



Leveraging Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) for COVID-19 Recovery in the Caribbean SIDS

Call for expression of interest

We are pleased to announce that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will initiate the project *Leveraging Sustainable Public Procurement for COVID-19 Recovery in the Caribbean SIDS in six Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the Commonwealth Caribbean*. The project will run until December 2025, and is led by UNEP through its Latin America and Caribbean Office as part of the initiative Global Opportunities for the Sustainable Development Goals – GO4SDGs.

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the importance of robust, agile, and well-coordinated public procurement systems. In order to utilize the public procurement function as a strategic tool for COVID economic recovery and sustainable development, it's important that governments have solid Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) frameworks in place.

The Caribbean SIDS have been disproportionately affected by the recent economic fall-out of the COVID crisis, as well as the ongoing effects of the climate change. A collapse of the region's tourism sector and a steep drop in commodity prices led to an economic contraction of -7% in 2020. While the Caribbean SIDS have begun unveiling their fiscal stimulus and recovery packages, with limited spending room in their budgets, public procurement, more than ever, will need to deliver the best value for money.

Objectives

The project aims at accelerating the shift to Sustainable Public Procurement in the Caribbean. In the six selected project countries, the project will support the development of Sustainable Public Procurement legal frameworks, strategies, and tools such as guidelines in key economic sectors, as well as enhance capacity and knowledge of Sustainable Public Procurement in both the public sector (procurement practitioners) and the private sector (suppliers).

More specifically, the project has the following two outcomes; 1): Governments of selected Caribbean SIDS adopt Sustainable Public Procurement policies and strategies, and 2): Sustainable Public Procurement criteria is integrated in public procurement processes and public procurement cycle, and thereby changing the purchasing behavior of governments in the selected Caribbean SIDS. Moreover, the project will provide (1) Technical assistance and capacity building to public institutions in the development of Sustainable Public Procurement legal frameworks, and procurement processes including tools and guidelines, (2) Technical assistance for the implementation of Sustainable Public Procurement practices and increased expertise among public procurement practitioners.



In this manner, enhancing the Sustainable Public Procurement will benefit the 6 project countries in the following ways:

- Reduce Caribbean SIDS' environmental footprints – Public purchasing of sustainable products and services by Caribbean governments as part of their post-COVID green recovery strategy will contribute to their objectives in meeting environmental challenges such as climate change, soil degradation, biodiversity loss, access to fresh water, etc. In addition, in leveraging their purchasing power for green recovery, these governments will be able to stimulate environmentally conscious markets.
- Promote hard-hit small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – Caribbean SMEs are a substantial contributor to economic and social development in the region, accounting for about 70% of regional enterprises. Given the important role of this sector, it is critical that Caribbean governments implement SME set-asides. Increased government purchases from local businesses and industries will play an important role in reviving the SME sector.
- Support women, youth, and disadvantaged groups - Labor force participation rates for women aged 25-64 is significantly lower than for men in the Caribbean region. This is significant as there is a growing body of evidence that supports a positive correlation between women becoming economically active and increases in GDP per capita and human development. Furthermore, Sustainable Public Procurement can stimulate social justice and social inclusion through the promotion of disadvantaged groups (women, youth, minorities, the disabled, etc.) in government contracting.

Approach

The project will apply UNEP's recently updated Sustainable Public Procurement Implementation Methodology as its implementation approach. This methodology foresees the establishment of a steering committee, involving key ministries involved in Sustainable Public Procurement (Finance, Planning, Environment, Social Affairs, etc.). This allows for synergized action and the integration of Sustainable Public Procurement in overarching and sectoral policies. The methodology also foresees involvement of private sector representatives and local authorities in the project to coordinate Sustainable Public Procurement actions and ensure that the highest consistent demand signal is sent out to the market.

Gender is an essential element in this project. The project approach aims to encourage national and local authorities to start using Sustainable Public Procurement to boost gender equality (gender responsive procurement) since gender comprises one of the core socio-economic concerns within supply chains, pertaining to workers' rights and fair pay.

Opportunities will also be made available for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange between the 6 participating countries. The project will rely on the opportunities provided by South-South cooperation to achieve its results. Finally, the use of virtual and blended learning methodologies for capacity development will be applied.



Requirement for participation

The following criteria will be used for country selection: 1) Belong to the Small Island Developing States of the Commonwealth Caribbean, 2) Quality of the proposal, 3) Readiness of the country for Sustainable Public Procurement implementation, 4) Support to Sustainable Public Procurement implementation in overarching strategies, 5) Level of inter-ministerial collaboration for Sustainable Public Procurement and project implementation.

Expression of interest and deadline

The expression of interest must be accompanied by an official communication indicating the nominated country's interest and the relevant documentation to demonstrate fulfilment of the criteria mentioned above.

In the expression of interest, please make sure to cover at least the topics below (maximum 3-page proposal):

- Proponent: name, title, institution and contact details.
- Current status of the Sustainable Public Procurement implementation in the country.
- Current level of readiness for Sustainable Public Procurement implementation in the country.
- Current support to Sustainable Public Procurement implementation in overarching strategies, and the level of inter-ministerial collaboration for Sustainable Public Procurement and project implementation in the country.

Proposals must be submitted in digital format and sent to the following e-mail addresses by **August 20th, 2022**: Beatriz Martins Carneiro, email: beatriz.carneiro@un.org and Ellen Svensson, email: ellen.svensson@un.org.