



How to apply socially responsible public procurement

An impact-driven framework with indicators
and practical examples

PwC EU Services
ICLEI Europe

February – 2025



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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Manuscript completed in February 2025

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PDF ISBN 978-92-9412-146-2 doi:10.2826/3648266 EA-01-25-073-EN-N

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025

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Executive summary

Leveraging public procurement for social objectives can lead to transformative societal benefits, such as promoting employment, social inclusion, decent working conditions, accessibility and sustainability. This report proposes an analytical framework to measure social impact in public procurement. Commissioned by the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) and undertaken by PwC EU Services and ICLEI under the ‘Socially responsible public procurement (SRPP) – Lot 2’ project, this report provides an analysis of a sample of public procurement procedures across the EU against a set of indicators for measuring social impact in public procurement. The report also includes good practices and identifies common success factors and challenges related to (measuring) social impact in public procurement. Based on these findings, the report offers actionable policy recommendations for EU-wide adoption to help Member States better integrate social considerations into their procurement practices.

Methodological approach and key steps

The primary objective of this study was to develop and validate a comprehensive framework for measuring social impact in public procurement procedures. This report outlines the analysis of procurement practices across the EU using the proposed framework. The methodology involved a series of systematic steps to ensure a robust and effective approach.

Step 1: design of the analytical framework

The first step involved the design of an analytical framework. This was initiated through extensive desk research, aiming to identify existing SRPP monitoring and impact measurement practices and supplemented by other inspirational examples related to public procurement and the social economy. Following this, a workshop with SRPP experts and representatives from EU Member States was organised in order to refine the framework and indicators. Following their insights, the framework was tailored and simplified. The final framework includes four main indicators, inspired by the European Commission’s “Buying Social” guide¹:



Promoting employment opportunities and social inclusion: this indicator assesses the integration of explicit, measurable targets for job creation, including the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and the promotion of employee skill growth.



Encouraging decent working conditions: this indicator evaluates measures related to employment status and the fairness of working conditions, including fair wages, adherence to International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, safe working environments and non-discrimination policies.



Supporting accessibility and design for all: this indicator assesses compliance with accessibility standards, including legal and regulatory requirements, universal design principles, physical accessibility, assistive technologies and inclusive environments.



Promoting sustainable practices: this indicator examines alignment with the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), supply chain fairness, prohibition of forced labour and adherence to ethical standards and certifications.

¹ European Commission, Commission Notice “Buying Social - a guide to taking account of social considerations in public procurement (2nd edition)” (2021). Last accessed on 19/11/2024 and available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/45767>.

Each indicator is broken down into **sub-indicators**, allowing for a detailed examination of how each public procurement procedure incorporates these social considerations. These are contained within the developed assessment matrix.

Step 2: creation of the assessment matrix and scoring system

Once the framework was established, the next step was the creation of an **assessment matrix** designed to standardise the evaluation process of public procurement procedures, ensuring consistency and objectivity. To complement the assessment matrix, a **scoring system** was developed to quantify how effectively public procurements integrated social impact considerations, providing a clear and measurable evaluation process.

Step 3: assessment of SRPP in EU Member States' procurement practices

Subsequently, a sample of 75 public procurement procedures from across all EU 27 Member States were evaluated against the assessment matrix and scoring system. The selection and evaluation process entailed four phases:

- Phase 1: identification of relevant procurement procedures that include social provisions
- Phase 2: selection of procedures identified in Phase 1 for detailed examination.
- Phase 3: analysis of the social considerations within the selected procedures.
- Phase 4: evaluation of the social impact of the selected procurement procedures using performance scores.

Results

The assessment of public procurement procedures across EU Member States reveals significant variability in the implementation and impact of SRPP. This assessment reveals critical trends, strengths and areas for improvement and underscores the importance of adopting standardised metrics to guide procurement professionals towards achieving transformative societal benefits.

General trends and impact levels

Public procurement procedures were categorised into impact levels: 'Not Impactful', 'Low Impact', 'Moderate Impact', 'High Impact', and 'Transformative'. Most procedures fall into the 'Low Impact' (31) and 'Moderate Impact' (28) categories, indicating that while social considerations are integrated, their depth and efficacy are often limited. Only a few procedures achieve 'High Impact' (10) and 'Transformative' (four) outcomes, setting ambitious benchmarks for social impact with comprehensive requirements and advanced monitoring mechanisms. The analysis of Social Impact Ratings by Purchase Type reveals that 'Services' typically produce a consistent moderate impact on social outcomes, while 'Mixed purchases', 'Works', and 'Supplies' show greater variability in their social impact.

The analysis per geographical level indicates that, at the national level, most of the 24 examined procedures showed a limited social impact, with most of them rated as 'Low Impact' (11) and only one reaching the 'Transformative' level. Regional procedures, though fewer in number (11), showed a balanced impact distribution, suggesting potential for improvement through targeted strategies. Local procedures, the most represented with 40 instances, were mostly classified as 'Moderate Impact' (18) and 'Low Impact' (15), indicating occasional but inconsistent substantial social outcomes. Each level has demonstrated potential for transformative impacts through enhanced commitments and strategic efforts.

Analysis of indicators

Employment opportunities and social inclusion are the most prominently featured indicators, included in approximately 83 % of the procedures (62 out of 75). Decent working conditions are also widely acknowledged, with 72 % (54 out of 75) incorporating relevant social aspects. Accessibility and inclusive design are included in 40 % of the procedures (30 out of 75), indicating significant room for improvement. Sustainability practices are included in 67 % of the sample cases (50 out of 75), showing a growing awareness of the importance of sustainability.

Overall, the performance across SRPP indicators presents margin for improvement across all the indicators. Drawing on the results from the evaluation exercise conducted using the proposed evaluation matrix (see Annex 1), “Encouraging Decent Working Conditions” scores highest at 2.4 out of 5, indicating some effort but ample room for improvement. “Supporting Accessibility and Design for All” scores 2.2, reflecting moderate attention to inclusivity. “Promoting Employment Opportunities and Social Inclusion” scores 2.0, suggesting modest efforts in job creation and social integration. The lowest score, 1.7, in “Promoting Sustainable Practices”, highlights a weak focus on social and supply chain sustainability. Despite these low scores, 67 % of the procedures incorporate green considerations, indicating a broad commitment to environmental sustainability.

Finally, there seems to be a trend towards integrating both social and environmental considerations in procurement decisions which indicates the adoption of a holistic approach. However, there is still considerable room for improvement in achieving comprehensive and consistent application of social considerations in public procurement.

Policy recommendations

SRPP integrates social considerations into public procurement processes, promoting employment, social inclusion, decent working conditions, accessibility and sustainability. Based on the findings, the analysis offers actionable recommendations:

- Adopt a holistic approach towards SRPP: integrate all aspects of SRPP to enhance overall social performance, as seen in Leuven's electric bicycle framework. Set clear social objectives, establish compliance mechanisms and foster collaboration between public authorities, contractors and civil society to standardise practices across the EU.
- Transforming public procurement for social good: implement strategic policies to elevate social considerations across procurement types, prioritising transformative and impactful procedures. Develop strategies to increase high-impact procurement procedures for meaningful social change.
- Standardise SRRP good practices across the EU: adopt uniform standards for employment, working conditions, accessibility, sustainability and social impact assessment. Standardisation also facilitates compliance and monitoring, ensuring alignment when integrating social considerations into procurement processes.
- Implement comprehensive monitoring and reporting mechanisms: address gaps in SRPP adoption with detailed protocols for audits, reviews and reporting. Require suppliers to provide regular updates on compliance with social and environmental standards using a national-level centralised database for tracking and transparency.
- Address critical gaps in data availability and transparency: improve data availability and transparency in Tenders Electronic Daily's (TED) procurement documentation. Implement protocols for regular audits and independent assessments to enhance accountability and transparency.
- Expand and foster the use of a framework to measure social impact: develop and implement an analytical framework to measure social impact in procurement. Create reporting templates, compliance checklists and protocols for progress reports. Facilitate collaboration between stakeholders and launch awareness campaigns on the framework's importance and benefits.

These recommendations aim to transform public procurement into a powerful tool for promoting social justice, environmental sustainability and economic resilience across the EU.

Conclusions

This report outlines the development of an analytical framework to measure the social impact of public procurement across the EU. The framework evaluates social impacts via four main indicators: promoting employment opportunities and social inclusion, encouraging decent working conditions, supporting accessibility and design for all and promoting sustainable practices. Each indicator has detailed sub-indicators. The scoring system uses weighted scoring to assess social performance, translating final scores into a social impact rating. Testing on 75 public procurement procedures from all 27 EU Member States revealed that while some integrated social considerations well, many lacked significant social impact. Common indicators were employment and social inclusion and decent working conditions, while accessibility and sustainable practices were less prioritised. In conclusion, the framework can monitor, encourage and enhance the integration of social considerations in public procurement, providing a standardised measurement tool for SRPP practices across the EU.

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1. Introduction

The significance of measuring social impact in public procurement cannot be overstated. Public procurement represents a substantial portion of the EU's GDP². Leveraging this economic power to achieve social objectives can lead to transformative societal benefits. More concretely, by integrating social considerations into procurement processes, public authorities can promote employment opportunities, social inclusion, decent working conditions, accessibility and sustainable practices.

To support the promotion of socially responsible public procurement across the EU, the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) commissioned PwC EU Services and ICLEI to carry out a study on '*Socially responsible public procurement (SRPP) (Lot 2): measuring positive impact in socially responsible public procurement*'. The primary objective of this study is to explore and enhance the methodologies and indicators used to measure social impact within the realm of public procurement.

Therefore, this report describes a proposal for an analytical framework to measure social impact in public procurement in the EU. The framework entails a set of indicators, along with an assessment matrix and scoring system. It was tested on a selected sample of public procurement procedures from across all EU Member States.

The report is structured into three main chapters:

- A description of the methodology followed to create an analytical framework to measure social impact in public procurement;
- Key findings from the implementation of the analytical framework, while highlighting good practices from different EU Member States. The key findings include a comparative analysis of the indicators, performance and trends, as well as case studies of successful implementations; and
- Actionable policy recommendations for EU-wide adoption and improvement. These recommendations are designed to help Member States enhance their public procurement practices by incorporating social considerations more effectively.

In light of the growing importance of socially responsible public procurement, this report serves as a relevant resource for policy makers, public procurement professionals and stakeholders across the European Union to monitor the integration of social considerations in public procurement.

²Access to public procurement. Last accessed on 09/10/2024 and available at: https://single-market-scoreboard.ec.europa.eu/business-framework-conditions/public-procurement_en#:~:text=Public%20procurement%20accounts%20for%20about,equal%20treatment.

2. Methodology and indicators for measuring social impact in public procurement

This chapter outlines the methodological approach followed to develop and implement an analytical framework to measure social impact in public procurement. The proposed framework aims to provide a structured and adaptable tool for measuring the social impacts of public procurement activities within the European Union.

2.1. Development of an analytical framework

This study entailed the development of an analytical framework which consolidates various methodologies, practices and policies from across the EU Member States into a single, comprehensive approach. The primary objective of the analytical framework is to provide a tool that can measure the social impact of public procurement in relation to a public procurement procedure, including on an organisational or Member State level. In addition, it aims to offer public procurers a flexible set of indicators that can be tailored to specific procurement contexts, thereby enhancing the social outcomes of their public procurement activities.

The creation of the framework involved desk research aimed at identifying existing SRPP monitoring and impact measurement practices, as well as other inspirational examples of indicators related to monitoring and evaluation of public procurement and social economy. To complement the desk research, there was an expert workshop to present and further develop a set of indicators and the analytical framework as a whole.

For the purposes of this study, SRPP *“is defined as procurement that takes into account one or several social considerations for advancing social objectives. SRPP can cover a wide spectrum of social considerations, such as employment opportunities, decent work conditions and compliance with social and labour rights, social inclusion, equal opportunities and accessibility”*.³

2.1.1. Desk research

The basis of the analytical framework stemmed from a comprehensive web-based search and documentary review aimed to identify existing approaches for SRPP monitoring and impact measurement adopted by public administrations on an EU and international level. The desk research focused on collecting approaches implemented by public administrations, as well as others suggested by academia and civil society organisations active in the field of social and sustainable public procurement. The additional research covered the EU and international level to ensure a comprehensive understanding of existing methodologies and indicators. Based on the collated information, a list of potential indicators was compiled which covered various social dimensions. These indicators aimed to promote employment opportunities and social inclusion, support social economy enterprises, encourage decent work and ensure compliance with social and labour laws. They also focused on accessibility and inclusive design, respecting human rights, addressing ethical trade issues and providing high-quality social, health, education and cultural services. Additionally, the indicators targeted sustainability goals. To ensure the robustness of the framework, the identified indicators were analysed to list and describe

³European Commission, REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION - Implementation and best practices of national procurement policies in the Internal Market, COM(2021) 245 final (2021). Last accessed on 09/10/2024 and available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0245>.

the specific social dimensions they address, including the technical criteria, data sources and potential challenges for measuring each indicator.

2.1.2. Stakeholder workshop

A half-day online workshop was organised to present and refine the framework for measuring the social impact of public procurement contracts on the national level. The workshop gathered experts and representatives from both EU Member States and non-EU countries, with relevant knowledge and hands-on experience in socially responsible public procurement. The participants ultimately helped simplify and make the framework more specific, targeting several dimensions in more depth. The main outcomes and conclusions of the workshop included:

1. The critical need for practical, clear and actionable indicators that align with existing EU directives and national regulations;
2. The relevance of harmonised definitions and standards to facilitate uniform assessments and compliance across Member States;
3. The acknowledgement of the complexities and potential pathways for advancing SRPP;
4. The importance of tailored approaches to data collection and the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including public authorities, social enterprises and representatives of disadvantaged groups, to ensure comprehensive and accurate measurement of social impacts; and
5. The potential of integrating independent verification bodies and leveraging existing frameworks such as the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD).

2.2. An analytical framework to measure social impact in public procurement

The proposed analytical framework includes four main indicators, each designed to measure the following social impacts and objectives in public procurement procedures:

- **Promoting employment opportunities and social inclusion.** This assesses the integration of explicit, detailed and measurable targets. It examines job creation requirements, including types and conditions of employment and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups. Additionally, it evaluates the promotion of employee skill growth through detailed training programmes and compliance with recognised standards and certifications, such as relevant ISO-standards.
- **Encouraging decent working conditions.** This evaluates measures related to employment status and the fairness of working conditions. It examines various employment contract types, contract durations and working hours to ensure they adhere to specified standards, including national and international regulations or conventions. Key aspects include fair wages, adherence to International Labour Organization's (ILO) conventions, provision of safe and healthy working environments and non-discrimination policies. This indicator also assesses mechanisms for suppliers to provide evidence of compliance with such measures.
- **Supporting accessibility and design for all.** This assesses the clarity and specificity of requirements for compliance with accessibility standards. It includes adherence to legal and regulatory requirements, explicit inclusion of accessibility in design and technical specifications and quality assurance in implementation and material selection. Furthermore, it identifies adherence to universal design

principles, physical accessibility (e.g. entrances, corridors and furniture) and the integration of assistive and digital technologies. It also examines communication accessibility, operational plans, staff training and accessible emergency procedures, as well as inclusivity, non-discriminatory environments, community integration and overall quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

- **Promoting sustainable practices.** This examines alignment with the CSDDD and overall supply chain fairness. It considers reporting requirements on sustainability practices, the prohibition of forced labour and compliance with ethical standards or certifications. It further examines adherence to EU and national collective agreements, optional alignment with the EU's or OECD's Responsible Business Conduct and mechanisms for monitoring and verifying compliance.

Additionally, the framework considers synergies with environmental aspects, which document the extent to which social and environmental procurement goals overlap. This additional indicator does not affect the final scoring or constitute an individual indicator. By capturing the overlap between social and green procurement, the study provided insight into the extent to which public procurement procedures adopt integrated sustainability practices. This, in turn, encourages a more informed evaluation of public procurement procedures, providing key insights into strategic goals such as the just transition.

To support the evaluation of public procurement procedures, a scoring system was developed which is translated into and supported by an assessment matrix. The assessment matrix was created to provide a structured and quantifiable means to evaluate public procurement procedures based on the four main indicators. The scoring system then translates these qualitative assessments from the matrix into quantifiable scores, enabling a comparative analysis of public procurement procedures and facilitating informed procurement decisions for public procurement authorities by providing insight into what constitutes an impactful procedure. These elements are described in more detail below.

2.2.1. Key indicators for measuring social impact

Each indicator is broken down into sub-indicators. They are listed and further detailed in the table below.

Table 1 - List of social impacts/objectives and key indicators used for measuring social impact

Indicator	Sub-indicator	Description
Promoting employment opportunities and social inclusion	Employment opportunities created	Assesses how public procurement procedure specifications set explicit, detailed and measurable targets for job creation, including types and conditions of employment. Higher scores are given to procurement procedures demonstrating transformative employment impacts and robust monitoring mechanisms.

