



EAPC blog

The commitment to public procurement of innovation – Lluís Juncà Pujol

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Public procurement of innovation is one of the most powerful tools available to government to promote the transformation of public services and enhance the competitiveness of the business sector.

Moreover, it is one of the

main instruments available to articulate the cooperation of quadruple helix players (government, universities and research and innovation centres, companies, and users of services) in developing new products and services that can provide more effective responses to the needs of people and societal challenges.

Accordingly, collaborative innovation processes promoted by public procurement of innovation generate benefits for all stakeholders: government and citizens, because it helps to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of public services; and companies, universities and research and innovation centres because it offers them the opportunity to develop new products and services that respond to real social demands.

To gain maximum benefits from public procurement of innovation, public buyers should remember that innovations developed in cooperation with companies can generate new market opportunities that may become a source of wealth and competitiveness for the production system. This strategic approach to public procurement of innovation opens up the possibility of new models for cooperation and shared risk that can make it possible to reduce the costs to the public buyer while improving and increasing the coverage provided by public services and enhancing the competitiveness of the production system.

Unfortunately, however, and despite the fact that no one doubts the potential benefits of public procurement of innovation, this strategic line of public purchasing has not yet taken root, either in Europe or in our own country. And in this case the obstacles are not legislative, since current legislation enables and promotes this type of procurement. The difficulties in ensuring that this model spreads and grows are more likely to be found in the internal resistance that arises when government proposes changes in the way things are done.

The Government of Catalonia's Ministry of the Vice-presidency and of the Economy and Finance recently published a report on public procurement of innovation in Catalonia. The report focuses on four pioneering initiatives: sustainable road surfaces; comprehensive treatment of patients with arrhythmias who need implantable cardiac devices; development of new monitoring tools for RIS3 strategies (**RIS3-MCAT Platform**); and promotion of new models for the selective sorting of municipal waste. In its conclusions, the report notes that public procurement of innovation is complex but possible, and that promoting it is more necessary than ever, both from the perspective of increasing efficiency in public spending and the viability of public services, and from the social and environmental standpoint.

The potential of public procurement of innovation to provide more effective responses to societal challenges

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