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USING PUBLIC FOOD PROCUREMENT TO PROMOTE ORGANIC PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION: THE ROLE OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR MULTIPLE POLICY GOALS

Luana Swensson*[1], Florence Tartanac[1]

[1]Nutrition and Food Systems Division, FAO, Rome, Italy

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Abstract: Public Food Procurement Programmes (PFPP), including school feeding, are receiving increasing attention as an important policy instrument with the potential to deliver multiple benefits for multiple beneficiaries, including food consumers, food producers and local communities. A key characteristic of PFPP is that it has the possibility – based on sound policy and regulatory frameworks - to determine not only the way food is produced and procured, but, in particular (i) what food will be purchased (such as local, socio and bio-diverse, nutritious, healthy, culturally appropriate); (ii) from whom (e.g. from local and/or family farming producers, small and medium food enterprises, women, youth and/or other vulnerable groups); and (iii) from which type of production (e.g. from agricultural production that ensure environmental sustainability as well as biodiversity). In doing so, IFPP has considerable potential to influence both food consumption and food production patterns, contributing to the transformation of local food systems.

Building on the existing literature on food procurement and on two countries experiences this chapter examines the multiple benefits that PFPP has the potential to achieve with a focus on the promotion of organic production and consumption. It will also analyze key enabling and constraining conditions, focusing on the role of conducive regulatory frameworks.

Introduction: Public food procurement programmes (PFPP), including school feeding initiatives, are important policy instrument to deliver multiple benefits for multiple beneficiaries, including food consumers, food producers and local communities (Tartanact et al, 2019). These initiatives are supported by an increasing number of international regulatory frameworks that recognize that public institutions, when using their financial capacity and purchasing power to award contracts, can go beyond the immediate scope of responding to the state's procurement needs by addressing additional social, environment or economic needs that contribute to the overall public good.

These frameworks – such the 2011 United Nations Commission for International Trade Law's (UNCITRAL) Model Law on public procurement – recognize the potential as well as the right for public entities to use procurement as a strategic instrument to pursue development goals. They are also endorsed by the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals, which identifies sustainable public procurement (which include environmental, economic and social aspects) as a key prerequisite for achieving more sustainable patterns of consumption and production (Target 12.7).

One particularity of public food procurement – which distinguish it from other type of public procurement – is its potential to have a direct impact on both suppliers and consumers.

The PFPP – and related policy and legal frameworks – can determine not only the way food is procured, but, in particular (i) what food will be purchased (such as local, diverse, nutritious, healthy, culturally adequate, environmental-friendly); (ii) from whom (e e.g. from local and/or family farming producers, small and medium food enterprises, women, youth and/or other vulnerable groups) and (iii) from which type of production (e.g. from agricultural production that ensure environmental sustainability as well as biodiversity) (Tartanac et al, 2019). Considering the weight of public sector demands and based on how those choices are made, PFPP have the potential to influence both food consumption and food production patterns (Bontrager Yoder et al, 2014; Fitch and Santo, 2016; Foodlinks, 2013; IPES, 2016; Tartanac et al, 2019, Valencia et al, 2019).

Furthermore, one important characteristic of PFPP is that by creating a demand for certain types of products (such as from organic production), governments have the power to set a positive trend. Public sector institutions – such as schools, hospitals, universities, prisons, armed forces, care homes, and canteens in government buildings – represent a significant part of the procurement of any national food economy. They can send a signal about government ambitions on the future directions of the food system that has the power to incentivize also supply chain actors to align their values and practices accordingly, fostering a transition towards sustainable food consumptions and production (Foodlinks, 2013; Sambuichi et al, 2013; De Schutter, 2014; IPES, 2016; UNSCN, 2017, Tartanac et al, 2019).

This potential is particularly relevant for the school feeding context. This is due to not only the predictable and stable demand that school feeding initiatives can provide specially for local and smallholder food producers, but also due to the specificities of its direct beneficiaries; i.e. the children. School feeding programmes, especially when combined with sound nutrition education initiatives, also have the potential to influence consumption patterns of children and lifetime dietary behaviors, contributing to the formation of future educated consumers (Fitch and Santo, 2016; UNSCN, 2017).