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Indicator	Sub-indicator	Description
	Skills development	Measures the promotion of employee skills development through specific training programmes, skill assessments and development plans. Higher scores are for creating learning organisations with detailed impact monitoring.
	Inclusion of disadvantaged groups	Evaluates the specificity and actionability of procurement procedure requirements for including disadvantaged groups. Higher scores are awarded for detailed programmes, targeted group identification, partnerships and mechanisms for systemic hiring changes and impact monitoring. Examples of disadvantaged groups: long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, youth, ethnic minorities, migrants, women returning to work, older workers and low-skilled individuals.
	Compliance with standards and certifications	Assesses adherence to specified standards and certifications, such as ISO 37101 (concerning sustainable development in communities) and ISO 26000 (on social responsibility). Higher scores are for setting ambitious, comprehensive standards and detailed compliance monitoring.
Encouraging decent working conditions	Employment status	Reviews the types of employment contracts (permanent, temporary, part-time, etc.) and job security.
	Fair working conditions	Examines fair wages, adherence to ILO conventions, safety, non-discrimination and grievance mechanisms. Higher scores are for detailed protocols and compliance documentation.
Supporting accessibility and design for all	Compliance with accessibility standards	Evaluates how clearly and specifically procurement procedure specifications require compliance with accessibility standards. It considers adherence to legal and regulatory requirements, the integration of accessibility in design and technical specifications, quality assurance in implementation and the use of assistive and digital technologies.

Indicator	Sub-indicator	Description
	Inclusive design and accommodation	Evaluates adherence to universal design principles, assistive technologies and accessible communication. Higher scores are for comprehensive and innovative inclusive design.
Promoting sustainable practices	Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDD)	Measures the efforts and processes in place to ensure corporate actions are sustainable and responsible.
	Fair supply chain	Assesses the fairness and sustainability of the supply chain, including ethical sourcing and treatment of suppliers.
Synergies with environmental aspects	Included or not included	Notes if there are synergies between environmental or green procurement and social procurement goals.

2.2.2. Assessment matrix

The assessment matrix standardises the evaluation process by ensuring consistency and objectivity in assessing and scoring each public procurement procedure. This systematic approach allows for a balanced and thorough assessment of each procedure, as well as for the generation of a comprehensive social impact rating that accurately reflects the effectiveness of the social dimensions embedded within public procurement. The assessment scale is carefully tailored to each sub-indicator and captures specific nuances and requirements of each social impact area. A simplified version of the assessment scale is presented in the table below to facilitate its understanding⁴.

Table 2 - Simplified Assessment Scale

0 - None	1 - Minimal	2 - Moderate	3 - Substantial	4 - Extensive	5 - Transformational
Sub-indicator not relevant or not mentioned in procurement procedure documentation.	Basic mention of criteria with minimal details. Limited documentation and unclear monitoring. General compliance practices.	Adherence to standards and agreements. Basic compliance efforts.	Clear criteria with mandatory adherence. Requires basic documentation or proofs of the social obligation.	Comprehensive and well-described social objectives, specific social goals and target categories supported by extensive reporting and documentation.	Exceeds expectations in terms of social impact measurement to ensure compliance. Required documentation is beyond standard requirements.

⁴The comprehensive assessment matrix can be found in Annex I.

2.2.3. Scoring system

To evaluate the social performance and impact of public procurement procedures, an indicator-based scoring mechanism that encapsulates and weights multiple social dimensions was developed. This enables a social impact rating (SIR) to be assigned to each procurement procedure based on their social performance.

The **indicator-based scoring** entails the following components:

- *Total Performance Score (TPS)* uses the abovementioned four key indicators to derive the total social performance score of a public procurement procedure. Each indicator evaluates different dimensions of social impact. More specifically, following an in-depth examination of the social provisions of a given procurement procedure, each sub-indicator was assigned a score ranging from 0 to 5 (see table 2). The score of each sub-indicator was used to calculate the average score for each indicator. The TPS is the result of the average score of all four indicators.
- *Holistic Bonus (HB)* encourages a holistic approach to social performance in public procurement procedures by addressing all indicators. This bonus is awarded to public procurement procedures that address at least two different indicators. The more indicators addressed, the higher the bonus received. Specifically, the full bonus is assigned to procurement procedures that address all four indicators, and the bonus entity progressively decreases when the procurement addresses three indicators (0.5 of potential bonus) or two indicators (0.25 of potential bonus). No bonus is assigned to procurement procedures with a mono-dimensional approach to social aspects. Therefore, the HB rewards and encourages a holistic approach to SRPP.
- *Deep Impact Bonus (DIB)* is evaluated through relevant sub-indicators for a thorough assessment of the effectiveness and reach of the procedure's social considerations. While the HB rewards the breadth of social impact across various social dimensions (or indicators), it does not measure the depth of social impact within each indicator. Therefore, the DIB has been introduced to capture the intensity of social impacts achieved by each procurement procedure. The intensity is measured by calculating the number of sub-indicators a procurement procedure addresses within the relevant indicators. Using this bonus in combination with the HB ensures that procurement procedures with significant social impacts in a single dimension are not penalised compared to those that achieve lighter impacts across multiple indicators.

The **SIR** entails a weighted scoring of each component (namely, TPS, HB and DIB) according to its importance. The weighting of each component of the indicator-based scoring can be adapted depending on the desired relevance of each one. In the study, the TPS is the primary indicator of social impact, as it evaluates multiple dimensions critical to the overall social performance of public procurement. Therefore, it is assigned a significant weight of 80 % to reflect its central role. The HB and DIB – both weighted 10 % – are secondary measures, encouraging a broad and in-depth approach respectively, without overshadowing the primary performance score.

The following equation summarises the approach adopted to derive the SIR:

$$SIR = [TPS * 0.8] + [HB * 0.1] + [DIB * 0.1]$$

The figure below provides a visual summary of the proposed scoring system for the analytical framework to measure social impact in public procurement.

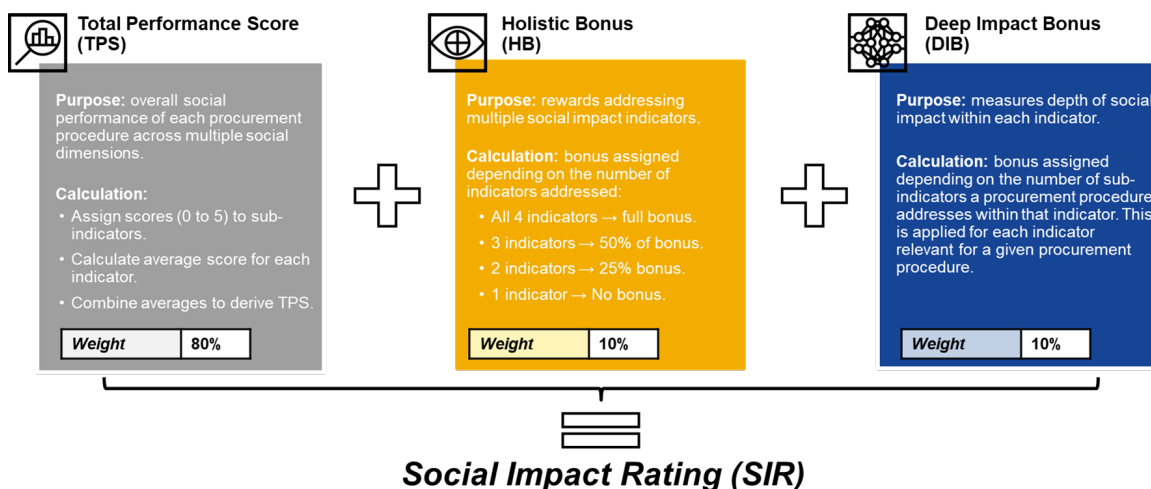


Figure 1: Proposed scoring system⁵

The result of this process is a weighted score expressed as a percentage. Progressively higher percentages indicate a greater social impact. To this end, the following predefined percentage ranges and corresponding performance labels have been adopted:

- **Not Impactful (0-29 %):** a public procurement procedure that has minimal or no specific requirements for social inclusion, decent working conditions or sustainability and lacks monitoring mechanisms.
- **Low Impact (30-49 %):** a public procurement procedure that has made some effort to address social performance but lacks comprehensive or detailed requirements, resulting in limited positive impacts.
- **Moderate Impact (50-69 %):** a public procurement procedure with specific requirements for social inclusion, decent working conditions or sustainability, but may not cover all indicators comprehensively. This results in moderate positive social outcomes.
- **High Impact (70-84 %):** a public procurement procedure with a strong commitment to and clear, substantial requirements across most indicators, leading to significant positive social outcomes.
- **Transformative (85-100 %):** a public procurement procedure with ambitious benchmarks for social impact and comprehensive, detailed requirements and advanced monitoring mechanisms. This aims for significant positive outcomes.

⁵Source: authors' own elaboration.

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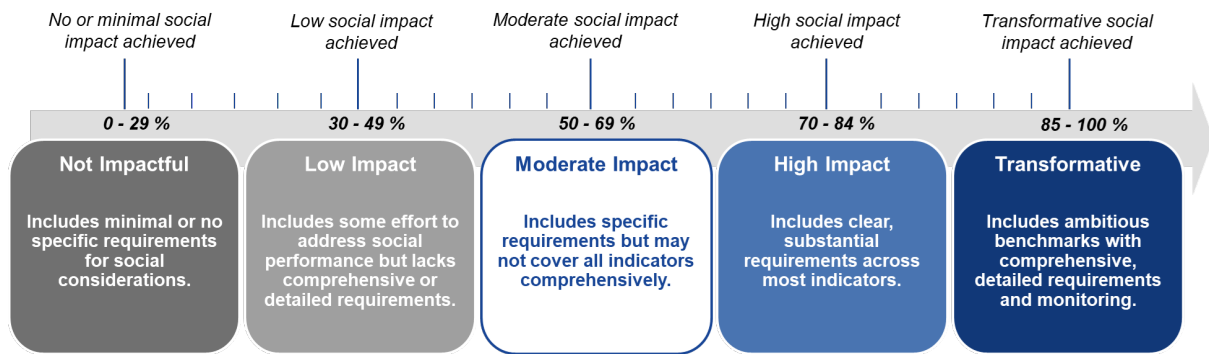


Figure 2 – Performance labels of Social Impact Rating (SIR)⁶

In addition to the components of the indicator-based scoring already described, the presence of synergies between social and environmental aspects was also mapped. The purpose of this mapping was to identify any pattern and interrelation between social and environmental goals that could denote an overall intention by public procurers to promote a more holistic approach to sustainability. Environmental synergies could potentially be included in the overall weighted score, in addition to (or as part of) the HB. However, in the context of the present study, this aspect was not considered in the scoring process and, therefore, did not affect the social impact rating as the focus was on social impact rather than green procurement alignment. In any case, this assessment provides insights into the extent to which green and social procurements overlap.

2.3. A four-phase approach to measure social impact in public procurement

To test the proposed analytical framework, a sample of procurement procedures from the 27 EU Member States was evaluated based on predefined criteria. The end goal was to contribute to the future widespread use of the framework and enable an assessment of each Member State's performance in socially responsible public procurement. This exercise was conducted in four phases:

- Phase 1: identification of procurement procedures.
- Phase 2: selection of public procurement procedures for in-depth analysis.
- Phase 3: analysis of social considerations within the selected procedures.
- Phase 4: evaluation of the social impact of the selected procurement procedures using performance scores.

Advanced translation tools facilitated the review of documentation across Member States. The following sections explain the steps followed in each of the four phases. This approach aimed to ensure a transparent assessment of social impacts within public procurement across EU Member States.

⁶Source: authors' own elaboration.

2.3.1. Phase 1: identification of procurement procedures

In the first phase, procurement procedures for each EU Member State which contained references to social impact were collected. This meant primarily searching Tenders Electronic Daily (TED)⁷ using specific keywords related to social clauses and ethical standards to ensure relevant results and to be in line with the framework indicators⁸. These keywords were translated into the Member States' official languages. The criteria for selecting procurement procedures included:

- At least one public procurement procedure over 1 million euro;
- At least one public procurement procedure with multiple lots;
- At least one procedure not reserved for sheltered workshops or social enterprises;
- At least two different sectors among three procedures; and
- At least two different types of procedures among open, restricted and negotiated procedures.

The timeline covered exclusively public procurement procedures from 2023 and 2024 due to the increasing implementation of strategic procurement across Member States in recent years.

To complement this search and gather additional procedures for specific countries which did not yield relevant results in TED, additional sources were also used (for example, centralised national procurement data portals or platforms that offer open access to documents without registration) to gather more relevant and detailed results, particularly for Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Spain.

In total, 135 public procurement procedures that reference social considerations were collected. This exercise did not aim to be an exhaustive collection of all procurement procedures which contained references to social considerations in each Member State. The identified procedures were documented in a database containing the following fields: Member State, title of the procedure, description of the procedure, name of the procuring entity, type of the procuring entity, level of public sector activity, sector, type of contract, type of purchase, main and other common procurement vocabulary (CPV) codes, awarded entity type, total contract value and a description of the procedure, including references to social impacts/objectives.

⁷TED refers to the online version of the 'Supplement to the Official Journal' of the EU, dedicated to European public procurement. TED provides free access to business opportunities from the European Union, the European Economic Area and beyond. Last accessed on 04/10/2024 and available at: [https://ted.europa.eu/en/about-ted#:~:text=TED%20\(Tenders%20Electronic%20Daily\)%20is%20dedicated%20to%20European%20public%20procurement](https://ted.europa.eu/en/about-ted#:~:text=TED%20(Tenders%20Electronic%20Daily)%20is%20dedicated%20to%20European%20public%20procurement).

⁸Please refer to Annex II for the keywords used.

2.3.2. Phase 2: selection of public procurement procedures for in-depth analysis

The second phase involved selecting a relevant sample of procurement procedures per EU Member State for further analysis. The number of selected procedures ranges from one to five procedures per country in line with the results of phase 1⁹. The selection process entailed an examination of the procedure's description, and an assessment of the social dimensions detailed in the procurement procedure documentation. The procedure's documentation was retrieved from the public procurement portals or facilitated directly from relevant public procurement official(s). In other words, procurement procedures for which social considerations fell out of the definition of SRPP and were not in line with the indicators of the framework were excluded from the initial list. The shortlist included 81 procurement procedures which were further analysed and categorised according to the key indicators of the analytical framework, namely: promoting employment opportunities and social inclusion, encouraging decent working conditions, supporting accessibility and design for all and/or promoting sustainable practices. As information was not readily available or was insufficient for a proper implementation of the framework in some cases, the final sample comprised 75 procurement procedures, with at least one relevant procurement procedure per Member State.

2.3.3. Phase 3: analysis of social considerations

In the third phase, the collected documentation of the selected procedures was reviewed in more detail to identify and summarise social considerations contained in the procurement documents. The focus was on award criteria, technical specifications and other documents such as annexes. This approach allowed us to understand how SRPP was integrated into each procedure. This analysis was carried out against the indicators and sub-indicators of the framework. The analysis was descriptive and further complemented with information about if and how each indicator and sub-indicator was met.

2.3.4. Phase 4: evaluation of social impact

In last phase of the analysis, the impact of each public procurement procedure was assessed using a social impact rating cluster. The implementation of each sub-indicator was assigned a score ranging from 0 to 5 based on the assessment matrix (see section 2.2.2, table 2 and Annex II for more information). This scoring system allowed for a comparison of how different public procurement procedures on the Member State level are performing in terms of social impact. Chapter 3 discusses these key findings, illustrating the range of practices and effectiveness in integrating social considerations across the selected procurement procedures.

⁹This variation arises from differences in the implementation of social conditions in public procurement procedures across Member States. In addition, there is limited data availability from some Member States, which either do not have open procurement portals or include explicit references to social conditions in their procurement notices. Consequently, some Member States are less represented in the sample.

2.4. Challenges and limitations

To gather the necessary documentation for the identification, selection and analysis of procurement procedures, procurement officials were directly contacted during Phase 2. However, this process presented several challenges. Firstly, TED often lacked detailed contact information, complicating efforts to gather additional documentation. In cases where the contact details were outdated or incorrect, resulting in bounced emails or misdirected inquiries, other suitable and similar public procurement procedures were identified and selected to maintain the robustness of the sample. Secondly, direct outreach to some public procurement authorities yielded no response to email requests. To mitigate this issue, there was follow-up via phone and email. Despite these efforts, a few procurement officials were not authorised to provide additional documentation due to concerns about confidentiality and the sensitivity of the information. Although the project's purpose was explained and officials were assured that any obtained documents would be handled with discretion and not shared publicly, additional documentation was not provided, preventing the inclusion of such procedures in the shortlist. Furthermore, certain contracting authorities were only willing to provide the procedure's documentation to third parties if necessary for auditing purposes or in the context of a legal dispute. As a result, these public procurement procedures could not be included in the sample.

In addition, there were some difficulties with the use of the TED search function. Although the search can be tailored for strategic procurement and further refined to social considerations, not all Member States have incorporated these criteria into their procurement notices. Consequently, the filter fails to capture all social procurements (in some cases, it even indicates that there are none, which is evidently inaccurate as at least one social procurement was identified per Member State). Additionally, it produces 'false positives', for instance, there were cases in which procurements were considered social merely because they contain a reference to labour law.

