

# Preparing for a Circular Playground: procuring creative spaces to play and learn in City of Aalborg





### Circular PP

---

PREPARING FOR A CIRCULAR PLAYGROUND:  
PROCURING CREATIVE SPACES TO PLAY AND LEARN  
IN CITY OF AALBORG

#### **Aalborg 2020**

**Publisher:** ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability in collaboration with the City of Aalborg

**Contact:** [julie.bastholm@aalborg.dk](mailto:julie.bastholm@aalborg.dk), [procurement@iclei.org](mailto:procurement@iclei.org)

**Authors:** Ashleigh McLennan is a Sustainable Procurement and Economy Officer at ICLEI and Julie Bastholm is projectmanager in the City of Aalborg.

**Layout and drawings:** Niina Silvasti, VisualMonkey

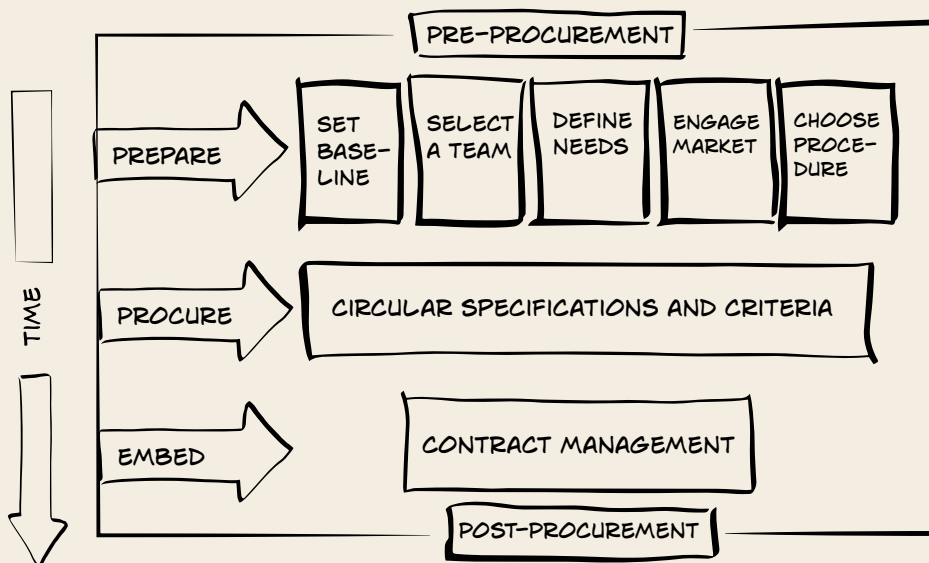
# Preparing for a Circular Playground: procuring creative spaces to play and learn in City of Aalborg

A playground can be so much more than a swingset and slide. Play is an important part of a child's development, and playgrounds can support this by providing creative spaces to play and learn. As part of the [Circular PP](#) project, the [City of Aalborg](#) (Denmark) has established a new innovative approach to buying playgrounds, based on the principles of a circular economy.

As with any innovative procurement, preparation is key! Essential pre-procurement activities include understanding the current provision of playgrounds in the city (setting a baseline); selecting the right team; defining your real needs; engaging the market; and selecting the right procurement procedure.

As a result of their pre-procurement, Aalborg has developed innovative circular award criteria, which encourage the use of natural features (such as small hills, trees and edible plants) and circular playground equipment (long-lasting, made with recycled materials and recyclable at end-of-life). Aalborg is piloting these criteria in a turnkey contract for the Stigsborg "Universe of Children and Youth", which is part of a large new neighborhood being built on former industrial land. The build will be complete in 2024.

