



*Enhancing VET for social impact: putting
social public procurement into practice*

Deal4Good – PR3 VET Handbook on Social Public Procurement



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PR3– VET Handbook on Social Public Procurement

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Abstract

This Handbook has been developed under **WP4 – Handover and Sustainability** of the **Deal4Good project**. It provides practical guidance **for vocational education and training (VET) providers** on how to introduce, adapt and deliver training on **Social Public Procurement (SPP)** in real learning environments.

The Handbook builds on the main **Deal4Good project** results. It does not duplicate the **PR1 Research Report** or the **PR2 Social Procurement Expert curriculum**. Instead, it translates the project's research findings, curriculum structure and national delivery inputs into practical guidance for training design, adaptation, delivery and sustainability.

The document explains why **SPP** is relevant for **VET**, how **national readiness levels** influence training delivery, what competences learners need, and how trainers can adapt the curriculum to different target groups, including **public buyers, social enterprises, SMEs**, intermediaries and **VET trainers**.

It also provides practical examples and tools for tender analysis, social criteria design, stakeholder mapping, bid preparation, contract monitoring, social impact assessment and blended learning supported by the **Deal4Good MOOC** and digital tools. The Handbook is intended to help **VET providers** move beyond awareness-raising and support learners in applying **SPP** through concrete tasks, such as analysing tenders, drafting criteria, preparing bids, monitoring contracts and assessing social impact.

Keywords

Social Public Procurement; vocational education and training; VET; Social Procurement Expert; social value; social economy; tender analysis; bid preparation; contract monitoring; social impact assessment; blended learning; work-based learning; training delivery; curriculum adaptation.





ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This Handbook is a practical training manual for vocational education and training (VET) providers that want to introduce Social Public Procurement (SPP) into their training offer and deliver it effectively in real learning environments.

Its purpose is not only to explain what SPP is, but to support trainers in transforming the Social Procurement Expert (SPE) curriculum into structured training sessions, applied exercises and practical learner outcomes. The Handbook builds on the Deal4Good project outputs and translates them into guidance that can be used in classrooms, workshops, blended learning formats and work-based learning settings.

The Handbook is designed for real training conditions. Learners may have limited time, different levels of experience and little prior knowledge of procurement or social impact. Trainers may also have limited access to real procurement cases or national examples. For this reason, the Handbook offers flexible, adaptable and practice-oriented guidance that can be adjusted to different learner groups and institutional contexts.

How to use this Handbook

This Handbook should be used as a working tool rather than as a document to be read from beginning to end. Trainers are encouraged to start by identifying the target group, the purpose of the training and the level of prior knowledge among learners.

A training session for public procurement officials will differ from one designed for social enterprises, SMEs, intermediaries or VET trainers. Once the target group is clear, trainers can select the most relevant SPE modules, choose an appropriate format and adapt the examples, exercises and tools to the learning context.

VET providers do not need to begin with a full training programme. In many cases, the most effective starting point is a single module or short workshop focused on one practical task, such as analysing a tender, drafting a social criterion, preparing a bid section or designing a simple monitoring indicator. This can later be expanded into a broader training offer.

A typical trainer workflow includes:

Step	Trainer action
1. Define the target group	Identify whether learners are public buyers, social enterprises, SMEs, intermediaries, trainers or mixed groups.
2. Set the training purpose	Decide whether the session aims to raise awareness, build practical skills or support advanced application.





3. Select relevant modules	Choose the SPE curriculum modules that best match the learner group and training objective.
4. Adapt the content	Adjust examples, cases and exercises to the national context and learner experience.
5. Focus on application	Ensure that every session includes a practical task and a clear learner output.

What this Handbook helps you achieve

By using this Handbook, VET providers can move beyond awareness-raising and support the development of real capacity for SPP implementation. The Handbook helps trainers design relevant training programmes, deliver applied learning sessions and support learners in developing practical skills.

These skills include analysing tenders, identifying opportunities for social value, drafting social criteria, preparing bid responses, monitoring contract implementation and assessing social impact.

In practical terms, the Handbook helps learners understand how procurement systems work, how social value can be integrated into procurement processes, and how SPP can be applied across the full cycle from tender analysis to contract implementation and impact assessment.

Key Principle

The effectiveness of SPP training depends on the ability to translate knowledge into action. Learners should not only understand concepts; they should apply them in realistic situations.

Every session should therefore include a task that reflects a real professional situation, and every learner should leave the training with something they have analysed, drafted, designed or improved.

Final Note for VET Providers

You do not need to start with a complete programme. A single practical module, workshop or blended learning session can be a strong starting point.

What matters is that the training is relevant, practical and adapted to the learner group. Over time, this can evolve into a more comprehensive training offer that helps make Social Public Procurement a field that can be effectively taught, learned and applied in practice.





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List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
CA	Contracting Authority
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EACEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EU	European Union
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SE	Social Enterprise
SPE	Social Procurement Expert
SPP	Social Public Procurement
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WBL	Work-Based Learning
WP	Work Package
PR3	Project Result No. 3





PART I — WHY SPP BELONGS IN VET

1 Social Public Procurement and the VET Role in Europe

1.1 What is Social Public Procurement (SPP)

Social Public Procurement (SPP) refers to the strategic use of public procurement to generate economic value as well as measurable social outcomes. When public authorities purchase goods, services or works, they can design procurement procedures in a way that contributes to employment, inclusion, equality, accessibility, fair working conditions and local development.

For vocational education and training (VET) providers, the key message is that procurement is no longer only about price and compliance. It is increasingly about value, where value includes social impact alongside cost and quality. This is directly aligned with the Deal4Good project, which aims to strengthen VET provision by preparing professionals who can support contracting authorities, social enterprises and other stakeholders in applying SPP in practice.

SPP can be integrated into procurement procedures through concrete elements such as technical specifications, selection criteria, award criteria and contract performance clauses. For example, a municipality issuing a cleaning services tender may include requirements related to fair working conditions, employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups, accessibility or community benefit. These are practical entry points that learners can identify, analyse and work with during training.

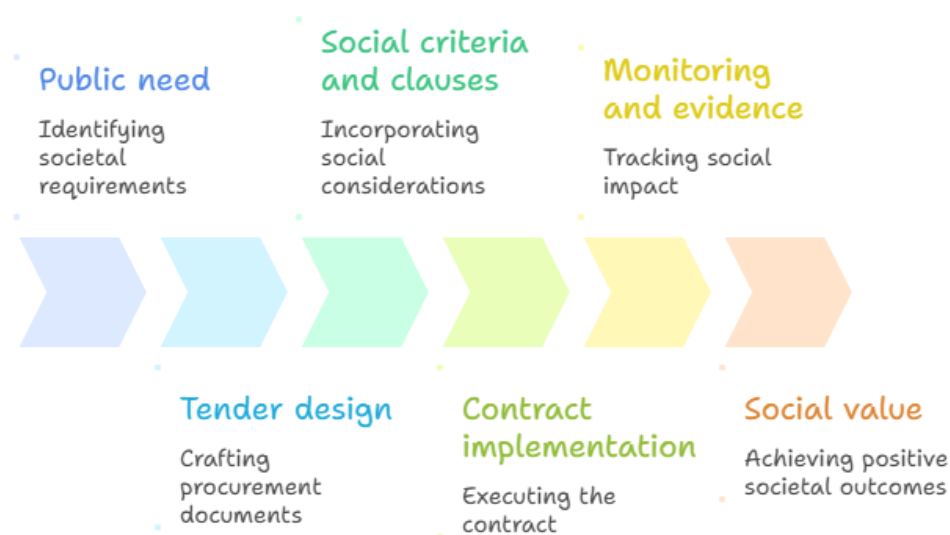


Figure 1 From public procurement to social value





For this reason, SPP should not be introduced only as a policy concept. In VET settings, it should be taught through practical examples that help learners recognise where social value can appear in real or simplified procurement documents.

How to introduce SPP in training

A simple and effective approach is to begin with a real or simplified tender. Instead of starting with definitions, the trainer presents the document and asks learners to identify what the contracting authority is trying to achieve. Once learners recognise standard elements such as price, quality and technical requirements, the trainer can introduce the idea that procurement can also include social objectives.

At this stage, SPP should be presented as a practical extension of existing procurement, not as a separate system. This helps reduce resistance and shows learners that they are not learning an entirely new process, but applying procurement in a more strategic and socially responsible way.

The explanation can then be linked briefly to relevant EU frameworks, such as Directive 2014/24/EU and the “Buying Social” guidance. However, legal and policy references should support the practical learning process rather than dominate it.

Trainer tip

Avoid starting with policy definitions. Instead, start with a real situation. Learners engage more quickly when they see how SPP works in practice rather than hearing abstract explanations.

1.2 Labour Market Relevance and the SPE Profile

The growing importance of SPP is closely linked to labour market needs. Public authorities, social enterprises, SMEs, intermediaries and support organisations increasingly need professionals who can combine procurement knowledge with an understanding of social value and impact.

However, the Deal4Good research findings show that this combination of skills is still limited. Procurement professionals often understand procedures but may lack confidence in integrating social criteria. At the same time, social enterprises may understand social impact but struggle to navigate procurement systems, tender documentation and bid requirements. This mismatch reduces the practical effectiveness of SPP.

The Social Procurement Expert (SPE) profile was developed to address this gap. It represents a hybrid competence profile that combines legal, operational and social impact-related skills. The profile is not theoretical; it is defined through real tasks that professionals need to perform, such as analysing tenders, drafting criteria, preparing bids, building partnerships, monitoring contract performance and assessing social impact.





What learners need to be able to do

SPP training should focus not only on what learners need to know, but also on what they need to be able to do. By the end of a training session, learners should be able to complete practical tasks, such as:

Learning focus	Practical learner output
Understanding procurement entry points	Identify where social criteria can be included in a tender
Designing social value requirements	Draft a clear and verifiable social criterion
Supporting supplier participation	Prepare part of a bid or compliance checklist
Monitoring implementation	Propose a simple monitoring indicator or evidence source
Assessing social impact	Link procurement objectives to expected social outcomes

Table 1 Learning focus and practical learner outputs in SPP training

How to teach the SPE profile

The most effective way to teach the SPE profile is to structure training around tasks rather than topics. For example, instead of delivering a lecture on procurement rules, the trainer can present a tender and ask learners to analyse it. Instead of explaining social impact only in theory, learners can be asked to define a measurable outcome and propose indicators.

A typical session should begin with a short explanation, followed quickly by a practical task. Learners may work individually or in groups, while the trainer guides the process and provides feedback. Assessment should focus on how well learners apply the concepts, not only on whether they can explain them.

Example in practice

A training session may ask learners to analyse a tender and identify opportunities to include social criteria. They then draft one criterion and explain how it would be verified. This exercise develops several elements of the SPE profile at the same time: legal understanding, practical application, social value integration and communication.

1.3 Why VET Providers Are Key Intermediaries

The implementation of SPP depends on people who are able to apply it in practice. This makes VET providers essential, because they can transform policy objectives and curriculum content into practical learning experiences.

VET providers act as a bridge between policy and implementation. They translate complex frameworks into accessible training, connect different stakeholder groups and create environments where learners can practise real tasks. This role is particularly important because SPP requires cooperation between contracting authorities, social enterprises, SMEs, intermediaries and support organisations.





Across the Deal4Good partner countries, SPP is not yet fully integrated into VET provision. In Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta and Greece, SPP remains at an early stage and is rarely included in training programmes. In Romania and Spain, it is present but not consistently applied. In Germany and Italy, the framework and practice are more developed, but SPP is still not fully mainstreamed in training provision.

This shows that, in all partner countries, there is a gap between policy potential and practical training. VET providers can help close this gap by introducing SPP through modular, applied and context-sensitive learning.

What this means for trainers

For trainers, this situation is an opportunity. Even a single module, workshop or practical exercise can help build capacity. The key is to move beyond traditional lecture-based teaching and design learning around interaction, application and collaboration.

Training should encourage learners to work with realistic procurement situations. It should also bring different perspectives into the learning process. For example, a case may first be discussed from the point of view of a contracting authority and then from the point of view of a social enterprise or SME. This helps learners understand both the technical requirements of procurement and the practical challenges faced by different actors.

Adapting to different country contexts

SPP training should reflect the maturity level of each national context.

Context type	Countries	Recommended training focus
Emerging SPP contexts	Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta, Greece	Awareness, confidence-building and simple practical steps
Intermediate SPP contexts	Romania, Spain	Application, problem-solving and adaptation to existing practice
More developed SPP contexts	Germany, Italy	Quality improvement, consistency, monitoring and impact measurement

Table 2 Recommended training focus by SPP maturity context

This does not mean that the SPE curriculum changes completely from country to country. Rather, the level of complexity, examples and exercises should be adapted to the learners' environment and experience.

Practical Implication for VET Providers

For VET providers, engaging with SPP means taking an active role in strengthening how procurement is understood and applied. This does not always require the creation of a new programme. In many cases, SPP can be integrated into existing courses in public administration, business administration, entrepreneurship, social economy, sustainability, project management or procurement.





For example, an existing course may include a short session on social criteria, a tender analysis exercise, a case study involving a social enterprise, or a practical assignment on contract monitoring.

Training should also encourage interaction between different learner groups. Bringing together procurement professionals, suppliers, social enterprises, SMEs and intermediaries can create mutual understanding and support more effective implementation of SPP.

Key Principle

Social Public Procurement becomes effective only when it is translated into skills, and skills become effective only when they are applied in practice.