Finally, although the framework proved to be useful to measure the social impact of public procurement procedures, the findings from this analysis need to be interpreted with caution. The sample size of 75 public procurement procedures is too small to extrapolate conclusions regarding how each EU Member State generally performs in relation to the adoption and implementation of social considerations in public procurement procedures. Nevertheless, the sample still provides relevant insights into good practices and how the identified indicators are addressed across different public procurement procedures.

3. Key findings and good practices

This chapter presents the main findings from the analysis of the selected procurement procedure sample and trends, using radar charts and other graphs to illustrate key data. The sample consists of 75 procurement notices, each evaluated across four key social impact indicators: promoting employment opportunities and social inclusion, encouraging decent working conditions, supporting accessibility and design for all and promoting sustainable practices. Good practices are highlighted and a comparative analysis identified which indicators have been implemented most frequently and comprehensively. Common success factors and enablers that drive these achievements are discussed at the end of this chapter.

3.1. About the sample¹⁰

The sample encompasses 75 public procurement procedures across all the EU 27 Member States, ranging from one to five procedures per EU Member State. The countries with the highest number of public procurement procedures per Member State analysed included Belgium, Estonia, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands. The lowest represented Member States (one each) in our sample were Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta and Romania.

All the procurement procedures took place in 2023 and 2024 to ensure a recent focus and to establish current patterns and trends.

Each public procurement procedure was broken down by geographical level, whether they were applicable on the local, regional or national level.

Across the sample, four different purchase types (services, supplies, works and mixed) were identified. In addition, a wide range of CPV codes and sectors were included. Out of the 75 public procurement procedures, the most represented CPV was 4500000 (Construction Work). Nevertheless, this only constituted five out of the 75 public procurement procedures. Most other CPVs were represented only once or twice in the sample. Where available, the monetary value of the procurement and, where applicable, Lot, were specified. However, this was not widely available or shared by the public procurement authorities.

Overall, the sample aimed to showcase a wide range of public procurement procedures from the EU Member States to identify how the framework's indicators are being implemented and to learn from good practices.

3.2. General trends

The application of SRPP is critical for achieving broader social and environmental goals. By evaluating the distribution of public procurement procedures across various impact levels and key indicators, general trends about how SRPP is being implemented, along with areas for improvement, were identified.

The current distribution of public procurement procedures across various levels of social impact provides an indication into the current state of SRPP implementation in the sample. At the lower end of the spectrum, 'Not Impactful' procedures typically have minimal social considerations and lack monitoring mechanisms. These procedures generally fail to address essential social issues such as social inclusion, decent working

¹⁰Refer to Annex III for a detailed breakdown of the sample of public procurement procedures.

conditions or sustainability, resulting in negligible positive social outcomes. At the highest level, 'Transformative' procedures set ambitious benchmarks for social impact, featuring comprehensive and detailed requirements alongside advanced monitoring mechanisms. These procedures aim for far-reaching positive outcomes by addressing a broad range of social issues and ensuring high levels of compliance and monitoring. This gradation, from 'Not Impactful' to 'Transformative' procedures, highlights the varying degrees of integration and effectiveness of social considerations within public procurement processes.

A significant portion of public procurement procedures analysed as part of this study fall into the 'Low Impact' (31) and 'Moderate Impact' (28) categories. This pattern suggests that while procurement processes do integrate social considerations, their depth and efficacy often remain limited. Specifically, procedures in these categories include some effort to address social performance, but the impact appears to be limited due to a lack of comprehensive requirements. In addition, there is a relatively small number of procedures in the sample achieving High Impact (10) and Transformative (4) outcomes. These procedures set ambitious benchmarks for social impact and feature comprehensive, detailed requirements and advanced monitoring mechanisms aim for significant positive outcomes.

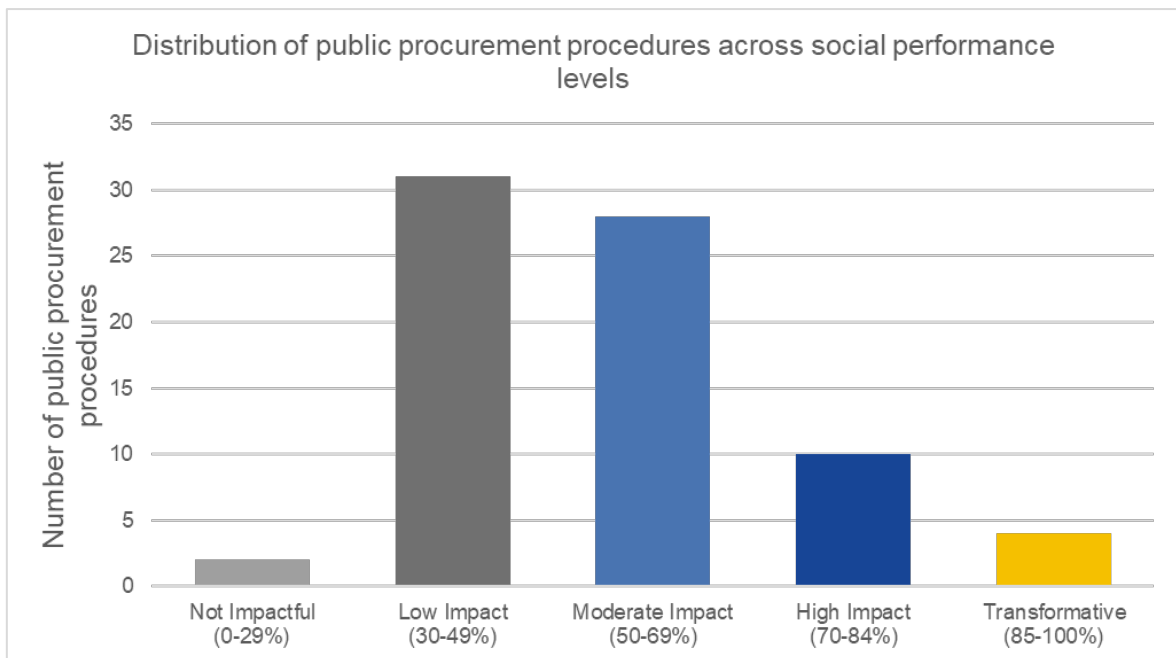


Figure 3 – Distribution of public procurement procedures across social performance levels¹¹

The data on Social Impact Ratings by purchase type reveal distinct patterns in relation to social outcomes. Nonetheless, variations in sample size for each purchase type may influence the perceived impact distribution.

Services appear to predominantly lead to a 'Moderate Impact' (22 instances out of 47), suggesting a steady, reliable influence on social outcomes. The public procurement procedures rated as 'Low Impact' (17 instances) and 'High Impact' (six instances) may indicate variability in their effectiveness. Supplies, with a total of 12 public procurement procedures, primarily resulted in 'Low Impact' (six instances) and 'Moderate Impact' (four instances), with only one instance of a 'Transformative' effect, highlighting their generally limited but occasionally significant social impact.

¹¹Source: authors' own elaboration.

Works (totalling 12 public procurement procedures) seem to be mainly associated with 'Low Impact' (seven instances) and 'Moderate Impact' (two instances), with occasional 'High Impact' (two instances) and 'Transformative' (one instance) outcomes.

The four mixed purchases (supplies and services) procedures analysed as part of this study show distribution across four impact levels: 'Not Impactful' (one), 'Low Impact' (one), 'High Impact' (one), and 'Transformative' (one). This may indicate variability in the social outcomes of mixed purchases. However, as only four instances are included as part of the sample, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about their overall social impact.

All in all, despite the limited sample size, services tend to have a consistent moderate impact on social outcomes. In contrast, mixed purchases and works appear to display greater variability in their social impact.

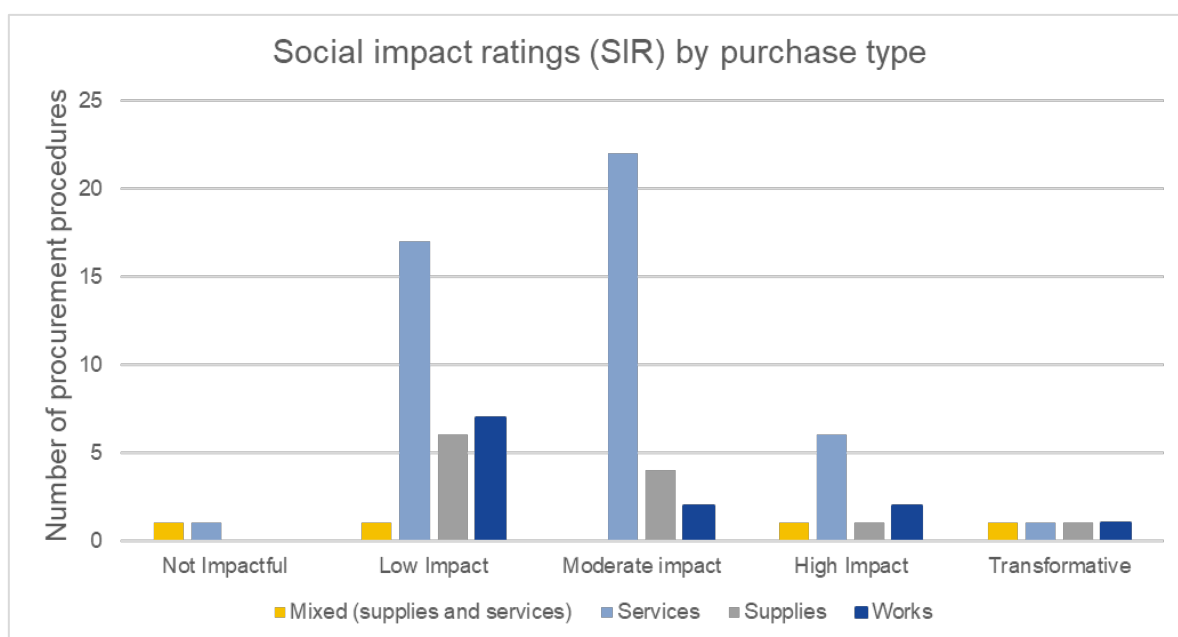


Figure 4 – Social impact ratings (SIR) by purchase type¹²

The social impact ratings of public procurement procedures vary significantly across local, regional and national levels.

At the national level, most procurement processes incorporate some social considerations but lack comprehensive requirements. Among the 24 national-level procedures analysed, strong commitments were rare, with only one setting ambitious benchmarks. The scores reflect this: 11 procedures were rated as 'Low Impact', seven as 'Moderate Impact', four as 'High Impact', and one as 'Transformative'. This distribution highlights that robust commitments to social considerations are uncommon on the national level.

The regional level, the least represented in the sample with 11 procedures, shows a balanced distribution: three rated as 'Moderate Impact', three as 'High Impact', three as 'Low Impact', and one as 'Transformative'. This suggests potential for greater impacts through targeted strategies and sharing best practices.

On the local level, which had the highest representation with 40 procedures, most were rated as 'Moderate Impact' (18) and 'Low Impact' (15), with a few achieving 'High Impact' (two) and 'Transformative' (two). This pattern may indicate that substantial social outcomes are occasional but remain inconsistent on the local level. Overall, each level has at least one transformative public procurement procedure, indicating that all levels

¹²Source: authors' own elaboration.

have the potential to achieve transformative impacts through enhanced commitments and strategic efforts.

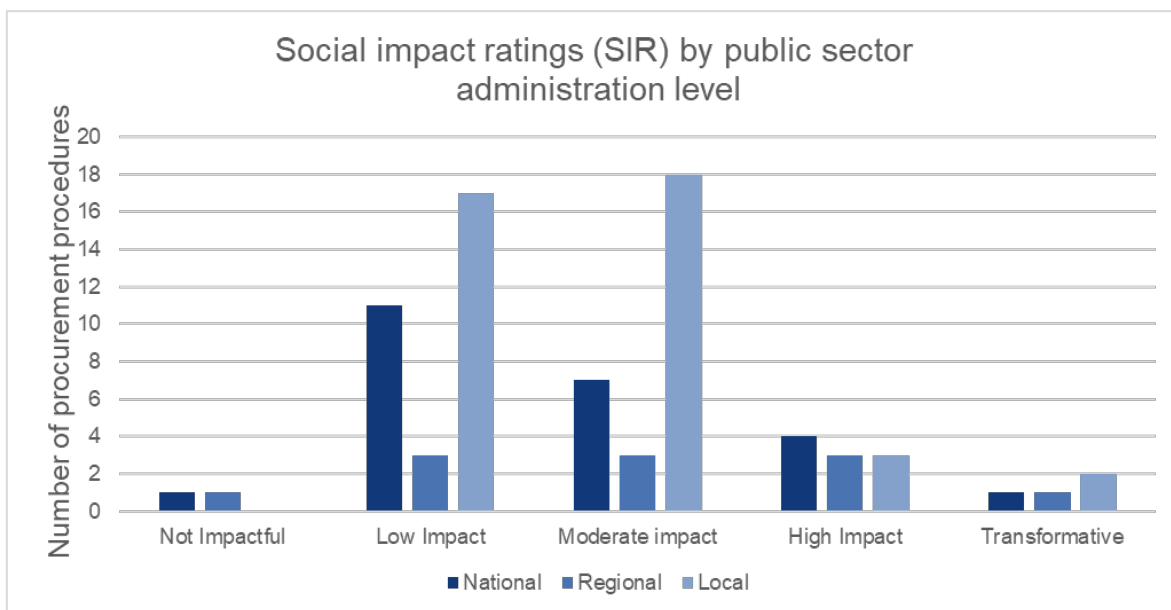


Figure 5 – Social impact ratings (SIR) by public sector administration level¹³

3.3. Analysis of indicators

The proposed analytical framework defined four specific indicators to be assessed across the sample of public procurement procedures: the promotion of employment opportunities and social inclusion, encouraging decent working conditions, support for accessibility and design for all and the promotion of sustainable practices. Each procurement procedure was assessed based on explicit, detailed and measurable criteria set out in the indicators and sub-indicators of the proposed framework. The findings are supported by charts and figures, but the primary focus is on evaluating how well these indicators have been integrated into the procurement processes.

It is evident that while social considerations are acknowledged in the sample of public procurement procedures analysed as part of this study, the depth and quality of their integration vary. Detailed assessments reveal that although some procurement procedures perform reasonably well against specific criteria, others fall short, underscoring the need for more comprehensive and consistent application of social considerations.

Out of the four framework indicators, employment opportunities and social inclusion stand out as the most prominently featured indicators, included in approximately 83 % of the analysed procedures (62 out of 75 procurement notices). This high inclusion rate underscores the significant recognition of these social factors within the procurement process. Comparatively, employment and working conditions are also widely acknowledged, with approximately 72 % of the sample (54 out of 75) incorporating relevant social aspects. While this represents a slightly lower inclusion rate than employment opportunities and social inclusion, it still demonstrates a broad commitment to decent working conditions in public procurement. In contrast, accessibility and inclusive design appear to be less prioritised as they are included in approximately 40 % of the analysed procedures (30 out of 75). While this represents a notable inclusion, it also

¹³Source: authors' own elaboration.

highlights considerable room for improvement, especially when compared to the higher inclusion rates of other social factors. Sustainability practices appear to be included in 67 % of the sample (50 out of 75), which may indicate a growing yet not fully realised awareness of the importance of sustainability.

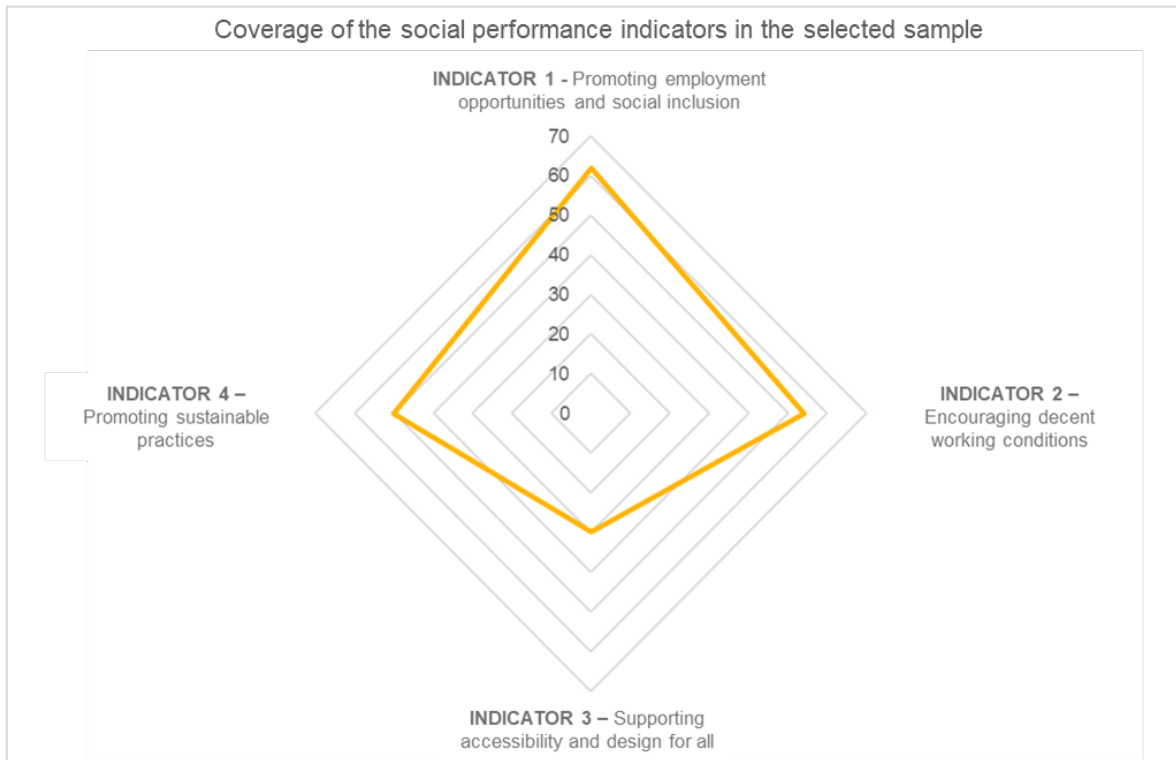


Figure 6 – Distribution of indicators in the selected sample¹⁴

Public procurement procedures exhibit generally low performance across SRPP indicators, as measured on a scale of 0 to 5 as defined in table 2. On average, encouraging decent working conditions scores highest at 2.4, indicating some effort but ample room for improvement. Supporting accessibility and design for all follows with 2.2, reflecting moderate attention to inclusivity. Promoting employment opportunities and social inclusion scores 2.0, suggesting modest efforts in job creation and social integration. The lowest score, 1.7, for promoting sustainable practices, highlights a weak focus on social and supply chain sustainability. Despite these low scores, 67 % of the selected public procurement procedures incorporate green considerations, illustrating a broad commitment to environmental sustainability. This high percentage, comparable to the inclusion rate of sustainability practices, indicates an increasing trend towards integrating both social and environmental factors in procurement decisions. Overall, this trend towards more comprehensive sustainability practices within the SRPP framework suggests a holistic approach, where the benefits of combining social and environmental considerations are increasingly recognised and realised.

