InnoHSupport
Supporting Innovation in Healthcare Public Procurement

D2.2 – Innovation procurement toolkit

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InnoHSupport
Supporting Innovation in Healthcare Public Procurement

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Authors	
Esmee Peters	University of Twente
Reviewers	
Diana Cortes	Science & Innovation Link Office
Natalia Norambuena	Science & Innovation Link Office

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1.0	30/05/2025	Esmee Peters, UTwente	Final review – annex added, and submission date added

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List of Abbreviations

EE	Executive Education
OMC	Open Market Consultation
PCP	Pre-Commercial-Procurement
PPI	Public Procurement of Innovation
R&D	Research and Development
WP	Work Package

Executive Summary

As part of InnoHSupport's mission to foster an inclusive, interconnected, and effective innovation ecosystem for healthcare procurement in Europe, D2.2 – Innovation procurement toolkit has been developed, including a collection of online healthcare training materials.
Ten new distinct InnoHSupport learning resources and other 56 additional resources have been mapped. All are freely accessible on the InnoHSupport AGORA platform. While each resource is designed to be used independently, we also offer a suggested reading path to support ease of use and comprehension.

This deliverable outlines the development of the 'Healthcare Innovation Toolkit,' which was created in four key steps. This document contains the following sections:

- **Section 1. Introduction.** This section provides a general introduction to the deliverable, including the objective, linkages to other work packages and deliverables, and an outline.
- **Section 2. Step 1: Contextualization – Identifying Barriers to Healthcare Procurement Innovation.** The foundation for this toolkit was established in deliverable D2.1, which analyzed barriers to the public procurement of innovation. These were categorized into five groups: (1) Cultural Barriers, (2) Legal and Procedural Complexity, (3) Lack of Knowledge and Skills, (4) Supplier-Specific Barriers, and (5) Awareness and Perception Issues. These categories helped define the needs and requirements addressed by the toolkit resources.
- **Section 3: Toolkit Design.** This chapter details the carefully defined requirements for constructing the toolkit and the online platform hosting it. To inform our design, we reviewed relevant examples—such as the PREPARE and PROCEDIN projects—for inspiration. Based on this, TicBiomed led the development of our own tailored toolkit.
- **Section 4: Mapping of External Resources.** Guided by the requirements from Chapter 2, we conducted desk research to identify existing healthcare-specific learning materials. A total of 56 relevant resources were identified and incorporated into the toolkit.
- **Step 5: New Resources Development.** To address gaps in existing materials and ensure the toolkit's added value, we carried out a new needs analysis. This led to the creation of ten new learning resources, developed in collaboration with project partners and leveraging their broad expertise and networks.
- **Conclusion and Next Steps.** The final section (chapter 6) discusses the toolkit's sustainability. This includes plans for promotion, ongoing development of resources, and integration into training materials to ensure long-term impact and usability.

1.   Introduction

The InnoHSupport project (GA no. 101157552) aims to drive innovation within the healthcare procurement ecosystem by addressing key challenges that hinder the adoption and implementation of cutting-edge solutions. Funded under the Horizon Europe program and supported by the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA), this initiative seeks to empower a diverse range of stakeholders, including SMEs, startups, public procurers, and research organizations, by providing strategic support and fostering collaboration. The project is structured around three main pillars:

- Capacity building
- Tailored advisory services
- Matchmaking

These pillars work in synergy to offer comprehensive support through training sessions, executive interventions, coaching, and methodologies tailored to innovation procurement. InnoHSupport also facilitates networking opportunities, including innovation showcases and partnership matchmaking, to accelerate the growth of healthcare innovators.

With a consortium of seven partners spanning six countries, InnoHSupport combines expertise from academia, industry, and public sectors to create a dynamic innovation ecosystem. By aligning stakeholders' efforts and resources, the project lays the groundwork for sustainable and impactful advancements in healthcare procurement practices across Europe.

1.1   Deliverable objective and scope

This document presents the design and development of the toolkit and new learning resources, as part of the T2.2 'Innovation procurement toolkit', led by the University of Twente as the WP2 leader. The objective of this task is to produce a set of digital learning resources relevant to all key stakeholder groups (demand and supply side), with particular focus on purchasing and innovation experts and suppliers who are less experienced in innovation procurement in healthcare.

Our objective is to create ten new resources in a portfolio of 30+ resources, with a guide for their use. The resources and associated guidance will include several specific elements covering:

- Pre-Commericial-Procurement(PCP),
- Public Procurement of Innovation (PPI),
- Open Market Consultation (OMC).

This toolkit will be freely accessible through the InnoHSupport Agora. The resources will also be made available on the online community Healthcare Buyers Community, the project website, and promoted via the project social media.

1.2 Relation to other WPs and deliverables

The present deliverable is closely linked with the two other tasks of work package two. T2.1 (Resource and learning needs analysis) provides the foundation of this deliverable, as this deliverable is based on the barriers and learning needs analyzed in D2.1 (more information in section 3). Similarly, these learning resources will be an important feature of T2.3 in the Executive Education (EE) Program. At the same time, this toolkit is a standalone tool that can be used by all healthcare procurement practitioners and healthcare suppliers who are interested in specialized advisory services provided by InnoHSupport.

1.3 Introduction to the toolkit

Public procurement holds significant potential to drive innovation. However, despite regulatory reforms and financial incentives, many healthcare systems across Europe still face challenges in adopting innovative solutions. InnoHSupport responds to these challenges by offering a structured framework and capacity-building resources designed to support the effective implementation of innovation procurement processes.

Our mission is to foster an inclusive, interconnected, and effective innovation ecosystem for healthcare procurement in Europe. To achieve this, we empower healthcare procurers and suppliers through specialized advisory services and the creation of a collaborative environment—one that helps bridge gaps, reduce barriers, and promote the uptake of innovative approaches.

As part of this mission, we have developed ten new, distinct InnoHSupport learning resources and established a platform that brings together existing materials from other relevant projects. All of these resources are freely accessible on the InnoHSupport AGORA platform (https://innohsupport.eu/agora/). These digital resources are designed for all key stakeholder groups, with a particular focus on purchasing and innovation professionals, as well as suppliers who may be less experienced in healthcare innovation procurement. The resources introduce key goals and processes of innovation procurement and address implementation challenges through case studies and insights into cultural barriers. Specific guidance is also provided on PCP, PPI, and OMCs.

Of the ten new resources, seven are tailored primarily to buyers and three to suppliers. However, since a comprehensive understanding of both perspectives is critical, we encourage all users—buyers and suppliers alike—to explore the full set. While each resource can be used

independently, a suggested reading order is provided to support better understanding and application. The development of this learning resource toolkit followed a four-step process, each of which is outlined in the chapters of this deliverable:

- **Section 2, step 1: Contextualization – Identifying Barriers to healthcare procurement innovation**. Building on deliverable D2.1, this chapter analyses key barriers to innovation procurement, forming the basis for the learning needs addressed by the toolkit.
- **Section 3, step 2: Design of the Toolkit**. This chapter details the needs analysis and decision-making process behind the design of the platform used to host the learning resources.
- **Section 4, step 3: Mapping of External Resources**. With the platform in place, we mapped relevant existing resources by leveraging partner networks and identifying synergies with other healthcare projects.
- **Section 5, step 4: Development of New Resources**. After the initial mapping, a new needs analysis was conducted to identify gaps. Ten new resources were developed to address these gaps, drawing on the expertise and networks of project partners.
- **Section 6: Conclusion and Next Steps**. The final chapter outlines strategies for promoting the toolkit, ensuring its continued development, and incorporating it into broader training materials to maintain momentum and impact.

2. Contextualisation: Identifying Barriers to Healthcare Procurement Innovation

Deliverable 2.1 (developed on the EU ProcurComp framework) provided a comprehensive analysis of learning needs and resource gaps, with the goal of identifying the most significant barriers currently related to Public Procurement of Innovation (PPI) in the healthcare sector. This analysis formed the foundation for the development of both existing and newly created resources presented in this deliverable. The findings of D2.1 revealed five primary categories of barriers that continue to hinder effective innovation procurement in healthcare.

2.1 Five categories of barriers

- **Cultural Barriers**. These include widespread risk aversion among public sector stakeholders, resistance to change, the influence of internal actors, and deeply rooted organizational cultures that do not prioritize innovation or support transformative approaches.
- **Legal and Procedural Complexity.** The legal frameworks and formal procedures governing procurement are often complex and difficult to navigate, posing significant barriers to innovation adoption.
- **Lack of Knowledge and Skills.** Many stakeholders lack awareness and expertise in innovation procurement. Key gaps include difficulty identifying innovative suppliers, limited understanding of PPI mechanisms, and insufficient knowledge of current and emerging healthcare needs.
- **Supplier-Specific Barriers.** Challenges on the supplier side include weak connections with procuring bodies, low demand for innovation, and limited engagement throughout the procurement process. Additional obstacles include overly prescriptive tender specifications, insufficient procurer competencies, poor risk management, and a lack of practical case studies to guide decision-making**.**
- **Awareness and Perception Issues.** Misconceptions about the risks and benefits of innovation, failure to consider the cost of not innovating, information asymmetry between suppliers and buyers, and limited understanding of the supplier perspective all contribute to a fragmented and hesitant innovation environment.

2.2 Learning resources requirement based on barrier categories

The identification of these five barrier categories guided the definition of learning resource requirements. Four key requirements emerged:

- **Linked to barriers 1 & 5, Targeted Stakeholder Group.** To address cultural (barrier 1) and perception-related barriers (barrier 5), special emphasis should be placed on supporting purchasing and innovation professionals, as well as suppliers *who are less familiar with PPI in healthcare.*
- **Linked to barriers 2 & 3: Key Learning Topics**. In response to legal and procedural complexity (barrier 2), as well as skill gaps (barrier 3), the learning resources should cover critical topics for capacity building, including:
  - Strategies for overcoming implementation challenges
  - Case studies illustrating successful innovation procurement
  - Methods to address cultural resistance
  - Practical guidance on procurement procedures, such as Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP), Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions (PPI), and Open Market Consultations (OMCs)
- **Linked to barrier 4: Stakeholder Differentiation**. Resources must be tailored to the distinct needs of different groups—primarily *buyers* (e.g., public procurers) and *suppliers*—as highlighted by the supplier-specific barrier categorization (barrier 4). Each group encounters unique challenges and therefore requires specific forms of support, particularly in relation to supplier-specific barriers.
- **Across all barriers: Context-Specific Content**. All barriers indicate the importance of all resources being in the healthcare context, addressing sector-specific challenges, and incorporating real-world examples through evidence-based case studies to support relevance and applicability.

