

INNOVATIVE KNOW-HOW TO PROMOTE GREEN PURCHASING IN PUBLIC OPERATIONS

Steven SUNDSTROM

Key Words: green purchasing, public institutions, model strategy, heterogeneous actors, guidelines/criteria

1. INTRO

Japan is looked to as a world leader in the area of green purchasing thanks to a number of key elements that define their strategy. The objective of this thesis is to introduce activities in Japan to provide a model strategy, and encourage greater exchange between purchasers and government officials through international partnerships.

Promotion of green purchasing in Japan is driven by the Green Purchasing Network (GPN), which encourages practical, innovative know-how by engaging “heterogeneous actors” (various stakeholders in society) in order to expand the green market and increase demand at all levels of society, from the government level to businesses, and finally citizens.

2. PURPOSE

The method of this study is based on research of primary and secondary sources, including the RELIEF project¹ conducted in Europe, and a six month observation period at GPN, as well as participation in a national network gathering of public purchasers in the U.S. The originality of this study is to exhibit the approach in Japan as a model strategy based on the analytical framework provided by Kawamura¹, in contrast with the activities currently found in Europe and America.

3. ANALYSIS

The key elements unique to Japan’s strategy are represented in Figure 1.

- (1) A network of heterogeneous actors generate innovative know-how through a centrally organized network,
- (2) National support and coordination,
- (3) A system of monitoring government progress and identifying obstacles

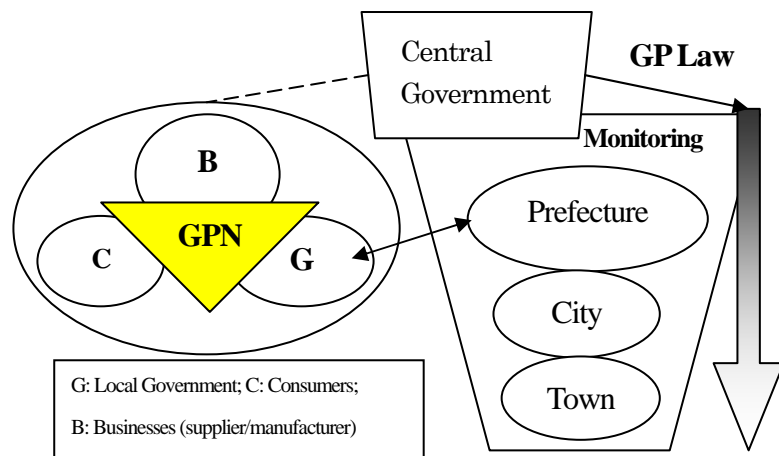


Figure 1: A model of Japan’s approach

4. CONCLUSION

The following benefits can be seen as a result of Japan’s method of implementation:

- (1) Expansion of the green market, represented by GPN’s database of 12,000+ products,
- (2) Greater transparency of business practices and readily available product information provided by manufacturers and suppliers, and
- (3) Continuous improvement of policies to expand the percentage of green purchasing at the level of towns and villages.

CITATION

- i) Erdmenger, Christoph ed. (2003)
- ii) Kawamura, Kumiko (2003)