

# IT Dienstleistungszentrum, ITDZ Berlin



## Interviewee:

Annelie Evermann, Legal Sustainability Manager  
in the Central Procurement team

## Why did your organisation affiliate to Electronics Watch?

As the central ICT service provider for our city, the ITDZ Berlin has a special responsibility to take social and environmental criteria into account in its tendering and award procedures. As ICT hardware poses a particularly high risk, we had to take action. We will continue to develop this process strategically and based on dialogue.

## How does affiliation support your responsible procurement work?

Being an Electronics Watch affiliate helps us on various levels. The information we receive from Electronics Watch is key. This is credible information that goes into detail about workers' rights in the specific production sites and regions associated with our ICT hardware. As a public authority, we need to explore whether there are any risks and violations linked to the subject matter of our contracts. Electronics Watch's quality-check of data about the relevant production sites helps us with this assessment, and enables us to make informed queries to resellers and brand companies. For us, this reliable information is very important, especially with such complex supply chains as in the ICT hardware sector.

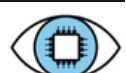
*We talk to the central ICT provider for Berlin about their responsible procurement journey, the importance of contract management and dialogue, and going beyond the visible range of monitored tiers and consumer products.*

## What makes Electronics Watch different from other responsible procurement tools/resources available?

The review during the contract period is crucial. After all, a one-off enquiry into compliance with social standards is very limited. With long framework agreements, you have to be able to carry out further checks in the meantime and at the same time go deeper into the supply chain. Another thing we really appreciate is the network of public buyers: this is unique. Continuity in our approach is very important and it is definitely improved through this networking

## How do you proceed with socially responsible public procurement in ICT tenders?

At the ITDZ, we currently use the Declaration of Commitment on socially responsible ICT, in combination with the tools and resources that Electronics Watch makes available to us. With this declaration, bidders commit to key labour and social standards in the supply chain. This includes both the commitment to provide binding documentation demonstrating compliance with these standards (up to tiers two and three) after the contract has been awarded, and the right of



ITDZ Berlin to monitor compliance throughout the contract performance, either by themselves or through third parties. During the term of the contract, we then use Electronics Watch to monitor compliance with the contractually agreed standards.

The advantage of this declaration of commitment is that it is a widely used tool in Germany. This means that we have a bidding market that is used to the declaration of commitment. It also enables a plausibility check to be carried out immediately after the contract is awarded.

### What is your role at ITDZ Berlin?

As a lawyer with long-term experience in the field of business and human rights and sustainable public procurement, I am the Legal Sustainability Manager in Central Procurement. This role is certainly helpful in a public authority like ours.

However, it is also important that the topic of sustainability is successfully mainstreamed within the organisation. In other words, sustainability must be incorporated into all organisational structures and processes. This does not only include our work with sustainable ICT supply chains, but also other supplies, services and construction work, where environmental and social requirements might be relevant and need to be incorporated and monitored in a legally compliant way.

### When and how did your organisation begin its responsible procurement journey?

The ITDZ has been focussing on green IT for a long time, and we took environmental requirements into account early on in our procurements. The legal situation in Berlin is supportive here, especially the administrative provision for environmental regulations in procurement (Verwaltungsvorschrift Beschaffung und Umwelt), which encompasses the necessary tools for a well-informed green procurement.

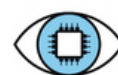


Annelie Evermann, Legal Sustainability Manager

Then, over the past few years, the ITDZ Berlin gradually addressed the issue of social sustainability in the supply chain. In the beginning, corresponding labour and social standards such as the ILO core labour standards were mainly anchored as optional requirements in the award criteria. But in 2023, the ITDZ Berlin demanded mandatory compliance with labour and social standards for the first time when retendering the framework agreements for workplace PCs (including desktop PCs, notebooks, monitors, printers and projectors). Since then, we have standardised this approach for all relevant IT hardware tenders and continue to develop it further.

### What are the biggest lessons you and your colleagues have learned so far?

One key realisation from my previous work has been confirmed once again: a tender does not end when the contract is awarded. Contract management is key, and it is particularly important when it comes to sustainability.



Often it is not prioritised the way it should be. Everyone is happy that the contract is awarded and turns towards new tenders. So contract management in this area is new, both for contracting authorities and for suppliers. And that is challenging and requires a lot of dialogue.

It is also interesting how differently suppliers and manufacturers react. Where for some of our requests, some manufacturers tell us "that's not possible", with other manufacturers, the same enquiry then goes through without any problems. So again, the lesson is that dialogue is key.

#### Are what are the biggest challenges that you face or have faced?

One major challenge is that we usually have contracts with resellers, and they have to pass everything on to the brand manufacturers or request it from them. This all needs to be coordinated in a dialogue so that we as public buyers get the information we need. There is still a lot of room for improvement here and my wish is that we, Electronics Watch and its affiliates, conduct reseller forums and dialogues both to promote a learning process, but also to learn from each other. And I'm not just talking about the big resellers, also small and medium-sized companies need to be on board.

And then there are some practical issues: for example, product changes during the duration of a framework agreement. As we only monitor our supply chain, that is, the subject matter of our contract, it is important to be aware of and to communicate product changes internally, so we look at the relevant supply chains.

“ *A tender does not end when the contract is awarded. Contract management is key.* ”

#### What are your responsible procurement goals for the coming 2-5 years? What's next on your journey?

On the level of content, we have just set conflict minerals as an additional topic in a pre-tender market dialogue and subsequently included requirements on conflict minerals in the tender. This is possible due to the international regulatory framework like the OECD Guidelines on Minerals and the EU Conflict Minerals Regulation, as this means that there are already existing structures in companies.

Generally, I think it is important to take into account both atypical hardware and further tiers in the supply chain. The ICT sector's efforts and the requirements in tenders are currently at supply chain level tier one and tier two, i.e. contract manufacturing and components, and occasionally parts of the components in tier three. And the focus of public buyers is often on standard hardware. But we can't stop there. In the end it is not acceptable that workers do not have the same rights in a complex supply chain just because they have the misfortune to be placed in a factory beyond the visible range of monitored tiers or consumer products.

Structure-wise, we want to develop our supplier management even further. Our aim is to ensure that social sustainability in the supply chains, as well as environmental and climate aspects, become natural components of our contract and supplier management.

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