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WOODMEADOWLIFE

„Restoring and promoting a long term sustainable management of Fennoscandian wooded meadows in Estonia and Latvia“

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Deliverable F1

Green Procurement Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The LIFE WOODMEADOWLIFE Green Public Procurement Plan establishes the environmental principles and sustainability requirements that guide all procurement and purchasing activities within the project. The plan supports the project's overall objective of conserving biodiversity and semi-natural grasslands while minimizing the environmental footprint of project implementation.

The procurement approach is based on the principles of the European Union Green Public Procurement (GPP) framework, the environmental procurement principles of the Estonian Environmental Board, and sustainable event management guidelines. In all procurement procedures, environmental performance is considered alongside price, quality, durability, energy efficiency, repairability, lifecycle costs, and waste reduction.

The project is committed to:

- reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- promoting circular economy principles;
- supporting local businesses and short supply chains;
- preferring reusable, recyclable, and repairable products;
- minimizing waste generation and unnecessary consumption.

Special attention is given to climate-friendly mobility solutions. Public transport, shared transport, and remote meetings are preferred whenever possible. Air travel is limited to unavoidable cases, and direct flights as well as carbon footprint compensation are encouraged.

Environmental requirements have been defined for all major procurement categories within the project.

For catering services, the project prioritizes local, seasonal, organic, and plant-based food options. Reusable dishes and serving materials are preferred, while unnecessary packaging and food waste are minimized.

Seminars, conferences, and field events are organized according to sustainable event management principles. Organizers are encouraged to reduce paper consumption, avoid disposable materials, ensure waste sorting, and protect natural habitats during outdoor activities.

Accommodation providers are selected based on their environmental practices, including energy efficiency, renewable energy use, waste management, and the availability of local and organic food.

Office supplies and office equipment are procured according to recognized environmental standards and eco-labels. Preference is given to recycled materials, energy-efficient devices, and products with lower lifecycle impacts.

The project also applies environmental criteria to information boards, printed materials, project publications, and promotional items. Durable, recyclable, and environmentally friendly materials are preferred, while disposable and short-life products are avoided.

Procurement decisions are based not only on price, but also on environmental impact, resource efficiency, lifecycle costs, and contribution to circular economy objectives. The project further encourages continuous improvement, cooperation with suppliers, and the development of innovative and environmentally responsible solutions.

By implementing this Green Public Procurement Plan, LIFE WOODMEADOWLIFE contributes to climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, waste reduction, sustainable resource use, and the promotion of environmentally responsible local economies.

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Introduction

The purpose of this Green Public Procurement Plan is to ensure that the activities of the LIFE WOODMEADOWLIFE project are implemented in an environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient manner and in accordance with both national and European Union green principles. The project focuses on the conservation of semi-natural habitats and biodiversity; therefore, the environmental impact of procurements and services related to project implementation must be kept as low as possible.

Green public procurement does not only mean purchasing environmentally friendly products, but also carefully planning the entire procurement cycle – from assessing the actual need to the use of products or services and the end of their lifecycle. Within the project, preference is given to solutions that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support local businesses, promote circular economy principles, and reduce waste generation.

This plan is based on the following reference documents:

- European Commission Green Public Procurement (GPP) recommendations;
- Environmental Board principles for green public procurement;
- Regulation No. 35 of the Minister of the Environment;
- Tartu 2024/2025 Sustainable Event Management Guidelines;
- GrassLIFE project guidelines for green public procurement.

General principles of green public procurement

The general principles of green public procurement form the basis for all procurements within the project, regardless of the procurement category. Their objective is to ensure that all purchases and contracted services within the project have the lowest possible environmental impact and contribute to sustainable development.

In addition to price, procurement planning also considers the quality, durability, reparability, energy consumption, packaging, and environmental impact of products and services throughout their entire lifecycle. Whenever possible, local service providers and short supply chains are preferred in order to reduce environmental impacts resulting from transportation.

Needs-based approach and resource efficiency

- only strictly necessary products and services are procured;
- rental and shared-use solutions are preferred whenever possible.

Circular economy

- preference is given to products and services that are repairable, reusable, and recyclable;
- procured products should be manufactured using minimal material resources.

Local and seasonal origin

- local service providers are preferred whenever possible;
- seasonal and locally sourced food is preferred.

Environmental management and eco-labels

Preference is given to companies and products with recognized environmental labels and to companies whose management systems comply with ISO 14001 or EMAS environmental management standards.

Reducing climate impact

- low CO_2 emission solutions are preferred;
- air travel is reduced whenever possible;
- video meetings are used where feasible.

Requirements for materials and services

1. Catering services

Catering represents a significant share of the environmental impact of seminars, study visits, and conferences. Food production, transportation, and packaging directly affect the climate, natural resources, and waste generation. Therefore, catering services should prioritize local, seasonal, and low environmental footprint solutions.

Special attention within the project is given to increasing the share of plant-based meals, reducing food waste, and using reusable tableware. Local producers and organic farming are also supported.

Preferred requirements

- locally sourced ingredients are used;
- seasonal fruits and vegetables are preferred;
- main meals include vegetarian options;
- ingredients are organically certified;
- GMO-containing products are not used;
- food is not individually portion-packaged;
- leftover food can be donated or distributed to participants after events;
- reusable dishes, cutlery, and tablecloths are used for serving;
- drinking water is provided as tap water or in large containers.

If catering includes transportation services, the environmental impact of transportation distances and packaging must also be considered. The aim is to reduce CO_2 emissions caused by transport and avoid excessive packaging.

2. Event organization

Study visits, seminars, and conferences organized within the project must follow environmentally sustainable principles and support environmental awareness among participants. Event organization should focus on waste prevention, energy and resource efficiency, and the protection of the natural environment.