For trainers, this means that every session should move from explanation to application and should result in a concrete learner output, such as an analysed tender, a drafted criterion, a bid section, a stakeholder map or a monitoring indicator.

PART II — NATIONAL CONTEXTS & READINESS

2 National SPP & VET Readiness Across Partner Countries

2.1 Comparative Overview of SPP Maturity

Across the eight Deal4Good partner countries — Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Romania and Spain — Social Public Procurement (SPP) operates within a common European framework. However, its practical application differs significantly from country to country.

All partner countries have a legal basis that allows social considerations to be included in public procurement. The main difference lies in how far these possibilities are used in practice. This depends on institutional capacity, administrative culture, available guidance, experience with social criteria and cooperation between public authorities, social enterprises, SMEs and intermediaries.

For VET providers, this distinction is important. SPP training cannot be designed as a single fixed model for all countries. It must reflect the level of SPP maturity in the environment where learners operate.

In Germany and Italy, SPP is relatively more developed. Contracting authorities have access to guidance, tools and, in some cases, established practices. However, implementation remains uneven across regions, institutions and sectors. Training in these contexts should therefore focus on quality, consistency, monitoring and improvement of existing practice.





In Romania, Spain and Greece, SPP can be described as partially applied. Policy frameworks exist and awareness is growing, but procurement practice is still often driven by cost, compliance and risk avoidance. Training in these contexts should help learners move from general awareness to practical application.

In Bulgaria, Cyprus and Malta, SPP is still emerging. Its use is limited and often linked to pilot projects, external initiatives or individual institutions. Awareness is lower, and many contracting authorities and suppliers have limited experience with social criteria. Training in these contexts should begin with simple examples, practical tools and confidence-building exercises.

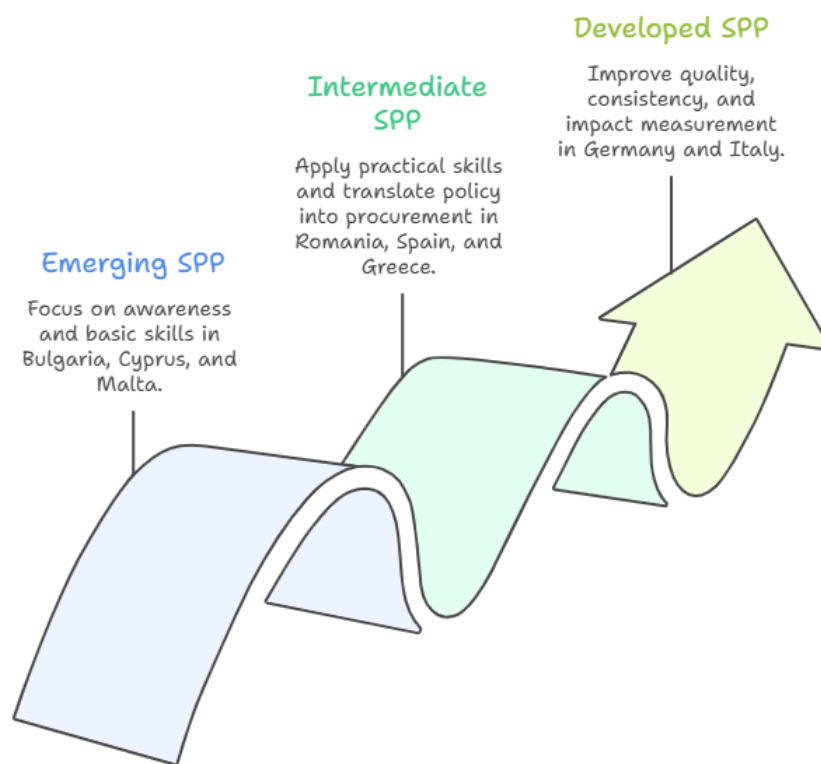


Figure 2 SPP maturity levels across partner countries

Despite these differences, several common patterns are visible across all partner countries. The legal framework is usually not the main barrier. The main challenge is translating legal possibilities into practical procurement decisions. Many professionals lack the skills, examples and confidence needed to apply SPP effectively. Local authorities are often important entry points, but their capacity varies. Social enterprises and SMEs are recognised as relevant actors, yet their participation in procurement remains limited by administrative, financial and capacity barriers.

For trainers, this means that the maturity level of each country should directly influence the design of the training.





Training adaptation by SPP maturity level

SPP maturity level	Countries	Training focus	Suitable learning activity
Emerging	Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta	Awareness, confidence-building, simple social clauses and basic tender analysis	Identify one possible social clause in a simplified local service tender
Intermediate	Romania, Spain, Greece	Application, problem-solving, translation of policy objectives into procurement requirements	Draft a measurable social criterion or compare procurement options
More developed	Germany, Italy	Quality improvement, consistency, monitoring and impact measurement	Review an existing tender and improve its social criteria or monitoring approach

Table 3 Training adaptation by SPP maturity level

A trainer working in Bulgaria, Cyprus or Malta may begin with a simple cleaning or catering tender and ask learners to identify one realistic social objective. In Germany or Italy, the trainer may use an existing tender and ask learners to improve the quality, measurability or monitoring of the social criteria. Both approaches are valid, but they reflect different starting points.

2.2 Institutional Landscape and Key Actors

SPP is not implemented by a single actor. It depends on cooperation between several groups, including public authorities, social enterprises, SMEs, intermediaries, VET providers and, in some cases, beneficiaries or community organisations. Understanding this ecosystem is essential for designing effective training. The figure below presents the main actors involved in the SPP training ecosystem.



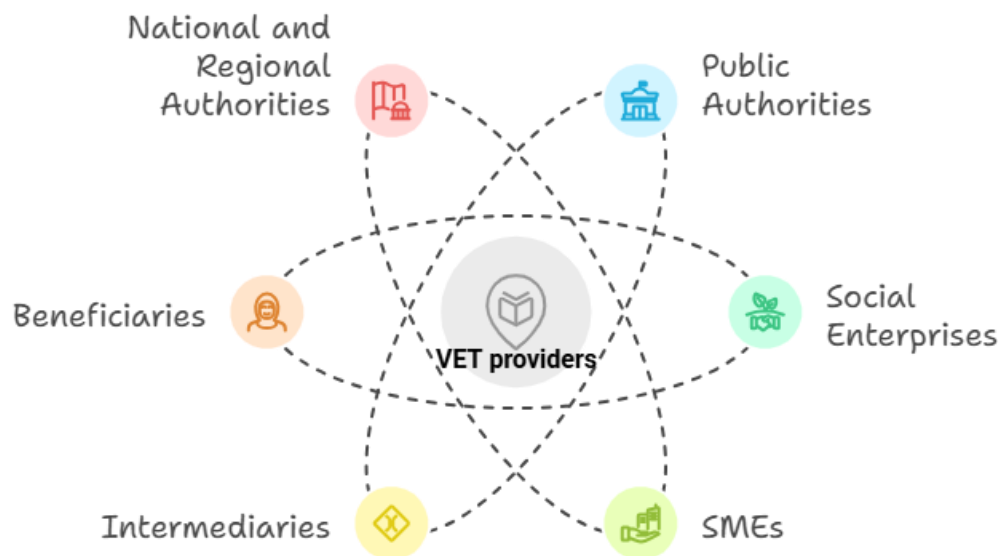


Figure 3 Key actors in the SPP training ecosystem

Across the partner countries, the main actors are broadly similar, although their roles, capacity and level of coordination differ.

Public authorities, especially municipalities, are central to SPP implementation. They procure services with direct social relevance, such as social care, cleaning, catering, maintenance, education, training and community services. This makes local procurement one of the most relevant entry points for SPP training.

Regional and national authorities shape policy frameworks, guidance and strategic priorities. In more developed systems, coordination between national, regional and local levels may be stronger. In less mature systems, fragmentation can make implementation inconsistent.

Social enterprises are important because they are often well placed to deliver social value. However, their participation in procurement may be limited by lack of tendering experience, administrative requirements, financial capacity or low awareness of opportunities.

SMEs may also participate in SPP, especially when procurement requirements are designed in an accessible and proportionate way. They may need support in understanding tender documents, preparing compliant bids and communicating the social value they can deliver.

Intermediaries such as chambers of commerce, NGOs, business support organisations, social economy networks and consultancy organisations play a bridging role. They connect buyers and suppliers, provide training, support pilot initiatives and help translate procurement rules into practical guidance. In emerging SPP contexts, their role is particularly important.





VET providers are part of this ecosystem because they can turn SPP into a teachable competence area. They can support public buyers, suppliers, social enterprises, SMEs and intermediaries by offering structured training, practical exercises and applied learning formats.

How to use the institutional ecosystem in training

The institutional landscape should not remain theoretical. Trainers can use it directly in learning activities.

A practical approach is to simulate the SPP ecosystem in the training room. Learners can be divided into groups representing different actors, such as a municipality, a procurement officer, a social enterprise, an SME, an intermediary organisation and a beneficiary group. Each group receives a role and works on a shared procurement scenario.

This helps learners understand not only their own perspective, but also the needs, limitations and expectations of other actors. Whenever possible, real stakeholders should also be involved in training. Inviting a procurement officer, social enterprise representative or intermediary to present a case can make the training more realistic and relevant.

2.3 Starting Points for VET Integration

Across all partner countries, SPP is not yet systematically embedded in VET provision. Existing programmes rarely address it as a distinct competence area, and learners are often not exposed to the combined skills required for SPP.

Procurement is commonly taught separately from social impact, while social economy training often does not cover tendering, compliance or contract management. As a result, learners may understand one side of the process but lack the integrated competence needed to apply SPP in practice.

Trainer capacity is another challenge. Many trainers have expertise in either procurement, social economy, sustainability, business support or public administration, but not necessarily in all of these areas. This makes integrated SPP training more difficult to deliver.

There is also often a weak connection between training and real procurement practice. Cooperation between VET providers, contracting authorities, social enterprises and intermediaries is still limited in many contexts. This reduces opportunities for case-based learning, work-based learning and practical assignments.

At the same time, there is clear potential for integration. Across the partner countries, policy frameworks increasingly recognise the need for capacity-building, and stakeholders acknowledge the importance of practical SPP skills. For VET providers, the opportunity is to integrate SPP into existing training offers rather than create entirely new systems from the beginning.





Practical entry points for VET providers

Existing training area	Possible SPP integration
Public administration	Social criteria, procurement procedures, contract monitoring
Business administration	Bid preparation, compliance, supplier readiness
Entrepreneurship and SME support	Access to public procurement, communicating social value
Social economy training	Tender participation, partnership building, impact evidence
Sustainability training	Linking procurement to social and environmental value
Project management	Stakeholder coordination, monitoring and reporting
Legal or procurement training	Practical use of social clauses and contract performance conditions

Table 4 Practical entry points for integrating SPP into VET provision

Integration should begin with small, targeted steps. A VET provider may introduce one SPP module into an existing course, organise a short workshop, or include a case-based exercise in a broader training programme. The important point is that even small additions should be practice-oriented.

A typical starting point is a simple procurement case. Learners analyse the case, identify opportunities for social value and propose one practical solution. Over time, this can be expanded into more complex tasks, such as preparing bid sections, designing monitoring indicators or assessing social impact.

Building connections with practice

SPP training is most effective when it is connected to real actors. VET providers should, where possible, cooperate with municipalities, social enterprises, SMEs, chambers of commerce, NGOs and other intermediaries. These partnerships can provide real cases, guest speakers, practical examples and opportunities for applied learning.

Where access to real cases is limited, trainers can use adapted or fictional scenarios based on familiar services such as cleaning, catering, maintenance, training, social care or community services. The key is to ensure that learning remains linked to realistic professional situations.

Key Takeaway

Across the partner countries, the main question is not whether SPP belongs in VET, but how to make it work in real training environments.

For trainers, this means moving from explanation to application, from isolated content to integrated learning, and from theoretical knowledge to practical skills. This Handbook supports that transition by helping VET providers adapt SPP training to national conditions, learner needs and real implementation contexts.





PART III — WHAT TO TEACH (CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT)

3 The Deal4Good SPE Curriculum Explained

3.1 Structure and Modules

The Deal4Good Social Procurement Expert (SPE) Curriculum is the core training content that VET providers can adopt, adapt and deliver. It was developed to respond to identified skills gaps and to support learners in building both knowledge and practical confidence to work with Social Public Procurement (SPP) in real professional contexts.

The curriculum should not be delivered as a sequence of lectures. It should be used as a practical learning pathway. Learners need to understand SPP, but they also need to practise analysing tender documents, identifying social value opportunities, drafting criteria, preparing bids, building partnerships, monitoring contracts and assessing outcomes.

The curriculum follows the public procurement lifecycle. It moves from understanding the policy, legal and social economy context, through tender design and bid participation, to contract management, social impact assessment and policy influence. This lifecycle approach helps trainers organise learning around real tasks rather than abstract topics. The figure below presents the SPE curriculum as a progressive learning pathway from foundation knowledge to practical application and system-level change.

