Green Purchasing Implementation and Success in Italian Municipalities

Andie Wilkerson and Dr. Nicole Darnall
Sustainable Purchasing Research Initiative; School of Sustainability, Arizona State University

Motives
- Italy’s government spending accounted for nearly half of its GDP in 2017 (OECD, 2020)
- Green Purchasing Policies (GPPs) specifically target procurement practices
  - Ensures that the goods and services purchased meet environmental and social needs
  - Considers the long-term economic benefits of these sustainable options

Methods
- Translated the 2017 US survey to Italian by researchers from Sant’ Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa
- Emailed a SurveyMonkey survey to municipality directors within departments of public tender, purchasing, public works, and environment
- Collected responses, and analyzed data for statistical significance using Chi-Squared Tests, and Fisher’s Exact Tests depending on the size of the data
- Used data to create recommendations for Italian municipalities that will be shared in a report published by SPRI

Results

Figure 1: Municipal-wide Implementation of Policies and Practices and Their Relation to GPP Implementation

- Env Management System: 6% No GPP, 39% GPP
- Internal Audits of Env Performance: 3% No GPP, 42% GPP
- Track Spending of Env Sustainability Activities: 16% No GPP, 65% GPP
- Many Vendors Offer Env Friendly Products/Services: 9% No GPP, 46% GPP
- Publication of Environment Sustainability Report: 7% No GPP, 48% GPP
- Set Goals / Targets for Env Performance: 7% No GPP, 65% GPP

All the policies and practices found to increase implementation rates of GPP in the US were found to be similar in the Italian dataset

Figure 2: Probability of Successful Implementation of GPP Given Use of Certain Criteria

- We Reward Employees who Develop Innovative Solutions: 31% No GPP, 80% GPP
- Top Managers are Responsible: 60% No GPP, 96% GPP
- Information on Env Impact of Products: 60% No GPP, 88% GPP
- Tracking Spending on Env Sustainability Activities: 40% No GPP, 69% GPP
- Many Vendors Offer Env Friendly Products and Services: 46% No GPP, 80% GPP
- Goals/Targets for Env Performance: 20% No GPP, 73% GPP

Suggestions to improve implementation and success of GPPs in Italian municipalities:
- Build on Complementary Policies and Practices
- Use Information About Environmentally Preferred Products
- Track Spending Related to Green Purchases
- Assign Responsibility to Top Level Management
- Participate in Networks to Share Best Practices

References
- Images sourced from Shutterstock

The author would like to acknowledge Nicole Darnall, the entire SPRI team, and Charles Redman for their guidance and feedback on this research.