

Local Cooperation Centres for Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement

A guideline for working together in the domain of Public Procurement

Version: April 2020

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the EU

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Executive summary

In this document we propose a flexible concept for setting up a Local Cooperation Centre for innovative and sustainable procurement, that is adaptable to the local situation. A Local Cooperation Centre (Centre) is any formal or informal organization or network consisting of a group of public partners, that work together in the domain of public procurement.

First, we discuss the rationale of a Local Cooperation Centre, which is aimed at decision makers at a strategic level (politicians and managers). By working together in public procurement more can be achieved and performance can be improved. Working together locally means that economic, social, ecological and other local political objectives can be reached and future challenges can be tackled in a more efficient and effective way.

Next we provide the concrete steps of setting up a Local Cooperation Centre, aimed at the tactical/operational level (for example the procurement department of a city). The guideline comprises ways to organize local cooperation be it informally, by formal agreement of with the help of a new entity, in part also depending on who takes the initiative. We explain the services that a Local Cooperation Centre can provide, the expertise needed for investing in the collaboration, and the means to fund the joint efforts.

The guideline lists good practices mentioned throughout the document and an annex of additional sources of information.

1 The Urban Agenda – Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement

The ‘Pact of Amsterdam’ of May 2016 has established the **Urban Agenda for the EU**: a new working method of thematic Partnerships seeking to optimize the growth potential of cities and to address societal challenges. It aims to do so through better cooperation between municipalities, regions, Member States, the European Commission and other stakeholders. The Urban Agenda for the EU focuses specifically on three pillars of EU policy making and implementation: better regulation, better funding and better knowledge.

The Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement is one of these Partnerships and was formally established in May 2017.

The members of the Partnership are:

- Cities: Haarlem (coordinator), Vantaa, Preston, Nantes, Gabrovo, Munich, Prague, Turin, Larvik, Lublin, The Hague; **er zijn members bij gekomen; checken!!**
- Member States: Italy; Czech Republic;
- European Commission: DG REGIO, DG GROW, DG ENV and DG CNECT;
- Observers and associations: The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), EUROCITIES, the European centre for Sustainable integrated urban development (URBACT) and Urban Innovative Actions (UIA);

Support:

- Urban Agenda Technical Secretariat;
- Stakeholders: Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services and Services of general interest (CEEP);
- Expert organisations: Finnish network-based consortium for sustainable and innovative procurement (KEINO), Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management and the Dutch Public Procurement Expertise Centre (PIANOo).

The Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement seeks to facilitate a joint effort for a public procurement strategy of municipalities that facilitates and supports innovation and sustainability (social, economic and environmental). The aim of this Partnership is to push forward the development and implementation of an ambitious procurement strategy as an integrated and supportive management tool for governance. Using public procurement and the procurement of innovation as a strategic management tool, municipalities can significantly increase the positive impact on their social, economic and environmental objectives.

Figure 1 Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement under the UAEU.

Urban Agenda for the EU

The 'Pact of Amsterdam' of May 2016 established the Urban Agenda for the EU: a working method of thematic Partnerships seeking to optimize the utilization of the growth potential of cities and to address social challenges. The Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement is one of the 14 Partnerships, and was formally established in May 2017.

Innovative and responsible procurement


The Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement creates the opportunity for cities and Member States to work closely together with European institutions to research and assess how to facilitate more use of innovative and responsible public procurement and thus support innovation and sustainability (social, economic and environmental).

Background for the Partnership

Social, economic and ecological issues manifest themselves within urban areas, and should also be addressed by the cities themselves. The EU is indispensable in the sense that EU-wide policy supports cities in their efforts to create the best possible environment for people.

Action plan of the Partnership

Together with European cities and organisations and representatives of the European Commission, the city of Haarlem (the Netherlands) as the coordinating city in the Partnership has produced an action plan with seven specific actions. The deliverables of the Partnership will be disseminated throughout Europe. Interested? For more information please check the QR-code:



Partners

Cities, regions

- Haarlem (NL) – coordinator
- The Hague (NL)
- Metropolis Nantes (FR)
- Turin (IT)
- Munich (DE)
- Vantaa (FI)
- Larvik (NO)
- Preston (UK)
- Gabrovo (BG)
- Prague (CZ)
- Lublin (PL)
- Region of Central Macedonia

Member states

- Italy
- Czech Republic
- Scotland

EU Institutions

- European Commission (DG GROW, DG REGIO, DG ENV, DG CONNECT and DG R&D)

Support, stakeholder & expert organisations

Support

- Urban Agenda Secretariat: Ecorys

Stakeholders


- Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)
- European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services and Services of general Interest (CEEP)


Expert organisations

- Finnish network-based consortium for sustainable and innovative procurement (KEINO)
- Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
- The Dutch Public Procurement Expertise Centre (PIANOO)
- Procure2Innovate
- Nederlandse Vereniging voor Inkoop Management (NEVI)

Observers & Associations

- Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)
- EUROCITIES
- European centre for Sustainable integrated urban development (URBACT)
- Urban Innovative Actions (UIA)
- Vereniging Nederlandse Gemeenten (VNG)
- EUROTOWNS





The action plan consists of the following seven actions:

01_Building strategy

This action supports politicians and technicians in cities (especially mid-sized and small-sized ones) in building their Public Procurement strategy. This strategy allows the implementation of the global strategy of the city's goals in facing social, economic and environmental challenges.

Output
Guidance Building Strategy

02_Circular procurement

The goal of the action is to make knowledge on circular procurement easily available, so that cities can build and develop competence for relevant staff.

Output
Training Circular Procurement

03_Local Cooperation Centres

The action aims at improving knowledge and skills in innovative and sustainable public procurement, including the pre- and post procurement/tendering phases. By sharing knowledge resources, tools and risk management cities have a greater impact in certain markets with a view to procuring much needed innovative goods and services that also foster a more sustainable development.

Output
Setting up Local Cooperation Centres

04_Innovation procurement broker

The partnership investigates the specific need for innovation procurement brokerage between the demand and supply-side, the organizational model, the features of an innovation procurement broker and how it can practically support the interaction between public buyers and economic operators.

Output
Roadmap on Innovation Broker

05_Funding

Cities need financial support to develop projects to learn from more advanced cities in circular procurement and social responsibility in procurement, to procure innovation and projects where they look for expert support to develop 'joint cross-border procurement'.

Output
Recommendations on Funding

06_Legal framework

The aim of developing a legal framework is to provide a practical toolbox with roadmaps of innovation processes and instruments that support public authorities on innovative and responsible public procurement taking legal aspects into account.

Output
Practical legal framework

07_Measuring spend

The action aims at developing a common cross-Europe methodology for municipalities and other institutions to measure where their procurement spend goes.

Output
Measuring Spend and wider impact tool

EU Urban Agenda partnership for Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement

Collaboration in EU Partnership



Driving innovation and sustainability
economic | environmental | social

Further information?
For further information on the Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement under the Urban Agenda, please contact Coordinator Mrs. Valentina Schippers-Opejko, vopejko@haarlem.nl

april 2020

The Action Plan of the Partnership has been approved in October 2018 which can be found [here](#).

This guidance document reports on the action Local Cooperation Centres for innovative and sustainable procurement (2.2).