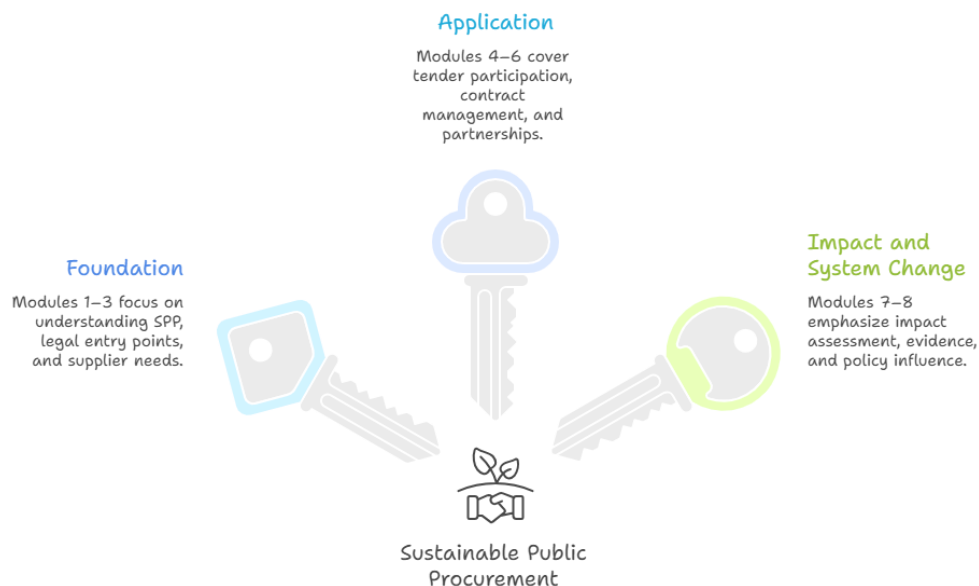


Figure 4 SPE curriculum learning pathway

The SPE curriculum consists of eight connected modules. Each module can be delivered as part of the full programme or used independently in shorter training formats. Where VET providers have limited





time or are working with beginners, it is advisable to start with one or two modules and gradually build towards a more complete training offer.

Overview of the SPE Modules

Module	Main focus	Typical learner output
Module 1 – Introduction to SPP and the Social Economy	Basic concepts of SPP, social value and social economy	Identification of one social value opportunity in a procurement case
Module 2 – Legislation and Regulatory Framework	Legal principles and safe entry points for social criteria	Mapping of where social criteria can be included in tender documents
Module 3 – Analysis of Social Enterprise Needs	Supplier readiness, barriers and support needs	Readiness assessment or support plan for a social enterprise
Module 4 – Bid Preparation and Participation	Tender analysis, compliance, bid structure and social value communication	Compliance checklist and draft bid section
Module 5 – Contract Management and Social Impact Monitoring	Contract obligations, monitoring, indicators and evidence	Simple monitoring table or indicator framework
Module 6 – Partnerships in SPP	Cooperation between buyers, suppliers and intermediaries	Stakeholder map or partnership model
Module 7 – Social Impact Assessment	Outputs, outcomes, indicators and impact evidence	Basic social impact chain
Module 8 – Advocacy and Policy Influence	System barriers, policy dialogue and institutional change	Short advocacy or improvement proposal

Table 5 Overview of the SPE modules

How SPE modules can be delivered

The SPE modules are designed as flexible learning blocks. A full module can typically be delivered as a 4–6 hour session, divided into shorter lesson units. A shorter version may be used as a 2–3 hour introduction within an existing course. For more advanced groups, several modules can be combined into a one-day, two-day or multi-session programme.

A typical module can follow this structure:

Stage	Trainer role	Learner activity
Introduction	Present the topic through a short example	Connect the topic to previous knowledge or experience





Case analysis	Provide a real or simplified procurement case	Analyse the case and identify key issues
Practical task	Guide individual or group work	Draft, map, assess, prepare or improve a concrete output
Presentation and feedback	Facilitate discussion and provide comments	Present outputs and receive feedback
Reflection	Summarise key learning points	Identify how the learning can be applied in practice

Table 6 Typical structure for delivering an SPE module

This structure keeps learning active and prevents the training from becoming too theoretical.

Module 1 – Introduction to SPP and the Social Economy

Module 1 introduces the basic concepts of Social Public Procurement, social value and the social economy. Its purpose is to create a common starting point for learners with different backgrounds. Some learners may understand procurement but not the social economy, while others may work in social enterprises but have limited knowledge of public procurement.

Trainers should use this module to help learners see the connection between public spending and social impact. The aim is not to overload learners with definitions, but to help them recognise that procurement decisions can influence employment, inclusion, accessibility and community benefit.

A practical way to deliver this module is to begin with a familiar public service, such as cleaning, catering, transport, maintenance or social care. The trainer can ask learners what the public authority usually considers when buying this service, such as price, quality, deadlines and technical requirements. The trainer then introduces the question: What social value could also be created through this purchase?

Module element	Guidance
Suggested activity	Analyse a simple local service example and identify possible social outcomes
Recommended learner group	Beginners, mixed groups, VET trainers, public officials, social enterprises
Expected output	One practical example of how procurement can support social value
Trainer note	Avoid long theoretical definitions. Start from a familiar service and build the concept from there.

By the end of this module, learners should be able to explain SPP in simple terms and identify at least one way in which procurement can support social value.

Module 2 – Legislation and Regulatory Framework

Module 2 focuses on the legal and regulatory framework that enables Social Public Procurement. This module is important because it provides the legal knowledge and practical guidance needed to implement SPP effectively, transparently, and in line with EU and national regulations. Trainees will





learn about the legal framework governing SPP in their country, the rights and obligations of contracting authorities and social enterprises, as well as how to apply social criteria in procurement procedures in a fair and compliant way.

The trainer's role is to reduce uncertainty. The module should not be delivered as a legal lecture. Instead, it should help learners understand where social considerations can be included safely and correctly within procurement procedures. Learners should understand principles such as transparency, equal treatment, proportionality, non-discrimination and competition, but always through practical examples.

The most useful teaching approach is to work with a simplified tender extract. Trainers can guide learners through the different sections of a simplified tender document, helping them first assess compliance with key EU procurement principles and then identify where social criteria can legally and effectively be included. Learners can then discuss which of these sections are most suitable to include social considerations.

Module element	Guidance
Suggested activity	Review a simplified tender, assess compliance and identify safe entry points for social criteria
Recommended learner group	Public buyers, procurement professionals, SMEs, social enterprises, intermediaries
Expected output	A legally compliant tender proposal with applied social clauses.
Trainer note	Keep legal explanations practical and linked to procurement decisions.

By the end of this module, learners should be able to apply social criteria in line with the EU principles of SPP.

Module 3 – Analysis of Social Enterprise Needs

Module 3 helps learners understand the needs, capacities and constraints of social enterprises and other social economy actors. This is essential because SPP cannot work effectively if tenders are designed without considering whether potential suppliers can realistically participate.

Trainers should use this module to help learners look at procurement from the supplier's perspective. Social enterprises may have strong social missions, but they may lack tendering experience, administrative capacity, financial resources or confidence in presenting their impact. Public buyers and intermediaries need to understand these barriers if they want SPP to become accessible and effective.

A useful approach is to introduce a fictional or real social enterprise profile. Learners analyse the organisation's mission, services, staff, experience and limitations, and then assess whether it is ready to participate in a public tender.





Module element	Guidance
Suggested activity	Analyse a social enterprise profile and identify readiness gaps
Recommended learner group	Social enterprises, SMEs, intermediaries, consultants, public buyers
Expected output	Supplier readiness assessment or support plan
Trainer note	Encourage learners to consider both the buyer's and the supplier's perspective.

By the end of this module, learners should be able to assess basic readiness for procurement participation and identify practical support needs.

Module 4 – Bid Preparation and Participation

Module 4 is one of the most practical modules in the SPE curriculum. It focuses on analysing tenders, preparing bid documentation, understanding compliance requirements, structuring technical responses and presenting social value clearly.

This module should be delivered through simulation and hands-on work. Learners should practise reading tender documents, identifying mandatory requirements, mapping evaluation criteria, drafting sections of a technical bid and checking submission risks.

The module is especially important for social enterprises and SMEs. Many organisations fail in procurement not because they lack capacity or social impact, but because they do not understand tender logic, documentation requirements or evaluator expectations.

Module element	Guidance
Suggested activity	Complete a bid preparation simulation using a simplified tender
Recommended learner group	Social enterprises, SMEs, suppliers, intermediaries, business support organisations
Expected output	Compliance checklist and draft bid section
Trainer note	Focus on clarity, structure, evidence and alignment with evaluation criteria.

By the end of this module, learners should be able to analyse tender documentation, distinguish mandatory from evaluative requirements, prepare a basic bid structure and communicate social value clearly.

Module 5 – Contract Management and Social Impact Monitoring

Module 5 focuses on what happens after a contract is awarded. Trainers should emphasise that SPP does not end when social criteria are included in tender documents. Social value must be delivered, monitored and documented during contract implementation.

This module helps learners understand contract obligations, stakeholder responsibilities, risk management, performance indicators and reporting. Learners should practise designing simple monitoring tools, because many organisations struggle to prove that promised social outcomes have been achieved.





A practical approach is to use a contract scenario that includes one social clause. Learners identify what needs to be monitored, what evidence should be collected, who is responsible and how often reporting should take place.

Module element	Guidance
Suggested activity	Develop a monitoring table for a contract clause with a social requirement
Recommended learner group	Public buyers, suppliers, contract managers, social enterprises, intermediaries
Expected output	Monitoring table or risk checklist
Trainer note	Present monitoring as a way to prove social value, not only as an administrative obligation.

By the end of this module, learners should understand how contract monitoring turns social commitments into evidence.

Module 6 – Partnerships in SPP

Module 6 explores cooperation between contracting authorities, social enterprises, SMEs, intermediaries and other stakeholders. Partnerships are important because smaller suppliers may not be able to deliver a contract alone, while public authorities may need support to understand the supplier market or define realistic social objectives.

This module is best delivered through group work and role-play. Learners can be assigned different roles, such as municipality, social enterprise, SME, intermediary, beneficiary group or training provider. They then work together to design a partnership model for a public service.

Module element	Guidance
Suggested activity	Role-play a procurement planning meeting involving different stakeholders
Recommended learner group	Mixed groups, intermediaries, public buyers, social enterprises, SMEs
Expected output	Stakeholder map or partnership model
Trainer note	Use role-play to show how different actors understand risks, opportunities and responsibilities.

By the end of this module, learners should be able to identify relevant partners, clarify roles and design a basic cooperation model that supports SPP implementation.

Module 7 – Social Impact Assessment

Module 7 introduces learners to defining, measuring and communicating social impact. Trainers should keep this module practical and avoid making impact assessment too technical at the beginning. The starting point should be a simple question: **What change should this procurement create?**





Learners need to distinguish between activities, outputs and outcomes. For example, “training 20 people” is an output, while “improving employability” is an outcome. This distinction is important because SPP should not only describe activities, but also demonstrate social change.

A useful activity is to ask learners to build a simple impact chain for a procurement case. They identify the social problem, the procurement activity, expected outputs, expected outcomes, indicators and evidence sources.

Module element	Guidance
Suggested activity	Build an impact chain for a procurement case
Recommended learner group	Public buyers, suppliers, social enterprises, VET trainers, intermediaries
Expected output	Basic social impact framework
Trainer note	Keep indicators realistic, simple and linked to the contract.

By the end of this module, learners should be able to define simple indicators and explain how social value can be monitored and communicated.

Module 8 – Advocacy and Policy Influence

Module 8 focuses on influencing systems, policies and institutional practices that affect Social Public Procurement. It is especially relevant for advanced learners, trainers, intermediaries, consultants and organisations involved in policy dialogue.

The purpose is to help learners understand that many SPP barriers are systemic. Even when individuals are motivated, they may work in environments where social criteria are not prioritised, guidance is missing or institutions are risk-averse. Advocacy helps learners identify where change is possible and how to communicate evidence-based proposals.

A practical way to deliver this module is to ask learners to identify one SPP barrier in their context and develop a realistic advocacy action. This could be a consultation response, a position statement, a meeting proposal or a stakeholder engagement plan.

Module element	Guidance
Suggested activity	Prepare a short advocacy or institutional improvement proposal
Recommended learner group	Advanced learners, trainers, intermediaries, consultants, policy actors
Expected output	Advocacy action plan or improvement proposal
Trainer note	Keep the task realistic. Learners should identify one achievable action, not redesign the whole system.

By the end of this module, learners should be able to identify a policy or institutional barrier and propose a realistic action to influence change.





3.2 Progressive Learning Pathway

The eight SPE modules form a progressive learning pathway.

Modules 1 to 3 build the foundation by helping learners understand SPP, the legal framework and the realities of social enterprises and other suppliers. Modules 4 to 6 focus on practical application through tender participation, contract management and partnership building. Modules 7 and 8 move towards impact and system change by focusing on measurement, evidence and policy influence.

Learning stage	Modules	Main purpose
Foundation	Modules 1–3	Understand SPP, legal entry points and supplier needs
Application	Modules 4–6	Analyse tenders, prepare bids, manage contracts and build partnerships
Impact and system change	Modules 7–8	Measure social outcomes and influence institutional practice

Table 7 Progressive learning pathway of the SPE curriculum

For VET providers, this means that the curriculum can be adapted to different training needs. A short course for social enterprises may focus mainly on Modules 3 and 4, because these learners need to understand procurement readiness and bid preparation. A course for public authorities may prioritise Modules 2, 5 and 7, because these learners need to design lawful criteria, manage contracts and monitor impact. A training-of-trainers format may combine Modules 1, 6 and 8 to strengthen facilitation, stakeholder engagement and system awareness.

The strongest results are achieved when trainers show how each module connects to the full procurement cycle. Learners should not see the modules as separate topics, but as parts of one professional process.

3.3 Learning Outcomes and EQF Alignment

The SPE curriculum uses a learning outcomes-based approach. For trainers, this means that every session should be planned around what learners should be able to do by the end of the session, not only around the content that will be presented.