## Process for a circular procurement

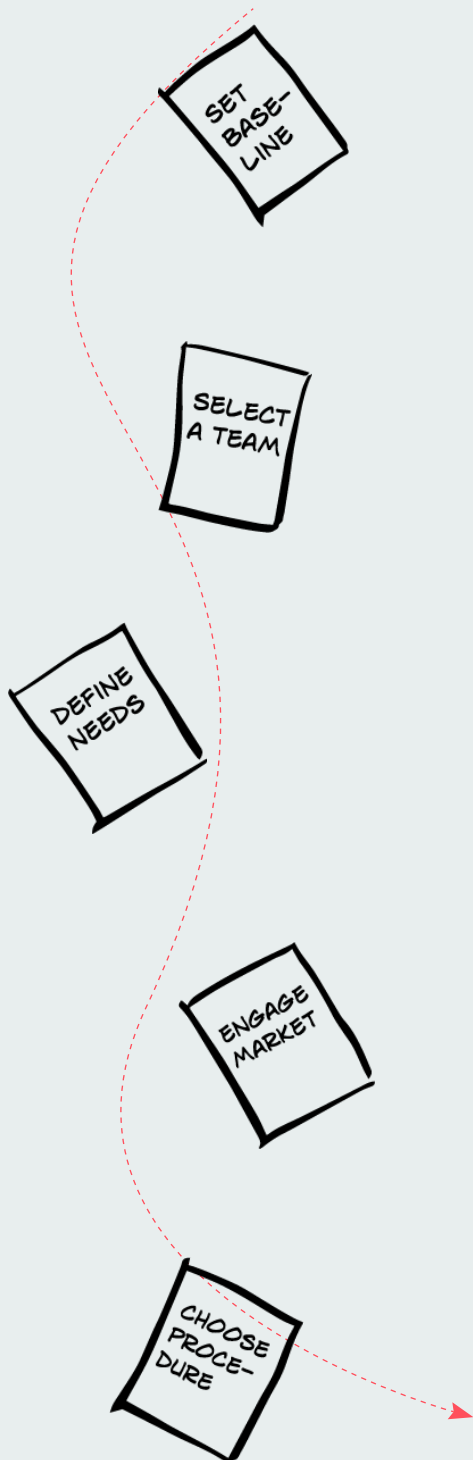


# Contents

---

<b>Preparing for a Circular Playground .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Main learning .....	5
<b>Background .....</b>	<b>6</b>
What is circular public procurement? .....	6
Why circular playgrounds?.....	7
<b>Pre-Procurement .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Set baseline .....	9
Select a team .....	10
Define needs .....	12
Market Engagement .....	14
Choose procedure .....	17
<b>Circular specification and criteria.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Subject matter .....	19
Selection Criteria .....	19
Technical Specifications .....	21
Award Criteria .....	23
Price.....	24
Best price-quality weighting .....	24
<b>Post-procurement .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Key Recommendations .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Annex A - City of Aalborg's Award Criteria .....	29





## Main learning

---

Circular procurement is not straightforward, but Aalborg learned that the best way forward is to just get started!

---

Only by doing procurement in practice is it possible to identify challenges, find innovative solutions, build necessary experience, and use the results to change mindsets.

---



# Background

---

The following guidance has been developed to help public buyers procure playgrounds designed and built according to the principles of a circular economy.

Circular playgrounds combine sustainable use of materials and innovative use of natural features, to create engaging spaces which encourage creative play and learning.

This guidance is inspired by a pilot tender for circular playgrounds developed by the [City of Aalborg](#) (Denmark) as part of the [Circular PP project](#) - a 3 year project (2017-2020) supported by the [EU's Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme](#).

This guidance has been developed by [ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability](#) in collaboration with the City of Aalborg.

## What is circular public procurement?

---

Public procurement is the process used by public buyers – such as government departments, cities and other publically-owned institutions – to purchase goods and services.

Public procurement can be a powerful tool in supporting the transition to a circular economy. Public authorities can use their buying power to stimulate and support circular economy businesses, which in turn makes circular economy goods and services more widely available to society at large.

Circular public procurement is a holistic approach to sustainability which considers whole life cycle impacts of products and services.

**For more general information, the following guides are helpful:**



- [Circular Procurement in 8 Steps](#)
- [Public procurement for a Circular Economy](#)
- [Circular Procurement: Best Practice Report](#)

## Why circular playgrounds?

---

**Aalborg's Vision for Municipal Schools** sets a target that at least 25% of all learning processes should take place outside of school, either physically or digitally. The goal is to encourage experimental learning and problem solving. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of outdoor spaces for teaching and learning has only increased.

Aalborg has also been committed to sustainability for several decades, even giving its name to the 1994 **Aalborg Charter** for local environmental action, which was signed by over 3000 local authorities in support of local environmental action. Aalborg's most recent **Sustainability Strategy (2016-2020)** highlighted the central importance of a circular economy approach to resource use and waste.

The City has experience in the circular procurement of school furniture (**case study here**), and playgrounds was a logical next step for building on their knowledge of materials, design and learning environments, but incorporating a new set of opportunities offered by the outdoors.

Combining these two priorities, Aalborg wants to develop an innovative future playground, which is sustainable and filled with endless opportunity for creative play and learning.

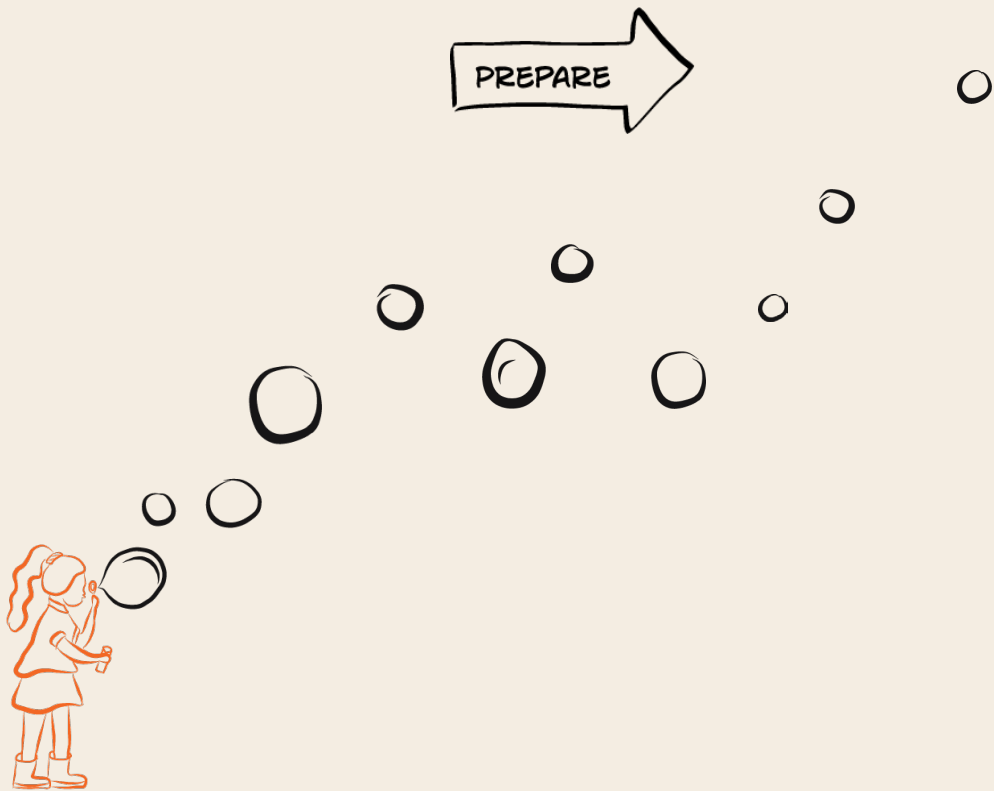
Aalborg identified an opportunity for piloting a circular playground in **Stigsborg** – a large urban redevelopment project converting former industrial docklands into a residential area with education and leisure services for 8000 people. The neighborhood's school will accommodate 1000 pupils plus 160 pre-school places, and is being designed as a 'Universe of Children and Youth' – meaning that young people's needs are placed in the center of the design.

