



Circular & Fair ICT Pact (Version 2.0)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a fundamental part of modern life. Smartphones, computers and digital networks connect people, provide access to vast amounts of information, and create countless opportunities for innovation and economic development. Digitalization and smart technologies can also play a crucial role in accelerating the transition towards a more sustainable society. At the same time, the ICT sector itself is a significant source of carbon emissions worldwide. It is responsible for 2 to 4% of global CO₂ emissions and this percentage is growing. The production and use of smartphones and data centers are two notable contributors¹. In addition, the ICT sector is dependent on a wide range of raw materials and rare minerals whose mining, production and waste phases have a high negative impact on the environment, on human rights and labor rights. Only a small proportion of these materials is effectively reused or recycled.

Reducing carbon emissions and the use of primary materials is a pressing worldwide challenge. Tackling these problems is an important part of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate. Pushing towards sustainable ICT would be a major step towards addressing these issues. Because the greatest impact of many ICT products is in the production phase, negative carbon impacts can be greatly reduced by extending lifetime and stimulating repair and reuse. Redesigning products and business cases to fully incorporate circularity principles will help reduce impacts further.

Many ICT industry players are already taking steps in this direction, offering solutions such as modular or better repairable hardware, or services with take-back schemes or ICT-as-a-service. Most of these, are, however, still a niche market compared to conventional ICT solutions. In addition to the environmental dimension, we have to address the social issues surrounding ICT by strongly promoting more transparent and fair value chains.

Leveraging procurement

(Public) procurement can be an important lever to help accelerate the necessary transition by creating a strong and consistent demand for circular and fair ICT. Many organizations around the world have set high circular, social and sustainable ambitions, and have made this a priority in ICT procurement. Unlike many other markets, however, there is a great imbalance between the massive global production of ICT brands and the relatively modest demand from individual procuring organizations. Current demand is simply too

¹ Assessing ICT global emissions footprint: Trends to 2040 & recommendations, Journal of Cleaner Production 177 (2018) 448-463

small-scale and too fragmented to provide the clear and unified market signal needed to drive systemic change. Even national-level collaboration is often insufficient to achieve the required scale.

To empower public ICT procurement, procurers need to reach out and collaborate with their peers on an international scale. Together, we can create a collective movement, through the implementation of recommendations, establish shared baselines and criteria, engage with the market on an equal footing, and help shape the demand for circular and fair ICT. We can share our good practices and speed up our collective learning. We can make a difference.

The Circular & Fair ICT Pact is an action under the Sustainable Public Procurement Programme of the UN One Planet Network² and lays the foundation for this international procurer collaboration. It brings together (public) ICT procurers and governments in a collective movement. The Pact consolidates and harmonizes our collective buyers' voice and provides a strong basis for coordinated action in dialogue with the organizations behind type 1 ecolabels for ICT, the market (ICT producers and value chain partners), non-profit organizations such as knowledge partners, circular service providers and relevant NGOs.

Our ambition and scope

Our collective ambition is to accelerate the transition towards circular and fair ICT-products through the power of procurement and have these products widely available on the market by 2030. In doing so, we contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. To achieve this, we seek to build up as much collective procurement power as possible, both directly by engaging a growing number of procuring participants in the Pact and by building capacity of other procurers through the work of our coordinating participants and the tools and guidance developed by the CFIT Pact.

Our circular procurement approach aims to maximize the lifetime of products and their components, increase the use of refurbishment, remanufacturing and repair, close material loops, and minimize carbon emissions and overall environmental impacts, thereby stimulating innovation. Avoiding hazardous chemicals is critical when aiming to close material loops and ensuring safe working conditions throughout the value chain. Our fair procurement approach aims to ensure transparent value chains and champion social justice, human rights and fair working conditions across the ICT sector.

The Pact started with a focus on workplace equipment (e.g. laptops and smartphones, displays, desktop computers, etc.). As of 2026, the product scope is expanded to also include digital infrastructure.