Particular care must be taken during events held in natural areas to protect habitats and avoid activities that may damage semi-natural habitats or disturb species.

Requirements

- waste sorting must be ensured;
- reusable name badges and signs are used;
- disposable decorations are avoided;
- participants receive guidance on environmentally responsible participation;
- the use of printed materials is minimized.

Events in natural areas

- existing trails are used in order to avoid trampling;
- habitat damage is avoided;
- participant numbers are limited where necessary;
- any damage caused by the event is restored afterwards.

3. Transport

Transport is one of the main sources of the project's carbon footprint. Therefore, the necessity of all trips must be assessed, and lower environmental impact transport solutions should be preferred whenever possible.

The project promotes the use of public transport, shared transport solutions, and digital alternatives instead of physical meetings. The objective is to reduce fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions caused by transport.

When organizing land transport, energy-efficient and lower-emission vehicles are preferred. Trips should also be planned as efficiently as possible in order to avoid unnecessary travel and reduce travel distances. Online meetings are preferred over face-to-face meetings whenever feasible.

Air travel has a significant climate impact and is used within the project only when unavoidable. Alternative transport options must always be considered, and trains or other lower-emission transport solutions should be preferred whenever possible. Direct flights should be prioritized.

Requirements

- public transport is preferred;
- trips are coordinated to reduce the number of journeys;
- vehicles must comply with at least EURO 5 standards;
- vehicles with the lowest lifecycle costs are preferred;
- for longer distances, air transport may be used, preferably through direct flights.

Where diesel vehicles are used, AdBlue systems should be applied whenever possible to reduce NOx emissions.

4. Accommodation

When selecting accommodation services, consideration is given both to the environmental impact of the accommodation provider and to its willingness to implement sustainable practices. Preference is given to accommodation providers that use energy-efficient systems, reduce waste generation, and support the use of local food.

Accommodation providers also play an important role in increasing environmental awareness among participants by providing information on sustainable mobility options and environmentally responsible behaviour.

Requirements

- facilities for waste sorting;
- information about environmentally friendly mobility;
- use of energy-efficient solutions;
- eco-labelled accommodation providers;
- use of renewable energy;
- water-saving measures;
- provision of local and organic food.

5. Office supplies

Although the environmental impact of office supplies may appear relatively small, their continuous use represents significant resource consumption. The project aims to reduce paper

and plastic use and to prioritize products made from recycled or certified materials. Special attention is given to product durability and reusability.

Requirements

- products must be made from 100% recycled or certified materials;
- at least 80% of products must be produced from FSC-certified cellulose;
- chlorine-free paper is used;
- refillable writing instruments or products with replaceable components are preferred.

6. Office equipment

The production and use of office equipment significantly affect energy consumption and resource use. Therefore, procurement decisions must consider not only price, but also energy efficiency, durability, and lifecycle costs.

The project prioritizes equipment with internationally recognized eco-labels that support longer product lifespans and easier repairability.

Requirements

Equipment must comply with at least one of the following standards:

- Energy Star;
- EU Ecolabel;
- TCO Certified;
- EPEAT.

Evaluation criteria

- energy efficiency and lifecycle costs;
- reparability and recyclability of materials.

7. Information boards and notice boards

Information boards and notice boards must be durable and suitable for natural environments. Material selection should consider both product lifespan and the possibility for reuse or recycling.

Information boards installed in natural areas must be aesthetically appropriate, blend into the environment, and require as little maintenance as possible.

Requirements

- durable and weather-resistant materials are used;
- PVC is avoided;
- constructions must be reusable or compostable;
- FSC-certified wood is preferred;
- natural finishing materials are preferred.

8. Printed materials and project book

The production of printed materials consumes significant amounts of paper, energy, and chemicals. Therefore, digital solutions should be preferred whenever possible, and environmentally friendly printing materials and services should be used when printing is necessary.

The design of the project book and other printed materials should ensure efficient use of materials and the longest possible lifespan.

Requirements

- only necessary quantities are printed;
- FSC-certified or recycled paper is used;
- plastic lamination is avoided;
- environmentally friendly printing inks are used;
- digital materials are preferred instead of printed materials;
- environmentally certified printing houses are preferred.

9. Promotional items and gifts

The purpose of project-related promotional items should be practicality, long-term use, and the communication of positive environmental values. Cheap and short-lived souvenirs that quickly become waste are avoided.

Preference is given to products made locally, from natural materials, and with low environmental impact.

Requirements

- disposable souvenirs are avoided;
- unnecessary plastic products are not used;
- practical and durable products are preferred.

Preferred solutions

- local handicrafts;
- natural materials;
- edible gifts;
- digital appreciation solutions.

Procurement evaluation criteria

The purpose of green public procurement is not only to select the lowest-price offer, but to identify the solution with the lowest overall environmental and social impact. Therefore, procurement evaluations consider environmental and quality criteria in addition to price.

Whenever possible, lifecycle costing principles are applied and the impact of products and services throughout their full lifecycle is assessed.

Criterion	Share
Price	40–60%
Environmental impact	20–40%
Resource efficiency	10–20%
Local origin and circular economy	10–20%

Where possible, lifecycle costs, CO_2 impact, packaging quantities, and recyclability are also evaluated.

Recommendations for implementation

The following practical steps support the effective implementation of the Green Public Procurement Plan in the project's daily activities.

Engagement of market participants

- communicate with potential suppliers before launching procurements;
- introduce environmental requirements and expectations;
- encourage suppliers to develop environmentally friendly solutions;
- support the participation of small and local businesses in procurement procedures.

Continuous improvement

- update the procurement plan according to new regulations and market developments;
- consider feedback from contracting authorities and suppliers;
- implement innovative solutions and new technologies;
- increase the share of green public procurement over time.