In summer 2020, Aalborg piloted its first circular playground procurement as part of the Stigsborg Universe of Children and Youth school construction contract. Their experience is dotted throughout this guide, as a real life example to help you in your own procurement.

# Pre- procurement

---

Different activities in the pre-procurement stage can run simultaneously – in particular, internal engagement (finding out more about your needs) and external engagement (finding out about what the market can offer). But for the purpose of this guidance, each activity is presented as a separate step.





## Set baseline

---

Before making your playgrounds more circular, you should start by understanding how sustainable or circular your playgrounds currently are.

### **This can be done by:**

- Checking the specifications and criteria used in recent calls for tender for playgrounds; and,
- Interviewing procurement officers and users on actual results of the tender.

This will provide your baseline, against which you can measure your future impact. It is also important to understand how your playgrounds are currently procured.

### **For example:**

- Is there a framework contract already in place? Are you obliged to use this? Does it include any sustainable options?
- Are playgrounds purchased as a product or service? i.e. does the supplier simply provide the equipment, or is it also responsible for maintenance?

The answers to the above will shape what is possible and desirable for you as a buyer.

**Outcome:** You should understand how sustainable your playgrounds already are, how they are currently purchased, and who is responsible for looking after them.

## Select a team

---

Different people will have different opinions about what a playground needs to achieve. This is already the right time to consult colleagues with different specialisms and skillsets, including, but not limited to:

- Procurers
- Environmental experts
- Education experts
- Safety experts

It is important you know who the most important stakeholders are, and what their most important needs are. Creating a steering committee to guide and assess the procurement can make sure their needs are reflected through the whole procurement process.

**Outcome:** Define a steering committee of decision-makers, who can authorise the process, and a working group of experts who can inform the tender specifications, and help evaluate the eventual bids.





## Aalborg's Experience

The idea for a circular playground in Aalborg originated in the Environmental Department, who want to improve the environmental impact of the city's procurement.

Procurement in Aalborg is quite decentralized: the procurement department is only responsible for about 10% of all procurements, with the rest of purchases being done directly by the relevant department. This means that playgrounds are being purchased by several different city departments, including the School Department, City and Landscape Department, and Building Department

Starting in 2018, the Environmental Department began speaking with colleagues across all the relevant departments. First, Aalborg set a baseline by interviewing colleagues from a school and a kindergarten, the playground inspector, a landscape architect from the Department of Parks and Nature, and the Procurement Department.

### **Through speaking with the above, the following needs were identified:**

- Procurers need playgrounds to be cost effective
- Park officers need equipment to be durable and easy to maintain
- Municipality's playground safety consultant ensures materials and equipment are safe for play
- Education officers need space which can be used for teaching
- Environmental officers need the park to be sustainable

A steering committee was formed, with a representative from the decision-making level in the Schools Dept., the Family and Employability Dept., the City and Landscape Dept., the Procurement Dept., and the Building Dept. Under the leadership of the Environmental Dept., the steering committee helped to strategically connect the city's priorities in sustainability, health, and education, finding common solutions to issues which are often tackled in silos.



PREPARE



## Define needs

---

Circular procurement means thinking differently about what you need, and how you can meet these needs.

When starting a circular procurement, it is important to define your real needs. For example, is a playground just a slide, swing-set and climbing frame? Or is a playground a safe, stimulating space where children can play creatively?

By defining the outcome, you want to achieve, rather than specifying the technical solutions to achieve that outcome, it is possible to come up with more creative and innovative solutions. This is where a working group of different experts can really help.

**Next, think creatively. Is there a circular economy solution to what you need? This can include solutions which:**

- Avoid the use of equipment and embodied materials altogether
- Use equipment made from recycled or sustainably sourced materials with a net positive environmental impact (for example recycled steel and plastics, or certified wood)
- Use equipment made from materials with guaranteed long lifetimes (i.e. durable materials)
- Use equipment which can be easily adapted, maintained and repaired (i.e. design solutions, servicing and warranties)
- Use materials which can and will be reused at end of life (i.e. supplier / manufacturer take-back schemes)
- Use materials which can be recycled at end-of-life

The above solutions are listed in their order of preference, according to their potential life cycle benefit/costs.