¹⁴Source: authors' own elaboration.

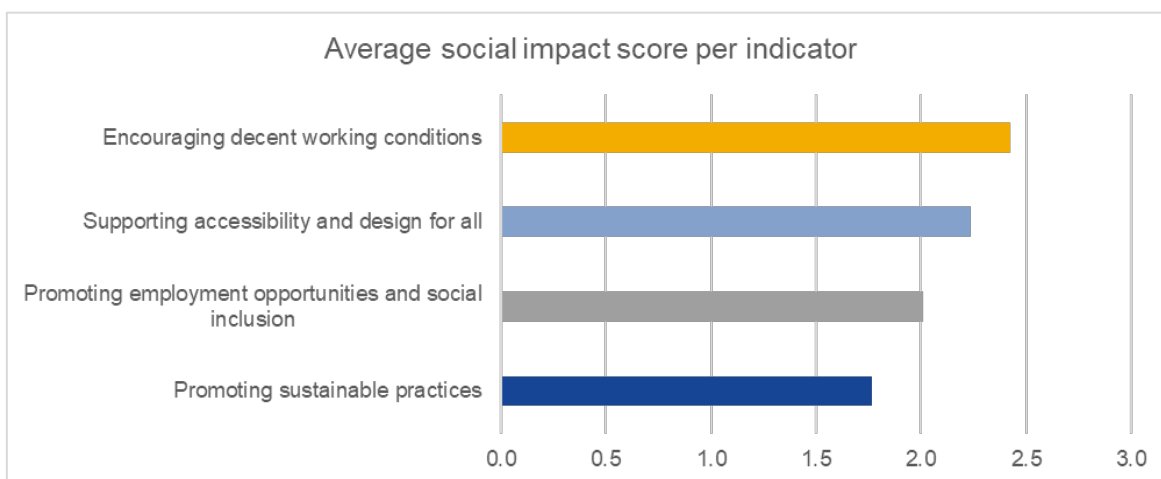


Figure 7 - Average social impact score (SIR) per indicator¹⁵

The following sections delve into the individual indicator performance, highlighting how well each sub-indicator has been integrated and how it performs on average (using the same 0 to 5 scale). In addition, the number of procurement procedures which include the indicator has been indicated in each graph to provide insights into how these two considerations interact.

3.3.1. Promoting employment opportunities and social inclusion

This indicator assesses how public procurement procedure specifications set explicit, detailed and measurable targets for job creation, particularly for disadvantaged groups and the promotion of skills development of employees. This was the most prevalent indicator in the sample (found in 62 out of 75 procurement procedures), however, the combined average score for this indicator was only 2.0 out of 5, suggesting that the depth and quality of the integration of such measures could be significantly improved.

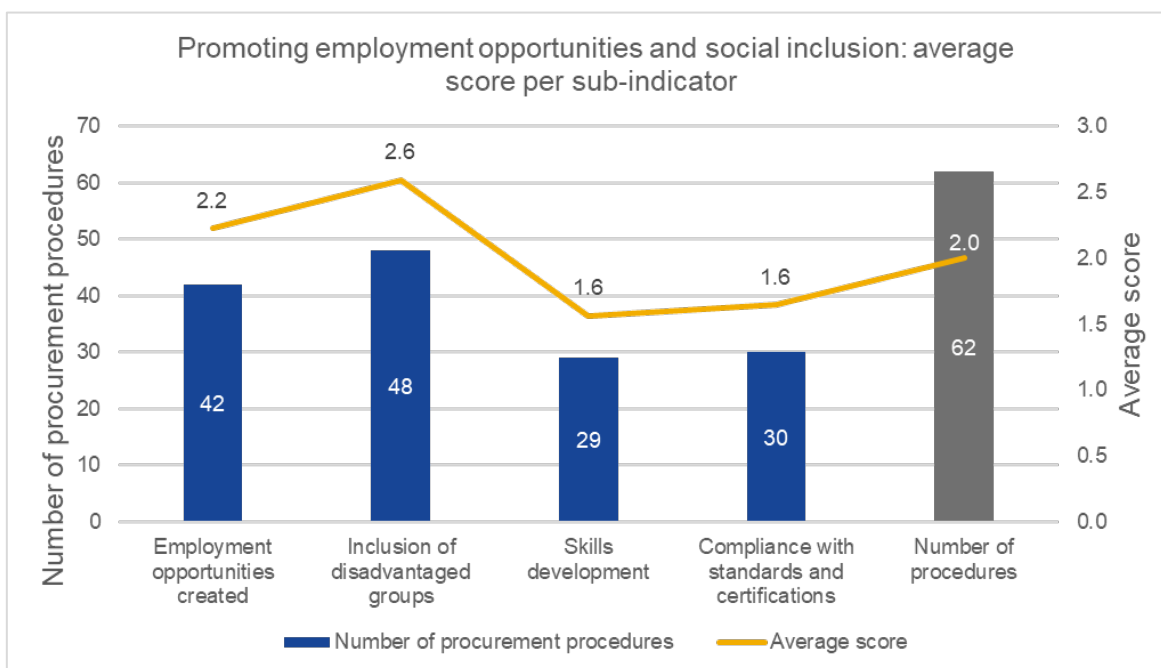


Figure 8 – Evaluation of indicator 1: promoting employment opportunities and social inclusion¹⁶

¹⁵Source: authors' own elaboration.

Within this indicator, the employment opportunities created sub-indicator was identified in 42 procurement procedures and received an average score of 2.2. This sub-indicator assesses how well the public procurement procedures specify targets for job creation, including the types and conditions of employment. Despite being prominently featured, the relatively low average score indicates that the requirements often lack the necessary detail and impact.

The analysis of procurement procedures identified several types of measures adopted to create employment opportunities, which can be grouped into four categories. The first group of measures includes job creation requirements and programmes. Some procurement procedures specify broad requirements for job creation without detailed targets, while others include moderately specific criteria such as the inclusion of apprentices or trainees. More detailed and measurable requirements for job creation included training hours and conditions of employment, along with monitoring and reporting mechanisms (for instance the creation of a specific number of new jobs for unemployed individuals as part of a framework contract).

A second category of measures includes targets for disadvantaged groups, such as the creation of job opportunities for people with disabilities or the long-term unemployed, often reserving contracts for social enterprises or similar entities, which are referred to as sheltered or social workplaces. A third group of measures includes social return on investment (SROI) and financial incentives. These measures appear to be solely implemented in the Netherlands, where public buyers mandated specific financial commitments towards social return initiatives, with detailed tracking and reporting requirements to measure the impact on targeted groups (for instance, the allocation of a specific percentage, e.g. at least 3%, of the total contract amount to social return initiatives). Finally, the last category of measures focuses on job stability by requiring contractors to absorb the existing workforce, for example by prioritising the absorption of the outgoing contractor's workforce.

The example in box 1 illustrates how well-defined job creation targets can be integrated into public procurement procedure specifications, although such detail and impact are not yet consistently achieved across all procurement procedures.

Box 1 – An example of measures contributing to creating employment opportunities

In Greece, an open multi-lot procurement procedure was established to provide vocational training services¹⁷, specifying the creation of 7,500 new jobs for unemployed individuals aged 25-45. The procedure included detailed conditions for employment such as the number of jobs, types of employment, full-time roles and specific employment duration, prioritising businesses operating in the green economy. It also outlined a clear process for application, selection and training, with mechanisms for monitoring and reporting and offered substantial financial incentives for hiring to drive significant job creation. Additionally, the procurement procedure aimed to deliver vocational training services to 4,000 beneficiaries, including 3,000 unemployed individuals and 1,000 workers in precarious employment. It targeted reskilling in areas with declining economic activity, such as the manufacturing sector and agriculture, due to changes in the production model, which is crucial for workforce adaptation.

The inclusion of disadvantaged groups sub-indicator was identified in 48 procurement procedures and received an average score of 2.6, which is the highest among the sub-indicators under this category. This sub-indicator evaluates the targeted support and

¹⁶Source: authors' own elaboration.

¹⁷Greece: Vocational training services – Comprehensive training programmes for the unemployed and employed. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/313017-2024>.

inclusion of specific measures for specific groups of people, for example people with disabilities or individuals who have been out of the job market for extended periods. The higher average score suggests that the analysed procurement procedures are more detailed in this area, yet there is still room for improvement to achieve comprehensive and effective inclusion.

The analysed procurement procedures included specific targets for hiring disadvantaged individuals, such as setting a goal for 30 % of the workforce to be from these groups. Additionally, some procedures required the contractors to be recognised as social workplaces or integration enterprises, which are organisations dedicated to employing and supporting disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, some procurement procedures requested accessible facilities and individual support measures like social-pedagogical assistance and coaching. The analysed procurement procedures presented varying degrees of specificity in relation to measures to enhance accessibility and support for disadvantaged groups. Examples include requirements for barrier-free access and accommodations for people with sensory impairments. Some procedures indirectly supported disadvantaged groups by hiring apprentices or junior resources, which may help create an inclusive environment even if there were no explicit hiring targets for disadvantaged individuals. In addition to these measures, some procurement procedures included specific social clauses aimed at promoting gender equality and work-life balance. These clauses often required practical proof of trainer qualifications in teaching methods that are sensitive to gender issues, which may be particularly beneficial for disadvantaged groups who may face gender-based discrimination.

Finally, procurement procedures analysed as part of this study included, in some cases, references to non-discrimination and equal opportunities. Nevertheless, in many cases, such references were broad or vague and with no reference to detailed programmes or policies. Some procedures, however, reserved contracts for suppliers with high percentages of disadvantaged employees and mandated partnerships with support organisations, such as social enterprises or sheltered workshops, specialised in providing assistance and resources to disadvantaged groups.

An interesting example showcased in box 2 illustrates this sub-indicator, showing how a higher level of detail and actionability in the inclusion of disadvantaged groups could be achieved.

Box 2 – An example of measures contributing to the inclusion of disadvantaged groups

In Denmark, Energinet led a procurement process to establish two framework agreements for transport and crane services¹⁸. This process included two parts, captured by two sub-agreements: one for general transport services across Denmark and another for services in specific areas identified by postal codes. A key aspect of this procurement was the social responsibility criterion, which made up 25% of the total evaluation criteria.

This criterion focused on promoting workforce development and social inclusion by encouraging the employment of driver apprentices. It aimed to provide opportunities for young people or those new to the job market by integrating them into the suppliers' operations. Suppliers who wanted to participate in this procurement were required to include a detailed description of their social responsibility initiatives, particularly regarding the employment and training of driver apprentices. The evaluation of this criterion was based on the quality and thoroughness of the suppliers' plans for using apprentices. By emphasising social responsibility, Energinet aimed to ensure that the procurement not only met its transportation and crane service needs but also contributed to broader societal goals.

¹⁸Denmark: transport services (excl. waste transport). Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/87102-2024>.

The skills development and compliance with standards and certifications sub-indicators were less frequently included, each appearing in 30 procurement procedures with an average score of 1.6.

The research identified several distinct categories of measures that procurement authorities have included in their contracts to promote skills development. These measures range from generic to specialised and targeted training programmes, support and mentorship programmes and social and community-oriented training. General training programmes often include detailed and structured training sessions for both permanent and temporary staff, specifying the number of training hours and topics covered. For example, one procurement procedure specified 5,632 hours of on-site training with various types listed in an annex, while another outlined vocational training services for 4,000 beneficiaries, ensuring the certification of acquired skills. Some public procurement procedures focused on specific skills such as digital competences, gender diversity and energy-efficient driving. Support and mentorship programmes incorporated elements such as post-training support to ensure the practical application of skills and continuous professional development (for instance, one procedure required a three-month professional internship with daily guidance from a mentor). Additionally, social and community-oriented training included programmes tailored to marginalised communities aiming to improve access to social services, education and employment (e.g. a procedure focused on training programmes for Roma people).

The compliance with standards and certifications sub-indicator encompasses measures that promote adherence to excellence and established norms. Some procurement procedures mandated the use of quality assurance systems and adherence to legal guidelines, such as compliance with ISO standards and HACCP guidelines¹⁹. In terms of sustainability and environmental standards, the promotion of sustainable practices was achieved by requiring compliance with ISO 14001 certification and sustainable resource use. Finally, the identified monitoring mechanisms for this sub-indicator included detailed requirements for documentation, regular updates and follow-up to ensure compliance (e.g. one procedure specified the need for CE Marking and compliance with EN standards through self-assessment questionnaires).

The example provided in box 3 highlights how public procurers can promote upskilling workers and ensure adoption and compliance with standards and certifications.

Box 3 – An example of measures contributing to ensuring that economic operators support skills development and comply with relevant standards and certifications

A procurement procedure related to the provision of personnel and temporary staff for two municipalities of the Dutch Province of Gelderland²⁰ focuses on promoting the upskilling of employees through specific training programmes, internships and other educational opportunities. This procurement included regular skill assessments and tailored individual development plans as part of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) activities, where the bidder committed to allocating 2.5% of the invoiced contract amount to these activities.

Additionally, the procurement procedure encouraged compliance with recognised standards and certifications, such as PSO certification, a nationally recognised certification for inclusive

¹⁹ HACCP (Hazard analysis critical control point) is a methodology and a management system used to identify, prevent, and control food safety hazards. Last accessed on 03/02/2025 and available at: [https://www.fsai.ie/business-advice/running-a-food-business/food-safety-management-system-\(haccp\)/principles-of-haccp](https://www.fsai.ie/business-advice/running-a-food-business/food-safety-management-system-(haccp)/principles-of-haccp)

²⁰The Netherlands: Engineering services - Framework agreement Gelderland tasks Regional water programme). Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/334401-2024>.

entrepreneurship to ensuring that social enterprises meet specific social and employment criteria²¹. Compliance with PSO certification and similar standards is encouraged, requiring services to be sourced from certified social enterprises or companies with at least 30% disadvantaged employees. Invoices from PSO-certified companies are valued at varying percentages based on certification levels. Contractors must report on social return activities and provide documentation such as target group declarations and employment contracts.

Overall, while the high inclusion rate of this indicator is encouraging, the average scores indicate a need for more detailed, clear and impactful requirements. While the focus seems stronger on including disadvantaged groups, job creation and skills development appear to be areas requiring more attention.

3.3.2. Encouraging decent working conditions

This indicator examines the types of employment contracts, job security, fair wages, adherence to ILO conventions, safety, non-discrimination and grievance mechanisms. The combined average score for this indicator was 2.5, reflecting a moderate level of detail and impact in the integration of these requirements. It also ranked as the second most included indicator.