3.   Toolkit Design

After identifying the types of resources, we aimed to collect and create, two parallel steps followed: mapping existing resources (Section 4) and constructing the toolkit—the platform that would host both the existing and newly developed materials. This process involved three main phases: first, discussing and defining the toolkit requirements within the project team, focusing on both usability and technical feasibility; second, reviewing relevant example toolkits for reference; and third, building the toolkit (website) itself.

3.1   Toolkit requirements

This section outlines the key functional and design requirements for the Innovation Procurement Toolkit, with a focus on usability, feasibility, and alignment with project-specific preferences. The toolkit is intended to serve as an accessible, user-friendly, and updatable repository of resources to support innovation procurement in the healthcare sector. This toolkit is freely accessible through the InnoHSupport AGORA (https://innohsupport.eu/agora/).

3.1.1   Usability Requirements

To ensure a practical and effective user experience, the following usability features have been identified as essential or preferred:

Necessary Functionalities:

- Each individual resource entry must include the following metadata:
    - **Title** of the resource
    - **Brief description** of the content and its relevance
    - **Origin/Author** of the resource
    - **Direct link** to the resource (PDF, external website, or YouTube)

Preferred Functionalities:

- **Filter options** to help users browse the database more efficiently. Recommended filters include:
    - **Type of resource**: e.g., case study, guide, webinar
    - **Format of resource**: e.g., report, video, website
    - **Procurement method covered**: e.g., PPI, PCP, OMC
- **Search Functionality**:
    - **A search bar** should allow users to quickly locate specific documents or topics.

- It is recommended that users apply either filters or the search bar independently, rather than in combination, to maximize the clarity and accuracy of results.

Feasibility and Project-Specific Preferences

The development of the toolkit must also align with the technical and strategic parameters set out by the InnoHSupport project:

- The toolkit will be open access and hosted on the **InnoHSupport Agora platform** (Task 4.1).
- The toolkit should adopt the **visual identity** and branding of InnoHSupport, ensuring consistency across all project materials.
- The design should allow users to **click directly on a resource link** and be taken immediately to either of the three formats envisioned as a resource:
  - A PDF document
  - An external website
  - A YouTube video
- The toolkit must include a simple and efficient mechanism for **resource updates**, enabling members of the InnoHSupport team to add new resources as they become available.

These requirements provide the foundation for the technical development and design of the Innovation Procurement Toolkit, ensuring both functionality and alignment with user needs and project objectives

3.2   Analysis of reference toolkits

Two key resources that support this work are the PREPARE Database (https://prepare.softr.app), developed by InnoHSupport project partner Ticbiomed, and the PROCEDIN Resource Bank (https://procedin.eu/resources/), provided by project partner the University of Twente. Both repositories are described in more detail below.

- The **PROCEDIN Resource Bank** serves as a centralized collection of resources focused on circular economy and green mobility. Hosted directly on the project website, it clearly distinguishes between buyers and suppliers from the outset. While it does not include all the preferred filter options, hosting it internally provides access to a range of other materials developed by the project, including training content, a stakeholder map, and an education database. It also provides an easy option to submit an extra resource.
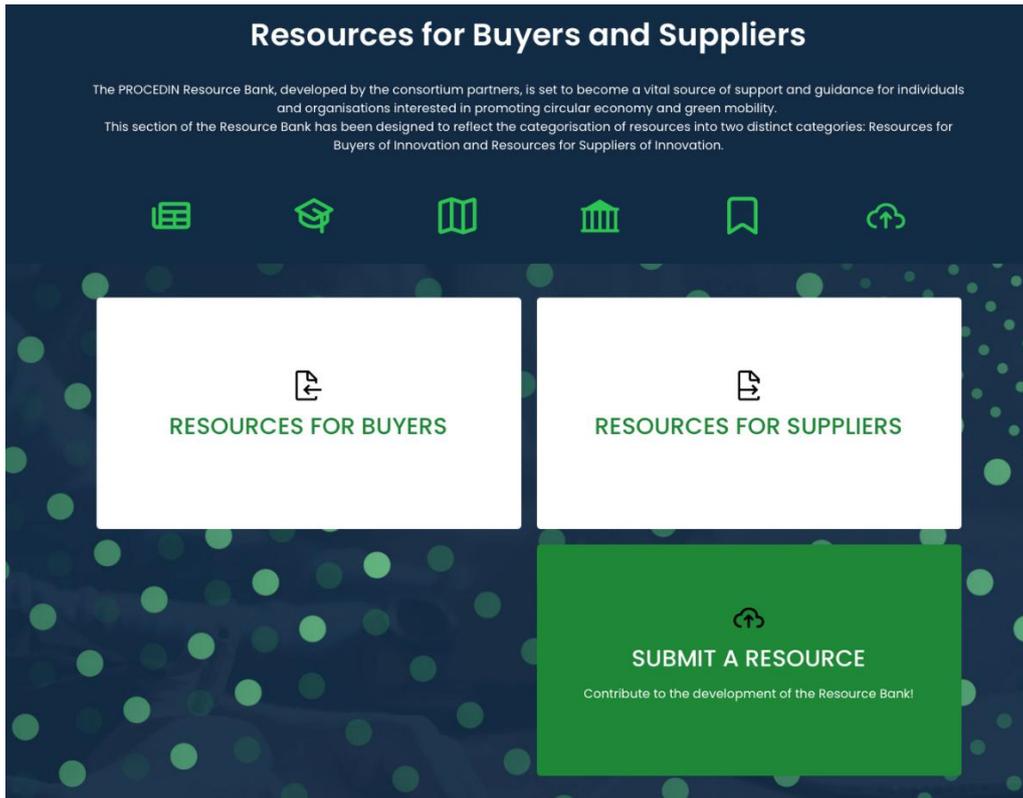
Figure 1: PROCEDIN Resource Bank

- The **PREPARE Database** is a structured repository designed to simplify the search and access to documents related to innovation procurement. It includes useful features such as filters and a search bar, enabling users to efficiently find relevant materials. The database is organized into categories covering various aspects of innovation procurement and is accessible via an external link from the PREPARE project website.
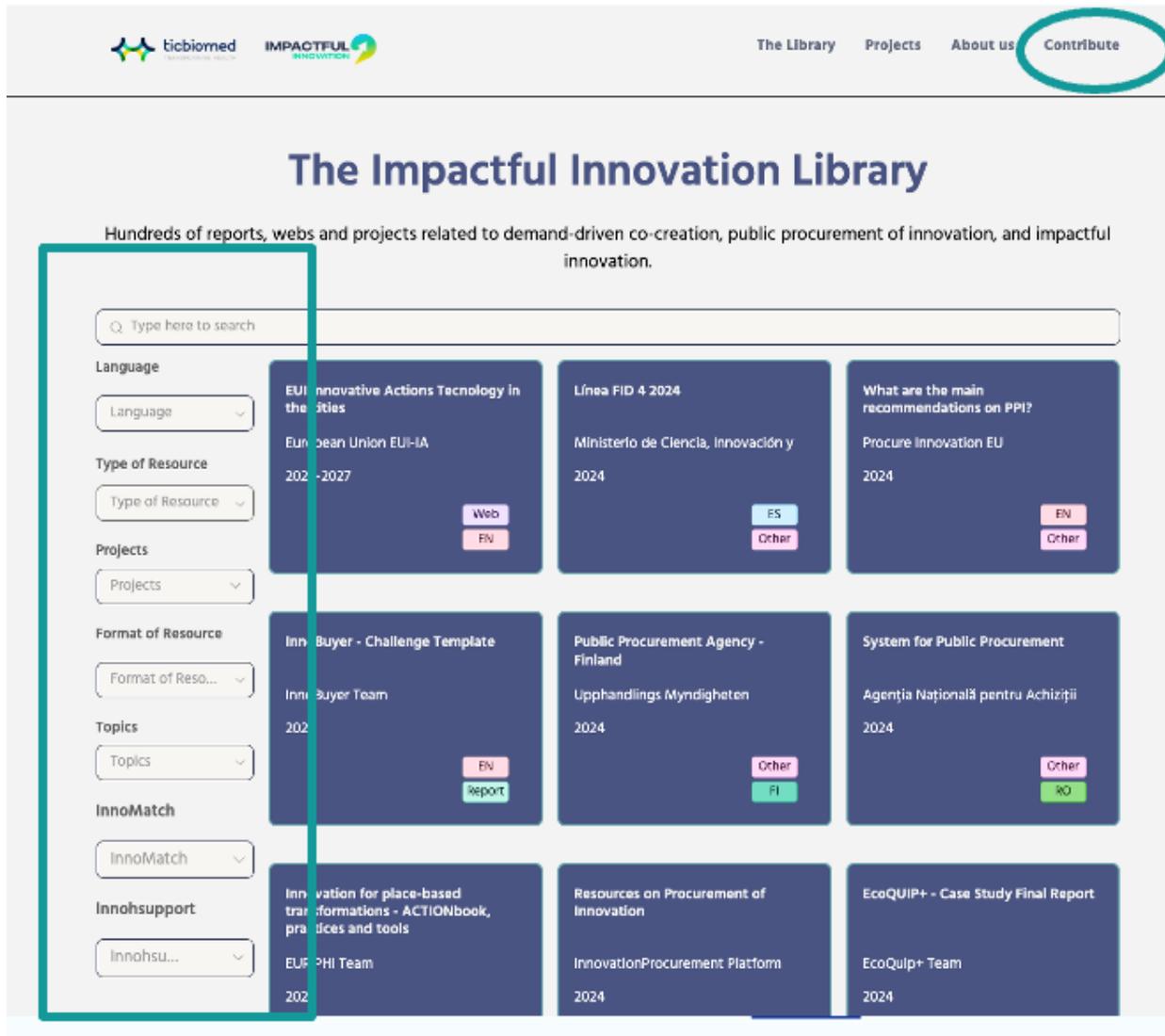
Figure 2: PREPARE Resource Bank

3.3 Construction of the Innovation Procurement Toolkit

In alignment with the requirements defined by the project consortium, the University of Twente led the development of the back-end structure of the Innovation Procurement Toolkit. This was built using an Excel file format that includes essential information for each resource, such as: *Title, Description, Origin/Author, Filter 1: Type (e.g., case study, guide, webinar), Filter 2: Format (e.g., report, video, website), Filter 3: Method (e.g., PPI, PCP, OMC), and direct link to the resource*. This format ensures that new resources can be easily added by project partners, supporting long-term usability and scalability of the toolkit.

