

## 7 Training and motivation - City of Göteborg, Sweden



Statue of Poseidon in the main street of Göteborg, Sweden (source: Göteborg & Co.)

When to start training and how to choose trainers?



Municipal staff attending a seminar about organic food, Göteborg, Sweden

The idea of greening municipal purchases often originates from a small group of people, who personally care for the environment and, for this reason, strive to convince their colleagues to procure and use environmentally preferable products. Products and services in a municipality, however, concern thousands of people. In a first step, these persons will have to be motivated to accept green products (and therefore must be taught the underlying environmental concern of the matter). In a second step, they will learn how to use these products properly and, at last, to request them in future acquisitions.

Introducing environmental criteria in purchasing procedures therefore always requires a parallel step of training and motivating the stakeholders. As a trend-setter in terms of green procurement, the City of Göteborg has developed a full training scheme for its staff, purchasers, politicians and suppliers.

### 7.1 Background and objectives

Göteborg is a very experienced city in the field of green purchasing. More than ten years ago, its procurement authority developed, in co-operation with the Environmental Protection Office, a model for environmentally aware purchasing. This model, which systematically assesses the ability of tendering companies to supply environmentally adapted products on a par with price and other delivery issues, was designed to include training activities. It was the municipal staff who initially requested such activities in order to get an idea of the municipal environmental policy.

### 7.2 Setting up a full training scheme

Ideally spoken, training is an integral part of the purchasing strategy and begins soon after the strategy has been launched. Trainers may be appointed by the green purchasing manager among his/her professional acquaintances and come from diverse backgrounds: municipal staff, lawyers, consultants, non-profit organisations or university researchers.

Göteborg initiated its training activities in 1990, one year after having launched its green purchasing strategy. Trainers are chosen according to their personal qualities to carry out the job. 80% of them are employed with the municipality, the rest coming from external bodies (such as the Swedish Committee for Ecologically Sustainable Procurement). They are put in contact with the Göteborg Procurement Authority via its networking activities.<sup>7</sup>

The Committee for Ecologically Sustainable Procurement is appointed by the Swedish Government. One of the main tasks for the Committee consists in setting up a common Swedish Guideline for green procurement. The guideline will be ready in spring 2001. It will be available in English on the Internet. For more information contact: Secretary Erén Andersson: [eren.andersson@environment.ministry.se](mailto:eren.andersson@environment.ministry.se) or visit the Web site: <http://www.sustainable-sweden.gov.se>

Box 10: Committee for Ecologically Sustainable Procurement

<sup>7</sup> Göteborg Procurement Authority participates in eight local, regional, national and international networks: Göteborg's Green Purchasing Network, Miljösamverkan Västra Götaland, Swedish EnviroNet, Grip Senter, Grønt IndkøbsNet, Committee for Ecologically Sustainable Development, ICLEI European Municipal Green Purchasers' Network and Eurocities.

From the very start, the training scheme is focused on all purchasing stakeholders including local politicians, municipal staff (purchasers, end users) and suppliers. The first training unit should deal with general environmental questions and can be presented in the shape of seminars, the length of which has to be adapted to the target group.

Table 3 shows Göteborg's first attempts at training for specific groups and the lessons learned for setting up a regular scheme.

WHO	TRAINING TYPE		FINANCING OF TRAINING
Politicians	First	Political representatives showed only little interest in a first half-day seminar on general environmental issues.	Purchasing Department
	Regular	Regular half-day seminars are now proposed twice a year as a general environmental update which is most appreciated.	
Suppliers	First	Suppliers were generally not interested in their first half-day seminar on general environmental issues.	Suppliers
	Regular	Suppliers can attend five hearings/courses a year on environmental protection. They take part in multi-stakeholder working groups (several times a year) which aim at exploring how suppliers and Göteborg can co-operate to develop greener products and services. Their reaction to the training is positive.	
Municipal Staff	First	The first two-day seminar on general environmental issues was welcomed with great interest. A second training on specific areas (cleaning, office equipment...) was carried out as a two-day seminar and focused on general purchasing agreements.	Each Municipal Department
	Regular	Twice a year, staff attends half-day seminars on general environmental issues. Two to three times a year, two-day seminars on environmental questions are proposed (by the procurement authority to the municipal staff), on subjects referring to particular product groups and environmentally related topics such as energy. Purchasers are additionally trained on legal issues and the leeway left to the use of specific environmental demands.	

