

Buying Green!

Green procurement is about minimizing the negative environmental and health impacts associated with what people buy on behalf of organizations —and for themselves. It's about buying products and services that are more energy efficient, less toxic, safer for workers and come with less packaging.

Buying 'greener' products and services helps minimize the environmental impact of government's activities, and in many cases it can also be more cost effective. At its core, green procurement within government organizations is about getting better total value for taxpayers' money.

With current annual spending of over \$2 billion, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has a huge opportunity to use its purchasing influence to stimulate demand for green products and services, and advance many of its key priorities such as waste reduction, fiscal responsibility and becoming more energy efficient. Green procurement can help government reduce its total costs by looking beyond the initial price of a product or service to also consider operating cost and costs for disposing or recycling a product. Green procurement is a key lever for any organization that wants to become more efficient, responsible and accountable.

What is the Purpose of this Guide?

The purpose of this guide is to promote a greater understanding of green procurement practices and help reduce the impact of government operations on the environment. The guide provides information on how to incorporate environmental considerations into purchasing and select products and services that represent 'best value' for government and taxpayers. It outlines how green procurement can help government achieve its strategic priorities. The guide is a practical tool that can be used throughout the procurement process — from low dollar value purchases to writing specifications to evaluating tenders and requests for proposals (RFPs).

Who is this Guide for?

This guide is for anyone who is involved in the procurement process and has a responsibility or an interest in helping government advance its environmental and other key priorities. Specifically, this guide is for staff within core government, but may also be of interest to government funded bodies (GFBs) such as municipalities, crown corporations, school boards, and post-secondary institutions who are involved in:

- » [Setting and writing product and service specifications.](#)
- » [Creating tenders and requests for proposals.](#)
- » [Making low dollar value purchases.](#)
- » [Approving requisitions, purchases and evaluating bids.](#)
- » [Procuring buildings and construction works.](#)

The Buying Green Guide at a Glance: How It Is Organized

This guide has a modular design that is intended to make it easy for users to quickly find the information that is relevant to them. There are three major sections in this guide and two appendices that cover all the basics about buying green.

Within each section or appendix you'll find examples, tips, worksheets and resources that can help you put green procurement into action. Here's an overview of the guide and what you'll find in each section and appendix.

- » **Quick Start Checklist** — This is a simple checklist of the key steps to consider to help integrate green into your procurement and buying decisions. If you only have time to skim one page, then this is the one you should read!
- » **Section 1: A Green Procurement Primer** — If you are not already familiar with green purchasing, then this section will help you understand the basics of green procurement and its benefits. It also debunks some common myths regarding green procurement.
- » **Section 2: Integrating Green into Procurement** — This section is where the practice of green procurement begins. Here is where you and your team will learn how to put green into procurement. It includes the processes and steps that will help staff decide which criteria or standards to use as part of greener procurement. This section also refers to corresponding tools in section 3.
- » **Section 3: Reference Sheets and Worksheets to Support Buying Green** — This section is comprised of a series of tools and worksheets that will make green procurement easier. These tools are designed to support the steps in Section 2 and offer guidance on how to interpret ecolabels, how you can begin to assess the potential environmental impacts of goods and services, and how to consider the green leadership of a company (beyond the green attributes of their product or service). It also includes some suggestions for capturing information to communicate success and finishes with a comprehensive glossary of green terms and definitions.
- » **Appendix A: How to Put Green into the Procurement of Buildings and Construction** — This section provides practical guidance on how to integrate environmental considerations into capital projects such as buildings, renovations, retrofits and procuring construction products and materials. It also contains guidance on what to look for when selecting project consultants.
- » **Appendix B: Green Product Factsheets** — This section provides a set of 15 Green Product Factsheets that give detailed Environmental information on products and services that have been identified as important for government based on criteria such as high value spend, environmental impact and degree of resonance with employees. Each factsheet provides recommended green criteria for writing solicitation documents (based on today's marketplace).

A Quick Start Checklist for Buying Green

The Quick Start Checklist has been developed as a simple tool to help you keep in mind the key steps involved in buying green. Use this checklist as a reminder of what is required to effectively integrate green into the purchasing process.

Read each question below. Check 'yes' if you have addressed the question. Check 'N/A' if it doesn't apply to the particular procurement that you are involved with.

Here are the things you need to do as part of buying green. Have you...

1. Clearly identified and quantified the need for a product or service to ensure that it can't be fulfilled in another way (e.g. could it be bought or leased?) and that the order is correctly sized to avoid waste (e.g. overprinting brochures just because they get cheaper as you buy more). Yes N/A
2. Identified the relevant environmental impacts of the product or service to ensure that possible issues related to packaging, energy consumption and end-of-life disposal are adequately considered to reduce risk and maximize benefits? Yes N/A
3. Developed minimum environmental specifications (such as an ecolabel certification) by consulting the recommendations in the Green Product Factsheets (Appendix B) or based on your own product or service research (see previous question)? Yes N/A
4. Identified if there are likely to be operating (e.g. energy or fuel consumption) or disposal costs that should be factored into your lowest total costing model if you are working with a tender or an RFP? Yes N/A
5. Developed green evaluation criteria for the tender or RFP based on the minimum green standards and your total cost considerations? Yes N/A