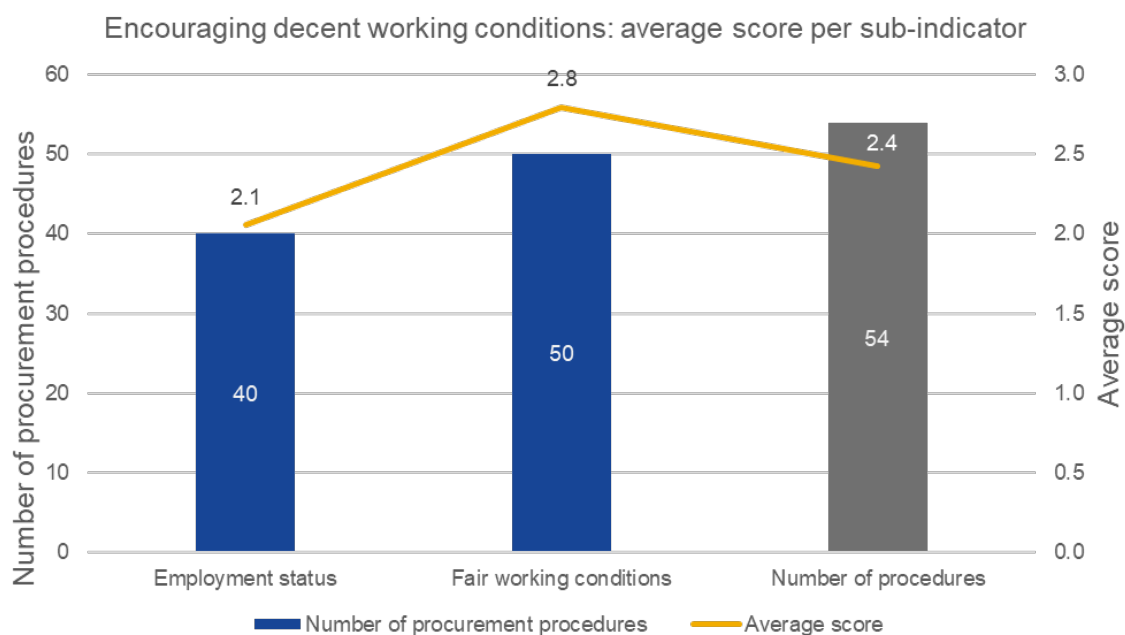


Figure 9 – Evaluation of indicator 2: encouraging decent working conditions²²

The employment status sub-indicator which reviews the types of employment contracts and job security, was included in 40 out of the 75 analysed public procurement procedures and received an average score of 2.1. This suggests that while many procedures address employment status, the clarity and impact of these requirements could still be improved. More concretely, within the sample of procurement procedures, there were a variety of measures ranging from compliance with a code of conduct, inspections and/or provision of supporting documentation to verify adherence to employment status. Other measures to ensure stable employment practices include strict

²¹The Prestatieladder Sociale Ondernemen (PSO certification) recognises the level of social contribution of an organisation. Any organisation that employs people in the Netherlands can join the PSO scheme. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://www.pso-nederland.nl/>.

²²Source: authors' own elaboration.

penalties for non-compliance, such as contract termination and financial sanctions, mechanisms for monitoring compliance with verification through payslips, employment contracts and work permits, and the use of self-assessment questionnaires to provide documentation and evidence of compliance with labour laws and non-discrimination policies. Box 4 provides illustrative examples of measures documented in public procurement procedures analysed in the study.

Box 4 – Examples of measures contributing to employment status

The Municipality of Loures in Portugal included a code of conduct in a public procurement procedure that specifically refers to the ILO Labour Convention²³. It surpassed the legal requirements by mandating that suppliers comply with industry standards on working hours. Furthermore, it set out explicit verification and compliance requirements, obliging suppliers to disclose relevant information about their activities and those of their subcontractors. Additionally, suppliers must permit inspections, allowing representatives of the Municipality of Loures to verify compliance with the practices outlined in the code of conduct.

Out of the five public procurement procedures analysed for the Netherlands, three scored high by including detailed provisions on regulations and fair working conditions. These procedures required contractors to verify their compliance of the social conditions of the procurement procedure with the Social Return Coordination Point, ensuring follow-up and verification of employment conditions. For example, they required a detailed explanation of the target group declaration²⁴, proof of benefit allocation and supporting documentation such as a payslip or employment contract.

The fair working conditions sub-indicator was included in 50 public procurement procedures and received an average score of 2.9, the highest overall score for any sub-indicator. This sub-indicator examines fair wages, adherence to ILO conventions, safety, non-discrimination and grievance mechanisms. High-scoring procurement procedures explicitly mandate fair wages aligned with industry standards and ILO conventions, detailed health and safety protocols, stringent non-discrimination policies and robust grievance mechanisms. They also demand extensive documentation and regular audits to ensure compliance. Box 5 illustrates how fair working conditions were currently included in some procurement procedures.

Box 5 – Examples of measures contributing to fair working conditions

The procurement procedure analysed for Syddansk Universitet (SDU) in Denmark mandated that employees²⁵, including those of subcontractors, receive wages and benefits that meet or exceed those outlined in collective agreements by the most representative labour market parties in Denmark. This requirement contributed to ensuring equitable compensation across the board. To verify compliance, contractors must provide essential documentation such as payslips, employment contracts and work permits upon request. Additionally, SDU's designated inspectors conduct unannounced site visits, reinforcing adherence to these standards. SDU also established mechanisms for grievance redressal. If SDU suspects a violation, the contractor must submit a detailed explanation. SDU can withhold payments to address legitimate claims from employees and impose fines for non-compliance. Contractors must also notify the contract-responsible parties at SDU via email in cases of complaints and disputes that cannot be resolved between the contractor and the client. Continued non-

²³Miscellaneous repair and maintenance services - operational leasing of 368 multifunctional devices. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/290599-2024>.

²⁴Target group allocation typically refers to the identification and assignment of individuals from specific groups that the SROI initiative aims to support or benefit. These target groups often include people who face barriers to employment, such as long-term unemployed individuals, people with disabilities or other disadvantaged groups.

²⁵Denmark: Non-scheduled Passenger Transport Procedure. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/168248-2024+Q36>.

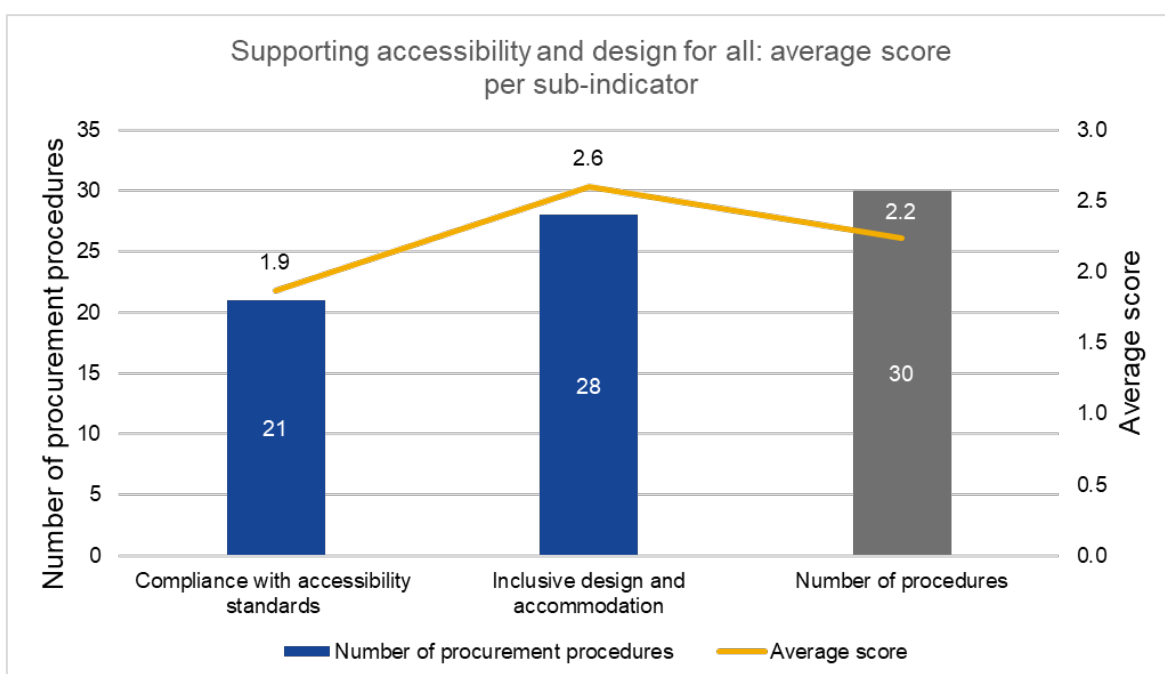
compliance after a warning allows SDU to terminate the contract. These measures not only uphold fair labour practices but also align with international labour standards, including ILO conventions. By addressing fair wages, safe and healthy working conditions, non-discrimination policies and mechanisms for grievance redressal, this procurement procedure sets a high benchmark for labour fairness and worker protection.

A procurement procedure by the Swedish Transport Administration required suppliers to implement internal routines ensuring accessibility and preventing discrimination²⁶. This included fostering an inclusive work environment where everyone, regardless of identity, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or age, is treated fairly. For instance, suppliers must establish routines for addressing discrimination issues and be ready to report on these upon request, with a template provided at the start of the agreement. Additionally, suppliers need routines to counteract discrimination from the outset. These measures promote equality and prevent discriminatory practices, contributing to a fair and respectful workplace. This public procurement procedure in Sweden exemplifies effective measures to support fair working conditions.

Despite the high level of attention to this indicator, the overall scores suggest that the detail and documentation of fair working conditions can still be further enhanced, along with ensuring compliance with working standards.

3.3.3. Supporting accessibility and design for all

This indicator evaluates compliance with accessibility standards, adherence to universal design principles and the integration of assistive technologies. The analysis revealed that approximately 40 % of the sample (30 out of 75 procedures) included aspects related to accessibility and inclusive design. This suggests that, while the indicator is included in a significant number of public procurement procedures, these requirements can still be further expanded. The combined average score for this indicator was 2.2, indicating a moderate level of detail and impact.



²⁶Road 41 Fritsla-Kråkered, Construction contract, Borås municipality. Last accessed on 04/11/2-24 and available at: <https://ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/405370-2024>.

Figure 10 – Evaluation of indicator 3: supporting accessibility and design for all²⁷

The compliance with accessibility standards sub-indicator assesses the clarity and specificity of requirements for compliance with accessibility standards within the public procurement procedure specifications. This includes dimensions such as adherence to legal and regulatory requirements, explicit inclusion of accessibility in design and technical specifications, quality assurance in implementation and material selection and incorporation of assistive and digital technologies. This sub-indicator was included in 21 procedures and received an average score of 1.9.

Based on the limited information related to this sub-indicator, four types of measures related to compliance with accessibility standards were identified. First, physical accessibility requirements were mostly focused on ensuring training locations, rooms and sanitary facilities were accessible to individuals with mobility impairments, including the use of ramps, handrails, wide entrances and pathways free of obstacles, as well as providing furniture that can be adjusted in height to accommodate wheelchair users. Second, technical and sensory aids concerned the integration of technical aids for participants with sensory impairments, such as hearing loops, audio guides, braille and visual aids like large print materials and high-contrast displays. Third, adherence to legal and regulatory standards included references to relevant national and international accessibility standards, such as the German Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz (BGG), the Barrierefreie-Informationstechnik-Verordnung (BITV 2.0) or the Harmonised European Standard EN 301 549. Finally, quality assurance and monitoring in the form of regular audits and inspections were included in some cases, but advanced quality assurance measures and continuous improvement processes were often lacking.

Box 6 provides an overview of exemplary and high scoring procurement procedures found to include relevant requirements for compliance with accessibility standards.

Box 6 – Examples of measures contributing to compliance with accessibility standards

The procurement procedure analysed for German Bundestag, Department ZR 3 - Procurement²⁸ included several references to accessibility standards, particularly focusing on digital services. It also mentioned quality assurance measures like ISO certifications and specified comprehensive requirements for compliance with accessibility standards, including adherence to relevant laws and guidelines such as the German Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz (BGG), the Barrierefreie-Informationstechnik-Verordnung (BITV 2.0) and the Harmonised European Standard EN 301 549. This procurement mandated digital accessibility in various aspects (hardware, software, websites, mobile applications and electronic documents) and required ongoing compliance with new legal requirements. It also outlined detailed quality assurance measures, including documented self-assessments and external tests.

The Estonian Business and Innovation Foundation (EISA) mandated strict adherence to established accessibility standards in a public procurement procedure²⁹. This included ensuring that all facilities, services and products were accessible to individuals with disabilities. Compliance was verified through regular audits and inspections, ensuring that all accessibility requirements are met and maintained. This involved making physical spaces, environments, information and services usable by people with various disabilities, such as mobility, hearing, intellectual or visual impairments, as well as accommodating distinct needs like those of

²⁷Source: authors' own elaboration.

²⁸Germany: Provider services - Internet-Service-Providing Dienstleistungen. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/787371-2023>.

²⁹Development of the export capacity of the tourism sector. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://riigihanked.riik.ee/rhr-web/#/procurement/7372285/general-info>.

families with young children, the elderly and foreigners.

The inclusive design and accommodation sub-indicator evaluates whether a procurement procedure adheres to universal design principles and ensures physical and communicational accessibility (e.g. accessible entrances, wide corridors, adjustable furniture, clear signage and multiple information formats). This sub-indicator also looks into how a procurement procedure integrates assistive and digital technologies and assesses social considerations such as inclusivity, non-discriminatory environments, fostering community integration and enhancing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. The sub-indicator was included in 28 procedures and received an average score of 2.6. The higher inclusion rate and score indicate that public procurement procedures may be more focused on inclusive design. Many of the identified measures focused on ensuring barrier-free access to facilities, technical aids and user-friendly interfaces for participants with sensory impairments and offering materials in multiple formats, including Braille, large print and audio. The least represented measure amongst the analysed procurement procedures related to developing comprehensive operational plans for maintaining accessibility features, training staff to assist individuals with various disabilities and implementing regular assessments, feedback mechanisms and audits to ensure continuous improvement.

The examples found in box 7 provide inspiration into how public procurers can help enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities by enforcing inclusive design and accommodation features as part of the procedures.

Box 7 – Examples of measures contributing to inclusive design and accommodation

The procurement procedure launched for City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg³⁰ in France specifies that providers must serve the needs of individuals with disabilities. This included offering alternative meals for individuals with dietary restrictions due to allergies, health conditions or religious practices, such as providing gluten-free, lactose-free, vegetarian or halal options. The procedure also required that staff were trained to assist individuals with disabilities, including those with mobility issues, visual or hearing impairments and other disabilities (including providing assistance with seating, serving food and other necessary accommodations).

The Procurement Centre of the Falun Borlänge Region in Sweden demonstrated commitment to inclusive design and accommodation principles in its procurement procedure³¹ launched with the aim of supplying a wide range of plumbing and heating materials. The procurement procedure adhered to universal design principles, ensuring comprehensive physical accessibility with features like accessible entrances and wide corridors. This procedure also included assistive and digital technologies.

Overall, while a significant number of public procurement procedures included this indicator, the scores indicate a need for more detailed and consistent application of accessibility and inclusive design considerations. Enhancing the clarity and impact of these requirements could improve the effectiveness of public procurement procedures in promoting accessibility.

³⁰ Catering Services for the City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg. Documentation not available online; obtained directly from the public procurement contracting authority (City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg).

³¹ Sweden: Plumbing and heating materials. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/65184-2024>.

3.3.4. Promoting sustainable practices

The promoting sustainable practices indicator assesses how well organisations align with the align with the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)³² and ensure fairness throughout their supply chains. This includes evaluating reporting requirements on sustainability practices, prohibiting forced labour and complying with ethical standards or certifications. It also examines adherence to EU and national collective agreements, optional alignment with the EU/OECD Responsible Business Conduct and mechanisms for monitoring and verifying compliance. This sub-indicator appears in 50 out of 75 procedures, achieving an average score of 1.8. This score suggests that while public procurement authorities often take sustainable practices into account, there is room for improvement in terms of the level of detail and overall impact.

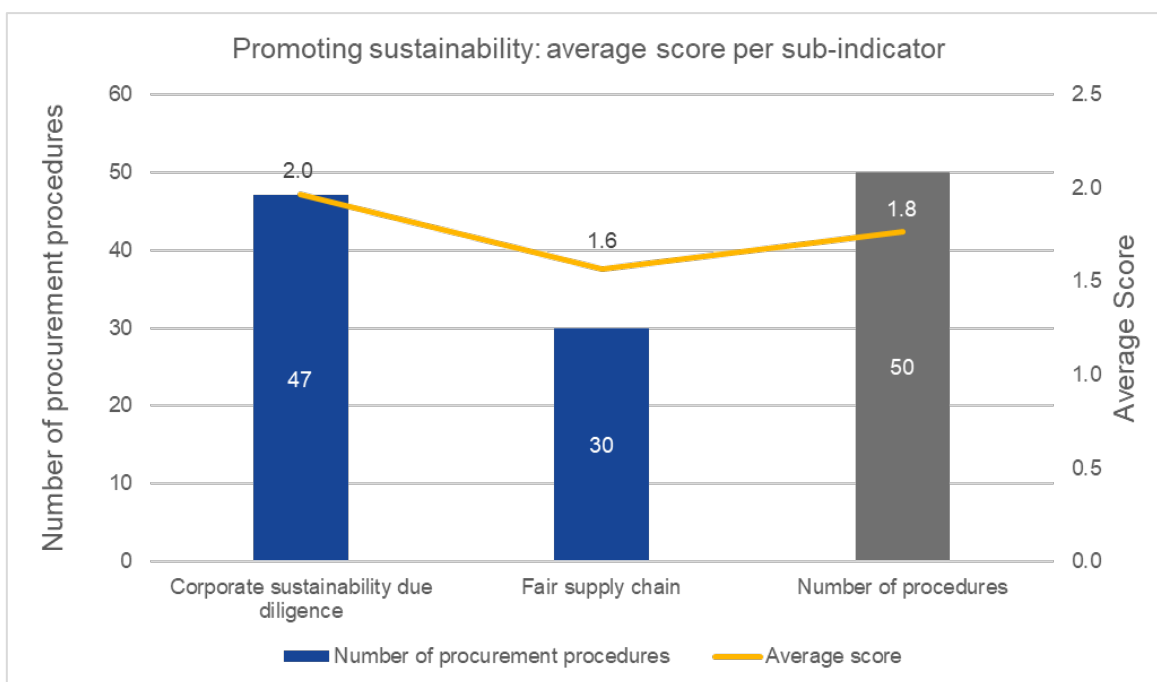


Figure 11 – Evaluation of indicator 4: promoting sustainable practices

The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDD) sub-indicator was included in 47 public procurement procedures and received an average score of 2.0. It measures the efforts to ensure corporate actions are sustainable and responsible, focusing on social and environmental aspects. This includes requirements like sustainability reporting, adherence to deforestation regulations, responsible sourcing of critical minerals and prohibition of forced labour, along with monitoring and verification mechanisms. Environmental aspects often received greater emphasis, with high-scoring cases requiring specific certifications such as ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015, ISO 27001:2013, ISO 50001:2018 and ISO 22005:2007 for various aspects of sustainability. Social aspects are emphasised through policies that explicitly forbid forced labour in line with ILO conventions, promote non-discrimination and require detailed reports on social responsibility compliance. Additionally, public procurement procedures often mandate adherence to quality management standards like ISO 9001:2015, which indirectly support social sustainability by ensuring fair labour practices and safe working conditions. Box 8 shows how CSDD can be used to promote sustainable practices in public procurement procedures.