Each module defines learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

Learning outcome type	Meaning	Example in SPP training
Knowledge	What learners understand	Learners understand what social criteria are
Skills	What learners can do	Learners draft a social criterion





Competence	How learners apply knowledge and skills independently and responsibly	Learners select an appropriate criterion, justify it and propose a verification method
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Table 8 Learning outcome types in SPP training

Trainers can use three planning questions for every session:

1. What should learners understand?
2. What task should they be able to perform?
3. What output will show that learning has taken place?

The figure below shows how learning outcomes can be translated into visible learner outputs.

Components of Learner Development

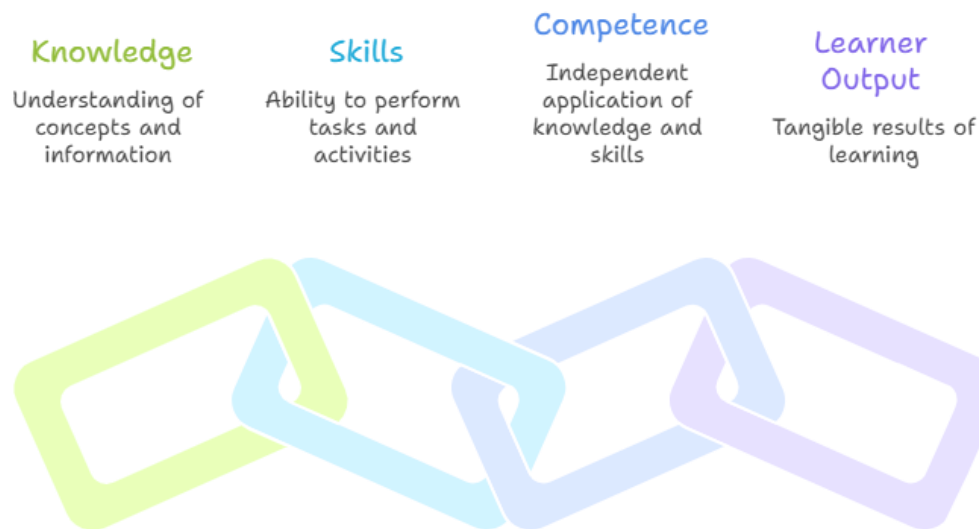


Figure 5 From learning outcomes to learner outputs

For example, in a session on social criteria, learners should understand what social criteria are, be able to draft one criterion and produce a written criterion with a verification method. This makes the learning outcome visible and assessable.

The curriculum is aligned with the European Qualifications Framework and the principles of ECVET. For VET providers, this supports integration into formal and non-formal training systems, short courses, continuing professional development offers and micro-credentials.

The SPE profile is particularly relevant for EQF levels 4–6, where learners are expected to apply knowledge in changing contexts, solve practical problems, take responsibility for tasks and collaborate with others. These expectations match the real demands of Social Public Procurement, where professionals must interpret rules, work with stakeholders and make practical decisions.





4 Translating SPP Skills into VET Learning Outcomes

4.1 Core Competence Areas

Social Public Procurement requires a hybrid competence profile. Learners need legal understanding, operational skills, social impact awareness, communication skills and the ability to work with different stakeholders. These competences are rarely developed together in traditional training systems, which is why SPP often remains possible in law but difficult to apply in practice.

For VET providers, the competence areas below can be used as a checklist when designing sessions and assessment tasks. Each competence should lead to a practical activity and a visible learner output.

Competence area	What learners need to develop	Practical activity	Expected output
Procurement literacy and legal understanding	Understand procurement stages and where social criteria can be included	Analyse a simplified tender procedure	Marked tender structure or short explanation of SPP entry points
Social value integration	Turn broad social goals into concrete procurement elements	Transform a social objective into a specification, award criterion or contract clause	Draft social criterion
Market and stakeholder understanding	Understand supplier capacities, barriers and support needs	Analyse a supplier or social enterprise profile	Readiness assessment or stakeholder map
Bid and tendering skills	Read tender documents, identify requirements and prepare compliant responses	Complete a mock tender exercise	Draft bid section or compliance checklist
Contract management and monitoring	Understand how social commitments are implemented after award	Work with a contract clause and design a monitoring table	Monitoring tool or risk checklist
Social impact measurement	Define indicators and assess whether outcomes are achieved	Build a simple impact chain	Basic impact framework
Collaboration and partnership building	Clarify roles and cooperation between buyers, suppliers and intermediaries	Simulate a stakeholder meeting	Stakeholder map or partnership plan





System thinking and policy awareness	Connect procurement to wider policy goals and system barriers	Identify one barrier and propose an improvement action	Short action plan or advocacy proposal
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Table 9 Core competence areas, practical activities and learner outputs

These competence areas should not be treated as separate theory topics. They should be converted into exercises, assignments and assessment tasks.

4.2 Learner Profiles and Learning Needs

Effective curriculum design requires trainers to adapt the SPE curriculum to real learner profiles. Public procurement professionals, social enterprises, SMEs, trainers and intermediaries do not start from the same position and should not receive exactly the same training emphasis.

Public procurement professionals usually need support in moving from compliance-focused procurement to strategic procurement. Training for this group should focus on social criteria, legal confidence, contract monitoring and impact verification.

Social enterprises and SMEs need support in understanding procurement procedures and preparing bids. Training for this group should focus on tender documentation, compliance requirements, bid structure and communicating social value.

VET trainers and intermediaries need support in translating SPP into accessible learning experiences. Training for this group should focus on facilitation methods, case-based learning, templates and adaptation to different learner levels.

Across all partner countries, learners face similar challenges. Many have limited prior knowledge of SPP, fear legal complexity, lack practical examples and have limited time for training. For this reason, trainers should use short, modular and task-based sessions. The training should not assume expert knowledge.

Practical adaptation by learner group

Learner group	Main need	Training focus	Recommended activity
Public procurement professionals	Confidence to apply SPP legally	Social criteria, contract clauses, monitoring and verification	Draft and verify one social criterion
Social enterprises / SMEs	Ability to participate in tenders	Tender analysis, compliance and bid preparation	Complete a compliance checklist and draft a bid section
VET trainers	Ability to teach SPP clearly	Facilitation, case-based learning and practical exercises	Design a 45-minute learning activity





Intermediaries / consultants	Ability to support both buyers and suppliers	Stakeholder mapping and advisory tools	Prepare a support plan for a procurement case
Mixed groups	Shared understanding between actors	Buyer-supplier collaboration and communication	Role-play a procurement planning meeting

Table 10 Practical adaptation by learner group

The key design principle is that learning outcomes must reflect real learners in real systems. Trainers should always ask: who are the learners, what do they already know, what task should they practise, and what output should they produce?

The SPE curriculum provides a strong structure, but its success depends on practical delivery. By aligning competence areas, learner needs and real constraints, VET providers can ensure that SPP training leads not only to knowledge acquisition, but to real capacity to act.

PART IV — HOW TO DELIVER IT IN PRACTICE

5 Adapting the Curriculum to National VET Systems

5.1 Common Delivery Barriers

Delivering Social Public Procurement (SPP) training is not only a matter of having good curriculum content. The main challenge is to turn the curriculum into learning experiences that work for real learners, institutions and procurement environments.

Before selecting modules, exercises or tools, trainers should begin with the delivery context. They should ask:

- Who are the learners?
- What do they already know?
- What procurement environment do they work in?
- What practical task should they be able to perform after the session?
- What examples, cases or templates are available?

The figure below presents a simple delivery model that trainers can use when adapting SPP training to real learner and institutional conditions.





Figure 6 SPP training delivery model

Across the partner countries, several common barriers affect SPP training delivery.

One major barrier is limited trainer capacity. SPP combines procurement, social economy, social impact and learning facilitation. In many countries, procurement training is treated as legal or administrative training, while social economy training is delivered separately. VET providers should therefore consider co-facilitation, especially at the beginning. A procurement expert can explain procedures, a social economy practitioner can present supplier realities, and a facilitator can guide learners through practical exercises.

A second barrier is legal complexity and risk-aversion. Public buyers and suppliers may fear that social criteria could create legal problems, delays or audit risks. Trainers should address this concern directly, but without turning the session into a legal lecture. The aim is to show where social considerations can be included safely and how they can be made clear, proportionate and verifiable.

A third barrier is the lack of real national examples. In countries where SPP is still emerging, trainers may not have access to many documented cases. To avoid abstract teaching, they should use realistic simulated cases based on familiar services such as cleaning, catering, maintenance, training, social care or community services.





Low awareness and limited demand may also affect delivery. Learners may not immediately understand why SPP matters. Trainers should therefore begin with a practical social or institutional problem, such as limited participation of social enterprises, unemployment, accessibility barriers or weak monitoring of social commitments.

Time constraints are another important barrier. Public officials, SME representatives and social enterprise staff often cannot attend long training programmes. This means that the curriculum should be modular. A 2-hour awareness session, a 4-hour workshop or a single 45-minute lesson unit may be more realistic than a full course.

Weak cooperation between training providers and practice is also a recurring challenge. If VET providers are not connected to contracting authorities, social enterprises, SMEs or intermediaries, training risks becoming too generic. Wherever possible, trainers should involve practitioners, use real cases or simulate stakeholder roles in group work.

The key message is that SPP training should be designed around real constraints, not ideal conditions. If time is limited, use short formats. If examples are limited, use simulations. If legal confidence is low, use step-by-step templates. If trainer expertise is fragmented, use co-facilitation.

5.2 Country-Specific Constraints

The same SPE curriculum cannot be delivered in exactly the same way in all countries. Practical readiness for SPP differs across Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Romania and Spain. For VET providers, adaptation is therefore a necessary part of delivery.

In Bulgaria, SPP is legally possible but still underdeveloped in practice. Procurement remains strongly focused on compliance and price-based evaluation. Training should begin with simple examples, confidence-building exercises and basic social clauses.

In Cyprus, SPP is still emerging and often linked to pilot initiatives or policy-driven actions. Local examples are limited, and cooperation between training providers and contracting authorities is not yet strong. Trainers should use simulated cases and gradually introduce practical tools.

In Germany, the legal and institutional framework is more developed, and support tools already exist. However, implementation varies across regions and levels of government. Training can therefore focus on improving existing practice, strengthening criteria and improving monitoring arrangements.

In Greece, SPP is legally enabled but not widely applied. Awareness remains limited, and procurement is still shaped by compliance and cost considerations. Training should combine awareness-raising with simple practical application.





In Italy, the social economy is well developed, especially through social cooperatives, but SPP is unevenly applied across regions. Training can build on existing awareness of social economy actors and focus on operational skills, measurable criteria and monitoring.

In Malta, SPP is at an early stage, and procurement systems may be difficult for non-specialists to navigate. Training should be short, practical and tool-based, using checklists, simplified tender documents and platform-navigation examples.

In Romania, SPP is supported by policy but not yet mainstreamed. Practitioners may be cautious, and implementation remains limited. Training should focus on reducing risk-aversion and showing when tools such as reserved contracts may be appropriate.

In Spain, SPP is policy-driven and varies strongly by region. Some regions are more advanced, while others are less experienced. Trainers should use adaptable examples and encourage comparison between regional approaches.

Country-based adaptation guide

Country	Delivery starting point	Training focus	Example activity
Bulgaria	Low practical use, compliance-oriented system	Awareness, confidence-building, simple social clauses	Add one social clause to a municipal service tender
Cyprus	Emerging, pilot-based practice	Simulation and gradual introduction	Analyse a fictional pilot case and propose scaling steps
Germany	More mature but uneven implementation	Quality, consistency and improvement	Compare and improve two tender examples
Greece	Legal basis exists, low awareness	Practical entry points and simple application	Redesign a simple local service tender
Italy	Strong social economy, uneven procurement use	Operationalisation and monitoring	Draft measurable criteria for a cooperative-based service
Malta	Early-stage, platform complexity	Tool-based training and simplified procedures	Use a checklist to respond to a local tender
Romania	Policy-supported, cautious practice	Risk reduction and reserved contracts	Compare standard and reserved contract scenarios
Spain	Regional variation	Adaptable buyer-supplier guidance	Compare regional examples and identify transferable elements

Table 11 Country-based adaptation guide for SPP training

This country-based adaptation should shape the level of complexity. In low-maturity contexts, trainers should prioritise understanding and confidence. In intermediate contexts, they should focus on application and problem-solving. In more mature contexts, they can work on quality, consistency, monitoring and impact.





5.3 Risk Factors and Mitigation Strategies

SPP training can fail even when the topic is relevant and the curriculum is well designed. The most common risk is that training remains too theoretical. This happens when trainers rely too heavily on definitions, legal explanations or policy background. Learners may understand the concept but still be unable to apply it.

The main response is simple: every session should include at least one practical output. Learners should produce something concrete, such as a tender analysis, draft criterion, bid section, monitoring table, stakeholder map or impact indicator.

Another risk is low learner engagement. Learners may see SPP as an additional burden, especially if they are already dealing with complex procurement rules or administrative tasks. Trainers should begin with real problems that learners recognise and then show how SPP can help address them.

Legal overload is also a common risk. Trainers should not remove legal content, but they should organise it around practical decisions. For example: What is the procurement objective? Where can social value be included? Is the criterion linked to the contract? Is it clear? Can it be verified?

A further risk is mismatch between training and practice. If examples do not reflect real procurement situations, learners will struggle to transfer the learning to their work. Trainers should therefore use real or realistic cases based on familiar services.