It is in this context that this paper argues that – depending on the choice of what, from who and from which type of production, food shall be purchased – PFPP, constitute one important instrument with the potential to achieve multiple policy goals, delivering multiple dividends to a multiplicity of beneficiaries, with contributions crossing all three areas of sustainability: social, economic and environmental. These include the promotion of production and consumption of organic products. Nevertheless, it also recognizes that these choices are not free and will be dependent of a series of conditions. These conditions include conducive regulatory frameworks[1], which not only allow, but also support and facilitate the use of PFPP as a policy tool. Nevertheless, despite its relevance, regulatory frameworks are still very often overlooked both by the literature (Stefani et al, 2017) as well as by policy makers (Brooks et al, 2014, Swensson, 2018)

Material and methods: This study employs a multidisciplinary and qualitative approach. It builds on literature review of relevant technical studies from different areas of knowledge (such as law, human health, agriculture, political sciences and environmental sustainability) that are linked to public food procurement and its use as a development tool. The study focuses on the analysis of the experiences of two countries experiences: i.e. Brazil and Denmark. These countries were selected after a first appraisal of the literature and their identification as good examples of actual implementation of PFP as a policy instrument to achieve multiple policy goals, including the promotion of production and consumption of organic food products. They have also been awarded the 2018 “Future Policy Award” from the World Future Council, dedicated to policies that

[1] The term ‘regulatory framework’ used in this publication comprises all public procurement laws and regulations, legal texts of general application, and administrative rulings made in connection with public procurement.

scale up agroecology, contribute to the protection of biodiversity, life and livelihoods of small-scale food producers, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement climate resilient agricultural practices.
Materials used in this study include academic journal articles, development agencies and research institutions' reports, case studies and conference papers. Primary sources include policy documents, laws and regulations from Brazil and Denmark obtained through FAOLEX database.

Results:

Public Food Procurement: Multiple benefits and beneficiaries

There is a range of literature and policy documents that recognize the multiples dividends that PFPP have the potential to achieve and the contributions that public procurement of food can make to sustainability and its three core components. (Morgan and Sonnino, 2008; Espejo et al, 2009; Gelli et al, 2010; Foodlinks, 2013; De Schutter, 2014; 2015; FAO, 2015; Global Panel, 2015; Smith et al, 2016; Fitch and Santo, 2016; FAO and WFP, 2018;). The literature also recognizes that institutional procurement has the potential to benefit both those who receive the food through the public institutions (food consumers) and those who supply the food (food producers) and the wider community in general.
Depending on the choice of **from who** food should be purchased (e.g. from local and smallholder farmers), PFPP can become an instrument to support local and smallholder agriculture production and stimulate community economic development. Several studies demonstrate that schools and other public institutions requiring regular and predictable demand targeting smallholder farmers' products can encourage, facilitate and reduce the risk of investments for farmers to increase and diversify their agriculture production, which may contribute to increasing their incomes and access to formal markets (IPC and WFP, 2013; FAO, 2015; Drake et al, 2016; FAO and WFP, 2018; Global Panel, 2015; Kelly and Swensson, 2017; Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler, 2010; UNSCN, 2017). PFPP can also be an important market opportunity for small processors and micro, small and medium-sized food enterprises, which may supply schools and other public institutions with nutritious processed food products such as bread, biscuits, fruit juice, as in the case of the school feeding programme in Brazil (FAO and WFP, 2018; Global Panel, 2015). As women and/or youth often own these enterprises, PFPP and school feeding initiatives have the potential also to contribute to increased youth empowerment and gender equity as well as to job creation (FAO and WFP, 2018; UNSCN, 2017).
In the same way, by defining what food is to be purchased (such as nutritious, varied and locally produced food) PFPP and, especially school feeding initiatives, can become powerful instruments to enhance food security and the nutrition of children and also of smallholder farmers and their communities, through increased and diversified food production, consumption and incomes. Diversified school feeding programmes can, indeed, have a direct effect on schoolchildren's food consumption, dietary diversity and nutrition status (FAO & WFP, 2018). Studies from countries like Brazil, Kenya and Ghana show that properly designed school feeding can lead to an increase in the variety and quantity of healthy foods served in schools, and to improvements in the dietary diversity of schoolchildren (Niebylski et al, 2014; Sidaner et al, 2012; UNSCN, 2017).
Considering the weight of public sector contracts, a diversification of the demand – especially when linked to purchasing from local and smallholder producers – has the potential to also stimulate production diversification by these actors. This may lead – according to the context – to an increase in smallholder farmers' consumption of diversified and nutritious food. (Biodiversity International, 2016; HLPE, 2017; IPES, 2016; Niebylski et al, 2014). It may also lead to an increase in the availability of these products in the local markets. In this sense, depending on the choice of what products to purchase, school feeding programmes has the potential to diversify diets of children, farmers and local communities, by promoting production of, and access to, a wider variety of foods.

