



Green Public Procurement (GPP) in ASEAN

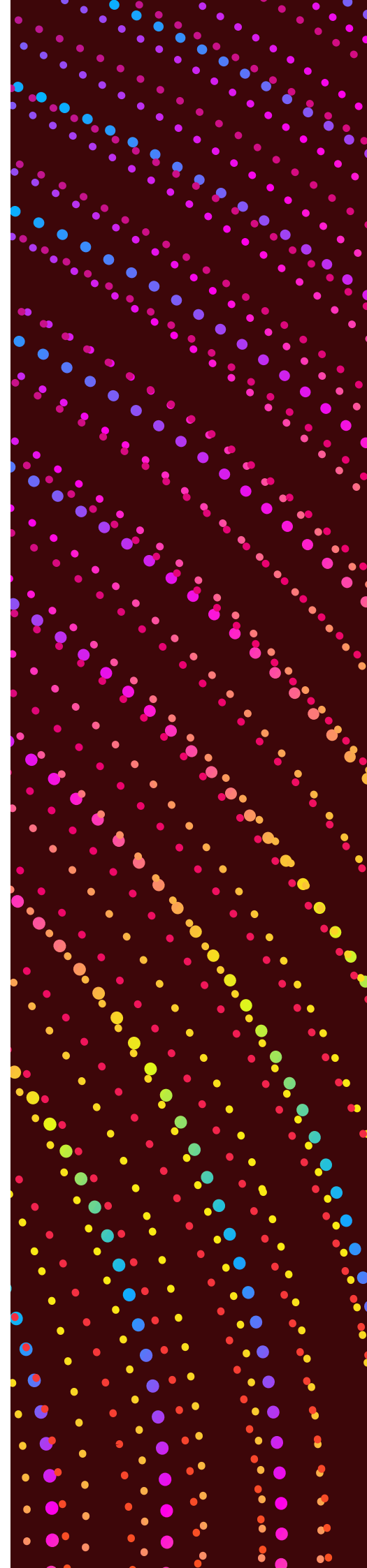
A Way Forward

Working Paper

switchasia



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Abbreviations

10YFP	10-year Framework of Programmes on SCP
ACSDSD	ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue
ACSS	ASEAN Community Statistical System
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AMS	ASEAN Member States
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APRSCP	Asia Pacific Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production
ASEC	ASEAN Secretariat
AWGCME	ASEAN Working Group on Coastal and Marine Environment
AWGCW	ASEAN Working Group on Chemicals and Waste
AWGEE	ASEAN Working Group on Environmental Education
AWGESC	ASEAN Working Group on Environmentally Sustainable Cities
CE	Circular economy
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019; SARS-CoV-1
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investment
GDP	Gross domestic products
GPP	Green public procurement
GSA	General Services Administration
KPI	Key performance indicator(s)
LCC	Life-cycle cost
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MRAs	Mutual recognition arrangements
MSME	Micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises
NAPs	National action plans
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions (Paris Agreement)
PFM	Public Financial Management (PFM) Systems
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	Small- and medium-sized enterprises
SPP	Sustainable public procurement
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper, *Green Public Procurement (GPP) in ASEAN: A Way Forward*, was developed to support the ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework, specifically its goal of establishing best practices for green products and GPP guidelines. Initiated by SWITCH-Asia following the decision by the ASEAN Working Group on Environmental Education (AWGEE) to address each pillar of the SCP Framework individually, the scope of this paper was expanded to encompass economic frameworks such as the **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025** and the **Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community**. Leveraging SWITCH-Asia's extensive experience in Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) across ASEAN, this paper provides actionable strategies to accelerate GPP adoption, address implementation gaps, and position GPP as a key driver of sustainable development, regional market integration, and economic resilience.

A comprehensive analysis of challenges and opportunities for ASEAN Member States (AMS) is provided, while strategic pathways required to accelerate GPP are presented, underscoring the critical role of GPP in advancing sustainable development, fostering innovation, and promoting equitable economic growth across the region. By providing practical recommendations and actionable strategies, this paper aims to strengthen GPP implementation, ensuring alignment with regional and global sustainability objectives while accommodating the diverse contexts and capacities of AMS. This approach promotes a unified regional effort to drive progress towards a resilient and sustainable future.

The paper begins by introducing the ASEAN context and highlighting the relevance of GPP for achieving the region's long-term sustainability and economic resilience. It examines three key regional strategic frameworks: the **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025**, the **ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework**, and the **Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community**. These frameworks emphasise the need to integrate sustainability into procurement practices to support regional economic integration, resource efficiency, and circular economy principles. Given the significant public expenditure on procurement within AMS, GPP is positioned as a strategic tool to stimulate markets for sustainable goods and services, reduce environmental impacts, and enhance social equity.

The paper then explores the current state of GPP across AMS, examining the legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks governing GPP, the institutional capacities needed for effective implementation, and the dynamics of public procurement operations, market practices, and accountability mechanisms. An in-depth analysis of opportunities and gaps reveals disparities in GPP maturity levels across AMS, highlighting the need for tailored national strategies and coordinated regional efforts. The analysis also highlights the importance of market readiness and engagement, particularly for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to ensure a reliable supply of sustainable products and services. Addressing these gaps is essential for enhancing competition, reducing procurement costs, and ensuring successful GPP implementation.

Drawing on international experiences, the paper offers insights into global trends in GPP implementation. It details the GPP policies and practices of the European Union (EU), including recent advancements and key lessons learned. Additionally, GPP initiatives within APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) are examined, with a specific focus on the USA's federal procurement policies. The emergence of regional procurement networks in regions such as Africa, Europe, and the Americas is highlighted, illustrating how collaborative frameworks can facilitate knowledge exchange, innovation, and the harmonisation of procurement practices. These international examples provide a valuable blueprint for ASEAN to develop its own regional strategies, ensuring policy coherence and market competitiveness.

The paper further outlines the Development of a Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming GPP in AMS that focuses on enhancing **Scale** (expanding GPP adoption across high-impact sectors), **Scope** (implementing GPP at all levels of government), and **Impact** (achieving measurable environmental, social, and economic benefits). The Framework encourages AMS to systematically assess their GPP maturity levels, identify strengths and gaps, and implement targeted actions to advance their programmes. By adopting this structured approach, AMS can take the lead in sustainable procurement, contributing to economic resilience, environmental stewardship, and inclusive growth in alignment with regional and global sustainability goals.

To support GPP implementation, based on the analysis of ongoing GPP practices, and acknowledging existing strategic documents, the paper introduces **two essential tools** for elevating GPP in AMS in a **flexible yet coordinated manner**:

1. **ASEAN GPP Maturity Self-Assessment Tool**, which provides a structured approach for AMS to enhance the **Scale, Scope, and Impact** of their GPP programmes. Centred around seven pillars – Policy; Institutional Structures; Capacity Building; Market Readiness; Harmonisation of Standards and Ecolabels; Integration with Public Financial Management (PFM) Systems; and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) – the framework helps AMS assess their current maturity levels, identify areas for improvement, and develop tailored strategies to advance GPP. This flexible approach allows each member state to progress based on its unique context while ensuring alignment with regional goals.
2. **Roadmap for Operationalisation of GPP at ASEAN Secretariat Level**: This roadmap outlines **60 activities** under **10 strategic areas** aimed at supporting AMS in mainstreaming GPP. These activities focus on policy development, capacity building, harmonisation of standards, market engagement, and monitoring and evaluation. By implementing these initiatives, the ASEAN Secretariat can provide consistent guidance, technical support, and regional coordination to enhance GPP efforts across AMS. This roadmap ensures that national strategies benefit from shared resources, best practices, and a collaborative regional approach.

Recognising the uneven levels of GPP maturity across AMS, the paper encourages each country to develop tailored national roadmaps while incorporating relevant activities from the regional roadmap. This approach promotes synergy between national and regional initiatives, while enhancing policy coherence, efficiency, and mutual reinforcement. Strengthening market readiness and engaging SMEs are critical to ensuring a robust supply chain of sustainable products and fostering inclusive economic growth.

In conclusion, this paper is intended to serve as a strategic guide for accelerating GPP implementation in ASEAN, offering actionable recommendations and a phased roadmap to enhance GPP across the region. To align national GPP policies with regional sustainability goals, a resource for policymakers, procurement professionals, businesses, and development partners is provided. Emphasising the need to broaden the scale, scope, and impact of GPP programmes, the paper supports capacity building, policy harmonisation, and market transformation. High-impact sectors are identified, and mechanisms to enable SME participation are outlined. By promoting a common understanding of procurement policies and fostering inter-regional trade, this document ensures AMS can transition towards a resource-efficient, circular, and low-carbon economy while achieving sustainable development goals through short-, medium-, and long-term activities.

SWITCH-Asia would like to express its sincere appreciation to the focal points in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Malaysia for their comprehensive responses to the questionnaire, which provided critical data and country-specific insights, enriching the depth of this study. Thanks are also due to Rowena Candice M. Ruiz, Government Procurement Policy Board, Philippines for sharing GPP policy and practices in her country. Further thanks to Isabella Loh, Chairperson, Singapore Environment Council, for providing insights on GPP practices in Singapore. Special acknowledgement is also given to the participants of the ASEAN+3 Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Leadership Programme (Vientiane, Nov 2–4 2024), whose extensive discussions were instrumental in identifying key gaps, challenges, and practical solutions for mainstreaming Green Public Procurement (GPP) across ASEAN. Their contributions have helped shape the strategic recommendations in this paper, ensuring that they align with both regional priorities and on-the-ground realities. Additionally, SWITCH-Asia acknowledges the valuable input of Dr Thoa Nguyen Bao for her analysis of EU trade agreements with ASEAN Member States, offering crucial perspectives on the intersection of trade policies and green procurement. Furthermore, we extend our gratitude to all of the experts who generously took the time out of their busy schedules to review this paper, providing critical insights and feedback that strengthened both the content and the practical applicability. These collaborative efforts have significantly enriched this working paper, ensuring that it will serve as a valuable and actionable guide for accelerating GPP adoption and fostering green procurement practices across the region.

2. INTRODUCTION

Public procurement accounts for 15%–30% of GDP in countries, making it a powerful tool for driving sustainability, innovation, and inclusive economic growth. By incorporating environmental and social considerations into purchasing decisions, Green Public Procurement (GPP) can accelerate the transition to resource-efficient, low-carbon, and circular economies. In the context of ASEAN, where member states are working towards regional integration and sustainable development, GPP offers a strategic opportunity to achieve these goals while fostering market transformation and regional competitiveness.

SWITCH Asia, through its Policy Support Component (PSC), has been at the forefront of supporting ASEAN Member States (AMS) in shifting from business-as-usual to a sustainable consumption and production (SCP) pathway, with a particular emphasis on Green/Sustainable Public Procurement (G/SPP). The initiative has provided technical assistance to countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines in the past, and is currently collaborating with Cambodia, Malaysia, and Vietnam on G/SPP. Through these engagements, SWITCH Asia has gained valuable insights into both the progress and challenges of G/SPP implementation across the region. While AMS have made notable progress, significant challenges remain, impeding the full realisation of G/SPP's transformative potential. This initiative underscores SWITCH Asia's commitment to supporting ASEAN Member States in advancing G/SPP as a strategic tool for sustainability, ensuring that public procurement plays a pivotal role in operationalising the **ASEAN SCP Framework** and driving meaningful progress towards sustainable development.

This working paper, *Green Public Procurement (GPP) in ASEAN: A Way Forward*, provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of GPP within ASEAN Member States (AMS). It examines challenges, opportunities, and best practices to help AMS strengthen GPP implementation and align their national procurement policies with regional and international sustainability objectives. The paper contextualises GPP within key regional strategic frameworks, including the **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025**, the **ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework**, and the **Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community**. These frameworks emphasise the critical role of sustainable procurement in achieving environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic resilience.

To support AMS in mainstreaming GPP, this paper introduces two essential tools: the **ASEAN GPP Strategic Framework** and the **Roadmap for Operationalisation of GPP at the ASEAN Secretariat Level**. These tools provide a structured approach to enhance the **Scale, Scope, and Impact** of GPP programmes, offering guidance on capacity building, policy harmonisation, and market engagement, particularly for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). By promoting regional cooperation and policy coherence, these efforts aim to drive innovation, strengthen institutional capacity, and facilitate cross-border trade in sustainable goods and services.

Designed for policymakers, procurement officials, businesses, and development partners, this paper serves as a strategic guide for fostering sustainable procurement practices across ASEAN. Through coordinated action and shared commitment, ASEAN can position itself as a leader in GPP, contributing to global sustainability goals and ensuring long-term economic, social, and environmental resilience.

2.1. Methodology

This Working Paper has been developed through a meticulous, multi-step, and consultative approach to ensure it is relevant, comprehensive, and aligned with the regional priorities of ASEAN Member States (AMS). The entire development process is shown in Figure 1. The SWITCH-Asia team undertook an extensive desk review of existing policies, strategies, and best practices related to Green Public Procurement (GPP) across AMS. This process involved examining a wide range of relevant documents, reports, and academic literature to build a solid understanding of the current landscape of GPP in the region. To gather more substantial and targeted insights, a well-structured questionnaire (Annex A) was emailed to SWITCH-Asia focal points in each ASEAN Member State. This step facilitated input collection from a relevant institution, ensuring a holistic perspective on the challenges and opportunities associated with GPP implementation.

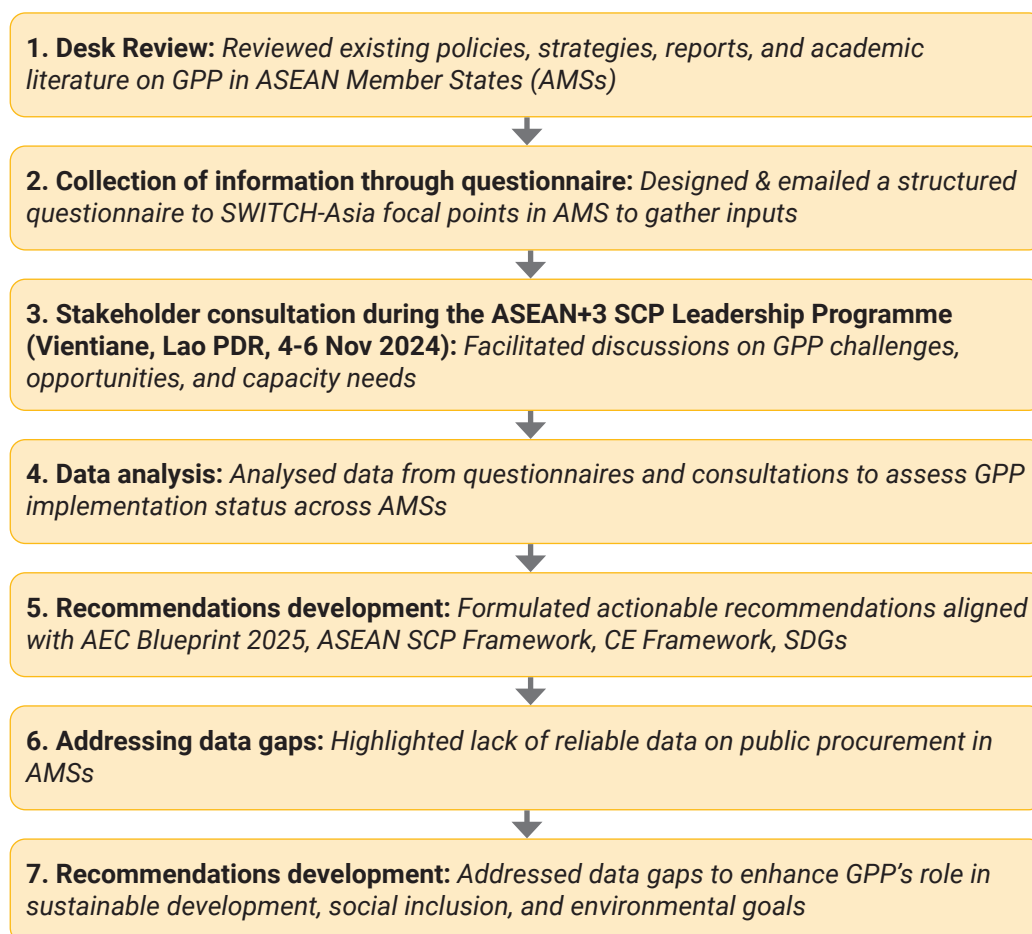


Fig 1. Development Process for the Working Paper

Following this data collection step, a stakeholder consultation was organised during the **12th-Plus-Three (ASEAN+3) Leadership Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)** held in Vientiane, Lao PDR, from November 4th to 6th, 2024. This event provided a platform for in-depth discussions, enabling stakeholders to articulate their views on the current state of GPP, as well as the capacity needs and opportunities for operationalising GPP within the ASEAN SCP Framework. The consultation drew participation from a wide range of actors, fostering dialogue and collaboration to identify critical gaps and practical solutions for mainstreaming GPP across the region.

Based on the inputs and feedback gathered from stakeholders, a thorough analysis was conducted to assess the status of GPP implementation in each ASEAN Member State. This analysis helped pinpoint key areas where additional support is required to integrate GPP more effectively into national procurement frameworks. The findings have been synthesised into a set of actionable recommendations aimed at scaling, expanding, and enhancing the impact of GPP programmes. These recommendations are designed to align with the **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025**, the **ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework**, the **Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community** and the broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

2.2. ASEAN context

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries is an economic grouping of 10 countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) with common objectives and a Charter (see Figure 2, below). One of the objectives of the group is to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development among members. ASEAN countries plan to establish a common market that will ensure free flow of goods, services, investment, labour and capital within the member countries.



Fig 2. ASEAN Political Map

ASEAN accounts for nearly 9% of the world's population, with almost half its population below 30 years of age.¹ ASEAN has witnessed a strong shift from rural to urban areas, with nearly half its population living in cities in 2022. Unemployment rates have been decreasing over the last decade, with a slight spike during the COVID pandemic, and tapering down again to 4.1% in 2022. ASEAN countries, despite being at different stages of development, have demonstrated a consistent growth trajectory, with their economies more than doubling since 2000. ASEAN nominal GDP per capita stood at USD 5,395 at the end of 2022, an increase of 37.6% from 2015. The region's nominal GDP grew from USD 1.6 trillion in 2009 to USD 3.6 trillion in 2022, and it is projected to reach USD 4.5 trillion by 2030, positioning ASEAN as the fourth-largest economy in the world.² ASEAN nations accounted for 7.0% of global GDP in 2023 and contributed 8.5% to global GDP growth between 2013 and 2023. This steady economic growth highlights the region's increasing importance on the global stage and underscores its potential as a hub for trade, investment, and innovation.

