

D4.3

Engagement routes between between business students, educators and public contracting authorities

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Lead Beneficiary	Municipality of Gabrovo
Author(s)/Organisation(s)	Todor Popov (GAB) Esmee Peters (UT) Louise Knight (UT) Valentina Schippers-Opejko (HAA)
Contact Email	t.popov@gabrovo.bg
Contributor(s)	All
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3	F6S NETWORK IRELAND LIMITED	F6S	IE
4	GEMEENTE HAARLEM	HAA	NL
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PROCEDIN

Procurement Capability - Embedding and Driving Innovation

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

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POI	Procurement of Innovation
PROCEDIN	PRO curement C apability – E MBEDDING and D IVING I nnovation
IPSERA	International Purchasing and Supply Education and Research Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
EU	European Union
PCA	Public Contracting Authorities
EL-IPS	European Lab for Innovative Purchasing and Supply (University of Twente)

1. Introduction

The new generation of MSc and BSc graduates is increasingly concerned with meaningful work. Many business students are passionate about making a tangible difference in society through their future employment. Purchasing and supply chain management is a particularly appealing field of work, with many opportunities. Yet, business and management students often don't see public procurement as a potential career pathway, to fulfil these aspirations. Every year, across the EU, public bodies do 2 trillion euros worth of business with companies, which represents 12% of Europe's GDP. As a pivotal engine driving innovation, sustainability, and social progress on a grand scale, public procurement has an excellent fit with the innovation, strategy and commercial skills of business graduates. We recognise the role PROCEDIN could play in providing business and management students with visibility on the importance of this field and the career and impact opportunities it offers.

With the University of Twente as part of the PROCEDIN project, PROCEDIN has close access to business students, relevant course materials, and relevant educator networks. Conversely, PROCEDIN is closely connected to practitioner networks through the municipality of Haarlem and Gabrovo. PROCEDIN therefore has a vital infrastructure to both create and facilitate engagement routes between business students, public contracting authorities, and educators.

- **Creating and facilitating engagement routes.** There are multiple routes to engage business students with public procurement, ranging from low (time) commitment (guest lectures) to high (time) commitment (traineeships). In our advice notes, a multitude of different routes will be described, including their relative advantages and commitment, along with guidance for effective outcomes. For each of the stakeholders (business students, educators, and public entities), we have prepared a different advice note to ensure that each is tailored and to the point, enhancing its readability and, consequently, the ease of adoption.
- **Promoting public procurement career opportunities.** To provide visibility of the importance of public procurement and the career and impact opportunities it offers, the first step is to ensure recognition of the significance by all stakeholders (students, public contracting authorities, and educators). In total, PROCEDIN hosted six different types of events. In addition to creating awareness, these events also facilitated engagement and offered opportunities for stakeholders to provide input in our advice notes.

In the rest of this deliverable, we will discuss the events and advice notes in more detail. This deliverable contains the following sections:

- **Chapter 2** explains why we focused explicitly on business students and why business students are an increasingly important target group for recruiting talent into public procurement.
- **Chapter 3** summarises the activities PROCEDIN organised to facilitate engagement between universities and public entities to combine forces and create engagement routes to attract more business students to public procurement (with a special emphasis on strategic procurement and procurement of innovation).
- **Chapter 4** summarises the advice notes constructed for this deliverable, including the purpose, and intended objectives of these different advice notes.
- **Chapter 5** concludes this deliverable, including the next steps and ongoing dissemination activities.

2. Why public procurement of innovation opportunities lie with business students and educators

2.1 Why business students?

Traditionally, public procurement is, in many countries, seen as part of civil service. As such, entry routes into public procurement are not as obvious as in some other sectors. For example, many people currently working in public procurement were previously working somewhere within the civil service and ‘accidentally’ ended up in public procurement. In other places, recruits might come from a legal background, or in cities and municipalities, recruits from an urban planning background might (historically) be the most obvious choice. Yet, a background in business is not such an obvious entry route.

Public procurement is increasingly becoming a pivotal engine for driving innovation, sustainability, and social progress on a grand scale. It’s a setting in which graduates can thrive, doing business and delivering societal value. Switching from the ‘traditional view’ of public procurement to public procurement of innovation and sustainable public procurement has strategic implications for public contracting authorities. As the view of public procurement has changed, it comes more into the domain where public procurement could benefit from the commercial, innovation, entrepreneurship and strategy skills that business students have. Yet, as the business and innovation aspects of public procurement receive relatively little public exposure (compared to regulatory aspects, for example), these opportunities are often underexplored.

Given that a typical business student would not have been thinking about working in the public sector when they signed up for a business degree, how can we give them visibility of these opportunities and attract their interest?