**If you are interested in purchasing a service rather than the playground as a product, you can also consider specific circular contract types, such as<sup>1</sup>:**

- Product service systems: the supplier retains ownership of the product, and the user pays-per-use or according to performance
- Purchase and resale agreement: the supplier buys back a product and ensures optimum value retention via reuse
- Purchase and resale agreement: the contract includes an agreement on who will recover the equipment after use. Alternatively, a separate contract can be made at a later time to specifically deal with reuse.

At this stage, it can also help to understand what is on the market. It is likely that this step will overlap with the next step – market engagement.

---

<sup>1</sup> Public Procurement for a Circular Economy

**Outcome:** At the end of this step, you should have a draft of the tender specifications. The viability of these depend on suppliers' business models, and should be assessed in the next stage – market engagement.



## Aalborg's Experience

Several workshops were held with staff from schools, kindergartens and other relevant stakeholders to discuss their wishes for future outdoor play areas. Nature and the use of natural materials was a common theme.

During the market dialogue (below), Aalborg also invited a professionals, including a landscape architect and cultural biologist to speak. They presented a holistic perspective of a future playground.

Aalborg developed a bold vision for a playground which avoids the use of materials altogether, by making the most of natural solutions, such as landscaping and vegetation. The lifetime of a landscape is longer than the lifetime of equipment, and when hills, terrain, and vegetation are established property, the ongoing maintenance of a playground can be kept to an absolute minimum. This nature-based solution for playgrounds can also have a positive environmental impact, such as encouraging biodiversity and capturing carbon.



## Market Engagement

---

It is important to understand what is currently available on the market and what is possible before publishing your call for tenders.

### **Market engagement helps you to:**

- Identify potential bidders and / or potential solutions
- Increase suppliers' understanding of what you need, and how they can meet these needs
- Inform your choice of procurement procedure and contract type.

Market engagement takes time. Allow yourself at least 3-6 months, or up to 12 if the contract is large and innovative. Spending this time upfront can benefit you later, as it leads to fewer clarifications and better bids.

- Do desk research – understand what is already available on the market.
- Consult colleagues in other public authorities – have others already tried to find a similar solution?
- Market sounding questionnaires – a comparatively easy way to gauge suppliers interest and capacity.
- Prior Information Notice – a PIN can provide the market with an early notification of intent to award a contract / framework and can lead to early supplier discussions to help inform the development of your specifications
- Trade shows – consider attending an expo to learn the latest in the industry, such as the FSB International Fair for Public Space, Sports and Leisure Facilities, or the GaLaBau trade fair for gardening, landscaping and greendesign.
- Meet the Buyer – invite potential suppliers to an event to learn more about your needs, and upcoming contract opportunities. For some contracts, supplier networking may also be desirable (for example, to encourage joint bids from suppliers of playground equipment and landscape architects).

When organising Meet the Buyer events, remember that suppliers may find it difficult to share ideas or ask questions in front of their competitors. Accommodate this by allowing time for one-to-one meetings – just make sure that any information shared during these sessions is available in adequate time to all potential bidders to ensure transparency and non-discrimination, as allowed for by the 2014 Procurement Directives<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> Article 40 of Directive 2014/24/EU



### Outcome:

After doing market research, you should understand the following<sup>3</sup>:

- The number of suppliers and the total size of the market
- Key suppliers and their market share
- The typical business models of suppliers, and the degree to which they suit the circular economy
- The number of buyers and their influence on the market (demand)
- The degree of competition
- Current prices, pricing methods and other factors influencing price
- Market trends and regional differences
- The availability of alternative goods and services (product differentiation)
- Any current or potential new developments in the market
- The nature and quality of the supply chain
- Supplier positioning – the level of vulnerability you would have if a particular supplier was to fail.

Most importantly, can the market already deliver what you want to buy?  
If not, are they willing to adapt to your needs?

---

<sup>3</sup> Checklist adapted from SPP Regions (2018) Market Engagement Best Practice Report:  
[https://sppregions.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Resources/Market\\_Engagement\\_Best\\_Practice\\_Report.pdf](https://sppregions.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Resources/Market_Engagement_Best_Practice_Report.pdf)



## Aalborg's Experience

Aalborg started their circular procurement of playgrounds by learning what had already been done by doing a baseline analysis as well as interviews with various institutions and professionals. Together with ICLEI, they did desk research on existing solutions and sought solutions from other public buyers. They found that no truly circular playground has been made yet, making this pilot an exciting first of its kind!

Aalborg first announced their intention to procure a circular playground at the Aalborg Sustainability Festival 2018. After a period of internal dialogue to define the city's needs, in February 2020 they visited a local fair on playgrounds organised by the building department in collaboration with several schools which were planning new playgrounds, where they discussed their ideas for a circular tender, and received feedback from suppliers on their ideas of how to buy sustainably, in particular, avoidance of harmful chemicals, and availability of spare parts and maintenance services.

In April 2020, Aalborg hosted an online "Meet the Buyers" event on Future Playgrounds which involved 74 participants, including suppliers of playground equipment, architects, municipalities from other regions, and researchers.

The event presented the circular and pedagogical vision of the project, in order to prepare potential suppliers for the bidding process. Seven potential bidders to the project (six from Denmark and one from the Netherlands) were invited to pitch their ideas.

Through this event, Aalborg better understood the current capabilities of the market, and how to best meet their own needs. It was discovered that traditional suppliers of playgrounds are primarily focused on equipment, and do not have in-house landscape architecture knowledge needed to create features using terrain and vegetation, such as landscape architecture knowledge needed to create features using terrain and vegetation.

