PROCEDIN

Building Procurement Capability for Embedding and Driving Innovation

D1.2
Procurement of Innovation
Vendor Firm Resource Base

June 2023

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	
CA	Consortium Agreement
CE	Circular Economy
CPV	Common Procurement Vocabulary
EIC	European Innovation Council
EAFIP	European Assistance for Innovation Procurement
GA	Grant Agreement
GM	Green Mobility
EISMEA	European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency
POI	Procurement of Innovation
WP	Work Package

1 Summary

This deliverable, D1.2, aims to address the challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in effectively participating in procurement opportunities. SMEs often lack the necessary resources and face capacity constraints in monitoring and pursuing lucrative procurement contracts. This document provides a **comprehensive mapping of resources, best practices, and successful case studies of SMEs** that have successfully tendered for public works. Additionally, it takes a comparative approach to explore the variations in procurement opportunities across different regions in Europe, identifying areas where the process is streamlined and highlighting regions where challenges persist.

Sections 1 – 3 of this report mirror the **related deliverable D1.1.** Whereas D1.1 addresses public sector buyers, D1.2 is aimed at vendor firms. Both deliverables explain the PROCEDIN Resource Bank, the common survey which informed its design and related activities.

The deliverable focuses on **understanding and overcoming barriers and obstacles encountered by SMEs** during the procurement process. By examining both sides of the equation, including the procurers' perspective, it offers valuable insights into the dynamics of procurement and presents strategies to equip SMEs with the necessary tools to navigate these complexities. Collaboration and synergy-building with other resources involved in the procurement ecosystem play a crucial role in providing SMEs with comprehensive support.

The key components of this task include:

1. **Mapping of Resources**: The deliverable provides a simple inventory of resources available to SMEs, such as training programmes, funding opportunities, and advisory services, which assist them in identifying and pursuing procurement contracts. By consolidating this information, SMEs gain access to a centralised resource base, simplifying their efforts in finding relevant support.

2. **Best Practices and Success Stories:** Successful case studies of SMEs that have excelled in the procurement arena are highlighted. By examining these shining examples, SMEs can learn from their experiences, identify effective strategies, and replicate their success. This section serves as an inspiration and source of practical guidance for SMEs seeking to improve their procurement capabilities.

3. **Comparative Analysis:** The deliverable conducts a comparative analysis of different regions within Europe, examining the varying degrees of streamlining in procurement processes. By identifying regions where procurement opportunities are more accessible and efficient, SMEs can gain insights into successful models and potentially replicate them in their own regions. This analysis also sheds light on regions where challenges persist, highlighting areas that require attention and improvement.

4. **Overcoming Barriers and Obstacles:** Recognising the barriers faced by SMEs and procurers alike, this deliverable offers strategies and recommendations for overcoming these challenges. It addresses issues such as limited resources, capacity constraints, complex regulations, and lack of awareness. By understanding these obstacles and the solutions to tackle them, SMEs can enhance their participation in procurement processes.

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By collaborating and building synergies with other stakeholders in the procurement ecosystem, this deliverable aims to **create a comprehensive resource base for SMEs**. The **PROCEDIN Resource Bank**, developed by the consortium partners, is set to become a **vital source of support and guidance** for individuals and organisations interested in promoting circular economy and green mobility.

2 PROCEDIN Project Introduction

The adoption of procurement of innovation (POI) practices – which bring together business and public sectors – relies on legal reforms, European, national and regional policies, growing expertise, guidance, tools and case studies, and networks of early adopters. However, to drive deep, systemic change, the rate, scale, and scope of POI adoption must increase.

To accelerate POI in the specific domains of **Circular Economy (CE) and Green Mobility (GM),** in the context of European cities' innovation for sustainability and resilience agendas, this project will leverage existing resources and its members' pan-European professional networks, and initiate new provisions to enhance and mobilise POI motivation, knowledge, and skills.

The complex landscape of growing expertise, experience, and learning infrastructure will be mapped, and resources will be related to the varied needs of different stakeholder archetypes (defined by organisation type, extent of POI experience, etc.) to identify and address key gaps in provision. Special attention will be given to promoting enduring access to, and increased uptake of, POI guidance and learning resources for buyers and vendors, and building leadership capacity for driving and embedding innovation through strategic procurement.

2.1 PROCEDIN Project Objectives

Collectively, encouraging POI capability development and accelerating the growth of CE and GM innovation ecosystems are essential components to meet European Green Deal goals and priorities for societal resilience. The following **PROCEDIN's objectives** are carefully crafted with that in mind:

O1. To map, make more accessible, and promote the use of, POI development resources.

