

**TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)
FOR
TRANSNATIONAL SERVICES FOR AWARENESS RAISING, NETWORKING AND CAPACITY
BUILDING ACTIVITY SUPPORT IN CENTRAL EUROPE**

Reference	CE-PRINCE_transnational-communication
Procuring organisation	ERI Hungary - European Research Institute Nonprofit Ltd Co
Project name	CE-PRINCE: Central Europe Green PProcurement and Innovation Network for Circular Economy
Project ID	CE0200688

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Recent years have seen a significant acceleration of sustainable development and eco-transition, which is still ongoing. These transversal processes concern more traditional economic sectors and became a cornerstone of how to cope with resource-efficient use and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The European Green Deal (2019) and the new Action Plan for the Circular Economy (2020) provide clues as to the direction to be taken in order to create an economic system that is also founded on life cycle thinking, ecodesign, and circular economy processes. The Action Plan specifically calls out Circular / Green Public Procurement (C/GPP) as a key factor in achieving the market's goals of improved environmental, economic, and social sustainability and boosting the motivation for eco-innovation.

C/GPP is the “approach by which Public Bodies integrate environmental criteria and/or requirements into all stages of their procurement process”. It promotes the development of environmental technologies and the spread of environmentally sound products, by seeking and choosing outcomes and solutions that have the least possible negative environmental impact over their whole life-cycle”. Although this approach predates the circular economy, it already incorporates several of its fundamental concepts, such as ecodesign, resource efficiency and the minimization of waste production.

With the circularity principle as its foundation, C/GPP seeks to leverage the purchasing power of the public sector to advance environmental policy objectives.

Even if C/GPP is an increasingly used tool, in most countries it is still a voluntary instrument that is implemented at varying rates, through different methods and degree of obligation among countries/regions: green criteria and standards are usually mentioned in the screening process, but they can be stricter or weaker, recommended or mandatory, and the awarding methods may be different too. Looking at the project partners’ countries, Austria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Slovenia all adopted a national regulation (NAP or equivalent

document); out of these, only Austria, Italy, and Germany set a general obligation to procure sustainable products and services, while the others have a partial obligation (referring to some economic sectors and/or partial environmental criteria) or general recommendations. Hungary still lacks a GPP-related national policy.

Moreover, GPP tenders could be more and more focused on circularity aspects. To reach this goal it is essential to make a match among the technical issues connected to circularity of goods and services and the capacity of the public sector to include these elements in their tenders.

According to the EC's most recent announcements (COM(2020) 98), the direction will be toward the expansion and further promotion of the use of GPP, and concurrently toward the standardisation of approaches and environmental criteria, in such a way to avoid a distortion of the single market and reduce the administrative burden for economic operators and public administrations implementing GPP.

To comply with the upcoming EC indications and make GPP truly effective it is crucial to make its adoption more homogeneous and consistent in the European context, and in particular in Central Europe. It is essential to create uniform, understandable, and quantifiable criteria for public tenders. In this sense, C/GPP can push towards greater economic competitiveness in the area, creating a single market based on the criteria of environmental sustainability and circularity.

On the other hand, the private sector needs actors (employees) able to respond to the aforementioned regulations in a way that is in line with circularity principles. However, lack of knowledge of environmental issues, a poor understanding of the public market and a lack of awareness of the potential of the eco-sustainable sector is still a crucial issue to face among private stakeholders.

C/GPP has a huge potential, which can be unleashed by matching demand and supply. So it's critical to support companies in the adoption of circular processes in order to fulfil public procurement requirements. This support should begin with the provision of tools that can help companies evaluate and improve their production processes in terms of sustainability and circularity. These procedures also encompass the development of new skills for employees, the promotion of research and innovation, and the creation of new employment prospects.

1.2 The project

CE-PRINCE Central Europe Green PRocurement and Innovation Network for Circular Economy is a project co-funded by the European Union Interreg Central Europe programme. It started on the 1st of June, 2024 and ends on the 30th of November 2026. through a collaborative effort of 10 EU partners and 14 associated partners. Liguria Region (LR), the lead partner for CE-PRINCE project is a regional authority which, according to the Green Public Procurement (GPP) national plan, is responsible for its implementation at the regional level. The Strategic Development Department together with the Sustainable Development are in charge of coordinating the project.

The transnational partnership aims to support the transition to a Circular Economy in Central Europe (CE) by leveraging Green Public Procurement (GPP) as a means to improve companies' circularity while reinforcing the public sector's capacity to publish tenders containing more and more elements of circularity.

Circular Procurement considers the whole lifecycle of goods and services to avoid negative environmental impacts and waste creation and achieve an overall reduction in the amount of energy and materials consumed.