Figure 3: Back-end InnoHSupport Resources

Drawing from their prior experience in developing similar web-based tools, Ticbiomed designed and implemented the user interface of the toolkit. The interface meets all previously defined requirements, including:

- Full display of resource metadata
- Integrated search functionality
- Filter options for refined navigation
- Seamless linkage to the Innovation Procurement AGORA platform (T4.1)
- Consistent application of the InnoHSupport visual identity
- A simple updating process to enable easy addition of new resources

Figure 4:InnoHSupport Toolkit

The toolkit hosts both the newly developed learning resources and the existing resources. In addition, the newly developed resources will also be featured in a dedicated toolkit section

within AGORA. This dual placement ensures enhanced visibility for new resources and makes them easily accessible to users across both platforms.
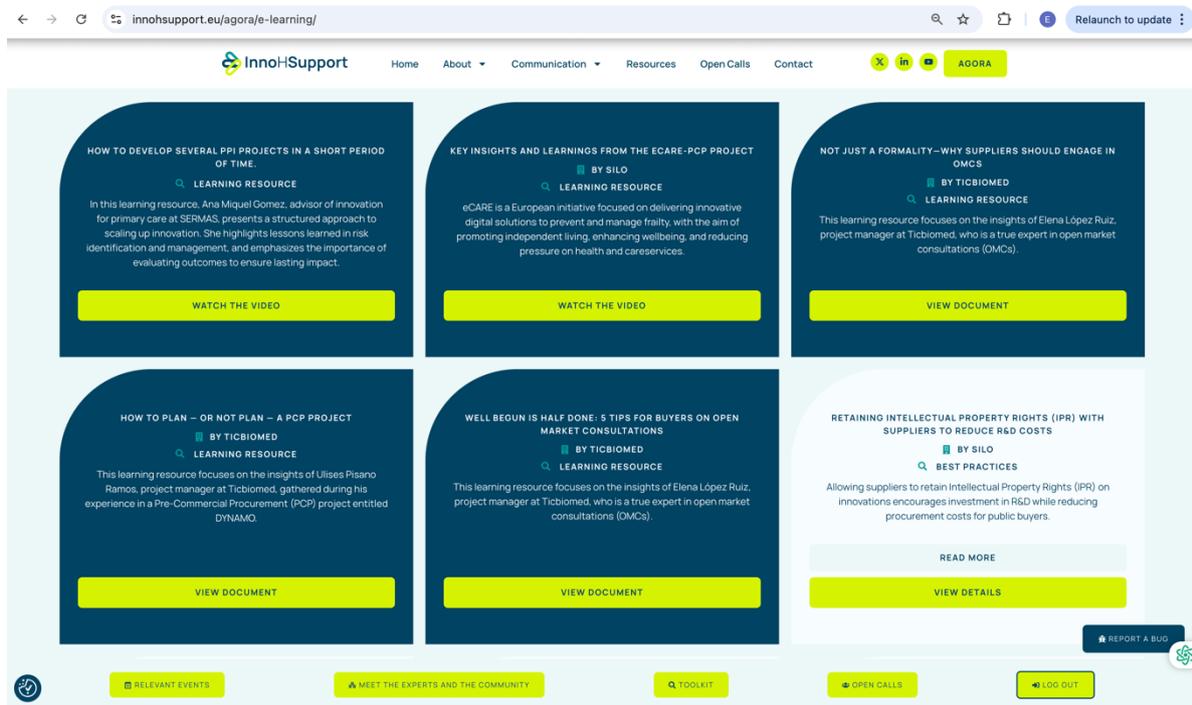

Figure 5: AGORA Toolkit section

4. Mapping of external resources

4.1 Approach

To identify relevant external resources for inclusion in the Innovation Procurement Toolkit, a multi-step approach was followed. This approach combined input from all project partners, as well as desk research from the University of Twente. The specific steps included:

- **Engaging project partners** to contribute any known or previously used resources relevant to innovation procurement in healthcare. After the desk research was completed by the University of Twente, project partners received the Excel form (figure 3) to complement existing resources they were familiar with.
- **Reaching out to the broader networks** of project partners to gather additional insights and resources beyond the immediate consortium.
- **Conducting structured desk research**, primarily through Google, to identify publicly available materials, toolkits, and databases.
- **Building synergies with ongoing repository searches**, particularly those carried out as part of section 3, such as the PREPARE and PROCEDIN repositories.
- **Reviewing outputs from other innovation procurement projects**, including: *EcoQUIP, LCB-Healthcare, AICCELERATE, InCareHeart, Healthcare Without Harm (HCWH), eCare, CareMatrix, Procure4Health.*
- **Consulting national and international procurement agencies**, such as: *Pianoo* (Netherlands), *ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability*, *Procure2Innovate* .
- **Requesting input from affiliated organisations**, including members of the *Innovation Procurement Task Force*.

This broad and inclusive approach was designed to ensure a diverse and comprehensive collection of high-quality, healthcare-specific resources for the toolkit. The intention was to create synergies with other initiatives and repositories and toolkits and not to duplicate what already exists was established as an important premise.

4.2 Resource selection results

The objective was to identify a minimum of 30 high-quality resources that aligned with the needs of the Innovation Procurement Toolkit and met the following criteria:

- Priority was given to resources that support purchasing and innovation professionals, as well as suppliers with limited experience in Public Procurement of Innovation in the healthcare sector.
- In response to known challenges related to legal complexity and skills gaps, selected resources were required to offer practical guidance on key procurement procedures, such as PCP, PPI, and OMCs.

- Applicability to either buyers or suppliers.
- Healthcare-specific relevance, with clear application to innovation procurement within the sector.

Following this structured approach explained in 4.1, a total of **56 relevant resources** were identified. These resources reflect a diverse mix of formats and topics, providing a broad foundation for learning and capacity building. Key findings include:

- All resources are explicitly designed for, or are accessible to, users with **limited prior experience** in healthcare innovation procurement.
- **Content types:**
  - **33 case studies** illustrating practical applications of innovation procurement
  - **11 practical guides** offering step-by-step support and procedural clarity
  - **11 resources** focused specifically on **OMC**
  - **5 resources** addressing **PCP**
  - **13 resources** centered on **PPI**
  - **Audience neutrality:** A significant portion of the materials were buyer/supplier agnostic

5.   New Resources Development

5.1   New needs analysis

Following the assessment of existing learning materials, a new needs analysis was carried out to inform the development of additional resources. This analysis highlighted several gaps:

- A generally neutral approach to the target audience, lacking tailored content for suppliers and buyers
- Relatively limited coverage of Pre-Commercial Procurement
- Minimal focus on scaling up and embedding innovation procurement as a routine practice, due to high beginner friendliness.

In response, the development of new resources focused on addressing these, what we considered "gaps":

- **Audience-specific materials:** We created resources specifically targeted at each group, while recognizing and still encouraging all users to engage with the full set of ten resources, as for both target groups, it is valuable to both sides.
- **Content for varying experience levels:** In addition to resources for those new to innovation procurement (as originally planned), we also included materials aimed at practitioners with intermediate experience, as we noticed the relative absence of those.
- **Dedicated focus on PCP:** Given its relative underrepresentation in existing materials, several resources were developed specifically to support understanding and implementation of PCP.
- **A structured learning journey:** To help users build knowledge step-by-step, we introduced a guided reading pathway. This approach allows practitioners to engage with the content in manageable, clearly connected segments that build towards a broader understanding.

5.2   Approach

To develop the new learning resources for inclusion in the Innovation Procurement Toolkit, a multi-step approach was used, drawing on the expertise of both project partners and their extended networks. The process included the following steps:

- Engaging project partners to contribute insights based on their experience with innovation procurement in healthcare
- Reaching out to partner networks to access additional expertise beyond the core consortium
- Contacting innovation procurement projects focused on PCP, including *eCare (https://ecare-pcp.eu)*, *Dynamo (https://dynamo-pcp.eu)*, *and INCAREHEART (https://dynamo-pcp.eu)*

Contributors participated in the resources development either by directly performing and recording an interview moderated by the University of Twente, or by participating in the collection of information to support the development of a written report by the University of Twente. Materials, both videos and reports, have been reviewed and, if needed, adapted by contributors before the final version was published in the project Agora.

5.3 Overview of new resources

In total, ten new learning resources were created, for which we recommend the following reading and watching order:

1. **Learning resource 1: Introducing Public Procurement of Innovation**
By experts, Natalia Norambuena & Diana Cortés Rodríguez, of the Science & Innovation Link Office (SILO)
In this first learning resource, Natalia and Diana provide an introduction to Public Procurement of Innovation (PPI), providing an overview of four important steps of PPI, including the benefits and risks. This learning resource can be found in the annex, Section 7.

2. **Learning resource 2: Well begun is half done: 5 Tips for Buyers on Open Market Consultations**
By expert, Elena López Ruiz, Project Manager Ticbiomed
This learning resource focuses on the insights of Elena López Ruiz, who participated in many OMCs for many different innovative procurement projects: INCAREHEART, Procure4Health, eCare, HSMonitor, and Innobuyer. In this learning resource, Elena will provide five tips for buyers on OMCs. This learning resource can be found in the annex, Section 7.

