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The Newsletter of the Portuguese National Contact Point for Responsible Business Conduct (NCP PT) is a biannual online publication, developed by the Directorate-General for Economic Activities (DGAE), which aims to communicate relevant news in the national and international context regarding the activity of the Network of National Contact Points and the OECD Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct (WPRBC). You can access the Newsletter via the NCP PT website, which is also available in Portuguese.

In this issue you will find information on:

1. [Reflections on the 4th Annual NOVA BHRE Conference](#)
2. [OECD Guidelines and SDGs: Two Frameworks, one Mission](#)
3. [Public Procurement with Impact: IMPIC's Strategy for a Sustainable Market](#)
4. [Review of the NCP PT Guide to Procedures](#)
5. [NCP PT launches new periodical: Activity Report](#)
6. [NCP PT 2025 Promotional Plan](#)



A reflection on the 4th Annual Conference of the NOVA Centre for Business, Human Rights and the Environment

The NCP PT team followed the organisation of the 4th Annual Conference of the NOVA Centre on Business, Human Rights and the Environment (NOVA BHRE), held under the motto 'Unravelling the Due Diligence Process in Human Rights and the Environment'. The following are the reflections of Ana Santos Duarte, Associate Researcher at NOVA BHRE, on the conference.

On November 19th, the auditorium of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation became the stage for inspiring reflections on corporate sustainability. Under the theme 'Unpacking Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence', political decision-makers, business leaders, experts, civil society representatives and academics gathered to analyse the due diligence process - from the initial commitment to respect human rights and the environment, through identifying and prioritising risks, to implementing measures, monitoring and ensuring transparent communication. The topic discussed comes at a crucial time in the history of sustainability.

We are witnessing the transition from voluntary principles laid down in soft law instruments, such as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct, to legal obligations, such as those laid down in the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D). This new piece of legislation imposes a responsibility on companies to respect human rights and the environment. In this sense, and given the rapid evolution of the legal landscape, companies are required to act beyond mere legal compliance, and must adopt a proactive and holistic approach to responsible business behaviour.



I. From commitment to action: the real challenge

One of the themes discussed in the first panel was the recognition that commitment is only the first step and implementation is the real challenge. Respecting human rights and the environment must be embedded in the DNA of companies and their operational practices. However, as Nichole Solomons emphasised, companies need clear structures and a diagnosis of existing practices in order to determine concrete and consistent actions.

Among the speakers, the consensus was clear: while legislation offers an important basis, the real impact depends on genuine business commitment and meaningful implementation.

II. A risk-based approach: there are no universal solutions

Another aspect emphasised was the importance of understanding the unique risks and impacts of each business and its value chain. It was emphasised that due diligence should not be reduced to a bureaucratic exercise or a set of checklists. This, as described in the CS3D, is an ongoing, risk-based process where companies must prioritise their actions by considering their salient risks.

As emphasised by Céline da Graça Pires, it is essential for companies to be proactive. As well as acting as soon as possible, they must also look at these issues not as threats, but as opportunities that could drive positive change and strengthen their competitive advantage.





III. Stakeholder involvement: the essence of due diligence

The key message throughout this third panel was the importance of meaningful involvement of all stakeholders. Due diligence will only be effective if companies truly listen to affected communities, employees, non-profit organisations and other stakeholders. For this to happen, it is imperative to remember that the best strategies and results come from inclusive and transparent dialogues and not just isolated decisions by boards of directors. This involvement is undoubtedly the essence of a responsible and sustainable approach.

IV. Transparency and responsibility: pillars of trust

In the fourth panel, speakers explored the difficulties associated with monitoring, reporting and communication. They discussed how the reporting requirements of the CS3D and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) should be recognised as strategic opportunities to promote a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. It also highlighted the role of transparency as a key driver for building trust and dialogue with stakeholders.



V. Supporting the entire value chain: the role of large companies

Throughout the day, the indirect impact of the CS3D on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has been mentioned. Although they are not directly covered by the directive, its impacts will be inevitable. In this context, the need to promote collaboration based on shared responsibility was discussed, where large companies will be key in supporting SMEs. This support can materialise in different ways, namely through capacity building, knowledge transfer, technical support and joint initiatives. Finally, it was also important to reflect on how a resilient and sustainable value chain can only be built with coordinated efforts and shared common values.

