchase huge volumes of food, e.g., for schools, hospitals, prisons and the military. For example, UK public institutions serve almost 2bn meals per year (Defra, 2024). This makes food procurement not only a significant source of environmental impact, but also a highly visible point of interaction between government and citizens, particularly at the local/municipal level.

Food procurement also sits at the nexus of multiple policy priorities, including health, local economic development, social wellbeing, biodiversity and national security. Strategic GPP can therefore do more than just reduce the carbon footprint of public sector food purchasing: it can also contribute to more resilient food systems and healthier communities.

Greening what food governments buy

Governments are using procurement to shift both the composition and environmental impact of food. Approaches include using ecolabels, changing ingredients and pursuing wholesale menu redesign. The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification, for example, is referenced in UK, EU and Japanese buying standards. The UK's Food for Life certification, run by the Soil Association, verifies caterers are serving fresh, ethically sourced and locally supportive food. The latter scheme, now part of the government's buying standards, has demonstrated payoffs for local communities: a UK public procurement review noted that '*for each £1 invested in Food for Life, an additional £1.85–£2.19 of economic activity is generated in the local area, and £3-6 of social return*' (Quince, 2024).

In addition to buying local, other approaches are emphasizing seasonal, organic and/or plant-based options. For example, Copenhagen's overall goal of reducing food sector emissions by 25% includes a target for public kitchens to use 90% organic ingredients in their procurement. The city has nearly reached its goal – and has done so without increasing budgets, but rather through investing in capacity building and training among kitchen staff (Future of Food, 2022).

Greening who governments buy food from

There is a notable focus on social value and economic empowerment in the selection of vendors. Supporting local suppliers is high on the agenda for many governments. As one participant noted:

> *'For social impact, we focus on the who. For sustainability, it's easier to start on the what.'*

Since 2009, the Brazilian National School Feeding Programme (PNAE) has required a minimum of 30% (45% since January 2026) of federal food funds to go to family farms. Priority is given to local, indigenous and *quilombola* producers using sustainable practices, with simplified, non-competitive procurement. While local implementation varies, with 28% of municipalities falling short of the target in 2022, at least US$1.6bn was spent on family farm products across the country in the same year. Crucially, PNAE is a multisectoral policy that has evolved from child health and nutrition into economic empowerment and environmental impact. It has been referenced in different jurisdictions as an example of best practice (e.g. in the UK by the Quince Review, 2024).

Greening how governments buy food

The importance of facilitating smaller supplier participation is also reflected in the approaches adopted for procurement. These are frequently concerned with overcoming the barriers for smaller suppliers who may struggle to provide the scale and reliability that larger companies can offer. This is an issue that is particularly relevant for food, beverages and catering given the dynamic and seasonal nature of food production, compared against the scale and consistency with which governments purchase food.