Doing the event online was necessary due to COVID-19, however, it made it possible to reach a broader base of suppliers, as well as include other municipalities interested in doing similar procurements.

**A recording of the event is available here (in Danish):**



[Watch event on Youtube](#)



## Choose procedure

---

Your choice of procurement procedure can influence the outcome of your approach.

### For example:

- **Open procedure:** any supplier can submit a tender, and all those who meet the minimum requirements will be included in the assessment of bids. This can increase the number of total bids you receive, but not necessarily the quality of offers.
- **Restricted procedure:** you can assess technical ability in a prior stage, and limit the number of operators invited to tender (a minimum of 5 must be invited).
- **Competitive procedure with negotiation and competitive dialogue:** these can be useful when design and innovation are important elements of the purchase<sup>4</sup>. Competitive procedure with negotiation is more suited to procedures where the buyer knows their preferred solution, but technical aspects of work, such as price and quality, need further development. In competitive dialogue, buyers describe their needs and minimum requirements, but are open to considering a range of solutions<sup>5</sup>.
- **Innovation procurement:** procedures such as a Pre-Commercial Procurement and Innovation Partnership can be used when there are no existing solutions to your need. In these procedures, you are procuring innovation, rather than a specific product. The risks are higher, however, these procedures can result in large gains in the effectiveness and efficiency of public services<sup>6</sup>.

17



## Aalborg's Experience

---

Aalborg's procurement was done as part of a larger turnkey contract for the entire Stigsborg's Universe of Children and Youth. Although the playground is only a small part of the total contract, the development as a whole is guided by circular economy principles, including the use of recycled or reusable materials in construction and CO<sup>2</sup> reduction<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> Article 26 (4) of Directive 2014/24/EU

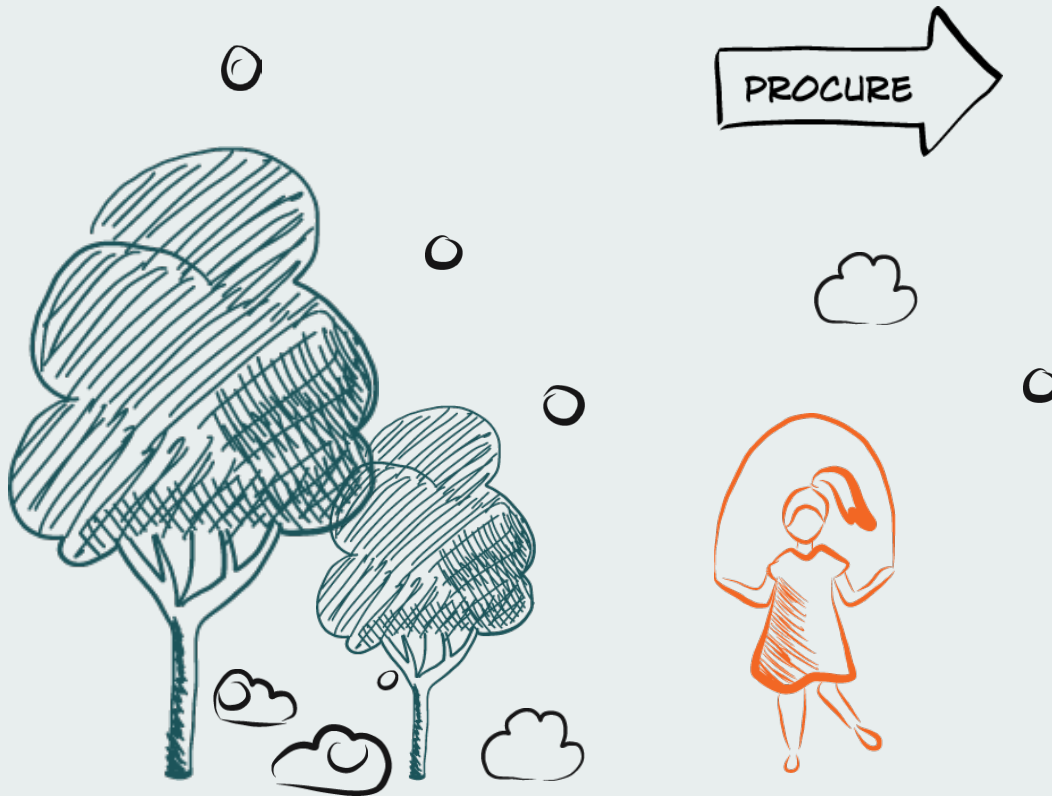
<sup>5</sup> European Commission (2018) Guidance on Innovation Procurement

<sup>6</sup> <https://innovation-procurement.org/why-buy-innovation/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.szc-eu.com/stigsborg-boerne-og-ungeunivers/>

# Circular specification and criteria

---



## Subject matter

---

The ‘subject matter’ of a contract defines the product, service or work you want to procure. According to the 2014 Procurement Directives, any specifications and award criteria you use in your call for tender need to be clearly “linked to the subject matter” of the contract.

As such, it is important you define your subject matter well. Referring to your circular objectives, or any other objectives such as creative play or outdoor learning, directly in the subject matter is a helpful way to make this clear. It also sends a strong signal to the market.