VI. From text to practice: the way forward

The CS3D establishes a legal basis, but its effectiveness will depend on its practical implementation. Despite the long road already travelled, there is still a major challenge: how to foster a business culture where sustainability due diligence is not seen as a burden, but as a strategic opportunity to innovate, be more resilient and increase competitiveness.

In conclusion, the 4th Annual NOVA BHRE Conference stood out as a privileged space for reflection and knowledge exchange, but above all as a catalyst for collective dynamics. The challenges we face in the field of corporate sustainability are vast and complex, requiring a coordinated and proactive response from companies, governments, experts, civil society, academia and new generations.



However, this complexity should not be an obstacle, but an incentive to action. The shared reflections do not represent an end, but a starting point for joint progress towards tangible and lasting solutions.

The path is clear: collaboration and commitment to concrete actions are non-negotiable. Because the future we want - fairer and more sustainable - will be defined by the decisions and steps we take today.

Ana Santos Duarte is a lawyer with solid experience in Business & Human Rights and Corporate Sustainability. She is currently a Legal Consultant at Beyond Human Rights Compliance (BHRC), the Business & Human Rights department of Global Rights Compliance (GRC), where she works with companies, investors and industry associations.

Ana is also an Executive Committee Member and Associate Researcher at the NOVA Centre on Business, Human Rights and the Environment (NOVA BHRE), where she contributes to research, stakeholder initiatives, lectures, training and publications. Previously, Ana worked as a lawyer at Vieira de Almeida & Associados, providing legal advice in the areas of Business & Human Rights and Social Economy.

With a post-graduate degree in Corporate Law and a law degree from the University of Lisbon, Ana specialised in human rights due diligence and responsible business practices, driven by her passion for sustainability.

OECD Guidelines and the SDGs: Two Frameworks, one Mission

In the context of the growing emphasis on companies' social and environmental responsibilities, AICEP's NCP PT team has prepared an article that explores the interaction between the OECD Guidelines for Responsible Business Conduct and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The role of business in achieving sustainable development is undisputed. Six of the nine planetary boundaries have been crossed, largely because of the continued negative impact of economic activities. Time and joint efforts are of the essence in curbing human pressure on Earth's resilience. Global challenges can only be overcome through multistakeholder collaboration, and companies are integral to the solution.

There is a growing proliferation of national and international business conduct and regulatory frameworks. They are intended to prevent companies' direct and indirect adverse impacts and incentivise them to contribute positively to economic, environmental and social progress. They are intended to mitigate the risks associated with transgressing the critical and complex biophysical processes that maintain a stable Earth system. Today, the SDGs inspire global action, as do the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct (the OECD Guidelines). Their creation is decades apart; their aim and content are deeply aligned. Enforcing the Guidelines means contributing to the SDGs.



OECD Guidelines for Multinational companies: pioneering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

The corporate role in sustainable development has been integrated into the major soft law structures of the past four decades. The XXI century started with the outline of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a vision with targets to combat poverty, hunger, disease, and environmental degradation by 2015.

Perceived as a crucial part of the solution, companies saw their role expanded in transitioning the MDGs to the SDGs. The private sector contributed to the agenda-setting and participated in the redefinition of the debate, agreeing to take responsibility for their part in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

However, the OECD Guidelines have long before put companies at the centre of the transformation. Initially adopted in 1976, the Guidelines focused on the need for companies to thoughtfully align their core business functions with the needs of the societies in which they operate. Even though they were produced decades ago, they are not outdated. On the contrary, they remain an innovative document and, in a way, a precursor to the entire debate that stresses companies' role in sustainable development.

The complementarities between the OECD Guidelines and the SDGs

An analysis of the revised 2023 version of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises sheds light on the complementary nature between the OECD Guidelines and the SDGs, offering insights for businesses and stakeholders seeking to align their actions with these global frameworks.



A closer look at each of the eleven chapters of the document pinpoints forthright references to objectives that are the same or similar to the SDGs. This complementarity evidence analysis shows the usefulness of the Guidelines for Enterprises, regardless of their sector, size, or geographical location.