O2. To map and mobilise key POI stakeholders to accelerate and embed POI adoption.

O3. To develop, provide and promote uptake of guidance on legal frameworks.

O4. To facilitate procurement leadership in driving and embedding POI to generate dynamic innovation ecosystems.

O5. To disseminate project activities, resources and other outcomes throughout the duration of the project, via multiple channels to reach all stakeholder groups.

This deliverable with focus in more detail into all the activities that will support the **Objective O1**, as it aims to map, make more accessible, and promote the use of POI development resources.

This Deliverable has a core **link to deliverable D1.1,** and it is an integral part of the project, tightly linked to **Milestones 2, 3, and 4**.

3   Mapping of Resources

This report outlines the planning, design, and implementation of the survey conducted within PROCEDIN WP1. The purpose of the survey is to compile a comprehensive list of resources relevant to the project's objectives. The report describes the survey strategies, sampling strategies, survey tools, and the subsequent analysis process. The aim is to ensure the availability of high-quality resources for the development of a robust resource base.

3.1   Resource Mapping Survey

Each resource survey begins with careful **planning and design**. A survey strategy was prepared during WP1 meetings, which included the aim, method, sources/respondents, and quality criteria. The aim clearly defined the objectives and boundaries of the survey. The method outlined the step-by-step process, considering potential risks and barriers that may affect the quality of the process or findings. Mitigation measures are implemented to address these risks.

Additionally, a **sampling strategy** was designed to articulate the rationale behind the survey. This strategy identified target respondents, starting at the organisational level and then narrowing down to named individuals wherever possible.

The **survey instrument** was prepared by UT (Figure 1), which served as the tool for data collection. To ensure the plan's robustness, the draft plan was reviewed by other consortium members.

Figure 1. Resource Mapping Survey Main Page

The **Resource Mapping Survey** is being conducted using Qualtrics[1], an online platform to facilitate ease of distribution, response monitoring, and compliance with GDPR regulations. The surveys are actively monitored to expedite responses and ensure timely data collection. Upon receiving responses, they are promptly checked for accuracy, and any queries or clarifications are addressed as necessary in collaboration with the respondents.

The survey served as a pivotal **data collection mechanism for both D1.1 and D1.2**, facilitating the centralisation of information and data collected **from both private and public** entities (Figure 2). The

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[1] https://www.qualtrics.com/

scope of resources sought encompasses various categories essential to project's objectives. These resources include:

- **Trainings & Training Materials**:
  - Comprehensive training programmes and accompanying materials that equip stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills in relevant procurement practices.
- **Capability and Skills Frameworks**:
  - Frameworks that outline the essential capabilities and skills required for successful procurement processes, enabling stakeholders to assess and enhance their capacities accordingly.
- **Consultancy Reports and European Projects' Outputs**:
  - Insightful reports generated by reputable consultancies, as well as outputs from European Commission-funded projects related to procurement, offering valuable analysis, recommendations, and lessons learned.

In addition to the aforementioned resources, project partners also solicited the provision of supplementary materials pertaining to the following areas:

- **Best Practices & Case Studies**:
  - Exemplary case studies and best practices showcasing successful procurement endeavors, enabling stakeholders to draw inspiration and replicate effective strategies.
- **Legal Frameworks**:
  - Documentation encompassing relevant legal frameworks, regulations, and guidelines governing procurement processes, ensuring compliance and fostering transparency.
- **Tools, Impact Assessments, and Other Resources**:
  - Practical tools, impact assessment methodologies, and other pertinent resources that aid stakeholders in optimising their procurement practices, streamlining processes, and achieving desired outcomes.
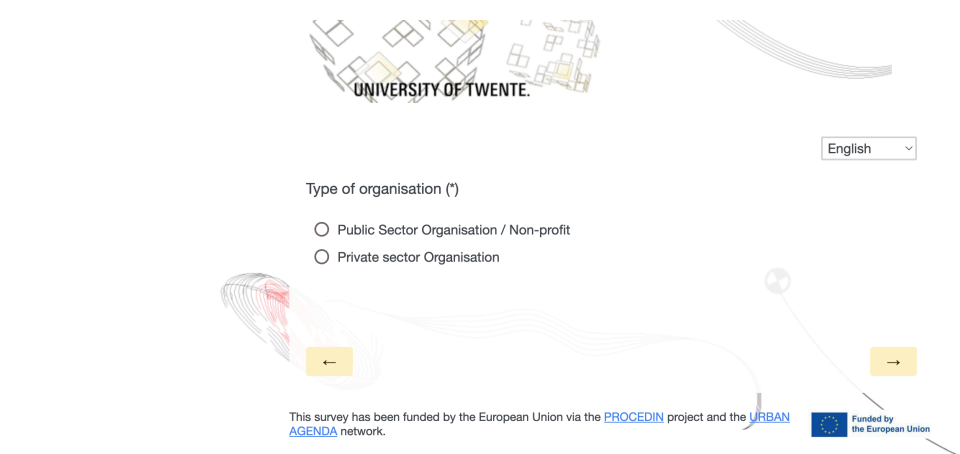

