

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING (MINECOFIN)

RWANDA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY (RPPA)

SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2024

FOREWORD

The Government of Rwanda is committed to achieving sustainable economic growth and development while safeguarding the environment and promoting social welfare. As we work towards realising our Vision 2050 and implementing the National Strategy for Transformation, we recognise the crucial role that public procurement plays in shaping a sustainable future for our nation.

With great pleasure, we present Rwanda's SPP Policy, a ground-breaking initiative that aims to integrate environmental, social, and economic considerations into our public procurement processes. This policy represents a significant milestone in our journey towards sustainable development and demonstrates our unwavering commitment to responsible and efficient use of public resources.

Through the implementation of the SPP Policy, we seek to leverage the substantial purchasing power of the government to drive innovation, support local industries, promote the adoption of sustainable practices across various sectors of the economy, and advance social objectives such as gender equality and youth employment. By giving preference to goods, services, and works that minimise negative environmental impacts, foster social equity, and support economic growth, we aim to create a ripple effect that encourages sustainable production and consumption patterns throughout our economy.

The development of this policy has been a collaborative effort, involving extensive consultations with stakeholders from government institutions, the private sector, civil society organisations, and development partners. We extend our gratitude to all those who have contributed their expertise and insights to shape this policy, ensuring its relevance and practicality in the Rwandan context.

As we embark on this journey, we call upon all public procurement entities, suppliers, and stakeholders to embrace the principles and practices outlined in the SPP Policy. Together, we can build a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive Rwanda for current and future generations.

We are confident that the SPP Policy will serve as a catalyst for positive change, inspiring innovation, and setting a new standard for public procurement in Rwanda and beyond. Let us unite in our commitment to sustainable procurement and work hand in hand to realise the full potential of this policy in driving sustainable development.

Dr NGIRENTE Edouard

Right Hon. Prime Minister of Rwanda

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rwanda's Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) Policy is a ground-breaking initiative that integrates environmental, social, and economic considerations into public procurement processes. The policy seeks to leverage the government's purchasing power to drive innovation, support local industries, and promote sustainable practices across various sectors of the economy.

The primary objectives of the SPP Policy are to minimise negative environmental and socio-economic impacts, stimulate market demand for sustainable goods and services, encourage the adoption of innovative sustainable technologies, and support the achievement of Rwanda's sustainability goals.

The policy introduces a comprehensive principle of sustainability in public procurement, which integrates environmental, social, and economic considerations throughout the procurement process to achieve value for money on a whole-life basis. It encourages procuring entities to prioritize life-cycle costing, support SMEs, foster fair labour practices, and promote products that align with Rwanda's climate goals.

The SPP Policy aligns with Rwanda's sustainable development priorities, including Vision 2050, the Revised Green Growth and Climate Resilience National Strategy, the National Environment and Climate Change Policy, the National Circular Economy Action Plan and Roadmap, and the Revised National Gender Policy. It supports numerous sector-specific policies and strategies as well as standalone sustainability laws. The policy's development involved extensive stakeholder consultations and is aligned with international frameworks and standards.

The implementation of the SPP Policy is organised into eight main phases, covering various aspects such as conducting needs assessments, updating laws and regulations governing public procurement, developing guidelines and criteria, piloting SPP practices, capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation. Key components of the implementation plan include identifying priority product groups, developing SPP guidelines and criteria, updating tender documents, integrating SPP into the e-procurement system, capacity building for procurement practitioners and suppliers, and establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework.

The SPP Policy is expected to yield significant long-term benefits for Rwanda, including reduced environmental impact, waste reduction, stimulation of sustainable markets, promotion of social equity, gender equality, youth development and economic development. The policy also aims to positively impact the business environment by creating opportunities for SMEs and fostering innovation in the sustainable business sector.

In conclusion, Rwanda's SPP Policy represents a significant milestone in the country's journey towards sustainable development, demonstrating the government's commitment to responsible and efficient use of public resources and to transforming the market and Rwanda's society. By harnessing the power of public procurement to drive positive change, the policy sets a new standard for sustainability in Rwanda.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFD	French Development Agency
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGCRS	Revised Green Growth and Climate Resilience National Strategy for Climate Change and Low Carbon Development
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GoR	Government of Rwanda
GPP	Green Public Procurement
GRPP	Gender-Responsive Public Procurement
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEA	International Energy Agency
IT	Information Technology
KfW	German Development Bank
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LED	Light Emitting Diode
MAPS	Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

MINICOM	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MIR	Made in Rwanda
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MRA	Market Readiness Analysis
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NISR	National Institute of Statistics Rwanda
NST1	National Strategy for Transformation
NTF	National Task Force on Sustainable Public Procurement
PSF	Private Sector Federation
RDB	Rwanda Development Board
REMA	Rwanda Environment Management Authority
RICA	Rwanda Inspectorate and Competition Authority
RPPA	Rwanda Public Procurement Authority
RSB	Rwanda Standards Board
SBD	Standard Bidding Document
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDGs	UN Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPP	Sustainable Public Procurement
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WASAC	Water And Sanitation Corporation
10YFP	10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

GLOSSARY

Circular Economy

A circular economy aims to redefine growth, focusing on positive society-wide benefits. It entails gradually decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources and designing waste out of the system. Underpinned by a transition to renewable energy sources, the circular model builds economic, natural, and social capital. It is based on three principles:

- ❖ Design out waste and pollution
- ❖ Keep products and materials in use
- ❖ Regenerate natural systems

Circular Procurement

Circular procurement occurs when the buyer purchases products or services that follow the principles of the circular economy, supporting the assessment of designing, making, selling, reusing and recycling products to determine how to get the maximum value from them, both in use and at the end of their life. This can also include approaches such as product-as-a-service and reducing purchasing.

Ecolabels

ISO Type I labels are those often referred to as ecolabels and identify overall environmental preference of a product (i.e. a good or service) within a product category based upon life cycle considerations. In contrast to a self-styled environmental symbol or claim statement developed by a manufacturer or service provider, an ecolabel is awarded by an impartial third party to products that meet environmental leadership criteria. They are also multi-criteria and multi-sectoral.

ISO Type I-like labels (often referred to as "certification schemes" or "sustainability labelling") share the same characteristics as Type I but often are focused on specific impacts (i.e. energy consumption, agricultural practice) and applied only to a specific sector (i.e. energy-using appliances, agricultural commodities).

Gender Responsive Public Procurement

A strategic approach whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works in a manner that promotes gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the procurement process. This involves considering the impact of procurement activities on women and men, addressing barriers faced by women-owned businesses, and designing and delivering contracts in a way that reduces gender inequalities and enables equal outcomes for women and men.

Green Public Procurement (GPP)

A process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured.

Life-cycle Approach

A life cycle approach reflects the incorporation of sustainability concerns from the complete life cycle of a product –all the way from extracting raw materials, manufacturing parts, assembling the product, and using and disposing of it after the end of use.

Life Cycle Costing

An economic assessment considering all agreed projected significant and relevant cost flows over a period of analysis expressed in monetary value. The projected costs are those needed to achieve defined levels of performance, including reliability, safety and availability. This can include energy use, maintenance, repair, disposal and other costs, depending on the product.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

Businesses that maintain revenues, assets, or a number of employees below a certain threshold. In Rwanda, SMEs are generally defined based on the following categories:

- **Micro enterprises:** Businesses employing up to 3 people, with an annual turnover or total assets not exceeding RWF 0.3 million.
- **Small enterprises:** Businesses employing between 4 and 30 people, with an annual turnover or total assets between RWF 0.3 million and RWF 12 million.
- **Medium enterprises:** Businesses employing between 31 and 100 people, with an annual turnover or total assets between RWF 12 million and RWF 50 million.

Sustainability Criteria

The set of conditions and requirements established to ensure that the procurement of goods, services, and works reflects social responsibility, environmental stewardship, and economic efficiency. These criteria aim to minimise adverse impacts on society and the environment while promoting local and global improvements over the long term. The criteria are aligned with sustainable development goals and are incorporated throughout the procurement process to enhance value for organisations and society. (ISO, 2017)

Sustainable Consumption and Production

The use of products and services which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimising the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the product or service so as not to jeopardise the needs of future generations.

Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP)

A process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole-life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation but also to society and the economy while minimising damage to the environment. When sustainable procurement is conducted by public authorities, we speak of Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP).

Sustainable Development

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Value for Money

Value for money (VFM), also known as the best value for money, is defined as the optimisation of whole-life costs and quality needed to meet the user's requirements while taking into consideration potential risk factors and resources available. Depending on the nature of the purchase, whole-life costs may include purchasing price, implementation costs, ongoing operating costs and end-of-life disposal. Quality may include non-price attributes such as recycled content, labour conditions in the supply chain, minimising waste and greenhouse gas emissions, conserving energy and water, minimising habitat destruction and environmental degradation, being nontoxic, etc. Accordingly, economy and effectiveness can be delivered by ensuring that quality factors extend to social as well as environmental performance, where reduced energy consumption results in greater efficiencies and long-term cost savings.

