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REBus in the Netherlands

A different approach - the first lessons learned

REBus, an EU Life+ funded project, is pioneering business models for a circular economy by testing the methodology for implementation with 30 businesses and public sector organisations in the UK and the Netherlands. The aim of this partnership¹ project is to share the learning across Europe to inspire others to start their circular journeys.

REBus is also tackling broader challenges like developing indicators, monitoring and metrics to provide an evidence base for policy makers.

Rijkswaterstaat², the Dutch REBus partner, is working with public organisations and businesses to help them adopt more circular procurement approach. They are working with at least 10 pilots to test this methodology focusing on six sectors in the Netherlands: IT, furniture, carpeting, construction, textiles and catering,

Rijkswaterstaat is coordinating the development of the pilot projects with key procurement-related stakeholders e.g. PIANOo, the expertise centre for public procurement, and central government procuring organisations like the Dutch CSR centre (MVO Nederland).

NL focus on generating demand

Cuno van Geet, Rijkswaterstaat, said “The lessons from the participating projects should provide us with insight into the drivers behind developing successful REBMs, the impact they have on cost and on the environment, and how to identify barriers that need to be challenged in order to implement circular procurement on a larger scale.”

A ‘Community of Practice’

REBus has joined a unique network in the Netherlands called Dutch Green Deal³ to exchange knowledge, to share pilot experiences, to meet up with fellow procurers and to have in depth sessions on sectors or topics.

Lessons learned: ProRail case study - circular flooring and furniture

ProRail, the Netherlands’ first completed pilot, is a new traffic control centre for railway. They specified performance requirements and total cost of ownership for flooring and furniture. Cuno said “One of the most important lessons we learned is to discuss your intentions with the market in advance. Engage them in early dialogue and involve your potential suppliers, giving them time to develop solutions that meet your requirements.”

Success breeds follow-up

Following the success of the project, ProRail has decided that circular procurement should feature in its entire procurement agenda for the coming year. It will also assess its applicability in the construction of a new traffic control centre scheduled for construction in Rotterdam.

Cuno continues “One of the key issues in the discussion with the market was how to value furniture and flooring after their expected lifetime of 10 to 15 years, and how to include that value appraisal in contracting.”

Sharing the knowledge

Cuno concludes “The procurers and companies came up with a good solution and business model for this contract. Lessons also show that we need to get involved earlier, in the design

phase of the building, and to find new indicators for discussing resource efficiency. ProRail has dared to take this first step in innovation. We can all learn from this experience. The lessons learned are now being used in a larger framework for similar project contracts at the Utrecht Medical Centre and Rijkswaterstaat.”

More information

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Notes

1. REBus is partnership project delivered by WRAP (project lead), Rijkswaterstaat, Aldersgate Group, KTN and the University of Northampton.
2. Rijkswaterstaat is the Dutch executive agency for infrastructure and the environment.
3. This Dutch Green Deal was initiated in 2012 by a group of seven organisations to set up pilots in procurement that contribute to a more circular economy. This initiative was a success - with 38 participating organisations as of October 2015 - partly due to the added impetus that the REBus project brought. Each partner is committed to developing two pilots, thus creating a win-win situation.