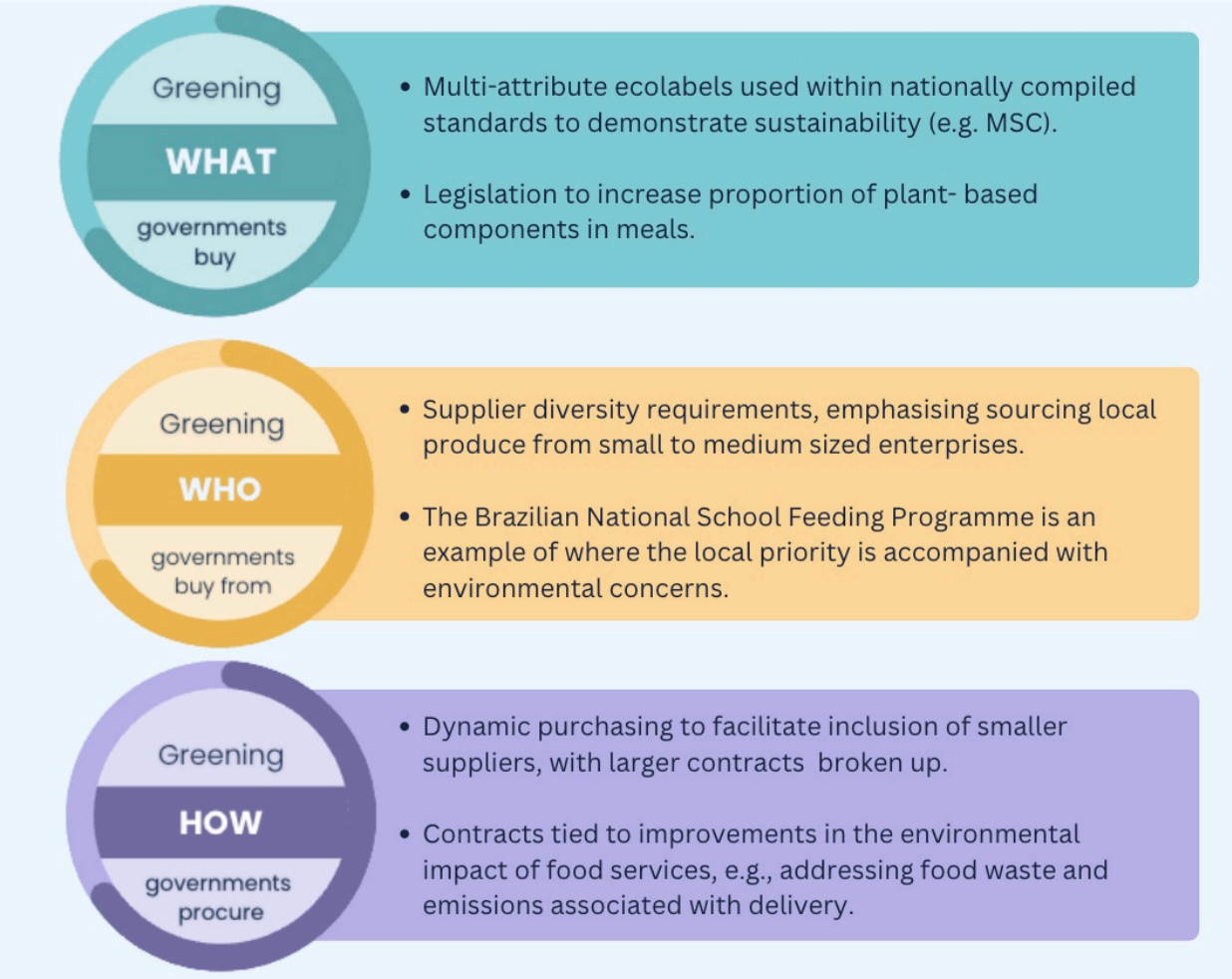
We see innovative pilots of dynamic purchasing systems that allow suppliers to bid to provide what they are able to and incorporate flexibility to add additional suppliers as needed. In other pilots, including Slovenia's Podravje Self-Sufficiency Project (Ryland, 2020), contracts are broken into smaller lots to allow for the provision of certain aspects of a food contract (rather than a whole menu).

There are innovative examples of using contracting methods to progressively improve the environmental impacts of procured food services. For example, in Helsinki, contracts that address the delivery of food were changed from payments based on travel time to those based on delivery distance. Minimising service vehicles being driven resulted in considerable emission reductions, as well as reducing costs by 25% (Global Lead City

Network on Sustainable Procurement, 2021). Elsewhere, public contracts increasingly incorporate food waste minimisation as a stipulation.

Taken together, these examples show how food procurement can be used to pursue climate and environmental objectives alongside health, social value and local economic development. These approaches demonstrate that the most promising approaches are not limited to buying greener products: governments are changing what they serve, who benefits from public demand, and how contracts are designed to not only feed but benefit communities more widely.

Figure 3: The what, who and how of food procurement



7.2 CONSTRUCTION AND EMBODIED CARBON

The buildings and construction sector is responsible for 33–37% of global emissions; sectoral emissions are projected to double by 2050 (UNEP et al., 2023; Li et al., 2025). The World Economic Forum estimates that government-funded construction activities are responsible for up to 17% of all public procurement-related emissions (Hildebrandt et al., 2022). More striking, a recent study estimates that public spending on construction is responsible for 11% of total EU emissions (Mähonen et al., 2023).

Public investment in construction and infrastructure is only anticipated to grow. Developing nations are rapidly urbanising and contracting to build increasingly sophisticated infrastructure. Governments around the world must be ready to rebuild after natural and man-made disasters. Public agencies will continue to invest in buildings, dams, levees, bridges, tunnels, ports, waterworks, railroads, airports and other major infrastructure projects.

However, limited progress has been made to tackle the embodied emissions in buildings or the carbon emissions of the entire life cycle of manufacturing, construction, maintenance and demolition of the materials used in construction (UNEP et al., 2023). For governments that invest in large infrastructure projects with minimal or no emissions in their operation – such as dams and levees – the entire greenhouse gas footprint is locked in the initial design plans and procurement of materials.