In the following pages, we share a set of tables that explore the complementarity between the Guidelines and the SDGs:

OECD Guidelines	Sustainable Development Goals
I. Concepts and Principles	16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
<p>This foundational chapter outlines the expectations for responsible business conduct, emphasizing adherence to local laws and international standards. This aligns closely with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), which promotes just and inclusive societies underpinned by strong legal frameworks.</p>	

II. General Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – No Poverty 2 – Zero Hunger 4 – Quality Education 5 – Gender Equality 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth 10 – Reduced Inequalities 17 – Partnerships for the Goals
<p>The Guidelines advocate for sustainable development, human rights respect, and stakeholder engagement. It aligns itself with the global need to eradicate poverty and hunger (SDGs 1 and 2).</p> <p>These principles directly intersect with SDGs 5, 8, 10 and 17, emphasizing inclusive and collaborative approaches to addressing global challenges.</p>	

III. Disclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 – Gender Equality 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth 10 – Reduced Inequalities 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production 13 – Climate Action 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
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Transparency in business operations and reporting is a key focus linked with materiality analysis. Therefore, this chapter resonates with SDG 12 and 13, which call for sustainable management and reporting of resources. By fostering trust and accountability, this chapter also supports SDG 16. At its core, only by disclosing information can shareholders and stakeholders understand enterprises’ business conduct. This will serve to achieve SDGs 5, 8 and 10.

IV. Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – No Poverty 2 – Zero Hunger 5 – Gender Equality 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth 10 – Reduced Inequalities
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The Guidelines’ chapter on human rights underpins businesses’ responsibility to avoid adverse impacts on human rights and to provide solutions when harm occurs. This closely aligns with SDGs 1, 2, 5, which is linked with SDGs 8 and 10, which advocates for equity, inclusion, and the poverty eradication.

V. Employment and Industrial Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – No Poverty 2 – Zero Hunger 3 – Good Health and Well-Being 4 - Quality Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 – Gender Equality 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth 10 – Reduced Inequalities
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This chapter promotes fair treatment of workers, collective bargaining, and eliminating forced labour and discrimination, directly supporting SDG 8 and 5. Its emphasis on occupational health and safety also complements SDG 3. On the other hand, as it correlates labour management practices with the creation of high-quality, well-paid, decent work and their contribution to economic growth, it also establishes a linkage with the reduction of poverty in general (SDGs 1 and 2) and with the need of raising standards of education of children (SDG 4).

VI. Environment	3 – Good Health and Well-Being 4 – Quality of Education 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation 7 – Affordable and clean energy	12 – Responsible Consumption and Production 13 – Climate Action 14 – Life Below Water 15 – Life on Land
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The Guidelines stress the need for environmental management, pollution prevention, and sustainable resource use, which are related to SDGs 6 and 7, both of which are prerequisites for SDG 3. This aligns with a range of SDGs, including SDGs 12, 13, 14, and 15, emphasizing businesses' critical role in protecting ecosystems. They also state that enterprises should integrate adequate education and training, which aligns with SDG 4.

VII. Combating Bribery and Other Forms of Corruption	1 – No Poverty 5 – Gender Equality 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth 10 – Reduced Inequalities 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
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This chapter's focus on integrity and anti-corruption is a cornerstone of SDG 16. By combating corruption, businesses contribute to transparent governance and fair competition, in the same way they contribute to economic growth and decent work (SDG 8, and therefore SDG 1). It also stresses how corruption disproportionately exacerbates inequalities, pointing to how enterprises have an essential role in combating these practices, contributing to SDGs 5 and 10.

VIII. Consumer Interests	3 – Good Health and Well-Being 4 – Quality Education 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production
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The Guidelines advocate that enterprises should ensure product quality, reliability, and safety, abiding by health and safety standards, which coincides with SDG 3. They also call for honest marketing and consumer privacy. These principles resonate with SDG 12, empowering consumers to make informed and sustainable choices. The Guidelines also point to the shared responsibility of enterprises in promoting consumer education to improve consumer decision-making, aligning with SDG 4.

IX. Science, Technology and Innovation	3 – Good Health and Well-Being 4 – Quality Education 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth	9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities 17 – Partnerships for the goals
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Promoting responsible innovation and technology transfer aligns with SDGs 9 and 17 and is the key to SDG 11. By encouraging equitable access to technological advancements, businesses contribute to inclusive and sustainable industrial growth, which in turn contributes to SDG 3 and 8. Scientific research and technological innovation are also strictly linked to SDG 4.