Figure 2. Resource Mapping Survey: Divider Page

As part of the survey, participants were presented with specific questions related to the **type of private sector organisation** they represent. These questions aimed to gather valuable information about the nature and characteristics of the organisations.

Participants were given the opportunity to provide a self-description of their organisation, allowing them to elaborate on their unique characteristics and activities. An open-ended field was provided to enable participants to provide a comprehensive description.

These survey questions (Figure 3) provided insights into the diverse range of private sector organisations participating in the survey, allowing for a better understanding of their profiles and roles within the procurement ecosystem.

Figure 3. Resource Mapping Survey: Type of Private Organisation

Within the survey, respondents were asked to indicate **their role within their respective organisations**. This question (Figure 4) aimed to gather information about the specific positions and responsibilities held by the participants.
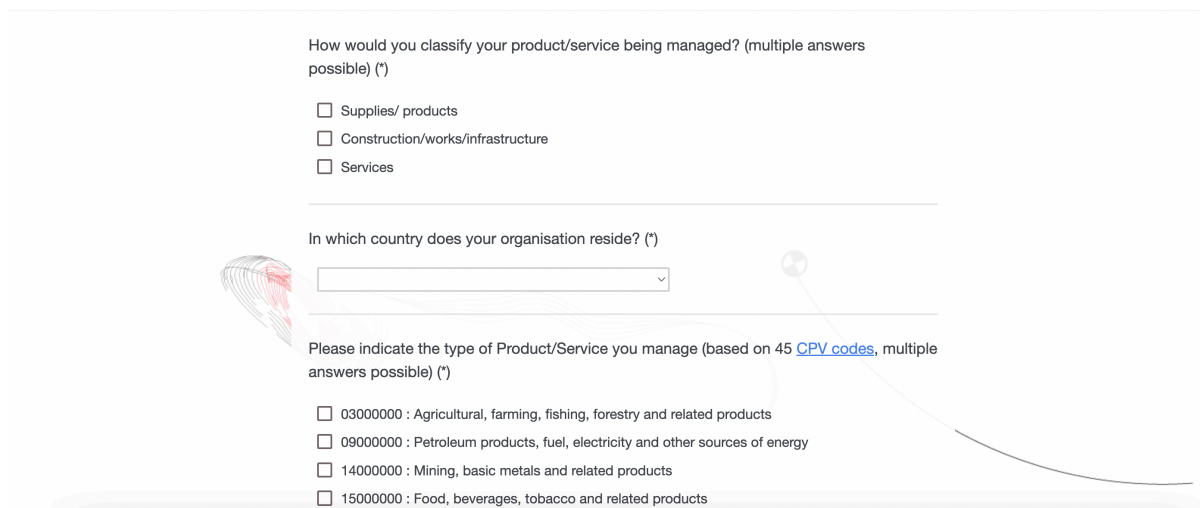

Figure 4. Resource Mapping Survey: Role within the Organisation

By capturing this data, the survey sought to gain insights into the diverse range of roles and responsibilities represented by the respondents. This information contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives and expertise within the context of procurement processes and decision-making within their organizations.

Furthermore (Figure 5), participants were asked to **classify the products or services** they manage within their organisation. This question allowed for the selection of multiple answers to capture the diverse range of offerings. In continuation, participants were requested to indicate **the country in which their organization is located**. This question aimed to provide an overview of the geographical

distribution of the survey respondents, enabling an understanding of the diverse regional contexts and potential variations in procurement practices across different countries.

Respondents were asked to **specify the type of products or services** they manage, based on a list of 45 **Common Procurement Vocabulary** (CPV) codes. This question allowed participants to select multiple answers that accurately represent the nature of their organization's offerings. The aim was to categorize and classify the range of products or services within the survey population, facilitating targeted analysis and recommendations specific to different sectors or industries.