Thus, the principle of value of money ensures the optimum combination of whole-life cost and quality or fitness.

Women-Owned Businesses

Enterprises where at least 51% of the ownership or shares are held by one or more women, or where a woman or women hold significant control of management and daily operations. These businesses play a crucial role in fostering gender equality and women's economic empowerment, and they are often given priority in gender-responsive public procurement processes.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Scope

The Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) Policy aims to integrate sustainability considerations into public procurement processes while aligning them with the country's long-term vision for sustainable development and the Rwanda Public Procurement Authority's (RPPA) ambition to become a regional leader in public procurement. The policy seeks to leverage the substantial purchasing power of the government to drive innovation, support local industries, and promote the adoption of sustainable practices across various sectors of the economy.

The scope of the SPP Policy applies to all public procurement entities at the national and sub-national levels, ensuring that sustainability considerations are integrated throughout the Rwandan society. Policy implementation will be guided by two key documents: the SPP Action Plan (RPPA, 2024a) and the SPP Guidelines (RPPA, 2024b). The SPP Action Plan provides a detailed roadmap for operationalising the policy, while the SPP Guidelines offer practical tools and recommendations for procurement practitioners to apply SPP principles in their daily work.

This policy document is structured as follows:

- ❖ **Chapter 1:** Outlines the purpose and scope of the SPP Policy, describes the policy development process, presents the rationale for implementing SPP in Rwanda, and details the alignment with Rwanda's sustainable development priorities.
- ❖ **Chapter 2:** Articulates the Government of Rwanda's commitment to SPP, introduces the principle of sustainability in public procurement, and defines key SPP objectives and outcomes.
- ❖ **Chapter 3:** Presents the findings from the legal analysis, including relevant laws and regulations, results from the analysis, and future legal and regulatory improvements. It also details the market readiness analysis and the development of policy options.
- ❖ **Chapter 4:** Summarises the views and input from various stakeholders, including public sector entities, private stakeholders, civil society organisations, development partners, and the National Task Force on SPP.
- ❖ **Chapter 5:** Outlines the policy actions, introduces the SPP Action Plan and SPP Guidelines, describes the implementation phases, details the institutional arrangements, and explains the monitoring and evaluation framework for the policy.
- ❖ **Chapter 6:** Discusses the anticipated impacts on mindset change, business environment, and Rwanda's efforts towards equality, unity, and reconciliation.
- ❖ **Chapter 7:** Describes the process for reviewing and updating the policy to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.
- ❖ **Annexe I:** Provides a summary of actions for policy implementation, including specific policy actions, their expected outcomes, responsible entities, and timeframes.

The SPP Policy is designed to be flexible and adaptable, allowing for a phased implementation approach that considers the varying capacities of procurement entities and the readiness of the market to supply sustainable goods and services.

1.2 Development of the policy

The development of Rwanda's SPP Policy was a collaborative effort involving various stakeholders to create a framework for integrating sustainability considerations into public procurement processes. The policy development process is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) and RPPA, with technical and financial support from the World Bank and the German Development Bank (KfW). The French Development Agency (AFD), through its subsidiary Expertise France, also provided support to the SPP policy development process as part of the "Climate Finance and Public Investment program", which aims to align public and private financial flows with Rwanda's climate goals.

Key institutions involved in the policy development process include the RPPA, Rwanda Environmental Management Agency (REMA), the Rwanda Standards Board (RSB), the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA), Rwanda Housing Authority (RHA), the Rwanda Law Reform Commission (RLRC), and the Private Sector Federation (PSF). The policy was drafted by a team of international and local experts led by the consultancy firm Arkatay Consulting AB in Sweden.

Throughout the policy development process, the National Task Force on SPP (NTF), a platform for stakeholder engagement and consultation, played a crucial role in providing guidance and technical input and ensuring alignment with national priorities. The NTF is composed of representatives from various government institutions, as well as the Association of Manufacturers, Transparency International, and the University of Rwanda.

Stakeholder consultations were conducted to gather insights, recommendations, and feedback from a wide range of actors, including government entities, private sector representatives, civil society organisations, and development partners. These consultations helped to ensure that the SPP Policy is inclusive, practical, and responsive to the needs and challenges of all stakeholders.

The SPP Policy is aligned with international frameworks and standards, such as the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) SPP Implementation Guidelines (2021) and the ISO 20400 Sustainable Procurement Guidance (ISO, 2017). The development process also drew upon the expertise and lessons learned from other countries that have successfully implemented SPP policies.

1.3 Rationale

The rationale for implementing SPP in Rwanda is grounded in the following key arguments:

1.3.1 Economic Impact

Public procurement accounts for approximately 13.5% of Rwanda's GDP (World Bank, 2020). Leveraging this significant purchasing power through SPP can drive sustainable practices and stimulate markets for sustainable products and services without requiring additional financial resources.

1.3.2 Environmental and Social Sustainability

SPP is a critical tool for achieving Rwanda's environmental sustainability goals and promoting social equity. By prioritising the procurement of low-carbon, energy-efficient, and socially responsible goods and services, SPP directly contributes to national targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, such as Rwanda's commitment to reduce emissions by 38% compared to business-as-usual by 2030 (Republic of Rwanda, 2020).

1.3.3 Economic Opportunities

SPP can generate significant economic benefits by supporting the growth of local sustainable businesses, stimulating innovation, creating green jobs, and enhancing the competitiveness of Rwandan businesses in both domestic and international markets.

1.3.4 Support for SMEs

SPP presents significant opportunities to build the capacity of SMEs in Rwanda. By integrating sustainability criteria into procurement processes and offering targeted support, SPP enables SMEs to:

- ❖ Improve working conditions
- ❖ Commit to environmental priorities
- ❖ Enhance competitiveness
- ❖ Participate more effectively in public tenders

This approach strengthens SMEs' ability to meet sustainability requirements and compete successfully for government contracts

1.3.5 Social Benefits

SPP can deliver substantial social benefits by promoting fair labour practices, supporting local communities, and empowering women, youth and disadvantaged groups. This contributes to the creation of decent jobs, the advancement of social equity and gender equality, and the improvement of the quality of life for all Rwandans.

1.3.6 Long-term Benefits

Implementing SPP is expected to yield significant long-term benefits for Rwanda, including reduced environmental impact, waste reduction, stimulation of sustainable markets, promotion of social equity, and sustainable economic development, aligning with Rwanda's Vision 2050 (MINECOFIN, 2020)

In conclusion, introducing a comprehensive SPP Policy in Rwanda is a strategic necessity that aligns with the country's sustainable development goals, supports the implementation of key national policies, and offers significant environmental, social, and economic benefits. By leveraging the substantial purchasing power of the government to drive sustainable practices and stimulate markets for sustainable products and services, SPP can contribute to the realisation of Rwanda's vision for a green, resilient, and inclusive economy.

1.4 Alignment with Rwanda's Sustainable Development Priorities

The SPP Policy is firmly aligned with and supports the implementation of Rwanda's key sustainable development policies and strategies.

1.4.1 Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 Revised in 2015

The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda (Republic of Rwanda, 2015) serves as the supreme law of Rwanda, providing the legal foundation for all other policies and strategies. The 2015 revision of the Constitution shows the level of importance Rwanda gives to the matter of environment. The SPP Policy aligns with the following key provisions of the Constitution:

- ❖ Article 22 enshrines the right to a clean and healthy environment, which forces public institutions to take the necessary measures through their policies and regulations to promote the procurement of environmentally friendly goods and services.
- ❖ Article 53 emphasises the protection of the environment and the rational utilisation of natural resources, which requires both the government and the suppliers to ensure sustainable resource management and the reduction of negative environmental impacts

1.4.2 Vision 2050

Vision 2050 (MINECOFIN, 2020) outlines Rwanda's aspirations to become an upper-middle-income country by 2035 and a high-income country by 2050, with a focus on sustainable and inclusive growth. The SPP Policy supports Vision 2050's goal of developing a green and resilient economy. Vision 2050 states that "growth and development will follow a sustainable path in terms of use and management of natural resources while building resilience to cope with climate change impacts".

The SPP Policy promotes the sustainable management of natural resources by prioritising the procurement of environmentally friendly goods, services, and works that minimise negative impacts on ecosystems, biodiversity, and resource availability. By encouraging the adoption of

circular procurement practices, such as the use of recycled materials, the reduction of waste, and the improvement of end-of-life management, the policy helps to conserve natural resources and reduce the environmental footprint of public procurement activities.

Furthermore, by stimulating market demand for sustainable products and services, the SPP Policy incentivises businesses to adopt more resource-efficient and environmentally responsible practices. This, in turn, drives innovation and investment in sustainable technologies and solutions that contribute to the long-term sustainability of Rwanda's natural capital.