X. Competition	8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
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Fair competition principles ensure a level playing field, contributing to SDG 8 by fostering market innovation and efficiency while preventing anti-competitive behaviour. Abiding by competition laws and regulations and recognising the importance of compliance is also the key to SDG 16.

XI. Taxation	10 – Reduced Inequalities 17 – Partnerships for the goals
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The Guidelines call for responsible tax practices and transparency in tax reporting, which contribute to SDG 10. Tax compliance also supports SDG 17 by promoting sustainable public revenue systems, which are critical for funding development goals.

From shared foundations to a common path forward

The OECD Guidelines and the United Nations SDGs represent two of the most influential frameworks guiding global corporate responsibility and sustainable development. Despite originating from different institutional spheres, their objectives and principles converge.

At their core, the Guidelines and the SDGs promote responsible business conduct as a cornerstone of sustainable development. The Guidelines are originally a set of non-binding recommendations by governments for multinational enterprises (MNEs), but their usefulness goes far beyond and extends to other stakeholders. They emphasize principles such as human rights, labour rights, environmental stewardship, and anti-corruption. Similarly, the SDGs, comprising 17 goals and 169 targets, call for inclusive, equitable, and sustainable practices to address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and peace.

Both frameworks highlight businesses' role as critical enablers of sustainable development. Promoting human rights is one of the most pronounced intersections between the two frameworks. The Guidelines explicitly require businesses to respect human rights and mitigate adverse impacts, which aligns with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Moreover, the Guidelines' emphasis on stakeholder engagement and due diligence resonates with the SDGs' call for partnerships and participatory approaches to development. Businesses can contribute to more inclusive and resilient societies by fostering dialogue and accountability.

The Guidelines advocate for environmental protection and sustainable resource use, directly supporting SDGs focused on environmental sustainability. For example, SDGs 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water), and 15 (Life on Land) all emphasize the importance of safeguarding natural ecosystems. Businesses adhering to the Guidelines can significantly advance these environmental objectives by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, adopting circular economy practices, and preventing pollution.

Strong governance is a linchpin of both the Guidelines and the SDGs. The Guidelines call for transparency, accountability, and robust management systems to prevent corruption and unethical practices. This directly supports SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), which targets the reduction of corruption and illicit financial flows and the promotion of rule-of-law-based governance structures.

The alignment between the OECD Guidelines and the SDGs is a powerful reminder of the interconnected nature of global challenges and solutions. These guiding documents reinforce each other, contributing to a transformational path while contributing to the companies' competitiveness, reputation, and profitability. By adhering to the Guidelines, businesses fulfil their responsibilities as global corporate citizens and accelerate progress toward achieving the SDGs.

National Contact Points (NCPs) serve to give visibility to the Guidelines and simplify the complexity encountered by many companies. They also serve as a mediation and conciliation platform to voice and resolve any complaints about alleged non-compliance with the guidelines. The transformative potential of the Guidelines and the SDGs can be fully realized through collective efforts, paving the way for a more just and sustainable world.

This article reflects on the recent collaboration with Universidade Católica Portuguesa, in the context of NCP PT's participation in the 2024 Annual Report of the SDG Observatory in Portuguese Enterprises. Consult this report [here](#).

Public Procurement with Impact: IMPIC's Strategy for a More Responsible Market

The NCP PT team spoke to Sandra Simões, Member of the Board of Directors of the Institute of Public Markets in Real Estate and Construction (IMPIC), to find out about the initiatives being developed to promote more responsible business behaviour in the context of public procurement procedures.



To what extent can sustainable public procurement work as a strategic tool in promoting economic, social and environmentally responsible development, considering its long-term impacts?

Sustainable public procurement is a strategic approach adopted by the public sector to promote economic, social and environmentally responsible development. The central idea is to promote sustainability while respecting human rights and encouraging practices that favour sustainable development.

In practice, they consist of incorporating sustainability criteria into public procurement and refer to the process of selecting suppliers and products by the public sector, taking into account not only the immediate cost, but also the long-term impacts. This includes environmental issues such as reducing carbon emissions, using recyclable materials and preserving natural resources, promoting energy efficiency, encouraging responsible production and consumption, as well as social aspects such as guaranteeing fair working conditions and promoting social inclusion.

