



Seeking an insight into socially responsible government procurement

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Government information on socially responsible procurement of goods and services open to improvement.

The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) is providing ever more and better information on how the government's procurement of goods and services takes account of people and planet, but there is still some uncertainty about the extent to which government procurement is socially responsible. The ministry's reports do not provide a comprehensive picture because they do not cover all procurement. These findings are presented in the Court of Audit's report entitled *Insight into Socially Responsible Government Procurement*.

Social responsibility means price is not the only factor in a procurement decision: the environment, opportunities for people with poor job prospects (social return) and measures taken to prevent forced labour, slavery, child labour and discrimination are also taken into consideration. In 2016, the government procured goods and services worth a total of €9.9 billion. As a major player, it can be an important catalyst for socially responsible procurement.

The Netherlands Court of Audit found that a large proportion of the goods and services the government procures falls outside the scope of the reports on socially responsible procurement because it was not subject to compulsory EU contract award procedures. Furthermore, far from all procurement contracts that are subject to EU procedures – worth €1.9 billion in 2016 – are considered in the annual reports on socially responsible procurement. This is not required by law. The Ministry of BZK does not disclose how many public contracts fall outside the reports' scope or why.

Publications

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The Netherlands Court of Audit has audited the Dutch government's socially responsible procurement. We asked what part of the ...

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