PFPP can also target **food that is produced** in a specific way, and, therefore, use public purchasing power to support and promote forms of agricultural production that ensure environmental sustainability. This includes the purchase of food from organic and agro-ecological production attuned practices (Fitch & Santo, 2016; Foodlinks, 2013; IPES, 2016). IFPP has the potential to promote environmental benefits also in terms of reduced packaging; food waste; and lower food miles (Foodlinks, 2013). Within this context, IFPP has been recognized also with great potential to influence positively water and land use, climate change as well the the production and comsumption of organic food products. (Beltrame et al, 2016; Fitch & Santo, 2016; Foodlinks, 2013; IPES, 2016).

The decision on what type of food to be procured, from who, and from what type of production – and consequently on which of the multiple potential benefits and beneficiaries to focus – will depend on decision- maker choices according to government priorities and on programme design. Policy makers can focus on single components, on specific beneficiaries or benefits. They can also adopt a multiple approach, favoring synergy (FAO and WFP, 2018; FAO, 2019). These decisions will be dependent, however, on a series of conditions. These conditions are linked to demand and supply side factors as well as to the policy, legal and institutional enabling environment (Kelly and Swensson, 2017; Smith et al, 2016), particularly a conducive public procurement regulatory framework (Swensson, 2018).

One key characteristics of PFPP is that, just like any type of public purchase, PFPP are operationalized and regulated by specific and detailed rules. These rules govern the entire procurement process, shaping and limiting the choices available to governments regarding (i) what food to purchase; (ii) how to purchase it; and (iii) from whom to purchase. As a result, the objectives and implementation of any public food procurement initiative is intrinsically linked to the existing public procurement regulatory framework (Swensson, 2018). This include the objective of supporting the promotion of organic agriculture through public food procurement, which can be directly supported - or constrained – by specific regulatory instruments.

Brazil and Denmark provide good examples on the different choices and possibilities of using PFPP to achieve multiple policy goals, including the promotion of production and consumption of organic food products. These experiences also provide insights on some key elements that may support or constrain these choices and their implementation, including a conducive regulatory framework. They have both been awarded the 2018 “Future Policy Award” from the World Future Council, dedicated to policies that scale up agroecology, contribute to the protection of biodiversity, life and livelihoods of small-scale food producers, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement climate resilient agricultural practices.

Examples of good practices

Brazil

Brazil is an interesting example of the political choice of using public food procurement and school feeding as instruments to achieve a multiplicity of benefits for multiple beneficiaries, including the promotion of organic production and consumption. On defining what food shall be purchased (such as diverse, healthy, safe and culturally adequate in the case of school feeding), from whom (family farmers and family rural entrepreneur)[2] and giving priority to food that is produced in a specific way. (i.e.from organic and agro-ecological production practices) Brazilian programmes are intentionally designed as multifaceted interventions, with objectives that go beyond the simple response by the state for food needs at the lowest price.

The Brazilian Food Purchase Programme (PAA) – which purchases food directly from family farmers and rural entrepreneurs, and their organizations, to meet the state’s various food needs – include nine goals that clearly articulate the

[2] The terms “smallholder” and “family” farmers are used interchangeably in this study.

multifaceted nature of the programme[3]. These goals include: (i) support family farming production by promoting its economic and social inclusion, and fostering income generation, sustainable food production, processing and industrialization(ii) support the consumption and valorization of food produced by family farming; (iii) promote access to food, in the quantity, quality and regularity necessary for people with food and nutritional insecurity; (iv) promote and enhance biodiversity, organic and agro-ecological food production and encourage healthy eating habits at local and regional level; and, (v) stimulate the development of cooperatives and associations (Law No. 10.696/2003, Law No. 12.512/2011, Decree No. 7775/2012).

The reformulation of the Brazilian National School Feeding Programme (PNAE) in 2009 has broadened the programme's traditional objective of responding to student's nutritional needs during their time in the classroom. Currently PNAE has among its directives: (i) the adoption of health and adequate food, including the use of diversified and safe food products which respect the culture, tradition and healthy eating habits and (ii) the support of local and sustainable development, fostering the purchase of diversified and locally produced food from family farming producers (Law No. 11.947/2009). The programme requires that at least 30 per cent of the federal budget allocated for the purchase of food for school feeding must be reserved for contracts with local family farming producers, giving priority and a price premium to, among others, organic and/or agroecological products.

