



Could you introduce us to the strategy behind the Procure2Innovate project? Why did BME decide to lead such an initiative?

The main goal of [Procure2Innovate](#) is to set up a network of competence centres for innovation procurement across Europe. The network will enable the competence centres to learn from each other, support each other and speak with a united voice towards policy makers. In addition, we hope to encourage other member states to join us and set up a competence centre of their own.

We want to focus on the knowledge that has been accrued by the already established competence centres so far, both positive and negative. It is often not recognised how valuable such experiences are and how much expertise has been generated over the years. The network is an opportunity to showcase this.

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Competence centres for innovation across Europe: the Procure2Innovate project

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will help build a European consensus on innovation procurement and its practices.

BME received generous support from the [Ministry of Economics and Energy \(BMWi\)](#) in putting together the proposal and consortium. The ministry felt that coordinating the project would be a role KOINNO could fill very well because we have been working on driving innovation procurement in Germany this since 2012. The experiences gathered during those years enabled us to come up with a concept that was oriented towards the issues practitioners face, also in other countries.

When can procurers start to get support from the newly established competence centres?

Five of the competence centres in the Procure2Innovate network are already up and running. Thus, procurers in the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, Spain and Germany can already receive support.

The new competence centres are just getting started and are being set up in different contexts, so they are at different points in their development.

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The [Irish Procurement Transformation Institute](#) is already offering first services, such as networking events, consulting and advice for [Horizon2020](#) applications.

We are expecting the Portuguese and Greek competence centres to have their first small events at the end of the year; starting their support in the beginning of 2019.

Italy and Estonia are in the midst of political and/or organisational transitions so it is difficult to know at the moment when they will be able to begin offering support to procurers. However, so far we have been amazed at how quickly things are moving, which is a testament to

the motivation of all partners in the project and to the real needs from public procurers.

We are also already in contact with a number of additional candidate countries looking to join the network, such as Lithuania, Belgium, Norway and Finland.

How will the initiative also help forge actions on greening public procurement in Europe?

For all of the existing competence centres, innovation procurement can only be achieved through better procurement practices. A more modern procurement department with better access to key decision makers will help procure efficiently,

less wastefully and with a view towards considering life cycle costs of purchasing decisions. All these aspects are as much part of innovation procurement as they are of green public procurement (GPP).

In fact, innovative and green procurement very often go hand and hand, and one could call them mutually beneficial. We see that many products and services purchased using innovation procurement are inherently more green, energy efficient and sustainable.

This is especially apparent in those competence centres that are combining green, sustainable and innovation procurement, such as Sweden, Netherlands and Austria.