Table 3: Göteborg's Training Scheme

Regular training has to be adapted to the needs, expectations and activities of the different actors. The training units may be held as seminars for about 100 participants, giving them the opportunity to share experiences and directly learn from each other. Other forms are lectures, workshops, hearings (where a background document is prepared and the 75-100 participants discuss it during the hearing), meetings, courses (20-25 people), conferences or multi-stakeholder working groups.

All those training activities are carried out with the main goal to promote collaboration, enhance know-how and exchange experiences. Moreover, they

Examples of issues to be included in a green procurement course, as proposed by the Federation of Swedish County Councils (LfU):

- Legally viable environmental requirements
- Tools for green procurement
- Evaluation of suppliers' answers to environmental requirements
- Environmental Management Systems and procurement
- The role of the procurement officer
- Best practice examples of Swedish County Councils

Box 11: A green procurement course proposed by the Federation of Swedish County Councils

One-day green procurement course

should get the target groups to adopt the idea of green purchasing and bring it home finally.

### 7.3 Motivating people to participate in training courses

In order to announce the seminars and to keep people informed and motivated between the meetings, green purchasing has to be widely advertised. The challenge is to get purchasers, environmental experts and end users to volunteer for the training.

To this end, Göteborg's Procurement Authority uses various tracks.

- Invitations to the meetings are communicated via the municipal mailing system and supplier lists, which include all suppliers having answered a tender at a certain stage.
- "Fördelen" ("Advantages"), a quarterly published by Göteborg's Procurement Authority regularly informs its readers about green procurement.
- Göteborg's Procurement Authority Web site is a source of environmental information for all stakeholders.

The direct contact between stakeholders, however, remains the most efficient way of communication.

### 7.4 A general commitment to green purchasing

The environmental policy in Göteborg and the different environmental projects launched by the municipal departments raised the interest of politicians. Although they did not seem very enthusiastic about the topic at their first environmental training, their interest grew during the following seminars, and today these politicians can be described as being very committed to the environmental question.

The high interest of the municipal staff in being trained on environmental and green purchasing issues is motivated by its close link to concrete purchasing issues. Part of the training consists in explaining the criteria for choosing a certain supplier.

The first training boosted the interest in green purchasing, resulting in a general demand for further (project-related) seminars on the topic. Today the City of Göteborg proudly states that 80 to 90% of its municipal staff have been trained on green purchasing according to their needs as purchasers or end users.

Small and medium-sized companies quickly understood that green purchasing (and supplying) is an opportunity to make a breakthrough in the market and will become a necessity in the future.

The big companies did not instantaneously become aware of the importance of green purchasing, but realised it two to three years after their first training and came back to Göteborg's municipality for more information.

Göteborg's Procurement Authority has experienced two types of difficulties in its training activities:

- The demand for training on green purchasing is so high that organisers have to refuse people because of sessions being fully booked. A satisfying training scheme, therefore, would require more resources than are currently available.
- The continuous character of the training requires an extraordinary amount of positive energy from the trainers. In a City such as Göteborg, staff turnover is high due to the high number of municipal employees (45,000), implying that there are always new employees to be trained. Trainers therefore must neither cease to motivate themselves in order to motivate "newbies" nor give up when facing their hard everyday work, always keeping in mind that the achievement of results takes time.



"Fördelen" ("Advantages"), the quarterly published by the Procurement Authority, Göteborg, Sweden

Political representatives

Municipal staff and specific purchasers

Suppliers

Barriers and difficulties

"Awareness and understanding of environmental work requires that the staff is informed and committed."

*Berit Westbjerg, Senior purchaser, Göteborg*

## Transferability

A differentiated training scheme for politicians, suppliers and municipal staff is vital for the successful implementation of eco-procurement within decentralised procurement structures.

The Göteborg case illustrates clearly the relationship between convincing the political decision-makers of the importance of green purchasing and expanding activities step by step. Training is only possible if significant resources are allocated to this effort. Vice versa, training will also contribute to convincing politicians to support future schemes and to motivate them to stick to their commitment.

The City of Göteborg model for "Green purchasing" is based on political decisions, established working methods and information/education strategies. The model or part of it, for example the information/education strategy, can be adjusted and used in any other European local authority.

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