Circular/Green Public Procurement (C/GPP), a significant contributor to the EU GDP at 14%, is a powerful tool for the green transition. It not only enhances market competitiveness but also stimulates eco-innovation. However, the varying implementation rates and levels of obligation across countries pose a challenge. To maintain a level playing field and reduce administrative costs, standardisation of techniques and environmental standards is essential.

Recognising the pivotal role of public authorities, business support organisations, and industry agencies in driving the private sector, the project calls upon them to face the challenge of Circular/Green Public Procurement. The project focuses on strengthening businesses' ecological transition and raising awareness in the public sector about its crucial role. This will foster a shared approach to C/GPP in CE.

Including circular principles in GPP criteria accelerates the transition of supply chains to a more circular economy, leveraging the matching between public demand and supply.

Implementing circular business models for companies is an essential step in terms of circular sustainability and improving competitiveness in Central Europe.

The project is articulated into 3 Work Packages:

- WP1 – Transnational Strategy for Circular Green Public Procurement
- WP2 – Enhancing the circularity of GPP: Action Plan, Pilot Action and Solution for the Public Sector
- WP3 – Improving Circular Market in CE: Action Plan, Pilot Action and Solution for enterprises.

Therefore, CE Prince starts by conducting an in-depth survey of the dynamics on the demand and supply sides to define a transnational strategy (WP1) that, by meeting the needs of the different countries, can be translated into action plans and pilot actions (WP2 and WP3). The set of tools that will be defined by the project for the public side (strengthening of C/GPP) and the market side will support the transformation and enhancement of the circular economy in Central Europe.

Notably the WP2 works on the demand side, defining an action plan with concrete actions aimed at improving the capability of public bodies to apply GPP as a leverage to promote circular economy across Central Europe. Within the pilot actions concrete tools - such as circular criteria for green tenders and guidelines - will be drafted and tested.

While WP3, working on the supply side, aims at improving the capability of companies in the adoption of circular economy processes and to participate to C/GPP public tenders: for this purpose and action plan for the private sector will be developed, while the pilot action, carried out with a sample of enterprises, foresees capacity building actions and practical tools to improve their circularity.

During the project, the partnership will be supported by the Advisory Board (AB), a permanent group of advisors conceived as a link between the project and stakeholder groups at regional, national and European level. The activity is coordinated by RL with the contributions of all partners.

The board will be composed of at least one referent of the partner' regional stakeholders' groups and C/GPP experts chosen among national authorities, EU officers, other EU projects referents and associated partners, and will meet at least 3 times.

The AB will provide their contribution to the project' Transnational Strategy and Guidelines (WP2-WP3) definition mainly focusing on creating a synergy on existing networks at European level (such as Enterprises Europe Network or the European Commission GPP Advisory Board) and building a dialogue on C/GPP

Results and policy recommendations from the AB will be disseminated in order to raise awareness and provide transparency about what and how was accomplished by the project.

2. Tender

2.1 The contractor

ERI Hungary - European Research Institute Nonprofit Ltd Co (ERI Hungary) is responsible for managing the communication activities of the Central Europe Green PRocurement and Innovation Network for Circular Economy (CE-PRINCE) Interreg Central Europe project, led by Liguria Region, Italy.

ERI Hungary is a non-profit company established by the Turin (Italy) based ERI Foundation and a Hungarian expert and promotes research and innovation in the areas of protection of the environment and social inclusion. Its mission is to improve the social, economic and cultural conditions of European citizens, enhance social inclusion of vulnerable-marginalised individuals, and promote respect for the environment and all living beings. ERI is committed to foster societal changes for protecting our world, enhancing circularity and sustainability.

2.2. Objective

In this tender - ERI Hungary in close cooperation with LR - is seeking for services to support the professional work of the CE PRINCE Advisory Board and ensure a wide reach and application among the European stakeholders in enhancing Circular/Green Public Procurement across Europe, promote and share the results of the project EU-wide.

The services should be provided by organisations with a seat in the EU with a broad network, having specific expertise in green public procurement and able to guarantee the involvement of local and regional governments across Europe and the wider dissemination/involvement of EU public and private stakeholders operating in the field of GPP.

The selected organisation will represent the link between the project and stakeholders at regional, national and European level via the project's Advisory Board activities, aiming at building an open dialogue on C/GPP towards policymakers and reinforce the stakeholders' involvement in the project results of both public authorities and companies.

It will promote the CE-PRINCE approach to have a resonance within European networks, raise awareness of the importance of C/GPP, and widespread knowledge transfer at different levels (policy, governance, international professional organizations and networks and external stakeholders).

3. Location

The services shall be carried out in Europe with special attention to the Central European regions.