Sustainability is another concern. If training is delivered only once, without follow-up or institutional integration, its impact will be limited. VET providers should embed SPE modules into existing programmes, reuse materials and build partnerships.

Finally, training may exclude some target groups if the level is not appropriate. If the content is too advanced, social enterprises and SMEs may disengage. If it is too basic, procurement professionals may not find it useful. Trainers should adapt tasks by learner group, especially in mixed sessions.

Risk and mitigation table

Risk	What it looks like in training	Trainer response
Too theoretical	Learners listen but do not practise	Add a practical task in every session
Low engagement	Learners do not see relevance	Start from a real problem
Legal overload	Learners feel confused or afraid	Use decision steps and examples
Weak link to practice	Cases feel artificial	Use real or realistic tenders
Low sustainability	Training ends after one event	Embed modules and reuse tools
Exclusion of learners	Content is too easy or too difficult	Adapt tasks by learner group

Table 12 Risk factors and mitigation strategies in SPP training

The key principle is that training should reduce barriers, not add new ones. If learners leave the session more confident and able to perform one practical task, the training has achieved its purpose.





6 Teaching Methods for Social Public Procurement

6.1 Delivery Formats by Context

There is no single best format for SPP training. The format should be selected according to the target group, available time, level of SPP maturity and access to real cases.

Short modular courses are often the most realistic option. They are suitable for public officials, SMEs, social enterprises and adult learners with limited time. A short session can focus on one task, such as understanding SPP, drafting social criteria, analysing tenders or preparing bids.

Blended learning is useful when learners need flexibility. Learners complete online content before the session, while the live session is used for application. This approach works well with the Deal4Good MOOC. For example, learners may review online content on social criteria before attending a workshop where they draft and assess criteria.

Work-based learning is suitable for advanced learners who can apply SPP directly in their work. This may involve analysing a real tender, preparing a bid section, designing monitoring indicators or reviewing a procurement procedure. This format requires stronger cooperation with employers, contracting authorities or partner organisations.

Online learning and MOOC-based delivery are useful for foundational knowledge and wider reach. However, online learning alone is not enough to develop applied SPP skills. It should be combined with facilitated exercises, feedback and assignments.

Workshops remain essential because SPP requires discussion and practice. Learners need to compare perspectives, test ideas and receive feedback. For many VET providers, a workshop is the best starting point.

Example delivery formats

Format	Duration	Best for	Trainer focus	Learner output
Awareness session	2 hours	Beginners, stakeholders	Explain SPP through examples	One identified opportunity for SPP
Introductory workshop	4 hours	Mixed groups	Basic concepts and simple exercise	Draft social criterion
Full module	4–6 hours	Targeted learner group	One SPE module in depth	Completed module task
One-day training	6–7 hours	Professionals	Tender analysis and application	Tender analysis and draft criteria
Two-day training	12–14 hours	Advanced or mixed groups	Full procurement cycle	SPP scenario or mini-project





Blended pathway	Flexible	Adult learners	MOOC and practical workshop	Assignment and reflection
Work-based learning	Flexible	Professionals	Real workplace task	Applied workplace output

Table 13 Example delivery formats for SPP training

Example: 4-hour workshop

A 4-hour workshop is suitable when learners are new to SPP but need practical understanding quickly.

Time	Session	Trainer role	Learner task
30 min	Introduction to SPP	Explain using one local service example	Share experience or expectations
45 min	Where social criteria fit	Show tender structure	Identify possible entry points
60 min	Tender analysis	Facilitate group work	Analyse a simplified tender
60 min	Criteria drafting	Coach groups	Draft one social criterion
30 min	Presentations	Give feedback	Present criterion and verification method
15 min	Reflection	Summarise	Identify one application idea

Table 14 Example 4-hour workshop structure

Example: 1-day practical training

A 1-day format is appropriate when learners need more time to practise and compare perspectives.

Time	Session	Main activity
09:30–10:00	Opening and expectations	Learner experience mapping
10:00–11:00	SPP basics and procurement entry points	Guided explanation using a case
11:15–12:30	Tender analysis	Group analysis of a simplified tender
13:30–14:45	Drafting social criteria	Practical drafting exercise
15:00–16:00	Bid or supplier perspective	Short bid response task
16:00–16:45	Presentations and feedback	Group presentations
16:45–17:00	Reflection	Individual next-step note

Table 15 Example 1-day practical training agenda

Example: 2-day applied training

A 2-day format is suitable for advanced learners or mixed groups of public buyers, suppliers, trainers and intermediaries.

Day 1 should focus on understanding SPP and designing criteria. Learners analyse a procurement case, identify social objectives and draft social criteria. Day 2 should focus on supplier response, monitoring and cooperation. Learners prepare a short bid section, design indicators, map stakeholders and present an integrated SPP scenario.





Day	Focus	Main outputs
Day 1	Understanding SPP and designing criteria	Tender analysis and draft criteria
Day 2	Bid response, monitoring and cooperation	Bid section, indicators and stakeholder map

Table 16 Example 2-day applied training structure

In this format, the trainer should act less as a lecturer and more as a facilitator and coach. The strongest learning comes from group work, feedback and revision of learner outputs.

6.2 Blended, Work-Based and Low-Resource Models

To ensure accessibility and sustainability, SPP training must work in different institutional conditions. Not every VET provider will have expert trainers, strong partnerships or real cases at the beginning. The delivery model should therefore match available resources.

In a blended learning model, learners first complete selected MOOC content or digital materials. This gives them a basic understanding before the live session. The classroom or online workshop is then used for practical application. After the session, learners complete a short assignment or reflection. This model is useful when learners have limited time and when trainers want to maximise practical work during contact hours.

Blended learning model

Stage	Learner activity	Trainer action
Before training	Complete MOOC unit or reading	Assign content and guiding questions
During training	Apply knowledge in exercises	Facilitate, coach and give feedback
After training	Complete assignment or reflection	Review outputs and suggest improvements

Table 17 Blended learning model for SPP training

In a work-based learning model, training is linked to a real workplace task. Learners may bring a tender from their organisation, analyse a real procurement opportunity, draft a bid section or design monitoring indicators. This model is highly effective for procurement professionals and social enterprise staff, but it requires access to real practice and attention to confidentiality.

In a low-resource model, the trainer uses simplified cases, standard templates, short sessions and open digital resources. This is suitable for emerging SPP contexts where there are few trainers and limited examples. The goal is to start training without waiting for perfect conditions.

A low-resource session can be built around one simulated tender, one template and one learner output. For example, in a 2-hour session, learners can review a simplified tender and draft one social criterion. This may seem modest, but it builds the foundation for more advanced learning.





The most practical recommendation for VET providers is to start simple and build gradually. A short modular session can become a workshop. A workshop can become a blended course. A blended course can later become a structured training programme.

The effectiveness of SPP training depends less on the format itself and more on the ability to combine flexibility, practical tasks and real-world relevance.

PART V — PRACTICE & APPLICATION

7 Case Studies from Partner Countries

The case studies in this section are intended to be used as training material, not only as background information. They reflect real or representative national situations in which Social Public Procurement (SPP) is legally possible but implemented with different levels of maturity, confidence and institutional support.

For trainers, the value of these cases lies in their realism. They show that SPP is rarely implemented under ideal conditions. In most countries, contracting authorities need more confidence, social enterprises and SMEs need more support, and VET providers need practical tools to connect policy with real procurement tasks.

Each case can be used in class to support discussion around three questions:

1. What is the procurement opportunity?
2. What prevents SPP from being applied effectively?
3. What practical training intervention could improve the situation??

7.1 Bulgaria — Social Criteria in Local Service Procurement

In Bulgaria, municipalities procure many services directly connected to local social needs, such as cleaning, catering, maintenance, social support, childcare and elderly care. These services provide a realistic starting point for SPP training because they are familiar to learners and can be linked to employment inclusion, support for vulnerable groups and local community benefit.

Although the legal framework allows the use of social clauses and reserved procedures, practical application remains limited. Procurement procedures are still often dominated by price and technical compliance. The main challenge is therefore not the absence of legal possibility, but the lack of applied knowledge, confidence and examples.

Training use	Guidance
Recommended learners	Beginner or intermediate learners, public buyers, municipalities, social enterprises, SMEs





Suggested activity	Analyse a simplified municipal tender for cleaning or catering services
Learner task	Identify one realistic social objective and propose where it could be included
Key lesson	Legal permission alone does not create practice. Learners need simple tools, examples and confidence-building exercises.

7.2 Cyprus — Pilot and Policy-Driven SPP Initiatives

In Cyprus, SPP remains at an early stage and is often connected to pilot initiatives, EU-funded projects or specific institutions with an interest in socially responsible procurement. This makes Cyprus a useful example for discussing how SPP can move from isolated experimentation to more regular practice.

The main limitation is the lack of documented local cases and structured guidance. Trainers may therefore need to work with simulated cases or adapted European examples. In early-stage contexts, simulation is often the most realistic way to begin building competence.

Training use	Guidance
Recommended learners	Beginner learners, public authorities, VET providers, intermediaries
Suggested activity	Analyse a fictional local service procurement pilot
Learner task	Identify what would be needed to make the pilot repeatable
Key lesson	Pilot initiatives are useful only when they are translated into repeatable procedures, templates and trained practice.

7.3 Germany — Institutionalised but Uneven Implementation

Germany represents a more mature SPP environment, with stronger legal frameworks, practical tools, advisory structures and support organisations. Social criteria are used in areas such as fair trade, employment conditions, accessibility and sustainable purchasing. However, implementation still varies across federal, regional and local levels.

This case is useful for more advanced learners. It shows that even where tools and frameworks exist, consistent implementation is not automatic. Training should therefore focus less on basic awareness and more on quality improvement, standardisation and effective use of existing tools.

Training use	Guidance
Recommended learners	Advanced learners, public buyers, procurement professionals, trainers
Suggested activity	Compare two tender examples with different levels of social criteria quality
Learner task	Identify what makes one example stronger and propose improvements





Key lesson	Mature systems still need training. The focus shifts from “Can SPP be used?” to “How can SPP be used better and more consistently?”
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7.4 Greece — Legally Enabled but Weakly Applied

In Greece, SPP is legally possible but remains limited in practice. Municipal and regional authorities procure services where social value could be relevant, including cleaning, catering, maintenance, social care and community services. However, social criteria are not systematically used.

The main challenges are low awareness, limited guidance, administrative caution and few documented national examples. This makes Greece a useful case for training contexts where learners need to understand both the opportunity and the first practical steps.

Training use	Guidance
Recommended learners	Beginner or intermediate learners, municipalities, public buyers, suppliers
Suggested activity	Work with a familiar municipal service case
Learner task	Identify realistic social value and one simple entry point for social criteria
Key lesson	Awareness-raising must be linked immediately to application. Learners should practise simple first steps.

7.5 Italy — Social Cooperatives in Public Service Delivery

Italy has a strong social economy tradition, especially through social cooperatives involved in social care, work integration, environmental services and community welfare. This creates a strong foundation for SPP, particularly at municipal level.

However, a strong social economy does not automatically guarantee effective procurement practice. Implementation remains uneven across regions and contracting authorities. Some public buyers have experience with social clauses, while others struggle to translate social objectives into measurable requirements and monitoring arrangements.

Training use	Guidance
Recommended learners	Public buyers, social cooperatives, intermediaries, advanced VET learners
Suggested activity	Analyse a public service contract involving a social cooperative
Learner task	Draft one measurable criterion and propose how it would be monitored
Key lesson	Social objectives must be translated into criteria, contract requirements, indicators and monitoring processes.





7.6 Malta — Experimental Use of Social Clauses in Local Tenders

In Malta, SPP is still at an early stage, with limited but growing experimentation. Local council tenders, particularly in cleaning and maintenance, provide realistic examples for introducing social clauses, such as encouraging suppliers to employ disadvantaged workers.

The main barriers include low participation of social enterprises, limited experience and the complexity of procurement systems, including electronic platforms. For non-specialists, the administrative side of procurement may be as challenging as the social content itself.

Training use	Guidance
Recommended learners	Beginner learners, local authorities, SMEs, social enterprises
Suggested activity	Use a simplified local council tender
Learner task	Identify required documents, deadlines, possible social clauses and evidence needs
Key lesson	Simple social clauses can create learning opportunities, but learners need procedural confidence and practical tools.

7.7 Romania — Reserved Contracts for Social Inclusion

Romania provides examples of reserved contracts supporting work-integration social enterprises and sheltered workshops. These instruments show how procurement can contribute directly to employment inclusion for persons with disabilities or other disadvantaged groups.

Although the legal framework supports such approaches, implementation remains cautious and limited. Contracting authorities may hesitate to use reserved contracts, and links between procurement institutions and the social economy sector remain weak.

Training use	Guidance
Recommended learners	Public buyers, social enterprises, intermediaries, policy actors
Suggested activity	Compare a standard procurement procedure with a reserved contract scenario
Learner task	Identify when a reserved contract may be appropriate and what risks must be managed
Key lesson	Targeted instruments can be effective only when public buyers know how to use them and suppliers are prepared to participate.





7.8 Spain — Regional Variation in SPP Practice

In Spain, SPP is encouraged at the national level but applied unevenly across regions. Some municipalities and regions are more advanced in integrating social and environmental criteria, while others remain less experienced.

This case is useful for discussing adaptation. It shows that one national framework can produce different local practices depending on institutional capacity, political priorities, available guidance and stakeholder cooperation.