1.4.3 National Strategy for Transformation 2 (NST2, 2024-2029)

The National Strategy for Transformation 2 (NST2, Republic of Rwanda, 2024) is Rwanda's five-year strategy aimed at transforming the country into a prosperous, inclusive and resilient nation. Building on the foundations laid by NST1, it focuses on five key priorities: creating decent and productive jobs, boosting exports, improving education quality, reducing stunting and malnutrition, and enhancing public service delivery. The SPP Policy directly supports several of NST2's goals:

- By promoting the procurement of locally produced goods and services, the SPP Policy contributes to NST2's "Made in Rwanda" initiative, which aims to drive industrial growth and boost the economy.
- The policy's emphasis on sustainable and energy-efficient procurement aligns with NST2's goal of universal access to clean water and electricity by 2029.
- Through its focus on capacity building and skills development, the SPP Policy supports NST2's objective of developing a market-ready workforce and equipping Rwandans with skills for the future.
- The policy's promotion of sustainable agricultural practices aligns with NST2's goal of modernising the agriculture sector and increasing productivity.

1.4.4 Revised Green Growth and Climate Resilience National Strategy for Climate Change and Low Carbon Development

The Revised Green Growth and Climate Resilience National Strategy for Climate Change and Low Carbon Development (GGCRS) (Republic of Rwanda, 2022) outlines Rwanda's approach to achieving sustainable economic growth while addressing climate change and environmental challenges. The SPP Policy directly supports the implementation of several key programs and targets in the GGCRS:

- ❖ **Programme 1 on Green Industrialisation and Trade:** The SPP Policy encourages the procurement of low-carbon goods, services, and infrastructure, contributing to the GGCRS objective of resource-efficient infrastructure and physical capital to drive green industrial and trade growth.

- ❖ **Programme 2 on Green Urban Transition and Integration:** By incorporating sustainability criteria into public procurement for urban infrastructure and services, the SPP Policy helps mainstream low-carbon and climate-resilient approaches in Rwanda's rapid urbanisation, in line with the GGCRS. The policy also stimulates the transition to low-carbon urban mobility through SPP for sustainable public transport vehicles and infrastructure.
- ❖ **Programme 3 on Sustainable Land Use and Natural Resource Management:** The SPP Policy promotes the procurement of goods and services that minimise negative environmental impacts, supporting the GGCRS goal of effective land use and natural resource management for resilient landscapes and communities.

1.4.5 National Environment and Climate Change Policy

The National Environment and Climate Change Policy (MoE. 2019) aims to promote sustainable economic development while protecting the environment and building resilience to climate change. The SPP Policy aligns with and supports the implementation of this policy in the following ways:

- ❖ Policy Objective 1, "Greening economic transformation," directly links to sustainable public procurement through Policy Statement 3, "Promote green technologies and procurement."
- ❖ The SPP Policy contributes to the policy's objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting sustainable land use, and encouraging the adoption of clean technologies by prioritising the procurement of environmentally friendly goods and services.

1.4.6 Rwanda's Green Taxonomy

Rwanda's Green Taxonomy (MINECOFIN, 2023) provides a framework for classifying environmentally sustainable economic activities. The SPP Policy supports the operationalisation of the Green Taxonomy through the following measures:

- ❖ Aligning public procurement practices with the technical screening criteria and thresholds defined in the Green Taxonomy. This ensures government spending supports activities that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. For example:
 - Prioritising the procurement of energy-efficient appliances and equipment that meet the taxonomy's eligibility criteria for the energy sector
 - Favouring construction materials and designs that comply with the green building standards specified in the taxonomy
 - Supporting the purchase of low-carbon vehicles for public transportation in line with the taxonomy's transport sector criteria

- Translating the Green Taxonomy into concrete public procurement actions by integrating its classification system and metrics into tendering processes, technical specifications, and contract award criteria. This includes:
- Using the taxonomy's sector-specific criteria and thresholds to define sustainability requirements in tender documents
- Evaluating and selecting bids based on their alignment with the taxonomy's environmental objectives and technical screening criteria
- Monitoring suppliers' compliance with taxonomy-aligned sustainability standards throughout contract implementation
- Creating demand for taxonomy-aligned goods, services, and infrastructure. This incentivises businesses to adopt more sustainable practices and invest in green technologies and solutions.

1.4.7 National Circular Economy Action Plan and Roadmap

The National Circular Economy Action Plan and Roadmap (MoE, 2022) aims to transition Rwanda towards a more resource-efficient and sustainable economic model. The SPP Policy contributes to the achievement of the Action Plan's objectives through the following measures:

- ❖ Supporting the adoption of circular economy principles in public procurement by promoting the procurement of goods and services designed for durability, repairability, reuse, and recycling.
- ❖ Leveraging public procurement to create demand for circular products and services. This directly contributes to the Action Plan's policy intervention#11, "Prioritise renewable and local materials over exhausting non-renewable materials as well as local construction types".

1.4.8 Revised National Gender Policy

The Revised National Gender Policy (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion 2021) aims to enhance gender mainstreaming and accountability for national transformation in Rwanda. It ensures gender gaps are addressed through effective gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive interventions, and accountability mechanisms.

The SPP Policy supports the Revised National Gender Policy by:

- ❖ Leveraging public procurement to create opportunities for women-owned businesses and underrepresented groups, supporting the gender policy's objective of ensuring equal access to resources and economic opportunities for women and men.
- ❖ Emphasizing capacity building for procurement practitioners and suppliers on sustainability issues and increasing knowledge of gender equality principles as called for in the gender policy.

- ❖ Establishing a legal and institutional framework for SPP implementation, reinforcing the gender policy's goal of promoting an enabling environment for gender equality.

1.4.9 Revised National Employment Policy

The Revised National Employment Policy (Ministry of Public Service and Labour, 2019) aims to create sufficient and productive jobs to reduce labour underutilisation and enhance productivity and competitiveness in Rwanda. The SPP Policy supports the Revised National Employment Policy by:

- ❖ Promoting the integration of social sustainability criteria into procurement decisions. This directly contributes to the employment policy's goals of creating sufficient and productive jobs, reducing labour underutilisation, and enhancing productivity and competitiveness.
- ❖ Leveraging public procurement to create opportunities for youth, women, and people with disabilities. This supports the employment policy's focus on promoting inclusive employment and addressing the specific challenges faced by these vulnerable groups in accessing decent work.

1.4.10 Made in Rwanda Policy

The Made in Rwanda Policy (MINICOM, 2017) aims to enhance the competitiveness of Rwandan products and stimulate domestic production. The SPP Policy aligns with and supports the implementation of the Made in Rwanda Policy through the following measures:

- ❖ Promoting the procurement of locally produced goods and services. This contributes to the development of local industries and the creation of employment opportunities.
- ❖ Encouraging the adoption of sustainable practices by local suppliers, enhancing their competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.

1.4.11 Updated Nationally Determined Contribution

Rwanda's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (Republic of Rwanda, 2020) outlines the country's commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance climate resilience under the Paris Agreement. The SPP Policy supports the achievement of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) targets through the following measures:

- ❖ By prioritising the procurement of low-carbon and climate-resilient goods, services, and infrastructure, the SPP Policy contributes to the NDC's target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 38% compared to the business-as-usual scenario by 2030.
- ❖ The policy promotes the adoption of sustainable practices across various sectors of the economy, supporting the NDC's sectoral mitigation and adaptation strategies.

1.4.12 Rwanda Competition and Consumer Protection Policy

The Rwanda Competition and Consumer Protection Policy (MINICOM, 2023) aims to enhance the regulatory framework for fair competition and consumer protection. The SPP Policy aligns with and supports the implementation of this policy through the following measures:

- ❖ By promoting transparency, fairness, and accountability in public procurement processes, the SPP Policy contributes to the creation of a level playing field for businesses and the protection of consumer interests.
- ❖ The policy encourages the participation of SMEs in public procurement, fostering competition and innovation in the market.

1.4.13 National Industrial Policy

The National Industrial Policy (MINICOM, 2011) seeks to develop Rwanda's industrial sector to diversify the economy and boost economic growth. The SPP Policy supports the implementation of the National Industrial Policy through the following measures:

- ❖ By creating demand for sustainably produced goods and services, the SPP Policy stimulates the growth of local industries and encourages the adoption of sustainable practices.
- ❖ The policy promotes the development of green industries and the creation of green jobs, contributing to the diversification and resilience of the Rwandan economy.

2 SPP POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Government of Rwanda's Commitment to SPP

The Government of the Republic of Rwanda is fully committed to implementing Sustainable Public Procurement across all procuring entities as a strategic tool to achieve its long-term sustainable development priorities. This commitment is based on the principle of sustainability (see section 2.2), which guides all procurement activities.

The government commits to:

- ❖ Ensure that all procuring entities and supervisory staff are aware of the importance of SPP and are equipped with the necessary knowledge and resources for transparent and effective implementation.
- ❖ Mandate the application of the SPP Policy and related sustainability criteria at all stages of the procurement cycle, including contract management, end-of-life disposal, and performance evaluation.

