

TIPS FOR GREEN PROCUREMENT

Green procurement means purchasing products and services that cause minimal adverse environmental impacts. It incorporates human health and environmental concerns into the search for high quality products and services at competitive prices. Green procurement is an effective tool to encourage the purchase of 'greener' products that have improved recyclability, reduced packaging, greater durability and a high recycled content.

The benefits of green procurement include:

- An improved ability to meet existing environmental goals, requirements, and laws.
- Improved worker health and safety.
- Reduced operating and maintenance costs, including hazardous material handling and disposal costs.
- Increased job satisfaction as you put your purchasing power to work to benefit human health and the environment.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles are helpful in understanding why and how to implement green procurement in your organisation. Keep in mind that these guidelines can change over time depending on local and overseas developments, and should be reviewed periodically.

1 Create A Culture That Supports Waste Reduction and Green Procurement In All Aspects of Operations

Organisations should facilitate and promote waste reduction and green procurement and expect staff and departments to follow suit.

2 Strike a Balance between Environment, Cost and Performance

The manufacture, use and disposal of a product may have adverse environmental impacts, which can result in substantial clean-up, liability and/or ever-increasing disposal costs. Organisations should take account of these impacts when deciding which products to buy, in addition to traditional factors such as quality, technical performance, cost, and availability.

3 Focus on Waste Minimisation

Waste minimisation should be an early consideration in the procurement process. One of the best ways of doing this is to develop waste reduction targets (e.g. by joining the EPD's Wastewi\$e Scheme).

4 Follow a Green Product Checklist

Several governments and organisations have established criteria for a variety of

environmentally responsible products and services. If there are no criteria available for the product you are purchasing, the following generic guidelines should help:

- Minimal use of virgin material in the product or service life cycle (e.g. recycled paper rather than virgin paper)
- Replacement of disposables with reusables or recyclables (e.g. reusable cups rather than paper cups)
- Minimal environmental impact from the entire product or service life cycle (e.g. degradable products)
- Minimal packaging or elimination of packaging. Especially avoid individual product packaging for bulk purchases.
- Reduced energy / water consumption (e.g. energy efficient equipment)
- Toxicity reduction or elimination (e.g. products without toxic substances)
- Durability and easy maintenance
- Waste disposal options (e.g. products that can be easily recycled)

5 Compare Environmental Impacts

Procurement personnel should consider comparing the various environmental impacts of different products to evaluate the trade-offs and make the “greenest” decision. Specifically they should:

- Comply with all environmental legislative and regulatory requirements when procuring products and services.
- Encourage suppliers and contractors to offer environmentally responsible products and services at competitive prices.
- Encourage suppliers and contractors to provide collection or recycling of used products.
- Encourage providers of services to consider the environmental impacts of service delivery.

6 Source Environmental Performance Information

Decisions on green procurement should be based on comprehensive and accurate information about a product’s environmental performance. Procurement staff should seek out information about the environmental life cycle of products and services to use in their evaluations and assessments.

7 Determine Market Availability

The market availability of environmentally friendly alternatives is a critical factor in green procurement. Aim to identify local and overseas suppliers and gather as much information as possible about the products you are purchasing. During the tendering processes, aim to explicitly reflect the organisation’s green procurement policy and encourage suppliers to provide greener alternatives.