2 The rationale of working together in the domain of public procurement

2.1 Public procurement impacts political goals

Every year, over 250 000 public authorities in the EU spend around 14% of GDP (2000 billion euros) on the purchase of services, works and supplies. In many sectors such as energy, transport, waste management, social protection and the provision of health or education services, public authorities are the principal buyers. In total there are almost 100,000 municipalities in Europe. A great part of public procurement in Europe (even above the EU value thresholds) is undertaken by these municipalities, by the public bodies and companies under their command, or by associations of municipalities.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are implemented in more and more cities and will affect policies and goals. These policies are often initiated by politicians and shall be implemented by the cities' top and middle management.

Today, procurement is becoming more strategic, more collaborative, and more technology-dependent than ever. Innovative and responsible public procurement empowers public authorities to obtain pioneering, innovative solutions customized to their specific needs. In this spirit, many municipalities engage also in green public procurement of higher efficiency equipment as an effective and widely accepted strategy.

All this helps local and central governments to provide taxpayers with the best possible quality services, while at the same time saving costs. It helps to create jobs and boost the competitiveness of European industry and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It also encourages more efficient, sustainable and innovative public services. Public procurement is thus an important instrument for achieving EU 2020 policy objectives as well as local policy objectives, including economic, social and environmental objectives.

Public buyers in Europe have a significant role to play in societal transformation and cities are important public buyers. For public authorities to act as lead customers, they must define long term needs, develop an innovation policy and a sustainable procurement strategy. This means not only that there has to be a focus on the procurement process (the "how"), but also a focus on the issues to be solved and wider policy goals to be achieved (the "why"). Governments will always buy services and goods, the question is whether they will also achieve general policy goals through procurement.

2.2 Local Cooperation in the domain of public procurement

Public procurement used to be regarded as a purely economic initiative, undertaken to meet technical or material requirements and unrelated to its social, environmental or community context. That has changed over the years. It now encompasses public action and its political dimension, which gives it additional meaning and fresh interest for buyers, as well as being a source of complexity. Defining

and managing strategic procurement is needed in order to ensure that public procurement practices are aligned with the municipality's broader goals.

Public procurement is in addition to this no longer seen as a job only to be done by the purchasers, but rather a way of implementing various policy priorities. Therefore, more and more cities in Europe are regarding public procurement as a strategic means to achieve policy goals that are not as such directly linked to purchasing.

Based on experience, public organizations responsible for planning and conducting public procurement at local level vary considerably in size and form, and smaller municipalities, municipal bodies and companies do not always have (enough) expert procurement officers. The level of competence of local procurement officers on the details of applicable law, and on the processes and general know-how of innovative procurement may vary - but one thing stands out: their expert knowledge of what the municipalities actually need to buy is in general very high.

To strengthen local ownership of public procurement and to minimize the risk of yielding inflexible and ineffective solutions, it is useful to expand local capabilities in innovative and sustainable public procurement and join forces locally, rather than rely on for example the expert knowledge and skills of centralized procurement bodies at national level.

Local or regional cooperation helps local governments with innovative and responsible public procurement by overcoming time and resource constraints and improving competence on innovative, sustainable and circular procurement. By joining forces, cities' collective buying power impacts political goals and addresses future challenges in a more efficient and effective way. Local collaboration also adds to good procurement and creates an opportunity to get a better value for money:

Achieve political objectives with a supralocal focus:

- strengthen the local economy (business / jobs);
- initiate environmentally friendly procurement;
- impact socially responsible procurement;

Address future challenges that transgress municipal boundaries:

- digital transformation;
- circular economy;
- changing demographics;
- energy transition to more sustainable sources;

Better value for money in creating demand pull and potentially economies of scale:

- better quality;
- lower prices;
- lower transaction cost for the procurement.

2.2.1 Local Cooperation Centres

Joining forces can take place by setting up a Local Cooperation Centre. A Local Cooperation Centre is considered any formal or informal organization or network consisting of a group of public partners, that work together in any form in the domain of public procurement.

Members

In a Local Cooperation Centre, local governments and related public entities (contracting authorities) join forces and overcome barriers that are unsurmountable by the individual municipalities on their own. By sharing knowledge and by working together, local buyers (municipalities, their public bodies and companies) can be encouraged to engage in innovative and responsible public procurement processes; they can have access to practical know-how (based on the strong expertise and experience accumulated by the Local Cooperation Centres) on how to conduct these.

From experience, their work is focused mainly on small and medium-sized towns, but they can also be unrolled to larger municipalities and improve their procurement efforts. Local Cooperation Centres are particularly beneficial when they allow smaller municipalities to access the experience of larger towns and cities. Larger cities can gain by taking smaller municipalities on board, because regionally targeted objectives get a better chance of being fulfilled.

Local Cooperation Centres are scalable and can cover any number of municipalities (ranging from 2 to 20, 30 etc., depending on local circumstances) that share a natural connection based on, for instance, geography, procurement needs, or their level of development.

Focus

A centre can be set up in specific sectors, such as transportation, waste and water management, or health and care services. Centres can also be based on the value of the procurements, or be focused in particular on circular procurements, innovative procurements or have a more general focus.

Expertise

Local Cooperation Centres can bring in additional expertise and capacity, and help save time and resources in the long run. They can provide opportunities for training and skills development, but also for networking, technical assistance provision and potentially engage in joint purchases. Local cooperation can also lead to municipalities having a role in supporting 'Lead Markets' by procuring innovative goods and services as first buyers, as well as contributing to climate change mitigation, environmental and social goals by fostering a more sustainable development. More specifically, building a circular economy requires joining forces of municipalities on at least a local and regional level. As a result, circular procurement practices should also be organized at this level. Local Cooperation Centres can provide for this need.

Establishing a Local Cooperation Centre as part of building a procurement strategy

This Partnership has also provided a guidance on building a procurement strategy, in order to share with cities a methodology, experiences and tools in a practical and operational way to help them build their own strategy and manage the procurement process. A Local Cooperation Centre is a good way to implement such a procurement strategy in collaboration with other municipalities. The first step in establishing such a Centre is to gain support on a strategic level and embed the local cooperation in the broader context of a city's procurement strategy. How to go about this, is explained in more detail in the guidance on Building Procurement Strategy. [<link>](#)

3 How to set up a Local Cooperation Centre

3.1 Main focus areas in setting up local cooperation

Setting up local cooperation in public procurement at an executive level, choices and decisions have to be made in the following four main focus areas:

1. Organizational structure;
2. Services offered;
3. Financing/funding;
4. Sources of expertise.

Each focus area provides options for different approaches. For example, as far as organizational structure is concerned, a Local Cooperation Centre can be a loose network, not officially tied to any organisation, or it be highly formalised (even be institutionalized into a separate legal entity).

Depending on the local situation different approaches may need administrative and/or political approval. In some municipalities there may already exist an informal cooperation between procurement departments in different municipalities and be considered the means for local cooperation.