The PNAE and the PAA and related objectives are aligned with the aforementioned international frameworks and national public procurement law that recognizes the key objectives of public procurement the pursuit of sustainable development (Law n. 8.666/1993). Furthermore, both Brazilian programmes were created through legislation which provides specific tools aimed at aligning the regulatory framework to the policy objectives. These legal instruments allow, among other issues: (i) the reservation of procurement opportunities to specific target beneficiaries (i.e., reservation schemes); (ii) the utilization of innovative award criteria (that acknowledge the socio, economic and environmental quality of the food products offered); (iii) the adoption of alternative and simplified procurement method (which substitute the standard open tender procedures); and, (iv) the application of tailored participation requirements. These instruments are crucial to enable and to support the implementation of all the aforementioned policy objectives (See Swensson, 2018).

The possibility of selecting suppliers based on awarding criteria that goes beyond the selection of the best price (which is traditionally the bottom line applied for public sector selection of suppliers) is an important enabling factor for the multifaceted nature of both programmes. Although prices cannot be higher than market prices, when selecting suppliers (among the eligible family farming producers), procuring entities shall apply specific awarding criteria aimed at reaching the following specific policy objectives:

(i) Support the poorest and most vulnerable producers. To foster the social inclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations, priority is given to these producers in the selection process. These groups include, among the eligible family farming producers, the land reform settlers, members of traditional communities (indigenous people and *quilombolas*[4]) and, in the case of PAA, beneficiaries of social programmes (such as the *Bolsa Família* social welfare programme) and women.

(ii) Support agroecological and organic production. Eligible suppliers of agroecological and organic production take precedence over conventional produce, with up to a 30 percent differential in the price margin allowed.

[3] For an overview of the Brazilian PFPP see, among many, Swensson, 2015.

[4] According to Brazilian legislation (Decree No. 4.887/2003), the remaining members of *quilombola* communities are ethnic and racial groups with their own historical past, characterized by specific territorial relations and with the assumption of black ancestry, related to the resistance of historical oppression.

(iii) Strengthen the development of collective actions. While individuals can access and sell their products to the programmes, farmer organizations, cooperatives or associations, including informal ones, take priority in the selection process over individual access (see Swensson, 2015).

(iv) Support local production. The locality of production (giving preference to the nearest locality of production based on the administrative division of the country [municipality, neighboring municipalities, other municipalities within the same state, neighboring states and other states within the national territory, in this order] is recognized as a priority selection criterion and prevails over all other criteria in the case of PNAE.

Furthermore, in both programmes the potential, as well as, the political choice of using public food procurement as an instrument to achieve different types of beneficiaries is very clear. Both programmes have two distinct beneficiaries: food consumers and food producers. The first include schoolchildren (in the case of PNAE) as well as people with food and nutritional insecurity supported by the government social assistance network (in the case of PAA). The second focuses on family farming producers.

Regarding the PAA, in the case of Brazil these target beneficiaries are defined by specific legislation (Law n. 11.326/2006) which establishes the criteria with which rural actors must comply in order to be classified as family farming producers. In the case of Brazil PFPP, these beneficiaries include not only farmers, but also as family rural entrepreneurs, foresters, aquaculturists, extrativists, fisherfolks, indigenous people and members of traditional communities. This legal instrument, combined with a registration system, is of great relevance in targeting, implementation and monitoring of the programme (Swensson, 2018). It also supports the compliance with the public procurement principles of transparency and equal treatment which requires that, when some advantage is given to a defined category of suppliers – such as the reservation of the contractual opportunities to family farming producers – it is essential that the criteria for category membership for those receiving that advantage is well defined.

In the case of organic, clear eligibility criteria for organic products and producers are provided by the regulatory framework, including standards and rules for the certification scheme (Law n. 1081/2003; Decree 6.323/2009). It is interesting to note that, in order to support the production and commercialization of organic food by family farming producers – and recognizing the difficulties these producers may have to access the traditional third-party certification schemes – the regulatory framework provides also an alternative instrument: i.e. the Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS). This "low-cost, locally based system of quality assurance with a strong emphasis on social control and knowledge building" (May, 2008) allows and facilitates family farming producer to sell their products as organic to PFPPs without bearing the costs of a third-party certification scheme.[5]

Although implementation challenges still exists, we can affirm that the Brazilian experience distinguishes itself not only by the policy choice of using PFPP as an policy instrument to achieve multiple goals across all the three pillars of development – including the support of organic agriculture – but also by the conducive policy and, particularly, legal enabling environment, which supported and made these choices possible.