³² Directive (EU) 2024/1760 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on corporate sustainability due diligence. Last accessed on 06/02/2025 and available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1760/oj>.

Box 8 – Examples of measures contributing to CSDD

The public procurement procedure launched for the Águas de Gaia, E. M., S. A. in Portugal³³, demonstrates a strong commitment to CSDD. It mandates the submission of a corruption prevention plan, except for individuals or small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are certified according to the law. It also requires various certifications, including those related to educational and professional qualifications of the safety, hygiene and health technicians assigned to the project, as well as ongoing compliance and monitoring to ensure that sustainability practices are maintained throughout the project lifecycle. This includes regular audits and the submission of sustainability reports. The procurement procedure also mandates a comprehensive sustainability plan that includes detailed policies and practices for environmental protection and social responsibility.

The Governing Board of the Alcoy City Council in Spain initiated a public procurement procedure that mandates bi-annual reports on compliance with social responsibility clauses, including adherence to several ILO conventions, such as those on forced labour and non-discrimination³⁴. It requires monitoring and verification of these obligations and includes specific requirements for environmental responsibility, such as the designation of an environmental manager. The tender also mandates accreditation with quality and environmental management standards as per articles 93 and 94 of the LCSP (Ley de Contratos del Sector Público or Public Sector Contracts Law), requiring bidders to provide specific certificates. Additionally, it mandates adherence to the principles of the circular economy and the 'do no significant harm' (DNSH) principle, ensuring no negative environmental impacts. Contractors must provide information on the ultimate beneficial owner and submit to controls by various European bodies.

The fair supply chain sub-indicator was included in 30 procedures and received an average score of 1.6. This sub-indicator assesses the fairness and sustainability of the supply chain, including ethical sourcing and treatment of suppliers. Specifically, one of the measures put in place included the use of Fair-Trade certified products for furniture. This ensured that the products were ethically sourced and met high standards of quality and traceability. Another measure was to include contract performance clauses that required suppliers to adhere to relevant labour laws and industry standards. Also, requiring a specific certification like SA8000 to demonstrate their commitment to workers' rights and social justice for a fair and sustainable supply chain. Box 9 illustrates an example contributing to fair supply chain.

Box 9 – Example of measures contributing to fair supply chain

In the procurement procedure for the Energinet Eltransmission A/S in Denmark³⁵, the importance of a fair and ethical supply chain is emphasised by requiring bidders to ensure that their supply chains adhere to fair labour practices and sustainability standards. This includes verifying that suppliers comply with labour laws, provide fair wages and maintain safe working conditions. Bidders must demonstrate their due diligence processes for assessing and monitoring supplier compliance, such as conducting regular audits and requiring certifications like Fair Trade or SA8000. Furthermore, they should outline their policies for addressing any violations and their commitment to sourcing materials responsibly, ensuring that their supply chains do not contribute to environmental degradation or social injustices.

³³Requalification of the Headquarters Building of Águas de Gaia, EM, SA. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/176526-2024>.

³⁴ Installation services of lifting and handling equipment, except lifts and escalators, assembly and erection of prefabricated structures. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/765014-2023>.

³⁵ Tender for transport and crane services. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/87102-2024>.

Overall, the low average scores suggest that the requirements for sustainable practices may need to be more detailed and impactful. Encouraging more public procurement authorities to include fair supply products and related certification and improve its application could enhance the effectiveness of public procurement in promoting sustainability (specifically, the demand for Fair-Trade certified products and certifications, such as SA8000).

3.4. Good practices from EU Member States

Based on this assessment, there are five transformative public procurement procedures according to the proposed scoring system. These procedures either fulfil all the sub-indicators of an indicator or the way they fulfil certain sub-indicators is considered particularly innovative. It is not necessary to meet all indicators to obtain a transformative score. The following examples are inspirational good practices for public procurement authorities across the EU.

3.4.1. A framework agreement for the purchase and maintenance of electric bicycles (e-bikes) and city bikes in Leuven, Belgium³⁶

Zorg Leuven, a welfare association providing child, home and elderly care in Leuven, issued a framework agreement for the procurement of e-bikes and the associated maintenance services. The chosen contractor supplies new e-bikes and maintains the current fleet to ensure efficient and timely transportation for Zorg Leuven employees. Maintenance and repair services must cover various locations within Groot Leuven, including home care services, residential care centres and a central bike repair workshop. The procedure specifications emphasised the importance of sustainable public procurement. This involved integrating environmental, social, ethical and economic criteria into all phases of the public procurement process. The objective was to identify solutions that minimise environmental impact throughout their entire lifecycle while also being socially and ethically responsible.

The public procurement procedure for this contract emphasised socially responsible public procurement by reserving access to candidates and bidders that were social workshops and enterprises primarily focused on integrating disabled or disadvantaged individuals. This approach supported social inclusion and provided meaningful employment opportunities for marginalised groups. The candidates or bidders were required to provide an official recognition or similar document from a competent authority, indicating recognition under a legal framework such as social economy legislation. If the legal framework did not fully cover this requirement, additional evidence had to be supplied. They also needed to provide documented proof, such as statutes, business plans or employment regulations, showing that integration was a primary goal.

Alternatively, candidates or bidders had to employ at least 30 % disabled or disadvantaged workers. Disadvantaged workers included job seekers who were hard to employ due to age (under 24 or over 50 years old), hard-to-place job seekers, members of disadvantaged minorities and members of socially marginalised groups. For disabled persons, the nature or severity of the disability did not need to prevent them from performing professional activities under normal circumstances. To prove compliance, candidates or bidders had to provide an official recognition or similar document from a

³⁶A framework agreement for the purchase and maintenance of electric bicycles and city bikes in Leuven, Belgium. Last accessed on 04/10/2024 and available at: <https://www.publicprocurement.be/publication-workspaces/02b098d5-2f87-4455-b3da-d61e37748ba6/lots>.

competent authority, confirming adherence to the 30% employment condition. If this recognition did not guarantee compliance, they had to supply additional documents. They also needed to provide an overview of their workforce, detailing the total number of employees, the number of disabled employees and the number of disadvantaged employees.

These conditions ensure the public procurement procedure supports enterprises that contribute to the social and professional integration of vulnerable groups, aligning with SRPP principles by promoting social responsibility, inclusion and providing meaningful employment opportunities, thereby fostering social sustainability and ethical procurement practices, which goes beyond the legal requirements.

3.4.2. Catering services for the City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg, France³⁷

The City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg issued a service contract for catering services for the city. The contract involves the provision of a range of catering services, including meal trays, snacks, cocktails, aperitifs, breakfasts, buffet dinners or lunches and seated hot meals and gala dinners. This service contract was divided into four lots, each with specific requirements for food quality, presentation and additional services like tableware and decorations. The contract emphasised the use of high-quality, seasonal ingredients, with a preference for low greenhouse gas-emitting products and a minimum of 30 % organic ingredients.

The public procurement procedure encouraged the hiring of individuals facing social and professional difficulties, including those with disabilities, job seekers and young people in training by incorporating integration clauses within public procurement contracts. These clauses facilitate the social and professional integration of these groups by providing them with employment opportunities through contracts with specialised insertion structures, such as integration enterprises, intermediary associations and temporary work integration companies. The procurement procedure mandated that staff be trained to assist individuals with disabilities, ensuring service accessibility. It also emphasised the importance of training staff to provide high-quality service to all individuals, including those with specific dietary needs or disabilities. The public procurement procedure did not mandate a specific number of integration hours but invited candidates to commit to a number of integration and training hours that are proportionate to the size of their organisation. This commitment was formalised in the engagement act of the framework agreement.

Regarding working conditions, the procurement procedure required compliance with the minimum wage and national labour standards to serve as a guarantee for working conditions. The procurement procedure emphasised the importance of inclusion as the documentation required that menus be provided in an accessible format and that staff be trained to assist people with specific dietary requirements or disabilities, as well as by providing high-quality service when seating individuals and serving dishes. Additionally, the contractor was required to offer alternative meals for individuals with dietary restrictions due to allergies, health conditions or religious practices, such as providing gluten-free, lactose-free, vegetarian and halal options. Furthermore, the procurement procedure included a number of environmental considerations. It required that contractors reduce food waste by proposing solutions for redistributing surplus food. It also required the use of biodegradable and compostable materials for disposable tableware and require the use of fair-trade certified products.

³⁷Documentation not available online; obtained directly from the public procurement contracting authority (City and Eurometropolis of Strasbourg).

3.4.3. Public procurement procedure for flowers and plants at the University of Twente, the Netherlands³⁸

The University of Twente procured flowers and plants, including the delivery of bouquets and potted plants. The public procurement procedure emphasised on the importance of ensuring sustainability along the value chain, as well as took into consideration material reuse, water usage, packaging and transportation.

This public procurement procedure was considered transformative because it promoted employment opportunities through a SROI initiative. The technical specifications of the contract required the contractor to allocate a minimum of 5% of the contract value (excluding VAT) to social return initiatives. Additionally, it promoted the inclusion of disadvantaged groups, such as individuals with disabilities, refugees and ex-offenders, in the delivery services. Specifically, contractors were required to submit a SROI plan detailing how they will achieve this.

Additionally, the public procurement process addressed the skills development sub-indicator. Suppliers could fulfil their SROI obligation by engaging in societal activities that promote skills development. For example, they could support high-skilled refugees through language internships to aid their integration. Contractors were also encouraged to participate in train-the-trainer programmes, where they would mentor educators on industry advancements.

Regarding working conditions, the contractor had to ensure stable and secure employment for their workforce. This included offering permanent contracts where possible and avoiding precarious employment practices such as zero-hour contracts. Moreover, contractors had to demonstrate their compliance with accessibility standards with documentation such as reports, accessibility certifications and records of any adjustments made to improve accessibility. Contractors were also encouraged to adopt a design for all approach, which involves considering the needs of diverse users from the outset.

The public procurement procedure also promoted sustainable practices by requiring contractors to provide evidence of their sustainability due diligence processes, including sustainability reports, environmental impact assessments and certifications. Finally, the public procurement procedure emphasised the importance of maintaining a fair and ethical supply chain by requiring regular audits of suppliers, ensuring compliance with labour laws and promoting fair trade practices. Contractors were encouraged to source from suppliers that are certified by recognised standards, such as Fair Trade or Rainforest Alliance. Additionally, the public procurement procedure encouraged contractors to support local suppliers and small businesses to promote economic sustainability.

³⁸Public procurement procedure for flowers and plants in the University of Twente, the Netherlands. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://s2c.mercell.com/today/107137>.

3.4.4. Framework agreement for the delivery, installation and maintenance of sanitary facilities in Groningen, the Netherlands³⁹

The Municipality of Groningen issued a framework agreement for the delivery, installation and maintenance of sanitary facilities. This public procurement procedure aimed to ensure the provision of high-quality sanitary services, while promoting sustainability and social return obligations.

The Municipality of Groningen encouraged the upskilling of employees through specific training programmes, including BBL (vocational training) and BOL (vocational education). The contractors had to provide evidence of these training programmes through the Social Return Monitor. Furthermore, this procurement required that the contractors allocate at least 3 % of the total contract amount to social return initiatives and at least 30 % of the workforce consisted of individuals distanced from the labour market. The Social Return Monitor was used as an instrument to measure social value alongside economic returns.

The public procurement procedure also promoted decent working conditions, fair wages and compliance with labour standards. The contractors were required to provide evidence that they comply with national and international labour standards. Additionally, the public procurement procedure mandated that new employees engaged in the awarded public procurement procedure were not hired by the contractor or subcontractor in the three months prior to the award date, to ensure fair and stable employment practices.

The Social Return Monitor was also used to ensure compliance with accessibility requirements for all aspects of the project. It also included regular audits and inspections to verify compliance. This comprehensive approach ensured that accessibility was integrated into all stages of the project, from planning to execution, achieving the highest level of compliance and quality assurance. The project also adhered to universal design principles to accommodate disabled people by providing ramps and accessible restrooms.

The public procurement procedure also demonstrated a high commitment to sustainability due diligence as the contractors had to report on their sustainability practices.

3.4.5. Enhancing road safety with construction works for Route 41 between Fritsla and Kråkered in Borås Municipality, Sweden⁴⁰

The Swedish Transport Agency Authority (Trafikverket Myndighet) issued a public procurement procedure for a comprehensive construction project to enhance road safety on Route 41 between Fritsla and Kråkered in Borås municipality to enhance road safety. This project involved the installation of central and side barriers, improvements to several bus stops, water protection measures, construction of wildlife crossings, widening of turnarounds, noise reduction measures and the development of new private roads. This procurement promoted key social objectives, including creating employment opportunities for the long-term unemployed, disadvantaged groups and persons with disabilities. It also emphasised fair working conditions and gender equality.

This contract promoted training and full-time employment opportunities. The technical specification required that contractors engage with employment agencies to explore

³⁹Framework agreement for the delivery, installation and maintenance of sanitary facilities in Groningen. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://www.tenderned.nl/aankondigingen/overzicht/350012>.

⁴⁰ Construction works for Route 41 between Fritsla and Kråkered in Borås Municipality to enhance road safety. Last accessed on 04/11/2024 and available at: <https://www.tenderned.nl/aankondigingen/overzicht/350012>.

opportunities for employing unemployed individuals within the project, followed up by reporting and verification requirements. It required that contractors adhere to anti-discrimination policies and actively promote diversity and inclusion within their teams to include disadvantaged groups. The procurement procedure ensured decent working conditions by requiring contractors to comply with minimum wage laws.

The project also adhered to universal design principles, by ensuring that the design and execution of the project considers the needs of people with varying abilities. For instance, it included provisions for the integration of assistive technologies, ensuring that technological solutions are accessible to all users.

The public procurement procedure included sustainability considerations, such as adherence to regulations addressing deforestation and responsible sourcing of critical minerals and compliance with ethical standards and relevant collective agreements at both the EU and national levels. This includes compliance with the CSDDD and Responsible Business Conduct in line with EU and OECD guidelines.

3.5. Common success factors and enablers

The analysis of the selected public procurement procedures enabled the identification of key elements of successful SRPP implementations across the EU Member States. This section shows the five common success factors and critical components that contribute to the effectiveness and impact of specific public procurement procedures.

3.5.1. Reserved contracts for social enterprises

The Public Procurement Directive 2014/24/EU encourages the use of reserved contracts for social enterprises and sheltered workshops, enabling disadvantaged groups to participate in public procurement. In the sample, five public procurement procedures used the reserved contract procedure in this way. This approach promotes social inclusion and economic empowerment and aligns with sustainable development goals. Additionally, by addressing unemployment and social exclusion among disadvantaged groups, these public procurement procedures also foster positive public perception and stakeholder support, making them highly successful on a social scale.

3.5.2. The use of contractual performance clauses and award criteria as a guarantee

The use of contractual performance clauses and award criteria in public procurement serves as a mechanism to ensure that contracts adhere to labour laws, minimum wage regulations and sustainability due diligence. By embedding specific social and environmental requirements into public procurement procedures, contracting authorities can hold contractors accountable for delivering on these obligations. For instance, several public procurement procedures in the sample included clauses that mandate compliance with labour laws, fair wages and decent working conditions, as well as providing training to employees. Particularly, one public procurement procedure from Austria integrated a training programme for unemployed individuals, ensuring not only job creation but also adherence to fair employment practices. In some procurement procedures, the award criteria are used to provide higher scores for suppliers who can prove compliance with environmental standards and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in their workforce. These clauses serve as guarantees, making contractors accountable for their social responsibilities, as non-compliance may lead to penalties or disqualification from the public procurement process.

