

IPTF CONFERENCE: SCALING-UP INNOVATION PROCUREMENT IN EUROPE

Brussels — June 18, 2024

This report sets out the objectives, main insights, and created impact of the **IPTF Conference** that was held in Brussels on June 18, hosted by the **Innovation Procurement Task Force (IPTF)**. The IPTF Conference epitomised the collective endeavours of members, notably its three founding projects: **BUILD**, **PROCEDIN**, and **Health InnoFacilitator**, all of which are Horizon Europe Coordination and Support Action (HEU CSA) initiatives funded under the HORIZON-EIE-2021-CONNECT-01-02 call for Building capabilities in innovation procurement. These projects are set to conclude in autumn 2024, culminating in the IPTF Conference as their collective Final Event. The focus of the conference is on **Scaling up Innovation Procurement in Europe**.

INNOVATION PROCUREMENT TASK FORCE

The IPTF was established to synergise the strengths and initiatives of its members in the realm of **Innovation Procurement (IP)**. The goal was to establish a central reference point for stakeholders engaged in Innovation Procurement, aiding in their capacity building. The task force has since expanded to include four additional members from EC-funded/supported, pan-European projects and initiatives: the **InnoBuyer** project, the **Urban Agenda Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement**, the **Procure4Health Project**, and the **PREPARE Project**. Additional partners are in the process of joining. With expectations set for further growth, the founding member partners are also engaged in newly awarded HEU and Interreg projects, indicating their ongoing participation.

PROCEDIN **Health
InnoFacilitator** **Procure
4Health**

Funded by
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THREE-PART DESIGN

The IPTF Conference brought together key stakeholders from public procurement, sector, and it aimed to discuss strategies, share insights, and foster collaboration. The agenda included keynote speeches, policy perspectives, interactive sessions, and networking opportunities, with a strong focus on **translating project outcomes into actionable policies**. The IPTF Conference offered an unparalleled platform for individuals within the innovation procurement ecosystem to unite and delve into the critical challenge of scaling up through a three-part, interactive programme:

- **Policy Perspectives on Scaling Up:** This segment revealed a variety of insightful and thought-provoking perspectives from IPTF partners and key stakeholders through brief presentations. These insights were critically examined before opening up the floor for debates with attendees or panel discussions.
- **Capacity Building in Action:** Based on needs identified earlier, this part showcased exemplary project outputs from PROCEDIN, Health InnoFacilitator, and BUILD. It aimed to demonstrate how the resources and methodologies developed by these projects were used to build innovation procurement capacity.
- **Learning Lab:** Using a World Café approach, this session invited all attendees to share their knowledge and collaboratively develop strategies for accelerating the adoption and scaling up of innovation procurement.

Throughout the day, there was a clear focus on exchanging insights about scaling up innovation procurement, as well as identifying ways to amplify enablers and tackle barriers. During the Conference, attendees also had the opportunity to explore displays showcasing the objectives and achievements of the IPTF Members.



ORGANISED BY:

PROCEDIN

BUILD
Innovation Procurement
Prepared for Cities

**Health
InnoFacilitator**

InnoBuyer
First choice for innovation procurement



SUPPORTED BY:

**Procure
4Health**

Prepare
Health systems
for the future



**Funded by
the European Union**

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PART 1: POLICY PERSPECTIVES ON SCALING UP
MAIN INSIGHTS

The Conference commenced with enthusiastic welcome speeches by **Louise Knight** from the University of Twente and **Danijel Pavlica** from F6S, setting an optimistic tone for the day. They highlighted the overarching goals of the Conference, which focused on scaling up Innovation Procurement and fostering cross-sector learning. Louise emphasised the "scaling-up question" as a focal point for the Conference, underscoring its critical importance for the day's discussions.



Silvi Serreqi from the European Commission delivered a welcome address, emphasising the collaboration among three key projects and the importance of translating their collective work into actionable policy. She pointed out the common challenges these projects face and stressed the necessity of addressing these challenges through effective policy-making.



An Schrijvers' keynote address was a highlight of the morning. She underscored the need for a bottom-up approach to Innovation Procurement, where public authorities submit unresolved problems for which no immediate solutions are available. She emphasised a need-driven approach to innovation, which focuses on creating value based on real needs. Schrijvers also highlighted the importance of capacity building, stressing that procurement officers need proper training and support. Collaboration between public and private sectors was deemed essential, and she discussed the significance of risk management by offering co-financing to mitigate the risks faced by civil servants. Additionally, Schrijvers advocated for top-down incentives to push innovation procurement onto the political agenda.