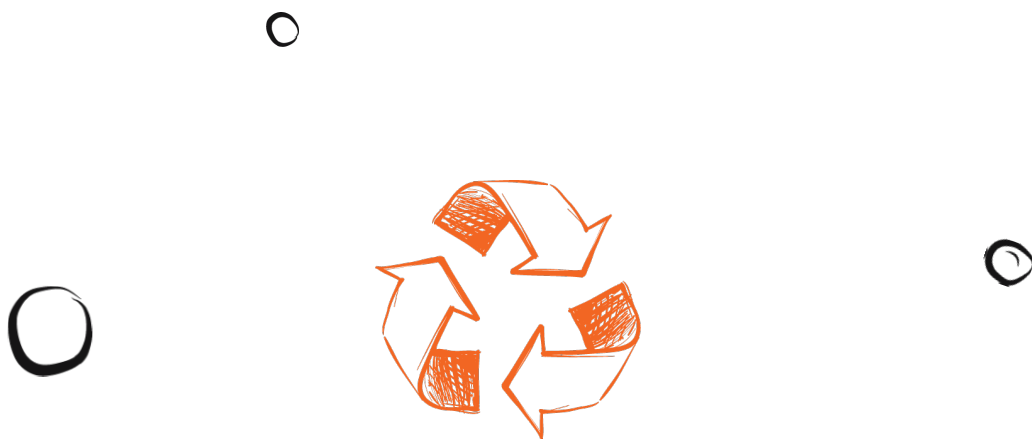
### Examples of subject matter:

- Design and build of sustainable outdoor play environment
- Supply of playground equipment made from sustainably sourced materials
- Supply of durable, reusable playground equipment and surfaces

## Selection Criteria

---

Selection criteria can be used to evaluate the previous experience and technical capacity of different suppliers to carry out the circular aspects of the contract. Bidders can be asked to provide a method statement demonstrating how they will meet the stated goals of the procurement.





## Aalborg's Experience

Aalborg asked bidders to provide a first draft of landscape modeling for the area, indicating their uses of terrain, surface material, plants, and play and learning equipment. This should include a description of how the model supports learning and circular economy.

Purpose	Sustainability category	Explanation
The product / item remains as originally intended.	Lifetime	Ensure that the product is of high quality with a long life and long warranty.
	Maintenance	Ensure good condition of the products by continuously improving wear and tear. damages, including the opportunity to obtain re-served parts.
	Recycling	Recycle either direct recycling of a product or recycled materials into a new product.
	Repair	Possibility of replacing larger parts of the product e.g. it is possible if the product can be separated
The product loses its original function - the purpose is that the product can be separated into clean, reusable material fractions for the purpose of being recycled.	Material Recycling	Known from return schemes (plastic, wood, textile, upholstery, metal) - glass and iron can be melted into new glass / iron, wood can be tiled and used for bottom decks in the garden, clean plastic fractions can be reused for new plastic. Paper / cardboard can be made into new paper, etc. Materials in the product must be kept in clean fractions so that the materials can form clean loops when the product can no longer be used.

## Technical Specifications

---

Technical specifications set compulsory requirements. If a bidder does not meet these requirements, their bid must be rejected. As such, it is essential that you set technical specifications which are possible and realistic, in order not to exclude competition.

Considerations such as safety are essential in playgrounds, and should be included in technical specifications.

### For example:

- Playground equipment and play surfaces must comply with the latest DS standard – DS / EN 1176-1: 2017 (or latest version), which establishes general safety requirements for fixed-mounted playground equipment and surfaces on public playgrounds.
- Play Surfaces and play equipment must comply with the latest DS standard – DS / EN 1177:2018 + AC: 2019 (or latest version), which specifies test equipment and shock test methods for determining a sub-layer shock absorption when measuring the acceleration achieved on impact.

### Depending on the subject matter of your procurement, other possible topics for technical specifications include:

- **Product warranty** – i.e. the bidder shall guarantee (via written declaration) a minimum 5-year warranty on all products supplied. This warranty shall cover the repair and replacement and include a service agreement with options for pick-up and return or on-site repairs, and guarantee that goods are in conformity with the contract specifications at no additional cost.
- **Spare parts** – i.e. the bidder shall guarantee (via written declaration) the availability of spare parts, or elements which achieve an equivalent function, for a period of at least five years from the date of delivery of the furniture product.
- **Disassembly and repair** – i.e. the bidder shall provide clear disassembly and repair instructions which allow for non-destructive disassembly of equipment for the purpose of replacing parts and materials.
- **Minimum environmental requirements of materials used** – playground equipment is typically made from wood, plastic, and/or metal. Each type of material comes with its own environmental impacts and circular economy options. A good source of minimum technical requirements can be found in the Nordic Swan ecolabel criteria for outdoor furniture and playground equipment (see box).
- **Paints and varnishes** – where used, paints and varnishes should meet the technical requirements of the EU Ecolabel.
- **Planting** – the chosen plants must be natural in the area, robust/hardy, and contribute to wildlife. A list of plant species defined as suitable for local growing conditions can be defined by the procurer. These (or a percentage of these) can be required to be organic<sup>8</sup> or equivalent; or grown according to Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles<sup>9</sup>. Bidders should provide information (name and amount) of plants to be supplied in execution of the contract.

---

<sup>8</sup> Grown according to requirements laid down in Regulation (EC) No 834/2007

<sup>9</sup> As defined by UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) IPM programme or EU Directive 2009/128/EC.



## Nordic Swan ecolabel for outdoor furniture and playground equipment

Nordic Swan provides third party certification for sustainable playground equipment. The label's environmental requirements have been drawn up from a life cycle perspective, taking production, use and waste into account.