The total regional trade in goods reached USD 3.8 trillion in 2022, with a trade surplus of USD 77.9 billion. The intra-ASEAN trade remained the highest, contributing to 22.9% to the total trade, with China (14.8%), USA (14.8%), EU (9%) and Japan (6.8%) becoming major export trading partners for ASEAN.³ As per the ASEAN Statistical Highlights 2023, the flow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the region has also been growing, with total FDI reaching USD 224.2 billion in 2022. According to S&P Global, the ASEAN region is expected to remain one of the fastest-growing regions of the world economy.

Economic activity in ASEAN varies significantly across member states. Manufacturing is the leading contributor to GDP in countries like Thailand (27%), Myanmar (25.4%), Vietnam (24.8%), Malaysia (23.4%), Singapore (21.6%), and Indonesia (18.3%).⁴ Meanwhile, Cambodia and Lao PDR rely more heavily on agriculture, forestry, and fishing, which account for 22.2% and 17.8% of their GDP, respectively. In Brunei Darussalam, the mining and quarrying sector dominates the economy, comprising 43% of GDP, while the Philippines' economy leans on

¹ ASEAN Statistical Highlights 2023, ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta, Indonesia.

² Available at <https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/mi/research-analysis/asean-economic-outlook-in-2024-jan24.html>. Accessed on 10.10.2024

³ ASEAN Statistical Highlights 2023, ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta, Indonesia.

⁴ ASEAN Statistical Brief, Volume IV, January 2024, Available at https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/00.-ASEAN-Statistical-Brief-on-GDP_19Jan2024.pdf

wholesale and retail trade, which contributes 18.1% to the country's GDP. These variations reflect the diverse economic foundations of ASEAN countries, each facing unique challenges and opportunities. Geopolitical dynamics, particularly the 'China Plus One' strategy adopted by many Western countries to diversify supply chains, have further helped to position ASEAN as a preferred investment destination.⁵ This trend could drive significant economic growth, provided the region enhances its infrastructure, energy systems, and policy frameworks to accommodate new investments and sustainable growth models.

As ASEAN's economic growth continues to surge, driven by rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, and a young population, the region faces the dual challenge of meeting escalating consumption demands while maintaining environmental sustainability. ASEAN's GDP has more than doubled since 2000, reaching USD 3.6 trillion in 2022; it is projected to hit USD 4.5 trillion by 2030. With a combined population of 672 million, including 213 million young people aged 14 to 34, the region holds immense potential for sustained growth. However, this demographic advantage also leads to a significant rise in resource consumption, necessitating substantial investments in infrastructure, services, and sustainable development. According to the **Global Resource Outlook 2024**, domestic material extraction in ASEAN has increased by 89% since 2000, and the region's material footprint (domestic extraction plus raw material trade balance) now accounts for 56% of the global total, up from 41% in 2000. This escalating demand for materials globally has become a major driver of the triple planetary crisis – climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution – contributing to 60% of global climate deterioration, 40% of air pollution-related health effects, and over 90% of water stress and land degradation. To address these challenges, ASEAN must pursue a monumental shift towards sustainable materials management and circular economy principles, coupled with strategic investments in resource-efficient infrastructure and the decarbonisation of energy systems and material production.

2.3. Relevance of GPP in the ASEAN context

The concept of using public procurement to achieve horizontal policy objectives has a long history, including within ASEAN member states. While there is growing momentum at the ASEAN level to align procurement regulations with a broader policy agenda, some countries are still in the process of fully harnessing the potential of public procurement for development. Despite challenges, sustainable and green procurement policies have gained significant traction globally, including in the ASEAN region. The inclusion of S/GPP in the SDG targets has solidified its role as a strategic tool for advancing broader development objectives. The conversation has shifted from whether to adopt S/GPP policies to how best to apply them to achieve national goals.

This shift in perception is driven by a stronger focus on 'Value for Money.' This principle has positioned public procurement as a powerful means of integrating sustainability with economic growth and social welfare. By considering the broader societal benefits, the inclusion of environmental and social considerations in procurement decisions becomes not just feasible but necessary. Competitive bidding in public procurement also offers authorities the opportunity to achieve cost efficiencies while advancing public good. Ultimately, sustainable procurement leverages competition and innovation to unlock the market's potential for sustainable solutions, transforming markets and achieving broader public goals.

In the ASEAN context, Green Public Procurement (GPP) stands out as a strategic lever for addressing ASEAN's resource efficiency challenges while advancing its low-carbon, circular economy ambitions. By embedding sustainability criteria into public procurement practices, GPP has the potential to transform high-impact sectors such as construction, transportation, and food systems. For instance, GPP can drive energy efficiency in buildings, appliances and industrial processes, aligning with the 8th ASEAN Energy Outlook's recommendations for reducing energy intensity and operational costs.⁶ Moreover, GPP can support ASEAN's climate commitments, with seven countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, and Vietnam) pledging net-zero targets by 2050 and others committing to substantial greenhouse gas reductions by 2030.⁷ Leveraging public procurement to prioritise sustainable goods and services not only accelerates

5 McKinsey & Company, Diversifying Global Supply Chain: Opportunities in Southeast Asia, Available at <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/logistics/our-insights/diversifying-global-supply-chains-opportunities-in-southeast-asia#/>

6 ASEAN Centre for Energy (2024), 8th ASEAN Energy Outlook 2023-2050; Available at <https://aseanenergy.org/publications/the-8th-asean-energy-outlook/>

7 International Energy Agency (2023) Decarbonisation Pathways for Southeast Asia, Available at <https://www.iea.org/reports/decarbonisation-pathways-for-southeast-asia>

resource efficiency but also catalyses market transformation across supply chains and address the dual challenge of increasing resource needs to support the growing consumption requirements of its population while remaining within planetary limits and reducing income inequality in the region.

Unfortunately, reliable data on public procurement remain scarce, especially at decentralised levels, making it difficult to assess procurement impact accurately. Current estimates suggest public procurement accounts for only 5%–8%⁸ of GDP in ASEAN countries, significantly lower than the 12.9% observed in OECD countries in 2021. Although this comparison is not statistically accurate, as the figures come from studies conducted during different time periods, this gap underscores the need to scale up Sustainable/Green Public Procurement (S/GPP) from isolated initiatives to a standard practice, embedding sustainability criteria seamlessly into procurement processes.

2.4. Overview of regional strategic frameworks and economic ambitions

While Green Public Procurement (GPP) policies and practices have been adopted by several ASEAN Member States (AMS), discussions at the regional level have, to date, remained limited. The ASEAN Secretariat has not yet fully leveraged GPP as a mechanism for achieving regional goals related to sustainable consumption, production, and circularity. However, in recent years, three significant strategic documents, namely the **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025**,⁹ the **ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework**,¹⁰ and the **Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community**,¹¹ have underscored the direct relevance of GPP. The ASEAN SCP Framework explicitly identifies GPP as a key pillar for SCP implementation, while the Framework for Circular Economy highlights the necessity of a demand-side policy, effectively referring to GPP, for operationalising circular economy goals.

GPP also has the potential to support the objectives of several other strategic ASEAN initiatives, such as the **ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan**, the **ASEAN Declaration on Green Jobs**, the **ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation**, the **ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development**, and the **ASEAN Regional Action Plan on Combating Marine Debris**. This alignment reflects the growing recognition of GPP as a critical demand-side strategy for driving sustainable investment and market transformation. By strategically harnessing public procurement, ASEAN can stimulate markets for sustainable products and services, foster innovation, and accelerate progress towards regional sustainability and circular economy goals. Therefore, these strategic documents mark a significant change in the way GPP is perceived by leaders and policymakers within ASEAN community.

2.4.1. ASEAN Economy Community Blueprint 2025



The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025 offers a transformative vision for ASEAN's evolution into a highly integrated, competitive, and inclusive economic region. It is built on five interlinked pillars: fostering economic cohesion, driving innovation and competitiveness, enhancing connectivity and sectoral cooperation, advancing inclusive and people-centred development, and strengthening ASEAN's global positioning. Central to this vision is the reduction of trade barriers through harmonised standards, mutual recognition arrangements, and aligned regulations, creating a seamless and unified regional market. The Blueprint underscores the vital role of micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) as the backbone of ASEAN's economies, with strategic measures to enhance their access to finance, technology, and markets, as well as capacity-building initiatives to boost their resilience and global competitiveness. Recognising the importance of adapting to global mega-trends, such as digitalisation and green technology, the Blueprint prioritises innovation, trade facilitation, and sustainable growth to secure ASEAN's relevance and leadership in the global economy.

8 Gourdon, J. and V. Bastien (2019), 'Government Procurement in ASEAN: Issues and How to Move Forward', In Ing, L.Y., R. Peters and O. Cadot (eds.), *Regional Integration and Non-Tariff Measures in ASEAN*. Jakarta: ERIA, pp.182-221.

9 Available at <https://asean.org/book/asean-economic-community-blueprint-2025/>

10 Available at <https://environment.asean.org/fresources/detail/asean-scp-framework-implementation-mechanism-2022>

11 Available at https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Framework-for-Circular-Economy-for-the-AEC_Final.pdf

Sustainability lies at the heart of the Blueprint, integrating environmental stewardship, clean energy adoption, and SCP into ASEAN's economic framework. Thus it sets a robust foundation for advancing GPP across AMS. GPP aligns with and can potentially accelerate key objectives outlined in the Blueprint by promoting environmental sustainability, enhancing market competitiveness, and supporting MSMEs. Elevating GPP within ASEAN Member States (AMS) would not only contribute to achieving these objectives but also provide a framework for addressing emerging global mega-trends such as digital transformation, clean energy adoption, and sustainable consumption and production.

GPP reinforces the objectives of the Blueprint contributing to a more sustainable, integrated, and resilient ASEAN economy. GPP serves as a strategic tool to advance key priorities outlined in the Blueprint. Elevating GPP among AMS would not only contribute to achieving these objectives, it would also provide a framework for addressing emerging global mega-trends such as digital transformation, clean energy adoption, and SCP.

The Blueprint creates the enabling conditions necessary to accelerate the adoption and success of GPP across AMS. Some of the interlinkages are highlighted below.

❖ **Facilitating trade and harmonising standards**

GPP can drive the harmonisation of standards and technical regulations across AMS, a key pillar of the AEC Blueprint for facilitation of trade among AMS. By embedding green criteria into product standards and ecolabels, GPP encourages the alignment of national policies with international sustainability benchmarks, reducing non-tariff barriers and facilitating cross-border trade. Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) for ecolabels can further enhance trade flows, enabling businesses to reduce cost of compliance to different standards and to compete in a unified, sustainable ASEAN market.

❖ **Empowering MSMEs and strengthening value chains**

The AEC Blueprint emphasises the development of MSMEs as a critical driver of regional economic integration. GPP supports this by creating demand for sustainable products and services, offering MSMEs opportunities to upgrade their capabilities and participate in green value chains. Targeted initiatives such as green financing platforms, capacity-building programmes, and digital procurement systems would enhance competitiveness of MSMEs, enabling them to access new markets and integrate into regional and global value chains.

❖ **Promoting digital and green technology integration**

GPP aligns with the Blueprint's focus on leveraging digital technology and green innovation to enhance trade and investments. Upgraded e-GP platforms incorporating a facility for embedding sustainability in procurement decisions can streamline processes, improve transparency, and enable real-time tracking of sustainability repercussions. Moreover, fostering the adoption of green technologies – such as resources and energy efficient solutions and circular economy practices – through GPP would catalyse innovation and strengthen ASEAN's position as a hub for sustainable innovations.

❖ **Driving sectoral cooperation and sustainability**

GPP can target high-impact sectors identified in the AEC Blueprint, such as construction, energy, transport, and agriculture, to maximise environmental and social benefits. By integrating sustainability criteria into public procurement for these sectors, ASEAN can collectively address resource efficiency, reduce emissions, and promote the adoption of clean energy technologies. Regional collaboration in these areas would enable AMS to pool resources, share knowledge, and implement scalable solutions tailored to ASEAN's unique context.

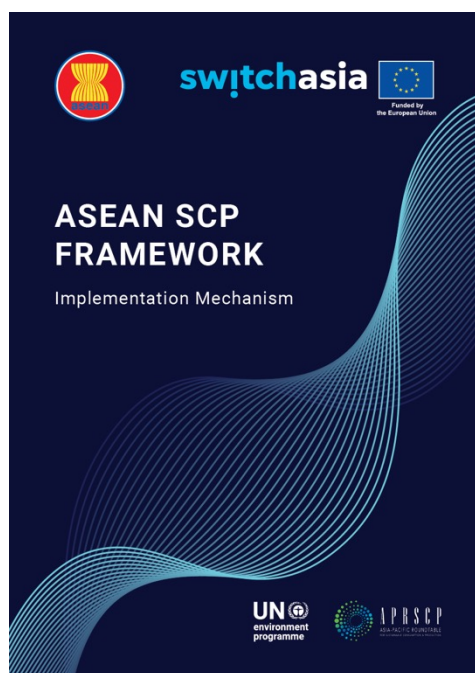
❖ **Aligning with global sustainability goals**

The AEC Blueprint recognises the importance of sustainable economic development as integral to growth. GPP strengthens this commitment by embedding sustainability into public spending, ensuring that government procurement supports clean energy adoption, resource conservation, and the circular economy. Such efforts would align ASEAN with global frameworks like the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), enhancing the region's global competitiveness and reputation.

The AEC Blueprint emphasises the importance of operationalising its strategic measures through actionable plans, monitoring systems, and capacity-building initiatives. By integrating GPP into the AEC Blueprint's strategic action plan, ASEAN can institutionalise sustainability within its economic development agenda. Clear milestones and targets for GPP adoption at the national and regional levels, supported by capacity-building initiatives and robust monitoring frameworks, would ensure consistent progress and alignment with regional and global sustainability goals. Furthermore, GPP provides a practical mechanism to translate the Blueprint's sustainability vision into actionable outcomes, fostering inclusive growth and environmental stewardship.

The ASEAN Secretariat, as a coordinating body, can facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration and engage stakeholders to operationalise GPP. By promoting strategic partnerships among governments, academia, and the private sector, the Secretariat can ensure the seamless integration of GPP into broader economic initiatives, driving a sustainable and resilient future for ASEAN.

2.4.2. ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework



The ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework recognises the crucial role of Green Public Procurement (GPP) in addressing the consumption needs of the region's population while respecting planetary boundaries. GPP is identified as one of the four key goals for regional action, guiding efforts to implement SCP in alignment with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG 12). This emphasis on GPP underscores its importance in promoting sustainable development and responsible consumption across ASEAN member states.

The Framework highlights the challenges faced by SMEs in greening their supply chains, which consequently hampers the progress of Green Public Procurement (GPP) in the region. It underscores the need to enhance SMEs' capabilities to transition towards producing greener products and services, emphasising that this shift is crucial for the region to move towards a resource-efficient, circular, and low-carbon economy. Accelerating the implementation of GPP is positioned as a key catalyst in this process, as it can drive the transformation of production processes by generating strong demand for sustainable

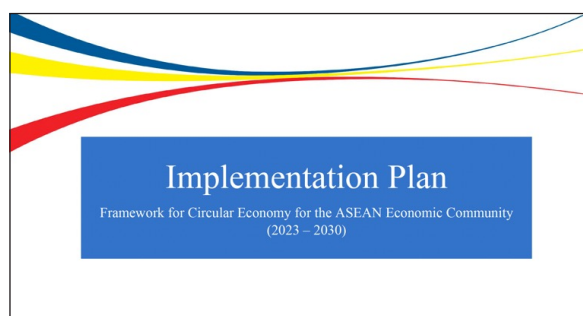
products and services. The Framework proposes several strategic actions to operationalise Green Public Procurement (GPP) and facilitate the region's green transition. These include developing regional guidance on GPP best practices to provide member states with a clear set of standards and examples to follow. It emphasises the importance of enhancing technical skills and offering financial incentives to SMEs to support their green transformation, enabling them to adopt more sustainable production methods and technologies.

Additionally, the Framework advocates for establishing a community of practice and comprehensive capacity-building programmes, fostering knowledge sharing and collaboration among stakeholders to strengthen GPP implementation. It also calls for the creation of a national green product directory, which would serve as a centralised resource for identifying and promoting environmentally friendly products and services. Lastly, increasing public awareness about green products is identified as a critical area of action, aiming to educate consumers and encourage demand for sustainable options. Together, these initiatives form a holistic approach to operationalising the Framework and driving the region towards a sustainable future. The ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME) has been identified as a nodal agency for implementation of activities related to SMEs.

2.4.3. Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community (2023–2030)

The Framework for Circular Economy (CE) for the ASEAN Economic Community outlines a transformative roadmap to guide the region towards a resource-efficient, resilient, and sustainable economic model. It identifies five strategic priorities essential for fostering circular products and services: (1) harmonisation of standards and mutual recognition agreements to facilitate trade in circular goods; (2) promoting trade

openness and facilitation for circular goods and services; (3) leveraging innovation, digitalisation, and emerging green technologies to green supply chains; (4) enhancing access to competitive sustainable financing and innovative ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) investments; and (5) ensuring the efficient use of energy and other resources. Together, these priorities aim to create an ecosystem that minimises waste, maximises the lifecycle value of resources, and supports ASEAN Member States (AMS) in achieving their carbon reduction targets under the Paris Agreement.



A central tenet of the Framework is the implementation of demand-driven policies, such as Green Public Procurement (GPP), to prioritise the use of circular products in the member states. GPP serves as a key enabler of ASEAN's transition to a circular economy by driving market demand for goods and services aligned with circular principles. By aligning public procurement processes with harmonised CE standards and mutual recognition agreements, GPP can reduce trade barriers and facilitate the seamless movement of circular

goods across borders. Embedding CE requirements into public procurement policies not only stimulates regional markets for circular goods and services but also encourages businesses to adopt sustainable production practices. GPP further promotes the adoption of innovative circular practices within supply chains, including take-back schemes, leasing models, and the use of renewable or recycled materials.

Moreover, GPP plays a critical role in empowering MSMEs to innovate and adopt circular economy practices by providing predictable and sustainable demand for green products. This, in turn, incentivises investment in resource-efficient processes and supports regional economic competitiveness. By fostering collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity, GPP strengthens ASEAN's commitment to a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy, ensuring the region remains at the forefront of global sustainability efforts while driving equitable growth and prosperity.