The integration of sustainability can be realised by defining and using environmental/social criteria in the different phases of a public procurement procedure: Technical specifications; Selection of suppliers (in this case, in direct award procedures, prior consultation and restricted tendering by prior qualification); Award criteria; and Execution of the contract.

What are the fundamental principles that guide sustainable public procurement and how do they contribute to achieving more responsible management of public resources?

Economic Efficiency: Seeking the best value for public money, taking into account not only the initial cost, but also the cost of operation, maintenance, recycling and/or destruction, considering the entire useful life of the product or service.

Social Responsibility: Ensuring that public procurement respects workers' rights and promotes social welfare. This includes combating slave labour practices (modern slavery), promoting the inclusion of vulnerable groups and ensuring gender equity.

Environmental Responsibility: Reducing negative impacts on the environment by prioritising products and services that use resources efficiently and are easier to recycle or destroy in an environmentally friendly way. It can also involve choosing suppliers who adopt environmentally responsible practices.

Why is sustainable public procurement so important and how can it contribute to economic development, innovation and the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals?

Sustainable public procurement plays a key role in promoting sustainability and the search for a more balanced development. The topic is extremely important, as public procurement represents a significant portion of the economy and has the potential to drive sustainable practices on a large scale.

According to EU data, public procurement contributes more than 16 per cent of the EU's gross domestic product (GDP), which highlights its economic relevance, the ability to promote job creation, innovation and the opportunity to positively influence the market. which makes public procurement one of the main drivers of economic growth.

By adopting sustainable criteria in public procurement, such as preference for ecological, low environmental impact and socially responsible products, it is possible to stimulate innovation, develop markets, strengthen the sustainable production chain and contribute to the preservation of the environment and the well-being of society, thus promoting a more sustainable and resilient future.

Implementing sustainable public procurement policies also contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defined by the United Nations (UN), especially with regard to responsible consumption, environmental protection and the promotion of decent work.

What are the main challenges that public entities face in implementing sustainable public procurement practices and how can they be overcome?

Although sustainable public procurement brings a number of benefits, its implementation can face challenges:

Lack of Training: Many public procurement professionals may not have the appropriate qualifications and training to correctly assess the sustainability of the products or services purchased. The lack of definitions that allow for greater technical and legal certainty, as well as little experience and a lack of practical cases and manuals of good practice in defining and using environmental and social criteria in the different phases of a public procurement procedure, also hinders its implementation.

Resistance to Change: The transition to more sustainable practices can be seen as costly or complex, which can generate resistance on the part of public managers and suppliers.

Misinformation: The lack of data on the life cycle of products and their environmental and social implications can make it difficult to make more informed decisions.

Initial cost: Although the cost of a sustainable solution may be higher in the short term, it is important to remember that sustainability generates savings in the long term, mainly through reduced energy, maintenance and waste costs.

How can sustainable public procurement encourage more responsible business practices, in line with Directive 2024/1760 (CS3D) and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights?

Given the purchasing power and weight in the contribution to GDP that public procurement has, by incorporating social and environmental dimensions and demanding products and services that meet strict environmental and social standards, it encourages companies to adopt more sustainable practices and more responsible behaviour throughout their value chain if they want to be suppliers to the state.

By prioritising suppliers that promote fair and safe working conditions, sustainable public procurement helps to combat exploitative labour practices and promote gender equity and social inclusion.

Directive 2024/1760, which deals with due diligence in relation to corporate sustainability, came into force on 25 July 2024. The purpose of this directive is to encourage sustainable and responsible business behaviour in companies' activities and in their global value chains. The new standards will ensure that the companies involved recognise and address the negative effects of their activities on human rights and the environment, both in Europe and beyond, as well as examining their supply chains to detect situations of forced labour or environmental damage and resolving any issues identified.

This regulation requires companies to carry out a detailed audit of both their 'upstream' partners, involved in creation or production, and their 'downstream' partners, in charge of transport, storage and distribution.

The fundamental components of this obligation are the identification and management of potential and actual negative effects on human rights and the environment in the activities of the main company, its subsidiaries and, when linked to its value chain, its commercial partners.