² The One Planet Network supports the global commitment to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production in both developed and developing countries. See also: www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sustainable-public-procurement/interest-group-circular-fair-ict-pact#

Our approach

The procurement cycle, as described in the CFIT Framework for Circular and Fair ICT Procurement³, forms the basis of our work. It defines that for CFIT participants, procurement includes not only the tender phase, but also the stages prior to the tender, as well as the use and end-of-use phase. Real impact can be made by applying CFIT's four core strategies of buying less, buying better, using products better and longer.

To empower participants, the Pact will provide ambitious guidance, recommendations, examples and common, easy-to-use baseline criteria that will be updated over time. These will build, where possible, on existing practices such as practices in (participating) countries, EU Green Public Procurement guidance, ecolabels for ICT and on fair procurement initiatives. In signing the Pact, participants commit to using the guidance, recommendations and other outputs of the Pact where possible, or to experimenting with more ambitious pilots and sharing their experiences.

The Pact is a procurement-driven partnership that can be signed by public procuring and/or coordinating organizations. The demand of procuring organizations forms the backbone of the Pact. To support and inspire procuring organizations beyond the Pact's participants, coordinating organizations initiate activities to build capacity in their country or region to promote sustainable public procurement of ICT, in line with guidance, recommendations and other outputs of the Pact. Coordinating organizations shape their support in a way that fits their capacity and preferred way of working.

Other organizations, such as ICT producers, value chain partners, non-profit organizations such as knowledge partners, circular service providers and relevant NGOs, cannot be participants in the Pact to avoid any conflict of interest. They are, however, invited to support the work under the Pact as a supporting organization. This support may include promoting the Pact and its outcomes, providing constructive input when invited to working group dialogues, or contributing to the development of tools and guidance.

The Pact is a voluntary arrangement, meaning that no actions are legally enforceable. We all benefit from creating a strong, uniform movement in ICT procurement. Nevertheless, procuring organizations always retain the final decision-making authority over their own procurement choices.

International collaboration

To develop recommendations, guidance, criteria and tools for sustainable procurement of ICT, the Pact sets up working groups. In these working groups procurement specialists and experts from different participating countries will join forces to address the four impact categories that are defined in the CFIT Framework for Circular and Fair ICT Procurement; circularity, fairness, carbon and climate and chemicals of concern.

³ CFIT Framework for Circular and Fair ICT Procurement, version 1.1, December 2022, Author: Circular and Fair ICT Pact

An important part of working group activities is engaging in high-level dialogue with the supplying market (ICT producers and value chain partners), policymakers, non-profit organizations such as knowledge partners, circular service providers and relevant NGOs. Their perspectives are crucial not only for creating a movement and products that are ambitious yet achievable, but also as partners in driving real change in the market.

To monitor the progress of the Pact and its participants, the Pact applies a qualitative approach. Beyond the direct impact of participants, the Pact will also have a wider influence on interested non-participants, through the activities of coordinating participants and by making the tools developed publicly available whenever possible.

Signing the Pact

To make the Pact actionable for procuring organizations, the Pact should be signed by the person responsible for ICT procurement, such as the responsible director, central procurement officer, or similar, and/or the person responsible for business operations insofar as they relate to ICT. For coordinating organizations, the Pact should be signed by the person responsible for overall procurement policy, sustainability or similar. Organizations that both coordinate and procure ICT are encouraged to sign at both levels to reflect their different roles.

Paragraph 1 – Scope and ambition

1.1 Scope of the Pact

1. The scope of this Circular & Fair ICT Pact is the procurement of ICT by public procuring organizations. Procurement of ICT includes workplace equipment such as laptops and mobile devices, as well as digital infrastructure.
2. Upon request of participants, the Steering Committee can extend the scope of the Pact to include other ICT product groups.

1.2 Ambition

1. Participants decide to:
 - a. work together towards having circular and fair ICT widely available on the market by 2030;
 - b. push towards lowering carbon emissions of ICT products by buying less, buying better, using products better and longer. In this way participants buy circular, extend product lifetimes and stimulate innovation;
 - c. push towards transparent and fair value chains in which human rights and labour rights are respected;
 - d. work towards a growing collective procurement volume; through engaging procuring organizations directly and indirectly in their work.
2. The ambitions are achieved in dialogue between procurement, non-profit organizations such as knowledge partners, circular service providers and relevant NGOs, the ICT industry and value chain as well as policymakers.