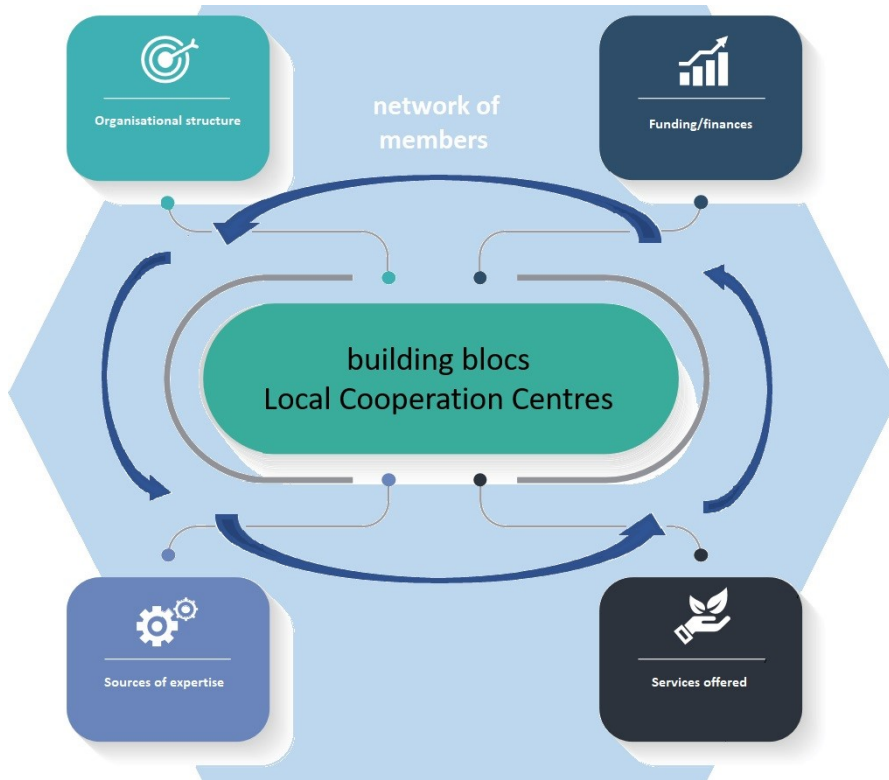
A cooperation can vary in scope, ranging from sharing knowledge on procurement law and the market situation to performing joint purchases.

The logical order in setting up a Local Cooperation Centre (Centre) is as follows:

1. Typically, one would start by defining the organizational structure. The main archetypes are described in 3.3 of this section.
2. Based on the decision for an organizational structure, the number and types of services the Local Cooperation Centre can offer can be determined (see 3.4).
3. Depending on the services on offer, one can establish what funding is needed (see 3.5). Available funding may dictate the types of services and organizational structure for a Local Cooperation Centre although based on experience, this should be the exception to the rule.
4. And finally, the link between the sources of expertise and the services offered needs to be made (see 3.6).

Keep in mind that all main focus areas and the decisions that are made, are interlinked and adjusting one may lead to changes in the other areas too.

Figure 2 Coherence of the main focus areas within the Local Cooperation Centre **Ik heb dus focus areas gebruikt en niet building blocks**



3.2 Preliminaries

A few reflections before we discuss the consecutive steps in setting up local collaboration.

A Local Cooperation Centre is flexible and adaptable

A Local Cooperation Centre for innovative and responsible procurement is driven by people and their needs, at any given point in time and place. The organizational structure, services and sources of expertise are significantly influenced by the actual members of the Local Cooperation Centre. As they invest time and resources, their commitment will eventually define what the final characteristics of the Cooperation Centre look like. By definition a network, especially one with a more informal set-up, will change over time; funding, institutions and the people in the network will change.

In this respect a Local Cooperation Centre is an agile and flexible means to an end. Although it might not be as resilient and enduring as a national procurement agency or national competence centre, there are at least two key advantages to flexibility: (1) resources put into the local cooperation can be customized according to the actual needs of its members, which is cost effective and efficient, and (2) the Local Cooperation Centre will be able to adapt more easily if needs suddenly change .

A Local Cooperation Centre needs set goals and a clear focus

If municipalities want to establish a Local Cooperation Centre, they should start by agreeing what the common goals are, seen in the light of what we have just mentioned. It implies defining the target audience, stating the ambition and defining key performance indicators (KPI). This means that members in the Centre have to decide which (common) political objectives are to be achieved, and what future challenges must be addressed jointly. Moreover, they need to determine what it means to get better value for money in a collective effort to enhance good procurement.

A clear focus on the actual motives for local cooperation and a constant attention for its concrete goals guarantee that the network stays viable and fulfills its purpose. Keeping a network alive is a means to an end, not a goal in itself.

Local cooperation is complementary to existing initiatives

Consider how a Local Cooperation Centre can be complementary to existing organizations and initiatives. National competence centres for public procurement, that offer general guidance and training, are already in existence in some Member States. In addition, Local Cooperation Centres can provide concrete support to its members in the everyday reality of public procurement and by doing so offer an added value.

Local cooperation can be temporary

Networks are by nature temporary and the objective or need for the network may in time diminish or even disappear. If that happens, the Local Cooperation Centre may have run its course. This is not in itself a problem, but in fact can be proof that the collaboration has been successful in addressing the need of the public buyers and in giving them the tools to do better procurement from now on. A new need may arise, perhaps again requiring local cooperation in what can be a different Local Cooperation Centre. And different Local Cooperation Centres might exist side by side, according to needs expressed.

Start small and soft

In the first phase of local cooperation it is recommended to set achievable goals (i.e. set the cooperation up for success). It is advisable to consider supporting so called 'lighthouse projects' at first using soft influences, not strict obligations. A lighthouse project is a short-term, well defined, measurable project that serves as a model for other similar projects. If harmonizing activities at all costs is an aim from the start, this may prove to be counterproductive in the long run. It is important to give stakeholders time to develop trust, even though this might at first not bring immediate results. Having enough time and room to gain trust will in the end support the sustainability of the actions of the Centre. It is crucial that the stakeholders and participants become motivated and have a growing sense of ownership of the activities in the Local Cooperation Centre.

Commitment, responsibility and accountability within local cooperation

Depending on the organizational structure that is chosen, the incentive for and enforcement of commitment is done differently. If the Local Cooperation Centre is set up as a new entity, commitment will be part of the organizational structure itself. With a more informal model, ensuring commitment will probably have to be gained by certain methods, such as influencing and convincing, as it is not embedded in an organizational structure.

One tried and tested approach to ensure commitment from all relevant stakeholders is to use the responsibility assignment matrix. It identifies which persons in a network or project are **R**esponsible, **A**ccountable and must be **C**onsulted or **I**nformed (RACI approach)¹. When you are negotiating with these stakeholders to achieve commitment, their RACI status can inform how many resources you are investing. Commitment from persons that are accountable or responsible is obligatory. However, if a stakeholder is only consulted and informed their commitment is not as crucial. In the figure below this model is applied to Local Cooperation Centres.

Table 1 Key responsibility roles in RACI model for a Local Cooperation Centre

Stakeholder	RACI status	Possible approach to achieve commitment
Politicians	Consulted	Underline how better procurement can help reach their political goals
Higher management	Responsible	Have numbers ready that show the possibilities that can be achieved with the Local Cooperation Centre
Colleagues	Accountable	Outline how the collaboration can save them time and effort and help them reach their goals
External stakeholders	Informed	Show the connections of better procurement with other societal goals (competitiveness, inclusion, innovation)

It is important, as time goes by, to keep investing in the commitment from the relevant stakeholders, especially if they are not involved on a regular basis. Informing and engaging is the foundation of the Local Cooperation Centre. Keep on sharing the benefits for the community, economy and strategy. It keeps a focus on what really matters: better procurement as a means to reach a city's goals.