4. Duties

The contracted entity will carry out and take responsibility for the following specific project activities:

4.1. WP1 – Transnational Strategy for Circular Green Public Procurement

Goal: Raising awareness on the importance of Circular/Green Public Procurement among European stakeholders via professional involvement in the spread of the Transnational Strategy for Circular Green Public Procurement in Central Europe (O.1.1) and to the development of the Circular Public Procurement Network in Central Europe (O.1.2).

Duties in the activities:

Activity 1.2 Definition of Transnational C/GPP Strategy for Central Europe: using their network disseminate the reviewed and improved Transnational Strategy across Europe: proven reach of at least 250 local, regional, and national governments and 25 professional organisations active in the field, including European policymakers, governance, international professional organizations and networks, relevant stakeholders. Initiation of receiving feedback to be shared with project partners.

Activity 1.3 Advisory Board: Support to and participation in the work of the CE-PRINCE Advisory Board (AB) coordinated by the lead partner Liguria Region: mapping the relevant stakeholders in the field of Circular Economy, and Circular/Green Public procurement, suggestions for involvement of at least 5 relevant experts from European/national authorities, EU bodies, networks to the advisory board meetings. Raise awareness of the importance of C/GPP by reviewing and giving feedback and disseminating the AB reviewed and approved main project documents (such as Strategies, Action Plans, circular green criteria and guidelines, news, educational materials, etc..) using the map (contact list) provided to the AB as relevant stakeholders for the CE-PRINCE project. Contributing to the development and sharing of the CE-PRINCE news, press releases, social media contents and leaflets via their network for at least 300 organisations.

4.2. WP2 – Enhancing the circularity of GPP: Action Plan, Pilot Action and Solution for the Public Sector

Goal: Awareness on the potential of GPP to boost Circular Economy, understanding circular criteria, Change mentality of public procurers: capability and role in applying C/GPP and Change decision makers' attitudes to build responsibility and drive the change to circularity via engagement in the Transnational Action Plan (TAP) to improve Public Sector practices for C/GPP in Central Europe (O.2.1) to set a common approach to C/GPP; Pilot Action: Assessment and improvement of C/GPP tenders (O.2.2) and Jointly developed solutions: The sets of circular green criteria and guidelines for manufacturing, agrifood, constructions and tourism related goods/services (O.2.3).

Duties in the activities:

Activity 2.1 Transnational Action Plan to enhance Circular Market leveraging GPP practices: using their network disseminate the reviewed and improved Action Plan across Europe: proven reach of at least 250 local, regional, and national governments and 25 professional organisations active in the field, including European policymakers, governance, international

professional organizations and networks, relevant stakeholders. Initiation of receiving feedback to be shared with project partners.

Activity 2.2. Pilot Action: Nurturing public authorities' technical abilities for circular GPP: Support to the identification of public authorities across Europe to be involved in the testing of environmental criteria in their tenders, engage PAs in the pilot activities from Central Europe, and strengthens public procurers' knowledge and skills regarding C/GPP with a focus on the process of public tender drafting and tender assessments in the awarding phase, share the practical guidelines with at least 300 organisations to facilitate C/GPP application by procurers to public tenders, in order to push the market toward circular economy.

2.3 Capacity Building to match Circular Economy with Green Public Procurement: promote the participation of the capacity building activities, engage decision-makers and public procurers from Central Europe, encourage and promote the use of the C/GPP Capacity Building toolkit (D.2.3.1) and the C/GPP Capacity Building Board Game (D.2.3.2) and disseminate the C/GPP Reports on Capacity Building (D.2.3.3) across Europe, searching for feedback.

Activity 2.4 Peer to peer exchange and Demand-Supply symposia on C/GPP: Support the identification of best practices and successful stories to be presented during the peer-to-peer meetings and demand-supply symposia, promote the events among at least 300 organisations across Europe, share audio-visual materials and media contents (D.2.4.1) and infographics and video tutorial (D.2.4.3) with stakeholders, asking for feedback.

4.3. WP3 – Improving Circular Market in CE: Action Plan, Pilot Action and Solution for enterprises.

Goal: Facilitate and accelerate the spread of C/GPP, change attitudes and behaviours of companies towards circular/green approaches, enhance awareness about environmental and economic benefits of implementing circular processes and business models. Raise awareness on the advantages and gains for companies via circular processes when responding to public tenders.

Duties in the activities:

Activity 3.1 Transnational Action Plan to improve enterprises circularity and compliance with C/GPP criteria: using their network disseminate the reviewed and improved Action Plan across Europe.

Activity 3.3 Capacity Building to enhance circularity and skills to comply to C/GPP criteria: Contribute professionally to the webinars and trainings by suggesting at least 3 experts for the Webinars and trainings on C/GPP (D.3.3.1), ensure media presence and uptake with international professional organizations, promoting the Circular/GPP Business Models and Guidelines (O.3.3) across Europe.