Indeed, more than half of all emissions from construction comes from materials such as cement, concrete, steel, aluminium, asphalt and flat glass (Li et al., 2025). However, the cement and steel industries are considered some of the most difficult sectors to decarbonise because carbon emissions are intrinsic to the industrial processes used in their production (Gonheim et al., 2022). Governments are beginning to develop industrial decarbonisation and domestic production policies, but for these strategies to succeed, governments need to consider their procurement as a demand-side lever of influence (UNIDO, 2026).

Greening what construction materials governments procure

Several governments have recently passed legislation requiring public procurement to tackle the embodied carbon in buildings, focusing both on how buildings are designed and construction materials are selected.

Under the Buy Clean California Act, the State of California has, since 2018, set limits on the global warming potential of some types of publicly procured steel, flat glass and

insulation (DGS, 2025). This framework was scaled nationally under the US Federal Buy Clean Initiative in 2021–24 to prioritise lower-carbon American-made steel, concrete, asphalt and flat glass for all federally procured and funded infrastructure projects (CEQ, 2024). Both Ireland and Türkiye have mandated low-carbon cement in public works since 2024, and Thailand launched its Green Public Procurement Framework in 2025, developing and piloting mandatory requirements for purchasing low-carbon cement (UNIDO, 2025).

A key leader in this sector, the Canadian federal government set a target to reduce embodied emissions from federal construction projects by 30% beginning in 2025, and requires vendors to conduct life cycle assessments of concrete when bidding for major building and infrastructure projects.

As more governments commit to utilising lower-carbon construction materials, an important area of policy development relates to the development of technical standards. As one Canadian official noted, standards are key to changing what materials governments purchase:

> *'Before you implement something, [procurement professionals] want to know all the details… It actually forces us to develop all the guidance and all the requirements, standards and information in advance… So our greener concrete work provided benchmarks for what "green concrete" is… and now [that information is] available. We're seeing other cities that don't have the capacity [to independently develop technical specifications] say, "We're just going to adopt that standard". So you can get the greenest active players adopting something now that the technical work has been done.'*

As this example highlights, nationally-led standards also have secondary benefits, can helping governments engage suppliers and supporting other levels of government through the creation of technical pathways and know-how.

Greening who governments buy from

While less frequent, some governments are also considering their suppliers' green corporate credentials (see **Section 5.1**). Under Canada's 2024 green procurement policy, federal contracts over CAD$25m require suppliers to measure and disclose their greenhouse gas emissions. The high threshold for the rule was designed with tackling construction-sector emissions in mind, as these projects often exceed the CAD$25m benchmark. Similarly, the UK's PPN 006 requires that vendors must develop a Carbon

Reduction Plan to be eligible to bid for contracts over £5m—once again targeting construction as a high-emissions category of spending.

Australia's Environmentally Sustainable Procurement policy (2024) is more explicitly targeting the sector. Would-be construction contractors are required to complete a Supplier Environmental Sustainability Plan, addressing environmental sustainability and circularity objectives, how opportunities for innovation will be considered, and the vendor's environmental sustainability initiatives.

Greening how governments procure construction

Governments are also greening how they procure construction projects through better market engagement and smarter policy approaches.

The UK's Advance Market Commitment for next-generation low-carbon concrete (see Section 6.2) is one such example of proactive market engagement, and shows how public sector leadership can enhance market certainty.

Multilateral development banks are also supporting their clients to better engage markets. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been supporting countries through its Sustainable Construction Materials Market Survey. This identifies regulatory and market opportunities in relation to concrete, cement and reinforcing steel in Cambodia, Loas and Viet Nam. Building on this, the ADB is working with countries to develop and integrate green construction materials taxonomies into procurement practices (ADB, 2025).

But beyond market engagement, transforming construction sector procurement requires governments to think more strategically about how GPP connects to broader policy measures and mixes. Oslo's approach to zero emission construction sites (ZECs) illustrates this point clearly.