Training use	Guidance
Recommended learners	Public buyers, regional actors, intermediaries, trainers, advanced learners
Suggested activity	Compare two regional examples or procurement approaches
Learner task	Identify which elements are accessible, measurable and transferable
Key lesson	Regional diversity requires flexible training design. Trainers should help learners adapt principles to their own context.

Cross-Country Insight for Trainers

Across all partner countries, the same pattern emerges: SPP is legally possible, but it becomes real only where capacity, confidence, practical tools and cooperation exist.

Trainers should therefore use case studies actively. A case study should not simply be read. Learners should analyse it, identify barriers, propose improvements and discuss what could be transferred to their own country or institution. The figure below shows how trainers can use case studies as active learning tools.





Strategic Procurement Process for SPP

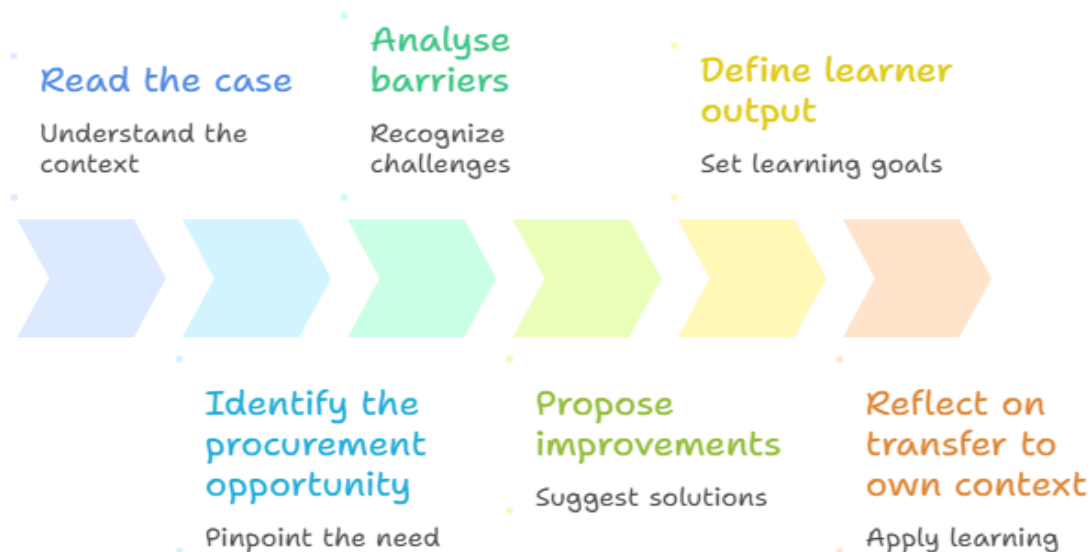


Figure 7 Case-based learning process

A useful trainer question is:

What would need to change for this example to work in your context?

8 Exercises, Assignments and Assessment Examples

8.1 Case-Based Exercises

SPP is best learned through practice. The following exercises are designed as trainer-ready activities that can be adapted to different countries, learner groups and delivery formats. They can be used in short workshops, full modules, blended learning or work-based learning.

Exercise 1 – Improving a Tender

This exercise develops learners' ability to identify where social value can be introduced into a procurement procedure.

Element	Description
Duration	60–75 minutes
Best suited for	Public buyers, VET learners, mixed groups, intermediaries





Materials needed	Simplified tender extract, tender analysis template, flipchart or shared online document
Trainer steps	Present the tender context; allow individual reading; divide learners into groups; ask each group to identify possible social objectives and draft one or two social criteria; facilitate discussion; support learners in checking whether criteria are clear, relevant and verifiable
Expected output	One improved tender element, such as a social criterion, contract clause or short explanation of where social value could be included
Evaluation criteria	The proposal should be relevant to the contract, understandable, realistic and possible to verify during implementation

Exercise Box 1. Improving a tender

Exercise 2 – Bid Preparation Simulation

This exercise supports learners, especially social enterprises and SMEs, in understanding how to respond to tender requirements that include social value.

Element	Description
Duration	90 minutes
Best suited for	Social enterprises, SMEs, suppliers, intermediaries
Materials needed	Simplified tender, compliance checklist, bid response template, examples of weak and strong bid text
Trainer steps	Explain the difference between mandatory requirements and scored criteria; ask learners to complete a compliance check; guide learners in preparing a short response to one technical or social value requirement; organise peer review; summarise common mistakes such as vague promises, missing evidence or unclear responsibilities
Expected output	A short bid section responding to a social criterion
Evaluation criteria	The response should be compliant, structured, clear, evidence-based and aligned with the evaluation criteria

Exercise Box 2. Bid preparation simulation

This exercise reflects the logic of SPE Module 4, where learners move through tender analysis, compliance, bid structuring, social value communication and review.

Exercise 3 – Stakeholder Mapping

This exercise helps learners understand that SPP depends on cooperation between different actors.

Element	Description
Duration	45–60 minutes





Best suited for	Mixed groups, intermediaries, public buyers, trainers
Materials needed	Stakeholder mapping template, case scenario, group workspace
Trainer steps	Present the procurement scenario; explain that SPP cannot be implemented by one actor alone; ask learners to identify relevant stakeholders; guide them in analysing each stakeholder's role, interest, influence and possible contribution; close with a discussion on where cooperation may fail and how communication can be improved
Expected output	Completed stakeholder map and short engagement strategy
Evaluation criteria	The map should include relevant actors, realistic roles and appropriate engagement strategies

Exercise Box 3. Stakeholder mapping

Exercise 4 – Social Impact Design

This exercise develops learners' ability to define measurable social outcomes.

Element	Description
Duration	60 minutes
Best suited for	Public buyers, social enterprises, intermediaries, advanced learners
Materials needed	Impact design template, procurement case, examples of outputs and outcomes
Trainer steps	Explain the difference between activities, outputs, outcomes and impact; present a procurement case with a social objective; ask learners to complete an impact chain; support them in identifying indicators and evidence sources; review whether indicators are realistic and linked to the contract
Expected output	Simple social impact framework with objective, output, outcome, indicator and evidence source
Evaluation criteria	Indicators should be measurable, realistic, linked to the contract and understandable for both buyer and supplier

Exercise Box 4. Social impact design

Exercise 5 – Policy Reflection

This exercise is suitable for advanced learners, trainers, intermediaries or public officials. It helps learners understand procurement as a policy tool.

Element	Description
Duration	45–60 minutes





Best suited for	Advanced learners, trainers, intermediaries, public officials, policy actors
Materials needed	Case study, reflection worksheet, policy objective prompts
Trainer steps	Present the case; ask learners to identify links between the procurement process and wider policy goals; guide them in identifying one barrier; ask them to propose one realistic improvement action, such as a guidance note, training action, stakeholder meeting or internal procedure
Expected output	Short reflection notes or action proposal
Evaluation criteria	The reflection should connect procurement to policy objectives and propose a realistic improvement

Exercise Box 5. Policy reflection

8.2 Assessment Formats

Assessment in SPP training should measure applied competence. Learners should not be assessed only on whether they can define SPP, but on whether they can use it in a realistic task.

Practical assignments are the most appropriate assessment method. Learners may analyse a tender, draft a social criterion, prepare a short bid response, create a monitoring indicator or complete a stakeholder map. These tasks provide clear evidence of learning because they show what the learner can do.

Project-based assessment can be used in longer training formats. Learners can develop a complete SPP scenario, starting from a public need and moving through tender design, supplier participation, contract monitoring and expected social outcomes. This is suitable for advanced learners or mixed groups.

Group work and presentations are also valuable because SPP is collaborative. Learners can work together to solve a case and present their proposed solution. The trainer can assess the technical quality of the output, the reasoning behind decisions, cooperation within the group and the ability to explain choices clearly.

Reflective assessment is useful when learners need to connect training to their own work context. A short reflection can ask learners what barrier they expect in applying SPP and what first step they could take after training.

Short knowledge checks can be used for terminology, basic concepts and legal principles, but they should not dominate assessment. They are useful as support tools, not as the main proof of competence.

A practical assessment approach can combine three elements:





Assessment element	Purpose	Example
Individual task	Checks personal understanding and applied skill	Draft one social criterion or complete a tender analysis
Group output	Assesses cooperation and problem-solving	Prepare a stakeholder map or SPP scenario
Short reflection	Supports transfer to practice	Identify one barrier and one next step for implementation

Table 18 Practical assessment approach for SPP training

This gives the trainer a balanced view of learner understanding, application and readiness to transfer learning into practice.

8.3 Reusable Materials

Many trainers may not yet have deep experience in SPP. For this reason, reusable materials should help them move quickly from explanation to application.

VET providers should prepare a small set of tools that can be used across different modules and formats.

Reusable material	Purpose
Tender analysis template	Helps learners identify procurement structure and SPP entry points
Social criteria design template	Supports the drafting of clear, relevant and verifiable criteria
Compliance checklist	Helps suppliers and learners distinguish mandatory requirements from scored criteria
Stakeholder mapping tool	Supports analysis of roles, interests, influence and cooperation needs
Impact indicator template	Helps learners define outputs, outcomes, indicators and evidence sources
Bid preparation worksheet	Guides learners in structuring a clear and compliant bid response
Trainer guide	Provides timing, instructions, discussion questions, expected outputs and assessment criteria

Table 19 Reusable materials for SPP training

Case libraries are also important. In countries where real SPP examples are limited, simulated cases should be used. These cases should be realistic and based on familiar procurement areas such as cleaning, catering, maintenance, social services, training or community services.

A good simulated case should include enough information for learners to analyse the procurement situation, identify social objectives and prepare a practical output. It should not be overly complex, especially for beginner groups.





Trainer guides should accompany the materials. A useful trainer guide should include:

- session objective;
- suggested timing;
- materials needed;
- instructions for group work;
- questions for discussion;
- expected outputs;
- assessment criteria.

Digital resources can support reuse and continuity. MOOC modules can be assigned before training to introduce basic concepts, while downloadable worksheets can be used during sessions. After training, learners can return to digital resources for revision or follow-up assignments.

Reusable materials should be simple, practical, easy to update and adaptable to national contexts. Their purpose is not to create complex documentation, but to help trainers deliver active learning with confidence.

The final lesson for VET providers is clear: the success of SPP training depends not only on curriculum design, but also on practical tools that trainers can immediately use.

PART VI — TOOLS, QUALITY & SUSTAINABILITY

9 Using the MOOC and Digital Tools

Digital tools enhance SPP training by making it flexible, accessible and repeatable, but they should not replace trainer-led learning. Social Public Procurement requires learners to practise complex tasks such as analysing tenders, drafting social criteria, preparing bid responses and designing indicators. These tasks require guidance, feedback and discussion.

The **Deal4Good e-learning platform** supports the SPE curriculum by giving learners structured access to online learning content before, during and after training. The platform is available at:

<https://deal4goodplatform.eu/>

The most effective use of the platform is as part of a blended learning pathway:

- ● Before training: learners complete selected online units or preparatory materials to understand basic concepts, freeing live sessions for practical application.
- ● During training: trainers use classroom or online workshops for exercises, case analysis, group work and discussion.
- ● After training: learners complete short reflections, assignments or workplace tasks, revisiting the platform content as needed.





The **Digital Self-Assessment Tool** for Social Public Procurement (SPP) Readiness can be used to assess learner or organisational preparedness. It is available at:

<https://form.jotform.com/260752341750049>

The tool helps learners, organisations and trainers reflect on their current readiness to understand, apply and support Social Public Procurement. Trainers may use the results to adapt the training level, select appropriate examples, and decide whether the group needs introductory, intermediate, or more advanced practical exercises.

Together, the Deal4Good e-learning platform and the Digital Self-Assessment Tool support a blended and learner-centred training approach. The e-learning platform provides access to structured learning content, while the self-assessment tool helps identify readiness levels and training needs. This allows live training sessions to focus more effectively on discussion, case-based work, practical exercises and the application of SPP in real or realistic procurement situations.