3. **Learning resource 3: Recommendations for Public Procurement of Innovation (PPI)**
By experts, Natalia Norambuena & Diana Cortés Rodríguez, of the Science & Innovation Link Office (SILO).
In this learning resource, Natalia and Diana provide their 7 key recommendations for starting with PPI. This learning resource can be found in the annex, Section 7.

4. **Learning resource 4: How to Plan — or Not Plan — a PCP Project**
By expert, Ulises Pisano Ramos, Project Manager Ticbiomed
This learning resource focuses on the insights of Ulises Pisano Ramos, project manager at Ticbiomed, gathered during his experience in a Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) project entitled DYNAMO. This learning resource can be found in the annex, Section 7.

5. **Learning resource 5:** **5 questions & answers with Samira Bousseta**

An interview with Samira Bousseta, the CEO and Founder of Altaee Consultancy

This learning resource draws on the insights and learning journey of Samira Bousseta, who has 20+ years of experience in healthcare innovation. Samira is currently the CEO and Founder of Altaee Consultancy, a pioneering firm in sustainable and innovative public procurement. This learning resource can be found in the annex, Section 7.

6. **Learning resource 6:** **Key insights and learnings from the eCare-PCP project**

By expert, Laura Sánchez Alonso, Senior manager at Science and Innovation Link Office (SILO)

This learning resource is a video in which Laura introduces the eCare-PCP projects, as well as her key insights and learnings. This learning resource can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpdiMv93TEc
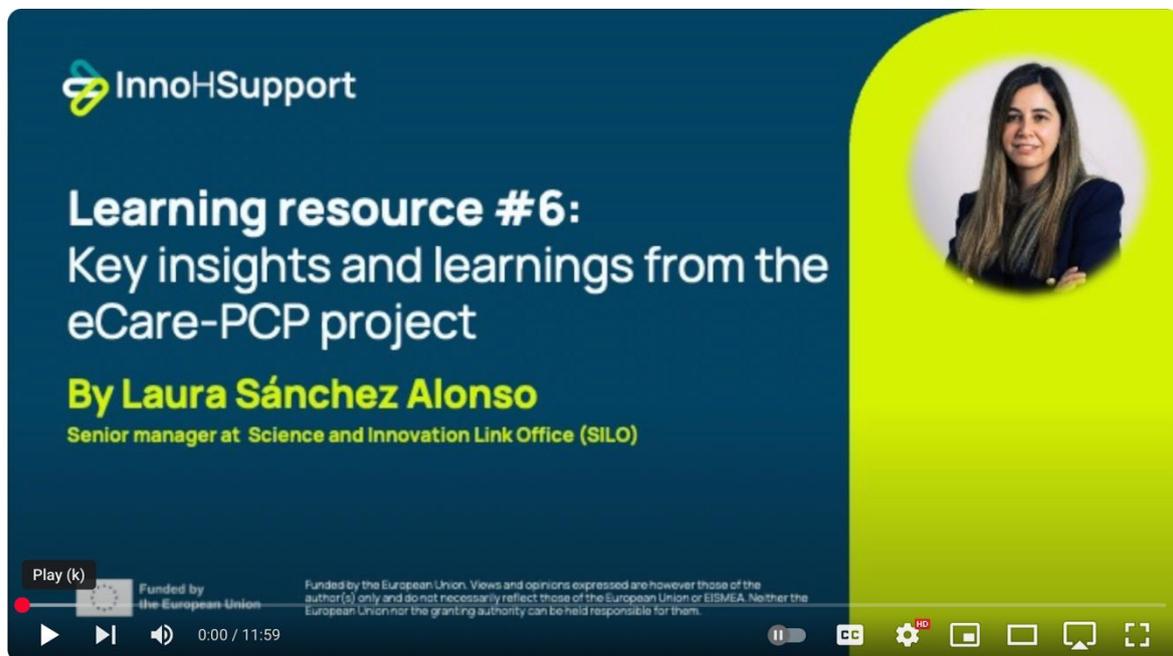
Figure 6: Screenshot of learning resource 6

7. Learning resource 7: How to develop several PPI projects in a short period of time

By expert, Ana Miquel Gomez, SERMAS

This learning resource is a video in which Ana explains how she was able to do several PPI projects at the same time, focusing on routinizing and scaling up PPI. This learning resource can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8IGhfhJj-A
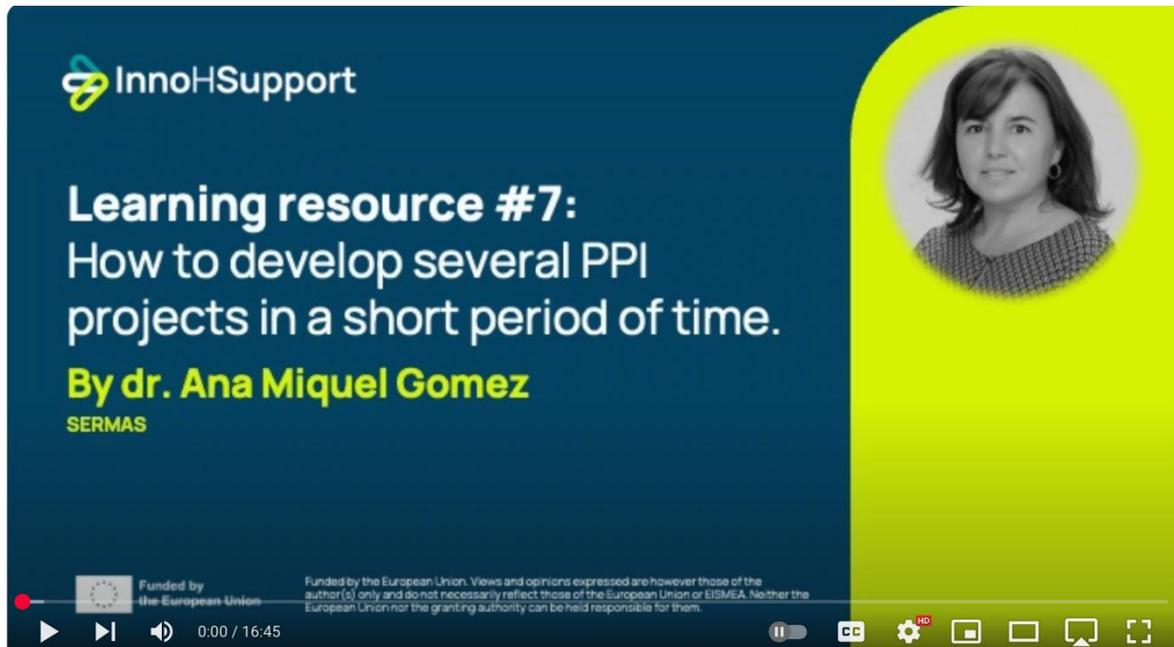
Figure 7: Screenshot of learning resource 7

8. Learning resource 8: Introducing Public Procurement Innovation Projects for suppliers

By experts, Natalia Norambuena & Diana Cortés Rodríguez, of the Science & Innovation Link Office (SILO)

In this learning resource, Natalia and Diana provide an introduction to Public Procurement Innovation projects for suppliers, providing an overview of the different phases and key recommendations, all specifically focused on suppliers. This learning resource can be found in the annex, Section 7.

9. Learning resource 9: Not just a formality—Why suppliers should engage in OMCs

By expert, Elena López Ruiz, Project Manager Ticbiomed

This learning resource focuses on the insights of Elena López Ruiz, who participated in many OMCs for many different innovative procurement projects: INCAREHEART, Procure4Health, eCare, HSMonitor, and Innobuyer. In this learning resource, Elena will provide three recommendations for suppliers on OMCs. This learning resource can be found in the annex, Section 7.

10. Learning resource 10: Key Considerations for Suppliers Entering Healthcare Innovation Procurement

By expert, Mark Wilson, principal of strategic technology Bioconsulting

Acting as a supplier in Healthcare Innovation Procurements himself, in this learning resource, Mark provides key considerations for suppliers who are currently facing barriers to do the same.

Figure 8: Screenshot of learning resource 10

5.3.1　A breakdown of the learning resources

Of the ten new learning resources, three are specifically tailored for suppliers, addressing the *Supplier-Specific Barriers* identified in Deliverable 2.1. Four resources focus on PCP (identified as a gap in chapter 5.1), including two that feature project case studies (learning resources 4 and 6)—responding directly to the identified gaps in the needs analysis and to one of the main barriers from D2.1: *Legal and Procedural Complexity*.

All resources reflect the overarching goal of embedding and scaling up innovation procurement within healthcare systems. Each report includes a dedicated section on how and why innovation procurement should be integrated into organizational culture, thereby addressing two main barrier categories of D2.1: *Cultural Barriers* and *Awareness & Perception Issues*.

Together, these resources form a structured learning journey. They are designed to help practitioners build understanding through clear, sequential segments, while also supporting those with intermediate experience. For example, Learning Resource 7, *"How to develop several PPI projects in a short period of time,"* features Dr. Ana Gomez Miquel explaining her approach to systematically organizing and routinizing PPI projects to make them more manageable and sustainable.

5.3.2　Links to all learning resources

All learning resources can be found here: https://innohsupport.eu/agora/e-learning/. The seven reports are also provided as an annex (section 7) to this deliverable, whereas we provide screenshots of the three videos.

6.   Conclusion & next steps

InnoHSupport aims to continue expanding the Innovation Procurement Toolkit by regularly collecting relevant learning resources. A dedicated section will also be added to the platform, allowing stakeholders to contribute additional materials and insights. The next steps include:

- **Promoting Resources:** Actively sharing existing learning materials and related initiatives through InnoHSupport's communication channels, including LinkedIn and the AGORA platform, to increase visibility and engagement.
- **Ongoing Toolkit Development:** Continuously enriching the toolkit with new, high-quality resources from other aligned projects as they become available.
- **Integration with WP2 – Task 2.3 (Executive Education Program):** The insights and materials from Deliverable 2.2 will directly inform the development of the Executive Education Program by providing practical, experience-based content that supports the development of core competencies needed for healthcare innovation procurement.