PART 1: POLICY PERSPECTIVES ON SCALING UP
MAIN INSIGHTS

Robert Miskuf, the IPTF Chair, discussed the birth and growth of the Innovation Procurement Task Force, as a great way to foster collaborations among sister projects. He emphasised the open-door nature of the Task Force, encouraging continued engagement beyond the founding projects. Miskuf highlighted the Initiative's future potential and the importance of nurturing it after the initial projects conclude.



The first policy perspectives session, facilitated by **Anna Tórz** of CIVITTA, featured insights from several experts. **Laura Sánchez** of SILO discussed the implementation of over 300 innovation projects, emphasising proactive problem-solving, informed decision-making, and promoting an innovative ecosystem. **Valentina Schippers** and **Frédéric Amiand** from UAP presented the Urban Agenda Partnership Position Paper, which contains ten key recommendations for politicians at all levels of government in Europe. **Robert Miskuf** of PEDAL highlighted the importance of empathising with public procurers and encouraging both suppliers and procurers. **Menno van der Eerden** from the Ministry of Defence in the Netherlands stressed the need for continuous innovation and flexibility in procurement, while **Louise Knight** from the University of Twente recommended focusing on value creation, designing attractive jobs to recruit the right people, and ensuring that procurement requirements align with strategic goals.



PART 1: POLICY PERSPECTIVES ON SCALING UP
MAIN INSIGHTS

The second part of the session included a panel discussion on Scaling up Innovation Procurement Policy featured insights from several experts. **Lieve Bos** from the European Commission highlighted the importance of making Innovation Procurement a standard practice, noting that it should not be seen as a niche activity for risk-takers but as a natural way to modernise public services. **Minouche Cramer** from the Municipality of Amsterdam emphasised the necessity of collaboration across different parties, and the importance of educating project and programme officers in procurement to bridge the gap between procurement and innovation. **An Schrijvers** from VARIO stressed that innovation procurement must be politically prioritised and supported with adequate staffing and resources, pointing out that examples of successful innovation procurement can help convince policymakers. **Maria Sanchis** from EIT Health discussed the need for strategic procurement roles within organisations, advocating for procurement stakeholders to be part of strategic decision-making processes. **Vassilis Tsanidis**, also from the European Commission, focused on the benefits of innovation procurement for citizens, emphasising that it leads to better and more cost-effective public services and supports the growth of innovative companies.



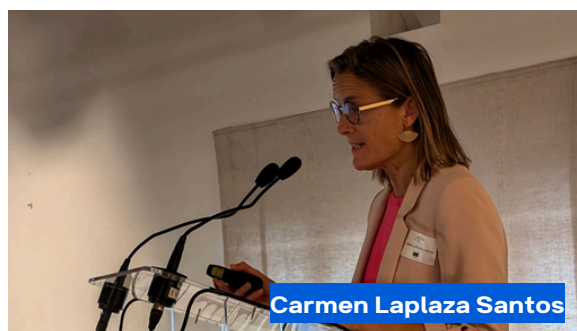
An Schrijvers, Vassilis Tsanidis, Minouche Cramer, Maria Sanchis, and Lieve Bos

In an open discussion, **Justyne Balasinska** from the European Commission highlighted the availability of tools and good practices, stressing the need for public authorities to adopt these tools. **Todor Popov** from the Municipality of Gabrovo pointed out that procurement is often seen as an administrative process rather than a strategic tool. **Lieve Bos** shared examples from Poland and the Czech Republic, where innovative procurement has become mandatory. **Louise Knight** emphasised that organisations need sufficient staff to achieve their innovative goals. **Laura Sánchez** suggested creating spaces for new stakeholders and funding to foster innovation development. **An Schrijvers** recommended continuing support for innovation trajectories and treating procurement as a standard organisational function. **Jorge González** identified resource allocation as a bottleneck for innovation departments, and **Robert Miskuf** called for raising the importance of innovation procurement on the political agenda and encouraging bottom-up approaches.

PART 1: POLICY PERSPECTIVES ON SCALING UP
MAIN INSIGHTS

Carmen Laplaza Santos from the European Commission delivered the second keynote, focusing on innovation in the Healthcare sector. She emphasised the importance of presenting competing solutions before making procurement decisions, particularly in Healthcare. Laplaza Santos highlighted the need to support small actors and stimulate cross-border markets. She also discussed the importance of facilitating open dialogue between supply and demand and introduced new funding opportunities under Horizon Europe for environmentally sustainable health systems.