One obvious opportunity lies in the fact that the new generation of graduates is increasingly concerned with meaningful work. Many business students are passionate about making a tangible difference in society through their future employment. They seek value in their work through impact in terms of social responsibility, sustainability, and innovation. Therefore, especially these business students could be attracted to public procurement through creating awareness of public procurement as a potential career path.

2.2 Why business student educators?

Whereas the innovation and sustainability aspects of strategic public procurement are important for attracting students' *interest*, business and management educators have a central role to play in increasing the *visibility* of public procurement. Ideally, procurement for public sector organisations would be integral to purchasing and supply chain management programmes, alongside purchasing for service, infrastructure and manufacturing sector organisations. This, however, is not the case.

In constructing the PROCEDIN database for European education provision (Task 4.1/Deliverable 4.1), we analysed many European education institutions' course curricula, giving us an overview of how much education specifically mentions public procurement. Across the EU, within current business-related course curricula within supply chain management, purchasing and supply management, and entrepreneurship, public procurement is neglected.

Whereas innovation, sustainability, and supply management are extensively covered in business studies, the connection with public procurement is rarely made. This is a critical gap that capacity building efforts should address.

The opportunity for PROCEDIN to create awareness of public procurement career opportunities not only lies with business students, it should also involve business student educators.

3. Promoting public procurement of innovation career opportunities through events

3.1 Purpose of our events

The first step in creating visibility of the importance of public procurement and its career opportunities is to create awareness of its potential and significance to all stakeholders, including students, public contracting authorities, and educators. By constructing workshops and presentations within broader business or procurement-related events and conferences, we hope to capture both public contracting authorities (PCA) and educators with experience in promoting public procurement career opportunities, as well as PCA and educators who have not considered public procurement career opportunities before.

The events we organised were not explicitly focused on students. Nevertheless, our workshops and presentations had input from several past students. Similarly, we could draw on our experiences of teaching strategic procurement courses and parts of the report were developed by business graduates in the PROCEDIN team.

Within our presentations and workshops, PROCEDIN could generate awareness and inform participants of possible routes of engagement. The mention of these possible routes is used to facilitate knowledge of potential courses of action for both stakeholder groups and to create and shape engagement routes based on the participants' experience. Hence, these events were both informative and interactive, capturing the following questions:

- **Why** is public procurement important and relevant for business students? (*informative*)
- **What** opportunities lie in strengthening connections between public contracting authorities and universities? (*informative*)
- **How** can public contracting authorities and educators best facilitate visibility of and interest in public procurement career opportunities? (*informative and interactive*)
- **How** can PROCEDIN help others with promoting public procurement career opportunities? (*interactive*)

This led to the following three objectives for our workshops and events:



Figure 1: objectives of workshop and presentations

3.2 Summary of organised events

Table 1 provides an overview of the four different events that were hosted, as well as the two upcoming events PROCEDIN has planned. PROCEDIN expects to reach between 200 and 300 relevant stakeholders – ranging from educators and public contracting authorities who do not have experience with public procurement career opportunities, to those who do. Similarly, we have an equal division between educators and practitioners, as well as a good representation of different European regions.

Table 1: Events organised

Event	Date	# Participants	Type of Participants	Nationality of participants	Type of event
Special Interest Group 'Purchasing and Product Innovation' (Sweden)	December 2023	31	Educators and practitioners	Mainly northern and western European	Interactive workshop
International Purchasing and Supply Education and Research Association conference (Brazil)	April 2023	18	Mostly educators	All of Europe	Presentation with Q&A
Urban Agenda Partnership Meeting (Netherlands)	April 2023	16	Mostly practitioners	High focus on Southern and Eastern Europe	Interactive workshop
Production and Operation Management Society Conference (United States)	May 2023	26	Mostly educators	All of Europe	Presentation with Q&A
PRECIUS transnational meeting (Finland)	June 5 th 2024	<i>(Expected between 50-75)</i>	Educators and practitioners	Mainly northern European	Presentation with Q&A
IPTF Conference: Scaling Up Innovation Procurement (Belgium)	June 18 th 2024	<i>(Expected between 75-100)</i>	Mostly practitioners		Panel discussion

4. *Advice notes: engagement routes to promote public procurement of innovation career opportunities to business students*

4.1 Purpose of the advice notes

The overall aim of the advice notes is to create awareness among skilled current students and recent graduates of career opportunities in public procurement. The three stakeholder groups that influence these decisions the most are educators, potential employers, and students themselves. Therefore, for each of these groups, we developed an advice note on the different entry routes into a career in public procurement – ranging from small time investment to more extensive time investment. These advice notes offer guidance and a concrete starting point to the relevant stakeholders, explaining how they can contribute to attracting business students to public procurement.