Figure 5. Resource Mapping Survey: Product/Service Specifications & Geographical Scope

The next section of the survey encompassed **three essential questions** (Figure 6) aimed at gathering valuable insights related to potential training providers, available resources for Small and Medium-Sized Companies (SMEs) regarding public procurement, and exemplary SMEs or suppliers with successful experiences in the public procurement/tendering process.

Figure 6. Resource Mapping Survey: Questions on Training, Resources and SMEs Examples

Respondents were encouraged to **identify any training, course, or workshop** providers that they perceive as relevant within the realm of public procurement. This question aimed to uncover potential sources of expertise and educational resources that could benefit stakeholders seeking to enhance their understanding and skills in this domain.

In the following questions, participants were asked to **share any knowledge they had about resources** specifically designed to assist SMEs/suppliers in navigating public procurement or tendering processes, particularly those provided by public authorities. This question aimed to gather insights into existing support mechanisms that could be beneficial for SMEs seeking to engage in public procurement.

The third question in the section invited respondents to **highlight any SMEs or suppliers who have demonstrated exceptional proficiency** in the public procurement or tendering process. These examples were sought to identify potential best practices and success stories that could provide valuable insights and serve as case studies for others in the field.

By posing these questions, the survey aimed to tap into the collective knowledge and experiences of the participants, enabling the project to identify relevant training providers, compile a comprehensive list of resources for SMEs/suppliers, and potentially engage with exemplary SMEs or suppliers as valuable sources for best practices.

The survey concluded with two questions (Figure 7) that aimed to gather insights from the participants regarding the **main enablers and barriers** associated with two specific aspects of procurement: public procurement of innovation and responsible/sustainable procurement.

Figure 7. Resource Mapping Survey: Enablers and Barriers

The gathered information will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with public procurement of innovation and responsible/sustainable procurement, thus informing the development of strategies and recommendations to address these factors effectively.

3.2 PROCEDIN Resource Bank

The **PROCEDIN Resource Bank** (Figure 8) developed by the consortium partners, is a **result of the Resource Mapping Survey**, and it is set to become a **vital source of support and guidance** for individuals and organisations interested in promoting circular economy and green mobility.

The partners acknowledge the plethora of development resources already available, such as training materials, best practices, and case studies. However, they also recognise that the resource landscape is complex and fragmented, making access to these resources challenging.

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Therefore, the Resource Bank provides **a centralised hub of relevant and high-quality resources**, making it easier for learners to find what they need. In addition, the consortium partners aim to **promote successful innovation procurement** related to circular economy and green mobility, which is crucial in achieving the Green Deal and ensuring societal resilience.
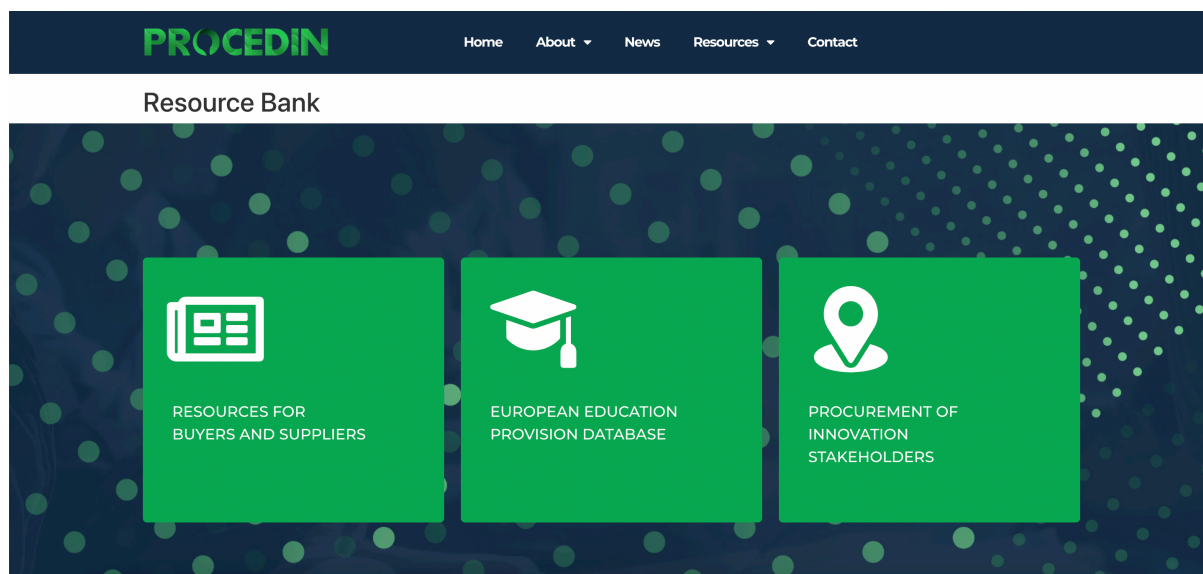
Figure 8. PROCEDIN Resource Bank: Landing Page