7.   Annexes

Of the ten learning resources included in this report, seven are documents/reports and three are videos. The seven documents are attached below, while Section 5.3 provides screenshots and links to the videos.

Learning resource #1: Introducing Public Procurement of Innovation (PPI)

By experts Natalia Norambuena and Diana Cortés Rodríguez of the Science & Innovation Link Office (SILO).

Part 1 of the InnoHSupport learning resources series

InnoHSupport learning resources

Public procurement is a powerful tool for driving innovation, but despite regulatory reforms and incentives, many healthcare systems across Europe struggle to adopt new solutions. InnoHSupport addresses these challenges by providing a structured framework and capacity-building resources that support the successful implementation of innovation procurement processes. Our mission is to create an inclusive, interconnected, and effective innovation ecosystem for healthcare procurement in Europe. We aim to empower healthcare procurers and suppliers by providing specialised advisory services and fostering a collaborative environment that bridges gaps, reduces barriers, and facilitates the adoption of innovative solutions.

To support our mission, we have developed 10 distinct InnoHSupport learning resources, all of which are freely accessible on the InnoHSupport AGORA platform (https://innohsupport.eu/agora/). This set of digital resources is relevant to all key stakeholder groups, with particular focus on purchasing and innovation experts as well as suppliers who are less experienced in healthcare innovation procurement. The resources introduce innovation procurement goals and processes and address implementation challenges through case studies and by exploring cultural barriers. They also include specific guidance on the procurement of R&D services (PCP), public procurement of innovative solutions (PPI), and open market consultations (OMCs). Of the 10 resources, seven are primarily tailored to buyers and three to suppliers. Nonetheless, because a comprehensive understanding of both perspectives is essential, we encourage both buyers and suppliers to explore all 10. While each resource can be used independently, a suggested reading order is provided on the final page of this report.

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Introduction to this learning resource

This first learning resource highlights the insights of Natalia Norambuena, Senior Innovation Consultant at Science & Innovation Link Office (SILO), and Diana Cortés Rodríguez, Manager at SILO. Both are experts in providing training in procurement and innovation. In this first learning resource, Natalia and Diana provide an introduction to Public Procurement of Innovation (PPI), providing an overview of four important steps of PPI, including the benefits and risks.

Step 1: Understanding the nature of PPI

Public Procurement of Innovation is a complex and potentially costly process. It is essential to clearly communicate both the benefits and risks, so that organisations can make informed decisions and fully understand what they are undertaking when implementing a PPI strategy or project. It's essential to understand that the public sector is constantly facing significant challenges, and addressing these often requires transformative change within the sector. This realization is the starting point.

Step 2: Does PPI fit your goal? Assessing the needs and maturity

From the starting point onwards, the maturity of the solution—whether it is already developed or still needs R&D—will determine the organisation's position in the process and the steps they need to take.

- When the solution is near market-ready, and the public buyer is able to provide clear requirements and technical specifications, it calls for a **PPI**.

- In contrast, if the solution requires further research and development (R&D), it falls under **Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP).**

Understanding this distinction is critical, as it determines the applicable rules and structure of the procurement process.

Here is where the second learning resource on open market consultations, by Elena López Ruiz, comes into play. One of the key purposes of an OMC is to assess the maturity of available solutions in the market. This directly informs the decision on the right purchasing process.

Step 3: Understanding the benefits of PPI

Before choosing PPI, it's important to understand both the benefits and risks of PPI.

1. It is important to highlight that PPI enables public buyers to procure innovative solutions, thereby strengthening the competitiveness of innovation ecosystems and supporting the growth of new businesses.
2. PPI can also open markets for industry and researchers, fostering economic growth and job creation in Europe.
3. Another key benefit of PPI is that it supports the modernization and improvement of public services, while also fostering innovation driven by public demand. Public authorities play an active role in tracking and encouraging innovation within the ecosystem.
4. Additionally, PPI can help position suppliers in wider markets, beyond their national borders. In some cases, suppliers engaged in PPI projects may connect with other public buyers through joint procurement initiatives, although these are not yet widespread. This can enable suppliers to expand their reach to a European or even international market.
5. PPI also serves as a tool to support broader policy objectives at both national and European levels. It contributes to economic recovery, the green and digital transitions, and the overall resilience of the EU. As such, PPI complements and reinforces other policy instruments aimed at achieving these goals.

These are significant advantages of the PPI instrument. However, it is equally important to recognize that PPI remains underutilized in Europe. While many webinars, projects, and initiatives exist around PPI, its actual implementation and uptake remain limited. To effectively harness the potential of PPI, engagement with the innovation ecosystem is essential. Public buyers must clearly communicate their needs and plans, and ensure that potential suppliers understand what is being sought and what they can offer in return. Strong communication and outreach are critical to developing and scaling up the use of this instrument.

Step 4: Acknowledging the risks of PPI

It is crucial to be aware that, like any process, PPI carries risks. However, because it involves innovation, the level of uncertainty is significantly higher than in traditional procurement. Understanding that risks are an inherent part of the process is key. What matters most is being prepared for them and implementing mitigation strategies to manage their impact. Four main risk areas can be identified:

1. **Failure to Obtain the Desired Innovative Solution**. When an innovative solution is defined in a tender, there is always a chance that not all objectives or requirements will be fully met. This should be anticipated and reflected in the tender documentation, acknowledging that the process includes R&D and innovation phases, which naturally involve variation and uncertainty.

2. **Technology Failure Despite Proper Execution**. Even when a supplier performs well and the project is closely monitored, the resulting prototype or innovative solution may still fail to meet expectations. This is not necessarily due to poor performance but rather a typical outcome of working with new and evolving technologies. In such cases, redefining the requirements and relaunching the tender may be necessary to pursue the innovation goals through an alternative approach.

3. **Price Variations and Budget Flexibility**. Due to the uncertainty in innovation processes, cost fluctuations may occur. Even if the tender sets a fixed price, unforeseen delays or technical challenges might require additional resources or a flexible budget to achieve the final solution. It is often difficult to adhere strictly to the original tender terms under these conditions, and some deviations should be expected.

4. **Lack of Internal Capacity in Public Organisations**. Many public sector organisations still lack the experience and internal knowledge to carry out PPI projects. Since this is a relatively new and underutilised instrument, capacity building is essential. Organisations may need to invest in training or seek external advisory support to manage the PPI process effectively. This is particularly important when internal human resources are insufficient or lack the necessary expertise.

Being aware of these challenges and addressing them early—through preparation, training, and the possible involvement of experienced external partners—is essential for the successful implementation of PPI.

Explore our other learning resources

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Learning resource #2: Well begun is half done: 5 Tips for Buyers on Open Market Consultations

Key insights by expert, Elena López Ruiz, Project Manager Ticbiomed

Part 2 of the InnoHSupport learning resources series

InnoHSupport learning resources

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Introduction to this learning resource

This learning resource focuses on the insights of Elena López Ruiz, project manager at Ticbiomed, who is a true expert in open market consultations (OMCs). She participated in many OMCs for many different innovative procurement projects: INCAREHEART, Procure4Health, eCare, HSMonitor, and Innobuyer. The OMC takes place during the preparation stage, which is before the actual procurement is launched. In this learning resource, Elena will provide five tips for buyers.

Elena's five tips for open market consultations

TIP 1: Don't just tick the box—leverage market feedback and leave space for dialogue

> *"Sometimes buyers carry out consultations simply because it's required— they see it as a checkbox to tick."*

My first tip is to really leverage the feedback you can obtain from the market. It can be incredibly valuable in helping you, as a buyer, shape the idea that will follow. A consultation can give you insight into whether your challenge is truly innovative, whether your goals are feasible, and whether your proposed budget is realistic—too much, too little, or just right.

You can learn a lot from a consultation. So my advice is to use that opportunity to actively shape your idea and to create space for genuine dialogue. Consultations should never be reduced to a formal event where you present your plans, ask suppliers to submit feedback online, and then walk away. That's not enough.

Instead, try to engage more openly with market suppliers. Try to understand how they feel about your goals, what solutions they already have, and what they think about the topic in general. In many cases, suppliers might have additional perspectives on the problem, as they might have worked with other organisations facing the same or a similar problem to the one you are facing, and they are subject-matter experts when it comes to specific technologies. As a buyer, you may understand the internal problem, but they are often the technical experts. **That's why it's so important to listen actively and leave room for conversation, not just formalities.**

TIP 2: Be transparent about your objectives—and your limitations

My second tip is that buyers should communicate very transparently what they have in mind for the procurement. That means being clear not only about your objectives, but also about any limitations or constraints you're working with.

This kind of openness builds credibility with the market. When suppliers see that you're not hiding information, that you're genuinely putting everything on the table—including potential challenges or roadblocks—they feel they can trust you. It allows them to properly assess the risks and opportunities and to propose more realistic, tailored solutions.

"I believe buyers could be much more open, especially about the potential difficulties they foresee. It may feel risky, but it actually strengthens the relationship with the market and leads to better results."

TIP 3: Present a challenge, not a predefined solution

We're all human, and we're often biased toward solutions. Instead of focusing on the actual problem, we tend to jump ahead and say what we think the answer should be. The third tip is to make sure that when you communicate the purpose of the OMC, you frame it as a challenge, not as a solution. You need to clearly state your problem and then let the market assess how it can be solved.

"Maybe you're thinking of solution A, but the market might come back with solution B, C, or something you hadn't even considered. That's where innovation happens."

So present your need as a challenge, not a prescription. Don't dictate the technology or the method—that's the market's job. You'll likely be surprised by the range of creative, high-quality solutions that surface when you leave space for the market to think freely.