- **Advice note for business students.** The advice note can serve as an informative flyer for students with limited knowledge and who are considering taking public procurement courses. It is also designed to help students who are considering a research project or internship in public procurement – by providing them with topic ideas and practical tips.
- **Advice note for educators.** This advice note helps educators integrate public procurement into their courses – providing them with different routes to do so.
- **Advice note for public contracting authorities.** This advice note provides examples, resources, and guidance on how public contracting authorities can facilitate internships and research projects in terms of design, recruitment, and mentoring.

WHY PROCEDIN?

The University of Twente (NL) is project coordinator for PROCEDIN. The UTwente team are researchers and educators embedded in EL-IPS (European Lab of Innovative Purchasing and Supply), a university-wide research center with 30+ researchers. The team has close access to business students, public procurement course materials, and relevant international educator networks. We have direct experience of working with students whose initial assumption is that a business administration degree program leads to a career in commercial companies. Through our research, practice and policy informed teaching, we highlight that public procurement is also about business. Our students benefit from many of the opportunities outlined in the advice notes.

Conversely, PROCEDIN is closely connected to practitioner networks such as the Urban Agenda Partnership for Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement through the municipality of Haarlem.

Combining both the practitioner networks and educators' experiences, as well as these of past students, PROCEDIN has vital infrastructure to create and disseminate these advice notes.

4.2 Advice note for business students

Example of the first four pages of the advice note for students. The complete advice note can be found [here](#).

PROCEDIN
Building Procurement Capability for Embedding and Driving Innovation

WORKING IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Are you a business student who is passionate about making a tangible difference in society?

Have you ever considered working in Public Procurement?

Every year, across the European Union, public bodies do 2 trillion euros worth of business with companies, which represents 12% of Europe's GDP. Public procurement is a pivotal engine driving innovation, sustainability and social progress on a grand scale. It's a setting in which graduates can thrive, doing business and delivering societal value:

WHY?

Front runner in shaping the future landscape

Economic significance Accounts for 29% of total government spending

Driver for sustainability. For example, through circular economy

Driver for social-responsibility. For example, through inclusion of disabled and disadvantaged people.

HOW?

WHAT?

In this advice note for business students, we explore **why** you should think about public procurement, **how** you can get familiar with public procurement and **what** your role is in finding a suitable internship or traineeship.

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WHY SHOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT?

ZERO-EMISSION VEHICLES

CO₂-NEGATIVE ROAD

6 PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IMPACT EXAMPLES

REDUCING URBAN FLOOD RISK

REFURBISHED FURNITURE

CARE FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

REDUCING FOOD WASTE

WWW.PROCEDIN.EU More case examples?

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HOW TO GET FAMILIAR WITH PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

1. INTERNSHIP

2. RESEARCH STUDY

3. STUDY PROCUREMENT

DRAW INSPIRATION FROM THE FOLLOWING INTERNSHIPS & TRAINEESHIPS

- European Central Bank
- The European Union Agency for the Space Programme
- The European Institute of Public Administration
- Europol
- European Space Agency
- Dutch Government
- Dutch local government

DRAW INSPIRATION FROM THE FOLLOWING RESEARCH PROJECTS

- Municipality Interventions for Sustainable Economic Recovery through Public Procurement
- Requirements placed bidders in their tenders to encourage fair and ethical trade
- Impact of changes in purchasing practices in the municipal procurement of youth healthcare services

DRAW INSPIRATION FROM THE FOLLOWING COURSES

The **PROCEDIN** Database for education provision offers an overview of different procurement, sustainability and entrepreneurship courses from 114 different universities within the EU. Following courses related to procurement would be another avenue for business students to explore to get more familiar with public procurement.

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WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN FINDING A SUITABLE INTERNSHIP?

- Identify potential employers:** search for employers that connect with your personal interest (can be international, national, local, or regional public sector entities, healthcare institutions, and not-for-profit organisations)
- Understand employer needs:** Tailor your approach to demonstrate how your skills and interests align with their strategic objectives, showcasing your potential to drive positive change.
- Approach prospective employees:** Leverage networks from university lecturers or professionals with expertise in public procurement, use LinkedIn, attend company events and career fairs
- Negotiate the ideal assignment:** Clearly articulate your objectives for the internship, emphasising your personal interest and possible requirements from your university.
- Avoid unpaid assignments:** Advocate for fair compensation for your contributions to strategic public procurement initiatives, emphasising the importance of recognising the value of interns' skills and expertise.