The Resource Bank page on the project's website (Figure 9) has been designed to reflect the categorisation of resources into two distinct categories: **Resources for Buyers of Innovation** and **Resources for Suppliers of Innovation**. This strategic division aligns with the objectives outlined in Tasks T1.1 and T1.2, allowing users to easily navigate and access the specific resources that are most relevant to their roles and needs.

Figure 9. PROCEDIN Resource Bank: Resources Categorisation

The **Resources for Suppliers of Innovation section** within the Resource Bank (Figure 10) is specifically designed to cater to the needs of suppliers, including SMEs, contractors, and service providers who are interested in participating in procurement opportunities. This section is set to provide resources

that assist suppliers in understanding the procurement process, preparing competitive bids, complying with procurement requirements, and showcasing their innovative capabilities.

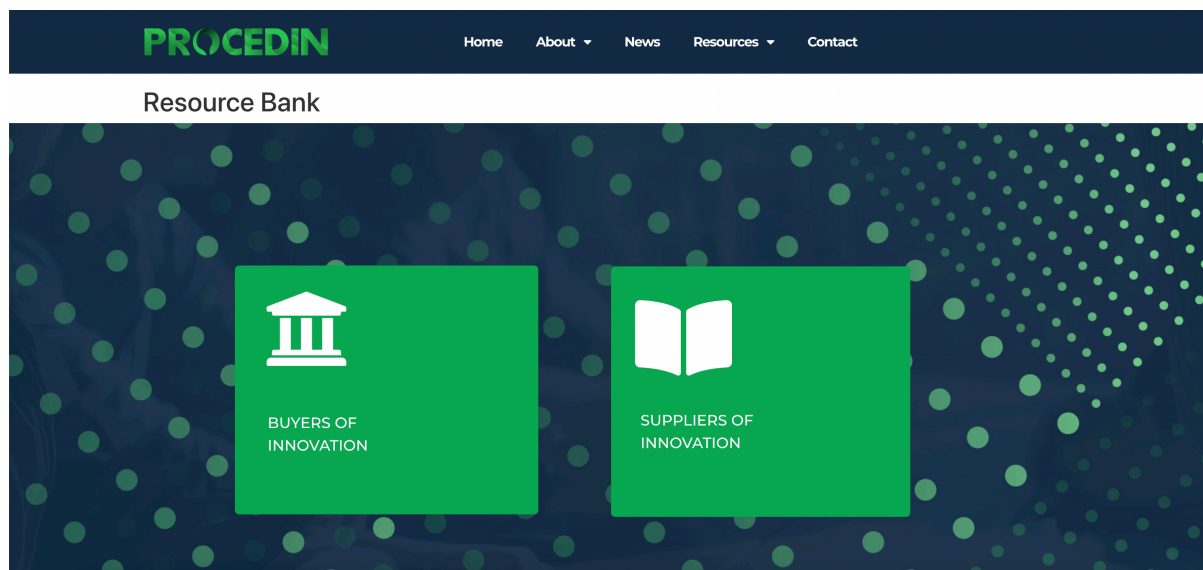By structuring the Resource Bank in this manner, the project website ensures that users can easily locate and access the resources most pertinent to their specific roles and objectives. It simplifies the search process and allows users to quickly find relevant information without sifting through unrelated materials.
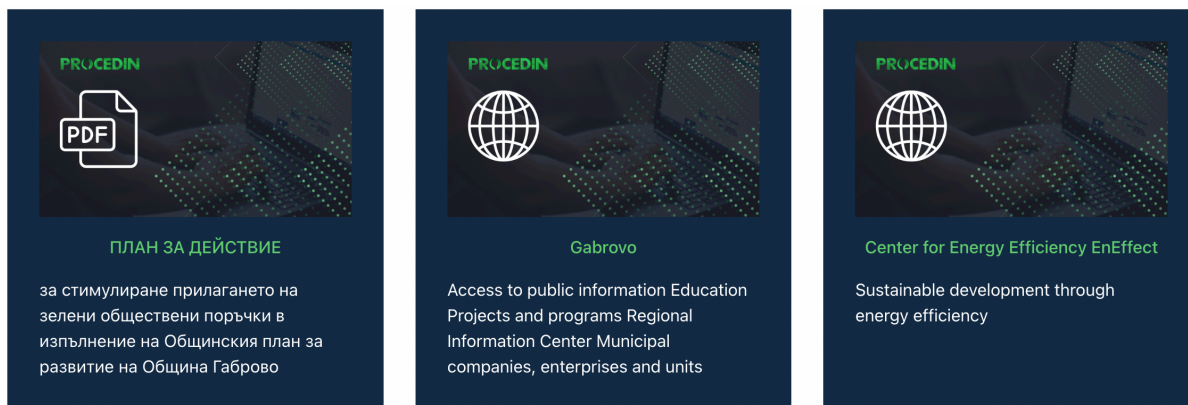

