

Research and Transfer Network **SUSTAINABLE** Public Procurement in North Rhine-Westphalia

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Background and Goals



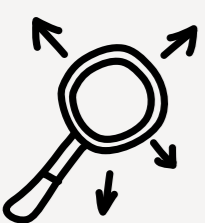
Public spending in the European Union (EU) accounts for roughly 20 % of Europe's GDP. Hence, the public sector has enormous power to influence market conditions. According to the European Commission, about 480 billion € are being spent on the national level annually, while other sources quantify the public procurement volume in North Rhine-Westphalia at around 50 Billion €. Public procurement can be a crucial strategic lever in the realisation of sustainability goals.



Recent amendments to the legal framework within the EU and Germany have already allowed sustainability criteria to be considered in public procurement procedures. At the same time, those regulations are vastly flexible in how they are applied, which results in diverging levels of ambition. The leverage effect of the public sector to promote a transformation towards sustainability is therefore significantly weakened. This situation is further complicated by the legal and administrative complexity of the purchasing process within Germany. The vertical diversity of the legal framework as well as the horizontal fragmentation of public entities pose enormous challenges to effectively consider sustainability aspects in the tender process. Established routines in public awarding offices represent

a further obstacle in this regard. Moreover, there exist large information gaps in core areas of public procurement and respective sustainability effects.

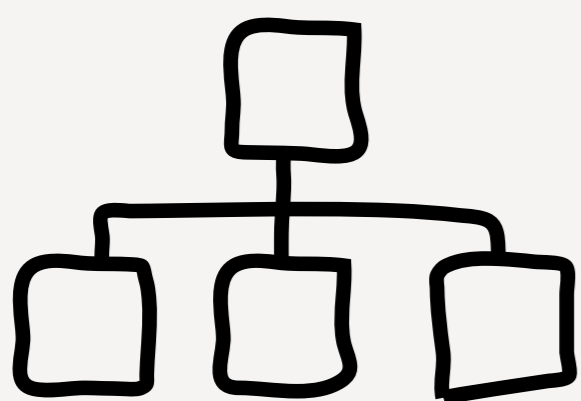
The Research and Transfer Network on Sustainable Public Procurement in North Rhine-Westphalia aims at tackling those challenges on three fields of action: First, empirical data is currently being generated on central questions in the topic area. Second, a high practical relevance and knowledge diffusion will be achieved by engaging in an intensive exchange with public procurement actors. Third, during the twelve month establishment phase of the network, proposals for targeting the identified research gaps will be compiled.



FIELD OF ACTION 1:

Empirical Data

The Research and Transfer Network aims at generating practical, transformative knowledge within the following three work packages:



Actors and networks: The field of consultancy, rule-setting and -implementing actors and networks is highly diverse and has only been marginally captured. Thus, a stocktaking of those actors and networks will be prepared.

Public procurement in North Rhine-Westphalia (system knowledge): Depending on the type of public entity and its internal organisation procurement processes in North Rhine-Westphalia proceed

quite different. Thus, we aim at compiling a comprehensive overview of those processes, as well as the drivers and constraints on the transformation towards a sustainable procurement system. Furthermore, tools that ensure sustainability in selected value chains will be captured and critically analysed.

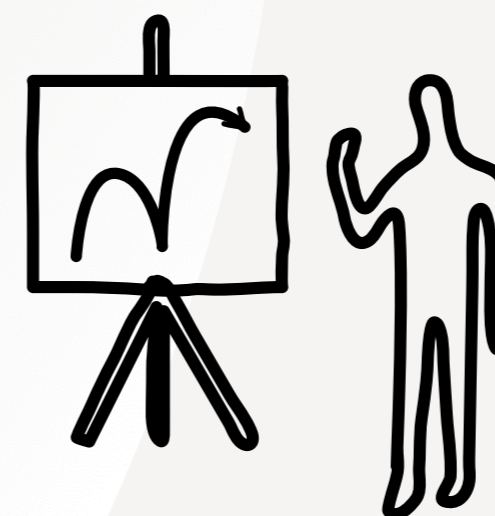
Transformative knowledge base (target knowledge): Key information to enforce a sustainable transformation of the public procurement system are missing or nonexistent. This missing information includes: relevant product groups from a sustainability perspective (including procurement volumes), trading partners in crucial value chains, and pioneers in the field of sustainable procurement. We will assimilate information on these missing fields of data. Additionally, research questions and topics for future projects will be developed.



FIELD OF ACTION 2:

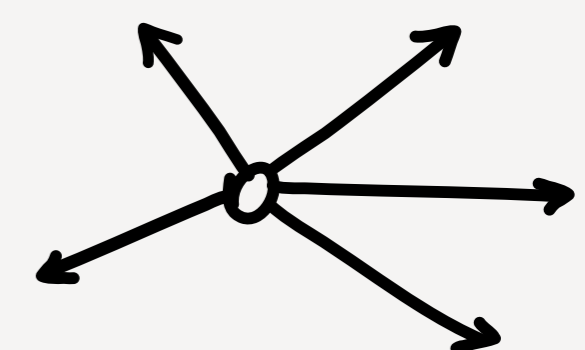
Stakeholder Dialogue and Knowledge Diffusion

An intensive dialogue with practitioners to identify and process research gaps represents the second field of action of our network. A further aspect of this action consists of developing approaches for a more effective diffusion of relevant knowledge on the ground.



Elements of the stakeholder dialogue include participative workshops, interviews on crucial research topics, and close cooperation with practitioners when it comes to data acquisition and analysis.

In addition, we aim at processing our research results in a comprehensive and implementation styled manner to ensure effective knowledge diffusion and reproducibility. When it comes to our future research agenda, we also plan to actively involve practitioners in its development process.



FIELD OF ACTION 3:

New Project Topics

Aside from generating empirical results, our network aims at identifying innovative research questions and topics. On this basis, new projects with different actor constellations will be advanced. In line with our transfer-oriented approach, we would like to integrate both academic actors as well as practitioners in those future projects.

Thus, cooperation with municipalities, companies, and civil society organisations are just as important as academic projects with research institutions. Concerning both the topical and the geographical focus, we would like to extend the scope of future projects beyond North Rhine-Westphalia. Alongside European policy-comparisons, a stronger focus on procurement systems in emerging and developing countries would be content options. Furthermore, we would like to continue working on the identification of particularly relevant product groups in terms of sustainability as well as on an integrated appraisal of innovative and sustainable procurement procedures.

Project Coordination

The activities of the network are coordinated at the German Development Institute.

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