Overall, the three frameworks – the **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025**, the **ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework**, and the **Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community** – collectively underscore the urgent need to rethink and elevate Green Public Procurement (GPP) as a strategic tool for sustainable development within the region. These frameworks highlight the interconnected goals of trade facilitation, MSME development, digital transformation, and environmental sustainability, demonstrating how GPP can drive market transformation, support circular economy practices, and align public procurement with global sustainability objectives. The SCP Framework explicitly positions GPP as a pillar for achieving sustainable consumption and production, while the Circular Economy Framework calls for demand-driven policies like GPP to operationalise circularity goals. The AEC Blueprint reinforces these priorities by focusing on harmonised standards, innovation, and inclusive growth. Together, these strategic documents make a compelling case for accelerating GPP adoption in ASEAN Member States (AMS), recognising it as a catalyst for economic resilience, environmental stewardship, and regional competitiveness in a rapidly evolving global economy. By fully integrating GPP, ASEAN can achieve its vision of a dynamic, sustainable, and inclusive future.

3. ASSESSMENT OF GREEN PROCUREMENT POLICIES ACROSS ASEAN MEMBER STATES

In the absence of any recognised framework to assess GPP implementation at the regional level, this paper has explored GPP progress at the country level as per OECD's Methodology for Assessment of Procurement System (MAPS)¹² Supplementary module on Sustainable Public Procurement. Accordingly, the progress has been assessed across four pillars – Legal, Regulatory and Policy Framework, Institutional Framework and Management Capacity, Public Procurement Operations and Market Practices, and Monitoring & Evaluation of GPP Programme to get a complete picture of GPP implementation in the ASEAN countries.

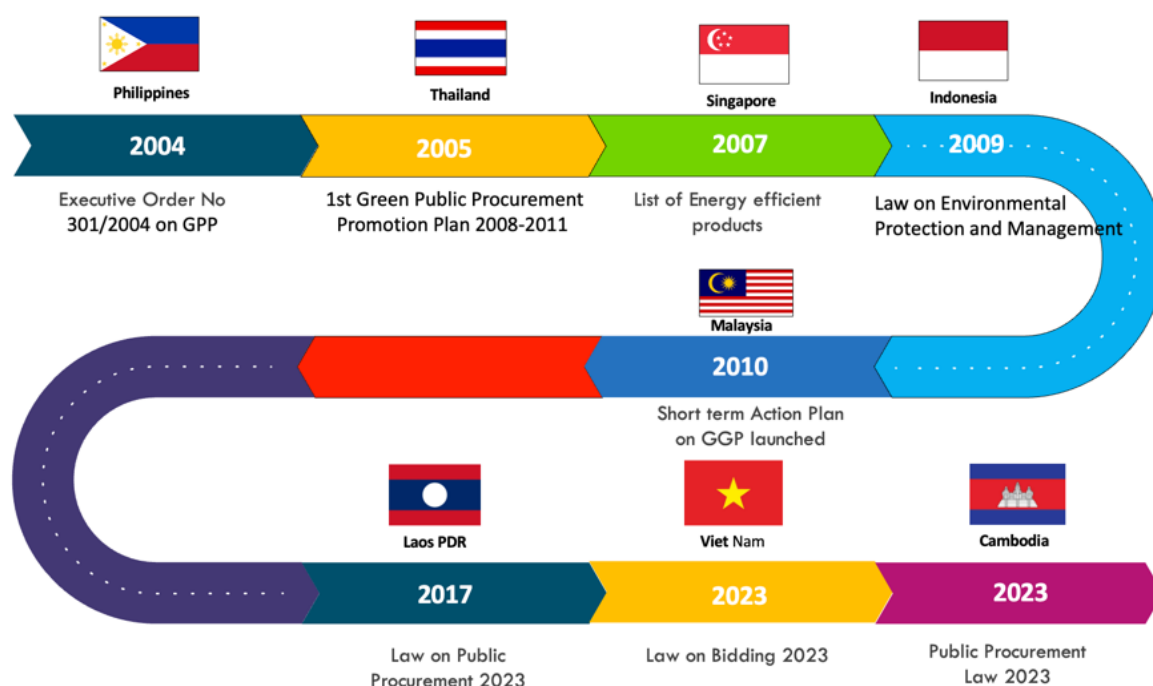


Fig. 3. ASEAN Journey on GPP – a country timeline

3.1. Legal, regulatory and policy framework

The ASEAN region has a long history of adopting policy and practices aimed at furthering SCP. All countries except Brunei and Myanmar have broader strategic documents and action plans¹³ at national level that encourage SCP practices, including green procurement policy and procedures to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth in their country. Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam have also adopted the SCP Road Map & Action Plan that underlines importance of GPP as a transformative tool to transition their economy towards a resource efficient, low carbon, sustainable and inclusive development path.

Though most of the ASEAN countries understood the potential of GPP policy for bringing about the market transformation necessary for achieving broader national sustainability goals, they embraced it at different points of time; and not all countries followed the same trajectory, or achieved the same maturity level in GPP implementation (see Figure 3, above).

¹² Available at <https://www.mapsinitiative.org>. Accessed on 03.03.2025

¹³ Cambodia – Cambodia Vision 2050; Indonesia – National Action Plan on SDGs; Lao PDR – National Green Growth Strategy; Malaysia – 12th Malaysia Plan; Philippines – The Philippines Development Plan 2023-28; Singapore – Singapore Economy 2030; Thailand – 20 Years National Strategy; and Viet Nam – Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2021-30.

The analysis of the current GPP legal framework in AMS reflects the following broad characteristics.

❖ **Start of Activities – beginning of GPP adoption and initial implementation**

The Philippines (2004) and Thailand (2005) were early adopters. Vietnam and Cambodia are recent entrants, introducing GPP laws in 2023. Myanmar supports GPP indirectly through sectoral policies.

❖ **Legal structure – existence of laws, executive orders, strategic action plans supporting GPP**

Comprehensive laws exist in the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand. Malaysia relies on executive orders and policies. Myanmar supports GPP through sectoral programmes, and Singapore allows environmentally friendly procurement without explicit policies.

❖ **Regulatory depth – extent of secondary legislation elaborating primary laws or policies.**

The Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam have developed secondary regulations or consistent updates to primary laws. Cambodia is working on elaborating secondary legislation. Myanmar and Singapore have limited or no secondary regulatory frameworks.

❖ **Sustainability dimensions – Inclusion of environmental, economic, and social criteria in procurement.**

The Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam address the environmental, economic, and social aspects of GPP. Malaysia and Indonesia focus primarily on environmental and economic dimensions, while Myanmar emphasises sector-specific environmental policies.

❖ **Policy integration – GPP integration into broader development strategies and national plans.**

Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines have integrated GPP into national development plans. Vietnam and Cambodia have stand-alone GPP policies, but they are found in other strategic documents. Singapore and Myanmar lack formal integration of GPP into broader strategies.

The evolving legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks for GPP in ASEAN countries reflect a dynamic and adaptive approach to achieving sustainable development goals. While the region has progressed at different speeds and along diverse trajectories, the growing inclusion of GPP within national strategies, laws, and action plans underscores a collective recognition of its transformative potential. Recent legal advancements in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Lao PDR indicate a positive shift towards embedding sustainability directly into procurement legislation, supported by secondary regulations. This trend not only strengthens the legal foundation for S/GPP but also ensures a systematic approach to integrating environmental, social, and economic considerations into public procurement decisions.

3.2. Institutional framework and management capacity

Japan's pioneering adoption of Green Public Procurement laws has set a critical precedent for the Asia-Pacific region, providing a robust framework for promoting environmentally sustainable procurement practices. Mirroring Japan's approach, ASEAN countries like the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia have not only developed their own GPP policies but have also established institutions responsible for managing national ecolabels and facilitating the adoption of GPP by practitioners. Their collaboration with government agencies ensures that procurement decisions are guided by credible ecolabel standards, thus strengthening sustainable purchasing practices across the region. However, as GPP has evolved into Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP), incorporating economic, environmental, and social considerations, institutional mechanisms have also adapted to meet these broader ambitions. The broad analysis of institutional framework in the region reflect the following key characteristics.

3.2.1. Leadership in GPP – Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment taking lead in GPP implementation

Mirroring Japan's approach, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand took the lead in developing GPP policy development and implementation. In newer

entrants like Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam, on the other hand, finance ministries are increasingly taking the leading role as the scope of GPP expands to cover social concerns as well.

3.2.2. Inter-ministerial Coordination – A structured approach for effective implementation

Malaysia excels with its GPP Steering Committee, while the Philippines has strong inter-ministerial coordination through its Procurement Policy Board. Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam lack similar coordination mechanisms, hindering their ability to fully realise the potential of GPP.

3.2.3. Ecolabelling Programmes – A critical tool for GPP adoption in early stages

All the countries in the region except Myanmar and Brunei have established Type 1 Ecolabelling programmes, although their maturity levels vary. Ecolabelling supports GPP by making green choices clearer for public procurement professionals. Most countries, except Thailand, have not prioritised high impact sector such as construction, energy, transport, and agriculture, identified in the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025.

3.2.4. Building Management Capacity – Efforts to train procurement professionals and develop institutional capacities

National Ecolabelling bodies in countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines have taken lead in training procurement professionals to handle GPP and engage in outreach, education, and market development to foster a culture of sustainable procurement. In contrast, ecolabelling bodies in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam need to be strengthened internally to play such crucial role in accelerating GPP in their countries.

3.2.5. e-Government Procurement (e-GP) system – Simplifying GPP implementation and evaluation

Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand are more advanced in the application and use of e-GP, while others like Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar are in the early stages of developing an e-GP system. Enhancing these systems to include sustainability considerations offers a significant opportunity to streamline and scale GPP efforts up.

The evolution of GPP throughout ASEAN highlights both progress and persistent challenges in embedding sustainability into procurement systems. While national ecolabelling institutions, inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms, and finance ministries are playing an increasingly vital role in advancing GPP, gaps remain in linking procurement policies with broader Public Finance Management (PFM) systems and national development plans. Strengthening these connections will be critical to institutionalising GPP and ensuring its long-term impact. Countries that have integrated GPP within national action plans, such as the Philippines and Lao PDR, demonstrate the benefits of a structured, strategic approach. Meanwhile, the digital transformation of procurement through e-GP systems remains uneven across the region, with many platforms lacking the functionality to systematically integrate sustainability criteria.

3.3. Public procurement operations and market practices

GPP implementation across AMS varies significantly across the region due to differences in procurement systems, institutional capacities, market readiness, and policy frameworks. Some countries, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand, have developed robust procurement tools, ecolabelling schemes, and policy guidelines to support the identification and acquisition of environmentally friendly goods and services. Others are still in the early stages of embedding sustainability into their procurement frameworks. Key factors influencing GPP maturity include the level of market engagement, integration of social and life-cycle considerations, alignment with national development plans, and the role of sub-national governments in driving sustainable procurement. Based on these characteristics, ASEAN countries can be grouped into five thematic areas that reflect their progress and challenges in advancing GPP. These thematic areas offer insights into how different policy, institutional, and market dynamics shape GPP implementation and what steps can be taken to scale it up across the region.

3.3.1. Market readiness and supplier engagement – A key differentiator in GPP adoption

In countries like Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, industry associations and ecolabelling bodies play a crucial role in market development and help bridge the gap between government procurement needs and market supply. Public-private partnerships and platforms such as the Thai Eco-Products Directory and MyHIJAU Mark support businesses in aligning with procurement requirements, enhancing market transformation, and promoting the adoption of sustainable practices. Other countries like Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam lack such mechanism to engage with suppliers for accelerating their GPP programme.

3.3.2. Sectoral focus and coverage of GPP Criteria

The most commonly adopted product and service categories in the region are paper, air conditioners, furniture, cement, paint, LED lighting, textiles, cleaning services, vehicles, and ICT equipment. However, they still need to expand their GPP frameworks to cover high-emission sectors such as construction, energy, transport, and agriculture, ensuring that procurement decisions drive meaningful environmental and economic transformation.

3.3.3. Sub-national implementation and decentralisation – amplify impact, foster sustainability practices

GPP implementation in most countries remains largely centralised, limiting broader adoption at the sub-national level. Only few ASEAN countries, such as the Philippines (Quezon City) and Malaysia, are beginning to expand Green Public Procurement (GPP) to sub-national and municipal levels, recognising the potential for local governments to drive sustainability initiatives.

3.3.4. Development of tools for GPP Implementation – key for accelerating GPP implementation

Nations like Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines have flourishing national Ecolabels and introduced comprehensive GPP guidelines to provide step-by-step instructions for integrating sustainability criteria into procurement decisions. Newer countries like Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam lack such tool for guiding procurers in integrating sustainability in procurement decisions.

3.3.5. Targets and monitoring of GPP Programme

Countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand have set targets for GPP implementation, and they monitor implementation progress. Countries like Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Myanmar are in the process of developing their monitoring and evaluation platforms for GPP, which is a positive step with respect to their current stage of GPP development.

Two significant gaps across the ASEAN region are the lack of reporting on the social aspects of GPP, and the continued reliance on manual data collection methods, which hinders the efficiency, completeness, and transparency of GPP reporting.

The varying levels of GPP implementation across ASEAN highlight the progress made in raising market ambitions and aligning procurement processes with national sustainability goals. Countries with strong institutional frameworks, market engagement mechanisms, and well-defined ecolabelling programmes are leading the way, while others need further capacity building and policy support to scale up their efforts. Expanding GPP into high-impact sectors, strengthening sub-national implementation, and integrating sustainability considerations into e-GP systems will be critical to achieving long-term sustainability goals. By leveraging best practices and fostering regional cooperation, ASEAN countries can accelerate GPP adoption, drive market transformation, and contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive economy.

3.4. Accountability, integrity and transparency in the Public Procurement System

Transparency, accountability, and integrity are fundamental to an effective GPP system, ensuring that procurement processes are equitable, efficient, and aligned with long-term sustainability objectives. In the ASEAN region, these principles are being increasingly embedded within GPP frameworks through structured policy development and multi-stakeholder engagement. Notably, countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand have actively involved industries and businesses, including SMEs and industry

associations, in the development of GPP criteria. This inclusive approach has helped ensure that GPP policies are practical, market-responsive, and conducive to fostering greener alternatives. By engaging stakeholders throughout the policy formulation process, these countries are enhancing market readiness, encouraging innovation, and building trust in procurement practices.

3.5. In-depth analysis of opportunities and gaps in ASEAN countries

The status of GPP in ASEAN countries reflects a dynamic yet uneven landscape, shaped by varying levels of legal maturity, institutional readiness, and market engagement. While significant strides have been made, the region presents both challenges and untapped opportunities for accelerating GPP implementation. However, the differing levels of GPP maturity, the inconsistent integration of sustainability criteria, and the fragmented implementation approaches across ASEAN highlight critical areas for improvement.

A key strength in ASEAN's GPP journey is the adoption of national strategies and action plans that promote SCP. Countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam have incorporated GPP within their SCP Roadmaps and Action Plans, emphasising resource efficiency, low-carbon development, and inclusive growth. Early adopters like the Philippines (2004) and Thailand (2005) set important precedents, while recent legislative advancements in Vietnam and Cambodia demonstrate a growing commitment to embedding all three dimensions of sustainability into procurement practices. However, the pace and trajectory of GPP adoption vary significantly, with Brunei and Myanmar lagging due to a lack of comprehensive policies and dedicated legal frameworks.

Despite progress, many AMS still face gaps in developing robust regulatory structures, particularly in the comprehensiveness and enforcement of legal frameworks. While countries like the Philippines and Thailand have reinforced their GPP policies through dedicated legislation, others, such as Vietnam and Cambodia, are still in the process of establishing secondary regulations to operationalise their recently enacted procurement laws. Singapore, despite its advanced economy, lacks an explicit GPP policy, leaving green procurement decisions to the discretion of individual agencies. This disparity underscores the need for a consistent approach to GPP policy development that combines flexibility with accountability and ensures comprehensive legal backing. This also presents an opportunity for newer adopters to learn from the experiences of their regional peers. Additionally, ASEAN-wide cooperation and agreement on minimum common GPP principle and criteria can reduce fragmentation and promote regional trade in sustainable goods and services.

Institutional frameworks also exhibit significant variation. In the early stages of GPP adoption, Ministries of Environment played a central role in policy development, inspired by Japan's model. However, as the concept of strategic procurement expanded to include social and economic dimensions, the involvement of finance ministries became crucial. In countries like the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia, finance ministries now play a pivotal role in GPP implementation. In contrast, newer adopters such as Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam lack robust inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms, which hampers the effective rollout and scaling of GPP. Malaysia's GPP Steering Committee, jointly chaired by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology, and Water, serves as a best practice for fostering inter-agency collaboration and strategic oversight.

Capacity-building and market engagement represent another critical gap. While countries like Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia have developed GPP guidelines and ecolabelling schemes to support procurement officials, the absence of comprehensive capacity-building programmes in newer GPP adopters poses a challenge. Additionally, it is observed that GPP implementation in ASEAN remains largely confined to federal levels, limiting its overall impact. Although Quezon City in the Philippines has enacted a Green Public Procurement Ordinance and Malaysia is considering extending GPP to local governments, broader participation at the municipal level is essential for scaling GPP across the region.

Monitoring and evaluation of GPP programmes in ASEAN remain inconsistent and underdeveloped. While Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines have set targets and collect data on GPP implementation, the lack of standardised indicators and automated reporting systems undermines the effectiveness of these efforts. Moreover, social aspects of GPP, such as labour rights, SMEs, employment generation and social inclusion, are rarely monitored, and manual data collection methods further hinder transparency and

efficiency. This gap presents a significant opportunity for ASEAN countries to adopt harmonised monitoring frameworks and digital reporting systems. Investing in e-procurement platforms that automate data collection and reporting can enhance transparency, efficiency, and comparability. By strengthening monitoring and evaluation, AMS can build public trust, attract international support, and demonstrate their commitment to sustainable development.

The alignment of GPP criteria with national ecolabels has facilitated procurement processes in several AMS, including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. However, these ecolabels primarily focus on environmental aspects, leaving social sustainability considerations largely unaddressed. The absence of a life-cycle approach to procurement in many AMS also limits the effectiveness of GPP in achieving long-term sustainability goals. To address these challenges, ASEAN countries must integrate social and economic criteria into ecolabelling schemes and procurement processes, ensuring a holistic approach to sustainability.