1.3 Definitions

1. A circular economy is defined as: an economic system of closed energy and material loops in which raw materials, components and products retain as much value as possible, while minimizing and avoiding waste and negative environmental and social impacts.
2. Transparent and fair value chains are defined as: transparent and verifiable value chains that generate goods and services while taking into account and stimulating social justice and recognizing international human and labor rights.
3. Circular and fair procurement is defined as: procurement which facilitates the move towards a circular economy and transparent and fair value chains.

Paragraph 2 – Participants and supporting organizations

2.1 Participants

1. The Pact recognizes two kinds of participants: procuring organizations and coordinating organizations.
2. Public organizations that buy ICT products or establish framework agreements for public procuring organizations can sign the Pact as procuring organizations.
3. National, regional or local governments (or agencies) can sign the Pact as coordinating organizations.

2.2 Supporting organizations

1. Non-participant organizations can support the Pact by submitting a Letter of Support to the Steering Committee to become a Supporting organization, subject to review and approval by the Steering Committee.
2. Supporting organizations:
 - a. endorse the ambitions of the Pact and promote or adopt the criteria, guidelines and tools developed under the Pact;
 - b. contribute to the dialogue in the working groups when invited to do so;
 - c. refrain from using the Pact network for marketing and sales purposes, unless otherwise agreed upon.

Paragraph 3 – Procuring and coordinating organizations

3.1 Actions of procuring organizations

1. Procuring organizations take action to:
 - a. harmonize demand by using the recommendations, guidance, and/or tools developed under the Pact where possible or by experimenting with higher ambitions;
 - b. extend the lifetime of devices in use, set conditions for reuse and repair and/or other circular strategies;
 - c. provide the time and effort required for ambitious procurement, knowledge sharing and tool development;
 - d. help anchor circular and fair procurement of ICT within their own organization, including internal customer demand, tools and procedures;
 - e. provide information on tenders as well as relevant practices in relation to operational management of ICT as part of the knowledge sharing in the Pact.
2. Procuring organizations accept to participate in qualitative progress monitoring, where relevant, supported by quantitative data.

3.2 Actions of coordinating organizations

1. Coordinating organizations take action to:
 - a. boost the collective procurement power by reaching out to ICT procuring organizations in their own area, promoting the Pact and by carrying out activities to build capacity in their country or region to promote sustainable public procurement of ICT, in line with guidance, recommendations and other outputs of the Pact. Coordinating organizations shape their support in a way that fits their capacity and way of working;
 - b. participate in qualitative progress monitoring, where relevant, supported by quantitative data.
2. Coordinating organizations may appoint another organization to carry out their coordinating role as long as this presents no conflict of interest.

Paragraph 4 – Working groups

1. Working groups will be established under the Pact to collaborate on common issues and to set up common criteria, tools, guidelines or recommendations.
2. Participants can join a working group.
3. Each working group will elect a chair from their midst. The Secretariat provides practical support.
4. The working group can invite supporting organizations and other non-participants for participation or dialogue. Non-participants have no deciding voice in the final products.
5. Participants can propose a new working group to the Steering Committee.
6. Outputs developed within the working groups will be shared within the international Pact community and made publicly available

Paragraph 5 – Governance and finance

5.1 Steering Committee

1. A Steering Committee is established to determine the overall strategy and budget, monitor the progress of the Pact and to set targets when applicable. It takes action to promote the uptake of Pact ambitions, guidance and recommendations by participating organizations.
2. The Steering Committee approves the criteria, tools, guidelines, recommendations and the collective progress report made under the Pact.
3. The Steering Committee has a minimum of five and a maximum of eleven members including the Secretariat (see 5.2) and will elect a chair from their midst.
4. The Steering Committee will be composed of representatives with relevant knowledge and expertise, put forward by participating procuring and coordinating organizations. Membership will be updated every two years using a rotating membership to ensure both good representation, expertise and continuity.
5. The Steering Committee meets several times a year.

