



UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

**SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT
STRATEGY**

2013 - 2017

1. Background and Purpose

This Sustainable Procurement Strategy has been developed to ensure that all staff involved in the procurement of goods and services within the University routinely consider how we can enhance and protect our shared environment, contribute to the health and well-being of society and build a sustainable economy through our procurement decisions.

This strategy outlines the following:

1. The six priority issues the University Purchasing Department (UPD) will always consider as part of our procurement decisions
2. Our sustainable procurement objectives as outlined in our Procurement Strategy 2013-2017
3. A statement of action which will support the delivery of our sustainable procurement objectives
4. The principles UPD will follow to support the delivery of this strategy.

The approach we have taken in the Sustainable Procurement Strategy is to focus on promoting the positive impact we can have through our procurement practice and processes. This will of course mean we will work to reduce the negative environmental and potential social impacts every organisation has in its supply chain, however, by taking a pro-active approach we are seeking to maximise the positive impact we can have through procurement.

The mission of the University of Oxford is to achieve and sustain excellence in every area of its teaching and research, maintaining and developing its historical position as a world-class university and enriching the international, national, and regional communities through the fruits of its research, the skills of its alumni, and the publishing of academic and educational materials.

UPD promotes purchasing professionalism and excellence to support the University in engaging with suppliers; it is responsible for establishing and managing effective commercial arrangements to deliver the University's purchasing requirements at best value for money (to time, quality and budget whilst considering environmental and social impacts).

This document sets out the University's Sustainable Procurement Strategy for the next five years which is developed alongside, and is aligned to the University's objectives and values.

2. Ownership and Approval of the Strategy

This Sustainable Procurement Strategy is owned and maintained by the Deputy Director of Purchasing and is sponsored by the Director of Purchasing and Director of Finance.

Specific yearly implementation plans will be developed against this strategy and will be delivered by UPD. Performance against these implementation plans will be monitored by the Deputy Director of Purchasing and reported to the Director of Purchasing, who will escalate matters as required to the Director of Finance.

3. Our Priorities

Since the launch of the National Action Plan: 'Procuring the Future' in 2006 sustainable procurement has been an increasingly important agenda for all organisations not only in terms of securing value for money but also maximising the positive impact an institution can have through how it uses its resources.

Sustainable procurement to the University of Oxford means routinely considering the environmental, social (including equality) and economic opportunities and impacts of purchasing decisions, whilst taking a long term view.

Given the range and scale of sustainability issues which are potentially relevant to the University of Oxford, the Sustainable Procurement Strategy has identified six priority issues which will be considered in all of UPD's procurement decisions.

The priority issues have been selected because they make a significant contribution environmentally, socially and economically to the University of Oxford, our key stakeholders, suppliers and the local community. This strategy also supports the delivery of the University's Carbon Management Strategy and is aligned to the work of the Environmental Sustainability Team.

As well as the consideration of these priorities in our procurement processes UPD will ensure that a risk based approach is used to identify and take opportunities to manage any significant environmental, social and economic considerations which are unique to any individual product or service procured by the University.

Key to success in implementing this strategy and delivering progress against the six priority issues will be to work in collaboration with the University's suppliers.

The six priority issues are:

- Optimise the use of natural resources in our procurement decisions and throughout our supply chain
- Effectively manage waste in the supply chain
- Effectively manage the delivery of goods and services to the University
- Support the management of our carbon impact and the delivery of the University's Carbon Management Strategy
- Work with suppliers and departments to raise awareness of sustainability to build a more sustainable economy
- Ensure that ethical considerations such as fair trade and a living wage are considered in our procurement practices

4. Priorities in detail

For each of the priorities we have identified why it is a priority for the University, and detailed some specific considerations.

4.1 Optimise the use of natural resources in our procurement decisions and throughout our supply chain

People and communities are reliant on a readily available supply of natural resources to sustain life itself – water being a perfect example. There is pressure on many of these resources caused by increased consumption and inefficient use. A commitment to optimising the use of these vital resources is a pre-requisite for any socially responsible institution.

We will:

- Encourage our suppliers to decrease any reliance on non-renewable resources with their production processes
- Systematically reduce the use of unsustainable materials e.g. unsustainable timber
- Systematically reduce the use of virgin materials

4.2 Effectively manage waste in the supply chain

It is well recognised that the cost of waste management and disposal will continue to rise. By effectively managing the production and flows of waste within our supply chain we can save money and reduce the negative environmental and social issues associated with waste.

We will:

- Manage and reduce the amount of packaging related to the products we purchase (including promotion of recycled packaging)
- Promote the procurement of recycled products
- Promote product options which generate less waste (either through their production or use)

4.3 Effectively manage the delivery of goods and services to the University

The University is a major employer and holds a central position within Oxford. As a tourist destination and the place where we live it is important that we consider the environmental and health related issues, such as air quality, associated with transporting our goods and services within and around the city.