- ❖ Promote the development of competitive local suppliers of goods, works, and services to drive market adoption of sustainability criteria.
- ❖ Facilitate dialogue with authorities, regulatory bodies, businesses, academia, and civil society to continuously enhance SPP practices.
- ❖ Align the development of SPP with efforts to enhance public procurement governance, strengthen public financial management, and support sustainable development.
- ❖ Engage third-party entities to independently verify and publicly report on the progress and outcomes of SPP initiatives, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- ❖ Professionalise procurement practitioners by institutionalising SPP trainers and assessors.

The implementation of SPP depends on cooperation among stakeholders, including government, private sector, civil society, and development partners. Key institutions like MINECOFIN, RPPA, and the Ministry of Environment (MoE) will lead the mainstreaming of sustainability across procurement activities.

2.2 Principle of Sustainability in Public Procurement

The principle of sustainability in public procurement refers to the integration of environmental, social, and economic considerations throughout the procurement process to achieve value for money on a whole-life basis. The Government of Rwanda is committed to ensuring that procuring entities apply this principle in order to reduce negative impacts and enhance positive outcomes for society, the economy, and the environment.

Key aspects of the sustainability principle in public procurement include:

1. Environmental Responsibility:

- Public procurement shall prioritise products and services that minimise adverse environmental impacts. This includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions and hazardous substances, promoting energy and water efficiency, and fostering resource efficiency and circular economy practices such as recycling and waste minimisation.
- Life-cycle considerations shall be integrated into procurement decisions to assess environmental impacts from production to disposal.
- Procuring entities shall support Rwanda's climate change mitigation and adaptation goals by selecting goods, services, and works that align with national environmental policies, including the Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy.

2. Social Responsibility:

- Public procurement processes shall foster social equity by promoting fair labour practices, gender equality, and opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), women-owned businesses, and marginalised groups.
- Suppliers shall be encouraged to adhere to high standards of health and safety, human rights, and inclusivity in their operations and supply chains.
- Public procurement shall support Rwanda's broader social goals, such as youth employment, gender equality, and decent work conditions.

3. Economic Responsibility:

- Value for money shall be achieved by considering the total cost over the life cycle of products and services, including long-term savings generated by sustainable procurement decisions.
- Procurement activities shall support local industries and SMEs by giving preference to "Made in Rwanda" products, fostering innovation, and contributing to economic development.

4. Governance and Accountability:

- The principles of transparency, fairness, and accountability shall govern all procurement processes. Public procurement entities shall consider sustainability at each stage of the procurement cycle, from planning and tendering to evaluation, contract management, and monitoring.
- Monitoring and reporting mechanisms will be established to assess compliance with sustainability requirements, ensuring continuous improvement in the implementation of sustainable procurement practices.

2.3 Key SPP Objectives

The SPP Policy aims to leverage the unequivocal purchasing power of public institutions to drive the transition towards a more sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous future for Rwanda. The policy is designed to contribute to the achievement of the country's long-term sustainable development goals and to align with national and international priorities.

The key objectives of the SPP Policy are:

1. Environmental Sustainability

- 1.1. Minimise negative environmental impacts** of production and consumption by promoting the procurement of environmentally friendly goods, services, and works.
- 1.2. Promote circular procurement practices** that foster sustainable resource management, reduce waste generation, and improve end-of-life management of goods and works.

- 1.3. **Support the transition to a low-carbon economy** by prioritising the procurement of energy-efficient products and services and those derived from renewable sources.

2. Social Responsibility

- 2.1. **Promote social equity and inclusion** by integrating social sustainability criteria into procurement decisions and requiring suppliers to adopt fair labour practices.
- 2.2. **Promote gender-responsive procurement** by integrating gender equality considerations throughout the procurement cycle
- 2.3. **Enhance the participation of underrepresented groups**, such as women, youth, veterans, and people with disabilities, in the procurement process and create opportunities for their economic empowerment.
- 2.4. **Support Rwandan businesses in adopting sustainable practices** and producing sustainable products, creating green jobs and contributing to social well-being while enhancing their competitiveness in international markets.

3. Economic Development

- 3.1. **Stimulate the growth of local sustainable industries** by identifying and prioritising spend categories for the incremental implementation of SPP and supporting the "Made in Rwanda" initiative.
- 3.2. **Drive innovation and competitiveness** by creating demand for reliable, high-quality, safe, and sustainable products and services.
- 3.3. **Stimulate women-owned businesses and SMEs to participate effectively** in public procurement by providing targeted support measures such as capacity building, access to finance, mentoring and preferential treatment when awarding contracts.

4. Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.1. **Encourage all stakeholders to adhere to the highest ethical standards**, good governance, and sustainability principles, such as accountability, transparency and compliance, throughout the procurement process.
- 4.2. **Promote public awareness and engagement in sustainable development issues** through third-party monitoring of SPP by civil society organisations and the media.
- 4.3. **Report annually on the progress and achievements of SPP** initiatives and goals, ensuring transparency and accountability.

3 ANALYSIS

3.1 Legal Analysis

3.1.1 Relevant Laws and Regulations

The SPP Policy is underpinned by a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework. The primary legal instruments that support SPP implementation include:

- ❖ **Law n°031/2022 of 21/11/2022:** This law governs public procurement in Rwanda and introduces sustainability as a guiding principle. Article 6 states that *"the awarding of public procurement is governed by the following principles: (...) 6° efficiency and sustainability."*
- ❖ **Ministerial Order n°001/23/10 TC of 10/10/2023:** This ministerial order complements the public procurement law and provides additional details on procurement procedures.

The legislations above are core instruments for procurement. In addition, several other legal instruments are relevant to SPP implementation in Rwanda, such as:

- ❖ **Law 18/2016 of 18/05/2016** governing the preservation of air quality and prevention of air pollution
- ❖ **Law n°48/2018 of 13/08/2018** on environment, which establishes strong obligations for undertakings to preserve the environment
- ❖ **Law n°70/2013 of 02/09/2013** governing biodiversity
- ❖ **Ministerial Order n°004/2021 of 12/02/2021** governing the use of substances that deplete the ozone layer or may cause climate change
- ❖ **Law n°17/2019 of 10/08/2019** relating to the prohibition of manufacturing, importation, use, and sale of plastic carry bags and single-use plastic items
- ❖ **Law n°66/2018 of 30/08/2018** regulating labour

The SPP Policy aligns with and complements this existing legal and regulatory framework, ensuring a coherent approach to the integration of sustainability considerations in public procurement.

3.1.2 Results from Analysis

While the existing legal framework provides a foundation for SPP implementation, there are some gaps and areas for improvement:

1. The public procurement law (Law n°031/2022 of 21/11/2022) introduces sustainability as a guiding principle but provides neither definition of the concept nor guidance on the application of sustainability criteria throughout the procurement process.
2. The ministerial order (Ministerial Order n°001/23/10 TC of 10/10/2023) does not currently include specific provisions related to SPP implementation.

3. There is a need to establish stronger links between the legal framework of public procurement and complementary laws related to the environment, biological diversity, climate change, competition, consumer protection, and labour to ensure a coherent and effective implementation of SPP.

3.1.3 Sustainability as Legal Principle

The introduction of the sustainability principle in section 2.2 of this policy directly addresses the gaps identified in the existing legal framework. By formalising the application of sustainability throughout the procurement process, the policy ensures that environmental, social, and economic considerations are integrated into all stages of public procurement, thereby operationalising the guiding principle of sustainability set forth in the public procurement law (Law n°031/2022).

On the basis of this legal principle, Rwandan procurement practitioners and courts will be empowered to develop professional practices that fully integrate sustainability considerations into their decision-making processes. This approach will ensure that sustainability becomes a key factor in both the procurement and legal interpretation of public contracts.

3.1.4 Future Legal and Regulatory Improvements

While the sustainability principle has been embedded in the policy, further improvements are planned to strengthen Rwanda's legal framework for sustainable procurement. These improvements will be operationalised through the SPP Action Plan (RPPA 2024a), which includes actions to:

- Integrate sustainability criteria into technical specifications, tender documents, bid evaluations, and contracts to assess the performance conditions during contract execution.
- Ensure capacity building for procurement entities and suppliers.
- Ensure compliance with environmental and social obligations by suppliers.

For more details on the planned legal updates, refer to Chapter 4 in the SPP Action Plan, where a roadmap for updating relevant regulations and standard bidding documents (SBDs) is provided.

3.2 Market Readiness Analysis

The development of Rwanda's SPP Policy was informed by a comprehensive Market Readiness Analysis (MRA) conducted from January to August 2024, which aimed to assess the capacity of the market to supply sustainable goods and services to respond to the government's SPP objectives and to identify opportunities and challenges for implementing SPP in Rwanda.

