Deep Dive Parallel Sessions

Transforming food systems through minimum standards

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Transforming food systems through minimum standards

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Sustainable public **food** procurement

Increasing recognition of food procurement as a development tool and as an entry point to trigger more sustainable food systems
Global Review of Sustainable Public Procurement

- Food and catering services are among the main sectors prioritized by governments to include sustainability criteria in their public procurement activities
- 2nd position of governments' priorities on SPP
Sustainable public food procurement

SPP involves the incorporation of SOCIAL, ECONOMIC and ENVIRONMENTAL considerations into public procurement

**Sustainable Public Food** procurement: nutrition, health, food systems transformation

**SPFP = Complex concept**

- No uniform definition
- Difficulties in determining:
  - *what is sustainable* in terms of social, economic and environmental considerations?
  - How can the *three dimensions* be computed?
  - How can the *trade-off* between different dimensions (e.g. social and environmental) be managed?
- May vary according to country contexts and policy priorities
Minimum mandatory PP requirement

“A minimum mandatory public procurement requirement is a legal requirement that directs the decision-making process of a national, regional or local authority, often in their role as a contracting authority, in a mandatory manner by specifying a contracting authority's demand in an environmental or social manner.”

Janseen, W. 2024. Shifting towards mandatory sustainability requirements in EU public procurement law: context, relevance and a Typology.
Objectives (Law n. 11.947/2009 and FNDE Resolution n. 6/2020)

• the promotion of **health eating habits** (use of **diversified** and **safe** food that respects the **local culture and traditions**)

• support of **sustainable development** and promotion of **local food procurement**, particularly from **family farming**

Mandatory requirement:

• At least 30% of the federal budget for food procurement MUST be used for the procurement of products from family farmers and family rural entrepreneurs.

• At least 75% of the budget must be used for the procurement of fresh or minimum processed food

Priority to (in this specific order):

• Local

• Vulnerable producers (land reform settlers, indigenous people, remaining members of *quilombola* communities)

• Organic (+price premium)

• Formal and informal women groups

Only 3 Justification for non-compliance

• impossibility of FF to provide a regular and constant supply;

• impossibility of FF to issue the necessary tax invoices;

• inadequacy of suppliers’ sanitary conditions
• Clear definition and verification instruments:
  • Family farmers and family rural entrepreneurs: Law 11.326/2006 + FF Registry
  • Local: FNDE Resolution 06/2020 (revised)
  • Organic and agroecological production: 3rd party certification + Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)

• Link to support programmes and related policies

• Assessed results in various domains
  • Product diversification
  • Increased incomes
  • Transition towards organic and agro-ecological production practices

In addition to the traditional nutrition benefits to children.
Minimum “Environmental” Criteria

“Contracting authorities can play an important social function by:

• contributing to the health, well-being of users and protection of the environment, supporting a healthier and more sustainable agricultural model,

• encouraging the agribusiness sector to play a synergistic role with national and EU agrifood policies that provide for an increase in agricultural areas cultivated using organic farming methods.

With targeted prescriptions, contracting authorities can also help reduce food waste and spread a culture about the value of food, proper nutrition and environmentally friendly production and distribution models.”

Ministerial Decree n.65, 10 March 2020
Mandatory criteria

- Minimum levels of **organic or other quality marked foods** (e.g. GI, Mountain food)
  - at least 50% of fruits, vegetables and beef (by weight)
  - Pork meat (only 10%), poultry meat (only 20%) – linked to **market conditions**
- **Seasonality** + specific **restrictions to processed food**
- Fish from **specific regions** and **species**. (safeguard biodiversity + social consideration) + rules on aquaculture.
- Vegetable oils: % **organic** + certification ensuring environmental sustainability for other types of oils (e.g. palm oil)
- Tropical products must be certified **Fairtrade**

Additional criteria related to food waste, packaging, reusable tableware, electrical equipment/energy consumption, compliance check.

Premium criteria

- **Short supply chains** and «km zero»
- Implementation of solutions to decrease the environmental impacts of **logistics** (green cars, central deposit)
- **Communication** (commitment to implement communication initiatives to convey information about the service’s environmental sustainability, to encourage proper eating habits, etc.)
- **Additional environmental and social characteristics** of food products. (e.g., farms that practice social agriculture)
- Organic **aquaculture**, seafood from non-endangered species, fresh seafood caught in the nearest place to the cooking
- Verification of **working conditions** along supply chains
- Despite the name: **combination** of social (including nutrition and health), economic and environmental criteria

- Show how criteria (and their impacts) are **interlinked**
- Brazil and Italian experience: also show how criteria **may vary** according to policy priorities and contexts
- Importance of **market conditions / analysis**
Seven minimum mandatory criteria for public canteens in Europe

1. **Healthy food** (100% of meals based on dietary guidelines that ensure sustainable healthy nutrition for all age groups and social contexts)

2. **Organic and other agro-ecological products** (at least 20%)

3. **Small-scale farmers support** (at least 10% of food from small-scale farmers, defined by turnover, agricultural area and number of employees)

4. **Climate Action** (25% GHG emissions reduction through more plant-based food, food waste reduction and a low-carbon food chain from farm to fork)

5. **Decent working conditions** (compliance with regulation + encouraging the employment of vulnerable workers in the farm to fork food chain)

6. **Fair Trade** (at least 25% from products typically sourced outside the EU)

7. **Animal welfare** (higher animal welfare + higher plant-based food content)

**Target + procurement criteria + verification**
Implementation challenges and FAO work

Italy - National survey (2018) highlighted that key challenges hindering a smooth application of the implementation of Minimum Environmental Criteria regulation (to all kinds of products) were linked to:

• lack of training and technical expertise;
• difficulties in designing and managing “green” tenders and
• the lack of potential economic operators available on the (local) market.

(Botta, 2024)

Results are aligned with the broader FAO work on the implementation of sustainable public food procurement
Some final considerations

- Minimum standards can be an important tool to promote food system’s transformation through PFP
- It is key to consider **a holistic approach** and the **interlinkages** among different criteria: It is not “either” social “or” environmental
  - Greater impact – but also require the management of trade-offs
- **Defining** which **criteria and verification instrument** can be **challenging**
  - Nutrition, health, food systems: complex concepts
  - Environmental sustainability: going beyond CO2 emission (biodiversity, land use, water use, nitrogen and phosphorus cycling)
  - It may depend on government **priorities**, contexts, and **market conditions**
- Criteria and verification instruments **cannot exclude smallholder actors** (e.g. third-party certification schemes)
- **Be aware that it is not enough**: Capacity building (procurement personnel and suppliers); guidelines (for designing and managing sustainable tenders) and other instruments (e.g. certification schemes) are key for proper implementation
Thank you!

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More information on our webpage:

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