

IN BRIEF

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Product & sector pilot project: IT | **Country:** The Netherlands



Circular Procurement IT equipment province of Utrecht



'In ten years, circular procurement will be the norm.'

Maarten Rauws, senior administrative legal advisor province of Utrecht

IT hardware is not an easy product to make circular. Even so, the Province of Utrecht decided to conduct a pilot project to purchase the workstation equipment in a circular way.

Project description

The pilot consists of a procurement process to purchase IT equipment for 1,000 workstations. The preparations started in April 2015. The criteria for the province's purchasing department are that on the one hand a large part of the products the producer supplies are used, and on the other hand the products or materials supplied can be used again for another cycle at the end of the lifespan or use phase. This pilot project ensues from the Green Deal Circular Procurement, which the province was one of the first parties to join in 2013. The goal is that at least 10% of the total procurement budget will be spent on circular projects by 2020.

Approach

The principles of circular procurement were explored in two workshops with Rijkswaterstaat, which included the participation of many smaller parties, and the award and selection criteria were considered. After this, a formal market consultation was started via TenderNed. This did not produce much interest. The parties hardly responded to the question of collectively developing a circular assessment methodology for this tender at all. This could be due to the low volume of the contract, a lack of knowledge of market players about the circular economy, or the lack of will to let go of more linear business models. Ultimately, the province entered into individual discussions with parties to obtain more information from the market.



FACTS & FIGURES

- > **Number of employees:** 800
- > **Contract volume:** Renewing IT hardware for 1,000 workstations, consisting of a laptop (with a choice of three types) or a tablet, a docking station, a monitor, a mouse and a keyboard.
- > **Contract form:** purchase (4 types of hardware), with action plan for returning the computer provided to the supply chain

Results

The province wanted a party that would also take on the task of being a circular service provider, but the market was not found to be ready for this. That is why the province decided to purchase the IT equipment first and to give the supplier the chance to develop the circular service provision. The winning supplier had to draw up an action plan in cooperation with the province of Utrecht within one year to get the IT hardware supplied back into the supply chain with the highest possible value. Four parties ultimately submitted tenders. However, the province had to exclude these four tenderers from the tender because, to the surprise of the province of Utrecht, none of them could meet the previously announced deadline and/or the requirements in the tender. In spite of this, it was an educational process in which many insights and lessons were learned. The province of Utrecht then decided to start a completely new tender.

Lessons learned

- Get to know the market. And be realistic about the possibilities. The requirements of circular procurement are sometimes in conflict with the business models of producers and/or suppliers.
- Market consultation is important. Bring the market along in the circular developments. As necessary, approach market parties individually while making sure the playing field is level.
- Organise a continuous market dialogue, separate from a tender, to gain a better understanding of each other and for more insight into the technical possibilities.
- Although market consultations are very important, see the previous points, they do not necessarily always produce the information the contracting authority is hoping for. This can be determined by the specific market within which the tender is held. The 'mores' within a market, for example in which players don't want to show their hand to competitors too much and therefore do not provide certain information in the consultation phase or even ask certain questions during for the information phase, can put the contracting authority on the wrong foot.

- Formulate a sound and measurable definition of 'used work equipment'. That was missing in this tender.

About REBus and the Green Deal Circular Procurement

The Green Deal Circular Procurement (GDGP) is an initiative of CSR Netherlands, NEVI, the Government of the Netherlands, Duurzame Leverancier (Sustainable Supplier), PIANOo, Kirkman Company and Circle Economy. Several pilot projects that have come out of the GDGP are financed in part by the European project REBus, which is being implemented in the Netherlands by Rijkswaterstaat (Department of Waterways and Public Works). Together, they are working to support entrepreneurs and governments with their circular procurement ambitions.

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Partners: CSR Netherlands | PIANOo | REBus | Rijkswaterstaat

Relevant links & documents: [Lessons learned report](#)

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