**Sustainable Procurement**

**Introduction**

The Government is increasingly committed to sustainability in purchasing, this is reflected in policy documents and is being translated into action through implementing and measuring sustainable procurement in the public sector. This document will enable you to consider the various aspects of sustainability in procurement and the different ways of applying knowledge and assessing your progress.

In this document we will:

* [Define sustainable procurement](#A)
* [Describe good sustainability processes and procedures](#B)
* [Reference good sources of information including self-assessment tools](#C)
* [Provide examples of useful documentation, Case studies and clauses](#D)
* [Training opportunities](#E)

**What is Sustainable Procurement?**

Sustainable Procurement is the process of recognising the adverse and favourable environmental, social and economic impacts of purchased goods, works and services. It is a wide ranging cradle to grave approach and should consider the entire supply chain rather than just the individual product or service. Whilst initial investment might be required this should be quickly recouped in savings from, for example, new found efficiency, energy reduction and work opportunities.

The UN Marrakech Task Force define Sustainable Procurement as "Sustainable Procurement is a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment". You can read more on their webpage (<http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/about.htm#Flyers>)

Procurement staff should have appropriate training to ensure that suitable practices are employed in the acquisition of goods, works and services.

**Good sustainability processes and procedures**

An institution who has developed sustainability aspects in its procurement function should be able to demonstrate a number of clear objectives.

* The institution, led by a sustainability champion will have a regularly reviewed sustainable procurement strategy and well documented, clear policies and procedures; these are embedded by the central team and across devolved procurement staff and budget holders into every stage of every procurement project.
* A sustainable purchasing policy, endorsed by senior management and widely shared within the institution and beyond, should detail the considerations staff need to make and due diligence to be undertaken when procuring goods, services and works. It will reference risk assessment tools and, environmental, social and economic factors. Institutions may also hold individual sustainability strategy documents for particular work streams for example specific commodities.
* Staff will regularly be provided with training and/or information to ensure all parties are aware of the ways the impact of any procurement exercise can be made positive. Key suppliers will be set appropriate KPIs to measure performance and procurement professionals should be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of each complete supply chain. Let contracts will include specific clauses relating directly to sustainability issues.
* Reports detailing procurement activity should (amongst other things) describe the split of expenditure between SME’s and larger organisations and demonstrate social benefits delivered from procurement projects in the community and wider society.
* Institutions should be paying suppliers to agreed timescales, recognising nuances with SMES and adjusting processes to ensure best practice. Regular reporting is provided by appropriate staff to the procurement function in order that there is a clear method of monitoring payment processes.

An institution who has done all of the above may have shared its experiences and expertise with other institutions either formally or informally. It may also have publically received recognition for its achievements via organisations such as the EAUC (Green Gown awards) or the CIPS awards. These institutions may also pride themselves on recognised accreditations such as fair trade status.

**Self-assessment and risk management tools**

There are various self-assessment mechanisms currently available to aid institutions in understanding, implementing, measuring and monitoring their progress with regards to a mature approach to sustainability. In 2010 the government defined that DEFRA would be best placed to drive sustainability improvements in the public sector and they developed the [Flexible Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-procurement-in-government-guidance-to-the-flexible-framework). This Flexible Framework has been used as a model by experts in various organisations to guide institutions and other government bodies through the maze of sustainability aspects and enable them to demonstrate their achievements.

Below is a list, with a short description, of organisations, companies and bodies who are best placed to advise you on all different aspects of the journey. It is worth having a look at each website to understand exactly what each company can do for you and consider how this might fit in with your Sustainability, Procurement and Organisational strategy.   
 **Public sector free information:**

[**APUC**](http://www.apuc-scot.ac.uk/#!/devsus)

Resources, best practice guides, Policy, code of conduct, Sustain,

[**Cabinet Office**](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-sustainable-development-a-part-of-all-government-policy-and-operations)

The Flexible Framework. Their aim is to make sustainable development a part of all government policy and operations.

Also, they have a number of pre written Government Buying Standards product specifications (formerly known as Buy Sustainable Quick Wins) which can help you develop tender documents for a particular products and services. Details on these “quick wins” can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sustainable-procurement-the-government-buying-standards-gbs).