Marlene Grauer provided an update on the Big Buyers Group, emphasising the need for more resources, skills, and collaboration among procurers. She encouraged participants to join the Big Buyers Group to access information and support, highlighting that innovation procurement is not a solitary task and requires allies. Grauer invited attendees to approach the group with their questions and needs to foster collaboration and advice.



The first part of the Conference on Scaling Up Innovation Procurement provided **critical insights** into the need for a multifaceted approach to innovation procurement. **Key takeaways** included the importance of both bottom-up and top-down strategies to foster a culture where innovation procurement becomes a standard practice rather than an exception. Emphasis was placed on the necessity of capacity building and proper training for procurement officers, as well as the integration of risk management strategies such as co-financing to support civil servants. Collaboration between the public and private sectors was deemed essential, and the need for continuous innovation and flexibility in procurement processes was highlighted. The session also underscored the importance of aligning procurement requirements with strategic goals and ensuring sufficient staffing and resources. Practical examples from several countries demonstrated the benefits of mandatory innovative procurement, illustrating a successful shift in procurement practices. Overall, the discussions pointed to the need for **political prioritisation, effective policy-making, and the creation of supportive environments to scale up innovation procurement successfully.**

PART 2: CAPACITY BUILDING IN ACTION
MAIN INSIGHTS

In the "Profiling Needs and Barriers" session facilitated by **Matthew Baqueriza-Jackson**, key insights emerged on the critical aspects of mainstreaming Innovation Procurement. Baqueriza-Jackson acknowledged the passion and commitment of the attendees but emphasised the necessity of extending this enthusiasm to other stakeholders, including public authorities, national governments, suppliers, and SMEs. The session focused on identifying the capacity needs and barriers that hinder the adoption of Innovation Procurement.


Matthew Baqueriza-Jackson

This part, chaired by **Jorge González**, tasked participants with exploring the development of necessary skills and capabilities to engage effectively in Innovation Procurement. Additionally, they were encouraged to reflect on their experiences and consider how to overcome barriers such as insufficient resources, lack of training, and resistance to change. The dynamic discussion aimed to generate actionable strategies to build capacity and address obstacles, thereby facilitating the mainstream adoption of innovation procurement practices.


Jorge González

Esmee Peters and Valentina Schippers

The **PROCEDIN Project** was presented by **Esmee Peters** from the University of Twente and **Valentina Schippers-Opejko** from the Municipality of Haarlem. The presentation offered key insights into the project's goals and contributions to innovation procurement capacity building. They outlined the aim to link key resources with stakeholders such as public authorities, SMEs, and educators. Peters noted that innovation should serve as a tool for achieving strategic goals like sustainability, rather than being an end itself. Schippers detailed the four perspectives stakeholders take on procurement: legal, collaborative, strategic, and innovative. They highlighted the importance of providing tailored resources like training videos, frameworks, and case studies to support these approaches. The presentation also stressed creating an ecosystem for collaboration among stakeholders and integrating innovation procurement into regular business practices, aligning it with broader strategic goals.

PART 2: CAPACITY BUILDING IN ACTION
MAIN INSIGHTS

The **BUILD Project** was presented by **Anna Tórz**, as well as its aim to enhance innovation procurement by understanding the unique needs of each city through empathy mapping and direct interaction. Tórz highlighted the importance of knowledge sharing, practical tools, and workshops to foster collaboration and capacity building among municipalities. The project identified common challenges such as budget restrictions, lack of case studies, and the complexity of innovation procurement. Practical solutions included evaluating procurement potential, emphasising the value of case studies, and encouraging interdepartmental collaboration. The presentation underscored the importance of listening to stakeholders, exchanging staff, and creating a supportive ecosystem for innovation procurement. As the project nears its conclusion, findings will be summarised in an information kit with innovative solutions to further aid municipalities.



