ETHICAL AND SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT PRINCIPLES FRAMEWORK

US

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

INTRODUCTION

The University of Sussex is committed within our sustainability strategy, <u>Sustainable Sussex</u>, to becoming one of the most sustainable universities in the world and to be a global leader within the higher education sector and beyond.

Over 60% of our current carbon emissions come from our supply chain. Therefore, making our procurement more sustainable is the single biggest step that we can take to achieving our ambitious organisational target of being net zero by 2035.

This ethical and sustainable procurement framework is our primary tool for influencing our suppliers and enabling them to demonstrate how they can work together with us to achieve true environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

The framework also supports the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and contains nine core ethical and sustainable procurement principles that we want to promote and foster within our supply chain:

· net zero target and action plan

· recycling target

· responsible consumption and production

· equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) framework for staff and supply chain staff

· staff access to wellbeing programmes

· supporting and volunteering in local issues

· initiatives to reduce inequality in the workplace

· real living wage

· engaging small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs) in the supply chain.

These nine principles directly support the achievement of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, which are designed to create a better world.

There are 17 SDGs in total (illustrated on page 2), which can be split into three broad categories:

· environmental sustainability

· social sustainability

· economic sustainability.

Throughout this framework, we show how our nine ethical and sustainable procurement principles relate to these three categories and the SDGs.[1]

[1] Several relevant SDGs are pictured on each page, however there are significant interlinkages between the SDGs that mean these procurement principles impact more SDGs than pictured.

▲
The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

This document is organised in a way that identifies the nine sustainability principles that we want to promote within our supply chain and provides recommended questions and criteria for colleagues to consider including in tender documentation. As every procurement is different, advice can be sought from the University's Sustainability Team on their use and implementation.

We are committed to applying this framework to all procurement activity at the University in a proportionate manner. This means that some of the principles should be mandatory for larger organisations and contracts, while Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) should be competitively scored against the principles in a proportionate manner to prevent barriers to entry. The typical boundary used to classify an SME is 500 employees.

This framework builds on existing good practice on ethical and sustainable procurement:

- Our October 2020 **Supplier Code of Conduct**, which outlines the minimum ethical, social, and environmental standards and behaviours expected of suppliers

- The Ethical and Sustainable Procurement section (3) of our **Procurement and Purchasing Policy**, which sets out our sustainable procurement goals

- Our affiliation to Electronics Watch, which allows us to monitor our electronics supply chains and protect the rights of supply chain workers

- Our membership of both the national and regional Responsible Procurement Group, where non-profit organisations and education institutes share best practice in sustainable procurement

- Distinct procurement activity conducted around specific key areas of the University's supply chain.

1. NET ZERO TARGET AND ACTION PLAN

Procurement is a key contributor to institutional carbon emissions. A 2019 study found that, on average, an institution's supply chain emissions are 5.5 times higher than their direct emissions.[2]

Carbon emissions in the supply chain can come from any activity associated with the product or service being procured. By making these activities less carbon intensive, the carbon footprint of the supplier and the purchaser can be improved.

As we work towards our institutional target of **achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2035** we will seek to prioritise collaboration with suppliers who share our values of working towards an ambitious yet well planned and achievable net zero target.

The Green House Gas Protocol classifies emissions in three ways – known as scope 1, 2 or 3 emissions. Scope 1 refers to the greenhouse gas emissions owned and controlled by the University while Scope 2 and 3 emissions refers to our indirect emissions, including those in our supply chain. For better understanding view the table below.

Scope	Type of emission
Scope 1	Fuel combustion, company vehicles, fugitive emissions
Scope 2	Purchased electricity, heat and steam
Scope 3	Procured goods services, business travel and communting

Recommended Question	Suggested Scoring method	Measures of Success
Does your organisation have a time bound Net Zero Carbon target and an action plan to achieve this?	· Mandatory for non-SMEs · Weighted scoring for SMEs	In order to answer yes to a pass/fail question in this area the supplier should be able to confirm that they have the following things in place: · published net zero target with date before the middle of the century by which they will be achieving a balance between the carbon emitted into the atmosphere, and the carbon removed from it · sub targets for Scope 1 and 2 emissions · SMART targets and an action plan for how they will reduce their scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions between now and their target date for achieving Net Zero. In order to receive a positive scoring in any quality questions in this area, potential suppliers should score highly if they also have: · ambition of net zero by 2035 or earlier to match University goal · commitments and an action plan for getting to net zero for scope 3 emissions · evidence of planned investment in decarbonisation and/or energy efficiency improvements · clear methodology for measuring progress including organisational KPIs.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

13 CLIMATE ACTION

---

[2] **https://www.cdp.net/en/research/global-reports/changing-the-chain**

2. RECYCLING

Recycling is preferable to both landfill and incineration (Energy from Waste) because it reduces the need for extraction of raw materials and is less energy intensive. For example, glass recycling saves over 12 million tonnes of raw materials and over 7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year in the EU, which is equal to taking 4 million cars off the road.