In conclusion, while ASEAN countries have made notable strides in developing GPP policies, frameworks, and practices, significant gaps remain in regulatory consistency, institutional coordination, capacity-building, monitoring, and the integration of social criteria. Except Thailand, most countries are still focusing on low value low impact items. AMS need to revisit their policy and align their GPP initiatives with the strategic priorities identified in the **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025**, the **ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework**, and the **Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community**. To accelerate GPP implementation, AMS must prioritise the development of National Action Plans, establish robust inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms, establish linkage with PFM system, invest in digital platform, and expand capacity-building initiatives. By addressing these gaps, ASEAN can harness the full potential of GPP as a strategic tool for achieving a resource-efficient, low-carbon, and inclusive economy, positioning the region as a leader in sustainable development on the global stage.

4. GLOBAL TRENDS IN GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IMPLEMENTATION

The 2020 SDG Indicator 12.7.1 data collection exercise¹⁴ undertaken by UNEP revealed that out of 53 participating countries, only 9 achieved a high maturity level in Green Public Procurement (GPP) implementation. Notably, eight of these countries are EU members, while the USA, a leading Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member, was the only non-EU country to reach this level. Given ASEAN's objective of establishing a single market and production base – facilitating the free flow of goods, services, investment, and skilled labour – it is both strategic and prudent to deepen engagement with GPP best practices in the EU and APEC, specially the USA. Understanding how these trading blocs have successfully integrated sustainability into procurement frameworks can provide valuable insights for ASEAN Secretariat and AMS. Adapting these learnings into the legal and regulatory structures of AMS will help enhance regional market competitiveness, align procurement with climate objectives, and position GPP as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth and trade integration across ASEAN.

4.1. GPP experiences in the European Union

European countries have been global pioneers in the adoption and advancement of GPP policies and practices, with nations such as Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK (the 'Green-7') achieving high levels of GPP maturity. These countries have influenced multilateral organisations like UNEP and set benchmarks for sustainable procurement practices worldwide. The EU's commitment to GPP dates back to the 2004 procurement directives, which initially focused on environmental considerations. In 2008, the European Commission (EC) expanded this commitment through the Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and Sustainable Industrial Policy, and introduced initiatives like the Procurement for a Better Environment report. This laid the foundation for using GPP to drive innovation in environmental technologies, products, and services. Strategic policies such as Resource Efficient Europe, EU 2020 Strategy, Circular Economy Action Plan, and the Green Deal have continually reinforced GPP as a key tool for achieving sustainability goals across EU Member States.

The EU's GPP framework, although voluntary, is supported by mandatory directives in specific sectoral legislations like Energy Efficient Directive, Clean Vehicles Directives, Eco-design for Sustainable Products Regulations and Energy Performance of Building Directive.¹⁵ To facilitate implementation, the EC developed common GPP criteria for various product and service categories, providing guidelines on technical specifications, award criteria, and contract performance clauses.¹⁶

These criteria, which can be applied at either a Core or Comprehensive level, give flexibility to contracting authorities based on their sustainability ambitions. Member States have customised these guidelines to their national contexts, with countries like France, the Netherlands, and Poland expanding the scope of GPP criteria to additional product categories. Furthermore, many European countries have prioritised environmental considerations over social equity in procurement practices, but increasingly the move to incorporate social considerations – such as decent work and working conditions, social inclusion, and equal opportunities – demonstrate the EU's commitment to holistic sustainability. The EU's progressive approach to GPP serves as a robust model for other regions, illustrating how strategic procurement can drive market transformation and sustainable development.

While most EU countries adopted GPP frameworks early on, based on EU procurement directives, there is nonetheless considerable variation in how countries have implemented GPP to reflect their local and national contexts. While some nations have only recently begun strategic GPP planning, others such as Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Belgium have fully integrated GPP and are now advancing specialised goals

¹⁴ Available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/37967/SDG.pdf> Accessed on 30.01.2025

¹⁵ Available at https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/green-public-procurement/gpp-criteria-and-requirements_en. Accessed on 07.12.2024

¹⁶ Available at https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/44278090-3fae-4515-bcc2-44fd57c1d0d1/library/f69e60f9-9dc6-4345-aa18-b9a4b6dfdbf0?p=1&n=10&sort=name_ASC, Accessed on 07.12.2024

like climate action and the circular economy. This diversity underscores the importance of flexibility and political commitment in procurement regulations. In particular countries with mandatory provisions appear to have done better in GPP implementation and reaching sustainability benefits, thus increasingly the trend is towards mandatory application of GPP criteria. For example, the horizontal sustainable public procurement policy of the Dutch central government applies to all tenders and has led to a large increase of GPP uptake.¹⁷ In the Czech Republic the use of GPP has become compulsory since 2021; contracting authorities can apply 'non-green' procurement only if they have a sufficient justification.

Europe's leadership in GPP is driven by the strategic use of National Action Plans (NAPs), which provide tailored frameworks for integrating sustainability into public procurement. While EU countries operate within a common framework, NAPs allow each country to outline clear goals, priorities, and timelines suited to their developmental needs. **Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Belgium** have leveraged their NAPs to develop tools, resources, and capacity-building initiatives that empower contracting authorities to implement GPP effectively. These plans ensure a systematic approach that combines political commitment, regulatory flexibility, and stakeholder engagement – key factors for achieving high levels of GPP maturity. NAPs also facilitate coordination between national and sub-national governments, aligning procurement strategies with broader sustainability objectives like climate action, circular economy, and social equity. By incorporating both mandatory and voluntary GPP criteria, NAPs provide adaptability while maintaining ambition, and help countries address challenges like capacity gaps and market readiness. Moreover, they enable harmonisation with regional and international standards, ensuring consistency and accountability. Ultimately, NAPs serve as vital instruments for sustaining momentum, driving market transformation, and achieving the concurrent goals of environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic development. Through well-designed NAPs, countries can leverage their purchasing power to achieve long-term success and resilience in an evolving global economy.

The European Commission defines *professionalisation* in public procurement as equipping contracting authorities with the appropriate tools, knowledge, and information to manage procurement processes effectively and achieve sustainability objectives. Professionalisation ensures that procurement practices align with broader policy goals, such as environmental protection, social equity, and economic efficiency. **The UK and the Netherlands**, which have invested in professionalising their public procurement workforce by developing knowledge exchange networks and providing practical tools, have demonstrated greater success in implementing SPP. For example, the Public Procurement Expertise Centre (PIANOO) in the Netherlands functions as a tool for a community of practice for public procurement practitioners.¹⁸ These countries have shown that a well-trained procurement workforce can seamlessly integrate sustainability criteria into tendering processes, driving meaningful progress towards sustainability goals.

In contrast, countries such as **Slovenia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Latvia, and Estonia** – where professionalisation efforts have been limited or absent – have struggled to achieve similar outcomes. The lack of systematic training, resources, and support structures in these countries has hindered their ability to adopt and effectively scale up SPP. Specifically, procurers who are equipped with the right skills and knowledge understand that incorporating sustainability into purchasing decisions does not necessarily increase costs. Instead, they recognise that sustainable procurement can generate long-term economic savings while delivering environmental and social benefits. This underscores the importance of professionalisation in empowering procurers to make informed decisions that align with sustainability objectives and public procurement policy, ensuring that procurement serves as a strategic tool for achieving national and regional development goals.

Recognising the critical role of knowledge and skills in SPP, and particularly in GPP, the EU and its Member States have launched several initiatives to professionalise procurement functions at both supranational, national and subnational levels. The European Commission provides financial support for pan-EU activities, projects, and campaigns designed to facilitate the adoption of SPP practices. For example, the Commission funds the **Procurement Forum**,¹⁹ which enables communication and collaboration among procurement experts and practitioners on SPP-related issues. Additionally, networking events supported by the Commission

17 Ruben Nicolas, Vítězslav Titl, Fredo Schotanus, European funds and green public procurement, *Ecological Economics*, Volume 227, 2025, 108400, ISSN 0921-8009, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2024.108400>.

18 OECD (2023) Professionalising the Public Procurement Workforce: A review of current initiatives and challenges, OECD, Paris, France.

19 Available at <https://iclei-europe.org/projects/?c=search&uid=wRUJoloP>

foster the exchange of ideas and best practices. At the member-state level, national governments have established competence centres that offer tools and resources to simplify the integration of sustainability into procurement processes. These coordinated efforts aim to build procurement capacities that are well-equipped to meet sustainability objectives effectively.

The main lesson learned from GPP experiences in Europe is perhaps the unrelenting support of political leaders combined with decisive investment in creating institutions and tools to capitalise on green procurement as an enabler of circular economy and green growth.

4.1.1. Recent developments in GPP in the European Union Countries

The EU continues to lead in GPP through comprehensive policies and innovative initiatives aimed at achieving climate neutrality and a circular economy by 2050. Central to this vision is the **European Green Deal**, which emphasises the role of public authorities in setting a precedent for sustainable procurement while addressing the risks of greenwashing. To enhance transparency, the EU has proposed an **Digital Product Passport**,²⁰ providing detailed information on a product's origin, composition, repairability, and end-of-life management. Additionally, the Green Deal advocates for integrating climate-friendly procurement practices into trade agreements, reinforcing the link between GPP and global sustainability goals. These measures are designed to stimulate markets for sustainable goods and services, ensuring that procurement decisions support environmental and ethical standards.

The EU is also addressing key barriers to GPP adoption, such as perceived higher upfront costs, through targeted funding mechanisms. The **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)**²¹ co-finance public projects in economically less developed countries, enabling contracting authorities to prioritise sustainable procurement without financial constraints. Initiatives supporting research, like **Horizon Europe**,²² support pre-commercial procurement and innovation procurement, driving research and development in areas where private-sector investment is limited. These funding programmes encourage public authorities to pursue greener projects and innovative solutions, boosting competitiveness and sustainability. The **European Innovation Procurement Awards**²³ further recognise exemplary efforts in advancing innovation procurement and fostering buyer-supplier collaboration to bring sustainable solutions to market. Together, these initiatives create a robust ecosystem for GPP, combining policy frameworks, financial incentives, and recognition programmes to accelerate the EU's transition to a sustainable, resilient, and competitive economy.

In recent years, many countries have increasingly leveraged electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) systems to simplify and accelerate the integration of sustainability criteria into procurement processes. These systems streamline the adoption of Green or Sustainable Public Procurement (GPP/SPP) by embedding sustainability requirements directly into tendering procedures, making responsible procurement more seamless and reducing the burden on procurement officials. Countries already equipped with e-GP platforms have upgraded their systems to align with evolving GPP frameworks. This approach minimises additional administrative effort while enabling benchmarking and monitoring of GPP progress. For instance, Sweden supports its e-procurement platform with environmental and social criteria, complemented by training programmes to enhance effective implementation. Germany employs ecolabels and life-cycle costing (LCC) within its system to provide clear sustainability guidance and detailed reporting.

Innovative features, such as those in Estonia's e-GP system, allow procurement officials to automatically apply pre-defined environmental criteria or create custom green requirements with minimal effort. These practices emphasise the importance of user-friendly e-GP systems that make integrating sustainability into procurement decisions straightforward and efficient. By reducing complexity and automating key processes, e-procurement systems ensure that sustainability becomes an inherent part of public procurement, driving transparency, accountability, and the widespread adoption of green practices without placing **unnecessary administrative strain** on procurement professionals.

20 Available at <https://data.europa.eu/en/news-events/news/eus-digital-product-passport-advancing-transparency-and-sustainability>

21 Available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_389

22 Available at https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

23 Available at https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-prizes/european-innovation-procurement-awards_en

4.1.2. Key trends and learning from the EU's GPP experiences

European countries have demonstrated global leadership in advancing Green Public Procurement (GPP) and showcasing how strategic procurement can drive environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic resilience. Through robust legislative frameworks, the development of National Action Plans (NAPs), and investments in professionalising procurement workforces, Europe has successfully integrated GPP into public procurement practices. The European Union's commitment to sustainability is reflected in initiatives like the European Green Deal, which promotes climate-friendly procurement, transparency through tools like the Electronic Product Passport, and financial support mechanisms such as the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and Horizon Europe. The adoption of user-friendly electronic government procurement (e-GP) systems has further simplified the integration of sustainability criteria into procurement processes, ensuring efficiency and minimising administrative burdens. These collective efforts provide valuable insights for other regions worldwide, demonstrating that GPP, supported by political commitment, professionalisation, and innovative tools, can be a powerful catalyst for market transformation and sustainable development.

Five **Key Takeaways from GPP Experiences in the EU** are provided below.

❖ Political commitment and strategic policy frameworks

Strong political leadership and comprehensive policy instruments, such as the European Green Deal and National Action Plans, are crucial for driving GPP adoption. These frameworks ensure that sustainability is integrated into procurement decisions at all levels of government.

❖ Mandatory and flexible GPP criteria

Countries with mandatory GPP criteria, such as the Netherlands and the Czech Republic, have shown higher success rates. The EU's dual approach – offering both Core and Comprehensive criteria – provides flexibility while maintaining ambitious sustainability goals.

❖ Professionalisation of procurement officials

Equipping procurement officials with the necessary skills, tools, and knowledge enhances their ability to implement GPP effectively. Countries like the UK and Sweden have benefited from capacity-building initiatives and knowledge-sharing networks.

❖ Integration of e-GP systems

Leveraging e-procurement platforms to embed sustainability criteria into tendering processes streamlines GPP implementation. Automated systems, like those in Estonia and Germany, reduce complexity, enhance transparency, and ensure sustainability is seamlessly incorporated.

❖ Financial incentives and innovation support

Addressing cost concerns through funding mechanisms such as ESIF and Horizon Europe enables contracting authorities to prioritise green procurement. Awards and recognition programmes further incentivise innovation, fostering collaboration between public buyers and suppliers to advance sustainable solutions.

4.2. GPP in APEC: Challenges, progress, and the need for cooperation

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a regional bloc comprising 21 member economies, including the ASEAN Member States (AMS) of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Together, APEC economies number 2.95 billion people, representing nearly two-thirds of global GDP and 50% of global trade. APEC's primary goal is to enhance regional economic integration by reducing trade barriers and harmonising regulations to facilitate smoother and more efficient trade.

In a 2013 study,²⁴ it was revealed that 18 out of 21 APEC economies have implemented GPP frameworks,

24 APEC Secretariat (2013), GPP in the Asia Pacific Region: Challenges and Opportunities for Green Growth and Trade, <https://www.apec.org/publications/2013/06/green-public-procurement-in-the-asia-pacific-region-challenges-and-opportunities-for-green-growth-an>

with 15 economies establishing environmental standards for specific product categories. However, the study also highlighted significant challenges due to the divergence in GPP policy, tools, and ecolabelling criteria across these economies. Differences in how each country defines and evaluates 'green' products complicate the formation of strategic partnerships and the development of consistent trade policies for environmentally friendly goods. This lack of uniformity leads to misunderstandings, inefficiencies, and trade barriers, hindering the promotion of green products on an international scale.

The study underscored the importance of regional cooperation and information exchange to overcome these challenges and achieve shared sustainable development goals. While there is limited publicly available information on coordinated GPP initiatives led by the APEC Secretariat, significant progress has been observed in individual member economies like Australia, Canada, China, and the USA. To provide more focused insights within the scope of this brief, a detailed examination of recent GPP developments in the USA has been conducted, reflecting the potential for broader application and cooperation within the APEC context. By fostering collaboration, harmonised standards, and mutual recognition of environmental criteria, ASEAN economies can enhance their collective efforts to promote sustainable procurement and green growth across the region.

4.2.1. Recent developments in the USA: Advancing sustainability in Federal procurement

The United States has undertaken significant measures to strengthen its existing programme to integrate sustainability into federal procurement, showcasing a comprehensive approach to innovation, environmental stewardship, and economic growth. As the world's largest public buyer, with an annual expenditure exceeding USD 700 billion on products and services, the US Federal Government recognises the transformative power of sustainable purchasing. Currently, over a third of federal contracts include requirements for sustainable products and services, demonstrating a decisive shift towards reducing emissions within the federal supply chain. This effort aligns with the government's goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and is guided by key executive orders, notably Executive Order 14030 (May 2021)²⁵ and Executive Order 14057 (December 2021).²⁶ These directives emphasise promoting US manufacturing, fostering job creation, and advancing climate resilience through procurement strategies.

To achieve these objectives, the USA has established ambitious targets for Federal agencies. These include achieving 100% carbon pollution-free electricity by 2030, 100% zero-emission vehicle acquisitions by 2035, and a net-zero emissions building portfolio by 2045. Additionally, the government aims to reduce Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions by 65% by 2030 compared to 2008 levels, and to implement a Buy Clean policy to promote the use of construction materials with lower embodied emissions. These targets are supported by a whole-of-government approach²⁷ that prioritises regulatory consistency, institutional coordination, and comprehensive capacity-building initiatives. Agencies are also required to integrate climate-related financial risk into their procurement processes, giving preference to suppliers who disclose greenhouse gas emissions and set science-based reduction targets.

A noteworthy advancement is the recognition of 60 private-sector sustainability standards and ecolabels across more than 40 purchasing categories. This shift from relying solely on government-managed/owned standards/ecolabels to embracing third-party, life-cycle-based certifications reflects a commitment to robust, verifiable sustainability criteria. By prioritising products that can be reused, refurbished, or recycled, and maximising environmental benefits through lifecycle cost analyses, the US Federal Government is ensuring that procurement decisions promote efficiency, resilience, and equity. These strategies also emphasise supporting underserved communities, creating well-paying union jobs, and advancing environmental justice.

Another crucial development has been setting a goal to make Federal government acquisition net-zero by 2050 by focusing on the entire supply chain. The General Services Administration (GSA) plays a critical role in tracking major suppliers' disclosures on greenhouse gas emissions, climate risk, and sustainability targets. Each agency is required to set and monitor annual GHG emissions reduction targets across Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions. Since the objective is to reduce emissions emanating from the entire supply chain, the

²⁵ Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/05/20/executive-order-on-climate-related-financial-risk/>

²⁶ Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/12/08/executive-order-on-catalyzing-clean-energy-industries-and-jobs-through-federal-sustainability/>

²⁷ See notably, https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/development-co-operation-tips-tools-insights-practices_be69e0cf-en/whole-of-government-development-co-operation_9a51a6f6-en.html

top 100 Federal suppliers are required to publicly disclose their Scope 1, 2 & 3 GHG emissions and climate-related financial risk and to set science-based reduction targets in alignment with Federal government goals. This rigorous framework ensures accountability and transparency in meeting the Federal Government's sustainability goals.