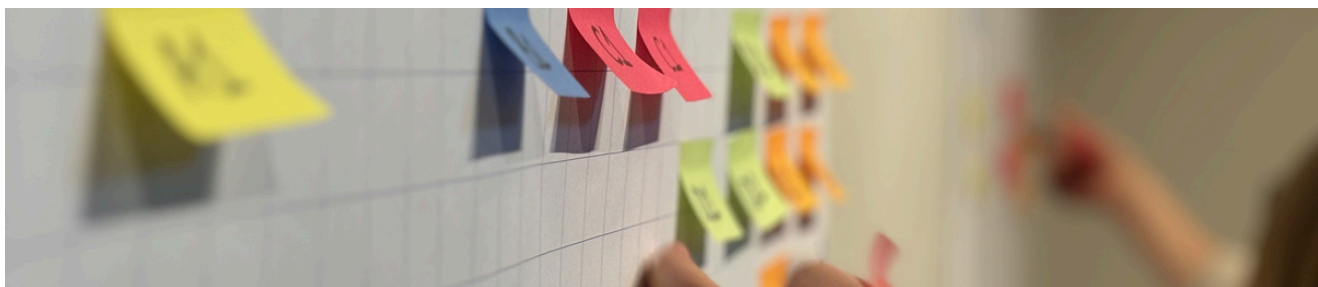
Silvia Paoella's presentation on the **Health InnoFacilitator Project** highlighted several key insights aimed at addressing gaps in innovation procurement within the healthcare sector. Paoella identified critical issues such as insufficient investment in innovation, a lack of knowledge among public buyers and SMEs, and inadequate partnership and cooperation between these groups. To tackle these challenges, the project set out six clear objectives: fostering a sustainable community, increasing awareness and skills, improving SMEs' ability to access innovation procurement, leveraging buyer capacity, and promoting best practices. A central element of the project was capacity building, which included training workshops and webinars designed to equip public buyers with necessary tools and knowledge. Despite initial difficulties in engaging public buyers, particularly in hospitals, the project ultimately succeeded in attracting participation. The project also emphasised the importance of not creating new communities but building on existing ones, joining forces with established networks like the European Public Procurement Alliance to ensure sustainability and broader impact.

PART 3: INNOVATION PROCUREMENT LIVING LAB**MAIN INSIGHTS**

During the **World Café** session led by **Matthew Baqueriza-Jackson**, participants explored five critical perspectives on scaling up innovation procurement. These perspectives included the need for robust policy support at various levels (EU, national, and regional) to enhance innovation procurement, strategies for improving coordination and cooperation among procurement organisations, methods to engage and motivate public buyers to embrace innovative procurement practices, approaches to build innovation capacity among suppliers, and solutions to address and reduce risk aversion among public buyers.

Following the detailed discussions at each table, the session culminated in concise presentations from each table's facilitator, summarising the key insights, ideas, and strategies that emerged. **Group A** emphasised the necessity of political commitment and adopting a holistic approach to innovation procurement. **Group B** advocated for a European roadmap to standardise processes and coordinate efforts at national and regional levels. **Group C** proposed rebranding public procurement to attract innovative talent and involving citizens more directly in the process. **Group D** stressed the importance of training SMEs and creating co-investment opportunities to build a supportive ecosystem. **Group E** focused on addressing risk aversion through better training, top-down communication, and creating a supportive regulatory environment.

The strategic recommendations from the Conference were comprehensive. There was a strong emphasis on **proactive problem-solving** to anticipate issues and foster an innovative ecosystem. **Aligning policies** to support proactive innovation procurement was deemed crucial. **Investing in training and support systems** for procurement professionals was highlighted, along with promoting cross-sector and cross-country collaborations and learning from best practices. Additionally, **simplifying compliance and utilising advanced tools** like AI to streamline processes were recommended. These insights and recommendations aim to create a more efficient, innovative, and supportive environment for public procurement, ultimately driving greater adoption and success in innovation procurement practices.



CONFERENCE CONCLUSION

The Conference successfully highlighted the critical role of Innovation Procurement in driving strategic growth and development across Europe. The key takeaways underscored the need for enhanced collaboration between public and private sectors, significant investment in capacity building, and the strategic use of procurement to foster innovation. The insights and recommendations aimed to elevate innovation procurement on the political agenda, promote cross-sector learning, and establish a sustainable ecosystem for continuous innovation.

The establishment of a roadmap and strategic frameworks discussed during the Conference will help in achieving these goals and **ensure that Innovation Procurement becomes a standard practice across Europe.** This approach is envisaged to ultimately lead to better solutions for public needs and foster economic growth. The collaborative spirit and strategic insights shared during the Conference set the stage for ongoing progress and Innovation in Public Procurement across Europe.



CONTACT US

This document provides interested stakeholders with an overview of the insights gathered during the event. If you have any comments or questions, please contact:

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