We as an institution are ultimately responsible for the waste produced in the process of harvesting, making, packaging and delivering the products and services that we procure.

That is why selecting a supplier who shares **our values and aspirations to reduce waste** and increase recycling (in line with our target of recycling 50% of our waste by 2025) is a priority for us.

Recommended question	Suggested scoring method	Measures of success
Does your organisation have a time bound target recycling rate and an action plan to achieve this?	· Mandatory for non-SMEs · Weighted scoring for SMEs	· Published waste recycling and reduction targets and action plan. · Ambition of target to match or exceed University goals (50% recycling rate and 10% reduction in the volume of waste produced per student by 2025). · Evidence of planned investment. · Clear methodology for measuring progress including KPIs. · Elimination of excessive packaging and single use plastic through volume reduction and use of recycled materials. · Innovative approaches to reducing waste such as circular economy practices.

3. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

The materials used in the products that we buy can have massive impacts on land and marine pollution and biodiversity. So, we as a university are committed to increasing the responsible and sustainable sourcing and processing of materials, as evidenced by product certifications.

There is a wide range of environmental produce certifications, from those certifying food as sustainably sourced, to those measuring the carbon emissions produced in the whole life cycle of a product.

For example, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) requires suppliers to prove that the wood or paper used in a product is from a sustainably managed forest that meets certain criteria, such as following local legislation, supporting local communities, and protecting biodiversity.

By requiring environmental produce certifications, we will encourage our suppliers to use forests, and other scarce biodiverse resources, sustainably in order to be able to sell their products.

Recommended question	Suggested scoring method	Measures of success
Please list any environmental and product certifications that are relevant to this contract, such as those that protect the biodiversity of the material origin, or those that certify the responsible sourcing of the materials.	Weighted scoring	Nationally or internationally recognised certifications and standards eg EU Ecolabel, FSC, PEFC, ISO standards, GHG emissions life cycle assessments
Do you have a policy and system in place to prove that your products have been made with constituent materials that have been responsibly sourced? If yes, please provide details	Weighted scoring	• Environmental and product certifications. • Attainment of BES 6001 or equivalent. • Assessments carried out by independent verification body.

4. EDI FOR STAFF AND SUPPLY CHAIN STAFF

The University of Sussex is committed to promoting social sustainability and supporting equality diversity and inclusion (EDI) within our EDI strategy **Inclusive Sussex**.

All employers can play their part in building a more inclusive society by encouraging good EDI practices and tackling both conscious and unconscious biases within their supply chain.

By requiring our suppliers to have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy we can help to build a more equal society. Ultimately, we can strive to ensure that employees working on our contracts are treated fairly at work and that the workforce is diverse and inclusive.

| Recommended question	Suggested scoring method	Measures of success
Does your organisation have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy that at least meets the requirements of the Equality Act (2010), and an associated action plan?	Mandatory for non-SMEs	• Current EDI policy that at least meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. • EDI action plan to implement policy aims, includes SMART targets and monitoring of relevant data to assess progress. • Governance oversight of EDI. • Evidence that EDI is embedded throughout organisation. • Evidence that EDI is championed at board level and is integral to decision-making.
Does your organisation provide EDI training to all staff?	Mandatory for non-SMEs	• Mandatory training for all staff. • Unconscious bias training. • Include EDI in staff inductions. • Requirement or provision of EDI training to their supply chain.
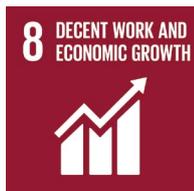
5. STAFF ACCESS TO WELLBEING PROGRAMMES

Employee wellbeing programmes are important for supporting people in their workplace and reducing work related stress.

A 2019 study found that 4.3 million UK employees were unhappy at work, with stress as a key factor. Providing wellbeing programmes can help to reduce this stress, as well as increasing performance and the resilience of the workforce.

We will actively use this procurement principle to encourage organisations to provide wellbeing support to their staff in alignment with our institutional value of kindness.

Recommended question	Suggested scoring method	Measures of success
Does your organisation have a staff wellbeing policy and/or action plan?	Weighted scoring	• Access to wellbeing programmes, seminars, and workshops on relevant topics. Provide access to physical and mental wellbeing programmes and resources, including but not limited to Mental Health First Aid, Wellbeing Champions. • Employer provides access to an occupational health service and or an employee assistance programme. • Equipping managers to identify and support their own and their team's wellbeing.
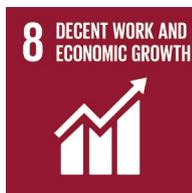
6. SUPPORTING AND VOLUNTEERING IN LOCAL ISSUES

By supporting local issues, either through donations, volunteering, or in-kind contributions, organisations can add social value to their work. This means that the organisation's work is not only creating monetary value for the organisation but also providing value and support to society through support for communities and social causes.

We define "local" in this framework in various ways. For example, local to: the organisation's headquarters, where the organisation operates or where a product was sourced.