The US total-government approach demonstrates how procurement can serve as a powerful lever for market transformation and sustainable development. By aligning procurement policies with long-term climate goals, the USA is driving innovation, private sector investment, creating and sustaining well-paying jobs and infrastructure improvements while protecting the environment.

Three key learnings from recent developments in US Federal Procurement

❖ **Whole-of-Government Approach for Effective Implementation**

The USA demonstrates the value of a whole-of-government approach in embedding sustainability within procurement processes. Through directives like Executive Orders 14057 and 14030, federal agencies are aligned under unified sustainability goals, ensuring regulatory consistency, institutional coordination, and accountability. This model highlights the importance of cross-agency collaboration to achieve comprehensive Green Public Procurement (GPP) outcomes.

❖ **Adoption of Lifecycle-Based Private Standards and Ecolabels**

The recognition of 60 private sector standards and ecolabels across more than 40 procurement categories for use by Federal procurers illustrates the importance of using lifecycle-based criteria and third-party verification to define sustainable products and services and easing embedding sustainability in purchasing decisions. By moving beyond solely government-managed standards/ecolabels, the USA ensures that GPP implementation is not hampered by the limitation of government owned/managed standards and ecolabels. Simultaneously, the government ensures that procurement decisions are credible, transparent, and measurable, while also fostering market-driven innovation and sustainability.

❖ **Setting Ambitious Targets across Federal Supply Chain**

The USA sets clear, measurable targets to make its Federal acquisition net-zero emissions by 2050, including milestones such as 100% carbon pollution-free electricity by 2030 and 100% zero-emission vehicle acquisitions by 2035. These objectives are supported by clear GHG emission targets for top 100 Federal suppliers and robust monitoring and reporting systems that track emissions reductions across Scope 1, 2, and 3 categories. This approach underscores the importance of establishing concrete targets, integrating them into performance management systems, and maintaining transparency through regular progress evaluations.

These key learnings offer valuable insights and demonstrate how strategic policy direction and setting ambitious targets for market operators can support market transformation across the entire value chain.

4.3. The Emergence of Regional Networks to Advance Strategic Procurement

In the recent past, the establishment of several regional public procurement networks such as the **African Public Procurement Network (APPN)**,²⁸ the **Inter-American Network on Government Procurement (INGP)**,²⁹ and **Procura+**³⁰ in Europe has served as a catalyst for accelerating strategic approach to procurement for achieving horizontal objectives of the government, including the adoption of Green Public Procurement (GPP). These networks have demonstrated the power of regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and capacity building in promoting sustainable and innovative procurement.

The African Public Procurement Network (APPN) has successfully connected procurement authorities across Africa, facilitating the exchange of best practices, development of harmonised tools, and addressing common challenges. This collaborative approach has led to increased transparency, efficiency, and sustainability in

28 Available at <https://appn-racop.org/en/>

29 Available at <http://portal.oas.org/Portal/Sector/SAP/DptodeModernizaci3n del Estado y Gobernabilidad/NPA/RedInteramericanadeComprasGubernamentales/tabid/1788/language/en-USA/default.aspx>

30 Available at <https://procuraplus.org>

procurement processes, aligning policies with broader goals such as climate resilience and social inclusion. Similarly, the Inter-American Network on Government Procurement (INGP) has united procurement bodies across the Americas, driving modernisation with a focus on transparency, efficiency, and sustainability. By adopting innovative procurement strategies, INGP members are aligning their procurement practices with global sustainability priorities and enhancing public sector efficiency.

In Europe, Procura+ has established itself as a leading network for advancing sustainable and innovative procurement. Through collaboration, knowledge exchange, and joint initiatives, Procura+ has enabled its members to implement pioneering procurement practices that prioritise environmental sustainability and foster innovation. The network's success highlights the importance of connecting practitioners to develop actionable solutions, creating a ripple effect that advances sustainable procurement on a regional and global scale.

The development of similar regional procurement networks globally would offer essential platforms for sharing best practices, aligning sustainability criteria, and addressing regional challenges in procurement. Such networks can support the creation of harmonised procurement guidelines and mutual recognition of ecolabels, facilitating smoother international trade in sustainable goods and services. Additionally, regional networks can host capacity-building programmes and training events to enhance the skills of procurement professionals, ensuring they are well-equipped to integrate sustainability into their procurement processes.

In Asia, International Green Purchasing Network (IGPN)³¹, based in China, aims to promote the spread of environmentally friendly product and service through Green Purchasing activities and share best practices examples. Asia Pacific Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production (APRSCP)³² is another network that promotes broader sustainable consumption and production in the region. However, their activities remain limited to organising webinars on GPP, and fall short of providing networking opportunities as noted in the case of Africa, Europe and North America. But these organisations hold potential for future strengthening, and they emerge as a credible networking platform.

By leveraging collective public procurement spending, regional networks can also influence markets and stimulate demand for sustainable and innovative products. This coordinated approach can drive innovation in green technologies and services, contributing to a global transition towards a low-carbon, circular economy. Furthermore, these networks can provide a unified regional voice in global forums on sustainable procurement, advocating for shared interests and contributing to international policy discussions on sustainability and green trade. This collaborative model offers a clear pathway for regions worldwide to modernise procurement practices, enhance economic efficiency, and promote global sustainability objectives.

4.4. Trade Agreements and GPP

Increasingly, countries are trying to understand the interface between trade policy and GPP policy, identify gaps and challenges, and prepare an action plan to facilitate trade of greener substitutes with the aim of supporting climate actions and achieving climate-related goals. In this context, two trade agreements, namely the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA)³³ and the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (EUSFTA),³⁴ stand out in the Asia region as both enable procuring entities to pursue environmental objectives while maintaining the agreement's core principles of open and fair competition.

Both **EVFTA** and **EUSFTA** incorporate environmental considerations within their public procurement frameworks under **Chapter 9**. These agreements establish legal pathways for integrating sustainability into procurement while ensuring that such measures do not create disguised trade barriers.

In **EVFTA**, three key provisions define the role of environmental considerations.

- **Article 9.3(2)(b)** establishes that Parties can adopt environmental protection measures, provided they do not constitute disguised restrictions on trade. This provision legitimises the inclusion of sustainability in procurement but requires a balance between environmental objectives and trade facilitation.

³¹ Available at <http://www.igpn.org>

³² Available at <https://www.aprscp.net>

³³ Available at https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/vietnam/eu-vietnam-agreement/texts-agreements_en

³⁴ Available at [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22019A1114\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22019A1114(01)&from=EN)

- **Article 9.9(6)** explicitly allows procuring entities to incorporate environmental considerations into technical specifications, enabling them to promote resource conservation and environmental protection. This provision marks a shift from merely permitting protective measures to actively encouraging sustainable procurement.
- **Article 9.11** allows ‘environmental characteristics’ to be used as evaluation criteria in procurement decisions, placing sustainability alongside price, quality, and technical merit. This provision ensures that environmental factors are integrated into the entire procurement process, from specifications to contract awards.

Similarly, **EUSFTA** follows a comparable structure but offers a more detailed approach to integrating sustainability.

- **Article 9.9(6)** provides procuring entities with the authority to incorporate environmental specifications in procurement.
- **Article 9.9(7)** strengthens this authority by requiring environmental criteria to be performance-based, scientifically justified, and transparent, ensuring that sustainability objectives are implemented effectively and fairly.
- **Article 9.9(10)** extends environmental considerations beyond technical specifications, allowing sustainability requirements to be embedded in the execution of contracts. This provision ensures that environmental performance obligations continue throughout the contract lifecycle.
- **Article 9.11** formally includes environmental factors in procurement evaluation, reinforcing their role in decision making.
- **Article 12.10(d)** uniquely connects public procurement to broader sustainability goals, explicitly recognising it as a tool for promoting sustainable development.

Both agreements carefully balance sustainability and trade facilitation through Article 9.3(2), ensuring that while environmental measures are encouraged, they do not create unfair trade restrictions. EUSFTA takes a more holistic approach by positioning procurement as an instrument for advancing sustainability objectives beyond just environmental protection, making it a useful model for ASEAN in developing GPP strategies that align with both trade policies and climate goals.

The EVFTA and EUSFTA procurement frameworks offer valuable insights for ASEAN Member States (AMS) in advancing GPP while maintaining open and competitive markets. These agreements demonstrate how sustainability can be systematically embedded into procurement policies without restricting trade. ASEAN can adopt similar provisions by allowing environmental criteria in technical specifications, evaluation processes, and contract performance requirements, ensuring that sustainability is a core principle rather than an optional add-on. The structured approach in these agreements also highlights the importance of regulatory clarity, ensuring that environmental requirements are transparent, science-based, and performance-driven to foster fair competition. Furthermore, the inclusion of sustainability objectives within broader trade agreements, as seen in EUSFTA’s Article 12.10(d), reinforces the role of public procurement as a strategic tool for climate action, circular economy, and sustainable economic development. For ASEAN, harmonising GPP policies across member states through regional agreements could facilitate cross-border trade in sustainable products and services, encourage market transformation, and position ASEAN as a leader in sustainable procurement within global trade frameworks.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR MAINSTREAMING GPP IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

5.1. Key Considerations for a framework to mainstream GPP in ASEAN

Section 2.3 discussed the three strategic frameworks, namely the **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025**, the **ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework**, and the **Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community**, that set the vision and outlook for the future direction of the ASEAN region. Upon closer examination, the three frameworks share five key themes that are essential for advancing ASEAN's vision of a successful and prosperous region. These interconnected themes provide a cohesive roadmap for sustainable development, economic integration, and resilience in the face of global challenges.

- *Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship* highlights the need for resource efficiency, environmental protection, and low-carbon growth as essential components for long-term prosperity.
- *Harmonisation of Standards and Trade Facilitation* calls for aligning regulatory standards, ecolabelling criteria, and technical requirements across ASEAN Member States (AMS) to promote seamless trade and economic integration.
- *Support for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)* stresses the importance of empowering MSMEs through capacity-building initiatives, access to green financing, and participation in sustainable and circular supply chains.
- *Innovation, Digitisation, and Technology Adoption* highlights the role of innovation, digital technology, and green technologies in driving sustainable growth and economic transformation.
- *Collaboration, Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing* espouse the importance of regional collaboration, capacity building, and knowledge exchange for overcoming shared challenges and advancing GPP, SCP, and circular economy goals.

To effectively operationalise Green Public Procurement (GPP) within ASEAN countries, any strategic framework must address the core thematic priorities identified in the three strategic frameworks discussed in Section 2.3 of this Working Paper. These priorities – sustainability, harmonisation of standards, MSME empowerment, innovation, and regional collaboration – are not only essential for ASEAN's success but are also applicable to global markets seeking opportunities to expand their business in ASEAN. Interestingly, these themes are not only essential for advancing ASEAN's vision of a successful and prosperous region but also serve as fundamental pillars for accelerating GPP in any country, including those within the ASEAN region.

The importance of GPP as a strategic tool for achieving sustainability goals is explicitly recognised in two of these frameworks: the **ASEAN SCP Framework** and the **Framework for Circular Economy**. Both documents emphasise how GPP can act as a catalyst for market transformation by stimulating demand for sustainable products and services. The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint reinforces these priorities by focusing on harmonised standards, innovation, and inclusive growth. Collectively, these strategic documents strongly advocate for the swift adoption of Green Public Procurement (GPP) in ASEAN Member States (AMS), highlighting the role of such procurement principles as a driver of economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and regional competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic global economy.

The pivotal role played by GPP in promoting circular economy practices by encouraging the procurement of products designed for durability, reuse, recycling, and minimal waste generation has already been demonstrated in this Working Paper. This approach aligns procurement policies with circular economy goals, ensuring that public investments contribute to a closed-loop economic system where resources are maximised and environmental impacts are minimised. Globally, this trend reflects how governments are increasingly leveraging procurement to support sustainable production and consumption patterns, driving a shift towards resource-efficient economies.

GPP also supports interconnected objectives like trade facilitation, MSME development, digital transformation, and environmental sustainability. By promoting harmonised standards and mutual recognition agreements for ecolabels, GPP reduces trade barriers, enabling businesses – especially MSMEs – to enter new markets. These practices enhance regional economic integration and help MSMEs adopt sustainable practices, improving their competitiveness in the global market. Additionally, switching to e-GP platform for integrating sustainability requirements streamlines operations, boosts transparency, and enables real-time tracking of sustainability outcomes. Together, these efforts ensure that procurement practices are efficient, accountable, and aligned with strategic goals such as trade facilitation, MSME empowerment, and digital innovation while fostering economic resilience, environmental stewardship, and inclusive growth on a regional level.

5.2. Priority Sectors and Themes for Accelerating GPP

According to the Global Resources Outlook 2024, resource use is projected to increase 60% by 2060 globally, which will present profound challenges to achieving climate, biodiversity, and pollution targets, as well as sustaining economic prosperity and human well-being. To mitigate these pressures, it is imperative to reduce the resource intensity of critical sectors such as **food, mobility, housing, and energy systems**. While supply-side measures, such as cleaner production, have received significant attention, there is an urgent need to integrate demand-side strategies that address consumption patterns, equity, and responsibility. An integrated approach – combining resource and energy efficiency, climate mitigation, and actions with respect to food and the land – can yield transformative benefits completely than any one of these policy action areas would in isolation. By 2060, such synergies could increase global GDP by 3% and improve the Human Development Index by 7%, compared to scenarios based on historical trends.³⁵

To fully harness the potential of GPP, ASEAN must focus on priority sectors and themes that address the region's most pressing sustainability challenges. The ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 has identified high-impact sectors such as **construction, energy, transport, and agriculture**, to maximise environmental and social benefits in the region; they have also been identified as priority sectors for reducing resource intensity and achieving climate, biodiversity, and pollution targets. These sectors thus represent critical areas where targeted interventions can achieve the most significant impact. Priority themes include promoting energy efficiency, advancing circular economy practices, fostering sustainable infrastructure development, and ensuring greater participation of MSMEs in economic activities. While ASEAN has made progress in reducing material intensity relative to GDP, the group's resource efficiency intensity remains higher than the broader Asia-Pacific region and the global average.³⁶

5.3. ASEAN GPP Strategic Framework

At this stage, a key question must be asked: *if a country aims to enhance its GPP programme through a Scale, Scope, and Impact strategy, what critical drivers or key areas must be addressed to ensure effective implementation and measurable results?* Various studies and frameworks provide insights into the response. The **UNEP SPP Guidelines 2021** highlight the importance of organisational structure; legal framework; tools like guidelines, ecolabels, capacity building, communication strategies; and a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. The World Bank emphasises Organisational structures, Regulations, Incentives, M&E systems, Capacity building, and Technical support for GPP implementation. Similarly, the UK's Flexible Framework identifies People, Policy, Strategy and Communication, Procurement Process, Engaging Suppliers, and Measurement and Results as key elements. Across all these frameworks, five core components remain consistent: Policy, Institutional Structures, Capacity Building, Market Readiness, and Measurement and Evaluation. These elements form the foundation for scaling, diversifying, and maximising the impact of GPP programmes, ensuring they are comprehensive, effective, and aligned with sustainability goals.

For ASEAN countries, two additional pillars are proposed to further enhance and elevate their GPP programmes: Harmonisation of Standards and Ecolabels, and the Integration of GPP with Public Financial

35 UNEP (2024) Global Resources Outlook 2024: Bend the Trend – Pathways to a liveable planet as resource use spikes. International Resource Panel. Nairobi.

36 Schandl Heinz, Soonsawad Nattaniij & Marcos Ray (2022), State of natural resource use and resource efficiency in the ASEAN community, CSIRO Available at <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/CSIRO%20presentaton-%20State%20of%20natural%20resource%20use%20and%20resource%20efficiency%20ASEAN.pdf>

Management (PFM) systems. The harmonisation of standards and ecolabels has been included because it is a core theme embedded in the **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025**, the **ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework**, and the **Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community**. These strategic documents emphasise the importance of developing consistent standards and mutually recognised ecolabels to facilitate seamless cross-border trade, reduce compliance costs, and promote regional economic integration.

The integration of GPP with public financial management (PFM) systems is another critical pillar, emerging as a key area of reform for successful GPP implementation. Aligning GPP with national budgeting, expenditure planning, and financial reporting processes ensures that sustainability objectives are embedded into the core financial decision making of governments, and this emerges from the whole-of-the-government approach for GPP implementation. Such integration helps secure the necessary funding for GPP initiatives, promotes transparency and accountability in public spending, and ensures that sustainability goals are consistently prioritised. By linking procurement with PFM systems, countries can better track the financial and sustainability effects of their procurement activities, making GPP a more effective tool for achieving long-term environmental, social, and economic outcomes. Together, these two pillars provide ASEAN countries with a comprehensive, regionally cohesive, and financially sustainable approach to advancing GPP, strengthening their ability to achieve sustainability goals and drive market transformation. These seven pillars for accelerating GPP in the ASEAN countries are discussed briefly in the following paragraphs (see Figure 4).



Fig 4. ASEAN GPP Strategic Framework

5.3.1. Policy Integration & Legislative Framework

Policy Integration and a Legislative Framework are fundamental for the successful implementation of GPP because they provide a clear, enforceable framework for embedding sustainability into procurement decisions. A well-crafted and comprehensive policy that mandates the integration of sustainability criteria ensures that GPP is not merely an option, but rather a legal obligation for procurement officials. Making sustainability a legal requirement rather than a recommendation strengthens accountability and ensures consistent application across all levels of government. Moreover, aligning procurement policies with broader thematic policies – such as those related to climate action, circular economy, or social equity – helps avoid conflicting objectives and duplication of efforts. This integration fosters a unified approach where procurement decisions actively support national sustainability goals, thus driving efficiency, coherence, and long-term impact. With robust policy integration and legislative support, GPP becomes an essential tool for promoting environmental stewardship, economic resilience, and social responsibility in public spending.

5.3.2. Institutional Framework

An effective institutional framework is essential for the successful implementation of Green Public Procurement (GPP) due to the interconnected and cross-cutting nature of public procurement. Since procurement affects multiple sectors, including infrastructure, energy, transportation, and healthcare, it requires coordinated efforts across various government agencies. GPP is inherently a multi-disciplinary initiative addressing environmental, social, and economic goals over a long-term horizon, making a structured and collaborative approach mandatory. A well-defined institutional framework signals the government's commitment to sustainability, and provides a clear and consistent directive that encourages markets and suppliers to respond by offering sustainable products and services. Furthermore, aligning and synergising institutions helps prevent duplication of efforts and conflicting objectives, ensuring efficient and cohesive implementation. When all relevant institutions work together under a unified framework, GPP becomes a powerful tool for driving sustainability, innovation, and market transformation.

