

Best Practices for Environmentally and Socially Responsible Procurement (ESRP)

Intent

This Best Practices for Environmentally and Socially Responsible Procurement (ESRP) document is intended to support and further the Purpose of the ESRP Policy to: “to support campus sustainability at Colorado State University and to provide guidelines, information, and resources in procuring products that will minimize negative impacts on society and the environment to the greatest extent practicable. This policy will guide CSU employees who wish to purchase goods and services for CSU to identify more environmentally sound products and may require the use of environmentally preferable products and services in many instances, as well as consider ethical and socially responsible business practices. Sustainable procurement incorporates awareness of the economic, environmental and social equity within an entity’s spend.”

ESRP Guidelines and Resources

The Environmental Protection Agency has issued five guiding principles of Environmentally Preferable Purchasing to help institutions incorporate environmentally friendly purchasing into their daily practices. These principles serve as an easy-to-follow baseline for virtually any type of purchasing. They are:

- Include environmental considerations as part of the normal purchasing process.
- Emphasize pollution prevention early in the purchasing process.
- Examine multiple environmental attributes throughout a product’s or service’s life cycle.
- Compare relevant environmental impacts when selecting products or services.
- Collect and base purchasing decisions on accurate and meaningful information about environmental Preference.

The ESRP takes a Triple Bottom Line approach to sustainability

The triple bottom line is a business concept that posits firms should commit to measuring their social and environmental impact – in addition to their financial performance – rather than solely focusing on profit, the single standard ‘bottom-line.’ A triple bottom line includes the ‘three P’s’: people, planet and profit. Alternately stated as the ‘three-E’s’: equity, environment, and economy.

The ESRP also has a special focus on social sustainability

Social sustainability covers considerations of fair labor practices, labor conditions and employee health and safety, living wage, ethical business practices, and utilization of

diverse business concerns and local businesses to positively impact the regional economy. Economic, environmental and social objectives should not be viewed in isolation.

“Even the narrow notion of physical sustainability implies a concern for social equity between generations, a concern that must logically be extended to equity within each generation.” – World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our common future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Selecting Products and Services with ESRP Considerations

There are several targeted areas where ESRP can be an effective tool in reducing the university's overall environmental impact. These targeted areas fall into two subcategories: products and services.

Examples of products and services for which ESRP standards should be used:

- chemically intensive products and services
- consumable office products
- promotional products
- furniture and furnishings
- IT products
- food services and catering
- food service supplies
- garments and linens
- professional service providers
- transportation and fuels
- appliances and electronics
- buildings and grounds maintenance supplies and services
- utilities
- garments and linens
- printing services (brochures, magazines, calendars, etc.)
- research materials and supplies
- vending and concessions
- automotive waste disposal
- Construction and remodeling
- recycling services
- hazardous waste
- universal waste

Before buying any product or service, several questions should be considered:

- Can the need be met in another way that uses fewer resources, material, and cost?
- Is a suitable product or service available within the university?

- Can the requirement be met by renting or sharing rather than purchasing?
- Is the quantity requested essential?
- Can the product serve any useful purpose after its initial use?
- Remember that the best way to help the environment is to minimize consumption. Is this purchase essential?
- If it is essential to purchase, what environmentally friendly alternatives have you considered?
- What is the 'life cycle cost assessment' (LCCA) or, the 'life cycle analysis' (LCA) – the environmental impacts, of the product?
- Does the product have any Type 1 Ecolabeling – assuring minimal environmental impacts?
- Is there a locally sourced product available?
- Is there a Fair Trade certified product available?
- Does the company have sustainable business practices, sustainability initiatives, or sustainability policies?
- Does the company support the community in which it resides?
- Does the company provide a living wage and fair labor practices? What are the supplier's labor and working conditions like?

