

Purchasing high quality, low carbon food in Copenhagen (Denmark)

The Municipality of Copenhagen provides approximately 20,000 meals each day to nursing homes, elderly homes, schools, day-care centres and homes for people with intellectual disabilities. The food is prepared in 80 large city-owned kitchens before being distributed to different establishments around the city. Copenhagen has ambitious sustainability plans and has been working with the Copenhagen House of Food, an independent, non-commercial foundation established by the City of Copenhagen in 2007, to create a healthy, happy and sustainable public food culture.



In 2013, the Municipality of Copenhagen published a public tender for a framework contract to procure 100% organic, seasonal fruit and vegetables. These were required to be certified and labelled as organic on the packaging or label, with suppliers that made it through the first round asked to provide samples of their produce to be tested for quality and taste.

Balancing the budget

In order to manage costs, an excel tool known as the Food Basket was developed to help balance costs for the different types of food purchased. For example, by reducing the amount of meat and increasing the amount of vegetables bought, the organic tender was rendered no more expensive than a tender for non-organic food.

Beyond organic

Technical specifications included requirements to minimise packaging and ensure that it was recyclable. Suppliers were obliged to help protect the environment by using raw materials and vehicles which resulted in the least possible environmental pollution and impact.

In addition, a number of criteria were introduced with regard to transportation. For diesel vehicles with an unladen weight of over 3,500 kg, the supplier had to demonstrate that they had achieved the necessary [environmental zone certificate](#) to be used in the City of Copenhagen. Vehicles that weighed less than this were required to meet the Euro 5 standard for emissions. For diesel vehicles, this means that they must be fitted with a particulate filter.

Suppliers were required to state in their offer what types of vehicles would be used including make, model and year. They were expected to show proof that these vehicles met the standards specified in the tender. If this was not possible at the time of submitting the tender, they were asked to inform the Municipality which vehicles they intended to use if they won the contract. Additionally, suppliers were expected to record their fuel consumption



throughout the contract and make it available to the Municipality on request, with appropriate justifications.

Choosing a supplier

The award criteria were divided between price (40%), quality (35%) and range of products offered (25%). In practice, this means that the Municipality awarded points according to how many different varieties of fruit and vegetables the suppliers could offer to the Municipality during a year.

This not only helped to promote biodiversity but also rewarded the use of seasonal products, as more varieties tend to be available for products which are currently in season. This can be seen with apples, of which 183 different types were offered, many of them from small and medium sized subcontractors.

Seven bidders applied for the tender, two of whom met all the tender specifications. The winning bidder supplies a wide variety of seasonal fruit and vegetables, sourced from small to medium sized subcontractors from all over Europe. The contract has been in place since August 2014 and runs for two years, with the possibility of a further two year extension.