

CASE STUDY

Peer learning within the Low Emissions Vehicle Programme

Launched in April 2022, the Electronics Watch Low Emissions Vehicle Programme (LEVP) supported participating public buyers to promote and protect the rights of workers in their low emission vehicle supply chains. The programme built their capacity to implement responsible procurement and provided worker-driven monitoring in the supply chain to inform risk mitigation and remediation.

Participants in the LEVP came together quarterly to review progress on responsible procurement activities, share updates, and discuss priorities, opportunities and challenges related to responsible vehicle sourcing. The LEVP working group meetings provided a platform for exchange about lessons learned and supported the development of best practices.



This case study explains how peer learning supported organisational capacity building among three programme participants: the City of Amsterdam, the Greater London Authority and Hamburger Hochbahn. It is based on interviews with the following representatives of those organisations:

- Hannah Deelstra, Policy Advisor in the Sustainable Commissioning and Procurement (CSR) Team of the City of Amsterdam. The City of Amsterdam joined the LEVP in December 2024.
- Martina Trusgnach, Responsible Procurement Manager of the Greater London Authority (GLA) Group. The GLA Group comprises the GLA and its function bodies, including Transport for London, the London Fire Brigade and the

Metropolitan Police. The GLA Group joined the LEVP when it launched in April 2022.

- Nienke Berger, Human Rights Officer and Sustainability Specialist at Hamburger Hochbahn. Hamburger Hochbahn joined the LEVP in November 2022.

The following text describes the interview subjects' experiences as members of the LEVP and how discussions within the LEVP working group influenced their respective approaches to Socially Responsible Public Procurement (SRPP).

The benefits of peer learning

During LEVP working group meetings, participant presentations provided concrete examples about how to put SRPP concepts into practice.

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For example, Hamburger Hochbahn shared the (then) new social criteria it introduced in a recent electric bus procurement, as well as questions and concerns that emerged in the preparation and evaluation of the tender. Such presentations helped others participants to anticipate similar inquiries within their own organisations and how these might be addressed proactively. More generally, the sounding board that the working group provided allowed LEVP participants to benefit from one another's knowledge and experiences. "The group setting helps you keep [lessons learned] in mind so you don't duplicate past efforts or make the same mistakes," said Martina.

The meetings created equal space to highlight achievements, like obtaining milestones towards increasing supply chain transparency, and to identify and address outstanding knowledge and capacity gaps. For instance, many participants were aware of the need to strengthen their supplier engagement on human rights-related issues. Examples shared by peers demonstrated how they could better structure such a dialogue, improve follow-up on systemic labour rights issues and ask more focused questions. "Seeing the types of questions that other public transport companies use when engaging their suppliers and how they escalate issues when they get appropriate responses has been helpful to us," said Nienke.

The interviewees particularly valued the opportunity to discuss specific cases, including evidence collected via Electronics Watch investigations, and how to make use of the findings in discussions with suppliers. "These insights have influenced our perspective on the importance of due diligence and helped us to initiate dialogue with key suppliers on specific issues," Hannah said. While monitoring findings were shared with participants quarterly in written reports, having the opportunity to discuss them with an Electronics Watch representative and other LEVP participants made the information

more accessible and helped to contextualise developments. These conversations enabled LEVP participants to understand when and how to use their leverage in the supply chain, as individuals and a group, to mitigate risks in the supply chain and support access to remedy.

Whether focused on specific parts of the procurement process, like tendering or contract management, on how to incorporate more effective social requirements, or general approaches to SRPP in the LEV category, exchanges with peers empowered the LEVP participants. When Amsterdam first joined the LEVP, Hannah explained, the one-on-one support from Electronics Watch provided the most value. After having integrated some of that guidance into its procurements, the utility of the working group discussions increased. "I felt better prepared to contribute and to benefit from the experiences of others," she said.

The forum provided by the working group demonstrated the organisational development that each LEVP participant is undertaking to achieve SRPP. Participant experiences also highlighted the delay before new practices generate results. Being aware of this process and the necessary investment in time helped participants to advocate for the necessary resources within their own organisations and for more effective policy and practices. "Hamburger Hochbahn has already come quite far in its work. But being able to point to what others are doing and have achieved makes it easier to advocate for additional progress within the company," Nienke reflected.

Strengthening SRPP leadership

SRPP is a very specialised practice area. It is influenced by numerous legal requirements and economic, political and organisational dynamics. Designing an effective SRPP approach, therefore, requires access to a broad range of expertise

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and information. And, to be able to implement that approach, public authorities must translate complex and often vague legal and theoretical concepts into practice.

To become a leader in SRPP, public authorities need to undergo organisational development. This takes time, commitment and a willingness to go beyond the status quo. Peer learning supports this journey by accelerating the learning process. It supports participants to build on what has worked and avoid what hasn't, and provides access to a larger pool of knowledge and experiences than would otherwise be available to individual organisations. Peer exchange facilitates more informed decision-making and creates a supportive environment for the type of innovation necessary to drive positive change.

Given the complexity of many high risk public supply chains, mitigating human rights risks and supporting access to remedy is most effective when done in coordination with others. This means that SRPP leadership is an inherently collaborative exercise. The LEVP working group enabled coordinated engagement of common

suppliers to address systemic human right issues. Being able to refer to the same evidence—from worker-driven monitoring—and the experiences of group members increased participants' credibility with their contractors. As Martina put it, "knowing we are not the only public body requesting information from our suppliers makes our requests stronger. When we experience pushback, we can point to the fact that others in the market are already complying, and we are not asking for anything out of the ordinary". Coordination between public authorities on SRPP complements coordination within them, between relevant departments and functions. Both internal and external coordination are critical to embedding SRPP practices within organisational structures and management systems.

The LEV Programme finished in December 2025. Building on its success, Electronics Watch now includes LEVs in the scope of its standard affiliation. Working group meetings and peer learning exchanges continue today with the organisations that have affiliated for their LEV procurements.



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Looking ahead: recommendations

The interviewees' insights provide practical guidance for other public buyers that aim to use peer learning to strengthen their SRPP practice. Below is a summary of lessons learned, including some topics and the characteristics of useful peer exchanges.

- ▶ **Establish the scope and timeline of the peer exchange.**
 - Define how often the group wants to meet and what topics it wants to cover.
- ▶ **Share information about SRPP approaches at the policy and operational levels and seek feedback from peers on these.**
 - Provide examples of policy language that demonstrates the priority of social responsibility and provides an enabling environment for implementation.
 - Share examples of successes and setbacks when implementing new policies, including how the approach could be adapted to incorporate lessons learned.
 - Promote the achievements of peers among your colleagues and within relevant networks.
- ▶ **Identify the tools and resources that your organisation uses to support its SRPP practices.**
 - Describe when, how and by whom these are used in the procurement process.
 - Share ideas about how these tools and resources could be further improved, including feedback from users (e.g., internal parties, suppliers, stakeholders).
- ▶ **Explain how and why you engage suppliers and solicit feedback on this practice.**
 - Describe the objectives and format of different engagements.
 - Explain how achievements to date contribute to desired outcomes, and which aspects have proved challenging or unsuccessful.
 - For issue-specific engagements, share the questions you have asked of suppliers and how you evaluate the quality of their responses, including related evidence to verify claims.
 - Discuss opportunities to engage common suppliers jointly, whether on specific cases or on systemic issues.
- ▶ **Describe the subject matter expertise that you and your colleagues have and information and capacity gaps within your organisation.**
 - Assess how participants in the peer exchange can support each other to address knowledge and capacity gaps and/or point them to resources that may be useful to do so.

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