5.3.3. Harmonisation of Standards and Ecolabels

Harmonisation of standards and ecolabels is critical for the successful implementation of GPP because it ensures consistency, facilitates cross-border trade, and enhances market efficiency. Ecolabels serve as key indicators of products and services that meet specific sustainability criteria, but the existence of independent ecolabelling schemes in different countries can complicate procurement processes. For example, in ASEAN, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand have their own national ecolabels, each with distinct certification processes. This lack of uniformity increases costs and administrative burdens for businesses, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), when trying to sell products across multiple markets. Harmonisation, supported by Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs), reduces these challenges by fostering trust in environmental claims and eliminating the need for duplicate certifications. It streamlines GPP processes, allowing procurement officials to confidently select products that meet standardised sustainability criteria, improving efficiency and credibility. Additionally, harmonised ecolabels promote innovation and market transformation by encouraging manufacturers to align with regional standards, thus driving green industry growth, creating jobs, and boosting economic competitiveness. Aligning regional ecolabels with international standards also enhances export opportunities and supports broader climate goals, contributing to commitments under the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

5.3.4. Professionalisation of Procurement

The professionalisation of procurement is essential for accelerating GPP because it goes beyond basic capacity-building and focuses on creating a highly skilled, motivated, and strategically empowered workforce. While capacity-building provides foundational knowledge, professionalisation equips procurement officials with advanced skills, tools, and methodologies to achieve strategic procurement objectives like GPP. It emphasises continuous learning, career planning, and the development of incentive schemes that recognise and reward excellence in sustainable procurement practices. By enhancing the professional knowledge, skills, and competencies of procurement officials, professionalisation fosters a culture where officials are not just following compliance requirements but are actively innovating and driving sustainability outcomes. This approach empowers procurement professionals to move beyond the 'compliance trap', enabling them to make informed, strategic decisions that align with broader environmental, social, and economic goals. Ultimately, a professionalised procurement workforce becomes a key driver for the successful and transformative implementation of GPP, ensuring consistency, efficiency, and long-term impact.

5.3.5. Market Readiness & Engagement

Market readiness and engagement, particularly the preparedness of SMEs, are critical for the successful implementation of GPP in developing countries. One of the key challenges in adopting S/GPP is the availability of sufficient quantities of sustainable products in the market. Procurement cannot be effective if there are not enough credible vendors capable of meeting sustainability requirements. A lack of market readiness, especially among SMEs, leads to limited competition, higher procurement costs, and potential accusations of favouritism, which can undermine the legitimacy of these initiatives. To address these challenges, it is essential to assess the market's capacity before rolling out sustainability criteria, and to provide adequate lead time for suppliers to adapt. This can be achieved through early notifications, phased

implementation timelines, and strategic dialogue with domestic suppliers. Supporting SMEs with capacity-building programmes, technical assistance, and green financing ensures that they can meet sustainability standards and certification requirements. Engaging suppliers through workshops, consultations, and procurement opportunities helps them align their business practices with green procurement standards, reducing barriers to entry and fostering innovation. Such engagement promotes inclusive economic growth, supports local industries, and helps achieve broader sustainability goals. By ensuring that SMEs are well prepared and actively involved in the process, governments can create a more inclusive, competitive, and effective market for sustainable products, driving the long-term success of SPP and GPP initiatives and promoting sustainable economic development.

5.3.6. GPP Linkage with PFM System

Developing a strong linkage between GPP and the Public Financial Management (PFM) system is critical for accelerating the adoption and effectiveness of GPP in a country. By integrating sustainability into financial processes, governments can introduce incentives and awards for meeting sustainability targets, encouraging procurement officials to prioritise environmentally and socially responsible practices. Tying the allocation of funds to specific sustainability objectives ensures that financial resources are strategically directed towards green initiatives. Implementing life-cycle costing (LCC) in budget estimation and expenditure cycles allows for the evaluation of long-term economic, environmental, and social results, promoting more sustainable and cost-effective procurement decisions. Incorporating sustainability criteria into budget preparation guidelines and templates helps institutionalise green practices at the planning stage, fostering alignment between budgeting and procurement activities. Establishing monitoring and reporting mechanisms to track expenditures on sustainable procurement enhances transparency and accountability, ensuring that investments contribute to GPP goals. By considering the long-term repercussions of procurement decisions in financial planning, governments can drive systemic change, promoting environmental stewardship, economic resilience, and social equity through procurement practices.

5.3.7. Monitoring & Evaluation Mechanism

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of GPP by ensuring transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. An effective M&E framework allows governments to track progress; measure the environmental, social, and economic impacts of GPP; and verify that procurement practices align with sustainability objectives. By establishing clear key performance indicators (KPIs) and systematically collecting data, policymakers can identify successes, address challenges, and refine strategies to enhance GPP outcomes. M&E supports evidence-based decision making and ensures that GPP initiatives contribute to achieving national and international commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate action targets. Furthermore, regular reporting on GPP performance builds stakeholder trust by demonstrating a commitment to sustainability and responsible public spending. A well-structured M&E system fosters accountability among procurement officials and suppliers, driving continuous progress and embedding sustainability into procurement processes. Ultimately, robust M&E practices ensure that GPP delivers meaningful, long-term benefits and remains adaptable to evolving global sustainability challenges.

To summarise, enhancing Green Public Procurement (GPP) through a Scale, Scope, and Impact strategy requires decisive actions on all seven pillars. These pillars provide a comprehensive foundation for effective GPP implementation by ensuring that policies are clear and legally enforceable, institutions are well-coordinated, and procurement professionals are empowered through continuous professionalisation. Additionally, for ASEAN countries, the integration of Harmonisation of Standards and Ecolabels and linking GPP with Public Financial Management (PFM) systems further strengthens the approach. Harmonisation of standards ensures consistency and facilitates cross-border trade, while integrating GPP with PFM systems embeds sustainability into financial decision-making processes, ensuring long-term outcomes and transparency. Market readiness is also crucial, particularly the preparedness of SMEs, in ensuring that suppliers can meet sustainability criteria and participate effectively in GPP initiatives. Lastly, a robust M&E mechanism is necessary to track progress, measure outcomes, and ensure continuous improvement. Collectively, these seven pillars create a cohesive strategy for advancing GPP, driving market transformation, fostering innovation, and achieving sustainable economic growth and environmental resilience.

5.4. ASEAN GPP Maturity Self-Assessment Tool

Section 3 of this Working Paper briefly discussed legal, regulatory and institutional policy frameworks for GPP implementation in the ASEAN countries. It also touched upon the gaps and opportunities for GPP playing an active role as a driver of economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and social values. The scope of this brief does not, however, extend to conducting a formal assessment of GPP maturity in ASEAN countries against established global frameworks, such as the SDG 12.7.1 indicator, the MAPS Supplementary Module on Sustainable Public Procurement, or ISO 20400 on Sustainable Procurement. Nonetheless, regardless of their current maturity levels, AMS must adopt a clear, progressive pathway to enhance their GPP practices within a defined timeframe. Such a structured approach is essential for aligning national efforts with regional sustainability objectives and fostering long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits.

To facilitate these efforts, a tailored framework inspired by the UK Flexible Framework has been developed to support ASEAN countries for self-assessment of their GPP maturity level, and to set actionable, measurable targets for gradually moving to the highest maturity level. The Flexible Framework, created by the Sustainable Procurement Task Force, is a globally recognised self-assessment mechanism that allows organisations to measure and monitor their progress in sustainable procurement implementation over time. Designed for universal applicability, the framework is suitable for either organisations or countries ranging from those with substantial procurement expertise to those with limited resources. The Framework emphasises a systematic, step-by-step approach, encouraging users to progress through five levels across key dimensions: Foundation, Embedment, Integration, Optimisation, and Leadership.

The adapted ASEAN GPP Maturity Self-Assessment Tool (Appendix 1) provides ASEAN Member States with a structured approach to self-evaluate their current GPP maturity level and advance their GPP initiatives. The tool focuses on the seven critical pillars already presented above (in a slightly different order) in Figure 4: **Policy Development, Institutional Mechanisms, Professionalisation, Harmonisation of Standards and Ecolabels, Linkage with Public Financial Management (PFM), Market Readiness (including SMEs), and Performance Monitoring & Evaluation**. Each of the pillars in the framework is both individually and collectively essential for strengthening a GPP programme. Individually, each pillar addresses a specific element critical to the successful implementation of GPP; collectively, these pillars create a holistic and interconnected system to ensure that GPP is comprehensive, effective, and sustainable. The synergy between these elements allows GPP to drive market transformation, foster innovation, and achieve long-term environmental, economic, and social benefits, ensuring that procurement practices contribute meaningfully to national and regional sustainability goals.

Each pillar in the **ASEAN GPP Maturity Self-Assessment Tool** is structured across five levels of maturity: **Foundation level, Integration level, Implementation level, Elevation level, and Champion level**, with **Champion level** representing the highest level. This phased approach allows countries to systematically develop and strengthen their Green Public Procurement (GPP) programmes, ensuring continuous progress towards comprehensive, sustainable procurement practices aligned with global standards.

- **Foundation Level:** This initial stage focuses on establishing the basic building blocks of GPP. Countries at this level develop initial policies, raise awareness among stakeholders, and identify core requirements for sustainable procurement. The emphasis is on creating essential legal and regulatory frameworks, defining institutional responsibilities, and initiating preliminary capacity-building activities to support future development.
- **Integration Level:** At this stage, sustainability considerations begin to be formally incorporated into procurement policies and processes. Guidelines, tools, and standards for GPP are developed and disseminated. Institutional roles are clarified, and initial mechanisms for incorporating environmental and social criteria into procurement practices are put in place. Collaboration with key stakeholders, including suppliers and procurement officials, is initiated to foster early engagement and understanding of GPP objectives.
- **Implementation Level:** This phase marks the active application of GPP practices. Procurement officials are trained to consistently apply sustainability criteria in tendering processes. Pilot projects or initial procurement initiatives are launched to demonstrate the feasibility and benefits of GPP. Monitoring and

evaluation systems are introduced to track performance and outcomes, ensuring that GPP practices are effectively implemented and refined based on feedback.

- **Elevation Level:** At this advanced stage, countries expand GPP adoption across multiple sectors and government levels. Policies are enhanced based on lessons learned from earlier implementation phases. Best practices are identified and shared to encourage widespread adoption. Tools such as life-cycle costing (LCC) and digital procurement systems are integrated to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Market engagement efforts are strengthened, particularly focusing on small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to ensure a robust supply of sustainable products and services.
- **Champion Level:** This represents the highest level of GPP maturity. At this stage, GPP is fully embedded in all procurement policies and practices. Countries demonstrate leadership by setting ambitious sustainability targets, adopting innovative procurement solutions, and influencing regional and international sustainability agendas. Comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems are in place to measure results, ensure transparency, and drive accountability. Countries at this level are recognised for their commitment to sustainability, resilience, and continuous innovation in public procurement.

By systematically working through each of these pillars, AMS can effectively assess their current GPP maturity levels, identify existing strengths, address specific gaps, and develop tailored strategies to embed sustainability into their procurement processes. This comprehensive approach ensures that each pillar is addressed holistically, recognising that success in GPP requires balanced progress across all areas. Furthermore, the tool's incremental structure allows countries with varying procurement capacities to participate meaningfully and advance towards GPP maturity at their own pace. This method promotes a sustainable, inclusive, and practical transition, enabling AMS to meet the goals outlined in regional strategic documents and strengthen their collective commitment to sustainability, market transformation, and economic resilience.

The tool also enables Member States to align their national strategies with the five thematic areas identified in the **three strategic documents**, namely, the **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025**, the **ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Framework**, and the **Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community**, which are driving collective regional progress. Moreover, the flexibility of the tool ensures its applicability across diverse socio-economic and regulatory contexts within the ASEAN region.



Fig 5. GPP Framework for Operationalisation of Strategic Goals

The visual representation of the GPP Maturity Self-Assessment Tool in **Figure 5** illustrates how the tool is designed to facilitate broader sustainability objectives outlined in ASEAN's strategic documents. This representation draws a parallel to the operation of a multi-blade fan, where each pillar of the tool acts like an individual blade. The seven critical pillars – Policy Development, Institutional Mechanisms, Professionalisation, Harmonisation of Standards/Ecolabels, Linkage with Public Financial Management (PFM), Market Readiness (SMEs), and Performance Monitoring & Evaluation – are the blades that drive the effectiveness of GPP.

In this analogy, just as a fan generates a higher volume of air when all the blades rotate in alignment and at the appropriate speed, GPP can achieve its full potential only when a country addresses issues concerning all seven pillars simultaneously and in harmony. If any blade (or pillar) is misaligned or not functioning at the right pace, the overall efficiency of the fan – or the GPP process – diminishes. This underscores the importance of a balanced and coordinated approach where each pillar is given adequate attention and resources to function effectively. Countries cannot rely solely on policy development or professionalisation/capacity building while neglecting market readiness or performance monitoring. Each component must be developed and maintained in synchronisation to create a procurement system that drives economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and inclusive growth.

This integrated approach ensures that GPP is not implemented in a fragmented manner, but rather as a cohesive strategy that addresses the multifaceted challenges of sustainable procurement. By adopting the ASEAN GPP Maturity Self-Assessment Tool, ASEAN countries gain a structured, pragmatic tool to drive the transformation of their procurement systems. This approach supports not only national sustainability ambitions but also the region's aspiration to lead globally in sustainable procurement practices. Through this model, ASEAN can chart a clear, inclusive, and scalable path towards achieving Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) maturity while ensuring alignment with global sustainability targets and regional economic priorities.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATIONALISATION OF GPP UNDER REGIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS

6.1. Scale, Scope & Impact Strategy for a deeper market transformation

The leading ASEAN Member States (AMS) like Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand have primarily adopted a traditional approach to Green Public Procurement (GPP) implementation, drawing from the European Union and Japan's experiences. This method places significant emphasis on a set of product categories linked to national ecolabels such as Ramah Lingnan Label (Indonesia), MyHIJAU Mark (Malaysia), Green Choice Philippines (Philippines), and Thailand Green Label (Thailand). A key feature of this approach is the reliance on the availability of ecolabel products and services, with contracting authorities typically advised to use ecolabel criteria as technical specifications. This has resulted in a narrow focus on GPP, with targets set as a percentage of procurement for only those products and services that have established ecolabels. For example, Malaysia set the target of 20% of government procurement to be green procurement by the year 2020 for selected groups of products and services for which MyHIJAU Mark existed. The approach was primarily focused on increasing demand for products and services that complied with ecolabel criteria, with procurement seen merely as a tool to promote environmentally friendly goods and services with an ecolabel.

The success of the GPP programme became heavily dependent on the progress of the national ecolabel system. As a result, its effectiveness was tied to the availability and adoption of ecolabel-certified products and services for which the contracting authority has no control. Without a robust and widely recognised ecolabel framework, the programme struggled to expand its reach, limiting its ability to drive sustainable procurement across high-impact sectors such as construction, mobility, energy and the food system. Any delays or gaps in ecolabel development resulted in a direct effect on the scope and effectiveness of GPP, failing in its role to drive broader market transformation. It is important to clarify that this is not a critique of the efficacy of ecolabels as a tool for promoting sustainable consumption and production, but rather a reflection on the design of the current GPP approach in the ASEAN countries.

By focusing solely on ecolabel compliance, the programme failed to encourage industries to innovate or improve beyond the baseline, which in turn limits advancements in environmental and social responsibility. Instead of challenging industries to exceed current practices, the focus was confined to meeting existing ecolabel criteria. This narrow perspective missed the opportunity to leverage the purchasing power of the public sector as a force for market transformation. Had procurement been used more strategically, it could have spurred innovation, fostered greener technologies, and accelerated the shift towards a sustainable economy. Instead, this limited approach restricted the transformative potential of GPP.

Consequently, GPP progress in AMS has remained tied to the development of national ecolabels, even though procurement regulations do not limit the inclusion of broader sustainability criteria. This ecolabel-centric focus confined GPP efforts to a narrow subset of products and services, leaving high-impact sectors like construction and transport – where significant sustainability risks and opportunities exist – largely untouched. Despite some AMS having established GPP frameworks, they have yet to create the large-scale sustainability impact needed to attract political attention and elevate the visibility of their GPP programmes.

While this approach may have been a pragmatic starting point – acknowledging that public procurers initially lacked the knowledge and skills to fully integrate sustainability across all stages of procurement – it is now outdated. The global focus has shifted towards targeting high-impact categories like construction and infrastructure to harness the full potential of public procurement for sustainability. Recent experiences in developed countries demonstrate that, by equipping public procurers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools, it is possible to apply GPP across the entire spectrum of procurement spend, maximising sustainability outcomes across products, works, and services. The focus has shifted to simplifying GPP

implementation for public procurers, enabling them to integrate sustainability concerns effectively into procurement decisions.

AMS must therefore take a decisive step forward by broadening the **Scale, Scope, and Impact** of their GPP programmes. This step is critical for contributing meaningfully to the strategic goals set in the various ASEAN frameworks and driving significant sustainability outcomes across the region. Expanding GPP in this way will enable a more comprehensive and strategic approach to market transformation in the ASEAN region.

Broadening the *scale* of the GPP programme means shifting from treating GPP as a supplementary ‘niche’ policy to establishing it as a core government strategy for driving investment toward sectors and industries that foster sustainable and inclusive growth. By embedding GPP into the heart of government policy, procurement systems can incentivise and reward market players who prioritise sustainability while gradually phasing out those who fail to address environmental and social concerns in their production and supply chains. This transition would position GPP as an integral part of a country’s broader development strategy, linking it closely with climate change commitments, SDG targets, and national growth agendas.

Expanding the *scope* involves moving beyond the narrow focus on a few product and service categories to targeting procurement categories that carry the highest sustainability risks and expenditure. This shift naturally means placing greater emphasis on works procurement in addition to products and services, ensuring that GPP encompasses sectors with the most significant potential for sustainable results. Furthermore, expanding the scope means extending GPP efforts beyond national-level procurement to include procurement activities at provincial and municipal levels, ensuring that sustainable practices permeate all layers of government spending.