Figure 10. PROCEDIN Resource Bank: Resources for Suppliers Section

Additionally, the Resource Bank page emphasises the **importance of collaboration and knowledge exchange** between buyers and suppliers. It features filters that promote cross-category resources, encouraging buyers to explore supplier-related materials and suppliers to gain insights into buyer perspectives. This collaborative approach fosters a holistic understanding of the innovation procurement landscape and supports effective engagement between both parties.

At the outset of the project, there is a recognition of the **current limited availability of resources** related to the specific focus area. This scarcity of resources serves as a driving force for the project's objectives, as it highlights the need to enrich and expand the available resources throughout the project's duration. To address this scarcity, the project consortium has devised a **strategy to continually engage with SMEs and stakeholders**. One of the key approaches is to **keep the survey open**, allowing for an ongoing collection of valuable insights and data from SMEs.

The consortium partners are committed to reaching out to SMEs on a regular basis to encourage their participation in the survey. This proactive engagement includes leveraging various communication channels, such as email campaigns, social media platforms, and industry networks, to raise awareness about the project and the importance of SMEs' contributions.

3.2.1 Resource Bank Communication and Promotion Strategy

By implementing the following **communication and promotion strategy,** together with strategies elaborated within D5.1, the consortium aims for the resource bank to effectively reach its intended audience, drive engagement, and establish itself as a valuable and trusted source of procurement-related resources.

- **Targeted Outreach**: Identify key stakeholders, including SMEs, procurement professionals, and relevant industry associations, and develop tailored communication materials to raise awareness about the Resource Bank. Utilise various channels such as email newsletters, social media platforms, and industry-specific forums to reach the target audience effectively.

- **Engaging Content**: Develop engaging and informative content to highlight the value and benefits of the Resource Bank. This can include case studies, best practices, practical guides, and success stories that resonate with the target audience. Regularly update the resource bank with new and relevant content to keep users engaged and encourage return visits.
- **Collaborative Partnerships**: Establish collaborations and partnerships with other organisations and initiatives in the procurement field (e.g., Innovation Procurement Task Force). This can involve cross-promotion of resources, joint webinars or events, and sharing of expertise. Collaborative partnerships enhance the visibility and credibility of the resource bank, reaching a wider audience and fostering knowledge exchange.
- **Thought Leadership**: Position the Resource Bank and PROCEDIN as a thought leader in the procurement domain by publishing insightful articles, research papers, and thought pieces. Leverage the expertise within the project consortium to contribute to industry publications, participate in relevant conferences, and engage in panel discussions to showcase the resource bank's knowledge and value.
- **User Feedback and Testimonials**: Encourage users to provide feedback on their experience with the Resource Bank. Collect testimonials and success stories from SMEs and procurement professionals who have benefitted from the resources. Display these testimonials on the Resource Bank's website and in promotional materials to build trust and credibility among potential users.
- **Training and Workshops**: Organise training sessions and workshops to demonstrate the functionalities and benefits of the Resource Bank. These sessions can be conducted virtually or in-person, targeting SMEs, procurement departments, and relevant stakeholders. The training sessions should showcase practical examples of how the resource bank can be utilised to enhance procurement processes and outcomes.
- **Continuous Evaluation and Improvement**: Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the communication and promotion strategy by monitoring website traffic, user engagement, and feedback. Incorporate user suggestions and feedback to continuously improve the resource bank and tailor the communication strategy to better meet the needs of the target audience.