5.2 Secretariat

1. The Secretariat is responsible for organizing and supporting the Steering Committee and the working groups.
2. The Secretariat organizes communication, an up-to-date website, events and knowledge sharing within the international Pact community.
3. The Secretariat supports monitoring activities, and draws up a collective progress report for the Steering Committee.
4. The Secretariat provides the Steering Committee with a transparent annual financial report on their work.

5.3 Financing the Pact

1. Coordinating organizations pay a yearly contribution to finance the work of the Secretariat and the working groups and/or contribute in kind. Procuring organizations contribute in kind. They are not required to pay a fee, but are encouraged to contribute financially when possible.
2. The yearly contribution is established by the Steering Committee.
3. Coordinating and procuring organizations are also encouraged to contribute in other ways to the advancement of the Pact, such as by financing a specific Pact working group or project.
4. Coordinating organizations are responsible for their own costs in implementing activities in their country or region that promote sustainable public procurement of ICT.

Paragraph 6 - Functioning of the pact

6.1 Legal status of the Pact

1. This Pact does not create any rights or obligations under national, European and international law.
2. The Pact does not create any private or public body.
3. All information shared by participants, by Supporting organizations or by the Secretariat as part of the Pact is considered open to the public domain.
4. Nothing contained in the Pact will be construed as a waiver of any of the privileges and immunities enjoyed by participants from Intergovernmental Organizations under national or international law, and/or as submitting them to any national court jurisdiction.

6.2 Entry into effect and duration of the Pact

1. This Pact has come into effect on June 14th 2021. The revised Pact will come into effect on April 15th, 2026.
2. The Pact will be terminated on December 31st 2030.
3. The duration of this Pact may be extended by the Steering Committee if sufficient participants decide by written consent to stay part of the extended Pact.

6.3 Implementation of the Pact

1. Participants will begin implementation of the Pact as soon as possible after its entry into effect.
2. The Pact will be implemented in accordance with national, European and international law, in particular with legislation on procurement, competition, state aid and technical standards and regulations.
3. Participants from Intergovernmental Organizations will implement the Pact in accordance with the regulations, rules and policies, in particular on procurement, competition and technical standards, applicable to them.

6.4 New Participants and Supporting Organizations

1. New participants may join the Pact by signing this document. New supporting organizations can send the CFIT Secretariat a Letter of Support for review and approval by the Steering Committee. Information on how to apply will be made available on the website.

2. The Steering Committee decides on approval of new participants and supporting organizations within one month of receipt of the request, based on the following criteria:
 - a. they endorse the ambitions and commitments of the Pact;
 - b. they can demonstrably contribute to the objectives of the Pact;
 - c. there are no grounds for doubting their integrity.
 - d. the Secretariat will publish the names of all participants and supporting organizations on the website.

6.5 Amendment of the Pact

1. Any participant can request the Steering Committee in writing to amend the Pact.
2. Any amendment requires the consent of at least 75% of all participants.

6.6 Ending participation or support

1. A participant or supporting organization can terminate its participation or support of the Pact at any time.
2. Participation or support of the Pact by an organization may be terminated by the Steering Committee if it has reasonable grounds to attribute to a lack of integrity or effort which could negatively affect the implementation of the Pact, and only after hearing the organization.

6.7 Resolution of disputes

1. Participants will seek to resolve any disputes relating to this Pact in mutual consultation. Failing this, they may present their dispute to the Steering Committee.
2. In seeking to resolve the dispute, the Steering Committee will give the participants involved an opportunity to present their views. If after six months the dispute has not been resolved, the Steering Committee will issue its recommendations to the participants involved. Participants accept the recommendations as the final resolution of the dispute.

Signed,

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|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Organization | | |
| Name | | |
| Title | | |
| Participation type | Coordinating organization | Procuring organization |
| Date | | |
| Signature | | |