Minutes
from preliminary Big Buyers Meeting on Zero Emission Construction Sites; ZemCons
Brussels, 5 December 2018
DG GROW

Organizers:
DG GROW and Innovative Procurements (National Suppliers Development Programme – Norway)

Participants:

Background for and purpose of meeting:
The main focus of this meeting was to get beyond the talk and move into action and concrete preparations for our collaborative efforts on Zero Emission Construction Sites, as an example of a joint statements of demand activity under the preliminary activities on the "Big Public Buyers and Networks" pilot initiative.

The meeting was set up to try to establish the following by the end of the full-day workshop:

- which cities and regions will be on board for this cross-border collaboration;
- a work plan for the long, medium and short-term work required;
- a smart way of organizing future work

1. Introductory remarks:
The event was kicked off with best omens by the DG GROW Head of Unit of the Public Procurement Strategy Marzena Rogalska, EUROCITIES Secretary General Anna Lisa Boni and ICLEI Coordinator on Sustainable Procurement Simon Clement. They all highlighted the importance of the Big Buyers initiative in bringing forward public procurement as a strategic tool, and highly welcomed the first preliminary meeting focusing specifically on joint statement of demands.

These opening remarks were followed by a short introduction by DG GROW on the objectives of the Big Buyers initiative and the next steps that will be taken in the following year. In particular, they highlighted that the project is still in the making, and their hope is to maintain the framework as flexible as possible so as to allow different cities to benefit from the program, taking into account their peculiar needs. DG GROW is planning to start with a 12 months trial period in which cities participating in the programme attend meetings and begin setting priorities and specific pilots. This process will be facilitated by a Secretariat to be appointed by the DG GROW and will also benefit from reimbursement of travel expenses for participants.
During the Q&A session, cities benefited from clarifications from DG GROW, and particularly welcomed the flexibility of the current framework. While they were interested in joint statement of demands, cities also welcomed available opportunities related to peer-to-peer exchange and breakthrough of innovation.

2. Discussion points

Following this introduction, the meeting moved to the workshop. The group was varied in their experience and involvement with Zero Emission Construction Sites, as well as with joining forces on more strategic public procurement. Therefore, in order to establish a common point of departure for rigging our further work, we needed to go through in detail the points below. Here are the key issues that were brought forward by the group through various types of group and individual work – all with a reference to a future and joint undertaking on ZemCons.

a) Key barriers/ challenges and opportunities:

**Barriers:**
- Fear of mistakes/ failures
- Evidence and analysis: objective/ representative data and measurements, as well as assessment tools (for justification) is needed
- Time (against us)
- Absence of EU overarching regulatory framework
- Procurement focus on upfront costs – not total costs of ownership
- Planning: long-term planning versus the budgetary year
- Legal barriers (?)
- Different speed between suppliers and buyers
- No clear understanding of costs versus benefits
- Chicken and egg scenario between the supply and demand
- Powerful industry (likely to face resistance to change)
- Lack of knowledge
- To speak with one voice toward a common goal (across all the cities/ regions represented here, and beyond) – re: predictability for the market
- Lack of strategic direction
- Energy supply – varies from place to place, and construction sites are energy demanding (regardless of technology chosen)
- Availability

**Opportunities:**
- Social and environmental benefits
- Also co-benefits involved; such as reduction in noise and local pollutants
- Cost-savings/ industrial opportunity for Europe
- Get further when having established one voice with a common goal (although difficult) than as a single costumer
- Synergies of funds
- Learn by experience from each other (extensively) – common goals and common road map
- This would be to pick a low-hanging fruit
- Setting the new standard
- Strategic planning; upcoming projects and alignment (makes us stronger)
- Time: developments are accelerated from increased demand volume -> accelerated innovation
- Political commitment: more likely to get through several cities wanting to collaborate (needed)
- Increased attention (from suppliers, funders etc.) when we are more actors joining forces
- Could be part of branding a city’s identity
b) Key stakeholders – whom to engage, involve, inform?