Member states must transpose the CS3D into national law and communicate the relevant texts to the Commission by 26 July 2026. A year later, the rules will start to apply to the first group of companies, following a staggered approach (with full application on 26 July 2029):

“The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UN Guiding Principles) recognise that businesses have a responsibility to exercise human rights due diligence by identifying, preventing and mitigating the negative effects of their operations on human rights and by being accountable for how they remedy those effects. The UN Guiding Principles state that companies should avoid human rights violations and should remedy negative effects on human rights that they have caused, contributed to or are linked to within the scope of their own operations and the operations of their subsidiaries and through their direct and indirect business relationships.”

What initiatives has IMPIC developed to promote sustainable and socially responsible public procurement, and how have these initiatives contributed to the definition of national and European strategies?

These issues have been the subject of reflection and maturation for some time now, and one of IMPIC's objectives is to publicise them, produce guidelines, manuals, training and, very importantly and relevantly, draw up a public procurement strategy (National Strategic Public Procurement Plan).

The current regulatory framework focuses on the process, i.e. the 'how to', and doesn't give the same weight to the end goal and, above all, doesn't value the instrumental weight that public procurement can have in priority policy areas and sustainability.

There is a growing proliferation of training programmes in the field of public procurement, which are essentially legal in nature. There is still a lack of development of a framework of minimum capacities and respective certification, particularly in the dimensions that go beyond the legal framework.

In Portugal, the three dimensions of strategic public procurement have very asymmetrical maturities. There has been a long tradition of green procurement initiatives since 2008. In the case of contracts for innovation, there has been a commitment since 2021, with the creation of the Centre of Competence in Public Procurement for Innovation (PROCURE+i), an initiative of IMPIC and ANI (National Agency for Innovation). In the case of socially responsible procurement, initiatives are scattered, *ad hoc* and lack a national vision.

In addition to IMPIC's participation, as a trainer, in training actions promoted by INA and other entities, both higher education and professional training, it has collaborated with organisations such as ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability (a global network that works with more than 2,500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development), together with the European Commission, through joint projects, to 'unleash' the full potential of contracting authorities in order to add value in the context of national and European policy objectives. In this way, a workshop was held on the 'Public Procurement Dialogues' project (European Commission, ICLEI and pwc), through which seminars were held in the 27 member states to develop a dialogue on the use of strategic public procurement (green, social and innovation) and establish communication channels between the European Commission and the member states with regard to strategic public procurement.

A first online meeting was held in March 2023, and the first face-to-face working session was held in November 2023, attended by several contracting authorities from various sectors and types of public administration, as well as companies from the environmental and social sector. IMPIC, APA and eSPap hosted the session and presented the current state of strategic use of public procurement in Portugal. During the working session, it was possible to identify the main existing obstacles and potential solutions and to propose the preparation of a roadmap for the development of strategic public procurement in Portugal, which was the responsibility of the hosts.

A virtual meeting was held in June 2024 to follow up on the development and preparation of the roadmap, and the ecological, social and innovation components were sent to ICLEI and the European Commission in November.

On 21 January 2025 in Brussels, a final conference will be held as part of the project ‘Organising workshops in the 27 Member States to develop a dialogue on the use of strategic public procurement (green, social and innovation)’, with two parallel sessions planned, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The idea behind these sessions is for Member States to share their experiences and exemplary action points with other stakeholders attending the conference and IMPIC will share its experience and strategy, which will serve as an interesting and guiding example for other Member States, to ensure greater acceptance and application of Socially Responsible Public Procurement (SRPP) and draw up recommendations to the EU level and all Member States.

In June of 2024, and then again in November, taking into account the success of the first one, a workshop was held in collaboration with IMPIC and at its headquarters, regarding the ‘Training on Socially Responsible Public Procurement (SRPP)’, as part of an interactive and personalised training programme, based on research, interviews and consultations with experts in public procurement and the social economy, carried out in 2023 in Portugal. This is a European Commission training programme, promoted by the WeBuySocialEU Team, on behalf of the European Commission, ICLEI Europe, and the Portuguese Association for Social Innovation - ESLIDER, under service contract EISMEA/2022/OP/0014 entitled ‘Training and awareness-raising activities on socially responsible public procurement’. It was designed to raise awareness of socially responsible public procurement policies and aimed to empower contracting authorities and facilitate access by social economy organisations to public contracts, and both took part in these 2 actions.