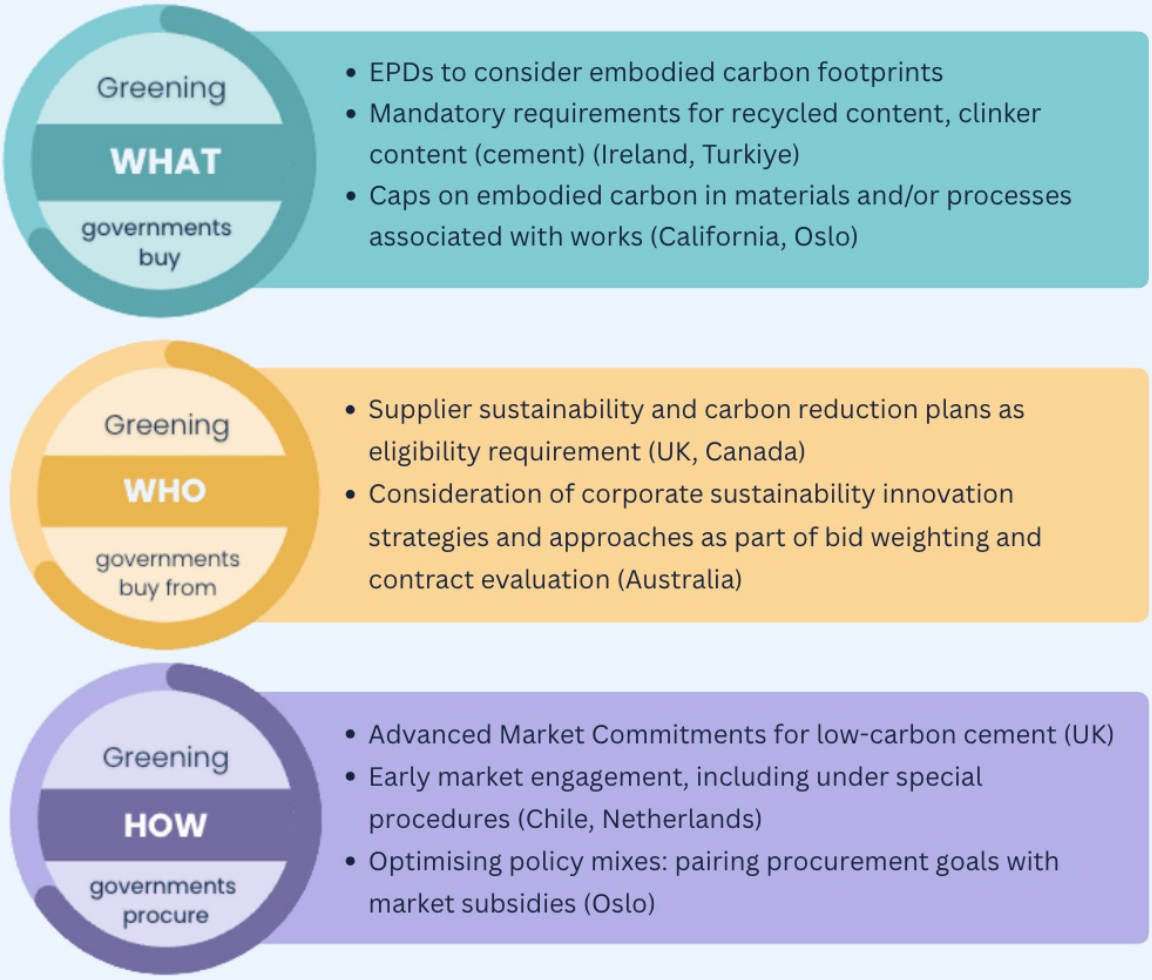
Since 2017, Oslo has set clear, incremental targets for reducing construction site emissions. In 2019, it launched a pilot project (Olav Vs Gate) to strategically refine technical specifications related to ZECS, and subsequently published these as common tender criteria, sending clear signals to the market. In parallel, Oslo also set up subsidies for zero-emission machinery and charging to enhance market-preparedness (ibid.). The City has also instituted a minimum 20% weighting to environmental criteria in public construction contracts; in practice, the standard in Oslo's tenders is closer to 30%.

The results are striking. In 2024, 85% of work at municipal sites was carried out using zero-emission machinery; 14% used biofuels, and only 1% used fossil fuels (C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, 2020). The additional cost of ZECS as compared with sites

using conventional diesel-powered machinery is calculated to be as little as 1% for major urban projects (Hafslund Rådgivning & Oslo Economics, 2025). It was only after laying all of this groundwork that, in 2025, the City of Oslo in Norway mandated all public construction sites be zero-emission, and announced its aims to make all construction sites, private included, zero-emission by 2030 (Dominguez & Zarai, 2025). In this case, alternative policy measures were utilised in order to enable successful GPP implementation.

Decarbonising the construction sector is one of the most technically challenging areas to tackle. And yet, governments are increasingly prioritising this critical sector in GPP efforts, leveraging the uniquely powerful role of public finance and demand-based innovation to derisk and catalyse green transformation in this sector.

