

Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines

Introduction

These guidelines provide triple bottom line considerations (social/educational, environmental and economic) as we make decisions around purchasing. They are intended to compliment the District's existing Policy 603.1 (previously 803.1), Purchasing and Tendering. Decisions made at the point of purchase can have a significant impact on sustainability efforts and the cost savings that can accompany them.

Sustainable purchasing is set within the context of achieving value for money. When our organization buys goods and services, we must take into account the economic value (price, quality, availability and functionality) and also the related environmental and social impacts of those goods and services. In this context, value for money includes the consideration of many factors such as cost, performance, availability, quality and environmental performance.

Effective Sustainable Purchasing Practices

The following should be considered when making a purchase on behalf of the District:

- Reducing total purchasing: prior to making a decision to purchase, consider whether the product is truly needed. If it is needed, is it possible to rent, lease, refurbish or buy second-hand instead of buying new?
- Durability: ensuring that equipment and materials that are purchased will perform well, will last a long time, and are repairable, thereby reducing waste and slowing the cycle of replacement (which requires additional resources for extraction, manufacture, and transport).
- Lifecycle cost: assessing the costs (financial and environmental) of the good over its lifetime. Items that consume more energy and supplies are more prone to breakdown and repair, or that have a shorter life may cost more despite having a cheaper initial purchase price.
- End of life: how will the item be disposed of at end of life? Can it be broken down and recycled or will it become landfill waste? Will the manufacturer take it back?
- Energy efficiency: is the item ENERGY STAR® certified? Will it help reduce energy costs?
- Packaging: seek products that have reduced packaging and that use recycled and reusable packaging.
- Toxics: does the item contain toxics that will be harmful to employees' or customers' health – or that may have caused health impact for those who manufactured it?
- Recycled content: specify or prefer high recycled content where appropriate, such as paper goods and plastics
- Sustainable harvesting: in the case of natural materials (i.e. wood, seafood, paper, etc.), was the good produced and harvested in a manner that will not deplete the resource?
- Organic: for foods and even fibres, was the good produced using organic methods that preserve soil health and work within natural ecology?
- Transport: reduce transportation impacts where appropriate

Effective Sustainable Purchasing Practices at the District Level

- Conduct an analysis of spending and/or consumption patterns for the District
- Evaluate environmental risks associated with major purchase categories to identify greatest opportunities to reduce environmental impacts
- Develop a reference list of key categories of goods and services with significant environmental impacts. Consider setting sustainable purchasing standards for these categories.

Effective Sustainable Purchasing Practices in Schools/Sites

Collaboration

- Collaborate with the Purchasing Department prior to purchasing goods or services because the Purchasing Department has:
 - Access to bulk purchasing power
 - Detailed information on performance standards for many different types of goods
 - Information on incentives for certain energy efficient equipment and appliances (in most cases the incentives must be applied for before a purchase is made)

Continuous Improvement

- Conduct an analysis of spending and/or consumption patterns for your site
- Evaluate environmental risks associated with major purchase categories to identify greatest opportunities to reduce environmental impacts. Select a sustainable purchasing initiative based on the results and set a goal.
- Measure and assess whether change has occurred (before and after surveys, observation/audits, utility consumption data)
- Assess and evaluate your challenges and success
- Revise your plan based on your evaluation feedback
- Communicate your results, challenges and successes to your community and district

Commitment to the Triple Bottom Line Assessment

- Assess your plan and implementation strategies for Educational/Social impact:
 - How does the sustainable procurement initiative connect with the environmental learning outcomes?
 - How does the initiative build environmental stewards?
 - How does being involved in the initiative provide enhancement of knowledge, skills and attitudes?
- Assess your plan and implementation strategies for Environmental impact:
 - How does this initiative decrease the school's ecological footprint?
 - How does this initiative enrich learner's knowledge of environmental connections and global impacts?
- Assess your plan and implementation strategies for Economic impact:
 - What are the financial costs to implement your sustainable procurement initiative?
 - How have you been proactive in accessing available funding from outside sources to support your initiative?
 - How will your sustainable procurement initiative save your school/site money by using fewer resources or by reducing life-cycle costs?

Leadership

- Inspire a collective vision
- Set short term and long term sustainable procurement goals which include implementing effective system-wide practices, resulting in consistent and behavioural changes

Learning for All

- Provide education on sustainable procurement through members of the Green Teams in classrooms, at school events and community events
- Capitalize on the teachable moments by showcasing the possible curriculum connections and providing information on sustainable purchases made within your facility
- Provide sustainable purchasing professional development opportunities for individuals with a purchasing role

Project Plan for developing Sustainable Purchasing Initiatives

These guidelines support successful development of sustainable purchasing projects by site-based Green Teams as they create local plans of action that align with the District Sustainability Action Plan.

Step 1: Determine your school-based (or site-based) sustainable purchasing initiative(s). Target a specific purchase type/behaviour that you would like to change (consider acquisition, use and disposal of the targeted goods/services)

Step 2: Collaborate with stakeholders and partner groups

Step 3: Develop the project plan (vision, scope, resources, education, funding, assessment, etc.) Create an action plan for each procurement initiative: targets, activities, timelines, roles and responsibilities, resources, budget, assessment and evaluation tools, communication tools, etc. Determine how you will measure weather behaviours have changed. Align with the District Sustainability Action Plan.

Step 4: Endorse the project plan collectively (all stakeholders to sign-off)

Step 5: Implement the project plan

Step 6: Celebrate, reflect and implement continuous improvement measures

Appendix 1 - Sustainable Purchasing Standards

Product	Sustainable Purchasing Minimum Standard
Standard Photocopy Paper	Contain a minimum of 30% PCW recycled content
Interior Paint	Classified as low-VOC (volatile organic compounds) or no-VOC
Garbage Bags	100% degradable
Paper Towels and Toilet Paper	100% recycled with some PCW content included
Flooring	Classified as low-VOC (volatile organic compounds)
Computers	ENERGY STAR® rated
Refrigerators and Dishwashers	ENERGY STAR® rated

Appendix 2 – Sustainable Purchasing Focus Areas

Through the use of the Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines, the District may focus on sustainable purchasing practices that affect the following, depending on the commodity being purchased:

- Waste prevention and reduction
- Natural resource reduction
- Pollution and toxin reduction
- Reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- Biodiversity maintenance or improvement
- Health and safety