Activities of Green Purchasing in the world

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1. Movements in Europe

In Europe, the green purchasing by the public sectors attracts attention, and the measure in countries called especially Denmark, Sweden, and Austria is progressing. Moreover, the activities in the EU level to which market integration progresses are a very important factor.

1) Denmark

In Denmark, all the public sectors of nation and municipalities (regional) have been obliged to perform green purchasing in 1992, and an action plan was submitted in 1995. According to a survey in 2000 by Denmark Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), it shows that 50% of the governmental organization of nation has the green purchasing policy, and also most counties, out of 14 and about one third of municipalities have the ones. Although there is also an advanced example which puts into practice like the Municipality of Kolding, as for the present condition, the number of such municipalities is limited to about 10 to 20 and is hesitating to implement the introduction still more.

The existence of the organization National Procurement Ltd. (NP) is to be characteristic in Denmark. NP is a private company, however it is the organization formed by nation and the council of municipalities, and makes a contract for tender with all companies, instead of each public sector for much products and services which are supplied to a public sector (Framework Agreement). Each public sector performs actual procurement along with the agreement of NP and a company. As for the object of the contract is various i.e. copying machine, computers, office stationery, vehicles, office furniture, refrigerators, food, clothing, cleaning, energy, hotel, travel, etc. The annual amount of dealings which the public sector using this system of NP also turned into 8000 in all organizations, such as nation, municipalities, and schools, and used this system goes up to 4 billion DKK (about 60 billion yen). In NP, the environmental consideration is incorporated in this contract.

NP has been setting up the requirement which should be fulfilled with aspect of environment at least, and also make the structure which gives an evaluation point for the products which meet the established Award Criteria. By this, a contract of a green product will be made preferentially, and green purchasing in a public sector is made easier.

1) Sweden

Although there is no legal obligation of the green purchasing to a public sector in Sweden, the efforts of the green purchasing have been actively taken focusing on the local government. In a certain municipality (the northwestern county) actively engaged in many years, it has broadly developed the purchase guideline for each product, and been widely utilized in other municipalities. In order that the government formulates the guideline of the green purchasing in public sector, the EKU (Ecologically Sustainable Public Procurement) committee has been organized by stakeholders related to green purchasing, and has promoted the development of the guideline in about 70 products area. Although the committee finished the role and it was dispersed in 2001, Swedish Environmental Management Council succeeded the operation has revised and been promoting enhanced the guideline.

2) EU

A policy in the EU level has a great impact on the activity in Europe. It has progressed to make a common rule in order that discriminatory handling is not occurred in the public procurement, while integration of the market is advanced. In relation to public procurement, EC (European Commission) has the directives, and it is indefinite whether green purchasing is to what extent possible in those frameworks and has become the factor which the public sector of each country hesitates to green purchasing. However, in the EC Interpretative Communication (an interpretative document of the regulation) which summarized how far an environmental consideration would be accepted in public procurement was published in July, 2001. In this, although fixed restriction was carried out, the quite wide range environmental consideration was accepted, and it became the important legal basis of green purchasing promotion. Moreover, in order to make the green purchasing easy to promote, it has
proceed to a discussion towards reforming EC instructions regarding the present public procurement. In Europe, when public procurement leads the market, recognition that it is an important tool is increasing, and the green purchasing is likely to also receive support political from now on and to progress further.

2. Movements in North America
1) Activities in the Past
The Federal government in the United State has been promoting the purchase of products using renewable material and energy saving devices based on Executive Order 12873 published in 1993. In Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), while promoting the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) program and implementing a pilot project in cooperation with each organization of the Federation, the database which adjusted the environmental label in and outside the country, guidelines, regulations, etc. is developed, and it provides by the homepage as a green purchasing tool. Moreover, the original activity has been carried out in state governments or a self-governing body, such as the state of Massachusetts and the city of Santa Monica. An NPO called Center for a New American Dream is also promoting the green purchasing of a public sector through education and providing the information in cooperation with EPA. In Canada, the Ministry of Environment has promoted green purchasing, and also an original activity in a local self-governing body is seen. TerraChoice managing the certification of Eco-label in Canada built the network of a purchaser organization called Ecobuyer Network, and has promoted green purchasing through providing the information of distributing a booklet periodically.

2) North America Green Purchasing Initiatives
The United States, Canada, and Mexico make the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and are promoting formation of the free market. When promoting the green purchasing, the concept for the North America Green Purchasing Initiative (NAGPI) occurred from the need of the activity in this North America level. The wide-ranging actors in North American gathered in order to exchange information and experience in spring 2002, NAGPI has been established and started substantially as a loose network at the end of the same year. The aim of NAGPI is forming “Information Hub” of the green purchasing actors concerned in North America. NAGPI connects institution for providing the information such as Ecobuyer Network in Canada, purchasers in organization centering on public sectors, Eco-label Accreditation Organization and Organization for Standardization, and Eco-label acquisition companies including suppliers (manufacturers and distributors). The secretariat of NAGPI is established in Commission of Environmental Cooperation (CEC) of NAFTA. NAGPI Steering Committee mainly consists of the Ministry of Environment (Environmental Protection Agency) of the three countries, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI, headquarters in Toronto) and TerraChoice, and plays the role of the coordinator for each organization. The concrete activity is still in the process but the following three points as main activities are considered in:

- Establishment and management of a website (center of information hub)
- Documentation of communication strategy paper (How does it communicate to purchase persons involved in North American?)
- Development of Lifecycle Cost Data Sheet (LCDS) or Calculation software for Life Cycle Impact (LCI)

NAGPI is just getting started, however it is expected to accelerate the movement toward the green purchasing in North America in order to coordinate the activities which each organization has been implementing in various ways.