PROCEDIN opportunities

PROCEDIN Stakeholder Map

Overview of different stakeholders involved with PDI

For investigating networks

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4.3 Advice note for educators

Example of the first four pages of the advice note for educators. The complete advice note can be found [here](#).

HOW TO GET BUSINESS STUDENTS EXCITED ABOUT WORKING IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

The new generation of graduates is increasingly concerned with meaningful work. Many business students are passionate about making a tangible difference in society through their future employment. Purchasing and supply chain management is a particularly appealing field of work, with many opportunities.

Yet, they often don't see public procurement as a pathway to fulfilling these aspirations. Even though public procurement is a pivotal engine driving innovation, sustainability, and social progress on a grand scale. Every year, across the EU, public bodies do 2 trillion euros worth of business with companies, which represents 12 percent of Europe's GDP.

As business and management educators, we have the privilege and responsibility to guide our students towards these rewarding opportunities and instill in them the passion and skills needed to thrive in sectors beyond the private sector. Universities have the opportunity and responsibility to provide students with more insights into the variety that public procurement offers, empowering them to become agents of positive change.

In this advice note for business management educators, we explore four opportunities, including examples, resources, and guidance on how universities can get students excited about working in public procurement.

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HOW YOU CAN BRING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT INTO YOUR EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

EXPAND YOUR CURRICULUM

HIGHLIGHT REAL-WORLD IMPACT

CONNECT WITH EXPERTS

PROMOTE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

SEPARATE REPORT AVAILABLE AT [WWW.PROCEDIN.EU](#)

POSSIBLE ROUTES TO STIMULATE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AS A CAREER PATH

- MAKE USE OF IMPACT CASES
- INTEGRATE REAL-LIFE WICKED PROBLEMS
- GUEST LECTURES
- RESEARCH PROJECTS & INTERSHIPS

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IMPACT CASE EXAMPLES

ZERO-EMISSION VEHICLES

CO₂-NEGATIVE ROAD

REDUCING URBAN FLOOD RISK

REFURBISHED FURNITURE

CARE FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

REDUCING FOOD WASTE

WWW.PROCEDIN.EU More case examples?



ORGANIZE GUEST LECTURES

WHY?

- Real-life case studies and examples engage students and demonstrate the relevance of public procurement.
- Public contracting authorities can provide valuable insights and internship opportunities.
- Bridging the gap between academia and practice prepares your students for successful careers.
- Opportunity to emphasize public procurement's diverse and rewarding career paths.

SOME EXAMPLES

INNOVATION & SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT ON THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR & RISK MANAGEMENT

STRATEGIC PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN THE CITY OF HAARLEM

WWW.PROCEDIN.EU



4.4 Advice note for public contracting authorities

Example of the first four pages of the advice note for PCA. The complete advice note can be found [here](#).










5. Conclusion

5.1 Next step: upcoming events

There will be two more events in which we (as PROCEDIN) will promote career opportunities within public procurement for business students and opportunities for all relevant stakeholders. The first will be during a multiplier event of European projects EXPERTISE and PRECIUS (both Erasmus+ projects). Here, we will provide a keynote speech on the lessons learned from these advice notes and previous events. The second event will be on June 18th 2024, the final event of PROCEDIN, which is organised as part of the Innovation Procurement Task Force conference on Scaling Up Innovation Procurement in Europe (SIPE). During this event, PROCEDIN will give a short presentation on the lessons we have learned from these advice notes and previous events – which will then feed into a panel discussion.

5.2 Next step: dissemination of the advice notes

The advice notes are available on the [PROCEDIN website](#), and we are distributing them widely. They will be shared on all PROCEDIN channels, including the PROCEDIN community and LinkedIn page. They will be shared with all Urban Agenda Partnership partners and within the international Purchasing and Supply Education Research Association (IPSERA) network, with the request to be shared among interested parties. EL-IPS (University of Twente's research centre) will broadly distribute them on their LinkedIn page and to the regional contracting authorities within their network. They will be added to the course materials of EL-IPS, for students, future guest lecturers, and public contracting authorities involved in providing research projects to business students.

5.3 Additional step: reflective article

Combining forces with other educators, business graduates and others (e.g., law, urban planning), and public contracting authorities throughout our events allowed us to link our past experiences with new insights and opportunities. These not only led us to reflect on **how** new talent can be attracted to public procurement but also on **why** public procurement opportunities lie with business students. While the *how* question is covered in the advice notes, we believe we could also contribute more to the *why* question—which we touch upon in the second chapter of this deliverable. Therefore, after the upcoming two events (where we expect to capture more insights), we will write a one-page on **why opportunities lie in attracting business students to public procurement**. This one-page reflective article will be distributed widely, using the same strategy as the advice notes (explained in 5.2).