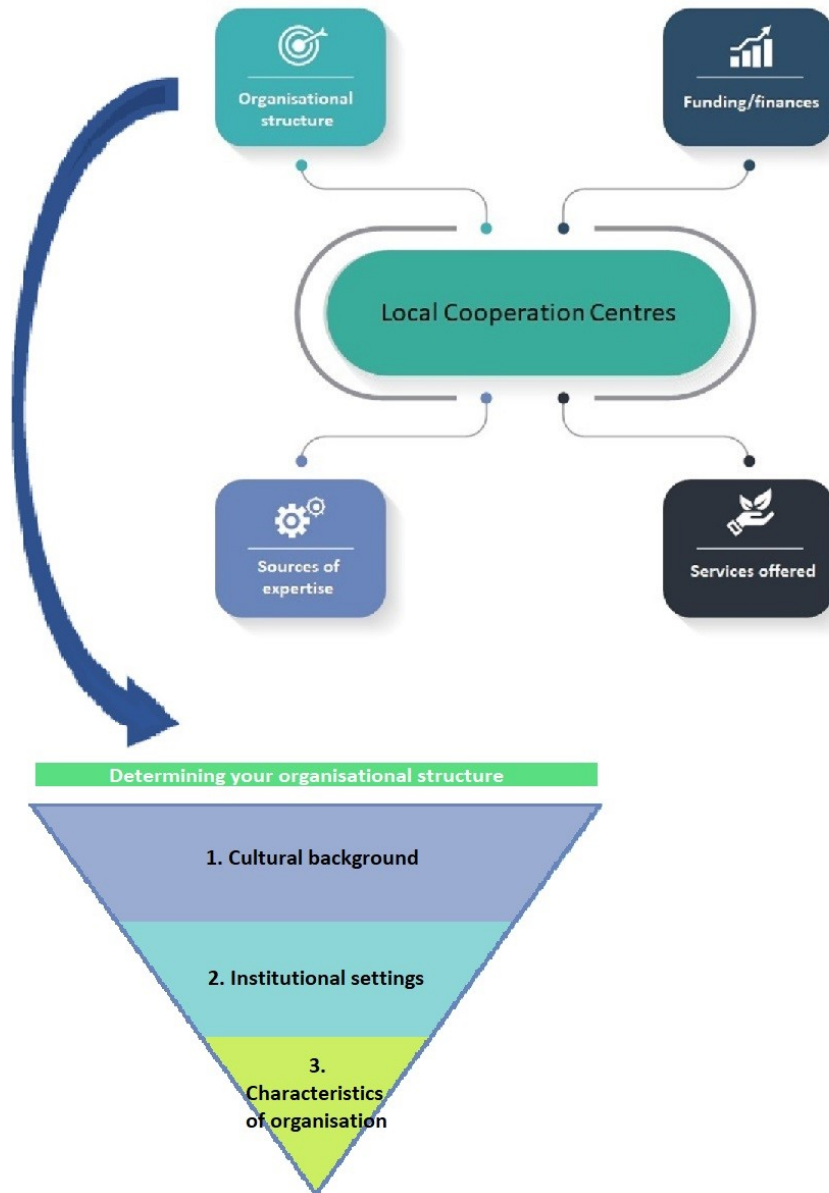
3.3 Organizational structure

Determining the suitable organizational structure of a Local Competence Centre entails making choices about a number of things, against the background of specific conditions in which the collaboration will take place. In the figure below these determinants are illustrated.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Responsibility_assignment_matrix



Figure 3 Organizational structure of a Local Competence Centre



3.3.1 Archetypes of local cooperation

There are basically three archetypes of organizing local cooperation.

A Local Cooperation Centre can be a loose network with a flexible management structure, not officially tied to any organization. But it can also be highly formalized and be set up as a separate legal entity. Or a Local Cooperation Centre can be located in a procurement department of one (or more) of its members. In practice most Local Cooperation Centres are mixing two or even three approaches together.

From experience it seems that the cultural context is a factor in choosing between a formal or an informal collaboration. There are so called grass root initiatives, where cooperation is based on a minimum of agreements and no institutionalization, and more formalized forms of cooperation, each depending on cultural preferences and existing infrastructures in different parts of Europe.

Below the three archetypes are described according to their application in practice:

Table 2 Type of Local Cooperation Centres

Type	Description			
INFORMAL model: Local Cooperation Centre is completely informal	A loose network of public buyers and other stakeholders, members can join or quit relatively easily The work of the network is based on the commitment of its members Gives ad-hoc support and advice	Increasing permanence and	Increasing flexibility	Increasing importance of personal
AGREEMENT model: Local Cooperation Centre by agreement of one or more procurement departments	A congregation of departments from public institutions under a joint agreement One or more members might service the other members Sustainability or innovation departments can also be involved			
NEW ENTITY model: Local Cooperation Centre located in local institutions/separate entity	Covers all aspects of innovative and responsible procurement Is institutionalized with support from the decision makers Undergoes official audits or evaluations			

Often Local Cooperation Centres develop from bottom up initiatives, finding their origin in unmet needs of public buyers. When the need for a Local Cooperation is voiced, the amount of political support and can contribute to stepping up to an organizational structure with more defined and institutionalized characteristics. If little or no political commitment can be gained, a loose, informal Local Cooperation Centre is still a viable option for working together. It can also serve to show politicians what the benefits of cooperation could be. If political support is high, and there may even be funding, the opportunity to locate the Local Cooperation Centre in a public agency can be considered. This will allow to make the cooperation more enduring and sustainable. On the other hand, institutionalizing cooperation can also mean that flexibility decreases.

1. Good practice : Purchasing Platform Northern Netherlands

This Local Competence Centre in the North of the Netherlands is an informal cooperation which decides annually if it wants to continue to work together for another year. General strategic goals, such as improving local and regional economy, enhancing mobility of civil workers and optimizing knowledge within the members, have been set in a long-term agreement. Those general goals give direction to the annual actions but does not enforce the commitment to those actions. The network evaluates annually whether the actions of the past year have been implemented and it is decided whether the members are still eligible and committed to continue their membership. New action goals are set for the next year. This keeps the network focused, keeps the commitment going and reduces deadweight.



3.3.2 Characteristics of organization

The following characteristics are important determinants of the organizational structure. Gathering the information for each point will further clarify the structure of a Local Cooperation Centre.

Table 3 Overview of organizational characteristics

Organizational structure	Budget size decided by?
Services	Mandate and mission received from?
Funding	Budget holder? Audit and evaluation by?
Sources of expertise	Personnel (own or seconded)?

3.4 Services offered

Figure 4 Services offered of a Local Cooperation Centre



3.4.1 Choosing services in line with your organizational structure

Depending on the organizational structure, certain services will be more or less easy to implement. Below recommendations are outlined, based on the three archetypes explained above .