We as a university are committed to volunteering in our local community through our **Spirit of Sussex Award, Staff Volunteering Scheme** and extensive **Outreach Activities**. We will actively reward suppliers who share this commitment to create positive community impacts through our procurement processes.

Recommended question	Suggested scoring method	Measures of success
Does your organisation donate time, money, or in-kind contributions to social and environmental issues and charities in the local area?	Weighted scoring	· Charity partners that are regularly supported. · Involvement in local community projects. · Grants to empower communities and support causes. · Examples of in-kind contributions are providing business advice, training, or equipment.
Does your organisation have a policy to support staff in volunteering, such as designated work hours for volunteering?	Weighted scoring	· Multiple paid days for volunteering per year. · Celebration of the volunteering work that staff do in these hours.

7. INITIATIVES TO REDUCE INEQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Encouraging initiatives that reduce inequality in the workplace is important for removing current wage gaps, related to protected characteristics[3] under the Equality Act 2010. It also ensures equal access to the employment opportunities that contracts create.

Asking questions around this principle will allow us to demonstrate that discrimination, of any form, is not welcome in our supply chain and that employees should be supported to progress in their careers.

Recommended question	Suggested scoring method	Measures of success
Please list the things that your organisation does to proactively implement equal and inclusive treatment for all workers, including those that embed its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010	Weighted scoring	• Pay gaps measured (disability, gender, ethnicity) and reported and initiatives planned to reduce pay gaps. • Policy and practice that ensures that appropriate reasonable adjustments are identified and are put in place by the employer. • Positive action in recruitment programmes for those protected characteristics which are under-represented in the workforce. • Mentoring and/or leadership programmes for specified groups which are under-represented or which face barriers to progression. • Staff diversity networks and champions.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
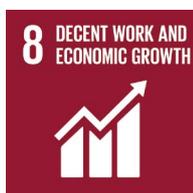
[3] **It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of:**

• age
• disability
• gender reassignment
• marriage and civil partnership
• pregnancy and maternity
• race
• religion or belief
• sex
• sexual orientation

These are called protected characteristics.

8. REAL LIVING WAGE

The University of Sussex is committed to poverty eradication through payment of real living wages.

The **Real Living Wage Foundation** is an organisation which sets the real living wage each year, based on the cost of living. It is higher than the national minimum wage and the national living wage, because these are calculated from median earnings rather than the cost of living.

Over 7,000 UK businesses voluntarily pay their employees the real living wage and the University of Sussex has committed to investigating the feasibility of applying for Living Wage Accreditation by August 2023.

By asking our suppliers questions about the real living wage we will encourage the uptake of the wage and can increase the number of workers in our supply chain being paid enough to live on.

Recommended question	Suggested scoring method	Measures of success
What percentage of your staff are paid at least the relevant Real Living Wage?	Weighted scoring	• 100% for large organisations. • Real Living Wage Foundation accreditation. • Regular third-party contracted staff paid the real living wage.
What initiatives or proactive steps has your organisation taken to ensure that those employed within your supply chain are paid a living wage?	Weighted scoring	• Requirement or support for their supply chain to pay their staff the real living wage.

1 NO POVERTY

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
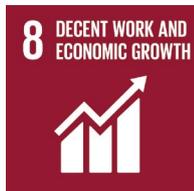
9. ENGAGING SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMEs) AND VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY, AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES (VCSEs)

It is important that SMEs and VCSEs are included in supply chains in order to ensure that markets are diverse and that these smaller enterprises are able to compete against larger and more established businesses.

The University of Sussex is committed to involving SMEs and VCSEs within our supply chain, both by taking a proportionate approach to implementing this framework with SME and VCSEs and by encouraging our partners to embed them in our wider supply chains.

Recommended question	Suggested scoring method	Measures of success
How does your organisation plan to engage local SMEs and VCSEs in the contract or supply chain?	Weighted scoring	• Selection of SMEs and VCSEs in their supply chain. • No barriers to SMEs and VCSEs in their procurement methods. • Membership of Minority Suppliers Development UK or similar organisations. • Regular engagement with local SMEs to identify partnership opportunities. • Prompt payment of invoices.
Please provide any examples of corporate social responsibility work with SMEs or VCSEs	Weighted scoring	• Providing business advice, training and mentoring.
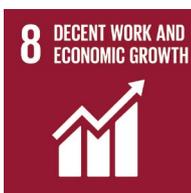
Review/Contacts/References	
Policy title:	Ethical and Sustainable Procurement Principles Framework
Date approved:	June 2021
Approving body:	Vice-Chancellor via the University Executive Group
Last review date:	27 June 2023
Revision history:	Version 2: June 2023 Version 1: June 2021
Next review date:	June 2025
Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	**Sustainability Strategy** **Sustainability Policies** **Sustainability Strategy Action Plan**
Policy owner:	Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services
Lead contact/author:	Sustainability Manager