

SUSTAINABLE AND CIRCULAR PUBLIC PROCUREMENT TOOLKIT PROJECT BRIEF

Purpose

In 2019, local governments spent more than \$2 trillion dollars on the procurement of goods and services, which equals 10% of the U.S. economy. This significant purchasing power often perpetuates unsustainable procurement practices. Traditionally, local governments operate within a linear economic **“take-make-waste” model** which results in resource depletion and environmental degradation, making it unsustainable for long-term economic and social well-being. Local governments must shift toward integrating **circular economy principles** into procurement decisions, enabling them to reduce waste, conserve resources, and promote more sustainable economic systems.

There is a significant gap in available guidance to help public entities address the sustainability and circularity challenges in their procurement programs. Recognizing this need, ICLEI USA partnered with the University of Colorado Boulder MENV Graduate Student Consulting Team to develop the **Sustainable and Circular Public Procurement (SCPP) Toolkit**. It offers local governments guidance in developing sustainable and circular initiatives to spark sustainable change for the local economy and broader supply chains. The toolkit is a comprehensive how-to guide that provides step-by-step guidance, tools, resources, and recommendations to aid local governments in furthering their sustainable procurement practices. The toolkit outlines six guidelines listed below. The toolkit also provides further recommendations on two sector-specific industries: construction and renewable energy technology.

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability USA (ICLEI USA) is a global non-profit organization that supports local governments in achieving their sustainability efforts by fostering local solutions to global environmental challenges. ICLEI USA supports its members with tools, resources, and expertise to advance climate action, resiliency planning, nature-based solutions, the circular economy, and equity initiatives.

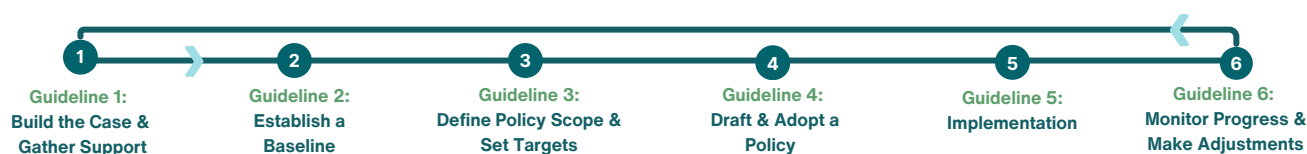


Figure 1. SCPP Toolkit Guideline Breakdown

Methods

The MENV Graduate Student Consulting Team conducted an extensive literature review of existing sustainable procurement initiatives and interviews with ten ICLEI USA members and ten subject matter experts. Some of those interviewed include King County, Washington, the municipality of San Antonio, Texas, the City of Boulder, Colorado, the Centre for Public Impact, Redwood Materials, and NIGP: The Institute for Public Procurement. The insights gathered from these diverse key participants informed the development of a robust and practical toolkit that supports strategic decision-making in sustainable procurement.

Outcomes

The toolkit is broken down into six guidelines, outlined below. By adopting SCPP practices, local governments can achieve several key outcomes, including meeting environmental and circular policy goals, promoting responsible resource management, and encouraging economic equity through inclusive supplier models.

Guideline 1: Build The Case & Gather Support

Understand and communicate the need for SCPP policy and ways to gather support for its development in your local government.

Guideline 2: Establish a Baseline

Determine your local government's current state of procurement, prioritize actions, and measure qualitative and quantitative data.

Guideline 3: Define Policy Scope and Set Targets

Define policy scope and set targets to provide your local government with direction for initiatives.

Guideline 4: Draft and Adopt a Policy

Outline a clear framework to identify the best policy levers that adhere to sustainable and circular targets across multiple departments of your local government.

Guideline 5: Implementation

Put policy and initiatives into action through a predetermined structure of how to effectively engage internal and external participants within governmental departments, suppliers, and contractors.

Guideline 6: Monitor Process and Make Adjustments

Create a structure that outlines steps for progress assessment and adjustments to implementation approaches, ensuring effective monitoring of your local government's efforts.

Impact

ICLEI will publish this toolkit for all ICLEI members to view and use to be viewed and used by all ICLEI members. ICLEI USA's 371 local government members can use this toolkit for guidance on SCPP practices and set a model for other local governments to follow. This toolkit has the potential to drive systematic change toward a circular economy, one that prioritizes the environmental, social, and economic well-being of communities. Table 1 outlines the potential impacts of this SCPP toolkit:







	Enhances reputation and public trust	Supports implementation of sustainable priorities	Supports a more systemic approach to sustainability
	Responsible energy, water, raw materials, and land use	Reduces GHG emissions and air pollution	Promotes regeneration and resilience of natural systems
	Integrates equity in the tender process	Generates inclusive supplier models	Supports collaboration with local suppliers
	Enhances market competitiveness and fuels secondary markets	Decreases life cycle costs	Supports local job creation

Table 1. Impacts of the SCPP Toolkit


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