Table 4 Overview of services/tasks by organizational requirement

	NEW ENTITY model	AGREEMENT model	INFORMAL model
Knowledge sharing and networking	XX	XX	XXX
Scoping possible intermediation (data exchange, such as financial expertise, market knowledge and best practices)	XX	XX	XXX
Helpdesk & advisory guidance & tools	XXX	XX	XX
Pilot purchasing	XXX	XX	X
Bringing supplier and purchasing together as a broker ²	XXX	XX	X
Joint purchasing	XXX	XX	X
Training	XXX	XX	X
Project management	XXX	XX	X
Contract management	XXX	XX	X
Monitoring and reporting	XXX	XX	X

X = possible but not easy

XX = possible

XXX = most suitable

A Local Cooperation Centre based on collaboration in a specific sector, such as transportation, waste and water treatment, and health and care related services, offers services around needs in this specific sector. Additionally, other services can be provided that have a more general focus, as long as the original needs are met

For a deeper understanding of which services a Local Cooperation Centre can provide, the European Competency Framework (ECF) for Public Procurement Professionals can be consulted³.

2. Good practice : ARPA Piemonte (Italy)

The network – focusing exclusively on Green Public Procurement (GPP) - was created in 2003. It was a specific action in the Province of Turin's Action Plan of Agenda21 (for the promotion of sustainable consumption and production). The agreement established a Monitoring Committee. In April 2004, by an official



² This Partnership has also provided a guideline to design a broker for innovation public procurement.

³ The European Competency Framework for Public Procurement Professionals is a set of tools to help public procurement organisations and individuals identify the skills needed to conduct public procurement procedures and carry out optimised procurement. It allows them to set objectives and evaluate themselves against them, and supports the creation of learning and development practices, as well as HR practices to professionalize the purchasing function. You can find the latest information on the ECFR for Public Procurement Professionals here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/public-procurement/support-tools-public-buyers/professionalisation-public-buyers_en

2. Good practice : ARPA Piemonte (Italy)

document, political representatives of all the organisations involved in the A.P.E. project undertook the commitment to adopt GPP's practices.

Since 2017, all Public Administrations in Italy are required to include Minimum Environmental Criteria (CAM), in their procurement procedures for a list of categories. CAMs are adopted by Decree of the Ministry of the Environment.

ARPA Piemonte is monitoring the implementation of those Minimum Environmental Criteria (CAM) as well as answers to the network's requests for more information and guidance (e.g. workshops and help desk activities)

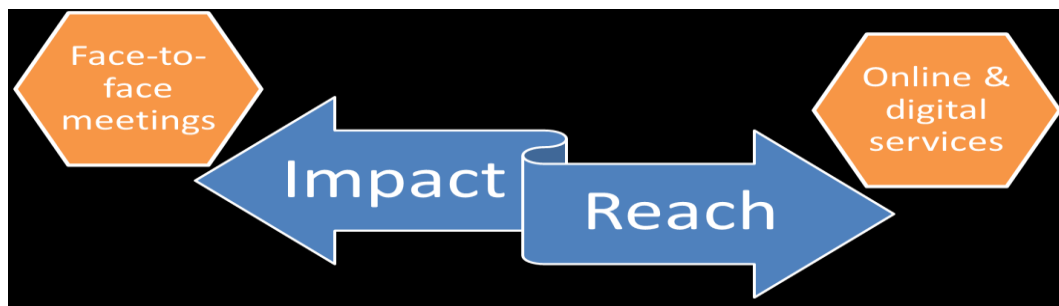
3.4.2 Choosing services in line with resources

Having determined on the services that are viable and suitable within the institutional set-up that is chosen (also taking into account matters of funding), the classification below can be applied in order to put together the right set of services for the needs that must be met.

When developing services, the consideration *start small and soft* applies. The catalogue of services is best built up over time. It is also not likely that a full set of services can be offered straight away. Refining and testing the first service(s) are important before adding more.

Services can be categorized along two dimensions: impact and reach.

Figure 5 Dimensions of services

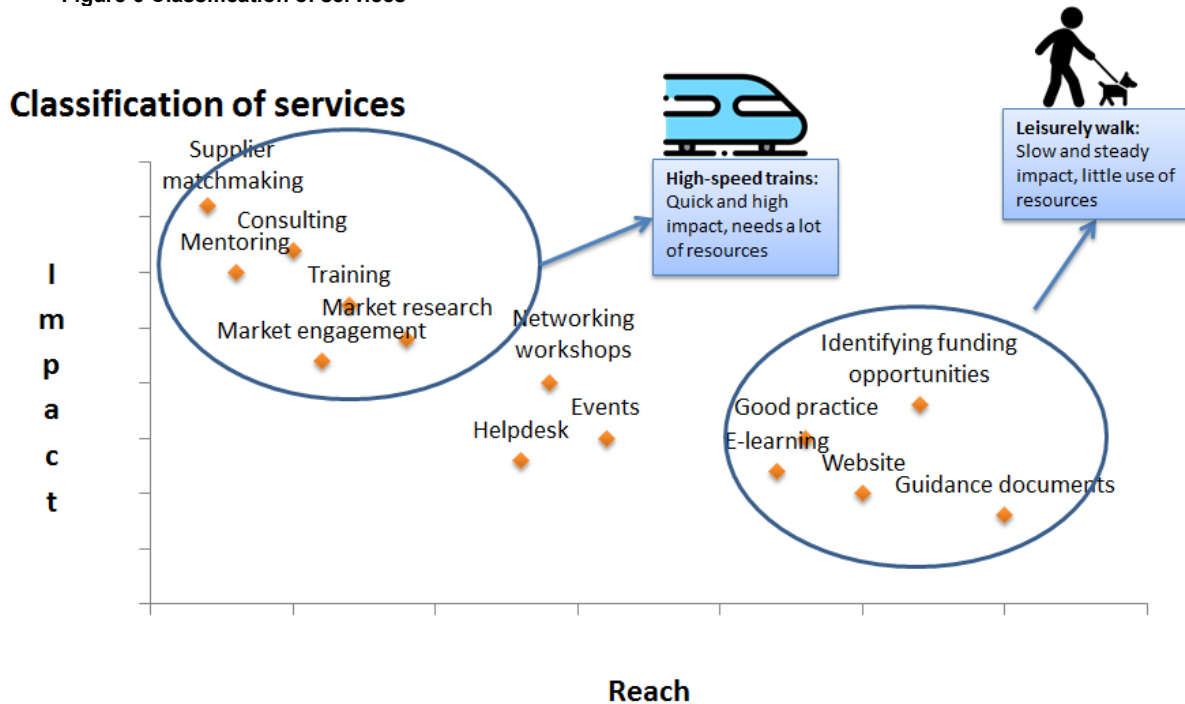


A wide reach ensures that as many members as possible are supported. A high impact on the other hand means that the support that is offered to a public authority makes a meaningful, long-term difference to their day-to-day work. Services with a wide reach are often online and digital services that are available on demand. Services with a high impact are normally in-person and more individualised. Ideally, all services and support offered have the best possible combination of impact and reach.

Services offered to public buyers can be typically identified as 'high-speed trains' or 'leisurely walks'. High-speed trains are services which cause a high impact, push things forward and significantly change how a buyer approaches strategic procurement. They also consume a lot of resources. A leisurely walk on the other hand is the type of services that has long endurance and needs little oversight. The *walking services* will probably not have as profound an impact as the high-speed trains, but they do provide an important starting point for buyers to explore the topic of responsible procurement, such as a website or a guidance document. The leisurely walks would thus need to be followed up by some high-speed trains. There are services that cannot be classified as either and

require a moderate amount of resources while also having medium impact, such as networking events or strategic workshops.