TIP 4: Broaden your communication channels to maximize reach

Another important tip for buyers is to communicate the consultation as broadly as possible. Too often, buyers stick to the channels they're already familiar with—those they're comfortable using. But that limits the reach of your consultation. Instead, make an effort to reach out to accelerators, startup hubs, and other multiplier hubs—organizations and platforms that can help spread the word far and wide. These networks can amplify your message and connect you with a much broader range of potential participants. By doing this, you'll attract more diverse and potentially innovative economic operators, enriching the consultation with new perspectives and ideas you might otherwise miss.

TIP 5: Involve a broad range of stakeholders—not just potential suppliers

It's also good practice not to limit participation in the consultation to economic operators alone. Think beyond companies that might submit an offer. In many cases, involving other types of institutions, such as research organizations, citizens' associations, or professional bodies, can bring valuable insights. For example, in the healthcare sector, it's especially important to involve patients and healthcare professionals, as well as policymakers, when relevant. If your procurement could have a broader impact on a region or a nation, then those voices matter.

"So my advice to buyers is: be open. Engage not just with those who may eventually submit an offer, but with anyone who can contribute to the topic that you are trying to find a solution for.. That's how you'll ensure the consultation reflects the full complexity of the challenge you're trying to solve."

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Funded by the European Union

Learning resource #3: Recommendations for Public Procurement of Innovation (PPI)

By experts Natalia Norambuena and Diana Cortés Rodríguez of the Science & Innovation Link Office (SILO).

Part 3 of the InnoHSupport learning resources series

InnoHSupport learning resources

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Introduction to this learning resource

This learning resource highlights the insights of Natalia Norambuena, Senior Innovation Consultant at Science & Innovation Link Office (SILO), and Diana Cortés Rodríguez, Manager at SILO. Both are experts in providing training in procurement and innovation. In this learning resource, Natalia and Diana provide their 7 key recommendations for starting with PPI.

7 key recommendations for PPI

Recommendation 1: Internal assessment.

The first step before launching a PPI project is to conduct an internal assessment within your organisation. This means evaluating whether you have the necessary resources, not only human, but also financial. While there are funding opportunities available for PPI projects that typically cover a large share of the budget, the participating organisation usually must contribute a portion as well. Therefore, it's essential to ensure that both financial and human resources are allocated, just as you would for any other project. However, because PPI is still relatively new for many public bodies, this initial internal review becomes even more important.

Additionally, for public buyers, it's especially important to engage as many internal stakeholders as possible. One of the main challenges is building an innovation culture within the organisation, as some teams may be hesitant or unfamiliar with this type of process. Involving diverse stakeholders helps them understand the benefits and builds internal support to move forward.

Recommendation 2: Be transparent.

One of the benefits of using this instrument is that it supports the achievement of broader policy objectives—such as economic recovery, digital and green transitions, and increasing resilience. Still, because the final solution may differ from the original vision, these policy goals might not be fully met. It's important to be transparent—both internally and with stakeholders—that objectives might only be partially achieved, depending on how the innovation process unfolds. So, while the benefits of PPI are significant, it is equally important to remain aware of the risks.

Recommendation 3: Seek support.

If your organisation lacks sufficient resources, particularly human resources, seek support. This support could come in different forms: participating in training sessions, engaging in capacity-building activities, or using available tools and starter kits designed to help organisations new to PPI get started. Also, don't hesitate to look externally for help. External advisory services—such as consultancies with expertise in PPI—can guide you through the entire process. For example, organisations like SILO, and many others, are specialised in this field and have experience managing these types of projects, including anticipating risks and applying appropriate mitigation strategies.

Recommendation 4: Choose the right procedure

Another key recommendation is to carefully select the appropriate procurement procedure. This decision should be based on tools such as the internal assessment, open market consultation, and an evaluation of the technology readiness level. Choosing the correct type of innovation procurement is crucial to ensure the procedure matches the maturity of the solution being sought. Take the time to define clear selection criteria, as well as a risk management strategy, since unexpected issues can arise during project execution.

Recommendation 5: Consider legal aspects

Another key point linked to internal assessment is the need to understand the legal framework of these instruments. Innovation procurement—particularly Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) and Public Procurement of Innovative solutions (PPI)—comes with specific legal obligations. It's essential that the regulatory documents and tender specifications are developed and reviewed by professionals who understand the nuances of these instruments. If that expertise isn't available internally, it's strongly advised to bring in external legal experts. These are not standard tenders; they have particular features that need to be properly addressed. For example, tenders must clearly regulate aspects such as IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) management and penalties. A well-informed legal and risk assessment will help ensure that the tender is as robust as possible.

Recommendation 6: Understand and plan funding requirements

If your organisation is seeking external funding, it's critical to understand all the conditions attached to that funding. These requirements must be reflected in the tender and in the monitoring framework of the project. Planning for this in advance helps ensure compliance and avoids surprises down the line.

Recommendation 7: Monitor and evaluate continuously

Finally, ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the contract are fundamental. Unlike traditional procurement, innovation procurement typically involves frequent check-ins rather than just a final delivery. It's essential to schedule intermediate evaluations to assess how the solution is progressing. Additionally, gathering as much information, case studies, and lessons learned as possible is crucial for both current and future projects. Many initiatives have already been completed, and there's a wealth of existing knowledge to learn from. In this sense, different projects, such as InnoHSupport, can be a valuable resource for both newcomers and more experienced practitioners to avoid common pitfalls and improve outcomes.

Explore our other learning resources

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Learning resource #4:
How to Plan — or Not Plan — a PCP Project

Key insights by expert, Ulises Pisano Ramos, Project Manager Ticbiomed

Part 4 of the InnoHSupport learning resources series

InnoHSupport learning resources

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Introduction to this learning resource

This learning resource focuses on the insights of Ulises Pisano Ramos, project manager at Ticbiomed, gathered during his experience in a Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) project entitled DYNAMO.

What is a PCP?
In a PCP process, public buyers commission research and development services from multiple suppliers at the same time. This parallel approach allows them to compare different solution paths and identify the most promising and cost-effective innovations available in the market. The R&D process is structured in stages — typically including solution design, prototyping, and the development and testing of early product versions. At the end of each phase, some suppliers are phased out, gradually narrowing the field as the solutions progress. First, the project will be introduced, and second, three main takeaways of the project will be shared.

Introducing PCP and the DYNAMO Project

DYNAMO is a Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) project — a funding instrument from the European Union that supports research and innovation at early development stages. The goal of DYNAMO is to develop what is being called a *Dynamic Pathway Assessment Tool*. In simple terms, this is a platform — based on artificial intelligence and other supporting technologies — that can help assess and design alternative response pathways in crisis situations. These crisis scenarios refer to unexpected events such as floods, pandemics, heatwaves, cyberattacks, or even major job losses.

The tool aims to support decision-makers at the regional or local level by helping them understand how to maintain the provision of healthcare services during such crises. For example, if a pandemic hits, the solution isn't meant to stop the pandemic itself but rather to help local or regional systems identify pressure points and plan how to respond effectively. The tool should help authorities map out where healthcare services are likely to be most strained (such as hospitals, labs, or primary care), and suggest ways to redistribute pressure. For instance, if a public hospital is overwhelmed, private labs or clinics might be identified as alternative providers that can take on part of the load.

The DYNAMO project is built around three key components:
1. **Scenario-based pathway generation** – creating alternative strategies for crisis response.
2. **Workforce skills mapping** – identifying which professionals have overlapping skills that can be repurposed in an emergency

3. **Matching and deployment tool** – a system that connects skills and staff with real-time needs, allowing for better reallocation of resources.

Currently, DYNAMO is in **Phase 2** of the PCP process, which is scheduled to conclude in **July of this year**, meaning the project is now at its midpoint, with around two years still to go before completion.

- **Phase 1** comprises solution exploration/ solution design
- **Phase 2** comprises prototype development and prototype testing, and
- **Phase 3** comprises original development and testing of a limited volume of first products or services in the form of a test series.

Ulises' three key takeaways for starting a PCP or innovation procurement journey in healthcare

INSIGHT 1: Uncertainty at the outset: The need for iteration and flexibility in PCP projects

"We tend to believe that when we are doing PCP projects, everything should be planned at the beginning — that it must be very solid, with everything clear from the start. But this is normally not true."

What really happens is that as the project evolves and things start moving forward, new information starts to appear. Even suppliers, providers, and procurers begin to realise that some things are feasible, others less so, and sometimes things are better done one way rather than another. This reflection and iterative process in the development of a solution has happened a lot in our case.At the beginning, we were developing the solution without knowing who was the most suited organisation to manage it, who would buy it, and who would be the end user. These are three different roles, and in the beginning, this was a mystery. We didn't know how we were going to make everything work because it involved putting together many different pieces — public organisations like hospitals or regional governments, but also likely private organisations and even NGOs.

The main idea became to create something called *local modelling groups*. These groups are made up of representatives from various organisations relevant to the specific scenario. For example, in the case of pandemics, this might include public health actors, regional government representatives, hospital management, and maybe people from labs or factories — or others responsible for healthcare equipment. These groups were created ad hoc to

manage the solution.This adds a certain burden, because we're trying to develop an innovation that depends on the creation of something entirely new — something that doesn't yet exist. That makes it difficult to manage, because the success of the solution relies on building, managing, and maintaining this new structure. But at the same time, it's interesting to see how this iterative process — through discussions, focus group sessions with procurers, suppliers, and other stakeholders — has gradually shaped the local modelling group. And it's still evolving.

At this point, we're still far from having a final idea of what this entity will look like by the end of the project. The same applies to the customer side — even if we create this group or working entity, it's still unclear who will actually pay for the solution. The most likely candidate would be a regional, local, or national government, depending on the scale. But that is still open to discussion.

So my first insight is that this kind of information is not possible to know at the beginning of the project. There will always be a degree of uncertainty. As you move forward, you get more information, which helps you refine your ideas and your vision. You start shaping different aspects of the solution. What you need at the beginning is a clear problem, the right talent, and a good idea to tackle the challenge. But everything else — how it will look from a business perspective, what the business model will be — that will come later. In the beginning, that's hard to define.