3.5.3. The use of multiple clauses and criteria to support social outcomes

Procurement procedures that incorporate multiple clauses or criteria addressing social outcomes are more likely to succeed in achieving these objectives, as they provide a structured and comprehensive approach to social responsibility. By including various clauses related to employment, fair wages, training and social inclusion, contracting authorities can ensure that suppliers commit to a wider range of social goals. Some procurement procedures from the sample, such as those aimed at vocational training, use mechanisms like SROI to track and measure the social value generated. These clauses require contractors to invest a percentage of the contract value into social initiatives, such as job creation for disadvantaged groups or training programmes for local communities. Additionally, performance clauses linked to employment conditions, such as ensuring the use of permanent contracts over precarious employment, are often included to protect workers' rights.

3.5.4. Partnering with external organisations

Linking public procurement procedures with entities such as local employment agencies, educational institutions or SROI contact points can significantly boost the effectiveness of SRPP initiatives. In particular, SROI contact points are instrumental in helping contractors tailor their social obligations to the specific contract, ensuring initiatives are both relevant and impactful. They also provide dedicated monitoring and support, assisting contractors to meet their social commitments effectively. Mechanisms like SROI require contractors to allocate a portion of the contract's value to training and employment schemes, to enhance employability. To ensure transparency and accountability, procurement procedures often include clauses requiring contractors to submit regular reports detailing the number of individuals trained and the outcomes achieved, maximising the social impact.

3.5.5. Combining environmental and social requirements

The combination of both green and social outcomes in public procurement procedures can significantly enhance the impact of procurement. When contracting authorities integrate environmental and social criteria, they ensure that suppliers address a broader range of societal challenges, such as reducing carbon emissions while creating employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Some of the public procurement procedures identified through the research include clauses which require compliance with sustainability standards, such as the use of eco-friendly materials, while simultaneously stimulating employment opportunities for individuals from vulnerable groups. To ensure these outcomes are met, monitoring mechanisms can be applied, including regular reporting requirements, third-party audits and compliance assessments. For instance, some procurement procedures include specific performance clauses mandating contractors to provide regular updates on both their environmental and social commitments, such as the use of certified sustainable materials or the hiring of individuals from marginalised communities. This ensures accountability and enables contracting authorities to track progress towards achieving both green and social objectives.

3.6. Common challenges and pitfalls

While the public procurement procedures analysed in the context of this study demonstrate that some contracting authorities across EU Member States are embedding social clauses and requirements in public procurement, a number of challenges remain as discussed in this section.

3.6.1. Widespread use of the lowest price criterion

The lowest price criterion appears to be commonly used by many contracting authorities, which can hinder the awarding of procurement procedures to bidders capable of delivering the highest social impact. While this approach prioritises cost savings, it often overlooks broader social considerations such as fair wages, employment for disadvantaged groups and sustainability initiatives. The analysis of procurement procedure documentation indicates that focusing solely on the lowest price criterion often results in missed opportunities to embed SRPP requirements directly into the evaluation process. This means that broader social objectives are not given sufficient weight during the procurement procedure award process, thereby weakening the overall SRPP impact. However, it is important to note that SRPP conditions can still be reinforced if they are made a mandatory part of the contract performance, even if they are not included in the award criteria. By moving beyond the lowest price criterion and embracing a more holistic approach to public procurement, Member States can enhance the social impact of public procurement procedures and contribute to broader societal goals.

3.6.2. Misalignment of social clauses to the subject matter of the contract

The analysis of the selected sample of public procurement procedures reveals that social clauses in public procurement benefit from alignment with the specific type of contract to maximise their impact. The collected data indicates that service-related contracts, which often include social clauses focusing on employment for disadvantaged groups, tend to achieve higher social impact levels. For example, a significant portion of service-related procedures fell into the moderate to high impact categories. In contrast, goods and infrastructure projects often struggle to implement social clauses effectively, leading to lower impact ratings. Indiscriminately applying broad social requirements across all types of procurement may lead to inefficiencies, discourage bidders and dilute the overall effectiveness of SRPP. Therefore, contracting authorities would benefit from ensuring that social requirements are relevant and tailored to the contract's subject matter. This targeted approach may amplify social benefits, minimise administrative burdens and promote fair competition, enhancing both the efficacy and efficiency of public procurement processes.⁴¹

3.6.3. Lack of ambition in social clauses

The lowest-performing procurement procedures often include social requirements that are too modest or vague, resulting in limited social impact. For example, procurement procedures might contain generic statements about promoting fair labour practices without specifying measurable targets or outcomes, merely reiterating what is already mandated by labour law. This lack of ambition can lead to minimal changes in contractor behaviour and reduce the overall effectiveness of SRPP. To address this, contracting authorities

⁴¹For a detailed breakdown, refer to figure 3.

should aim to set clear, ambitious and measurable social targets within their procurement procedures. Recommendations include defining specific social objectives, such as a percentage of jobs to be created for disadvantaged groups or specific sustainability metrics to be achieved, and detailed guidelines on how these targets should be met and reported.

3.6.4. Lack of or inadequate monitoring mechanisms of public procurement procedures' outcomes

Many of the analysed procurement procedures included ambitious clauses and requirements that support social outcomes aimed at generating a positive impact. However, the true effectiveness of these procedures can only be assessed during the contracting period through robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms. Effective monitoring mechanisms, which can include regular progress reports from contractors, independent audits, site visits, stakeholder consultations and performance metrics specific to social outcomes, were seen in the highest performing procurement procedures. Without these mechanisms in place, it is difficult to determine whether the social objectives outlined in the procurement documents have been successfully achieved.

4. Policy recommendations

SRPP is a strategic approach that integrates social considerations into public procurement processes. Public entities can promote employment opportunities, social inclusion, decent working conditions, accessibility and sustainability through SRPP. This chapter provides a list of actionable recommendations based on the findings from the analysis.

Adopt a holistic approach towards SRPP

To enhance overall social performance, it is crucial to adopt a holistic approach that integrates all aspects of SRPP. For instance, in Leuven, Belgium, a framework agreement for e-bikes and maintenance services by Zorg Leuven not only enhanced mobility for employees but also met comprehensive social inclusion and decent working conditions indicators. The public procurement procedure promoted diverse employment opportunities, required the employment of disabled or disadvantaged workers and mandated upskilling programmes. This holistic approach leverages multiple benefits by integrating SRPP. To adopt such a holistic approach, it is necessary to set clear social objectives, establish robust compliance mechanisms and foster collaboration between public authorities, contractors and civil society. By standardising these practices across the EU, public procurement can become a powerful tool for promoting social justice, environmental sustainability and economic resilience.

Transforming public procurement for social good

To harness the full potential of public procurement as a driver of social change, it is imperative to implement strategic policies that elevate social considerations across all procurement types. Drawing from good practices, public procurement should prioritise transformative and highly impactful procedures to ensure substantial and consistent benefits for communities. This entails developing targeted strategies to increase the number of high-impact public procurement procedures, making SRPP a more effective tool for driving meaningful social change. Specifically, for services, the current distribution across impact levels – with a slight inclination towards low and moderate impact and the presence of not impactful procurement procedures – highlights the need for enhanced strategies to better integrate social considerations. By doing this, public procurement can transition from delivering moderate benefits to achieving significant and lasting social improvements.

Standardise SRPP good practices across the EU

To ensure a cohesive and impactful approach to SRPP, it is essential to standardise good practices across the EU. This includes adopting uniform standards for assessing employment opportunities, working conditions, accessibility, sustainability and social impact. Standardisation will also facilitate easier compliance and monitoring, ensuring that all Member States are aligned in their efforts to integrate social considerations into procurement processes. The findings from the analysis suggest concrete actions related to the development of clear guidelines and criteria for social indicators, particularly in areas like skills development and fair supply chain, inclusion of compliance with standards and certifications and employment status in public procurement procedures and the promotion of consistent application of accessibility standards and inclusive design.

To support inclusive design, public procurement contracts can adhere to both national and international accessibility standards. This includes detailed requirements for physical accessibility, such as accessible entrances, wide corridors and appropriate equipment for individuals with functional impairments. Additionally, contracts could include operational plans for maintaining accessibility features and staff training to ensure that accessibility is maintained throughout the project lifecycle. By doing so, public procurement can ensure that services and infrastructure are inclusive for all citizens.

To enhance social inclusion, public procurement contracts can also benefit from mandatory clauses for the employment of disadvantaged individuals, such as people with disabilities, long-term unemployed and those from marginalised communities. This can be supported by setting specific targets, such as the number of jobs, types of employment (e.g. full-time or part-time), conditions (e.g. permanent roles or temporary roles), minimum percentage of the workforce or a set number of training hours dedicated to these groups. Requiring proof of compliance, such as employment records and training certificates, will ensure transparency and accountability. This approach promotes social inclusion as well as helps to address unemployment and underemployment among vulnerable populations.

Integrating comprehensive ethical standards in public procurement contracts can also be beneficial. This could include adherence to collective agreements, alignment with the CSDDD and Responsible Business Conduct. Implementing detailed methodologies for monitoring and verification mechanisms, such as regular audits and third-party certifications, will ensure continuous adherence to ethical standards and fair labour practices. This approach will help to promote ethical business practices and ensure that public procurement contributes positively to social and environmental outcomes.

Implement comprehensive monitoring and reporting mechanisms for compliance with social and environmental standards

A significant gap in the current SRPP adoption is the lack of comprehensive monitoring and reporting mechanisms. To address this, it is essential to implement detailed protocols for regular audits, reviews and reporting. Suppliers should be required to provide regular updates on their compliance with social and environmental standards and authorised personnel should conduct independent audits and inspections. Establishing a centralised database on the national level for tracking and reporting compliance will enhance transparency and accountability, ensuring that the objectives of SRPP are met effectively. As demonstrated by the findings, practices still vary greatly, and successful social impact also varies greatly across different regions. A national-level database ensures uniformity in data collection and reporting standards across different regions, facilitating more accurate and comprehensive oversight. Additionally, it allows for easier comparison and benchmarking of SRPP practices across various jurisdictions, leading to more effective identification of best practices and areas needing improvement. Centralised tracking also streamlines the process for stakeholders to access information, ensuring that the objectives of SRPP are met effectively on a broader scale.

Address critical gaps in data availability and transparency across TED's procurement procedure documentation

The adoption and implementation of SRPP across the EU reveals significant gaps in data availability and transparency, particularly in TED's procurement procedure documentation. Many procurement procedures analysed as part of this study failed to incorporate comprehensive social considerations and even when they did, the impact was often minimal due to the lack of robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms. Implementing detailed protocols for regular audits, reviews and independent assessments is essential to enhance accountability and transparency. By requiring suppliers to provide specific (structured) data on social considerations, TED can ensure that public procurement processes are inclusive and fair, as well as contributing meaningfully to social and environmental goals.

Expand and foster the use of a framework to measure social impact of public procurement

This report summarises the development and implementation of an analytical framework to measure social impact of public procurement across the EU. If applied systematically to all public procurement procedures at local, regional or national level, it will provide significant findings in relation to how social considerations are included in public

procurement procedures. This would enable the measuring of the social impact of public procurement, as well as give insights on areas that need further attention and improvement at different levels.

The proposed analytical framework can be further expanded by creating reporting templates, compliance checklists and detailed protocols for regular progress reports. These tools will help procurement officials monitor adherence to the framework's indicators. Additionally, they provide examples of effective monitoring practices and outline penalties for non-compliance to ensure robustness in the implementation process. To do so, collaboration between various stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector entities, non-governmental organisations and civil society, needs to be facilitated. Establishing collaborative platforms or working groups can facilitate the exchange of inspirational practices, address common challenges and foster a shared understanding of how best to monitor and measure social impact.

To ensure the widespread use of the proposed framework, targeted awareness campaigns within Member States could be considered to inform and educate stakeholders on the importance and benefits of incorporating the social indicators. These campaigns could leverage the framework's structure to show how to focus on key indicators, such as promoting employment opportunities, ensuring decent working conditions, supporting accessibility and fostering sustainable practices. Additionally, the campaigns could address the vague requirements often found in procurement documentation by clarifying and reinforcing Member States' public procurement authorities' understanding of social procurement and its indicators. This can be further enforced by capacity building exercises. These programmes could also focus on the practical application of the analytical framework, including how to effectively integrate social indicators into procurement processes. Offering workshops, webinars and online courses can help ensure that all relevant parties are well-equipped to utilise the framework and its tools.

Finally, pilot programmes within specific public procurement organisations to test the analytical framework and its tools could contribute to its adoption and continuous improvement. These programmes could focus on integrating the framework's indicators into a selected number of public procurement procedures and evaluating their social impact. Collecting feedback from these pilot programmes would help to refine and improve the framework.

5. Concluding remarks

As part of a broader effort to promote SRPP across the EU, this report describes the approach to develop an analytical framework to measure social impact of public procurement in the EU. The proposed framework measures social impacts across four main indicators: promoting employment opportunities and social inclusion, encouraging decent working conditions, supporting accessibility and design for all and promoting sustainable practices. Each indicator is broken down into sub-indicators, allowing for a detailed examination of how each public procurement procedure incorporates these social considerations. The scoring system evaluates the social performance and impact of public procurement procedures through a thorough assessment of each indicator and weighted scoring, whilst the final score is translated into a social impact rating based on predefined percentage ranges.

The feasibility of the proposed analytical framework was tested on a sample of 75 public procurement procedures from all EU Member States (ranging from one to five procedures in each country). The findings reveal that, although certain Member States have successfully integrated social considerations into public procurement, substantial opportunities for enhancement remain. Many of the analysed public procurement procedures do not incorporate social considerations and, among those that do, the social impact is often minimal. Only a few cases were found to be transformative, primarily due to the lack of detailed and ambitious social requirements. The most frequently implemented indicators included promoting employment opportunities and social inclusion and encouraging decent working conditions. However, supporting accessibility and design for all and promoting sustainable practices were less frequently prioritised.

In conclusion, an analytical framework to measure social impact of public procurement in the EU can contribute to monitoring, encouraging and maximising the integration of social considerations in public procurement procedures at Member State and EU level. The proposed framework not only provides a measurement tool which uses a weighed scoring system, but also indicators that can set a basis for standardisation of SRPP practices across the EU.

Annex I: SRPP evaluation matrix

Main indicator	List of sub-indicators	Description of the sub-indicator	Score	Description of each score of the scale	Rationale
1. Promoting employment opportunities and social inclusion	1.1 Employment opportunities created	This sub-indicator assesses the extent to which the procurement procedure specifications include explicit, detailed and measurable requirements for creating employment opportunities. Higher scores are awarded for procurement procedures that provide clear, specific targets for job creation, including types and conditions (e.g. permanent roles, temporary roles).	0	No specified requirements for creating employment opportunities within the procurement procedure specifications.	No commitment to job creation.
			1	Vaguely formulated requirements for employment (e.g. general statements like 'create jobs if possible').	Limited clarity and commitment to job creation.
			2	Moderately specific requirements for employment (e.g. some indication of expected number of jobs or types of employment but lacks detailed criteria).	Some effort to promote job creation but not extensive.
			3	Detailed requirements for employment (e.g. specific number of jobs, types of employment and conditions like full-time or part-time roles).	Clear commitment to job creation with specific targets.
			4	Comprehensive requirements for employment (e.g. large-scale hiring, detailed job descriptions and conditions).	High impact on employment with extensive and clear requirements.
			5	Transformative requirements for employment (e.g. ambitious and far-reaching employment opportunities, detailed verification and compliance mechanisms).	Major, transformative impact on employment opportunities with detailed monitoring mechanisms.
	1.2 Skills development	This sub-indicator measures how well the procurement procedure specifications promote the growth and upskilling of employees. Procurement procedures that lack detailed requirements or provide only general statements score lower. The highest scores go to procurement procedures that offer industry-leading training programmes and include	0	No specified requirements for training or upskilling.	No effort to improve employee skills.
			1	Vaguely formulated requirements for training (e.g. general statements like 'provide training if necessary').	Limited clarity and commitment to upskilling.
			2	Moderately specific requirements for training (e.g. some indication of training programmes but lacks detailed criteria).	Some effort to promote upskilling but not extensive.
			3	Detailed requirements for training (e.g. specific training programmes and regular skill assessments).	Clear commitment to employee development with specific programmes.
		4	Comprehensive requirements for training (e.g. tailored individual development plans, partnerships with educational institutions and detailed training schedules).	High level of commitment to employee development and upskilling.	