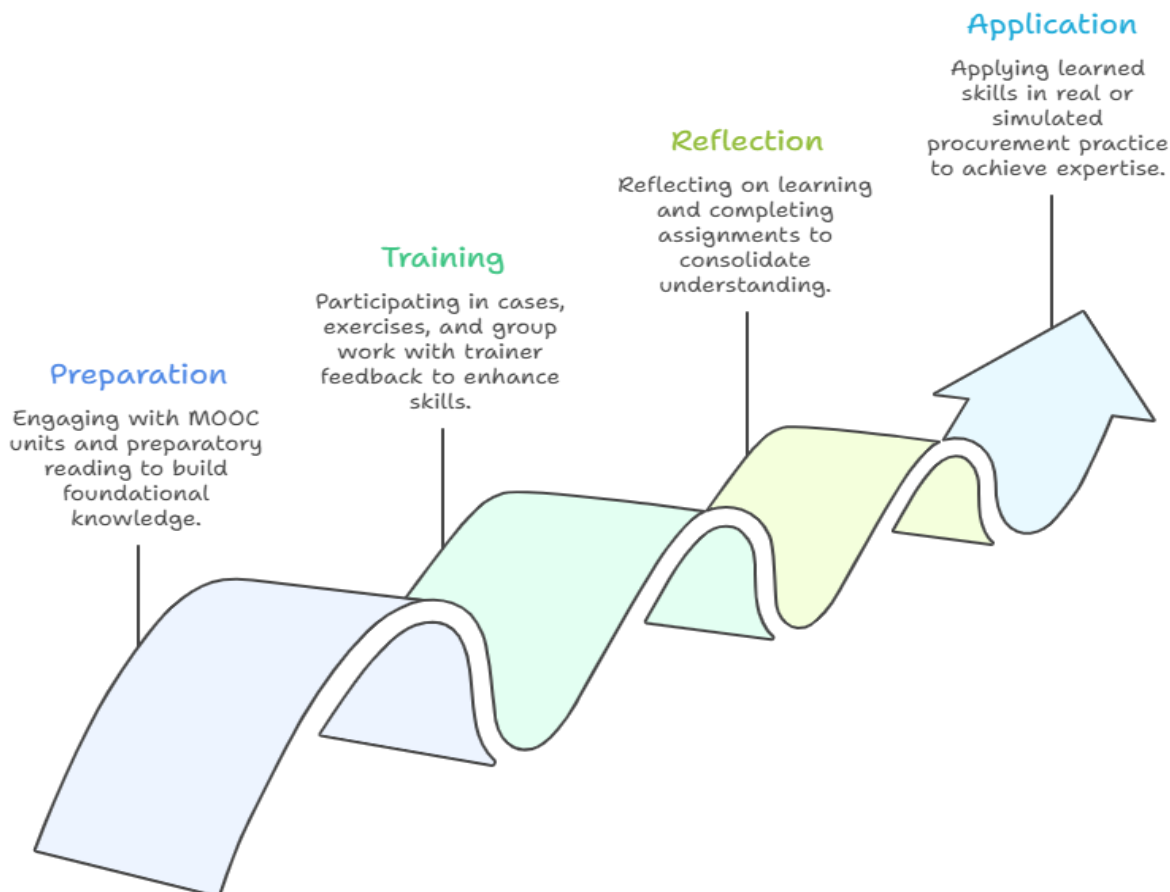


Figure 8 Blended learning pathway for SPP training





Stage	Learner activity	Trainer role	Output
Before training	Complete selected units or preparatory materials on the Deal4Good e-learning platform and fill in the Digital Self-Assessment Tool for SPP Readiness	Assign platform content, provide guiding questions and review readiness results	Basic understanding of SPP and initial readiness overview
During training	Work on cases, exercises, group tasks and discussions	Facilitate, coach, provide feedback and adapt tasks to learner readiness	Practical output, such as a criterion, bid section, stakeholder map or monitoring indicator
After training	Complete a reflection, assignment or workplace task and revisit relevant platform materials if needed	Review outputs and suggest improvements	Evidence of learning transfer

Table 20 Blended learning pathway using the MOOC and digital tools

Key principle: Digital tools should free up training time for practice. They support pre-learning, active application and post-training follow-up, but the development of practical SPP skills still depends on guided exercises, feedback and real or realistic procurement tasks.

10 Quality Assurance & Trainer Profiles

10.1 Trainer Competencies

SPP training quality depends heavily on the trainer's ability to translate complex content into practical learning. A competent SPP trainer should combine three areas: procurement, social value, and learning facilitation. Co-facilitation is recommended when one trainer cannot cover all areas.

Trainers should be able to:

- Explain the procurement process (planning, publication, evaluation, award, implementation)
- Show where social criteria may appear and how to make them clear and verifiable
- Explain social value and social economy actors' role
- Facilitate applied learning exercises such as tender analysis, bid simulations, stakeholder mapping, and group reflection
- Simplify legal and technical content without losing accuracy
- Integrate the Deal4Good e-learning platform and Digital Self-Assessment Tool into blended training sessions
- Assess practical outputs such as social criteria, bid sections, or monitoring indicators





Trainer readiness checklist:

Competence area	Trainer should be able to...
Procurement basics	Explain main stages of procurement and tender documents
Social value	Explain how procurement can create social outcomes
Social economy	Describe the role and challenges of social enterprises and SMEs
Practical facilitation	Run exercises, simulations, group work, case discussions
Simplification	Translate legal/technical content into clear language
Digital delivery	Use MOOC content and digital tools in blended formats
Assessment	Evaluate practical outputs (criteria, bids, indicators)

Table 21 Trainer readiness checklist

Trainers should also have support materials: templates, case studies, exercises, simplified legal guidance, examples of social criteria, bid preparation tools, and facilitator notes.

Key quality requirement: learners should leave with a practical output, e.g., drafted criterion, completed tender analysis, bid section, or monitoring indicator.

10.2 Capacity Building and Peer Learning

Sustainable SPP training requires continuous capacity building. Trainers need opportunities to update their knowledge, improve their materials, exchange experiences and learn from real delivery. This is particularly important because Social Public Procurement is still developing in many countries, and trainers may not yet have extensive practical experience in combining procurement, social value and applied VET delivery.

Capacity building should not be understood as a one-off trainer training activity. It should be treated as an ongoing process that supports trainers before, during and after delivery. Trainers should be encouraged to review their sessions, collect feedback, adapt exercises and gradually build a stronger set of cases, tools and examples.

Because procurement practices, policy priorities and social economy ecosystems may change over time, training materials should be reviewed regularly. VET providers should update their materials with new examples, learner feedback, national developments, practical lessons and, where possible, real procurement cases. This helps ensure that the training remains relevant and connected to practice.

Peer learning is particularly useful in this field. Trainers in countries with more developed SPP systems, such as Germany or Italy, may share examples of tools, criteria, monitoring approaches and implementation practices. Trainers in emerging contexts, such as Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta or Greece, may share useful approaches for awareness-raising, confidence-building and low-resource delivery. Romania and Spain can provide insights from contexts where policy support exists but practical implementation remains uneven.





The aim of peer learning is not to create one standard model for all countries. Instead, it should help trainers compare approaches, understand different maturity levels and adapt methods to their own national, institutional and learner contexts.

Peer learning can be organised through trainer exchanges, online meetings, joint workshops, shared repositories, peer review of training materials and communities of practice. Even short online exchanges can be valuable if they focus on concrete delivery questions, such as how to explain social criteria, how to use simulated tenders, how to work with mixed learner groups or how to assess practical learner outputs.

After each training activity, VET providers should collect feedback and review what worked well and what should be improved. This review should not focus only on participant satisfaction. It should also assess whether the exercises were realistic, whether the timing was appropriate, whether the level was suitable for the learner group and whether learners produced usable outputs.

Simple quality cycle for VET providers

Step	Action	Practical example
Plan	Define the learner group, module, format and expected output	Prepare a 4-hour workshop for social enterprises focused on bid preparation
Deliver	Use case-based and task-based training methods	Work with a simplified tender and a compliance checklist
Review	Collect learner feedback and trainer observations	Ask learners which task was most useful and where they felt uncertain
Improve	Adapt timing, examples, exercises and materials	Simplify the tender case or add clearer instructions
Share	Exchange materials and lessons with other trainers or partners	Upload the improved template to a shared partner repository

Table 22 Quality cycle for SPP training delivery

A useful approach is to create a short internal trainer record after each session. This can include the agenda used, number and type of participants, exercises delivered, challenges observed, learner outputs and recommendations for the next delivery. Over time, this creates institutional memory and supports more consistent training quality.

Capacity building should therefore be understood as a continuous process of delivery, reflection, revision and cooperation. The more trainers exchange practical experience, the easier it becomes to deliver SPP training in a way that is realistic, accessible and relevant for different learner groups.





11 Sustainability, Scaling and Policy Alignment

11.1 Sustainability Risks

SPP training will only have long-term value if it becomes part of regular VET provision, continuing professional development or institutional capacity-building activities. If it remains a one-off project activity, its impact will be limited.

The first sustainability risk is dependence on project-based delivery. In many countries, SPP training is introduced through EU-funded projects, pilots or temporary initiatives. When the project ends, the training may stop. To reduce this risk, VET providers should embed selected SPE modules into existing courses, professional training programmes or continuing professional development offers.

The second risk is low institutional integration. If SPP remains outside formal or non-formal training systems, it may be seen as optional or marginal. VET providers should therefore identify where SPP fits naturally. Relevant areas include public administration, business services, procurement, social economy, sustainability, project management, entrepreneurship and local development.

The third risk is limited trainer capacity. If only one or two people can deliver SPP content, the training cannot be repeated or scaled. This can be addressed by preparing trainer guides, using co-facilitation, developing internal trainer teams and reusing standard templates.

The fourth risk is weak demand from learners and institutions. In low-awareness contexts, potential learners may not immediately understand why SPP is relevant. VET providers may need to combine training with awareness-raising by clearly showing the practical benefits of SPP for public buyers, social enterprises, SMEs and local communities.

The fifth risk is lack of practical continuity. If learners do not have opportunities to apply what they learn, skills may fade quickly. Training should therefore include follow-up assignments, workplace tasks, access to MOOC resources or opportunities to reuse templates after the session.

Sustainability risk and response table

Risk	What may happen	Practical response
Project-based delivery	Training stops after project funding ends	Embed modules into existing courses or CPD offers
Low institutional integration	SPP remains optional or marginal	Link SPP to current VET programmes and professional training
Limited trainer capacity	Training cannot be repeated or scaled	Develop trainer guides, templates and co-facilitation models
Weak demand	Learners or institutions do not see the value	Combine training with awareness-raising and practical examples





No application after training	Skills are not transferred into practice	Use follow-up tasks, workplace assignments and MOOC resources
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Table 23 Sustainability risks and practical responses

The key message is that sustainability depends on integration. SPP training should not be treated as a separate project activity, but as a competence area that can strengthen existing VET provision and professional development.

11.2 Scaling Pathways

Scaling SPP training does not mean copying the same course in every country or institution. It means adapting the Deal4Good approach to different systems while keeping the core principles: practical relevance, social impact orientation and alignment with real procurement processes.

One pathway is integration into existing VET programmes. VET providers can embed selected SPE modules into courses related to public administration, business, procurement, social economy, sustainability, project management or entrepreneurship. This is often easier and more realistic than creating a completely new qualification.

A second pathway is the use of short certified or non-formal training offers. These can be attractive for adult learners and professionals who need targeted upskilling. For example, a VET provider could offer a short course on “Social Criteria in Public Procurement” or “Bid Preparation for Social Enterprises”.

A third pathway is blended learning. The MOOC can provide common theoretical content, while workshops provide practical application. This makes scaling easier because trainers do not need to deliver all introductory content live and can use contact time for exercises, case analysis and feedback.

A fourth pathway is partnership building. Training becomes stronger when VET providers cooperate with contracting authorities, social enterprises, SMEs, chambers of commerce, NGOs and intermediaries. These actors can provide real cases, guest speakers, learner outreach, practical examples and feedback.

A fifth pathway is the creation of a trainer network. Trainers can share materials, compare delivery experience, review each other’s exercises and gradually improve the quality of SPP training. This is particularly useful when several organisations want to deliver similar content in different national or regional contexts.

A sixth pathway is policy alignment. SPP training should connect to national and EU priorities related to employment, inclusion, social economy, sustainability, public sector modernisation and local development. This strengthens the relevance of the training and helps position SPP as part of wider policy implementation, not only as a technical procurement topic.





Scaling option	How it works	Best used when...
Module integration	Add SPE modules to existing programmes	The institution already has relevant courses
Short CPD offer	Deliver targeted workshops or micro-courses	Learners need quick and practical upskilling
Blended pathway	Combine MOOC content with practical sessions	Learners need flexibility and trainers want to maximise practice time
Partnership model	Work with municipalities, social enterprises, SMEs and intermediaries	Real examples, outreach and applied learning are needed
Trainer network	Share materials and delivery experience across providers	Scaling requires more trained facilitators
Policy alignment	Link training to national or EU priorities	Training needs stronger institutional relevance and visibility

Table 24 Scaling options for VET providers

Scaling should be gradual. A VET provider may begin with one workshop, repeat it, improve it, integrate it into an existing course and later develop a more complete training offer. What matters is that scaling preserves practical learning and does not reduce SPP training to awareness-raising only. The figure below illustrates a gradual scaling pathway from a single workshop to a more complete SPP training offer.



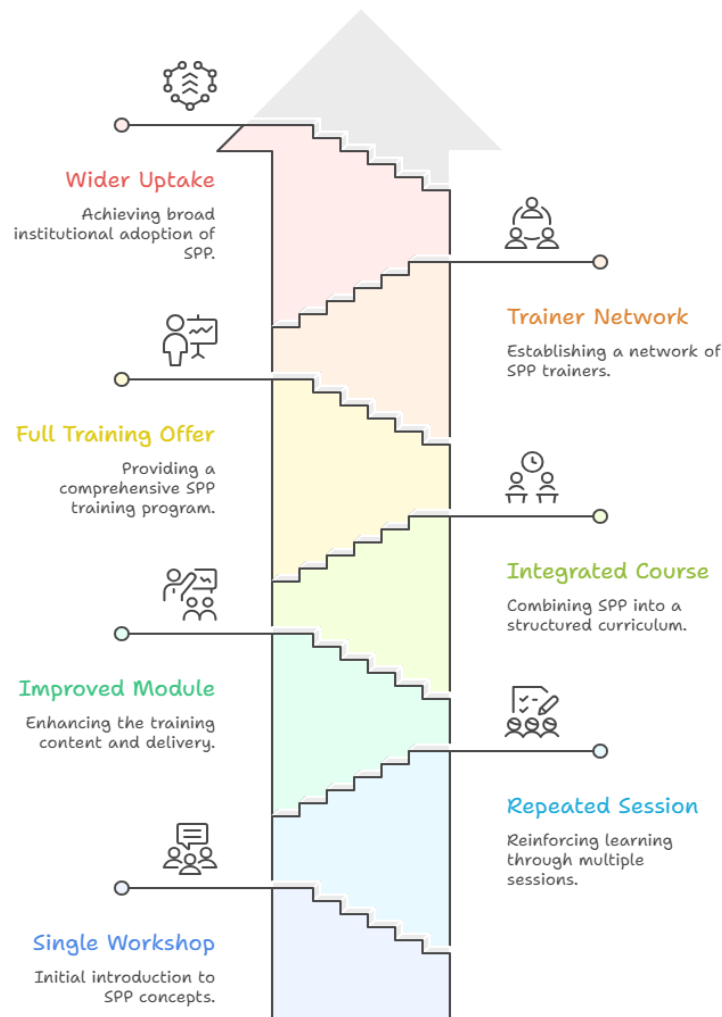


Figure 9 Scaling pathway for SPP training

Conclusion and Key Takeaways

This Handbook shows that Social Public Procurement (SPP) can become a practical and teachable competence area when it is delivered through clear, applied and learner-centred training. For VET providers, the main role is to translate policy objectives, curriculum content and digital resources into learning activities that help learners apply SPP in real or realistic procurement situations.