Examples of criteria to consider when determining potential impacts of goods and services include:


- Fitness for the intended purpose and value for the money
- Energy, water, and resource efficiency
- Minimum use of virgin materials
- Maximum use of post-consumer content materials
- Packaging materials to have product delivered

Evaluating Environmental Claims

Customers should become familiar with environmental labels and consider products that provide environmental certification. Several references are linked to this document for use and guidance with third party certifications and "ecolabels" such as LEED™, ENERGY STAR®, EPEAT, GREENGUARD®, Green Seal™, Forest Stewardship Council®, USDA Organic, WaterSense, and the ACT label for lab equipment and products, etc. Look for ecolabels when selecting products. For example, when buying office equipment consider items that carry the ENERGY STAR® rating and are EPEAT Gold rated. Various University price agreements offer products with the ENERGY STAR® rating as well as other 3rd party certifications or ecolabels.

Suppliers citing environmentally preferred product claims shall provide proper certification or detailed information (such as an EPD – Environmental Product Declaration, if applicable or available) on environmental benefits, durability, and recyclable properties to Procurement Services.

There are three types of “ecolabels” commonly used to identify ESRP products.

- Type I: A third-party verified seal described by the ISO 14024 standard which considers multiple attributes of the product that are life-cycle based. Examples: ECOLOGO Certification Program, EPA Safer Choice, Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT), ENERGY STAR, Environmental Choice, FSC Certified, Green Seal™, WaterSense, and many others.
- Type II: A category of ecolabel described by the ISO 14021 standard pertaining to self-declared claims by manufacturers or businesses, often only considering a single attribute of the product. Examples: labels  symbols / graphics such as , ‘100% biodegradable,’ ‘recycled content’ etc.
- Type III: A category of ecolabel described by the ISO 14025 standard pertaining to Environmental Product Declarations based on product category rules and requiring a product life cycle assessment with the EPD verified by a 3rd party expert. Consists of a verifiable statement on environmental impact or other sustainability consideration, or report card style. Primarily intended for business-to-business communication. Example: nutrition facts on food and drink labels. GREENGUARD® looks at the emissions released by products into the office environment.

As ecolabels and certifications change over time, consult the University Purchasing Manual for further information.

Further References:

- ACT Label (Accountability, Consistency, and Transparency) Environmental Impact Factor Label:
 - <https://act.mygreenlab.org/>
- B-Corp:
 - <https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/>
- Chlorine-Free Products Association:
 - <http://www.chlorinefreeproducts.org/>
- Colorado State University:
 - [Integrated Solid Waste Program](#)
 - [Procurement Services](#)
 - [Surplus Property](#)
- Cradle to Cradle Certification:
 - <https://www.c2ccertified.org/get-certified/product-certification>
- ECOLOGO Certification Program:
 - <https://www.ul.com/resources/ecologo-certification-program>
- EPA (Environmental Protection Agency):
 - [About the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program](#)
 - [ENERGY STAR](#)
 - [Hazardous Waste](#)

- [Introduction to Ecolabels and Standards for Greener Products](#)
- [Safer Choice Chemicals](#)
- [Universal Waste](#)
- [WaterSense](#)
- EPD (Environmental Product Declaration):
 - <https://www.environdec.com/home>
- EPEAT (Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool):
 - <https://www.epeat.net/>
- Fair Labor Association:
 - <https://www.fairlabor.org/>
- Fair Trade:
 - <https://www.fairtrade.net/>
- Federal Energy Management Program:
 - <https://www.energy.gov/eere/femp/federal-energy-management-program>
- Forest Stewardship Council:
 - <https://fsc.org/en>
- GREENGUARD Certification:
 - <https://www.ul.com/services/ul-greenguard-certification>
- Green Seal Ecolabel:
 - General Information: <https://greenseal.org/green-seal-standards/our-standards/>
 - Standards: <https://greenseal.org/green-seal-standards/standards-list/>
- [Database of repairability](#) (after warranty period – consult with your departmental IT).
- LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design):
 - <https://www.usgbc.org/leed>
- USDA Organic:
 - <https://www.usda.gov/topics/organic>