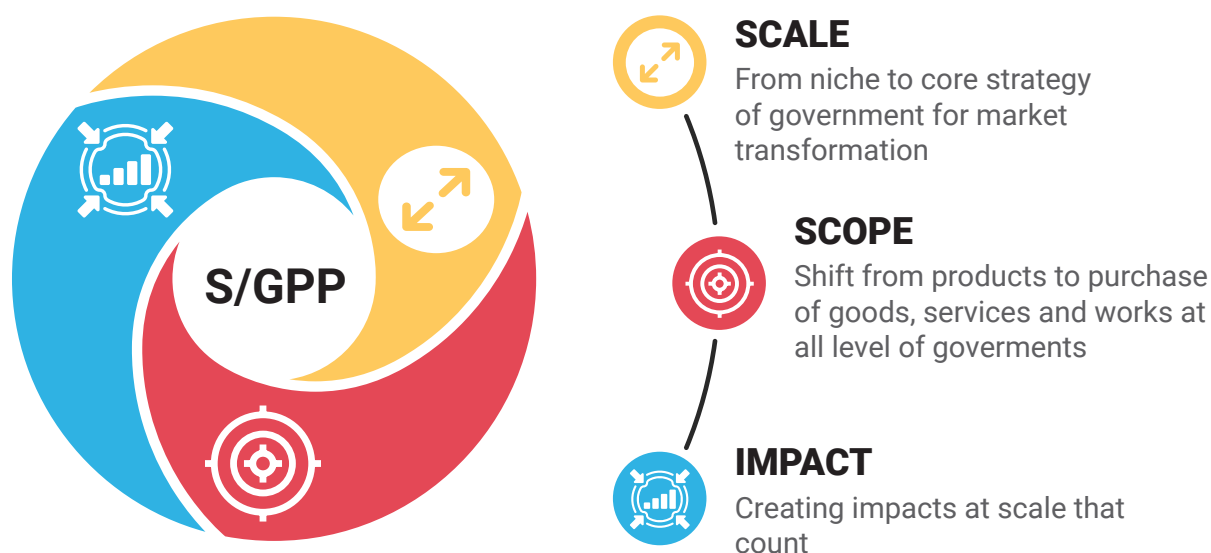


Fig. 6. Scale, Scope & Impact Strategy for a Deeper Market Transformation

Enhancing the Impact of the GPP programme requires linking it with various sectoral policies, such as innovation, climate change, and social inclusion, to make a meaningful contribution toward national development goals. GPP must be recognised as a fundamental government strategy, regularly reviewed by political leaders to set future priorities, with results and progress widely communicated through public channels to build awareness and support. The adoption of this Scale, Scope, and Impact (SSI) approach by AMS is pivotal for accelerating GPP programmes, driving market transformation, and transitioning towards a greener, circular, and low-carbon economy in the ASEAN region (see Figure 6).

6.2. ASEAN-wide initiatives and cooperation on GPP

By systematically working through each pillar in the ASEAN GPP Maturity Self-Assessment Tool, member states can enhance the Scale, Scope, and Impact of GPP programmes at the national level to maximise sustainability benefits. However, in recognition of the varying levels of GPP maturity among countries, these actions need to be complemented by offering strategic guidance, leveraging strengths within the region, and reducing implementation costs through collaborative efforts by the ASEAN Secretariat at the supranational

level. The proposed sets of actions are informed by insights gathered from the responses to the questionnaire, refined through discussions with high-ranking delegates from ASEAN countries, and validated during the ASEAN+3 SCP Leadership Programme held in Vientiane on November 4–6, 2024.

These recommendations outline a whole of the region approach to mainstreaming GPP, effectively addressing both shared challenges and emerging opportunities. By fostering collaboration, they aim to drive sustainability, innovation, and equitable development across the region. This coordinated strategy ensures that countries can collectively advance GPP practices, enhance market readiness, and position themselves as leaders in sustainable procurement.

6.2.1. Establish an ASEAN GPP Working Group

ASEAN GPP Working Group would serve as a centralised entity to lead and coordinate the integration of Green Public Procurement (GPP) across ASEAN Member States. Its primary mandate would be to align GPP with regional priorities such as the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025, ASEAN SCP Framework, ASEAN CE Framework, climate action, and inclusive growth, positioning sustainable procurement as a pivotal element in ASEAN's development agenda. The Working Group would provide strategic guidance, develop standardised tools, and foster collaboration among member states to complement GPP efforts by AMS. This approach would ensure that GPP becomes an integral component of economic planning, enabling consistent progress across the region. By addressing common challenges, such as capacity gaps and market readiness, the task force would empower AMS to effectively embed GPP within their national frameworks, fostering cohesion and synergy in the region's pursuit of sustainability.

6.2.2. Develop a Regional Corpus Green Procurement Fund

ASEAN, in collaboration with development partners, can develop a regional corpus of funding similar to the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility (ACGF)³⁷ for undertaking GPP projects. This corpus of fund, inspired by European structural and investment funds (ESIF), would address the financial barriers that hinder GPP implementation, particularly in less economically developed ASEAN Member States. This fund would provide grants or low-interest loans to support critical projects, such as upgrading procurement systems, developing green markets, and training procurement professionals. By offering targeted financial support, the fund would enable member states to overcome resource constraints and scale up their GPP initiatives. It would also incentivise SMEs to adopt sustainable production practices by providing access to affordable financing for technology upgrades and process improvements, thereby strengthening the region's green supply chains and fostering inclusive economic growth.

This fund can also be potentially used for joint market development of innovative greener solutions by AMS through framework contracts, achieving greater coherence between spending across different countries, exploiting monopsony power, producing economies of scale, reducing downward competition between public authorities, and improving the single market within ASEAN. These contracts allow for joint setting of the main elements of the contract (the frame) under which many different purchase contracts can be agreed over time, saving time and costs for the development of the market for greener products and services.

6.2.3. Establish a Regional Green SMEs Finance Platform

A Regional Green SMEs Finance Platform would serve as a transformative initiative to empower micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in ASEAN to access diverse existing/potential funding opportunities from regional and global sources, such as the Green Climate Fund and international financial institutions. By addressing the financial barriers that often prevent MSMEs from investing in sustainable manufacturing practices, the platform would provide tailored financial solutions, including concessional loans, grants, and green bonds to meet their investment needs. These resources would enable MSMEs to invest in technology upgrades, improve operational efficiency, and adopt sustainable practices such as energy efficiency, circular economy principles, and low-carbon technologies. In addition to financing, the platform would offer comprehensive training programmes to help MSMEs navigate the nuances of green procurement, prepare technical bids, and utilise the size and agility of the platform to offer a competitive solution, enabling enterprises to participate and win public contracts. Specialised capacity-building initiatives

37 Available at <https://www.adb.org/what-we-do/funds/asean-catalytic-green-finance-facility/overview>. Accessed on 29.01.2025

would further support MSMEs in upgrading their manufacturing processes to meet GPP requirements, ensuring their integration into sustainable supply chains.

Beyond supporting participation in GPP, the platform would play a critical role in enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs in the global market. By aligning their production practices with internationally recognised sustainability standards, MSMEs would meet the growing demand for eco-friendly and socially responsible products in global markets, particularly in regions with strict environmental and social compliance requirements. This alignment would provide ASEAN MSMEs with a competitive edge, opening doors to international trade opportunities and global value chains. Over time, the platform would not only strengthen regional markets by fostering innovation and creating demand for green solutions, but also position ASEAN as a hub for sustainable economic growth. By addressing both financial and technical barriers, the platform would empower MSMEs to become key players in the global green economy, contributing to ASEAN's overarching goals of inclusive growth, market transformation, and sustainable development.

6.2.4. Harmonise Standards and Ecolabels

The harmonisation of **standards** is critical for advancing GPP and regional market integration within ASEAN. Standards define the technical specifications, performance benchmarks, safety requirements, and sustainability criteria that underpin procurement processes. When standards differ significantly across ASEAN Member States, it becomes challenging for suppliers – especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs) – to comply with varying requirements in each market. This fragmentation increases transaction costs, slows trade, and hampers the scalability of sustainable solutions across borders. Harmonising standards not only promotes interoperability and reduces duplication but also supports the development of unified supply chains and strengthens quality assurance mechanisms across the region.

ASEAN has already recognised the importance of this issue and developed guidelines to support the harmonisation of standards.³⁸ The Guidelines have been developed in response to Article 19 of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint calling on members to harmonise standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures through their alignment with international practices. These Guidelines provide detailed information on the process for harmonisation of standards, including the role of responsible parties for different activities.

In contrast to quality and performance standards, ecolabels are essential tools for identifying products and services that meet specific environmental or sustainability criteria. Contracting authorities can use ecolabels for designing tender specifications and for verifying products and services compliance against the tendered specification. Globally, they have been the backbone of GPP programmes and are widely used as an effective tool for GPP implementation. However, challenges arise when countries operate with independent ecolabelling schemes, complicating cross-border procurement. In regions like ASEAN, countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand have developed their own national ecolabels, each with distinct criteria, verification, and certification processes. This lack of uniformity poses significant challenges for businesses, particularly SMEs, which face increased costs and administrative burdens when attempting to sell ecolabel led products in multiple markets. The Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) advocates for Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) to address these issues, fostering trust in environmental claims and reducing the need for duplicate certifications. The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025 has also flagged the harmonisation of standards and ecolabels and MRAs as a priority for reducing trade barriers and creating a single competitive market.

Harmonising ecolabels can provide several strategic advantages, such as facilitating cross-border trade by lowering compliance costs and simplifying procurement for SMEs, enabling them to participate more easily in public tenders across different countries. Additionally, harmonisation supports regional economic integration by fostering unified supply chains for sustainable products and enhancing economic competitiveness. A harmonised system also helps streamline the implementation of GPP by allowing procurement officials to confidently select products that meet standardised sustainability criteria, reducing administrative workloads and improving programme credibility. This approach encourages resource-sharing initiatives, such as centralised databases of ecolabelled products and collaborative capacity-building programmes, improving efficiency and effectiveness.

38 Available at <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ASEAN-Guidelines-for-Harmonisation-of-Standards-2022-Version.pdf>

Moreover, harmonised ecolabel criteria can promote innovation and market transformation by encouraging manufacturers to develop sustainable products that meet regional standards. This drives the growth of local industries, creates green jobs, and supports sustainable economic development, helping regions meet commitments under frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement, and making harmonisation a strategic priority for advancing sustainability through GPP.

6.2.5. Establish an ASEAN GPP Academy

A centralised GPP academy would serve as a comprehensive hub for Green Public Procurement (GPP) resources, offering case studies, toolkits, training materials, and best practices to ASEAN Member States. By facilitating knowledge exchange and fostering innovation, the academy would help countries learn from one another while reducing duplication of efforts. This initiative would really help those countries, which are facing resistance in shifting GPP from a niche policy to a core government strategy, by learning how to achieve this shift, at both political and administrative levels, from their peers who already have a strong GPP framework. Collaborating with national institutions, the academy would develop competency models and certification frameworks to enable procurement professionals to identify and address skills and knowledge gaps in integrating sustainability into procurement processes. Additionally, it would provide seamless access to world-class technical resources, ensuring consistent and high-quality capacity-building opportunities for procurement officials and stakeholders across the region.

The academy would also act as a nodal agency for creating practical tools and support mechanisms, such as guidelines, manuals, standardised templates, and help desks, alongside advisory services tailored to contracting agencies. Practical training initiatives, including on-the-job programmes and expert mentoring, would further enhance procurement officials' capabilities. To advance professionalism in public procurement, the academy could implement non-financial incentives, such as certification systems, performance management frameworks, professional recognition awards, and networking opportunities, establishing a culture of excellence and innovation in sustainable procurement practices. By promoting collaboration and harmonising capacity-building efforts, the academy would accelerate the adoption of GPP across ASEAN, driving operational and coordinated progress toward sustainability.

Expanding its role, the academy could mainstream procurement education into the tertiary system by collaborating with universities to develop bachelor's and master's degree programmes focused on sustainable procurement. These curricula, designed in partnership with national public procurement training institutions, could be delivered through a regional network of academic institutions, preparing future procurement leaders with specialised expertise. Furthermore, the academy could support ASEAN Member States in professionalising procurement as a strategic career by advising on the creation of service schemes for procurement officers, establishing clear career pathways, and elevating the role of procurement in advancing national and regional sustainability objectives. Member States may choose to optimise training delivery costs either by utilising the ASEAN GPP Academy exclusively or by leveraging a hybrid approach that combines the Academy with existing national training institutions. Through these initiatives, the academy would not only transform GPP practices but also position ASEAN as a global leader in sustainable procurement.

6.2.6. Promote Regional Collaboration on Priority Sectors

Targeting high-impact sectors such as construction, energy, transport, and food systems provides a strategic pathway for ASEAN to maximise the environmental and social benefits of Green Public Procurement (GPP). By focusing on these areas, GPP can address key sustainability risks while driving economic innovation and fostering regional resilience.

Regional collaboration offers a unique opportunity to amplify the impact of GPP in these sectors. For instance, ASEAN could develop harmonised standards and labels (like EU Flower) for construction materials such as low-carbon cement and recycled steel, facilitating their adoption across member states. Joint procurement initiatives for renewable energy technologies, such as solar panels and energy-efficient systems, could lower costs and accelerate the region's transition to clean energy. In transport, coordinated efforts to promote electric vehicles (EVs) and sustainable public transit systems would mitigate urbanisation challenges and reduce emissions. Similarly, in food systems, regional policies to procure organic or low-impact agricultural products would support sustainable farming practices, enhance food security, and strengthen local economies.

By prioritising these high-impact sectors and fostering collaboration, ASEAN can address shared challenges collectively, achieving significant sustainability outcomes while stimulating innovation and sustainable growth. This approach would position ASEAN as a global leader in green economic development, demonstrating the region's commitment to a low-carbon, circular, and inclusive future.

6.2.7. ASEAN Network of Public Procurement (ANPP)

Establishing a regional public procurement network within ASEAN, modelled on successful initiatives like the **African Public Procurement Network (APPN)**, the **Inter-American Network on Government Procurement (INGP)**, and **Procura+**, could significantly accelerate the mainstreaming of Green Public Procurement (GPP) across the region. Such networks have demonstrated the transformative potential of regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and capacity building in advancing sustainable/green procurement practices, and an ASEAN-focused initiative could serve as a critical catalyst for achieving the region's sustainability goals.

Drawing inspiration from APPN, INGP, and Procura+, an ASEAN Public Procurement Network would provide the institutional framework needed to mainstream GPP across the region. By promoting collaboration, harmonisation, and capacity building, the network would enable ASEAN to harness the transformative power of public procurement to achieve sustainable economic growth, resource efficiency, and long-term environmental resilience. Such an initiative would not only strengthen regional cooperation but also position ASEAN as a leader in sustainable procurement on the global stage.

ANPP can also consider introducing a Green Procurement Award that would recognise and reward countries, contracting authorities and individual procurement professionals for demonstrating significant progress in GPP implementation. Coupled with financial incentives, such as access to additional development grants, the awards would encourage member states to scale and enhance their GPP programmes. By highlighting achievements and celebrating innovation, this initiative would foster a culture of excellence in sustainable procurement. It would also motivate countries to adopt ambitious GPP targets and implement best practices, accelerating regional progress toward sustainability goals.

6.2.8. Standardised GPP Evaluation Metrics & Monitoring

A harmonised framework for evaluating the impact of Green Public Procurement (GPP), embedded within the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint, would institutionalise sustainability as a core element of ASEAN's economic and development strategy. This unified framework would standardise indicators and methodologies, enabling member states to consistently measure GPP's environmental, social, and economic contributions. Metrics such as carbon emission reductions, resource efficiency, local economy development and improved labour practices would provide clear and actionable insights into the tangible benefits of sustainable procurement initiatives.

Integrating these standardised GPP indicators into the AEC Blueprint would formalise GPP's role as a critical driver of regional sustainability, aligning it with broader ASEAN priorities such as inclusive growth, circular economy, and climate action. Regular reporting under this system would foster transparency, accountability, and comparability, allowing member states to benchmark progress, share best practices, and identify areas for improvement. This alignment would simplify data collection and support evidence-based policymaking, strengthening the collective impact of GPP initiatives across the region.

Such a coordinated approach would enhance ASEAN's global leadership in sustainable procurement, attracting international partnerships, green investments, and technical support. By embedding GPP into its economic planning framework, ASEAN can demonstrate its commitment to transitioning toward a low-carbon, circular economy while ensuring inclusive development for all member states. This initiative would not only advance regional sustainability goals but also position ASEAN as a benchmark for integrating sustainability into public procurement at a global scale.

6.2.9. Launch a Regional GPP Index for Progress Benchmarking

A Regional GPP Index would serve as a robust benchmarking tool to measure and compare the progress of Green Public Procurement (GPP) implementation across ASEAN Member States (AMS). By fostering transparency and accountability, the index would provide a clear picture of regional advancements in key

areas such as policy development, market readiness, sustainability impacts, and the professionalisation of procurement functions to achieve strategic objectives. Utilising standardised indicators, the index would enable AMS to systematically track their efforts, identify gaps, and prioritise actions for improvement.

The index would also promote healthy competition among member states by showcasing best practices and success stories, fostering a culture of excellence while encouraging knowledge exchange. Its visibility would motivate AMS to intensify their GPP initiatives and align national efforts with broader regional goals. For policymakers and stakeholders, the index would offer valuable, data-driven insights to inform decision making and drive targeted interventions.

Moreover, the Regional GPP Index would support AMS in laying the groundwork for and reporting on the SDG 12.7.1 indicator, demonstrating their progress toward sustainable procurement commitments. By providing a unified framework for assessing GPP, the index would help harmonise efforts across the region, ensuring ASEAN's collective progress toward a low-carbon, circular economy and strengthening the Association's role as a global leader in sustainable public procurement.

6.2.10. Establish an ASEAN Market Engagement Platform for GPP

To elevate Green Public Procurement (GPP) in Asian countries, the ASEAN Secretariat should lead the creation of a Regional Market Engagement Platform. This platform would serve as a bridge between public procurement authorities, existing business platforms, and the private sector, fostering dialogue, collaboration, and innovation to meet the growing demand for sustainable goods and services. The platform could include mechanisms such as supplier development programmes, innovation partnerships, and sustainability workshops to enhance the capacity of businesses – especially of SMEs – to meet GPP criteria.