PROCEDIN will also engage in broad communication through the **Urban Agenda Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Procurement** and during the Urban Agenda Partnership meetings. By leveraging these networks, PROCEDIN can increase its visibility and reach within the relevant communities.

4 Best Practices and Success Stories

In order to equip SMEs with the necessary tools to understand and navigate the complexities of procurement issues, task 1.2 actively collaborates and build synergies with other valuable resources from the procurement ecosystem. The objective is to provide SMEs with a comprehensive support system that enhances their capacity to participate effectively in procurement opportunities.

To kickstart this collaborative effort, several key resources have been identified as initial touchpoints for SMEs. These resources include:

- **Procurement Forum[2]**: an online platform that brings together procurement professionals, experts, and stakeholders from across Europe. By engaging with this forum, SMEs will gain

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[2] https://procurement-forum.eu/

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access to a wealth of knowledge, best practices, and industry insights shared by experienced practitioners. The forum offers a space for discussions, knowledge exchange, and networking, empowering SMEs with valuable information and connections.

▪ **European Assistance for Innovation Procurement (EAFIP) Initiative[3]**: is a European Union-supported programme that aims to promote and facilitate innovation procurement. SMEs can leverage this initiative to gain a deeper understanding of innovation procurement processes, learn about successful case studies, and access practical tools and guidelines. By engaging with the EAFIP initiative, SMEs can enhance their readiness and capability to engage in innovative procurement opportunities.

▪ **Sustainable Procurement Platform[4]**: focuses on promoting sustainable and responsible procurement practices. SMEs can utilise this platform to gain insights into sustainable procurement strategies, access resources on sustainable product/service requirements, and learn about relevant certification schemes and standards. By aligning their offerings with sustainability criteria, SMEs can enhance their competitiveness and increase their chances of success in procurement processes.

The **European Innovation Council[5]** (EIC) fosters strong collaboration between top-notch innovators supported by the EIC and public or private buyers, investors, technology giants, and industrial leaders. This collaboration aims to establish new partnerships that drive the modernization of services for the benefit of the EU economy.

Through EIC initiatives, more than 150 EIC-funded startups, scale-ups, and SMEs have had the opportunity to engage in fruitful interactions with influential innovation procurement stakeholders. This has resulted in 56 follow-up discussions and the successful signing of 11 contracts and non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), demonstrating a tangible business impact for the participating companies.

The initiative known as **Big Buyers Working Together** plays a crucial role in stimulating market demand for innovative and sustainable products and services across Europe. In the previous round of collaboration, which concluded in November 2022, four Working Groups actively facilitated engagement between 61 companies and various business associations through 16 market engagement sessions. Throughout this process, participants took part in 46 online Working Group meetings, conducted 4 site visits, and embarked on 3 factory visits.

These Working Groups served as platforms for extensive knowledge sharing and experience exchange among 60 purchasing entities. Collectively, these entities boasted a substantial procurement budget exceeding €40 billion[6]. By bringing together such a diverse range of stakeholders, the initiative fostered an environment conducive to in-depth discussions and collaboration, ultimately driving market demand for innovative and sustainable solutions.

PROCEDIN is committed to **promoting success stories and relevant initiatives** within the field of procurement on the project website. As part of project's mission to support SMEs and enhance their understanding of procurement dynamics, the consortium recognises the value of showcasing real-world examples of success. Through the project website, **case studies of European SMEs** that have excelled in the procurement arena will be highlighted, providing valuable insights and best practices.

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[3] https://eafip.eu/
[4] https://sustainable-procurement.org/
[5] https://eic.ec.europa.eu/
[6] https://public-buyers-community.ec.europa.eu/about/big-buyers-working-together

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5 Comparative Analysis

In Western EU regions, SMEs generally have greater access to resources, including financial capital, advanced technology, and skilled workforce. These advantages enable them to actively engage in innovative procurement processes. Western regions often exhibit well-established procurement systems, streamlined procedures, and a mature ecosystem of public and private buyers. This conducive environment facilitates SMEs' participation in public procurement of innovation, leading to a higher number of contracts won and a greater share of contract value secured by SMEs.

On the other hand, Eastern EU regions face some distinct challenges. Limited access to resources and funding, coupled with relatively underdeveloped procurement systems, can pose barriers for SMEs in these regions. The procurement landscape may be characterised by less efficient procedures, higher administrative burdens, and a lack of awareness about innovative procurement practices. These factors contribute to a lower number of contracts awarded to SMEs and a smaller share of contract value obtained compared to their counterparts in Western regions.