4.4. Overview of contributing to the success of CE-PRINCE project:

By ensuring EU-wide networking, transferability and dissemination, the Contracting Party will contribute to the implementation of the project by:

- promoting the CE-PRINCE approach to have a resonance within European networks,
- raising awareness of the importance of C/GPP, and widespread knowledge transfer at different levels (policy, governance, international professional organizations and networks and external stakeholders)

- representing the link between the project and stakeholders at the regional, national and European level and build open dialogues on C/GPP towards policymakers
- mediating the development of policies on C/GPP promoted through the actions of the project, receiving opinions and recommendations from the higher governance level and advise on the integration of the efforts
- promoting and disseminating the project outputs and results when acting as a link towards European networks working on Circular Economy and EU Green Public Procurement Advisory Board
- contributing to the uptake of the durable tools, methodologies and information and training materials to increase knowledge on C/GPP
- sharing good practices exchange, knowledge, data, solutions to enhance Circular/GPP
- contribution to the uptake of the Circular/Green Public Procurement Standard Criteria (O.2.3) and aligning the results with the most recent achievement at European level.
- ensuring transferability and encouraging superior EU levels to spread the principles of circularity
- representing a privileged basin of expertise and experiences in which to continue the dialogue on C/GPP towards policymakers.

5. Deliverables

5.1 Required deliverables

The awarded organisation shall provide the following documents by email and using an online document storage (Drive) before every reporting obligation in the project:

- Report on the duties delivered under WP1 activities; proofs of reached stakeholders and their feedback
- Report on the duties delivered under WP2 activities; proofs of reached stakeholders and their feedback
- Report on the duties delivered under WP3 activities; proofs of reached stakeholders and their feedback
- Overall report on results

5.2 Timeline of activities

The consultant while accomplishing its duties shall contribute to the deliverables of the Work Package activities according to the timeline of the project. Below is a not-yet-finalised timeline which might change slightly but it is for the indication of the workload of the activities.

DELIVERABLES	2025												2026 ¹											
	Jan 31	Feb 28	Mar 31	Apr 30	May 31	Jun 30	Jul 31	Aug 31	Sep 30	Oct 31	Nov 30	Dec 31	Jan 31	Feb 28	Mar 31	Apr 30	May 31	Jun 30	Jul 31	Aug 31	Sep 30	Oct 31	Nov 30	
D.1.3.1 A) Reports of Advisory Board meetings																								
D.1.3.1 B) Publishable AB meeting reports, summarizing main achievements																								
D.1.3.2 A) AB recommendations for the C/GPP Transnational Strategy for CE (A.1.2)																								
D.1.3.2 B) AB recommendations for Action Plan to enhance GPP/circularity of Public Administrations (A.2.1)																								

¹ The timeline may change according to the plans of the Work Package leaders

D.1.3.2 C) AB recommendations for Action Plan to enhance GPP/circularity of Public Administrations (A.2.1)																				
D.1.3.2 D) AB recommendations for Nurturing public authorities' technical ability for Circular GPP (A.2.2)																				
D.1.3.2 E) AB recommendations for Capacity Building to match Circular Economy with Green Public Procurement (A.2.3)																				
D.1.3.2 F) AB recommendations for Transnational Action Plan to improve companies Circularity (A.3.1)																				
D.1.3.2 G) AB recommendations for the Innovative tool for enterprises circularity detection and solutions testing (A.3.2)																				
D.1.3.2 H) AB recommendations for Capacity Building for companies on circularity and C/GPP (A.3.3)																				



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<p>D.1.3.2 I) AB results and policy recommendation disseminated for raising awareness of the importance of C/GPP (A.1.3)</p>																			
<p>D.1.3.3 Communication Materials disseminated via existing channels and networks to support the dialogue with policy makers (A.1.3)</p>																			
<p>D.2.4.2 Peer-to-peer and symposia Central European exchange meetings and events are shared best practices across Central Europe on peer-to-peer meetings, symposia, the local events on an international platform (A.2.4)</p>																			
<p>D.3.1.2 Communication Events to facilitate and accelerate the spread of C/GPP</p>																			

5.3 Reporting

The project requires to report about its activities in every 6 months. As the contracted organisation's activities take part in the project implementation, it is obliged to report about its achievements and results. The reports are due by

- 01 June 2025
- 01 December 2025
- 01 June 2026
- 01 December 2026

6. Timeframe

The deadline for submission for the call for tender is **29/11/2024**. Quotations shall be submitted by replying to the call or send it to ce-prince@eri.net.in.

Candidates will be notified about the results of the selection process by 04/12/2024. It is expected that before starting the assignment, the service provider must attend a preliminary online meeting provided by the Project Coordinator. The assignment starts after the signing of the contract by both parties and lasts until 04/12/2026.

7. Budget

The maximum budget for this service is EUR 37.500,00 (including all charges).