

STA CASE STUDY SERIES

Province of Toledo, Spain

Responsible Timber Procurement: From cork to outdoor benches

Contextual background

The province of Toledo has been including environmental and social criteria in public tenders since 2004. In 2010, the Provincial Council of Toledo adopted a “Declaration for the development of a Green Public Procurement policy”¹ to implement procurement of forest products which have been sustainably sourced. This gives priority to those certified by a credible certification such as FSC. The declaration includes the following:

- The elaboration of a GPP Plan.
- The creation of a GPP Council.
- To provide municipalities and smaller territorial entities (EATIM - Entidad de ámbito territorial inferior al municipio) with the necessary tutoring.

The Province of Toledo is one of nine other public administrations in Spain that have developed a responsible procurement policy on timber products (also including Barcelona, Benicarló, Gavá, León, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Sant Boí de Llobregat, Madrid and Murcia). These cities are listed in the ‘green’ list of the WWF campaign “Cities Friends of the Forest”, making them amongst the top scoring in Spain for implementing procurement policies that give preference to suppliers of wood certified with the maximum guarantee of socially and environmentally responsible origin. The Council of Toledo was given special distinction as the first Spanish public administration to indicate a preference for FSC-certified cork above other artificial materials.

The Toledo Province runs a special campaign² “Campaña de mobiliario urbano” to encourage the purchase of sustainable street furniture. The Campaign targets all municipalities under 50,000 inhabitants of the province and half of the cost of the benches is covered by the provincial administration (Cost per unit: 150€). In 2011 over 900 certified sustainable wood benches were purchased, meaning a total investment of 140,000 €. 127 municipalities were interested in participating in this program.



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¹ “Declaración institucional por la que la Diputación Provincial de Toledo se compromete a la Compra Pública Sostenible” de 21 de abril de 2010

² ‘Campaña de mobiliario urbano’ – online at:

www.diputoledo.es/global/categoria.php?id_area=5&id_cat=1811&f=1811

Tender implementation

Subject-matter: Public supply of outdoor benches, office paper and toilet paper.

Timber products involved: Benches, paper, cork.

Publication date: 2012

Value of tender: Benches (763 units).

Technical criteria used and verification:

- **For benches:**
 - 70% of wood in benches must be made of certified timber.
 - Compulsory certification (FSC, PEFC or equivalent) as proof of compliance for timber proceeding from sustainably managed forests.
 - Timber must be water-resistant, fungicide and insecticide treated.
- **For white paper:**
 - Minimum 70% of the total fibre used must proceed from FSC, PEFC or equivalent sustainably managed forests as demonstration of having fulfilled the relevant criteria.
 - Durability: above 100 years. This can be demonstrated through scoring LC/LDK 12.80 in the test DIN 6738 (German regulation).
 - Requirements for printing and copying paper: AFNOR Q11-013 (French regulation) or DIN 19309 (German regulation).
- **For recycled paper:**
 - Weight: 80gr.
 - 100% fibres coming from recycled paper
- **For toilet paper:**
 - 100% recycled paper
 - Blue Angel or equivalent certification
- **For cork:**
 - In 2010, technical specifications for public tender of Christmas baskets made cork for bottles of wines and sparkling wines mandatory (§ 2.5 of the above Declaration)³

Additional/complimentary measures

- Suppliers of benches must provide a report issued by official laboratories, indicating the scientific denomination of the tree species for the timber used.
- To facilitate implementation, the Province of Toledo provides advice to local councils interested in introducing environmental criteria in the specification of technical requirements for their contracts, especially for those in line with the provincial Sustainable Public Procurement Plan (Guide 2011-2012 in the frame of the Disclosure and Awareness Raising Programme).

³ According to paragraph 2.5 of the Declaration: (...) The County purchases bottles of wine, sparkling wine or other beverages traditionally bottling with cork for promotional gifts, Christmas baskets (...) In the specifications for the purchase of such bottles, will be introduced as a mandatory requirement the cork caps. Furthermore, in public procurements, suppliers that submit documentation proving that the cork used in their caps comes from a cork-producing area FSC or PEFC certified will score higher. (...)

- Advice offered to local councils also includes Information Days organised by the Environment Service of the Diputación de Toledo, on topics such as Certified Forest Products.
- Since 2011, Toledo Council has also been a part of RETECORK, the European network of cork-producing territories. Toledo supports the use of natural, organic cork by requiring, for instance, cork-bottled wine for Christmas baskets. Production of wine bottle caps made of artificial materials such as plastic or metal is much more polluting than cork, but in recent years these have overrun the wine market. This endangers the traditional extraction of cork and the future of the cork oak industry, causing rural abandonment and lack of forest management as well as increasing fire risk.

Barriers encountered

- It was necessary to convince both suppliers and councils ascribed to the Diputación about the need to develop sustainable public procurement policies for forest products and their benefits to the environment and society. Toledo had the assistance of WWF particularly through the Cities for the Forest program, which offered extensive experience about awareness raising for environmental issues.

Results achieved

- Since 2004 the Environmental Service (Servicio de Medio Ambiente) of the Province of Toledo uses 100% recycled paper and purchases exclusively certified timber. Since 2007 all paper procured by the province of Toledo comes exclusively from sustainably managed forests.

Lessons learned

- Apart from technical specifications development phase, the implanting of a sustainable forest management products purchasing policy involves a joint process of learning for both, Public Administrations and suppliers. These two actors have to cooperate with each. In some cases, PAs need to awareness supply companies willing to participate in selection processes; in others, suppliers should advise the administration to improve the contract's technical specifications.

For further information:

Joaquín Rodríguez-Arango Fernández, Diputación de Toledo – Servicio de Medio Ambiente
jrarango@diputoledo.es, www.diputoledo.es

Authors of case study:

Laura Carniel and Peter Defranceschi, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

For more information on the Sustainable Timber Action (STA) project please visit
www.sustainable-timber-action.org



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