Despites the lack of an overall impact evaluation, qualitative studies demonstrate the multiplicity of benefits of the Brazilian approach (see Sambuichi et al, 2013 and Swensson, 2015 for an overview). This include the support of organic production. Data shows that the public purchase of organic products through the PAA modalities implemented by the National Supply

[5] FAO and IFOAM - Organics International promote PGS as an alternative guarantee system that is highly suitable for the development of sustainable local food systems leading to an improvement of the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in terms of income, health, nutrition and social recognition; as well as development of local organic markets for safe food and the empowerment of local communities (FAO, 2018).

Company (Conab) has tripled in the last three years, risen from 2.2% in 2013 to 6% in 2018 (CONAB website). Although it is still a small percentage compared with overall food purchases, it illustrates the potential of the instrument also regarding this specific goal. The increase of public purchase of organic products is, indeed, part of the National Plan of Agroecological and Organic Production (2016) and is seem therefore as a complementary instrument to the support of the production of organic and agroecological products.

Denmark

Denmark provides another interesting example of a policy choice of using public food procurement as an instrument to achieve multiple policy and development goals, including, in particular, the promotion of the organic sector. By targeting food that is produced in a specific way (i.e. organic) Denmark has tailored public food procurement as an instrument to support and trigger the consumption and production of organic products in the country. Although this initiative is not based on specific legislation – as in the case of PAA and PNAE programmes in Brazil – it is supported by a conducive regulatory framework which – together with other policy and institutional factors – have been demonstrated as providing a key enabling condition for its development (Fragkos and Mikkelsen, 2018; Mikkelsen and Lund ø, 2016; Sørensen et al, 2015) .

Policy support to organic farming is not new in Denmark, but, until recently, the focus was mainly on supporting production. In 2011, however, the Danish government launched the new Organic Action Plan (OAP), which adopted a unique approach, using public food procurement – together with other strategies – as a key instrument to foster production of organic products in the country (Sørensen et al, 2015).

With approximately half a million public meals produced per day at school, hospital and other public institutions, the Danish government choose public food procurement to be a primary driver for increasing the demand and hence stimulating farmer's motivation to convert from conventional to organic food production and achieve the OAP overall goal of doubling by 2020 the organically cultivated area in the country from the 2007 level (Sørensen et al, 2015) The key action adopted for the implementation of the strategy was to set the goal to increase up to 60% the procurement of organic food in all public kitchens by 2020.

Although the focus of the Danish OAP is on increasing organic production in the country, the purchase of organic food by public institutions has been recognized as an instrument to deliver multiples public good simultaneously (Sørensen et al, 2015; Berg, 2017; Fragkos and Mikkelsen, 2018). From an environmental perspective, organic production is recognized to be more sustainable compared with conventional methods, delivering benefits in terms of energy utilization, soil quality maintenance, water conservation, pest control as well as biodiversity improvements (Sørensen et al, 2015).

Potential benefits also include health (through a decrease in consumer's intake of chemical fertilizer and pesticide residues) and nutritional outcomes. Although the Danish strategy does not target directly "what food to purchase", by integrating higher levels of organic food within their existing budget, public kitchens have being adopting adaptation strategies which include buying more local and seasonal foods, less processed products, limiting meat consumption as well as reducing food waste (Sørensen et al, 2015). Similarly, although not targeting directly "from who" food should be purchased the OAP is believed to have the potential to go hand in hand with local and regional sourcing strategies and also support the local agriculture production, stimulating community economic development (Mikkelsen and Lundø, 2016).

The Danish OAP and the objectives to be reached through public food procurement are aligned with and supported by the public procurement regulatory frameworks, both at national as well as at the European level. These frameworks (European Directives 2014/24/EU enacted by Danish Public Procurement Act n. 1564/2015) recognize that public procurement should be used strategically as a "market-based instrument to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth while ensuring the

most efficient use of public funds" (EU Directive) and provide instruments in order to enable food procurers to make better use of public procurement in support of common societal goals.

Among these instruments there is, similarly to the Brazilian case, the possibility of using special awarding criteria that goes beyond the lowest price, including both environmental and social aspects. This instrument is particularly relevant considering that over-emphasis on price as the awarding criterion (to the detriment of quality and other environmental, and socio-economic ones) is considered as one of the key bottlenecks for the implementation of sustainable public food procurement initiatives (De Schutter, 2014; 2015; Morgan and Sonnino, 2008; Swensson, 2018).