The platform would enable governments to share procurement forecasts and sustainability requirements with suppliers, ensuring greater market readiness and alignment with GPP priorities. It could also facilitate regional ecolabel recognition, harmonising sustainability standards across member states to simplify compliance for businesses operating in multiple ASEAN markets. By enhancing transparency and fostering trust between buyers and suppliers, this initiative would stimulate innovation, drive market transformation, and position ASEAN as a leader in sustainable procurement. Through targeted market engagement, the Secretariat can accelerate the adoption of GPP, support SMEs, and ensure the availability of sustainable products and services at scale across the region.

6.3. Roadmap for Operationalisation of GPP at ASEAN Secretariat Level

Although the above recommendations were developed following a multistakeholder consultation process, it would be good for the ASEAN Secretariat to hold structured consultations with countries to ensure that proposed actions align with national priorities, institutional capacities and market conditions. These consultations will build consensus, secure political commitment, and strengthen regional cooperation, ensuring that the operationalisation of GPP is inclusive, responsive, and tailored to the strategic priorities of the region.

The following **short (0-2 years), medium (3-5 years), and long-term (>5 years) action plan** outlines strategic steps for the operationalisation of GPP recommendations at the ASEAN Secretariat level. This structured approach aims to ensure a comprehensive and phased implementation that addresses immediate needs, builds capacity, and establishes a sustainable foundation for long-term success.

**60 activities under 10 strategic initiatives designed to support AMS
in mainstreaming GPP at the ASEAN Secretariat level.**

Actions/Activities	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	>5 Years
1. Establish ASEAN GPP Working Group			
Develop the Task Force Structure and Governance Framework			
Conduct a Baseline Assessment of GPP in AMS			
Facilitate Regional Capacity-Building Initiatives			
Develop and Implement Harmonised GPP Guidelines			
Promote Strategic Partnerships and Global Collaboration			
Make GPP as a key strategic instrument for long term progress			
2. Develop a Regional Corpus Green Procurement (RGP) Fund			
Establish a charter for creation, operation and governance of RGP Fund			
Conduct a Feasibility Study and Needs Assessment			
Launch Pilot Funding Programmes for GPP Initiatives			
Firm up modalities for supporting MSMEs, Start-ups & Social Entrepreneurs			
Scale Up the Fund and Expand Coverage			
Establish a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting System			
3. Establish a Regional Green SMEs Finance Platform			
Develop a Centralised Green Finance Portal			
Create Green Financing Guidelines			
Launch Green Innovation Grants			
Facilitate Peer-Learning Networks			
Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)			
Integrate Green Finance into Policy Frameworks			
4. Harmonisation of Standards and Ecolabels			
Conduct a Comparative Analysis of Existing Standards and Ecolabels			
Establish a Regional Working Group on Ecolabel Harmonisation			
Develop Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) for Ecolabels			
Create Regional Guidelines for Harmonised Ecolabel Criteria			
Establish a Centralised ASEAN Ecolabelling Database			
Align ASEAN Ecolabels with International Standards			

Actions/Activities	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	>5 Years
5. Establish ASEAN GPP Academy			
Develop the Academy's Framework and curriculum			
Launch Introductory GPP Training Programmes			
Develop Certificate and Advanced Training Programmes			
Create an E-Learning Platform and Digital Resources			
Establish Regional Centres of Excellence			
Develop Partnerships with Global Institutions			
6. Promote Regional Collaboration on Priority Sectors			
Identify and Prioritise Key Sectors for Collaboration			
Organise Regional Workshops and Forums			
Develop Sector-Specific GPP Guidelines			
Launch Cross-Border Pilot Projects			
Establish Sectoral Centres of Excellence			
Create a Regional Policy Platform for Sectoral Collaboration			
7. ASEAN Network of Public Procurement (ANPP)			
Establish the Network Framework and Governance Structure			
Launch Initial Knowledge-Sharing Platforms			
Conduct Regional Training and Capacity-Building Programmes			
Develop Standardised GPP Implementation Guidelines			
Organise Annual ASEAN Public Procurement Conferences			
Institute a Regional GPP Awards			
8. Standardise GPP Evaluation Metrics & Monitoring			
Develop a Unified Set of GPP Evaluation Metrics			
Conduct Baseline Assessments Across Member States			
Implement a Centralised Digital Monitoring Platform			
Establish Regular Reporting and Review Cycles			
Develop a Regional Benchmarking and Certification System			
Conduct Impact Assessments and Policy Reviews			

Actions/Activities	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	>5 Years
9. Launch a Regional GPP Index for Progress Benchmarking			
Design the Framework for the Regional GPP Index			
Engage Stakeholders for Consensus and Feedback			
Pilot the GPP Index in Selected Countries			
Develop a Centralised Digital Platform for Data Collection and Reporting			
Expand the GPP Index to all AMS			
Publish Annual Regional GPP Benchmarking Reports			
10. Establish an ASEAN Market Engagement Platform for GPP			
Develop the Platform Structure and Operational Framework			
Launch Initial Market Engagement Events			
Create a Digital ASEAN Market Engagement Portal			
Facilitate Sector-Specific Engagement Programmes			
Establish an ASEAN Supplier Development Programme			
Host Annual ASEAN GPP Trade Fairs and Innovation Expos			

It is very likely that some of the proposed activities for enhancing GPP – whether related to capacity building, market engagement, policy harmonisation, or benchmarking frameworks – already exist in some form within AMS or are in various stages such as ideation, pilot implementation, or discussion. In these cases, the most effective course of action would be to avoid unnecessary duplication and instead focus on strengthening, scaling up, and building synergies with these ongoing initiatives.

By leveraging existing programmes, resources, and networks, ASEAN can maximise efficiency, reduce costs, and ensure that efforts remain coordinated and aligned with regional goals. Collaboration between AMS and relevant stakeholders, including international organisations, private sector actors, and academic institutions, can help align these initiatives more closely with broader strategic goals. By taking this integrated approach, ASEAN can ensure that GPP activities are comprehensive, non-redundant, and strategically focused on achieving long-term sustainability, innovation, and economic resilience in the region.

6.4. Roadmap for Elevating GPP in the ASEAN Member States

Section 6.2 presented a comprehensive, whole-of-region approach for ASEAN to mainstream GPP, aiming to address both regional challenges and opportunities. This approach emphasises the need for collaborative efforts among AMS to drive sustainability, innovation, and equitable development through GPP. Such a cohesive strategy ensures that each member country benefits from shared knowledge, resources, and best practices, leading to a more efficient and conclusive GPP implementation process. Building on this framework, Section 6.3 identified 60 activities under 10 strategic initiatives designed to support AMS in mainstreaming GPP at the ASEAN Secretariat level. These activities aim to provide the necessary tools, resources, and guidance to strengthen GPP programmes, address existing gaps, and overcome implementation challenges. This coordinated effort positions GPP as a driver for long-term environmental and social benefits, aligning ASEAN's procurement practices with global sustainability objectives and international best practices.

Additionally, the **ASEAN GPP Maturity Self-Assessment Tool**, discussed in Section 5.3, offers a practical tool for AMS to enhance the Scale, Scope, and Impact of their GPP programmes to maximise sustainability

benefits. AMS can leverage this tool to conduct a systematic self-assessment of their GPP maturity levels across key pillars essential for expanding the reach and effectiveness of their GPP initiatives. This evaluation helps AMS identify strengths, pinpoint gaps, and implement targeted actions to advance GPP maturity. By addressing these gaps, AMS can strategically enhance their capacity and capability, ensuring they are well-positioned to lead in GPP implementation and achieve meaningful sustainability outcomes. The tool empowers member states to adopt a structured and progressive approach to GPP, thereby expanding the Scale (increasing adoption across high-impact sectors), the Scope (including all levels of government), and the Impact (delivering measurable environmental, economic, and social benefits). This comprehensive approach supports AMS in delivering economic resilience, environmental stewardship, and inclusive growth, aligning procurement strategies with the broader sustainability goals outlined in ASEAN's strategic frameworks.

Given the varying levels of GPP maturity across AMS, this Working Paper is not proposing a standardised roadmap for GPP operationalisation at the country level. Instead, AMS are encouraged to develop tailored national roadmaps and action plans that reflect their unique contexts, capabilities, and policy environments. These national plans should incorporate relevant activities outlined in the Roadmap for Operationalisation of GPP at the ASEAN Secretariat Level (Section 6.3). This will ensure alignment with regional strategies and foster a coordinated and cohesive approach to advancing GPP.

By customising their roadmaps, AMS can address country-specific challenges and opportunities within their procurement systems while leveraging regional support structures and initiatives. This approach allows AMS to benefit from shared resources, harmonised standards, and best practices facilitated by the ASEAN Secretariat, while simultaneously achieving their national sustainability goals. Ensuring synergy between national and regional measures promotes greater policy coherence, efficiency, and mutual reinforcement of GPP initiatives. This coordinated effort accelerates the adoption of sustainable procurement practices, strengthens regional economic integration, and drives collective progress toward ASEAN's broader sustainability and development objectives.

7. FINAL NOTE

This working paper, *Green Public Procurement (GPP) in ASEAN: A Way Forward*, demonstrates the transformative potential of GPP as a strategic approach for promoting sustainability, fostering innovation, and advancing inclusive economic growth. By examining challenges, opportunities, and global best practices, the paper underscores the critical role of incorporating environmental and social criteria into procurement processes to drive market transformation and achieve broader sustainability objectives.

The paper introduces two key tools – the **ASEAN GPP Maturity Self-Assessment Tool** (Annex 1) and the **Roadmap for Operationalisation of GPP** at the ASEAN Secretariat Level (section 6.3, Table 1) – which provide structured guidance for enhancing the **Scale, Scope, and Impact** of GPP programmes. These tools will enable ASEAN Member States (AMS) to evaluate their GPP maturity, identify areas for improvement, and implement targeted strategies, all while promoting regional cooperation and policy alignment. Strengthening institutional capacity, harmonising standards, engaging small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and establishing effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are identified as essential drivers for successful GPP implementation.

By embracing these strategies, AMS can collaborate to create a more resilient, resource-efficient, and sustainable future. Through coordinated efforts, ASEAN can position itself as a global leader in sustainable procurement, contributing to international sustainability commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement, while ensuring long-term environmental, social, and economic prosperity.

Appendix A. ASEAN GPP Maturity Self-Assessment Tool

Level 1: Foundation	Level 2: Integration	Level 3: Implementation	Level 4: Elevate	Level 5: Champion
Policy Integration and Legislative Framework				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop initial GPP policy • Identify legal gaps in procurement law • Raise awareness among stakeholders, • GPP policy communicated to key procurement staff • Set preliminary objectives of GPP policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and amend procurement legislation • Sustainability recognised as a core procurement principle • Align policy with national and regional goals • Align procurement policies with national development priorities and objectives • Develop secondary regulations mandating the procurement of sustainable alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand GPP policy into a strategic tool for addressing sustainability risks in key sectors • Focus on high-spend and high-impact sectors like construction, transportation, industry, etc. • Develop template and tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend GPP implementation to all levels of government • Integrate LCC methodology • Develop review mechanism for SPP progress • GPP policy updated for climate, circular economy, and biodiversity • Focus on simplification of regulations for facilitating sustainability integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact comprehensive GPP legislation • Regular review of GPP progress by political leaders • Set ambitious targets • Integration of GPP into NDCs to achieve climate targets • Periodic comprehensive reviews to set future priorities
Institutional Framework for SPP				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate a Lead agency • Form a Task Force on GPP • Conduct initial capacity assessment • Develop a basic GPP implementation plan with roles and responsibilities • Prioritise products and services based on average spend analysis data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an Inter-ministerial GPP Coordination Committee • Develop institutional policies and guidelines • Allocate dedicated GPP resources • Develop Guidelines and Standards • Conduct detailed spend analysis to identify key sustainability impacts • Contract is awarded on the basis of value for money, not the lowest price 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operationalise Interministerial committee • Create toolkits, templates, and digital resources for integrating sustainability • All procurement above a certain threshold is assessed for sustainability risks • All stages of procurement cycle are used for managing sustainability risks • e-GP system is upgraded to facilitate streamlined implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance e-GP platform to report progress of GPP against indicators • National standards identified and reviewed from sustainability point of view • A life cycle approach is applied for high risks infrastructure projects • Align Institutional Policies with National Goals • GPP Help Desk is established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate GPP Across All Institutions • Implement robust accountability systems • Sustainability KPI is agreed with suppliers • Evaluate and continuously improve

Level 1: Foundation	Level 2: Integration	Level 3: Implementation	Level 4: Elevate	Level 5: Champion
Professionalisation				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Baseline Skill Assessments on GPP • Identify key competencies • Basic Training on GPP Principles to key procurement staff • Establish a Procurement Professional Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Training on GPP Principles to all procurement staff and stakeholders • Introduce certification programme on GPP • Ensure GPP principles are incorporated into standard procurement guidelines and manuals • Establish a Procurement Professional Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement mandatory and ongoing GPP training • Develop practical tools and templates • Introduce Mentorship Programmes • Host GPP Workshops and Conferences • Practical tools delivered to public procurers • Incorporate GPP in Performance Evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Advanced GPP Certification programme • Develop Continuous Learning Initiatives • Implement rewards and recognition programmes • GPP included in competency and selection criteria • Strong incentives in place for innovative works • Opportunity provided for networking with professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalise Procurement Professional Bodies • Mandate Advanced Training for Senior Officials • Publish achievements to attract talents • Benchmark people performance • Promote international exchange programmes • Contribute to the development of global procurement standards
Harmonisation of Standards and Ecolabels				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Baseline Assessment • Identify Key Product Categories for achieving Climate & Sustainability Goals • Designate a nodal agency for coordination • Develop a Preliminary Ecolabel Database • Raise awareness on voluntary standards and ecolabels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align Ecolabel Criteria • Develop Guidelines for the use of Ecolabel by procurers • Participate in regional dialogue to discuss harmonisation strategy • Pilot Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) • National Standards for critical products are upgraded for top 50 products • Review ecolabels to be aligned with regional harmonisation goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a centralised, digital registry of approved ecolabels and standards for procurers • Implement Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) • Develop consistent verification and auditing procedures • Adopt Harmonised Ecolabels in Procurement • National Standards for critical products are upgraded for all identified products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand Ecolabel Coverage • Develop Sector-specific Standards • MRA for ecolabel signed with neighbouring countries • Facilitate cross-border procurement using harmonised ecolabels • Issue guidelines for use of private voluntary sustainability standards and ecolabel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonisation of ecolabel criteria is agreed and completed • Develop and promote a unified ASEAN ecolabel • Make the use of harmonised ecolabels mandatory • Publicly share case studies and success stories of harmonised GPP practices

Level 1: Foundation	Level 2: Integration	Level 3: Implementation	Level 4: Elevate	Level 5: Champion
GPP Linkage with PFM				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build awareness for finance managers & stakeholders • Undertake initial assessment of PFM system • Initiate dialogue with key ministries • Integrate GPP principles into public procurement laws, regulations and public finance policies • Align GPP with fiscal and sustainability goals within PFM systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update budget preparation guidelines to include sustainability criteria • Equip key personnel with skills to integrate GPP into PFM focusing on sustainability risks and LCC • Introduce Sustainability Criteria in Fund Allocation • Create templates for tracking expenditures on sustainable procurement • Establish cross-departmental committee to oversee GPP integration with PFM process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate Sustainability Targets to budgetary allocation • Implement LCC methodologies in both budget estimation and expenditure cycles • Establish monitoring mechanisms • Integrate GPP into Financial Audits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalise sustainability in budget cycles • Introduce financial incentives and awards for exceeding sustainability targets in procurement • Integrate GPP tracking into digital PFM systems • Use digital platform to publish GPP expenditure and sustainability results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate Comprehensive GPP-PFM Integration at all levels of governance • Set Ambitious Sustainability Targets • Develop indicators to evaluate GPP integration into PFM and measure sustainability outcomes • Use performance audits to assess GPP's effects on fiscal sustainability and environmental outcomes
Market Readiness and Engagement				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct baseline Market Assessments • Engage with stakeholders • Identify Key Product Categories • Develop a preliminary database of responsible suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create guidelines and toolkits to help suppliers understand sustainability criteria • Offer basic training to help SMEs improve their sustainability performance and meet GPP requirements • Establish a knowledge-sharing and capacity-building platform • General programme for engagement with suppliers initiated • Provide Clear Communication Channels on upcoming GPP opportunities and requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide hands-on support and technical assistance to SMEs for adopting sustainable production methods • Organise Market Engagement Events • Facilitate access to green financing and incentives for green transformation • Map supply chain for key spend areas and identify sustainability risks • Ask top 100 suppliers to report sustainability performance on a voluntary basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer advanced training and capacity-building programmes on innovation, Circular Economy practices and Life-cycle Costs • Promote Regional Supplier Networks • Support VSS & Ecolabel Certification • Create Digital Marketplaces • Ask top 100 suppliers to report mandatorily on sustainability progress in supplier disclosure programmes such as CDP, SBT initiative, etc. • Top 500 suppliers asked to report sustainability progress on a voluntary basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalise Green Supply Chains • Suppliers recognised as key to delivery of organisational procurement strategy • Benchmarking of suppliers on sustainability performance • Support suppliers in accessing international markets for sustainable products • Publicly recognise and promote successful case studies of supplier engagement and market readiness in GPP

Level 1: Foundation	Level 2: Integration	Level 3: Implementation	Level 4: Elevate	Level 5: Champion
Monitoring and Evaluation				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness • Develop preliminary Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for tracking basic GPP outcomes • Conduct an initial assessment of GPP and identify data collection gaps • Designate an agency to oversee M&E activities • Ask Contracting authorities to report on a voluntary basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Comprehensive M&E framework • Align M&E with National sustainability goals and international commitments • Pilot standardised tools and templates for collecting GPP data • Provide training for procurement officials on tools and templates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement consistent data collection and reporting by all contracting authorities • Develop digital performance dashboards • Establish feedback loops for continuous improvement • Release public reports detailing GPP achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement • KPIs refined for individual purchasers to measure how their efforts to buy sustainably contributes to the sustainability objectives of the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking with peer organisation • Compare GPP performance against international benchmarks • Broaden M&E activities to cover additional dimensions • Develop reward and recognition programmes for agencies and suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make M&E a mandatory and integral part of all procurement processes • Produce detailed reports on the regional and global impact of GPP initiatives • Independent audit of GPP benefits is regularly undertaken and published • Use M&E findings to drive innovation in GPP practices • Share GPP M&E best practices and insights in ASEAN and global forums



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