The MRA followed the methodology outlined in the UNEP SPP Guidelines (2021), ensuring a systematic and evidence-based approach. This methodology emphasises the importance of an

MRA as the first step in a continuous and iterative process of understanding the market, identifying priority product categories, and developing procurement tools to implement SPP for those product categories. As articulated in the SPP Action Plan (RPPA 2024a), the process of understanding the Rwandan market for different product categories will be iteratively expanded as SPP is being implemented. This evidence-based approach ensured that the SPP Policy and its associated documents are grounded in a thorough understanding of the Rwandan market context and aligned with global SPP trends.

The MRA involved the following key steps:

1. **Prioritisation of product and service categories:** The MRA began by identifying high-impact procurement areas based on factors such as procurement volume, sustainability risks, and the government's ability to influence the market. This process involved iterative discussions with the RPPA and the NTF.
2. **Supplier engagement:** The MRA team conducted surveys and interviews with suppliers across the prioritised categories to gather insights on market readiness, sustainability practices, and potential barriers to SPP implementation. The findings from these engagements informed the development of practical and effective SPP guidelines.
3. **Stakeholder consultations:** The MRA involved extensive consultations with key stakeholders, including government institutions, industry associations, and civil society organisations. These consultations helped to validate the prioritised product categories, assess institutional readiness for SPP, and identify capacity-building needs.
4. **Analysis of procurement data:** The MRA team analysed procurement data from the e-procurement system to identify high-volume and high-cost product categories, as well as any gaps in data capture that could hinder SPP monitoring and evaluation.
5. **Benchmarking and best practices:** The MRA drew upon international best practices and standards, such as the ISO 20400 Sustainable Procurement Guidance (ISO, 2017), to ensure alignment with global SPP trends and to learn from the experiences of other countries.

The MRA revealed that the prioritised product categories present significant opportunities for SPP implementation due to their high procurement volumes and also the readiness of the market to switch to sustainable alternatives.

Suppliers across the prioritised categories expressed willingness to adapt to SPP requirements, highlighting the potential for market transformation through clear guidelines, capacity building, and government incentives. The MRA also underscored the importance of a phased approach to SPP implementation, starting with pilot projects for initial products and gradually expanding to other categories and sectors. This phased approach, as outlined in the SPP Action Plan, allows for continuous learning, refinement of SPP tools and processes, and effective capacity building for procurement practitioners and suppliers.

Based on the findings of the MRA, the SPP Action Plan identifies eight prioritised product categories. Of these categories, four have been selected as initial products for the pilot phase of SPP implementation:

1. **Computers**, including Laptops and Desktops
2. **Water Dispensing Solutions**, replacing Single-Use Water Bottles with Fountains and Water-Dispensers
3. **Eco-Friendly Vehicles**, including Hybrid and Electric Vehicles
4. **Sustainable Paper**, including Recycled and Forest-Certified Paper Supplies

These initial products have been selected based on their potential for rapid implementation and the availability of relevant guidelines at international and continental levels. The SPP Action Plan outlines a pilot phase, where selected procuring entities will conduct pilot tenders for these categories, using the sustainability criteria and procurement approaches provided in the SPP Guidelines. The insights gained from the pilot tenders will inform the refinement of the guidelines and the broader rollout of SPP implementation in Rwanda.

The other 4 product categories are strong candidates for SPP, recommended by leading institutions and shall be considered for the next sequence of products in the SPP implementation plan and shall be supported by second round of market analysis, where necessary:

5. **Organic Fertilisers**, including waste management within agriculture
6. **Energy-efficient Electrical Devices**, including LED Lighting, Air Conditioning Units, and Electrical Transformers
7. **Sustainable Construction and Building Management**, including Green Housing Initiatives
8. **Sustainable Furniture**, sourced from Sustainably Managed Forests

These initial products have been selected based on their spend values, potential for rapid implementation, and the availability of sustainable alternatives in the Rwandan market. The SPP Guidelines provide detailed guidance on the procurement of these initial product categories, to support procurement practitioners in effectively integrating sustainability considerations into their procurement activities. The pilot phase for the initial products will involve selected procuring entities conducting pilot tenders and applying the sustainability criteria and procurement approaches outlined in the SPP Guidelines. The lessons learned from these pilot tenders will be used to refine and improve the guidelines, ensuring that they are practical, effective, and well-suited to the Rwandan context before a full-scale rollout of SPP implementation.

The MRA also highlighted the need to improve data capture mechanisms in the e-procurement system to enable more in-depth market analysis and effective monitoring and evaluation of SPP implementation. This finding has informed the SPP Policy's emphasis on the importance of stakeholder engagement, communication, and monitoring and evaluation to ensure the successful implementation of SPP in Rwanda.

Furthermore, the MRA assessed the need for integrating gender-responsive public procurement (GRPP) principles into the SPP framework, aligning with Rwanda's Revised National Gender

Policy (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, 2021) and key international good practice on GRPP such as UN Women and International Trade Centre (2024), UN Women (2023), and International Trade Centre (2022-2025). The analysis revealed significant opportunities for leveraging public procurement to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment in Rwanda. Women-owned businesses can be supported with measures such as capacity building, access to finance, and simplified bidding procedures to enable their effective participation in SPP. Based on these findings, the MRA recommends integrating GRPP considerations into the SPP Policy, SPP Action Plan, and SPP Guidelines, setting specific targets for sourcing from women-owned businesses, and providing tailored support to women entrepreneurs to enhance their competitiveness in public procurement opportunities.

By offering a comprehensive assessment of the market's readiness for sustainable procurement, identifying prioritised product categories and initial products for the pilot phase, and highlighting key opportunities and challenges, the MRA has ensured that the SPP framework is evidence-based, practical, and well-suited to the Rwandan context. The insights gained from the MRA will continue to guide the implementation of SPP in Rwanda, contributing to the achievement of the country's sustainable development goals and the transition towards a green, resilient, and inclusive economy.

Based on these findings, the SPP Policy proposes a comprehensive implementation plan that includes the development of SPP guidelines and criteria for prioritised products, capacity building for procurement practitioners and suppliers, pilot projects, and the integration of SPP into the e-procurement system.

3.3 Analysis and Development of Policy Options

The consultation process for the introduction of the SPP framework enabled the identification of several policy options, each assessed against a robust set of sustainability criteria. The options were evaluated for their environmental, social, and economic impacts, providing a balanced view of potential outcomes:

- ❖ **Option 1: Baseline Scenario (no change):** Continued application of existing procurement practices without integration of SPP principles.
- ❖ **Option 2: Gradual Integration of SPP:** Phased implementation of sustainability criteria across high-impact categories, accompanied by targeted training and legal adjustments.
- ❖ **Option 3: Full Integration of SPP:** Immediate overhaul of procurement practices to incorporate comprehensive sustainability criteria across all categories.

Each option was analysed for its comparative advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages of gradual integration of SPP (Option 2):

- ❖ Allows for adjustment periods, reducing initial resistance and providing time for training and capacity building.

- ❖ Offers flexibility in refining criteria based on pilot outcomes, enabling evidence-based policy refinement.
- ❖ Facilitates stakeholder engagement and buy-in, fostering a collaborative approach to SPP implementation.
- ❖ Enables targeted allocation of resources to high-impact categories, maximising the efficiency of SPP efforts.

Disadvantages of gradual integration of SPP (Option 2):

- ❖ A slower pace of change might delay the realisation of environmental benefits and could be less impactful in the short term.
- ❖ Potential risk of inconsistent application of SPP principles across different categories, leading to fragmented implementation.

Advantages of full integration of SPP (Option 3):

- ❖ Maximises impact on sustainability goals by comprehensively addressing all procurement categories.
- ❖ Sends a strong market signal, boosting green innovation and encouraging suppliers to rapidly adapt to SPP requirements.
- ❖ Aligns quickly with international standards, enhancing Rwanda's global reputation as a leader in sustainable development.
- ❖ Demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability, potentially attracting international support and investment.

Disadvantages of full integration of SPP (Option 3):

- ❖ Requires significant upfront investment in training and system changes, straining institutional resources.
- ❖ Higher initial resistance from stakeholders due to the rapid pace of change and potential disruptions to established practices.
- ❖ Potential supply chain disruptions as suppliers struggle to meet comprehensive SPP criteria across all categories simultaneously.
- ❖ Limited opportunity for iterative learning and refinement of SPP criteria based on pilot experiences.

The preferred policy option, as recommended for ministerial approval, is Option 2, which is the gradual integration of SPP. This option balances the need for immediate action with the practical considerations of market and institutional readiness. By focusing on high-impact categories and allowing for a phased implementation, Option 2 enables Rwanda to make significant progress

towards its sustainability goals while minimising disruptions and ensuring the long-term success of the SPP programme. The gradual approach also allows for continuous improvement and refinement of SPP criteria based on lessons learned from pilot projects, ensuring that the policy remains responsive to evolving market conditions and stakeholder needs. Ultimately, Option 2 provides a sustainable and pragmatic path towards comprehensive adoption of SPP practices in Rwanda, aligning with the country's strategies and policy framework for sustainable development.