- **Funders:** both at local, national and regional levels, plus the existing Horizon2020, as well as funding operators themselves
- **Academia:** new knowledge, studies/reports of CO₂ emissions, researchers and technicians
- **Organizations/ NGOs:** environmental associations/organizations, local and regional NGOs, trade unions, chamber of commerce (supporting SMEs enterprises)
- **Policy and decision makers:** legislators, EU regulators, opinion setters, political champions, policy lobbyists, politicians (all levels, from mayors to MEPs), city council/ city board
- **Internal (in the cities and regions):** experts on procurement strategy, lead buyer, budget owners (city and commissioners), lobby internally ("ambassadors"), experts working together (both from a legal/procurement and technical perspective), legal department, sustainability department, finance department
- **Industry and suppliers:** operators, electricity suppliers, people who invested in traditional buildings (which we need to turn around), energy infrastructure firms, workers on site, construction companies, suppliers who are more or less "ready" on zero emission solutions (we have some names already), builders (in particular leaders in this field),
- **Other public buyers (beyond this group):** National government – especially related to environmental taxes, other big buyers/cities and regions, local networks of smaller buyers (in particular relevant in Amsterdam/ cities and regions, ministry of infrastructure, information for champions, C40 and EUROCITIES networks could be relevant to tap into once more
- **Citizens:** citizens involvement

c) Key steps to get to the long-term target on realizing zero emission services and products for the construction sites in upcoming public building projects?

A number of steps were suggested to reach the long-term target of being able to get zero emission solutions for construction sites when setting such demands in the tendering process. The group also realized through this exercise that the majority of points were now related to ensuring that the idea gets commitment from the higher levels in the cities and regions. These are the key steps jointly suggested by the group:

- **Ensure the internal commitment and making the case** (especially internally, but also eventually to external actors):
  - This is particularly relevant on the high decision-making level
  - Evidence and brief information is needed
  - Internal dialogue with all key stakeholders to agree on visions and goals
  - Set clear municipal targets for ZemCons
  - International success stories
  - Link to a city’s overall strategy: need to be clear
  - Clear and measurable goals
  - Securing political commitment & identify political champions
  - Need a clear and brief presentation of the initiative: what/ why/ how (both for internal purposes, but also to clearly demonstrate "the carrot" to the market actors/suppliers/developers)
  - Sort legal issues
  - Ensure there is no green-washing: ensure we are working with the ones who are really into this
- **Training programme**
- **Market consultations/ engagements**
- Organize a joint market engagement with same goals, definitions and intentions to buy zero emission technology
  - Map, leverage and secure funding (EU and nationally/locally)
  - Identification of other cities and regions willing to collaborate
  - Draft and finalize a joint statement of demand
  - Agree on definitions (such as: What makes up a construction sites? What do we mean by zero emission technology (what is excluded, what is included etc.)
  - Define/ map relevant pilots in each city/region that could be relevant for the market engagement + inviting these stakeholders; starting with pilots/specific construction sites across the group
  - Engage with stakeholders and industry along the way – especially pro-active industry stakeholders
  - Communication on strategy, but also on experience from pilots
  - EU-wide guidelines on indicators
  - Develop a more detailed work plan
  - Map other ongoing/existing networks and processes related to zero-emission construction sites

3. Next steps:

a) Short-term:

- **One-pager on the initiative:** After working through the discussion points above, the group realized that the key elements and emphasis at this stage (short-term) were to both ensure the internal commitment and to make the case in their respective cities and region. Buy-in at the management level (both politically and administratively) is essential. Therefore, the workshop organizers were challenged to produce this after the workshop and distribute to the group, for their use in their respective cities and regions. The National Suppliers Development Programme will share this.

- **Lobby internally with the right people/departments/levels**

- **Feedback on which cities/regions are on board to the organizers:** The groups agreed to get back to the workshop organizers before the year-end. In hindsight we realize that this was a bit too optimistic with regards to time, and therefore we suggest the second week of January – by Friday 11 January. The intention to join this initiative can be sent to: tina.solvberg@nho.no

- **EUROCITIES** also agreed to follow up with the individual cities and regions within their working group on public procurement, illustrating the opportunity to participate in the joint statement of demands on Zero-Emissions Construction Sites coordinated by the National Suppliers Development Programme. Interested cities should send their statement of interest by 11 of January (same as the point above) to: tina.solvberg@nho.no

- **Agree on the organization of work:** Once the level of participation is concluded upon, the suggestion is to form a smaller working group to work on more practical issues in between meetings with the larger group towards the political statement/joint statement of demands and also the market engagement.

- **Agree on a more concrete and detailed work plan**
• **Synchronize with other on-going initiatives:** Tina will reach out to Climate-KIC which is currently coordinating a similar initiative in the Nordics to see if it makes sense to join forces, from the perspective of one voice-one goal mentioned above.

**b) Medium term:**

All of these points are relevant to drill deeper into once the above has been established:

- Map relevant funding sources
- Set a deadline for and define the scope for additional actors who wish to join this initiative
- Joint statement of demand/ political statement
- Market engagement