We will:

- Manage the scheduling of deliveries to reduce the impact on the local environment
- Reduce the overall volume of deliveries to the University through our procurement practices
- Engage with local stakeholders to promote our commitment to reducing traffic congestion within Oxford

4.4 Support the management of our carbon impact and the delivery of the University's Carbon Management Strategy

Procurement was identified in the University's Carbon Management Strategy as being a mechanism to reduce energy consumption across the University. The integration of the consideration of carbon into our procurement processes is essential if we are to meet our stated carbon targets, and we will work with our colleagues in the Environmental Sustainability Team to achieve this.

We will:

- Embed energy efficiency criteria in University-wide contracts and precedent contracts
- Promote the procurement of energy efficient equipment to all staff (particularly within laboratories)
- Develop joint carbon reduction plans with those suppliers identified as having the highest carbon impacts

4.5 Work with suppliers and departments to raise awareness of sustainability to build a more sustainable economy

As a large local employer with a vast supply chain we can have a significantly positive impact environmentally, socially and economically. Whilst value for money is a key part of our Procurement Strategy, we also understand that a sustainable supply chain will help us deliver excellence for the University and support the local economy.

We will:

- Support our suppliers understanding of sustainability and sustainable procurement
- Explore opportunities to increase the number of local businesses within our supply chain
- Encourage our suppliers to implement mechanisms to monitor and communicate their sustainability performance and that of their wider supply chains

4.6 Ensure that ethical considerations and a living wage are considered in our procurement practices

Social and ethical considerations are important part of our social responsibility as a high profile employer and purchaser. Working with our supply chain we make decisions for the benefit of individuals and communities locally and globally.

We will:

- Promote compliance with the Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code
- Support a living wage within our services supply chains
- Promote excellent health and safety practices both on our site and through our supply chain

Consideration of these priorities will be integrated into our procurement processes and guidance developed and communicated to staff and suppliers.

5. Our Objectives

In our Procurement Strategy 2013-2017 we have identified the following objectives. It is through meeting these objectives we will ensure the effective delivery of our Sustainable Procurement Strategy.

Sustainable Procurement Objectives

1. Enable University of Oxford staff to develop and apply their skills, experience and knowledge to support progress towards sustainable procurement objectives
2. Build sustainability considerations (environmental, social, and economic) into our procurement processes and methodologies
3. Ensure contractual requirements embed sustainable procurement objectives and maximise their contribution to further University policy objectives
4. Develop supplier awareness of sustainable procurement objectives, encourage them to continuously increase their contribution to these objectives and report progress

As well as delivering against these four objectives we will regularly monitor and report on our progress against the Flexible Framework, a self-assessment tool developed by the business-led Sustainable Procurement Task Force, which allows the University to track its progress on sustainable procurement. The University is following the recommended approach to implementing the Flexible Framework by systematically working through each theme (people, policy, process, suppliers, results), continuously improving from levels one to five.

6. Statement of Action

The following statements of action (articulated in our Procurement Strategy 2013-17) have been structured around the categories identified in the Flexible Framework. For each of these categories (Policy, People, Process, Supplier Engagement and Measurement) there will be a detailed action plan which will be reviewed on annual basis.

6.1 Policy

We will develop and ratify our Sustainable Procurement Strategy.

We will champion this strategy within the University.

6.2 People

We will deliver training and guidance to equip UPD staff with the right skills, knowledge and tools to achieve sustainable procurement objectives.

Working with Estates Services we will raise the awareness of sustainable procurement with departments and influence the development of specifications and procurement options as early as possible to ensure they contribute to sustainable objectives.

6.3 Process

We will promote and build sustainability into our procurement practices (category management, contract and supplier relationship management, tendering) using a risk assessment tool covering social, economic and environmental factors.

6.4 Supplier Engagement

We will work with suppliers under supplier relationship management programmes to ensure that sustainable procurement considerations become 'business as usual' and are embedded into commercial activities directly and down the supply chain.

We will work with suppliers to address sustainability by building relevant key performance indicators and contract terms into contract. We will ensure that sustainability is a standing agenda item in all supplier reviews.

We will highlight to departments those preferred suppliers who have the best sustainability credentials, and where practical establish agreements that offer environmentally preferable products.

6.5 Measurement

We will report on the indirect carbon emission arising from purchasing as part of HEFCE's requirement for all institutions to measure and report on carbon emissions produced through the procurement of goods and services.

We will reach level three on the Flexible Framework by December 2013 and establish stretch targets beyond that date.

7. How we will deliver this strategy

There are three key guiding principles which will support the effective delivery of the Sustainable Procurement Strategy. We will ensure these principles are embedded into UPD's thinking and action.

Principle 1: Communicating and Learning

We will share good practice and effectively communicate our lessons learned from implementing sustainable procurement initiatives. We will seek ideas from others to continually improve our performance.

Principle 2: Partnering and Engaging

We will partner with internal and external stakeholders to effectively deliver our sustainable procurement objectives. It is by working with colleagues we will maximise the impacts of the Sustainable Procurement Strategy and identify mechanisms to ensure our strategy has the positive impact we intend it to have.

Principle 3: Measuring and Reporting

We will ensure we regularly monitor and report on our progress against this strategy. Using the Flexible Framework we will be able to benchmark our performance with colleagues within the sector and beyond.