4 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

The development of the SPP Policy involved extensive consultations with a wide range of key stakeholders, including government departments, private sector representatives, civil society organisations, and development partners. These consultations were conducted through various channels, including workshops, interviews, and surveys, to gather insights, recommendations, and feedback on the proposed policy.

4.1 Public Sector

Key government departments and agencies consulted during the policy development process include:

1. **Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, MINECOFIN**, played a crucial role in aligning the SPP Policy with national economic and budgetary priorities. The ministry expressed strong support for the policy, emphasising its potential to drive sustainable economic growth and attract green investment.
2. **The Rwanda Public Procurement Authority, RPPA**, provided valuable insights into the practical aspects of implementing SPP, as the lead agency responsible for overseeing public procurement in Rwanda. The authority fully endorsed the policy and committed to developing the necessary guidelines, tools, and training programmes to support its implementation.
3. **The Rwanda Environment Management Authority, REMA**, provided technical guidance on integrating environmental sustainability criteria into the SPP Policy. The agency welcomed the policy as a significant step towards achieving Rwanda's green growth and climate resilience objectives.
4. **The Rwanda Standard Boards, RSB**, offered expertise on product standards, certification, and labelling schemes. The board expressed its readiness to collaborate with RPPA in developing and implementing SPP standards and guidelines.
5. **Ministry of Infrastructure, MININFRA**, plays a crucial role in implementing sustainable practices in construction, transportation, and other infrastructure sectors, as the ministry responsible for overseeing infrastructure development in Rwanda. Their involvement ensures sustainability considerations are integrated into infrastructure projects. MININFRA's Transport division provided input on prioritising mobility

solutions to reduce pollution and CO2 emissions, which informed the selection criteria for eco-friendly vehicles aligned with Rwanda's environmental goals.

6. **The Rwanda Inspectorate and Competition Authority, RICA**, as the agency responsible for consumer protection and fair competition, provided valuable insights into the social and environmental aspects of the SPP Policy. The authority endorsed the policy and stressed the need to rethink existing policies that may have negative impacts on consumer health and the environment, such as those contributing to land and soil degradation. RICA emphasised the importance of integrating consumer welfare and environmental sustainability considerations into public procurement practices, ensuring that the SPP Policy delivers tangible benefits to the Rwandan population.
7. **The Rwanda Information Society Authority, RISA**, is mandated to plan and coordinate the implementation of the national ICT for Development agenda. The authority plays a crucial role in integrating digital solutions to support the SPP Framework.
8. **The Rwanda Housing Authority, RHA**, is responsible for setting standards for the construction industry and promoting green building practices in Rwanda. As the lead implementer in the housing sector, RHA oversees the procurement of housing and the implementation of national guidelines as part of its mandate.
9. **The City of Kigali, CoK**, is tasked with providing the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of its 1.5 million residents. Its mission is to "Build and Sustain a City of Character, Vibrant Economy, and Diversity through strong partnerships with stakeholders to provide responsive, rapid, and effective urban development."
10. **The Rwanda Energy Group, REG**, plays a key role in the energy sector, comprising two subsidiaries: the Energy Development Corporation Limited (EDCL) and the Energy Utility Corporation Limited (EUCL). REG's involvement in the SPP Framework focuses on energy-efficient product subcategories.
11. **The Rwanda Green Fund, FONERWA**'s mandate is to invest in public and private projects that create transformational change, incubate and accelerate high-impact green ventures, and attract climate finance and green investment. FONERWA is strategically positioned to enhance environmental and climate resilience by participating in SPP projects.
12. **The University of Rwanda, UoR**, as an academic institution, contributes to market research and the development of sustainable product guidelines. UoR supports procurement entities by providing insights into prioritised and other sustainable products available in both local and international markets.

4.2 Private Stakeholders

Key stakeholders, such as the Private Sector Foundation (PSF) and the Rwanda Association of Manufacturers (RAM), were actively engaged and consulted during the policy development process. The Market Readiness Analysis conducted as part of the policy provided valuable insights into the perspectives and needs of various suppliers. Key findings from the MRA include:

- ❖ The need for a clear and early signal to the market that the Government of Rwanda is embarking on an SPP journey, enabling suppliers and contractors to prepare for the increased demand for sustainable products. This will also allow them to respond effectively to sustainability criteria in future procurement tenders.
- ❖ Suppliers across prioritised categories expressed willingness to adapt to SPP requirements but highlighted the need for clear product guidelines, capacity building, and incentives to support the transition.
- ❖ SMEs emphasised the importance of targeted support measures to enable their participation in sustainable public procurement, such as training, access to finance, tax incentives and simplified bidding procedures.
- ❖ Suppliers in sectors such as organic fertilisers, IT equipment, and eco-friendly vehicles identified specific challenges and opportunities related to the availability of sustainable alternatives, market demand, and regulatory frameworks.

While generally supportive of the SPP Policy, some private sector representatives raised concerns about the potential impact on SMEs and the need for a phased approach to implementation. These concerns were addressed by incorporating provisions for SME support and pilot projects in the final policy design.

4.3 Civil Society

Civil society organisations, such as Transparency International Rwanda (TI-RW), which participated as a member of the National Task Force (NTF), contributed significantly to the development of all documents under the SPP Framework. These organisations were consulted to ensure that the SPP Policy adequately addressed social and environmental concerns. Broadly, civil society endorsed the policy, emphasising the importance of transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement in its implementation.

4.4 Development Partners

Development partners, including the World Bank, the German Development Bank (KfW), and the French Development Agency (AFD), provided technical and financial support for the development of the SPP Policy. They commended Rwanda's leadership in promoting sustainable public procurement and expressed their commitment to supporting the implementation of the policy through capacity building, knowledge sharing, and financing mechanisms.

4.5 National Task Force on SPP

NTF was established during the policy development process to serve as a multi-stakeholder platform for coordination, consultation, and policy dialogue. The NTF brings together representatives from government, private sector, civil society, and academia to provide strategic guidance and recommendations on SPP policy development and implementation. The members of the NTF played a crucial role in shaping the SPP Policy by actively participating in the policy

development process, providing valuable insights and feedback, and ensuring that the policy reflects the needs and priorities of various stakeholders. The NTF's endorsement of the final policy document demonstrates the broad-based support for SPP across different sectors and groups. Moving forward, the NTF will continue to play a vital role in the implementation of the SPP Policy by facilitating knowledge sharing, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement, as well as monitoring and evaluating the progress of SPP implementation and proposing corrective actions as needed.

Overall, the stakeholder consultations revealed a high level of support and buy-in for the SPP Policy across various sectors and groups. While some concerns were raised regarding the capacity of SMEs and the need for adequate support measures, these issues were addressed in the final policy design. The inclusive and participatory approach adopted in the policy development process has laid a strong foundation for the successful implementation of SPP in Rwanda.

5 SPP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan outlines the key activities, timelines, and responsibilities necessary to operationalise Rwanda's SPP Policy and achieve its objectives. It follows the methodology outlined in the UNEP SPP Guidelines (2021), which emphasises an iterative approach for identifying priority products and developing product-specific sustainability criteria. This approach involves a continuous process of understanding the market, prioritising product categories, and developing procurement tools to implement SPP for those categories. As SPP implementation progresses, the process of understanding the Rwandan market for different product categories will be iteratively expanded.

5.1 Policy Actions

The detailed actions required for the full implementation of this policy are provided in Annexe I: Summary of Actions for Policy Implementation. This annexe outlines specific actions, responsible entities, and timelines for each step of the implementation process. The annexe serves as a practical roadmap for translating the policy's objectives into concrete actions and outcomes, ensuring alignment with Rwanda's national sustainability goals

5.2 SPP Action Plan and SPP Guidelines

The implementation plan is presented in two main documents:

1. **The SPP Action Plan** (RPPA, 2024a).: This document provides a detailed account of how to implement the SPP Policy, including specific activities, timelines, and responsibilities. It covers various aspects of SPP implementation, such as the policy and legal framework, institutional arrangements, capacity building, market engagement, and monitoring and

evaluation. The Action Plan serves as a practical guide for all stakeholders involved in the implementation process, ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to achieving the SPP Policy's objectives.

2. **The SPP Guidelines** (RPPA, 2024a): This document offers guidance to procurement practitioners on how to apply SPP principles and practices in the Rwandan context. It includes information on the prioritisation of product categories, the development of sustainability criteria, and the integration of SPP considerations throughout the procurement cycle. The SPP Guidelines are designed to be a user-friendly resource that empowers procurement professionals to make informed decisions and effectively implement SPP practices in their day-to-day work.

The SPP Action Plan and SPP Guidelines are complementary to the SPP Policy, providing the necessary operational details and practical guidance to support its effective implementation, while the policy itself outlines the overarching objectives, principles, and strategies for sustainable procurement in Rwanda.