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Main indicator	List of sub-indicators	Description of the sub-indicator	Score	Description of each score of the scale	Rationale
		detailed mechanisms for monitoring and reporting the impacts of training and upskilling initiatives.	5	Transformative requirements for training (e.g. industry-leading training programmes and requirements to monitor and report training impacts).	Transformative impact on employee skills with detailed monitoring mechanisms.
	1.3 Inclusion of disadvantaged groups	This sub-indicator evaluates the degree to which the procurement procedure specifications detail specific and actionable requirements for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups. Examples of disadvantaged groups include long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, youth, ethnic minorities, migrants, women returning to work, older workers and low-skilled individuals.	0	No specified requirements for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups.	No effort made to include disadvantaged groups.
			1	Vaguely formulated requirements for inclusion (e.g. general statements like 'promote diversity if possible').	Limited clarity and commitment to inclusion.
			2	Moderately specific requirements for inclusion (e.g. some indication of targeted groups but lacks detailed criteria).	Some effort to promote inclusion but not extensive.
			3	Detailed requirements for inclusion (e.g. specific programmes or policies to hire and support disadvantaged groups).	Clear commitment to inclusion with specific targets.
			4	Comprehensive requirements for inclusion (e.g. partnerships with organisations supporting disadvantaged groups and detailed support programmes).	High level of effort and resources dedicated to inclusion.
			5	Transformative requirements for inclusion (e.g. systemic change in hiring practices, specific targets for disadvantaged groups and requirements to monitor and report impacts).	Transformative impact on inclusion with detailed monitoring mechanisms.
	1.4 Compliance with standards and certifications	This sub-indicator assesses the clarity and specificity of requirements for compliance with recognised standards and certifications within the procurement procedure specifications.	0	No specified requirements for compliance with standards or certifications.	No adherence to recognised standards.
			1	Vaguely formulated requirements for compliance (e.g. general statements like 'comply with relevant legal requirements').	Limited clarity and commitment to compliance.
			2	Moderately specific requirements for compliance (e.g. some indication of standards or certifications but lacks detailed criteria).	Some effort to adhere to recognised standards but not extensive.
			3	Detailed requirements for compliance (e.g. specific standards or certifications that need to be met).	Clear commitment to compliance with specific standards.
			4	Comprehensive requirements for compliance (e.g. multiple relevant certifications, active maintenance and updates of certifications).	High level of commitment to maintaining and exceeding standards.

Main indicator	List of sub-indicators	Description of the sub-indicator	Score	Description of each score of the scale	Rationale
			5	Transformative requirements for compliance (e.g. leading in certification and compliance and requirements to monitor and report compliance impacts).	Transformative impact on industry standards and compliance practices with detailed monitoring mechanisms.
2. Encouraging decent working conditions	2.1. Employment status	This sub-indicator evaluates employment status in procurement procedure documents by examining contract types (full-time, part-time, self-employed), contract length and working hours to ensure compliance with specific standards. It also assesses mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing SRPP conditions and requires suppliers to provide evidence of compliance. These aspects together offer a comprehensive assessment of employment status in contract performance.	0	No mention of employment status conditions, contract length, working hours, standard deviation reporting, monitoring or verification mechanisms or documentation requirements in the procurement procedure documents (e.g. no reference to employment conditions or compliance mechanisms).	No commitment to defining or regulating employment status.
			1	Basic mention of employment status with a simple reference to compliance with general employment conditions standards (e.g. general statements like 'comply with employment standards' without specific details on contract length or working hours).	Limited clarity and commitment to regulating employment status and working conditions.
			2	Some effort to include employment status conditions with moderate specificity (e.g. mentions some specific standards but lacks comprehensive details, such as general minimum or maximum values for contract length and working hours).	Some effort to promote clear employment status and working conditions but not extensive.
			3	Commitment to detailed employment status conditions and working hours (e.g. detailed requirements for employment status with specific standards but may not require proofs or certifications for all aspects).	Clear commitment to defining employment status and working conditions with specific guidelines.
			4	Detailed stipulations on employment status conditions and working hours (e.g. includes clear requirements for monitoring and verification mechanisms but may lack some third-party audits).	High impact on employment status with detailed conditions and requirements.
			5	Specific and comprehensive employment status conditions with regular audits and certifications (e.g. requiring suppliers to provide proofs of compliance with specific standards and detailed protocols for regular audits and reporting).	Major impact on employment status with comprehensive, detailed requirements and monitoring.
	2.2. Fair working conditions	This sub-indicator evaluates the fairness of working conditions by examining key aspects within procurement procedure documents. It includes stipulations on fair wages, adherence to ILO labour conventions,	0	No mention of fair wages, adherence to ILO labour conventions, safe working conditions, non-discrimination policies, grievance mechanisms or documentation requirements in the procurement procedure documents (e.g. no reference to fair labour practices or compliance mechanisms).	No commitment to fair wages or adherence to labour standards.
			1	Basic mention of fair wages or general labour standards without specific details. No mention of adherence to ILO labour conventions, safe working conditions, non-discrimination	Limited mention of fair wages or general labour standards.

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Main indicator	List of sub-indicators	Description of the sub-indicator	Score	Description of each score of the scale	Rationale
		provision of safe and healthy working conditions, non-discrimination policies and mechanisms for addressing worker grievances.		policies, grievance mechanisms or detailed documentation requirements. No basic documentation is required, such as a self-assessment questionnaire that suppliers must fill out.	
			2	Some effort to promote fair wages and safe working conditions (e.g. mentions basic adherence to some ILO labour conventions and briefly mentions non-discrimination policies and grievance mechanisms).	Some effort to promote fair wages, safe working conditions and basic adherence to labour standards.
			3	Commitment to fair wages and safe working conditions with specific guidelines. Adherence to several ILO labour conventions is detailed but may not require proofs or certifications for all aspects. Non-discrimination policies and grievance mechanisms include some protocols for addressing worker concerns but may lack some aspects. Comprehensive documentation requirements include specific forms and evidence but may lack some elements.	Commitment to fair wages, safe working conditions and adherence to several labour standards.
			4	Detailed stipulations on fair wages and adherence to ILO labour conventions. More detailed methodologies for grievance mechanisms and non-discrimination policies are included. Documentation requirements include specific forms, evidence and regular submission of reports but may lack some elements.	Detailed requirements for fair wages, safe working conditions and adherence to labour standards.
			5	Specific and comprehensive stipulations on fair wages, adherence to ILO labour conventions and requiring suppliers to provide proofs of compliance (e.g. detailed protocols for regular audits, reviews and reporting and comprehensive documentation).	Comprehensive, detailed requirements and monitoring for fair wages, safe working conditions and adherence to labour standards.
3. Accessibility and design for all	3.1. Compliance with accessibility standards	This sub-indicator assesses the clarity and specificity of requirements for compliance with accessibility standards within the procurement procedure specifications. It includes dimensions such as adherence to legal and regulatory requirements, explicit	0	No mention of accessibility standards within the procurement procedure documents (e.g. no adherence to legal and regulatory requirements and accessibility is not mentioned in design, technical specifications or implementation).	No adherence to recognised standards.
			1	Basic mention of accessibility standards with vague and non-specific references (e.g. limited adherence to basic legal and regulatory requirements and accessibility is mentioned in a general sense without detailed specifications).	Limited clarity and commitment to accessibility.
			2	Some effort to include accessibility standards with moderate specificity (e.g. adherence to key legal and regulatory requirements and accessibility is included in some aspects of design and technical specifications).	Some effort to adhere to accessibility standards but not extensive.

Main indicator	List of sub-indicators	Description of the sub-indicator	Score	Description of each score of the scale	Rationale
		inclusion of accessibility in design and technical specifications, quality assurance in implementation and material selection and incorporation of assistive and digital technologies.	3	Commitment to clear and specific accessibility standards (e.g. strong adherence to legal and regulatory requirements with detailed inclusion of accessibility in design, technical specifications and material selection).	Clear commitment to compliance with specific accessibility standards.
			4	Detailed and extensive references to accessibility standards (e.g. full adherence to all relevant legal and regulatory requirements and accessibility is a core component in design, technical specifications and material selection).	High level of commitment to maintaining and reaching high level of accessibility standards
			5	Specific and pioneering approach to accessibility standards (e.g. proactive engagement with evolving legal and regulatory requirements and accessibility is seamlessly integrated into every aspect of design, technical specifications and material selection).	Transformative impact on accessibility standards and compliance practices with detailed monitoring mechanisms.
	3.2. Inclusive design and accommodation	This sub-indicator evaluates adherence to universal design principles, physical accessibility (e.g. entrances, corridors and furniture) and the integration of assistive technologies. It also assesses communication accessibility, operational plans, staff training and accessible emergency procedures. Additionally, it considers inclusivity, non-discriminatory environments, community integration and quality of life for individuals with disabilities.	0	No mention of inclusive design and accommodation principles within the procurement procedure documents (e.g. no adherence to universal design principles, no consideration for physical accessibility such as accessible entrances or wide corridors and no integration of assistive and digital technologies).	No adherence to recognised standards.
			1	Basic mention of inclusive design and accommodation principles with vague and non-specific references (e.g. limited adherence to universal design principles and basic consideration for physical accessibility but lacking in other areas like adjustable furniture).	Limited clarity and commitment to inclusive design.
			2	Some effort to include inclusive design and accommodation principles with moderate specificity (e.g. adherence to key universal design principles with noticeable efforts to ensure physical accessibility such as accessible entrances and wide corridors).	Some effort to adhere to inclusive design standards but not extensive.
			3	Commitment to clear and specific inclusive design and accommodation principles (e.g. strong adherence to universal design principles, ensuring comprehensive physical accessibility with features like accessible entrances and adjustable furniture).	Clear commitment to compliance with specific inclusive design standards.
			4	Detailed and extensive references to inclusive design and accommodation principles (e.g. full adherence to universal design principles, ensuring extensive physical accessibility with features like highly adjustable furniture and advanced assistive technologies).	High level of commitment to maintaining and reaching high inclusive standards.

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Main indicator	List of sub-indicators	Description of the sub-indicator	Score	Description of each score of the scale	Rationale
			5	Transformative approach to inclusive design and accommodation principles (e.g. proactive engagement with evolving universal design principles, ensuring transformative physical accessibility with features like innovative accessible entrances).	Transformative impact on inclusive design standards and compliance practices with detailed monitoring mechanisms.
4. Sustainable practices	4.1. Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDD)	This sub-indicator evaluates the overall alignment with the CSDDD by considering several key aspects within the procurement procedure documents. These aspects include requirements for reporting on sustainability practices, adherence to regulations addressing deforestation, responsible sourcing of critical minerals and the prohibition of forced labour. Additionally, it considers mechanisms for monitoring and verification of compliance and the inclusion of supplier documentation requirements.	0	No mention of sustainability reporting, adherence to deforestation regulations, responsible sourcing of critical minerals or prohibition of forced labour within the procurement procedure documents (e.g. no reference to any sustainability practices or compliance mechanisms).	No commitment to sustainability reporting or adherence to relevant regulations.
			1	Basic mention of sustainability practices with a simple reference to compliance with general sustainability standards (e.g. general statement like 'comply with sustainability guidelines' without specifics on deforestation or labour practices).	Limited mention of sustainability practices and general compliance standards.
			2	Some effort to promote sustainability reporting and basic adherence to deforestation regulations and sourcing of critical minerals (e.g. mentions adherence to deforestation regulations but lacks comprehensive details and monitoring mechanisms).	Some effort to promote sustainability reporting and basic adherence to relevant regulations.
			3	Commitment to sustainability reporting with specific guidelines. Adherence to several deforestation regulations and responsible sourcing of critical minerals is detailed but may not require proofs or certifications for all aspects. Mention of prohibition of forced labour with some protocols for addressing compliance. Comprehensive documentation requirements include specific forms and evidence but may lack some elements. Monitoring mechanisms include some detailed protocols for regular audits and reviews but may lack some aspects.	Commitment to sustainability reporting, adherence to several relevant regulations and prohibition of forced labour.
			4	Detailed stipulations on sustainability reporting and adherence to deforestation regulations and responsible sourcing of critical minerals (e.g. includes clear requirements for monitoring and verification mechanisms but may lack some third-party audits).	Detailed requirements for sustainability reporting and adherence to relevant regulations.
			5	Specific stipulations on sustainability reporting, adherence to all relevant deforestation regulations and responsible sourcing of critical minerals and prohibition of forced labour (e.g. requiring suppliers to provide certifications of compliance and detailed protocols for regular audits and reporting).	Comprehensive, detailed requirements and monitoring for sustainability reporting and adherence to relevant regulations.

Main indicator	List of sub-indicators	Description of the sub-indicator	Score	Description of each score of the scale	Rationale
	4.2. Fair supply chain	This sub-indicator evaluates supply chain fairness by examining key aspects within procurement procedure documents. It considers compliance with ethical standards or certifications, adherence to EU and national collective agreements and optional alignment with the CSDDD and EU's or OECD's Responsible Business Conduct. It also assesses mechanisms for monitoring compliance and requires supplier documentation.	0	No mention of ethical standards, adherence to collective agreements or alignment with the CSDDD within the procurement procedure documents (e.g. no reference to fair labour practices or human rights).	No commitment to ethical standards or adherence to relevant agreements and directives.
1			Basic mention of ethical standards with a simple reference to compliance with general ethical practices (e.g. general statement like 'adhere to ethical standards' without specifics on labour agreements or community impact).	Limited mention of ethical standards and general compliance practices.	
2			Commitment to ethical standards with specific guidelines (e.g. detailed requirements for fair labour practices and human rights but may not require proofs or certifications for all aspects).	Some effort to promote ethical standards, basic adherence to relevant agreements and directives and basic measures for addressing social aspects.	
3			Commitment to ethical standards with specific guidelines. Adherence to several relevant collective agreements is mentioned but may not require proofs or certifications for all aspects. Mention of alignment with most aspects of the CSDDD or Responsible Business Conduct is optional. Basic measures for addressing fair labour practices, human rights, community impact and worker well-being are detailed. Documentation requirements include specific forms and evidence but may lack some elements. Monitoring mechanisms include some detailed protocols for regular audits and reviews but may lack some aspects.	Commitment to ethical standards, adherence to several relevant agreements, optional alignment with directives and basic measures for addressing social aspects.	
4			Detailed stipulations on ethical standards and adherence to relevant collective agreements (e.g. includes detailed measures for addressing fair labour practices, human rights and worker well-being but may lack some third-party audits).	Detailed requirements for ethical standards, adherence to relevant agreements, optional alignment with directives and comprehensive measures for addressing social aspects.	
5			Specific stipulations on ethical standards, adherence to all relevant collective agreements and mandatory alignment with the CSDDD (e.g. requiring suppliers to provide certifications of compliance and detailed protocols for regular audits and reporting).	Comprehensive, detailed requirements and monitoring for ethical standards, mandatory adherence to relevant agreements and directives and transformative measures for addressing social aspects.	

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Main indicator	List of sub-indicators	Description of the sub-indicator	Score	Description of each score of the scale	Rationale
5. Interaction with green procurement considerations	N/A	Assesses whether there has been any integration between social and green procurement goals.	Yes / No	N/A	N/A

Annex II: keywords⁴²

Public Procurement	Procurement procedure	Social Impact
Socially Responsible Public Procurement Social Procurement	Public procurement Public tender Procurement notice	Employment opportunities / conditions Workers' rights Social inclusion / integration Social economy enterprises Decent work Social and labour law Accessibility Human rights Ethical trade / fair trade Health Education Culture Sustainability Gender

⁴²Used in various combinations and translated into the Member States' languages.

Annex III: sample breakdown

Member State	Total number of analysed public procurement procedures	Total number of procurement levels represented			Procurement procedure types				Public procurement procedure link <i>(TED or national public procurement portal if unavailable)</i>
		Local	Regional	National	Services	Supplies	Works	Mixed	
Belgium	5	3	2		3		1	1	Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3; Procedure 4; Procedure 5.
Bulgaria	2	2			2				Procedure 1; Procedure 2.
Czechia	3	2		1	2	1			Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3.
Denmark	2			2	2				Procedure 1; Procedure 2;
Germany	3	2		1	1	1	1		Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3.
Estonia	5			5	5				Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3; Procedure 4; Procedure 5.
Ireland	2	1		1	2				Procedure 1; Procedure 2.
Greece	3	1		2	3				Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3.
Spain	5	3	2		4	1			Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3; Procedure 4; Procedure 5.
France	2	1		1	2				Procedure 1; Procedure 2.
Croatia	2	2				1	1		Procedure 1; Procedure 2.
Italy	5	4	1		4	1			Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3; Procedure 4; Procedure 5.

How to apply Socially Responsible Public Procurement: An Impact-Driven Framework with Indicators and Practical Examples

Member State	Total number of analysed public procurement procedures	Total number of procurement levels represented			Procurement procedure types				Public procurement procedure link <i>(TED or national public procurement portal if unavailable)</i>
		Local	Regional	National	Services	Supplies	Works	Mixed	
Cyprus	4	2	1	1	1	1	2		Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3; Procedure 4*.
Latvia	2	2			1		1		Procedure 1; Procedure 2.
Lithuania	3	1		2	3				Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3.
Luxembourg	1	1					1		Procedure 1.
Hungary	1			1		1			Procedure 1.
Malta	1			1	1				Procedure 1.
Netherlands	5	2	3		3	1		1	Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3; Procedure 4; Procedure 5.
Austria	2	1	1		2				Procedure 1; Procedure 2;
Poland	3	3			2	1			Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3.
Portugal	2	2			1		1		Procedure 1; Procedure 2.
Romania	1	1					1		Procedure 1.
Slovenia	3	1		2	2	1			Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3.
Slovakia	2	1	1					2	Procedure 1; Procedure 2.
Finland	2	1		1		1	1		Procedure 1; Procedure 2
Sweden	4	1		3	1	1	2		Procedure 1; Procedure 2; Procedure 3; Procedure 4.

*Provided directly by the Contracting Authority.

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