Figure 6 Classification of services



Train and person icon sourced from: Icon made by [Freepik](http://www.flaticon.com) from www.flaticon.com

Experience shows that Local Cooperation Centres tend to provide more ‘high-speed train’ services, because they are driven by the needs of their members. Competence centres at the national level are more policy driven and have a longer time frame for the completion of their goals. This means that they usually offer more leisurely walk services as a basis and add high-speed trains as needed. The difference between services offered in a Local Cooperation Centre and competence centres at a national level can also be explained by their focus. Nationally, competency building focusses on *what* can be achieved in the domain of public procurement, so the guidance and services provided will tend to be of a general nature that can be applied by public buyers regardless of time and place. Locally, the cooperation is established around *how* to perform better procurement in actual cases and so will be more concrete and tailor-made.

3.4.3 A closer look at joint procurement

Joint purchasing is a service which is more likely to be offered by a Local Cooperation Centre than by a national institution. It is more obvious for the Local Cooperation Centre to collect a joint need and organize the process due to geographical proximity, based on the needs of the members.

Joint procurement can be a beneficial outcome of local cooperation. At the same time, this is a service which can be categorized as complex ‘high-speed trains’. Before embarking upon the quest, a few recommendations are in order:

- Joint purchasing is more challenging in an informal structure. This however, should not be an inhibition, because after the joint purchase as a combined statement of demand, local governments can sign and manage their own contracts.
- A joint purchase can serve different purposes. It can aim to steer the market in a certain direction by combining the market power of larger contracts. Or it can involve a cooperation in the evaluation and award stage of the tender. Depending on its purpose the organizational structure may need adaption or an additional framework in which to carry out joint purchasing can be considered.

3. Good practice : Réseau Grand Ouest Commande – RESECO (France)

In order to create a context favourable to the integration of sustainable development in public procurement, 98 communities of the Great West adhere to animate an inter-regional dynamic on the integration of environmental, social, ethical and equitable criteria in the public order.



The network is made up of elected officials and technicians from local authorities and legal entities governed by public law with an autonomous legal personality and exchanges with many other actors: associations, companies, institutional representatives. It remains open to interested parties.

The objectives of RESECO:

- Create a common culture among network members in the area of sustainable development through sustainable purchasing
- Help decision makers in their technical and legal purchasing policies
- Share and distribute experiences
- Create momentum, motivate and engage stakeholders
- Know and inform about sectors, categories and suppliers
- Develop information and optimize skills
- Bring local, national and international initiatives together as a source of information and a source of information
- Promote sustainable development through responsible purchasing as part of public procurement

3.5 Funding/finance

Figure 7 Funding of a Local Cooperation Centre



A Local Cooperation Centre needs financial resources. They may consist of a specially allocated budget or of in-kind contributions. Regardless, some form of investment has to be made. It solidifies the commitment from everyone involved and allows the Local Cooperation Centre to tackle relevant problems.

3.5.1 Linking funding and the organizational structure

A Local Cooperation Centre does not necessarily need a specifically allocated financial budget. The closer you get to the model “New entity” organizational structure, the more need for a formal budget. In an informal situation everybody can put in their own resources (time and in-kind).

In a more formal organizational setting, there are several options to collect funding:

- You can receive financial compensation from suppliers through joint procurement and joint contracting via commission/kick back (the suppliers pay a percentage of their turnover to the Local Cooperation Centre);
- You can receive a membership fee per joint procurement;
- In case of formal knowledge sharing structures, the Local Cooperation Centre can be funded through a membership fee per inhabitant.

Normally, the organizational structure is the starting point. But sometimes available funding can be the trigger for the formation of a Local Cooperation Centre. This however should be an exception. The best driver is the intrinsic need of the procurer. If unexpectedly funding is available, the incentive to set-up your Local Cooperation Centre needs a double-check.

Table 5 Funding by organizational structure

	NEW ENTITY model	AGREEMENT model	INFORMAL model
Membership fee per inhabitant	XXX	XX	X
Membership per procurement	XXX	XXX	X
Financial compensation from the supplier	XX	XX	XX
Re-investment of a % of savings	XXX	XX	XX
Subsidy from other (higher) government	XXX	XX	X

X = possible but not easy

XX = possible

XXX = most suitable

4. Good practice : Lublin Functional Area (Poland)

Integrated territorial investment/ERDF funding was used to pursue joint initiatives. Several municipalities joint forces in order to improve the use of public spaces. One goal was to increase the accessibility within the region and to create a single transportation hub. Therefore, the construction of an Integrated Intermodal Metropolitan Bus Station has commenced (after regional assessment of the needs) and the park and ride spots will be improved. The goal is to improve the regional transportation system. Via an investment in accessibility, low emission transport and local entrepreneurship are thus being encouraged.



3.5.2 Linking funding and services

Also, the services that are offered by the Local Cooperation Centre will influence what funding is needed and what funding can be achieved through fees, e.g. the service of joint procurement has associated costs but can also generate fees.

Knowing which services can generate which funding will help decide which additional 'leisurely walks' or 'high-speed trains' service can be afforded to address local challenges. Below the possibilities for three larger groups of services are outlined with an indication of which funding opportunities exist. It is most notable that the service classified as a resource-intensive high-speed train also offers the best possibilities to generate funding.

Table 6 Linking the funding and services offered

	Joint purchasing/ Joint contracting (high-speed train)	Development of templates and guidance (leisurely walk)	Knowledge sharing and capacity building (in-between walk)
Membership fee per inhabitant	XX	XX	XXX
Fee per tender	XXX	-	-
Financial compensation from the supplier	XXX	-	-
Re-investment of a % of savings	XXX	X	X
Subsidy from other (higher) government	XX	XXX	XXX

X = possible but not easy

XX = possible

XXX = most suitable

5. Good practice : Vois – Vestfold Public Procurement Cooperation (Norway)

VOIS (Vestfold Public Procurement Cooperation) was established in 1996 and is a formalized collaboration involving all municipalities in Vestfold and the University of Southeast Norway, Campus Vestfold as members.



The goal is to enter into the best possible procurement agreements, manage the contract portfolio, ensure procurement professional development and collaborate with other public companies and purchasing associations, while taking the lead as a responsible consumer, demanding environmentally friendly goods and services manufactured in accordance with ethical and social standards and facilitating corporate social responsibility among its members, suppliers and partners.

VOIS is funded partly by membership fees and partly by commission/kick back – the latter is introduced to six of the largest contracts. The suppliers pay a percentage of the revenue of the acquired order to VOIS.

The benefits of VOIS turn out to be the positive effects of large contracts, savings as a result of joint processes, savings as a result of discounts/rebates and savings as a result of knowledge sharing/free courses by VOIS to the municipalities.

6. Good practice : ABZ - Regional Public Procurement Centres Bavaria (Germany)

The Auftragsberatungszentrum Bayern e.V. (ABZ) is a point of contact for public contracts. The network informs and advises companies and contracting authorities on German and European public procurement in the supply and service sector.



Companies are supported in exploring the public market at regional, national and international level as well as in participating in tenders. Public authorities are helped to tender in accordance with procurement law and to find suitable bidders. The ABZ is networked in Germany and Europe from Bavaria and has connections to numerous partners as a member of the network of contract advisory services of the federal states and in the EU advisory network "Enterprise Europe Network".