5.3 Implementation Phases

The implementation of the SPP Policy is divided into eight main phases:

1. **Inception Phase (2023):** Establishes governance structures, hires experts, designates the SPP Focal Point, and forms the Steering Committee and National SPP Task Force.
2. **Needs Assessment Phase (2023):** Conducts an initial diagnosis, needs analysis, stakeholder mapping, and spend analysis.
3. **Development Phase (2023-2024):** Reviews the legal framework for SPP integration, develops SPP Guidelines, and creates the SPP Policy and Action Plan.
4. **Designing Phase (2023-2024):** Prioritises product groups for SPP implementation, assesses market readiness, develops SPP Product Guidelines, revises Standard Bidding Documents (SBDs), and creates training materials.
5. **Piloting Phase (2024):** Conducts a Pilot SPP Training Workshop, tests training materials, and pilots SPP Guidelines with selected entities through pilot tenders.
6. **Finalisation Phase (2024):** Integrates SPP criteria into the e-procurement system, finalises and approves SPP Product Guidelines and revised SBDs, and issues a Ministerial Order on SPP.
7. **Capacity Building Phase (2024):** Conducts SPP sensitisation sessions and a Training of Trainers programme to prepare pilot entities for SPP implementation.
8. **Implementation Phase (2024-2026):** Establishes an SPP monitoring system, certifies the SPP Training Programme, improves the legal framework, builds capacity of procurers and suppliers, develops new SPP Product Guidelines, and deploys communication strategies to promote SPP.

Capacity-building and awareness-raising activities will be conducted throughout the implementation process to ensure that all stakeholders have the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively implement and support SPP practices. This includes training for

procurement professionals, suppliers, and decision-makers, as well as public awareness campaigns to promote understanding and support for sustainable procurement among the general public.

The implementation plan also emphasises the importance of market engagement and the development of local sustainable industries. By creating demand for sustainable goods and services through public procurement, the plan aims to stimulate innovation, encourage the adoption of sustainable practices by businesses, and contribute to the overall resilience and competitiveness of the Rwandan economy.

5.4 Institutional Arrangements

The success of the Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) Framework in Rwanda depends on the establishment of appropriate structures and resources. While RPPA holds the mandate to lead the implementation of the SPP process, full support from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) is critical at all levels. To ensure effective implementation, RPPA will establish and coordinate the following key structures, along with ensuring close collaboration with other institutions.

5.4.1 RPPA SPP Unit

RPPA will establish a dedicated SPP Unit within the authority to act as the central focal point for coordinating the implementation of the SPP Framework across all government entities. This unit will have responsibility for providing leadership, issuing guidance, and managing the key functions related to SPP, as outlined below:

- **Leadership and Coordination:** The SPP Unit will provide overall leadership and coordination for the SPP process, ensuring consistent implementation of sustainability principles in procurement activities across all government entities. It will develop product-specific guidelines, facilitate supplier engagement, and oversee the alignment of procurement practices with national sustainability goals.
- **Legal Integration:** The SPP Unit, in collaboration with the RPPA legal team, will ensure that sustainability criteria are fully integrated into procurement laws, regulations, and standard bidding documents (SBDs). This includes ensuring compliance with national and international legal frameworks to support seamless SPP implementation.
- **Capacity Building:** The unit will take charge of developing and delivering training and capacity-building programs for procurement officials, suppliers, and other stakeholders. These programs will focus on enhancing the understanding and application of sustainability criteria in procurement processes.
- **Research and Innovation:** The SPP Unit will expand RPPA's existing research capabilities to conduct in-depth analysis on sustainable products available in the market. In collaboration with the Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) and academic institutions, it

will work towards establishing local ecolabels, further supporting the development and identification of sustainable products in Rwanda.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** The SPP Unit will develop and implement a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to track the progress of SPP implementation. The unit will conduct regular assessments, compile reports, and provide recommendations to ensure ongoing compliance and improvement in SPP practices.
- **Communications and Outreach:** The unit will also manage communications related to the SPP Framework, promoting awareness and engagement with key stakeholders, including development partners, suppliers, and government agencies. It will ensure that updates on SPP progress and key developments are communicated effectively.

5.4.2 Leading Regulatory Bodies

RPPA, in coordination with the following regulatory institutions, will ensure that proper standards and regulations for SPP are set and adhered to. These institutions will revise product-specific procurement guidelines and integrate sustainability criteria into tender documents, supporting the transition to sustainable products:

- ❖ Rwanda Standards Board (RSB)
- ❖ Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA)
- ❖ Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB)
- ❖ Rwanda Energy Group (REG)
- ❖ Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA)
- ❖ Rwanda Housing Authority (RHA)
- ❖ Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA)
- ❖ Rwanda Transport Development Agency (RTDA)
- ❖ Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority (FDA)
- ❖ Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC)
- ❖ Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA)
- ❖ Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA)
- ❖ Office of the Auditor General (OAG)

5.4.3 Private Sector Support Institutions

Under the guidance of the following institutions, suppliers and contractors will be supported to shift towards more sustainable products. These institutions will play a key role in helping the market adapt to the new sustainability requirements:

- ❖ Rwanda Inspectorate, Competition and Consumer Protection Authority (RICA)
- ❖ Private Sector Federation (PSF)
- ❖ Rwanda Association of Manufacturers (RAM)

5.4.4 Government Funding Institutions

The shift towards sustainable products requires substantial financial support for the private sector. The following institutions will provide the necessary resources to facilitate business development and help suppliers meet the new SPP criteria:

- ❖ Rwanda Green Fund (FONERWA)
- ❖ Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA)
- ❖ Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN)
- ❖ National Bank of Rwanda (BNR)
- ❖ Rwanda Development Board (RDB)

5.4.5 Research and Resource Institutions

To promote the ethical and sustainable procurement of products, and to foster innovation within the local market, the following institutions will conduct research and provide support to both RPPA and the business community:

- ❖ University of Rwanda (UR)
- ❖ Transparency International Rwanda (TI-RW)
- ❖ National Industrial Research and Development Agency (NIRDA)

5.5 Monitoring & Evaluation of the Policy

Effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are crucial for the successful implementation of the SPP Policy. The M&E framework will track the progress of SPP objectives, identify challenges, and inform necessary corrective actions to ensure alignment with Rwanda's sustainability goals.

The framework will also align with the Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems (MAPS) criteria and the Model of Excellence in Public Procurement. MAPS is an internationally recognised tool for assessing public procurement systems, while the Model of

Excellence provides a comprehensive framework for best practices in procurement. By incorporating these standards, Rwanda ensures its SPP practices meet international benchmarks and continuously improve.

RPPA shall develop a comprehensive M&E framework with specific indicators within nine months of policy adoption. The framework will include both quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure outcomes and impacts of SPP implementation.

5.5.1 Frequency of Review

RPPA will conduct an annual review of the SPP Policy's implementation to assess compliance with sustainability criteria and monitor progress. A comprehensive mid-term review will take place every three years to evaluate the long-term impact, with final evaluations aligned with the policy's five-year life-cycle. Procuring entities are expected to conduct internal monitoring and evaluation at least once or twice a year, producing a report. RPPA will oversee and review these reports either annually or biennially.

5.5.2 Roles and Responsibilities

- ❖ RPPA is the lead agency responsible for overseeing the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the SPP Policy.
- ❖ The SPP Unit within RPPA will collect and analyse data, producing annual reports.
- ❖ RPPA will collaborate closely with MINECOFIN and the Ministry of Environment (MoE) to ensure alignment between SPP and broader national sustainability objectives.
- ❖ Independent auditors will be engaged periodically to verify the accuracy and integrity of M&E reports.
- ❖ RPPA will train internal assessors from various institutions on the SPP Model of Excellence for M&E. These assessors will conduct self-assessments on the implementation of the SPP Framework at least annually.
- ❖ To enhance learning and promote objectivity, assessors from different institutions may team up to conduct joint evaluations of their respective assessments once a year.

5.5.3 Data Collection and Reporting

Data will be collected quarterly by procuring entities using predefined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that focus on environmental, social, and economic outcomes. These include compliance with sustainability criteria, supplier performance, and environmental impact. Progress reports will be submitted annually to RPPA. The results will be made publicly available through annual reports and the RPPA's dedicated online platform.

5.5.4 Use of M&E Findings

M&E findings will be used to inform policy adjustments at a national level, improve the sustainability criteria for future tenders, and support capacity-building initiatives. Regular

reports will be disseminated to stakeholders to ensure transparency and foster continuous improvement.

5.5.5 Corrective Actions

If significant gaps or delays are identified, corrective actions will be taken, including additional training for procurement entities or adjustments to sustainability criteria. RPPA will issue recommendations to address shortcomings and ensure entities comply with the SPP Policy.

5.5.6 Imihigo Performance Contracts

The SPP performance criteria and indicators will be integrated into Imihigo performance contracts at national and district levels. Each entity's progress towards these targets will be monitored through the Imihigo process, and results will be factored into the national evaluation of government performance. This ensures that SPP objectives are included in the annual performance targets of procuring entities, promoting accountability and enhancing stakeholder commitment.

6 IMPACT OF THE SPP POLICY

In addition to the expected sustainability impact of the policy, the anticipated impact on the business environment, as well as on Rwanda's equality, unity and reconciliation process is discussed in the sections below.