### For example:

- Wood raw materials from sustainable forestry operations
- The use of recycled plastic and metal raw materials and a design that permits the reuse of plastic and metal
- The use of chemicals with a lower environmental impact
- Good performance properties (safety, strength and stability)

Nordic Swan ecolabelled products must also be accompanied by information on how to maintain the product and recommended maintenance products, and how to proceed when the product comes to the end of its useful life.

By requiring a playground which meets the technical requirements of Nordic Swan, you might miss out on opportunities for more

advanced circularity or innovations – such as Aalborg's integrated approach to landscape and learning. However, ecolabels provide an easy way for procurers to set requirements, and verify bidders compliance with these.

The 2014 Procurement Directives allow public buyers to use ecolabels to define the technical requirements of their purchase and check compliance with these requirements. But remember, only criteria which relate to the subject matter of the contract can be used (some ecolabel criteria concern general management practices, which may not be specifically relevant to the contract in question). For more information on using ecolabels in procurement, see the [Buying Green guide](#).

### Find the Nordic Swan's ecolabel criteria:



[Nordic-ecolabel.org](https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org)

## Award Criteria

---

Unlike technical specifications, which set minimum requirements, award criteria challenge the market to offer the best available solution.

Award criteria should link to the subject matter of the contract, and should be designed to help you assess which bids are more circular than others. To do so, the points awarded for each circular criterion should reflect your aims, as defined in the pre-procurement phase.

### Example circular award criteria:

- Lifetime i.e. X points shall be awarded for each additional year of warranty and service agreement offered that is more than the minimum technical specification as follows:
  - 4 or more years extra warranty: x points
  - 3 years extra warranty: x/0.75 points
  - 2 years extra warranty: x/0.5 points
  - 1 year extra warranty: x/0.25 points

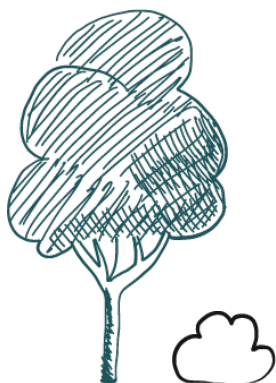
Verification: tenderer will provide a written declaration detailing the offer period

- Use of recycled materials: X points are available for the use of recycled plastic/wood/metals in place of virgin materials.

Verification: bidder shall provide a declaration of compliance with this criterion.

- Material recycling i.e. points shall be awarded when plastic parts with a mass greater than 100g are marked in accordance with EN ISO 11469 and EN ISO 1043.

Verification: bidder shall provide a declaration of compliance with this criterion, with a list of all plastic components with a weight greater than 100g.



## Price

---

Price is also evaluated as part of the award criteria. It is important that this also reflects your circular ambitions. In a non-circular procurement, the maximum points for price are usually awarded to the lowest cost option, but products designed to last longer may involve higher upfront investment costs, which will be offset by the lower maintenance and renewal costs in the medium and long-term.

As a result of your market dialogue, you should have an understanding of current prices, pricing methods and other factors influencing price. Select a method of evaluating price which best meets your circular objectives.

The best case scenario would assess Total Cost of Ownership.

**For this, the following costs would need to be known:**



**TCO = Upfront costs (equipment and installation)  
+ Service costs (maintenance and refurbishment)  
/ Guaranteed lifetime**

Another approach is setting a realistic upper price limit and lower limit, based on past contract as well as what you learned in the market dialogue phase about current prices and suppliers' business models. Offers outside this price range can be excluded using a technical specification. The supplier with the lowest price receives the maximum points, and the supplier with the highest price receives 0 points, with other price offers scored on a linear scale between these.

## Best price-quality weighting

---

Each award criterion should be weighted according to your priorities in the tender.

To check the weightings, it is recommended that you do a sensitivity test i.e. do a test run with some made-up scores. Find out what would happen if a bidder scored well in all award criteria apart from the circular criterion. Would it be possible for a non-circular solution to win the contract? If so, adjust your weightings until this is no longer the case.





## Aalborg's Experience

---

At Stigsborg, the playground became part of the total contract for the entire Children and Youth Universe, and therefore circularity will be incorporated into more parts of the whole project and be communicated to all people involved. A disadvantage might be that the circular requirements might not be as prioritized as they would be in a smaller tender.

**Aalborg used the following weighting:**

- Landscape modelling (30%)
- Circular economy (30%)
- Learning (20%)
- Price (20%)

**Under 'circular economy', the following sub-criteria were awarded:**

- Lifetime (30%)
- Maintenance (25%)
- Use of recycled materials (25%)
- Maintenance (10%)
- Material recycling (10%)

Submitted proposals will be judged by

the Stigsborg Universe of Children and Youth evaluation committee which consists of politicians, relevant administrative leaders, representatives of the school management, the school board, the teachers, the educators and professional judges with architectural and engineering backgrounds. Aalborg's Evaluation Form for the circular playground can be found in Annex A.



# Post- procurement

---

To make sure your new playground is truly circular, it is important to enforce and embed circular economy practices.



## Post-procurement

---

To make sure your new playground is truly circular, it is important to enforce and embed circular economy practices.

Contract performance clauses are a tool to ensure that the goods and services delivered as part of the contract meet the intended circular requirements, that the equipment and landscaping is maintained over the medium- to long-term, and at the end of equipment' life, it is reused or recycled.