INSIGHT 2: Good planning to avoid delays

Related to the first idea, the second one is that you need to plan in advance. In most projects, one of the main problems is that people don't think ahead about everything that needs to be done. I think that if you're able to create a list of the different barriers or problems you might face later, and start working on those early, it can help avoid serious issues down the line.

For example, you might need to start working on complying with the ethical aspects of your solution or the legal aspects. In a different project that I participated in, during the piloting phase, we suddenly had to deal with the ethical committee or GDPR regulations, or other legal frameworks. That caused delays of two, three, even four months — and at that point in the project, those delays were critical. They could have killed the project.

So, planning in advance is really important. You need to try to identify as many possible threats to your solution as early as possible, and then start planning how to handle them. That might mean putting in place alternative plans in case some of those risks actually come up.

INSIGHT 3: Be flexible—most things will change

My third point is flexibility:

> *"There's always uncertainty at the beginning of these projects, so it's impossible to have a fixed plan from the start that will work for the next three or four years without needing changes. That's just not realistic."*

You need to start working — of course, you can plan some things — but around 90% of what could happen can't be foreseen at the beginning. So my point is that you always need to be as flexible as possible, without losing sight of your goal. You know you have a challenge and you have a solution, and you're going to bring them together — that's the core. All the other things around it can change, and that's not a problem. That's normal.

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Learning resource #5:
5 questions & answers with Samira Bousseta

An interview with expert Samira Bousseta, the CEO and Founder of Altaee Consultancy, a pioneering firm in sustainable and innovative public procurement.

Part 5 of the InnoHSupport learning resources series

InnoHSupport learning resources

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Introduction to this learning resource

This learning resource draws on the insights of Samira Bousseta, the CEO and Founder of Altaee Consultancy, a pioneering firm in sustainable and innovative public procurement.

About the Expert – Samira Bousseta

"My name is Samira Bousseta, and I've been working in the field of public procurement for over 20 years. I began my career as Chief Procurement Officer for various cities in France, of different sizes, where I was responsible for developing procurement policies and strategies. Later, I transitioned into the healthcare sector, working for RESAH, a French central purchasing body. There, I was head of Legal Affairs Department and also began working on innovation procurement. At that time, RESAH was coordinating a consortium of five central purchasing bodies aiming to buy a new solution in the area of healthy aging. That was my starting point in innovation procurement, where I developed practical approaches—initially through European projects, and later through hands-on collaboration with healthcare organizations and other central purchasing bodies in France.

I then joined the French State Purchasing Department, where I led the innovation procurement policy for the entire state procurement system, covering all ministries and public agencies. It was a large and complex environment for introducing innovation into procurement.After that, I moved to the European Commission as a Policy Officer in DG GROW—the directorate responsible for EU public procurement policy. There, I focused on both innovation and sustainable procurement at the European level.

Overall, I've been working on innovation procurement for almost 15 years, beginning with the HAPPI project. At that time, innovation procurement was a fairly new and little-known concept. Things have evolved since then—the topic is now more developed and better recognized. However, there's still a lot of progress to be made in actual procurement practices."

5 questions & answers with Samira

Question 1: What tips would you give to someone just starting with innovation procurement in healthcare?

Tip 1: Understand the problem

When you start planning, the first question you need to ask stakeholders is: ***What is the problem we're trying to solve?***

If there's no clear problem, there's no reason to pursue innovation.

When I worked with the ministries, my job was to challenge them to identify unsolved problems behind the projects they were proposing. Not just a list of needs, but the real problems behind those needs. The first tip I would have is: really check with the internal stakeholders to **understand what the actual problem is**. Sometimes you have this idea where people say, "We need to do something digital," or "We need to do something innovative," but if you don't know what the actual need is, then it's really hard to go into the market and ask for something. So, spend some time understanding the problem. Because without identifying the *real* problem, you risk getting everything wrong: wrong problem, wrong needs, wrong solution. And then you increase the risk of failure significantly.

Tip 2: Talk to the market

We started with a tagging exercise to spot innovation opportunities, and then had deeper discussions to define the actual problems. Only once we'd done that did we engage the market, not with a pre-defined solution or needs list, but with a problem. That's a long process, too, because it can be difficult for suppliers. ***They're used to selling solutions, not responding to problems without a clear brief.*** But this dialogue helps refine the problem and gives us new insights. It's a learning phase that also shifts the mindset of procurement officers. So the second thing is: **really talk to the market**.

Tip 3 : It is a process, not a procedure

"Even if the innovation doesn't succeed, you've still collected valuable information. You've mapped stakeholders and created a structure that can be reused. It's about organizing all the information you gather so that it becomes easier next time. The process teaches you how to engage people, how to set up meetings, and how to avoid earlier mistakes. So, another tip I would offer is:

Don't start with a big, high-stakes, strategic project. Begin with smaller, more manageable ones—test and learn. Use tools like the 80/20 rule (the Pareto Principle) to identify where small innovation efforts could have a meaningful impact."

Because this isn't a classical procurement process. It's not as simple as drafting tender documents, publishing them, and awarding a contract. Everything has to be designed with the implementation of an innovation process in mind, and it has to be framed in a way that minimizes the risk of failure. If you don't take this into account from the beginning, it won't work. **Innovation procurement isn't a *procedure*—it's a *process.*** A process that requires you to consider different kinds of risks, challenges, and planning that don't typically exist in traditional procurement.

If you don't embrace the length and complexity of the process, you shouldn't do innovation procurement.

Tip 4: Plan ahead

Another tip—which I think many people would agree with—is that innovation procurement needs to be *planned*. When you're preparing your procurement strategy, you should identify areas that could be open to innovation. Of course, a procurement officer can't do this alone— we don't typically have the technical knowledge—so it must be done in collaboration with practitioners, clinicians, and healthcare staff. From the beginning, you want to recognize that a particular need might be addressed through an innovation procurement process. Once you've identified that, the next step is to understand what that process should look like in the healthcare sector: who the key stakeholders are, and how to engage them from the outset.

You also need to acknowledge that any innovation procurement project will likely take at least two years. It's a long process, starting with assessing the needs. That's why **it's important to approach it strategically, aligning it with the broader goals of the healthcare organization.** For example, maybe the goal is to reduce the time nurses spend using certain devices. That becomes a focused objective, and from there, you gather the relevant people around the table to make the project a success, or at least to minimize the risk of failure.

Too often, innovation procurement happens by accident. Someone attends an event or trade fair, sees an interesting solution, and tries to bring it in for testing. But without proper planning from the beginning, the process is unlikely to succeed.

You even need to accept that the project might not succeed. That's something that must be clearly communicated in the public sector: innovation involves risk, and it might not work.

In summary:

1. **Understand what the actual problem is;**
2. **Really talk to the market;**
3. **See it as a process, not a procedure;**
4. **Plan ahead;**
5. **Embrace the length and complexity;**
6. **Involve stakeholders from the beginning;**
7. **Align the process with the organisational strategy;**
8. **Be realistic about timelines;**
9. **Start small;**
10. **Accept the risk.**

Question 2: What are some key considerations or common challenges to watch out for during the middle stages of an innovation procurement project?

> *One thing that often gets forgotten is that the process isn't linear. Innovation procurement is not a straightforward, step-by-step journey—it involves loops, where you may need to revisit earlier stages before moving forward again.*

Typically, what happens is that after the market consultation, people move straight into drafting the tender documents because they're trying to stick to a fixed timeline. But I believe that even with a general timeline, **it's important to build in flexibility**—space to go back to the market, ask new questions, gather more insights, and strengthen your business case. Only once that business case is solid should you proceed with drafting the tender documents. And even then, while developing your award criteria, you might need to revisit and re-challenge earlier assumptions to ensure everything aligns.

This iterative approach—looping back, testing assumptions, refining as you go—is very different from traditional procurement processes. But it's essential for innovation procurement, where you're often dealing with uncertainty and need to continuously reassess your direction. So again, **it's not about following a rigid sequence.** It's about allowing room to challenge your thinking at each stage and adjusting your approach as needed. That's what sets innovation procurement apart from classical procurement methods.

As the buyer, you should always be monitoring whether what you've put in place is actually working. That means **performing quality checks** throughout the entire process, step by step. It's important to remember that your job doesn't end when the contract is signed.

In innovation procurement, signing the contract is really just the beginning of the implementation phase. The contract itself is meant to support the delivery of an innovation process—one that should ultimately result in a new solution being developed and implemented within your organization. So, it's critical to understand that the procurement process continues until that solution is fully in place and performing as expected. You need to have a clear vision from the beginning: What are the key steps from start to finish? What should you be evaluating to ensure everything is on track? The goal is to confirm that you contracted with the right supplier, that they're delivering the right solution, and that it's performing according to what was promised.

To do this effectively, you need to conduct quality checks, not just with internal stakeholders, but also with the suppliers. These checks should then be used to improve your procurement process for future projects. That's where KPIs come in. You need to define what you're measuring.

Question 3: What internal key performance indicators (KPIs) would you typically track?

Internal KPIs focus on how well we have managed the overall procurement process, from preparation through to implementation. Did we involve the right stakeholders, and did we involve them early enough? Did we challenge and clarify the actual needs effectively? Did we consider all relevant factors when drafting the tender documents? These internal KPIs help us assess whether our own processes for managing innovation procurement were effective.

For innovation procurement, this can include:
- The value of the solution delivered in relation to its cost was the price justified by the innovation?
- The effectiveness of each step in the process—how was the procedure selected? How were negotiations conducted?
- Operational metrics—such as the length of the procurement process, responsiveness during key stages, or the efficiency of collaboration between departments.

All of these help measure the performance of the procurement department itself and ensure that innovation procurement isn't just about reaching a contract, but about delivering long-term impact.

Question 4: What key performance indicators (KPIs) would you typically recommend for suppliers?

So there are really two sets of KPIs:

- **Internal KPIs** assess whether we've set up and executed the process in a way that delivers what was promised.
- **Supplier KPIs** assess the quality of the relationship and delivery, from their capacity to respond to how issues are managed during implementation.

For the supplier relationship, a lot depends on the early phase, like market consultation. Did we ask the right questions? Did we collect the data needed to build a different kind of relationship—one that's more suited to innovation?