Also, with regard to the Big Buyers Working Together (BBWT) project, which was set up to support collaboration between public buyers with strong purchasing power and promote wider use of strategic public procurement for innovative and sustainable solutions (by working together and pooling their resources, cities, central purchasing bodies and other large public buyers can maximise their market power and impact), central purchasing bodies and other large public buyers can maximise their market power and impact), IMPIC, not being a large buyer but being the body that regulates public procurement, has actively participated in some of the 10 Communities of Practice created, namely Socially Responsible Public Procurement. This group focuses on monitoring working conditions, including gender equality aspects in contracts, supply chain management, increasing opportunities for people with disabilities, regulating online security and including social considerations in different product groups.

Specifically within the framework of CPSR, IMPIC contracted the acquisition of services to identify and survey national legislation in the social field, with a view to its potential application in the field of socially responsible public procurement, in the following areas:

- **Human Rights** - Aligned with the United Nations Framework of Reference;
- **Employment and labour relations**, in particular with regard to:
 - Disclosure and transparency of information/contractual conditions;
 - Working conditions and social protection;
 - Gender equality and non-discrimination in access to employment;
 - Social dialogue;
 - Health and safety at work;
 - Reconciliation of work and family life;
 - Human development and training in the workplace;
- **Consumer rights**.

What are the main challenges faced in integrating sustainable, innovative and socially responsible practices into public procurement, and how can a national strategy address these issues?

The main challenges faced in integrating sustainable, innovative and socially responsible practices into public procurement foresee the inclusion of the three dimensions of strategic public procurement – ecological (green), innovative and socially responsible - presents several challenges, including the need to offer specific guidance, improve the competitiveness and effectiveness of public procurement, and promote the training and professionalisation of public buyers.

In addition, it is essential to modernise support for buyers and suppliers through specialised centres, implement digital transformation in procurement processes and improve the governance of data related to public procurement. To tackle these issues, the definition of a national strategy for public procurement, with a time horizon of 2025-2030, emerges as a response to modernise and rationalise the public procurement system in Portugal, making it more efficient, sustainable and innovation-oriented. This strategic approach not only contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, but also stimulates the modernisation of the national economy and promotes a fairer and more resilient society, through dialogue, partnerships and the empowerment of the agents involved.

The response to the main challenges of integrating sustainable, innovative and socially responsible practices into public procurement in Portugal is outlined through the National Strategy for Public Procurement, planned for the 2025-2030 period.

This strategy aims to thoroughly modernise and rationalise the public procurement system, ranging from preparation for new instruments in 2025 to full implementation by 2030. Directly facing rapid technological change and the imminent revisions to the European legal framework, the strategy aims not only to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of processes, but also to leverage public procurement as an engine for sustainable growth.

In this context, the strategy doesn't just adjust to the new demands of the 21st century; it also seeks to turn public procurement into a driving force for a more competitive economy and a more equitable society. Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, the strategy fosters innovation and promotes an economic recovery that is both socially and environmentally resilient. Essentially, this strategic approach, which involves continuous dialogue and strategic partnerships, aims to empower public and economic agents, preparing them to lead the way in modernisation and sustainability.

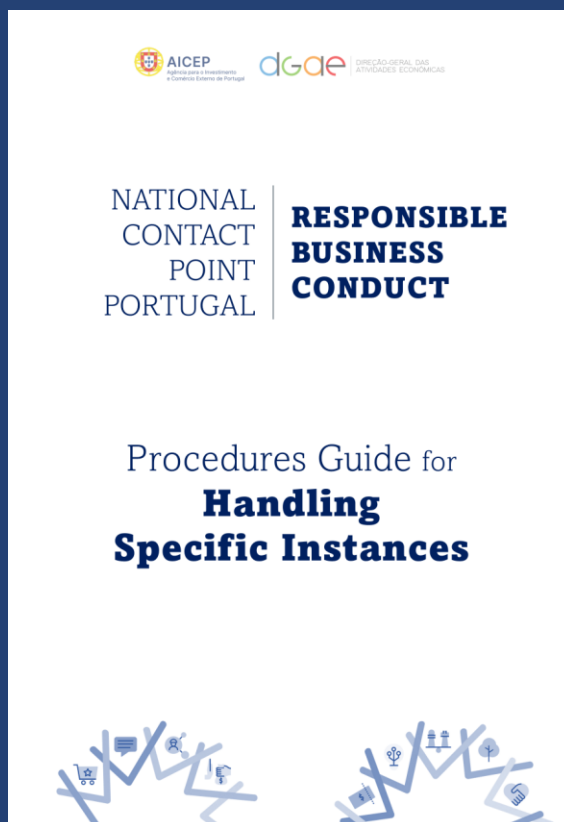
Visit the [STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2022-2025](#) tab on the IMPIC website for more information on:

Transformation of IMPIC's Information Systems; Revision of Regulatory Laws; Public Procurement for Innovation; Expansion of the Base Portal's functionalities; Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing - Prevention System in the Real Estate Sector; Support for the Internationalisation of Companies in the Construction and Real Estate Sector; Circular Economy and Sustainability in Construction and Real Estate; and the National Strategy for Green Public Procurement.

Revision of the NCP PT Procedures Guide for Handling Specific Instances

Following the 2023 update of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct, the NCP PT has been revising the Guide to Procedures for handling specific instances (complaints submitted to the NCP based on an alleged breach of the Guidelines).

This document is intended to serve as a guide for the parties involved, namely the NCP PT Secretariat, any independent mediators, complaint notifiers and companies. The draft update will soon be shared through the NCP PT channels (website, LinkedIn and email), with the aim of collecting contributions and comments from stakeholders.



The new version will provide a broader and more detailed explanation of how the NCP PT works in dealing with complaints related to companies' non-compliance with OECD recommendations. The main objective is to guarantee clear and predictable rules for all parties involved, promoting greater transparency and efficiency in this process.

NCP PT launches new periodical: Activity Report

In December 2024, the NCP PT launched its first Annual Activity Report, a digital publication available in Portuguese and English. This report, developed by AICEP and DGAE, aims to present, in a clear and transparent way, the initiatives carried out by the NCP PT throughout the year 2024. With this initiative, NCP PT aims not only to give greater visibility to its work, but also to involve and highlight its stakeholders more actively while promoting dialogue around best business practices.

The first edition of the report testifies a year of intense work, marked by milestones such as the successful completion of the peer review follow-up process to the NCP PT, the organisation of 12 NCP PT awareness-raising sessions and the contribution to partnerships with highlights such as the NOVA BHRE Podcast episode, the collaboration with OECD Watch within the scope of the NCP Performance Assessment and with the SDG Observatory in



Portuguese Companies, by the Portuguese Catholic University. This report also identifies the main achievements of 2024, the internal and strategic resources that underpin the activity of the NCP PT, offering readers a comprehensive perspective on its reach and functioning.

NCP PT 2025 Promotional Plan

The DGAE's NCP PT team has published its Promotional Plan for 2025. This plan is a key tool in promoting Responsible Business Conduct addressing the need for greater visibility, accessibility and transparency of the OECD Guidelines.

The 2025 Plan was developed on the basis of guidelines from the WPRBC Secretariat and reflects a strategy centered on the effectiveness and implementation of the Guidelines through promotional activities. Among the main initiatives planned for 2025 are updating the NCP PT website, publishing the biannual newsletter, producing video tutorials on various chapters of the Guidelines and organising the annual webinar.



NCP PT will continue to opt for online events, allowing for greater coverage without the need for extensive financial resources. This format also favours the rapid dissemination of promotional materials, which will essentially be virtual. With these initiatives, a continued commitment to raising awareness about the OECD Guidelines is expected, in line with the NCP PT promotional mandate.

Talk to us



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NEWSLETTER PCN PT

A Newsletter do Ponto de Contacto Nacional Português (PCN PT) para a Conduta Empresarial Responsável é uma publicação online produzida pela Direção-Geral das Atividades Económicas (DGAE). Esta publicação terá uma periodicidade semestral e pretende comunicar as principais novidades no contexto nacional e internacional sobre a atividade da Rede de Pontos de Contacto Nacionais e do Grupo de Trabalho de Conduta Empresarial Responsável da OCDE. A Newsletter será disponibilizada em língua portuguesa e inglesa. Poderá aceder a esta publicação através da página do PCN PT na DGAE e ser notificado quando uma nova publicação estiver disponível. Para tal, basta preencher este formulário.

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* Indica uma pergunta obrigatória

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A sua resposta

Organização *

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A sua resposta