6.1 Change of Mindset

It is increasingly acknowledged that the concept of sustainability revolves around transforming our behaviours and the way we perceive consumption and production. While the prevailing assumption has been that demand influences supply, the converse holds true as well: the manner and nature of our production can shape consumers' needs and drive the demand for more sustainable products. If both the demand and supply sides recognise their mutual ability to alter consumption and production patterns, the SPP initiative will become a resounding success for Rwanda, setting an example in challenging the existing trend that has dominated public procurement over the past decades. We are undoubtedly reaching a critical juncture where public procurement must be not only sustainable but also ethical, given the proliferation of greenwashing practices over time. These aspects should not be overlooked by policymakers if Rwanda aspires to foster a new narrative and generate long-lasting social and environmental impact.

6.2 Impact on Business

The implementation of the SPP Policy is expected to have a significant positive impact on Rwanda's business environment. By creating a strong demand for sustainable goods, services,

and infrastructure, the policy will stimulate the growth of local sustainable industries and encourage businesses to adopt more environmentally and socially responsible practices. This, in turn, will enhance the competitiveness of Rwandan businesses in both domestic and international markets as sustainability becomes an increasingly important factor in consumer and investor decision-making.

The SPP Policy also presents significant opportunities for SMEs and women-owned businesses. The capacity-building and awareness-raising components of the policy will help SMEs and women-owned businesses to better understand and meet sustainability requirements, enhancing their competitiveness and access to public procurement opportunities. This inclusive approach will contribute to the diversification and resilience of the Rwandan economy while promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

Furthermore, the capacity-building and awareness-raising components of the SPP Policy will help businesses, particularly SMEs, to better understand and meet the sustainability requirements of public procurement contracts. This will not only improve their access to public procurement opportunities but also enhance their overall sustainability performance and market competitiveness.

6.3 Impact on Equality, Unity and Reconciliation

The SPP Policy is expected to have a positive impact on Rwanda's equality, unity, and reconciliation process. By promoting social responsibility and inclusivity in public procurement, the policy will contribute to the creation of a more equitable and cohesive society.

The SPP Policy includes specific provisions to encourage the participation of underrepresented groups, such as women, youth, and people with disabilities, in public procurement. This will be achieved through targeted capacity building, preferential treatment in the evaluation of bids, and the promotion of supplier diversity. By providing these groups with increased access to economic opportunities, the policy will help to reduce social and economic disparities, foster greater inclusion, and promote a sense of shared prosperity.

Furthermore, the SPP Policy emphasises the importance of fair labour practices and the support of local communities. By requiring suppliers to adhere to high standards of social responsibility, the policy will contribute to the improvement of working conditions, the protection of workers' rights, and the strengthening of local communities. This, in turn, will help to build trust, promote social cohesion, and support the ongoing process of reconciliation in Rwanda.

The consultative and participatory approach taken in the development and implementation of the SPP Policy also contributes to the promotion of unity and reconciliation. By engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including government entities, the private sector, civil society organisations, and local communities, the policy fosters dialogue, collaboration, and a shared sense of ownership in the pursuit of sustainable development.

Overall, the SPP Policy's focus on social equity, inclusion, and community support is expected to have a positive impact on Rwanda's equality, unity, and reconciliation process. By leveraging

the power of public procurement to drive social change, the policy will contribute to the creation of a more just, harmonious, and sustainable society.

7 POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATE

The Rwanda SPP Policy is designed to be a dynamic and evolving framework capable of adapting to changes in the economic, environmental, and social landscapes. The RPPA is responsible for reviewing and updating this policy to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. This process allows for the incorporation of implementation experiences, emerging priorities, and stakeholder feedback into the policy framework.

Review Process:

- ❖ **Scheduled Reviews:** The SPP Policy will undergo a formal review every three years. These reviews are timed to align with broader economic and environmental strategy updates, ensuring that the SPP Policy remains synchronised with national and international sustainability goals.
- ❖ **Implementation Feedback:** Ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities provide continuous feedback on the implementation of the policy. This feedback is systematically collected and analysed to identify areas where the policy may be improved or needs adjustment.
- ❖ **Stakeholder Consultation:** A crucial part of the review process involves consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, suppliers, NGOs, and the business community. These consultations help to gather diverse perspectives on the effectiveness of the policy and suggestions for its improvement.

Update Mechanism:

- ❖ **Policy Revision Committee:** A dedicated committee comprising members from relevant ministries, procurement authorities, and sustainability experts is tasked with overseeing the review and update process. This committee is responsible for proposing amendments to the policy based on the review findings.
- ❖ **Public Drafts and Comment Period:** Before any changes are finalised, draft revisions are made available for public comment. This transparency ensures that all interested parties have the opportunity to contribute to the policy development process.
- ❖ **Final Approval and Implementation:** After incorporating public and stakeholder feedback, the revised policy is submitted for final approval by the appropriate governmental bodies. Once approved, the updated policy is officially published and disseminated through various channels to ensure that all affected parties are informed of the changes.

Timeline:

- ❖ **Pre-Review Preparation:** Six months before the scheduled review, preparatory activities begin, including data collection and stakeholder outreach.
- ❖ **Review Phase:** The formal review process takes approximately three months, during which the policy is thoroughly examined and revisions are drafted.
- ❖ **Public Consultation:** A one-month public consultation period follows, allowing for wide-ranging input on the proposed changes.
- ❖ **Finalisation and Approval:** Final revisions and approvals are completed within two months, ensuring that the updated policy can be implemented swiftly.

This structured approach to reviewing and updating the SPP Policy ensures that it remains a robust and effective tool for promoting sustainability in public procurement, capable of adapting to changing conditions and enhancing its impact over time.

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ANNEXES

Annexe I: Summary of Actions for Policy Implementation

Policy Action	Responsible	Time frame
Key Outcome 1: A strong SPP Legal Framework has been established		
Revise Standard Bidding Documents (SBDs) to incorporate sustainability criteria, ensuring their application throughout the procurement cycle	RPPA	2024-2025
Issue a Ministerial Order on SPP to make sustainability requirements mandatory for selected products, providing a legal basis for implementation	MINECOFIN, RPPA	2025-2026
Key Outcome 2: The capacity of RPPA to deliver on SPP Goals has been strengthened		
Establish a dedicated SPP Unit within RPPA to coordinate, oversee, and drive the implementation of SPP practices across all procuring entities, ensuring alignment with national sustainability goals and providing technical support and capacity building for procurement officers	RPPA	2025
Key Outcome 3: Full coverage of SPP across the procurement cycle has been achieved		
Integrate sustainability criteria into the national e-procurement system to automate the evaluation of sustainability compliance, streamline procurement processes, and ensure transparency in all tenders.	RPPA	2025
Key Outcome 4: The capacity of all stakeholders on SPP has been strengthened		
Build the capacity of procurement staff, user's department and suppliers to effectively apply sustainability criteria, including life-cycle costing (LCC) and gender-responsive procurement, and ensure compliance with sustainability standards throughout public procurement activities	RPPA	2024-2026
Key Outcome 5: A robust M&E Model of Excellence for SPP has been established		
Develop key performance criteria and indicators to track progress, outcomes, and compliance with	RPPA	2025

sustainability criteria and to enable self-assessment approaches across all procuring entities		
Key Outcome 6: Clear SPP Product Guidelines have been developed		
Develop and refine additional SPP Product Guidelines for identified product categories as required, identify relevant product ecolabels, etc.	RPPA	2025-2026
Key Outcome 7: SPP tenders for prioritised products have been piloted		
Support institutions to conduct pilot tenders for initial product categories to test and refine SPP practices before full-scale implementation	RPPA, selected procurement entities	2024-2025
Key Outcome 8: SPP has been effectively integrated into contract management		
Integrate SPP Outcomes into Imihigo performance contracts at national and district levels to ensure accountability and drive implementation	RPPA, MINECOFIN, MINALOC	2025-2026
Key Outcome 9: Interdisciplinary coordination and collaboration on SPP have been ensured		
Engage with relevant ministries to develop joint guidelines for SPP implementation, ensuring cross-sectoral alignment and coherence	RPPA, relevant ministries	2025-2026
Key Outcome 10: SPP has been effectively promoted, and stakeholder engagement has been strengthened		
Develop a communication plan & strategy as outlined in the SPP Policy and SPP Action Plan to raise awareness at all levels across all institutions and involve all stakeholders	RPPA	2024-2026
Key Outcome 11: The capacity of the market to adopt more sustainable products is regularly assessed		
Conduct regular market readiness assessments to evaluate the availability of sustainable products and develop a phased scaling model for introducing sustainability criteria in additional product categories based on readiness and impact.	RPPA	Annually from 2025
Key Outcome 12: Ownership from key SPP stakeholders has been secured		

Establish an SPP stakeholder advisory committee with representatives from key sectors to provide ongoing feedback and guidance on SPP implementation.	RPPA, PSF, REMA	2024-2025
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