Because here, we're not just buying an existing solution. We're co-developing something new. So we have to assess whether the company is actually capable of doing that. That makes it a very different type of relationship, and you need to prepare for it from the beginning. So, on the supplier side, KPIs are about ensuring that what we've put into the contract aligns with what the suppliers can actually deliver.

> *It is about building a good working relationship, so that the contract can be executed smoothly.*

For example:

- A KPI could be tracking how long it takes for a task to be completed,
- Or how quickly the supplier gets paid.
- It could also cover dispute resolution—do we have the right processes in place to resolve disagreements effectively?

These kinds of KPIs focus on making sure the relationship works and that the supplier can deliver on their commitments.

Question 5: If you could offer a final piece of advice to someone starting innovation procurement in healthcare, what would it be?

Build a strong ecosystem

It is important to focus on building a strong innovation ecosystem and network. Market consultation is just one part. Before that, you need to ask: *where do we begin? How do we organize this? You need a good understanding of how the innovation market works. Who are the players? Which innovative companies make up the ecosystem?* You should start building relationships with them, not just for one project, but as a core pillar of the procurement department. It is similar to how sustainability cannot be treated as a one-off effort. You should make use of existing platforms, like the **Healthcare Buyers Community**. Among others, the Healthcare Buyers Community allows buyers to connect with each other, share experiences, and collaborate on innovation procurement. **Don't isolate yourself.** Engage not only with the innovation ecosystem and suppliers, but also with other public buyers. Platforms like this offer resources, support, and the opportunity to learn from others.

Understand the big picture

You can't just wake up one day and say, "I want to do innovation."

First, you need to understand how innovation actually works, especially in the health sector. Without that, you might end up with a small pilot from a tiny company that cannot scale. Implementing innovation at a larger level often involves collaboration with multiple partners and existing contracts, which adds complexity. If you don't plan for that, the project may just be abandoned.

You need the big picture, and you have to take responsibility for it. That's one of the main problems in innovation procurement: **procurement departments are still viewed as administrative units focused on compliance and legal alignment. But they need to evolve into strategic actors.** They should manage an entire process, not just that one procedural step. And that's the key issue. When people hear "innovation procurement," their first thought is usually about the procedure, because that's what they manage and what they know. You really need to do market research, map the innovation ecosystem, and actively engage with it. But this engagement shouldn't just come from the procurement officer. The innovation ecosystem should be embedded in your organization's thinking. All stakeholders should be involved so that the mindset begins to shift. **Because if you want to do innovation procurement, you need to understand that it's a complex chain.**

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Learning resource #8: Introducing Public Procurement of Innovation (PPI) for Suppliers

By experts Natalia Norambuena and Diana Cortés Rodríguez of the Science & Innovation Link Office (SILO).

Part 8 of the InnoHSupport learning resources series

InnoHSupport learning resources

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Introduction to this learning resource

This learning resource highlights the insights of Natalia Norambuena, Senior Innovation Consultant at Science & Innovation Link Office (SILO), and Diana Cortés Rodríguez, Manager at SILO. Both are experts in providing training in procurement and innovation. In this learning resource, Natalia and Diana provide an introduction to Public Procurement Innovation projects for suppliers, providing an overview of the different phases and key recommendations, all specifically focused on suppliers.

The three main phases of the innovation procurement process

From the supplier's perspective, we usually consider three main phases in the innovation procurement process:

1. **Procurement planning**
2. **Contract execution**
3. **Post-project continuity**

In each of these phases, suppliers should adopt different strategies.

Phase 1: Procurement planning

"During the planning phase, suppliers should be commercially proactive."

This means reaching out to public organisations early on, informing them about your innovative solutions and capabilities. If you already have experience with PPI projects, it's good to highlight that, as it shows you understand how these processes work and the steps involved in co-developing solutions. Participation in Open Market Consultations (OMCs) is also strongly recommended. While it's not mandatory to take part in an OMC in order to respond to a future tender, it is highly advisable. This is a chance to provide feedback and technical insights, and indirectly influence the design of the tender in a way that could increase your chances of participating and winning. More information on OMCs is provided in our second learning resource for suppliers.

Before bidding, it's also critical that suppliers read the tender documents carefully. Even though tenders are often designed to be SME-friendly, suppliers must ensure they meet all the requirements. If needed, they should consider forming consortia or joint ventures to fulfill criteria they may not be able to meet alone.

Phase 2: Contract execution

During contract implementation, the focus should be on optimising delivery, managing costs, and maintaining open and frequent communication with the public buyer. These projects typically involve regular monitoring, not a "deliver and disappear" approach. Instead, it's a collaborative, two-way process. It's essential to maintain clear and open communication, as there is some flexibility available if certain aspects do not align exactly with the tender specifications. Suppliers should treat this phase as a team effort, even though there's a formal contract in place. Transparency and coordination are key to ensuring the project progresses smoothly.

Phase 3: Post-project continuity

After the project ends—especially in the case of PCP or PPI—it's essential to continue developing the solution and look for new tender opportunities to scale or further commercialise it. Another important aspect is IPR (intellectual property rights) management. In PCP, for instance, both benefits and risks are shared between the supplier and the buyer, meaning that the intellectual property rights and the results are also shared. So, suppliers can retain rights to develop and market those results further.

"Often this is an important yet often overlooked point: the process doesn't end with the project—it can lead to additional opportunities, markets, and growth."

Recommendations for suppliers

Recommendation 1: Internal assessment.

The first and most important step is conducting an internal assessment. This is essential for both public buyers and suppliers. You need to evaluate what you are capable of doing internally, both in terms of resources and expertise, and identify where you might need external support. If certain skills or capacities are lacking, it's crucial to hire external advisors or experts to guide the process effectively.

Recommendation 2: Engage experts.

In many organisations, it's common practice to engage external experts to help monitor the project and define tender specifications. This is important not only for quality control but also to ensure the cost-efficiency of the project. There are many funding opportunities and instruments available that can support these projects. While organisations usually need to allocate part of their own budget, external funding can significantly complement internal resources. These grants and co-financing options can make innovation procurement much more feasible.

Recommendation 3: Consider legal aspects

Another key point linked to internal assessment is the need to understand the legal framework of these instruments. Innovation procurement—particularly Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) and Public Procurement of Innovative solutions (PPI)—comes with specific legal obligations. It's essential that the regulatory documents and tender specifications are developed and reviewed by professionals who understand the nuances of these instruments. If that expertise isn't available internally, it's strongly advised to bring in external legal experts. These are not standard tenders; they have particular features that need to be properly addressed. For example, tenders must clearly regulate aspects such as IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) management and penalties. A well-informed legal and risk assessment will help ensure that the tender and your application are as robust as possible.

Recommendation 4: Monitor and evaluate continuously

Finally, ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the contract are fundamental. Unlike traditional procurement, innovation procurement typically involves frequent check-ins rather than just a final delivery. Additionally, gathering as much information, case studies, and lessons learned as possible is crucial for both current and future projects. Many initiatives have already been completed, and there's a wealth of existing knowledge to learn from. In this sense, different projects, such as InnoHSupport, can be a valuable resource for both newcomers and more experienced suppliers to avoid common pitfalls and improve outcomes.

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Learning resource #9:
Not just a formality—Why suppliers should engage in OMCs

Three key recommendations by expert, Elena López Ruiz, Project Manager Ticbiomed

Part 9 of the InnoHSupport learning resources series

InnoHSupport learning resources

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Introduction to this learning resource

This learning resource focuses on the insights of Elena López Ruiz, project manager at Ticbiomed, who is a true expert in open market consultations (OMCs). She participated in many OMCs for many different innovative procurement projects: INCAREHEART, Procure4Health, eCare, HSMonitor, and Innobuyer. The OMC takes place during the preparation stage, which is before the actual procurement is launched. In this learning resource, Elena will provide three recommendations for suppliers.

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Open Market Consultations matter for suppliers

Although suppliers are not legally required to participate in an OMC to submit a tender—since they can still submit offers without taking part—this learning resource presents compelling arguments and practical tips that strongly encourage participation.

For suppliers, an OMC is a valuable opportunity to understand what the buyer is really looking for—well before the tender is published. It's not just about reading what's on paper; it's about picking up the context, nuances, and unspoken priorities that often emerge during discussion. These insights are rarely captured in formal documents but can make all the difference when preparing a competitive offer. By engaging in the consultation, you (as a supplier) position yourself to better align your proposal with the buyer's actual needs and expectations. That gives you a distinct advantage when it comes time to submit your tender.

Elena's 3 recommendations for suppliers

Recommendation 1: Take part, even when it is not mandatory

My first recommendation is simple: **participate**.

> *"Even if you don't immediately see the impact, I can assure you—it's there."*

If you know how to leverage the opportunity, it can make a real difference. Engaging in the consultation gives you a clearer view of the buyer's expectations and positions you to respond more effectively when the tender is published.

Recommendation 2: Understand the buyer's needs before pitching your solution

My second recommendation is to really take the time to understand what the organisation is looking for. Sometimes, suppliers come in with a ready-made pitch—they have their product, they're convinced it's the best on the market, and they want everyone to love it. That's understandable, and of course you should showcase your solution. But don't stop there. Listen carefully. Try to grasp the buyer's actual needs and context. That understanding will help you tailor your offer in a way that truly fits their expectations.

Recommendation 3: Think long term—this is more than a one-off opportunity

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"The goal should not only be to win the immediate contract."

It is important to see participation in an OMC as part of a long-term strategy. You might take part, submit a tender, and still not be selected. That is always a possibility. The goal should not only be to win the immediate contract. By joining the consultation, you start to build a trust-based relationship with the buyer. That can open doors later, including future contracts, other consultations, and new collaborations.

This is especially relevant in sectors like healthcare, where the public sector plays a central role. In countries like Spain, for instance, the healthcare market is largely public. If you don't build relationships with the public players, you may find you have very few clients to work with—public or private. So it's worth the effort to build trust, stay visible, and make sure you're in the mix when opportunities arise.

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