[**EAUC – The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges**](http://www.eauc.org.uk/home)  
A Subscription funded, Sustainability champion for Universities and Colleges. Providing support and guidance Documentation

[**HEFCE**](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/lgm/sd/rgf/)

Revolving Green Fund and Students Green Fund  
  
[**The Marrakech Process**](http://esa.un.org/marrakechprocess/)

The Marrakech Process is a global multi-stakeholder process to support the implementation of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and the elaboration of a 10-Year Framework of Programmes on SCP (10YFP).

[**People and Planet**](http://peopleandplanet.org/consultancy)

League table listing University status. Electronics Watch. Green League

Environmental and Sustainability training for the sector, subscription   
  
[**SOPO - Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government**](http://www.sopo.org/)

Guidance predominantly for local government but a lot of useful advice for the public sector. Need to sign up.  
  
For reference there is a British Standard relating to Sustainability. [BS 8903](http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030203003)

**Private companies offering limited free advice and further support for a fee**

[**CIPS**](https://www.cips.org/)

Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply. General sustainable procurement advice, guides and model documentation as well as the [CIPS Sustainability Index](https://cips-sustainabilityindex.com/)

[**NET Positive Futures**](http://www.net-positive.org/en/)

Jimmy Brannigan and Sheri-Leigh Miles. Sustainable Procurement Training and support with an [“Action plan”](http://www.netpositivefutures.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Achieving-the-Flexible-Framework-L4-in-12-Months.pdf) to reach level four on the Flexible Framework. Jimmy has advised many HEI’s including Manchester and Cambridge.

[**Carbon Trust**](http://www.carbontrust.com/client-services/advice/public-sector-advice)

A private company focusing on helping companies cut their energy usage

[**Sustainable Procurement Limited**](http://www.sustainableprocurement.eu.com/ourwork.html)

Director (Barbara) worked for Defra project developing the original Flexible Framework, also Advisor to the Swiss-led UN Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Public Procurement. Can provide training, guidance and advice for a fee.

**Provide examples of useful documentation, Case studies and clauses**

Below are links to documents, webpages, policies and case studies demonstrating best practice in the sector. Each of these examples are from Universities who have scored well in either their Procurement Maturity Assessment (PMA) or Procurement Capability Assessment (PCA) and we thank those who have allowed us to reference their excellent work.

The University of the West of England have developed an excellent Sustainable Purchasing Policy and a Guide for Sustainable Procurement. Both of these documents, along with other sustainability advice can be found on their [website](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/finance/purchasing/supplierinfo/environment.shtml).

The University of Durham detail their [Corporate, Social and Environmental Responsibility (CSER) Policy](https://www.dur.ac.uk/procurement/suppliers/sustprocpolicy/) referencing and linking other relevant and pertinent documents.

Middlesex University created their own document, based on the Flexible Framework detailing how they would implement the guidance. You can view their approach [here](http://www.hepa.ac.uk/ViewDocument.aspx?t=1&ID=2528&GUID=5c391df6-c171-41f8-8075-b6ff62513e08&dl=1).

The University of Plymouth [Sustainable Procurement Strategy](http://www1.plymouth.ac.uk/procurement/Documents/Sustainable%20Procurement%20Strategy%20A5%20-2009-2014.pdf) is an excellent example. N.B. The document is due to be updated shortly – the revised version will be linked as soon as it is available

Loughborough University published a Case Study detailing how they used the British Standard to help develop its sustainable procurement strategy and policy. You can view the document [here](http://shop.bsigroup.com/upload/Shop/Download/CaseStudies/Sustainability/BSI-Loughborough-Casestudy-EN-UK.pdf).

If your institution has developed something you would like to share with the sector, please contact [Emma Keenan](mailto:emma.keenan@bufdg.ac.uk) at BUFDG who will add your information to this document.

**Training**

Depending on your requirements, there are various organisations offering different types of training.

In the first instance please check the HEPA training pages for forthcoming competitively priced sector specific events. If you don’t see what you need do contact [HEPA](http://www.hepa.ac.uk/) who can suggest options available.   
  
[CIPS](http://www.cips.org/en-GB/training-courses/) offer courses throughout the UK at various times of the year

BIP solutions run various courses around the country via [PASS](http://www.passprocurement.com/what-we-do/training/)

[Net Positive Futures](http://www.netpositivefutures.co.uk/) offer bespoke training for institutions leading teams to enable them to achieve level 4 on the Flexible Framework during a set timeframe.

**This document is intended as a guide to the different routes you might consider when implementing or developing a sustainability policy. You should seek appropriate professional advice referencing your particular institution.**