1. Individual consulting services for both enterprises as well as public buyers. Consulting takes place on the phone or at one-to-one meetings. Basic consulting is free of charge.
2. Trainings and seminars are offered on various procurement related topics.
3. Monthly newsletter provides practical tools and contains new developments in legislation, court decisions, initiatives on sustainable procurement and procurement of innovation.
4. A proven tendering portal / database. Convenient search options and automatic notification make it easy to find business opportunities. It offers the opportunity to find out about tenders throughout Europe quickly and from a single source.

The majority of all public tenders are published only in national tender publications, which are difficult to access from Germany. Together with the European partners, this information is bundled into the database in one place. The portal also offers a large number of tenders from all federal states for companies that only want to apply for public tenders from Germany.

3.6 Sources of expertise

Figure 8 Sources of expertise of a Local Cooperation Centre



3.6.1 Learning and exchanging

Most Local Cooperation Centres are based upon a *peer-to-peer network* where public buyers can exchange knowledge and learn from other buyers. The peer-to-peer learning approach takes as a basis that informal and unstructured knowledge is best transmitted from peer to peer, i.e. from one equal to another. Through peer-to-peer learning and mentoring, the Local Cooperation Centre can be enabled to effectively exchange information and experience, gather knowledge and form bonds across municipalities.

For an even closer cooperation a *buddy system* can be taken into consideration, where two persons or municipalities are partnered up for a certain amount of time to learn from each other more intensely. They can have site and study visits which allow them to ‘deep-dive’ into each other’s procurement approaches.

If public authorities are more advanced in responsible and innovative procurement than others (large information asymmetry) a *mentoring system* could be valuable. In this case the more knowledgeable public authority offers to accompany another authority in its processes and advice whenever needed. A mentor can also be a powerful signal for decision makers showing that better procurement is possible and worth the risk.

Beside the above mentioned expertise, other sources of expertise are available that are free of charge, such as:

- Training and guidance from the European Commission;
- National institutions, especially national competence centres and central purchasing bodies;
- International (governmental) organisations, especially OECD and World Bank.

In all cases, the Local Cooperation Centre is best complementary to existing organizations and fills gaps left by existing bodies.

3.6.2 Linking available expertise and organizational structure

A chosen organizational structure will influence which kind of expertise will be readily available in a Local Cooperation Centre. The more formalized the model is, the more likely it will be that a wide variety of expertise will be available in-house. In addition, a more formalized organizational structure will allow more easily to contract experts to supply the additional knowledge.

Table 7 Sources of expertise by organisational structure

	Model 1: NEW ENTITY	Model 2: AGREEMENTS	Model 3: INFORMAL
The expertise is organised within the organisation/ network	XXX	XX	XX
The expertise is provided by the collaborating partners	XX	XXX	X
The expertise is provided by other cooperation centres or networks	XX	XX	XX
The expertise is provided by commercial partners (contracted)	XXX	XX	X

X = possible but not easy
 XX = possible
 XXX = most suitable

However, while expertise is more easily available in a more formal Local Cooperation Centre, the strength of the informal model lies in the creation of a good knowledge management which will allow each member to easily access the information *without* additional cost or administrative burden. And of course, collaborating partners might already have the expertise available and are willing to share it with the other members of the cooperation centre.

3.6.3 Linking available expertise and services for public buyers

Each service requires a certain expertise. Knowing where this expertise can be obtained will inform which services can be offered within the available resources.

A Local Cooperation Centre needs to deliver value for its members. In many cases this will be knowledge and expertise that public procurers need to implement responsible and innovative procurement. Some of that expertise can of course come from within the organization or its collaborating stakeholders. Beyond that, expertise can be brought into the network through other (national) procurement organizations and even outside contractors. As outlined in the table below, each of these sources will be able to provide a different type of knowledge. Any information that is closely linked to everyday procurement and administrative processes will likely come from within the network. Expertise that goes beyond purchasing towards understanding the economy and politics will be provided from stakeholders and other experts outside the Local Cooperation Centre.

Table 8 Available expertise by sources of expertise

		SOURCES OF EXPERTISE			
		The expertise is organised within the organization/ network	The expertise is provided by the collaborating partners	The expertise is provided by other competence centres or networks	The expertise is provided by commercial partners (contracted)
AVAILABLE EXPERTISE	Expertise of specific market/domain	XXX	XX	X	XX
	Expertise regarding sustainable and responsible strategic goals	XX	XXX	X	X
	Expertise regarding innovative procurement (purchasing knowledge)	XXX	XXX	XXX	X
	Expertise regarding finance and economics	X	XX	XXX	XXX
	Legal expertise	XX	XXX	XX	X
	Project management	XX	XX	XX	XXX

X = possible
 XX = preferable
 XXX = necessary

Some services can be offered by just accessing the expertise available internally or within the network, while more complex services (mostly high-speed train services) will need outside expertise.

Table 9 Available expertise by services offered

AVAILABLE EXPERTISE	SERVICES OFFERED		
	Joint purchasing/ Joint contracting (high speed train)	Development of templates and guidance (walking)	Knowledge sharing and capacity building (in-between)
Expertise of specific market/domain	XXX	XX	X
Expertise regarding sustainable and responsible strategic goals	XXX	XXX	XX
Expertise regarding innovative procurement (purchasing knowledge)	XXX	XXX	XX
Expertise regarding finance and economics	XXX	XX	XX
Legal expertise	XXX	XXX	XX
Project management	XXX	X	X

X = possible

XX = preferable

XXX = necessary

In all cases the Local Cooperation Centre will greatly benefit from expertise and training they can receive from other national institutions.

4 To conclude

<...>

Annex 1: Good local practices

2. PURCHASING PLATFORM NORTHERN NETHERLANDS	
Country	The Netherlands
Website	https://ipnn.nl/
Contact	info@ipnn.nl
organizational structure	(mostly) informal
Services offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge sharing and networking • Scoping possible intermediation (data exchange, such as financial expertise, market knowledge and best practices) • Helpdesk & advisory guidance & tools • Other, i.e. staff exchanges (public buyers)
Funding / finance	Other, i.e. work in kind
Sources of expertise	The expertise is provided by the collaborating partners
<p>This Local Competence Centre in the North of the Netherlands is an informal cooperation which decides annually if it wants to continue to work together for another year. General strategic goals, such as improving local and regional economy, enhancing mobility of civil workers and optimizing knowledge within the members, have been set in a long-term agreement. Those general goals give direction to the annual actions but does not enforce the commitment to those actions. The network evaluates annually whether the actions of the past year have been implemented and it is decided whether the members are still eligible and committed to continue their membership. New action goals are set for the next year. This keeps the network focused, keeps the commitment going and reduces deadweight.</p>	