Terms and conditions can be used to instruct how a contract should be delivered, and set remedies in the event these conditions aren't met.

### **For example:**

- organic waste and packaging waste should be separated into existing urban waste factions and collected for recycling, with records kept and made available on request;
- Replacement parts should be provided within X days of a request being made.

For more complex, longer-term supplier relationships (for example, if playgrounds are provided and maintained as part of a service contract), a performance monitoring clause can help encourage improvements over the course of the contract delivery. Such clauses should be collaboratively developed with the selected supplier, to make sure that monitoring is feasible, and most importantly, the resulting data is useful, both to you as a buyer (helping you to assess impact) and to the supplier (helping them develop and improve their service)

Finally, it is important that those in charge of managing playgrounds are aware of these contract clauses, so that they can make use of repair or replacement services where available.

## Key Recommendations

---

Aalborg will be building its first circular playground as part of the Stigsborg Universe of Children and Youth redevelopment, due to be completed in 2024. When this pilot began, it was and still is the first of its kind. This meant that Aalborg spent a longer time in the pre-procurement phase than is usually possible for public buyers. But by doing this, Aalborg has now created a framework for circular playgrounds, which it will continue to use in all its future purchases. By supporting the creation of this guide, they hope that other public buyers throughout Europe and beyond can also follow their lead.

### **Aalborg have three main recommendations for others looking to procure circular playgrounds:**

- 1 Market Dialogue** - discussing the vision for future playgrounds with suppliers was truly beneficial. Aalborg understood better how their goals could feasibly be met by the market, which improved their call for tender, and suppliers left with new ideas and an understanding of the future direction of playgrounds in Aalborg and how to best provide these.
- 2 Cross-cutting competencies** - creating the steering committee was very important. As well as bringing together the right skills, it also allowed new connections to be made between different city policies, creating innovative new ideas and an inclusive approach to sustainability.
- 3 Allow time** - circular solutions are still very new and innovative, meaning they are not yet deeply embedded in the market. Innovation needs collaboration and creative thinking, both of which take time. But through proper preparation, the hope is that time and money can be saved in the longer-term.



## Annex A - City of Aalborg's Award Criteria

Aalborg Municipality will identify the most economically advantageous offer based on the award criteria “best price-quality ratio”, where the following sub- and part-criteria, with weighting, are used as the basis for the award of the framework agreement:

Sub criteria	Weighting in percent
<p><b>Landscape Modeling</b></p> <p>This will partly be assessed based on the submitted landscape modeling. In this connection, the tenderer is required to enclose drawings of the proposed landscape modeling and interior design.</p> <p>Furthermore, it will be positively assessed that the elements terrain, playsurface planting, learning environments, outdoor workshop, tools and learning are met as far as possible in landscape modeling.</p> <p>The tenderer's interior design solution is desired with high functionality and flexibility for play and learning for ages from 0 - 16 years.</p>	<p>30%</p>
<p><b>Circular economy</b></p> <p>The sub-criterion “Circular Economy” will be assessed based on the tenderer's answer to the following 5 sub-criteria as well as in landscape modeling.</p> <p><b>Part criterion “Lifetime” (weight: 30%)</b> It is considered positive that a long-life guarantee is offered in addition to the minimum requirements for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The elements from terrain modeling, for example, hills, slopes, ditches</li> <li>• Planting</li> <li>• Play equipment such as swings, climbing towers and the like</li> <li>• Tiles and coating</li> <li>• Play surface</li> <li>• other elements such as learning environments, fences, sheds.</li> </ul> <p>The product warranty offered must be stated for several years.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Part criterion “Maintenance” (weight: 25%)</b></p> <p>The tenderer is requested to state the spare parts offered on other items, play equipment and substrates that exceed the minimum criteria. The spare parts warranty offered must be stated for a number of years.</p> <p>It is considered positive if the tenderer in the landscape model designs the elements so that minimum maintenance is required.</p> <p>It is considered positive if the Offeror provides a user-friendly maintenance plan for the operation and maintenance of the terrain and plantings.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Sub-criterion “Recycled materials and share of recycled materials in new products” (25%)</b></p> <p>It is positively important that the tenderer uses as far as possible recycled materials such as recycled plastic, recycled wood, 2 nd hand products / elements, transforms a product into a new product with a new function, thereby reducing the environmental impact.</p> <p>It is positively emphasized that, when using land for terrain / landscape modeling, opportunities for using surplus land and assessing the environmental impact of land transport are being sought.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Part criterion “Maintenance” (10%)</b></p> <p>It is considered positive that the tenderer offers products with the opportunity to disassemble the product and change any parts to extend the life of the product.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Part criterion “Material recycling” (10%)</b></p> <p>It is considered positive that the use of clean materials or materials is kept separate, which after end of life can be directly included in material loops.: 30 %)</p>	<p>30%</p>
<p><b>Learning</b></p> <p>The learning must reflect children aged 0 to 16, corresponding to a crèche, kindergarten and the 3 basic steps in primary school (schooling, middle school and schooling) and the activity categories: dissemination, dialogue, physical movement, immersion and studies / production.</p>	<p>20%</p>
<p><b>Economy</b></p> <p>It should be noted that a price that does not exceed the stated budgetary framework cannot be exceeded.</p> <p>This is followed by a final weighted price: “CE price” *% + “landscape price” *% + “learning price” *% + “economy price” *%.</p>	<p>20%</p>