Figure 4: The what, who, and how of green construction procurement



8 CONCLUSION

This report illustrates that GPP is moving from ambition to implementation. A range of governments are using diverse tools to reframe what they buy, who they buy from and how they buy in order to enhance the transformative impacts of public purchasing.

A key finding from this report is that there is no single pathway or playbook for GPP. Rather, policymakers and procurement officials need to carefully consider their objectives and the distinct features of each sector, and tailor their approaches to the challenges and opportunities they face – and then measure and track impact metrics accordingly. As one expert noted:

> *'We need to enable bureaucrats and technical people to solve these technical problems and trust their solutions… whether that results in doing it through a product-focused policy or through a firm-focused policy.'*

The most successful examples are those that combine approaches, e.g., using product standards alongside supplier requirements and innovative contracting to reinforce and enhance impact over time. The 'what', 'who' and 'how' should therefore be understood as a toolbox rather than a prescription; in practice, the three approaches can and should reinforce one another.

The potential of GPP extends beyond reducing the environmental impact of government operations. It can shape markets. Product requirements can create demand for cleaner goods and materials; supplier requirements can encourage companies to strengthen environmental governance across their operations; and innovative market engagement and contracting can reduce risk, giving firms greater confidence to invest in emerging technologies and production processes.

There are already signs of these effects in practice:

- The Netherlands is mainstreaming circularity into its purchasing and using its CO_2 Performance Ladder to encourage suppliers to compete on corporate climate outcomes;
- The Canadian federal government's work on developing standards for embodied emissions in construction materials has supported subnational governments to move ahead with their own GPP efforts sin the sector; and
- Programmes such as the GPG have helped emerging technologies move towards commercial deployment.

In sectors such as food and construction, governments like Brazil and the City of Oslo are similarly demonstrating that greener procurement can be combined with other public objectives, including affordability, local economic development, health, innovation and industrial transformation.

Successful GPP does not necessarily depend on procurement officials becoming environmental experts, or governments waiting for perfectly mature green markets. Instead, governments are finding ways to reduce these barriers by using credible standards and shared criteria to:

- make greener purchasing easier;
- engage suppliers early to understand and shape what markets can deliver;
- piloting new approaches before scaling them;
- using contracts to reward improvements over time; and
- combining procurement with regulation, subsidies and other policy instruments to strengthen market signals.

Important constraints nevertheless remain. Public procurement is already complex; incorporating additional objectives can increase real and perceived risks for officials. Financial pressures continue to favour upfront cost over whole-life value, while limited institutional capacity constrains innovation. Perhaps most importantly, governments still lack sufficient data to understand where GPP is being implemented and what environmental, economic and market impacts it is producing. Better measurement is essential not only for improving procurement practice, but for demonstrating success and building the political and bureaucratic case for scaling it.

However, governments do not need to wait for these challenges to be fully resolved. The cases examined in this report show public purchasers experimenting and making progress under imperfect conditions. Some approaches begin with simple product standards; others use procurement to raise expectations of major suppliers; still others use public demand to help create markets that do not yet exist at scale. What matters is that the approach is suited to the problem governments are trying to solve and that procurement is treated as a strategic function rather than simply an administrative process.

Now is an important moment for GPP. Geopolitical disruption, trade tensions and concerns about supply-chain security are already prompting governments to rethink how they use public purchasing. Greater emphasis is being placed on procurement as a means of supporting domestic production, strengthening critical supply chains and building economic resilience. The question is therefore not whether governments will use procurement strategically, but what kind of economies that spending will help build.

Short-term purchasing decisions can create long-term investment signals. Public contracts awarded today can encourage firms to invest in facilities, technologies, skills and supply chains that will operate for decades. If environmental objectives are treated as secondary to immediate economic or security concerns, governments risk using public money to lock in carbon-intensive productive capacity and create new vulnerabilities as economies decarbonise and climate change impacts intensify.

By aligning climate and environmental priorities with governments' wider economic objectives, public spending can help build supply chains and industries that are not only more secure, but more competitive and resilient in the long term. As geopolitical disruption and concerns over supply-chain security prompt governments to use procurement more strategically, the question is not whether public spending will be mobilised in this way, but what kind of economies that spending will help build. Procurement for the planet, in this sense, is not simply about reducing the environmental impacts of government spending. It is about using the purchasing power of the state to help build the markets, infrastructure and productive capacity needed for the economies of tomorrow.

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