

EPF feedback on the evaluation of the Public Procurement Directives

The European Panel Federation (EPF) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the evaluation of the public procurement directives. EPF believes that the evaluation of the public procurement directives is a unique opportunity to address the possibility to further support the uptake of sustainable and EU sourced bio-based materials and products. The use of bio-based materials is vital for promoting environmental sustainability, reducing carbon footprints, storing carbon and fostering a circular economy. In this respect, EPF thinks that EU public procurement directives should further support the uptake of bio-based materials and products, such as wood-based panels, in the following manner:

- **Driving Market Demand for Products Manufactured in Europe:** Public procurement directives can explicitly encourage or require the use of bio-based materials and products made in Europe in government contracts by creating demand and incentivise industries in the EU to develop and supply sustainable products. Governments are significant consumers of goods and services, and their purchasing power can create substantial market demand. Supporting bio-based products in procurement policies can thus stimulate broader market acceptance and innovation, allowing these materials and products made in the EU to substitute fossil-based and energy intensive alternatives.
- **Fostering Sustainability and Circular Economy:** Public procurement policies can prioritize bio-based products, such as wood-based panels, that are made from renewable material, recovered wood or industrial by-products. They can set criteria for lifecycle impacts, including environmental performance and embodied carbon, and reward suppliers whose products have minimal negative effects on the environment. Bio-based materials, derived from renewable resources or waste, tend to have a lower environmental impact than fossil-based counterparts. By favouring bio-based options, procurement policies help promote sustainability, reduce dependency on non-renewable resources, and support the transition towards a sustainable circular bioeconomy in line with the cascading principle¹.
- **Supporting Climate Change Mitigation:** Public procurement can include climate criteria, such as carbon neutrality or emissions reduction targets, as part of procurement specifications. Materials with lower greenhouse gas emissions, like bio-based alternatives substituting energy intensive materials and products, can be favoured in such frameworks. Bio-based materials often have a smaller carbon footprint compared to fossil-based materials, especially if produced through sustainable practices. By incorporating climate criteria into

¹ In line with the cascading principle, **woody biomass should be used according to its highest economic and environmental added value** in the following order of priorities: wood-based products, extending their service life, re-use, recycling, bioenergy, disposal.



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procurement processes, governments can help reduce overall emissions and support national or international climate goals.

- **Aligning with the Principles of the New European Bauhaus (NEB):** Public procurement directives can align with the principles of the NEB by integrating sustainability, inclusivity, and aesthetic quality into the procurement process. By prioritizing bio-based products and materials, such as wood, these directives can foster the use of sustainable resources that reduce environmental impacts, enhance circularity, and contribute to carbon neutrality, all of which align with the NEB's goals. Additionally, incorporating EU-sourced and renewable materials supports regional economies and promotes innovative design, this alignment would drive the transition to more sustainable practices in the construction ecosystem that is responsible for about 36% of operational GhG emissions in Europe.
- **Aligning with Global Sustainability Goals:** Public procurement directives can be aligned with international agreements (e.g., the Paris Agreement) and national sustainability policies, focusing on reducing resource consumption and promoting eco-friendly alternatives like bio-based materials and products. Governments are under increasing pressure to meet sustainability goals set by global climate accords, national strategies, and local environmental policies. Public procurement should play a major role in meeting these obligations by favouring bio-based materials and products that would contribute to reducing environmental impacts.

To conclude, EPF believes that public procurement directives should support the uptake of EU sourced bio-based materials and products because they can leverage the purchasing power of the government to drive innovation, sustainability, and environmental protection. By setting clear standards, encouraging market development, and fostering a transition to more sustainable practices, such policies help shift both public and private sector supply chains toward more environmentally friendly and socially responsible solutions. These actions can contribute to achieving broader climate, economic, and social objectives on a local, national, and European scale while being in line with the objectives of the Green Deal and fostering the development of a competitive circular bioeconomy in Europe.

About EPF - the European Panel Federation has members in 30 European countries and represents the manufacturers of particleboard, MDF, OSB, hardboard, softboard and plywood. The EU wood-based panels industry has an annual turnover of about 25 billion euro and creates over 100,000 jobs directly.
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