3. ARPA Piemonte	
Country	Italy
Website	http://www.arpa.piemonte.it/
Contact	m.gilisoni@arpa.piemonte.it
organizational structure	new entity
Services offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge sharing and networking • Helpdesk & advisory guidance & tools • Training • Monitoring and reporting
Funding / finance	Subsidy from other (higher) government
Sources of expertise	The expertise is organised within the organization/ network
<p>The network – focusing exclusively on Green Public Procurement (GPP) - was created in 2003. It was a specific action in the Province of Turin's Action Plan of Agenda21 (for the promotion of sustainable consumption and production). The agreement established a Monitoring Committee. In April 2004, by an official document, political representatives of all the organizations involved in the A.P.E. project undertook the commitment to adopt GPP's practices.</p> <p>Since 2017, all Public Administrations in Italy are required to include Minimum Environmental Criteria (CAM), in their procurement procedures for a list of categories. CAMs are adopted by Decree of the Ministry of the Environment.</p> <p>ARPA Piemonte is monitoring the implementation of those Minimum Environmental Criteria (CAM) as well as answers to the network's requests for more information and guidance (e.g. workshops and help desk activities)</p>	

4. RÉSEAU GRAND OUEST COMMANDE - RESECO	
Country	France
Website	https://www.reseaugrandouest.fr/
Contact	contact@reseco.fr
organizational structure	new entity
Services offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge sharing and networking • Scoping possible intermediation (data exchange, such as financial expertise, market knowledge and best practices) • Helpdesk & advisory guidance & tools • Training
Funding / finance	Membership fee per inhabitant
Sources of expertise	The expertise is organised within the organization/ network
<p>In order to create a context favourable to the integration of sustainable development in public procurement, 98 communities of the Great West adhere to animate an inter-regional dynamic on the integration of environmental, social, ethical and equitable criteria in the public order.</p> <p>The network is made up of elected officials and technicians from local authorities and legal entities governed by public law with an autonomous legal personality and exchanges with many other actors: associations, companies, institutional representatives. It remains open to interested parties.</p> <p>The objectives of RESECO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a common culture among network members in the area of sustainable development through sustainable purchasing Help decision makers in their technical and legal purchasing policies Share and distribute experiences Create momentum, motivate and engage stakeholders Know and inform about sectors, categories and suppliers Develop information and optimize skills Bring local, national and international initiatives together as a source of information and a source of information Promote sustainable development through responsible purchasing as part of public 	

5. LUBLIN FUNCTIONAL AREA	
Country	Poland
Website	https://lublin.eu/lublin/lublin-w-ue/zintegrowane-inwestycje-terytorialne/lubelski-obszar-funkcjonalny/
Contact	
organizational structure	by agreement
Services offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint purchasing • Project management • Contract management • Monitoring and reporting
Funding / finance	Subsidy from other (higher) government
Sources of expertise	<p>The expertise is organised within the organization/ network</p> <p>The expertise is provided by commercial partners (contracted)</p>
<p>Integrated territorial investment/ERDF funding was used to pursue joint initiatives. Several municipalities joint forces in order to improve the use of public spaces. One of targets was to increase the accessibility within the region and to create a single transportation hub. Therefore, the construction of an Integrated Intermodal Metropolitan Bus Station has commenced (after regional assessment of the needs) and the park and ride spots will be improved. The goal is to improve the regional transportation system. Via an investment in accessibility, low emission transport and local entrepreneurship are thus being encouraged.</p>	

6. VOIS – VESTFOLD PUBLIC PROCUREMENT COOPERATION	
Country	Norway
Website	https://www.vois.no/
Contact	vois@sandefjord.kommune.no
organizational structure	(mostly) informal by agreement new entity
Services offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint purchasing • Training • Contract management • Monitoring and reporting
Funding / finance	Membership fee per inhabitant Financial compensation from the supplier
Sources of expertise	The expertise is organised within the organization/ network
<p>VOIS (Vestfold Public Procurement Cooperation) was established in 1996 and is a formalized collaboration involving all municipalities in Vestfold and the University of Southeast Norway, Campus Vestfold as members. The goal is to enter into the best possible procurement agreements, manage the contract portfolio, ensure procurement professional development and collaborate with other public companies and purchasing associations, while taking the lead as a responsible consumer, demanding environmentally friendly goods and services manufactured in accordance with ethical and social standards and facilitating corporate social responsibility among its members, suppliers and partners.</p> <p>VOIS is funded partly by membership fees and partly by commission/kick back – the latter is introduced to six of the largest contracts. The suppliers pay a percentage of the revenue of the acquired order to VOIS.</p> <p>The benefits of VOIS turn out to be the positive effects of large contracts, savings as a result of joint processes, savings as a result of discounts/rebates and savings as a result of knowledge sharing/free courses by VOIS to the municipalities.</p>	

7. Regional Public Procurement Centres	
Country	Germany
Website	https://www.abz-bayern.de/
Contact	hoess@abz-bayern.de
organizational structure	new entity
Services offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge sharing and networking • Scoping possible intermediation (data exchange, such as financial expertise, market knowledge and best practices) • Helpdesk & advisory guidance & tools • Training • Other, i.e. Tender alert service & Consulting service on cross-border bidding.
Funding / finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidy from other (higher) government Other, i.e. Business chambers
Sources of expertise	The expertise is organised within the organization/ network
<p>The Auftragsberatungszentrum Bayern e.V. (ABZ) is a point of contact for public contracts. The network informs and advises companies and contracting authorities on German and European public procurement in the supply and service sector.</p> <p>Companies are supported in exploring the public market at regional, national and international level as well as in participating in tenders. Public authorities are helped to tender in accordance with procurement law and to find suitable bidders.</p> <p>The ABZ is networked in Germany and Europe from Bavaria and has connections to numerous partners as a member of the network of contract advisory services of the federal states and in the EU advisory network "Enterprise Europe Network".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual consulting services for both enterprises as well as public buyers. Consulting takes place on the phone or at one-to-one meetings. Basic consulting is free of charge. • Trainings and seminars are offered on various procurement related topics. • Monthly newsletter provides practical tools and contains new developments in legislation, court decisions, initiatives on sustainable procurement and procurement of innovation. • A proven tendering portal / database. Convenient search options and automatic notification make it easy to find business opportunities. It offers the opportunity to find out about tenders throughout Europe quickly and from a single source. <p>The majority of all public tenders are published only in national tender publications, which are difficult to access from Germany. Together with the European partners, this information is bundled into the database in one place. The portal also offers a large number of tenders from all federal states for companies that only want to apply for public tenders from Germany.</p>	

Annex 2 : Sources of more information

Author	Topic	Link
DG Grow	Guidance on Innovation Procurement	https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/?fuseaction=list&coteld=3&year=2018&number=3051&version=F&language=en
DG ENVIRONMENT	Product criteria for green public procurement	https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/eu_gpp_criteria_en.htm
Eafip	Eafip Toolkit	https://eafip.eu/toolkit/
GREENIN	Design Options Paper for innovative procurement	http://innovation-procurement.org/resources/?c=search&keyword=Design%20Options%20Paper%20for%20deployment%20of%20Green%20Public%20Procurement%20of%20Innovation
SESAM	Innovative Procurement – Opportunities and Chances Webinar	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6bDagB-I5o
procure2 innovate	Network of national competence centres for innovative procurement	www.procure2innovate.eu
ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability	Sustainable procurement guidance and training	http://www.sustainable-procurement.org/resource-centre/
ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability	Innovation procurement guidance and training	http://innovation-procurement.org/resources/
IISD	Sustainable procurement for infrastructure purchasing	https://www.iisd.org/sites/default/files/publications/role-public-procurement-deploying-sustainable-Infrastructure.pdf