The objective of targeting organic food products in public purchases is also supported by the national Organic Law (Law No. 1657/2015). Based on the EU legislation on organic farming this Law defines clear eligibility criteria for organic products and producers and sets out the standards and rules for the certification scheme, i.e. the Danish stated-owned organic Ø-label. Denmark was one of the first countries in the world to adopt a stated-owned organic label back in 1990. Currently the label is not only familiar (to 98%) but also highly trusted by (81%) the Danish consumers (Frederiksen, 2016).

This instrument, similarly to the Brazilian case, facilitates the targeting and implementation of the food procurement initiative and the compliance with public procurement principles of transparency and equal treatment of suppliers. It also provide the baseline for monitoring and evaluating the results and impacts of the initiative and related policy—a factor that is also considered of key importance for the sustainable development of public procurement initiatives that pursue broader development goals (UNEP, 2017; UNEP and 10YFP, 2016). In the case of Denmark, in fact, great effort is dedicated to the monitoring of the OAP, including a specific scheme (the Organic Cuisine Label) which, building on the organic certification scheme, allows the measurement and monitoring of organic food procurement by public kitchens (Sørensen et al, 2015).

It is interesting to note, as reported by Berg (2017), in order to support the conversion to organic production, efforts were made also to make the rules on how to become an organic producer easier to understand. This has been achieved partly through informing farmers via different channels about the requirements for becoming an organic farmer and partly also by making the rules on how to become an organic producer clear and flexible enough to make the transition easier (Berg, 2017). These instruments, together with other factors, have been considered as key enabling factors of the Danish strategy (Fragkos and Mikkelsen, 2018; Mikkelsen and Lund ø, 2016)

Currently Denmark has the highest market share of organic products in the world, with almost 80% of Danes purchasing organic food. The OAP was very successful in motivating public kitchens in augmenting their percentage of organic food purchases. Already in its first two years of implementation the percentage of participating public kitchens that reached the target of 60% of organic food purchase doubled from 31% to 62% (Sørensen et al, 2016). A significant example is the city of Copenhagen that met the goal of 90 per cent organic food in public kitchens in 2015. Also thanks to the increase in demand, the OAP has amply met its original goal of doubling organic land compared to a 2007 baseline (Berg, 2017).

The policy choices as well as the achieved results of the Danish OAP is a good illustration of the potential of PFPP – when properly supported by a conducive policy and regulatory frameworks – to influence both production and consumption patterns, and promote positive changes in the food system.

Discussion: The literature and the country experiences presented demonstrate the multifaceted nature of PFPP and the multiplicity of benefits and beneficiaries that PFPP have the potential to achieve. They also demonstrate how PFPP can be tailored to the pursuit of different policy objectives and influence both production and consumption patterns and ultimately drive more sustainable food systems.

The decision on which of the many potential benefits to focus is primarily a policy choice and can differ from country to country according to government priorities. They may include the promotion of production and consumption of organic products, as shown by the examples presented in this study. These choices, however, are dependent on a series of conditions, which include, with particular relevance, a conducive and aligned regulatory framework.

One key characteristic of PFP which distinguishes it from private parties is that government institutions are not completely free to choose (i) what food to purchase; (ii) how to purchase; and (iii) from whom to purchase. These choices are shaped and limited by the public procurement regulatory framework. As a result, the objectives and implementation of any food procurement initiative will be intrinsically linked to the existing public procurement regulatory framework, its alignment with the policy objectives and the possibility of amending it. Despite this strong linkage between PFPP and public procurement regulatory frameworks, the importance of the later as a key enabling factor as well as the need for alignments and reforms is often overlooked both by the literature as well as by policy makers.

The experiences of Brazil and Denmark analyzed in this paper are good examples that demonstrate the role of public food procurement and related regulatory frameworks in supporting policy maker's choice on the use of public food procurement as an instrument to pursue multiple development goals, including the promotion of production and consumption of organic products. These include, among others, the recognition of sustainable development as one of the objectives of public procurement; awarding criteria that goes beyond the lowest price; legal instruments that provide clear criteria for target beneficiaries and; adapted procurement procedures for facilitating the access (especially in the case of smallholder farmers) to public contractual opportunities. These instruments – together with other elements such as appropriate funding, institutional capacities, and strong political support – are key enabling factors of these policy choices.

The findings of this study highlight the need for more research in this area as well as the importance of raising awareness of policy makers on the need for accompanying PFPP with regulatory reforms and appropriate instruments to allow the use of public food procurement as an instrument to reach multiple benefits and beneficiaries. This includes its use for promoting the consumption and production of organic products.

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