The Handbook supports a shift from awareness to application. Learners should not only understand what SPP means, but should also be able to analyse tenders, draft social criteria, prepare bid responses, build partnerships, monitor contract implementation and assess social impact. For this reason, every training activity should include a practical task and result in a concrete learner output.

The key takeaways for VET providers are:





- SPP training should be practical, modular and adapted to the learner group.
- Training should be aligned with national readiness levels and real institutional conditions.
- Digital tools, including the Deal4Good e-learning platform and the Digital Self-Assessment Tool for SPP Readiness, should support blended learning but not replace trainer-led practice.
- Trainers need reusable materials, realistic cases, templates and peer learning opportunities.
- Learners should leave the training with something they have analysed, drafted, designed or improved.
- Long-term sustainability depends on integrating SPP into regular VET provision, CPD offers and cooperation with public authorities, social enterprises, SMEs and intermediaries.

In conclusion, the value of the Deal4Good Handbook lies in helping VET providers make Social Public Procurement accessible, applicable and sustainable. By combining structured learning content, practical exercises, digital support and cooperation with real stakeholders, VET providers can help turn SPP from a policy possibility into a concrete professional skill.

ANNEXES

Annex A – National Notes

This annex provides practical national orientation notes for VET providers, trainers, curriculum designers and training managers. The notes are not full country reports. Their purpose is to support decisions on how introductory, practical or advanced SPP training should be in each partner country.

The notes should be used together with the SPE curriculum and the training guidance provided in the Handbook. They help trainers adapt examples, exercises and learner tasks to the level of SPP readiness in each national context.

Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, Social Public Procurement is legally possible, but its practical use remains limited. Procurement is still often shaped by price-based evaluation and administrative compliance. Municipalities are important potential actors because they procure services closely linked to social needs, such as cleaning, catering, childcare, social support and elderly care.

For training delivery, trainers should start with basic and highly practical examples. Learners need clear guidance on how a social clause can be written, where it can be included and how it can be verified. Training should focus on confidence-building and simple step-by-step exercises rather than advanced concepts.

Cyprus

In Cyprus, SPP is emerging and is mainly connected to policy priorities, pilot actions or project-based initiatives. Practical experience is still limited, and cooperation between training providers, contracting authorities and social economy actors is not yet systematic.





For trainers, this means that simulated cases may be necessary. Training should focus on awareness, guided application and gradual introduction of tools. A useful approach is to present a simple pilot procurement example and ask learners how it could become a repeatable practice.

Germany

Germany has a more established SPP environment, supported by legal frameworks, guidance tools, advisory structures and practical examples. However, implementation varies between federal, regional and local levels.

Training in Germany can therefore be more advanced. Instead of focusing only on what SPP is, trainers can focus on quality, consistency and improvement of existing practice. Learners can compare different tender examples, assess the quality of social criteria and discuss how existing tools can be used more effectively.

Greece

In Greece, SPP is legally enabled but weakly applied. Awareness remains limited, and procurement practice is still strongly influenced by compliance and cost considerations. Practical examples are not yet widely available.

For training delivery, trainers should begin with awareness-raising but quickly move to simple application. Case-based learning is essential. A good starting point is a familiar municipal service where learners identify one realistic social objective and discuss how it could be included in the tender.

Italy

Italy has a strong social economy tradition, especially through social cooperatives active in social care, work integration, community welfare and environmental services. This provides a strong basis for SPP, but implementation remains uneven across regions and contracting authorities.

Training in Italy should focus on operationalisation. Learners should practise turning social objectives into measurable criteria, contract clauses, partnership models and monitoring indicators. The key training challenge is not introducing the social economy, but connecting it more effectively to procurement practice.

Malta

In Malta, SPP is at an early stage, with experimental use of social clauses in selected tenders, especially in local services such as cleaning and maintenance. Awareness and practical experience are still limited, and procurement systems, including electronic platforms, can be difficult for non-specialists.

Training should therefore be short, practical and tool-based. Learners need checklists, simplified tender examples and exercises that help them understand basic procedures. Platform navigation and document interpretation may be as important as the social criteria themselves.





Romania

In Romania, SPP is supported by policy and legislation, and instruments such as reserved contracts show potential for supporting work-integration social enterprises and sheltered workshops. However, implementation remains cautious and limited.

Training should focus on reducing risk-aversion. Learners need concrete examples, templates and step-by-step guidance. A useful activity is to compare a standard procurement procedure with a reserved contract and identify when each option may be appropriate.

Spain

In Spain, SPP is policy-driven and shows strong regional variation. Some municipalities and regions are more advanced, while others remain less experienced. Social enterprises and SMEs may also face administrative and financial barriers when participating in tenders.

Training should therefore be adaptable and region-sensitive. VET providers should use examples from different regional contexts and help learners identify which practices are transferable. Training should support both buyers and suppliers, especially through tender analysis, bid preparation and accessible social criteria.

Cross-Country Note

Across all partner countries, the same conclusion emerges: SPP is legally possible, but unevenly implemented. The main constraints are capacity, confidence, practical know-how and cooperation between actors.

For VET providers, this means that training must be practical, accessible and adapted to national maturity levels. The key missing element is not only information, but structured learning that helps learners apply SPP in real situations.

Annex B – Trainer Checklists and Templates

This annex provides practical tools that trainers can use when planning and delivering SPP training. The templates are flexible and can be simplified, expanded or translated depending on the learner group, national context and training format.

1. Training Preparation Checklist

Before delivering SPP training, trainers should confirm that the session is realistic, relevant and adapted to the learners.

- ☐ The target group is clearly defined.





- ☐ The training level matches learner experience.
- ☐ Real or simulated case examples are prepared.
- ☐ Legal content is simplified and contextualised.
- ☐ Practical exercises are included in the session.
- ☐ Time allocation reflects learner availability.
- ☐ Digital tools, if used, are tested and accessible.
- ☐ Templates or worksheets are ready.
- ☐ The trainer has identified which parts may require additional explanation.
- ☐ A short reflection or feedback activity is included at the end.

This checklist helps avoid one of the most common risks in SPP training: delivering content that is technically correct but not usable for the learner group.

2. Session Design Template

This template can be used when planning a single training session or one module within a longer course.

Element	Trainer guidance
Session title	Use a practical title, such as “Designing Social Criteria in Public Procurement” or “Preparing a Bid with Social Value”.
Target group	Specify whether the session is for public buyers, social enterprises, SMEs, trainers, intermediaries or mixed groups.
Learning objectives	Define what learners should understand and what practical task they should be able to perform.
Suggested structure	Start with context, explain the core concept, provide an example, run an exercise and close with reflection.
Materials needed	Prepare a case study, template, worksheet, presentation and any digital tools.
Practical output	Define what learners will produce, such as a drafted criterion, tender analysis, bid section or stakeholder map.

3. Tender Analysis Template

This template helps learners analyse a procurement example and identify opportunities for SPP integration.

Analysis element	Notes
Type of procurement	What service, good or work is being procured?





Contracting authority	Who is the buyer?
Target groups or social needs	Are there social needs linked to the procurement?
Selection criteria	Are there requirements linked to supplier capacity?
Award criteria	Is social value included in evaluation?
Contract clauses	Are there social obligations during implementation?
Existing social elements	What is already included?
Opportunities for improvement	Where could social criteria be added or strengthened?
Verification method	How could compliance be checked?

This template is especially useful for workshops and can be used with both real and simulated tenders.

4. Social Criteria Design Template

This template helps learners translate a social objective into a concrete procurement criterion.

Element	Description
Social objective	What social outcome should the procurement support?
Proposed criterion	What requirement or criterion will be included?
Link to the contract	How is the criterion connected to the goods, services, or works?
Verification method	What evidence will be required?
Expected outcome	What social result is expected?
Monitoring approach	How will implementation be followed during the contract?

For example, in a cleaning services tender, the social objective may be employment inclusion. The proposed criterion could require the contractor to provide work opportunities for disadvantaged workers, while the verification method may include employment records or periodic reports.

5. Stakeholder Mapping Tool

This tool supports learners in identifying actors involved in an SPP process and planning how to engage them.





Stakeholder	Role	Interest	Influence	Engagement strategy
Contracting authority	Defines and manages the procurement	High	High	Involve early in planning
Social enterprise	Potential supplier or partner	High	Medium	Provide tender support
Beneficiaries	Receive social value or services	High	Low/Medium	Consult on needs
Intermediary organisation	Provides support or facilitation	Medium	Medium	Engage as training or advisory partner
Monitoring body	Checks compliance and outcomes	Medium	High	Clarify reporting expectations

Trainers can adapt this table to any national case, local example, or simulated scenario.

6. Trainer Self-Assessment Checklist

This checklist helps trainers reflect on their readiness to deliver SPP training.

- ☐ I can explain the basic stages of public procurement clearly.
- ☐ I understand how social criteria can be included in procurement.
- ☐ I can explain social impact concepts in simple language.
- ☐ I can design practical exercises, not only presentations.
- ☐ I can simplify legal information without losing accuracy.
- ☐ I can facilitate discussion between different stakeholder groups.
- ☐ I can use digital tools or MOOC resources effectively.
- ☐ I can adapt content to different learner levels.
- ☐ I can use examples or scenarios to support applied learning.
- ☐ I can collect feedback and improve future training.

If several items cannot be checked, the trainer may need co-facilitation, additional preparation, or support materials.





Key Recommendation

Trainer materials should be simple, adaptable and focused on real tasks. The most useful materials are those that help trainers move quickly from explanation to application.

Annex C – Glossary

This glossary supports consistent understanding across the Handbook and training activities.

- **Social Public Procurement (SPP)**

Public procurement that integrates social objectives into purchasing decisions. These objectives may include employment inclusion, fair working conditions, accessibility, equality, support for social enterprises or community benefit.

- **Contracting Authority (CA)**

A public organisation or body that purchases goods, services or works through procurement procedures. Examples include municipalities, ministries, public agencies, schools, hospitals and public utilities.

- **Social Enterprise (SE)**

An organisation that combines economic activity with a social or environmental mission. Social enterprises typically reinvest profits into their mission and aim to create social value through their activities.

- **Social Economy**

The part of the economy made up of organisations that prioritise people, social objectives and community benefit over profit maximisation. It may include social enterprises, cooperatives, associations, foundations, mutual organisations and other mission-driven entities.

- **Reserved Contracts**

Procurement procedures restricted to specific types of organisations, such as sheltered workshops, work-integration social enterprises or organisations employing disadvantaged groups, where allowed by law.

- **Social Criteria**

Requirements or evaluation elements included in procurement procedures to achieve social outcomes. These may relate to employment, inclusion, accessibility, working conditions, training or social impact.





- **Technical Specifications**

Procurement requirements describing the characteristics of the goods, services or works being purchased. Social considerations can sometimes be included where they are linked to the subject matter of the contract.

- **Selection Criteria**

Criteria used to assess whether a bidder has the capacity, experience and resources to perform the contract.

- **Award Criteria**

Criteria used to evaluate and compare bids in order to identify the most economically advantageous tender. Award criteria may include quality, price, sustainability and social value where appropriate.

- **Contract Performance Clauses**

Conditions that define how the contract must be implemented after award. These may include social requirements, such as reporting on employment outcomes or ensuring accessibility.

- **Social Value**

The positive social, economic or community benefit created through an activity, service, project or procurement process.

- **Social Impact**

A measurable positive change that addresses a social challenge. In the context of SPP, social impact may include improved employment opportunities, better access to services or stronger inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

- **Social Impact Assessment**

A process for identifying, measuring, evaluating and communicating the social outcomes of a project, activity or procurement process.

- **Stakeholder**

Any individual, organisation or institution affected by or involved in a procurement process. Stakeholders may include contracting authorities, suppliers, beneficiaries, intermediaries, trainers and policymakers.





- **Consortium**

A group of organisations that collaborate to deliver a contract or project. In SPP, consortia may help smaller social enterprises participate in larger procurement opportunities.

- **Co-Creation**

A collaborative process in which different actors jointly design solutions. In SPP, co-creation may involve contracting authorities, social enterprises, beneficiaries and intermediaries working together to define needs and improve procurement design.

- **Work-Based Learning (WBL)**

A learning approach where learners develop skills through tasks connected to real or simulated workplace situations. In SPP training, this may include analysing tenders, drafting criteria or preparing bid documents.

- **MOOC**

A Massive Open Online Course that provides online learning content accessible to a wide audience. In Deal4Good, the MOOC supports flexible access to SPE curriculum content.