Furthermore, variations in economic development and industry composition across EU regions impact SMEs' opportunities arising from procurement of innovation. Western regions, with their more advanced economies and diverse industries, often witness a higher demand for innovative products and services. This demand stimulates the involvement of SMEs in procurement processes, as they possess the necessary expertise and capabilities to meet market requirements. In contrast, Eastern regions, which may have a higher concentration of traditional industries, face a different landscape where procurement of innovation may be less prevalent.

To bridge the gap between regions, PROCEDIN and its Resource Bank promote knowledge sharing, capacity building, and networking opportunities for SMEs in less developed regions. Moreover, PROCEDIN aims to connect SMEs with potential buyers, investors, and technology leaders, fostering collaboration and enabling access to procurement opportunities.

6 Barriers and Obstacles

Barriers and obstacles for SMEs to achieve success in public procurement of innovation as suppliers can be attributed to various contextual factors and country-specific differences. These factors pose challenges for SMEs in effectively participating in procurement processes. Here are some key barriers and obstacles identified:

- **Size of the country**: The size of a country plays a role in determining the demand for large works contracts. In very small countries, the need for such contracts may be limited, thereby reducing opportunities for SMEs to engage in significant projects.
- **National context of public procurement system**: Differences in how the public procurement system is structured at the national level can impact SME participation. Higher levels of decentralization, for instance, can limit possibilities for aggregating demand, resulting in many purchases falling below EU thresholds. This can hinder SMEs' access to larger procurement opportunities.
- **Nature of procurement**: The composition of procurement volume, particularly the prevalence of public works, can affect the share of SMEs in terms of contract value. For example, a higher proportion of public works contracts may result in a lower overall share of SMEs in terms of contract value. Additionally, country-specific procurement traditions, such as a significant

number of tenders for agricultural services in Greece, may disproportionately favour micro-enterprises.

- **Traditions in tendering**: Different countries may have distinct traditions and practices when it comes to tendering for specific types of products or services. Such practices can make it challenging for SMEs to compete effectively and secure contracts.

- **Tendering approaches**: Some countries may rely on general contractors for public works, making it difficult for SMEs to access opportunities, as contracts are not broken down into smaller lots that are more accessible to smaller enterprises. Additionally, disparities may exist in advertising upcoming tender opportunities, limiting the visibility of procurement opportunities for SMEs.

Understanding these barriers and obstacles is crucial in developing strategies and support mechanisms that address the specific challenges faced by SMEs in the public procurement of innovation.

7   Conclusion and Next Steps

The Resource Survey conducted within PROCEDIN WP1 was an essential step in compiling a comprehensive Resource Bank that is live on the project website. Through careful planning, design, and implementation, the survey has gathered valuable resources relevant to the project's objectives. However, the consortium intends to keep the Survey open in order to continuously gather relevant resources, while also establishing a dedicated section within the Resource Bank for interested stakeholders to contribute additional resources. Moreover, some of the next steps are the following:

- **Promoting Success Stories**: Actively showcase success stories and relevant initiatives on project channels, highlighting SMEs that have excelled in the procurement arena. This will inspire and motivate other SMEs to pursue innovative procurement opportunities.

- **Resource Bank Development**: The resource base for both buyers and vendor firms will be further enriched with other relevant resources, to provide SMEs with comprehensive and practical tools to navigate the dynamics of procurement issues effectively.

- **Communication and Promotion**: Implement the strategy to raise awareness about the Resource Bank and its benefits, and leveraging existing platforms and networks to maximise the reach and impact of the Resource Bank.

- **Collaboration with Stakeholders**: Collaborate with public authorities, training providers, and industry associations, to enhance support mechanisms for SMEs in understanding and participating in public procurement processes. This will include facilitating one-to-one meetings, and connecting SMEs with potential opportunities.

- **Comparative Analysis and Knowledge Exchange**: Further comparative analysis will be conducted to deepen consortium's understanding of regional disparities in SMEs' procurement of innovation.

- **Capacity Building and Training**: PROCEDIN will explore opportunities to provide capacity building and training programmes for SMEs, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the complexities of procurement processes effectively.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**: Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be conducted to assess the impact of PROCEDIN's interventions and initiatives. Feedback and insights from SMEs and other stakeholders will inform the continuous improvement and refinement of the Resource Bank and associated support mechanisms.