

You've got the power:
Sustainable ICT
procurement and RIPE

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You've Got the Power: Sustainable Procurement and the RIPE Community

Michael Oghia — 28 Aug 2020


The RIPE community can contribute to a more sustainable Internet in multiple ways, but one of the most immediate and impactful among these involves decisions regarding buying hardware and sourcing services. We take a closer look at the issues surrounding procurement, the resources available, and explore ways we can work together to create guidelines relevant to the RIPE community.

Earlier this summer, I [wrote](#) about how the endeavour to “green” the Internet cannot happen without the RIPE community. The goal of that post was not merely to share knowledge, but also help empower the community with concrete recommendations of actions you can take and highlight how sustainability is a criterion that consumers increasingly [care about](#). Of these, one stands out as a wealth of untapped potential that many within the RIPE community may not even realise they have: the power of procurement.

Why it's important

The importance of responsible procurement of devices, software, services, and more cannot be overstated. It is central to achieving the [goal](#) of more sustainable production and consumption, and is

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Quick poll

1. How many of you are responsible for your company's procurement/purchasing decisions?
2. How many of you regularly interact with your suppliers?
3. What are your company's main priorities when selecting a supplier?

The issue

- Conflict mineral **mining**, supply chain **opaqueness**, human rights **abuses**, and unsustainable **production** methods
- The computer and mobile phone industry is one of the most susceptible to **conflict** and **slave** labour

What we can do about it

- Responsible procurement has a **significant impact** on efforts to “**green**” the Internet
- Introduce the concept of responsible procurement. What does this look like?
 - Do your research
 - Use your voice
 - “Vote” with your euros
 - Stay ahead of new regulations
 - Set an example for the region

My goal isn't to disparage, guilt, or alienate, but simply to **empower!**

Where do we go from here?

- Some resources exist (e.g., [GEC](#)), but there is no definitive guide on responsible and sustainable procurement for the ICT sector, particularly focusing on the RIPE service region
- Determine if there is a need for a document with more practical guidelines for operators (similar to [ripe-554](#) for IPv6)
- We could collaboratively write one, drawing from best practices and case studies collected from across the RIPE community

Additional remarks:

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Guiding questions

1. Would such a guide, designed by you/for you, help you and your colleagues make more informed choices?
2. What kind of information would you want such a guide to include?
3. What could we do as a community to demand more sustainable options from suppliers?
4. Would you/your company be interested in being involved in the creation of a guide/guidelines?

Thank you!

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Resources

bit.ly/GreeningRIPE

bit.ly/WeNeedRIPE

eurodigwiki.org/wiki/WS_11_2017

electronicswatch.org

bit.ly/3mhySLo

bit.ly/EU-Conflict-Minerals