



Product Sheet

Sustainable Procurement Guidelines for Office Furniture

Advanced sustainability criteria and verification instructions

Advanced sustainability criteria: are intended for use by procurers who seek to purchase the most advanced environmentally-friendly and socially-responsible products available on the market, and may require additional administrative effort or result in a price increase, as compared to other products fulfilling the same function.

Regions covered: **All Regions**

This Product Sheet is divided into four sections:

[Section 1: Sustainability and verification criteria](#) for the following:

[Section 2: Information sources](#)

[Annex 1: Check-lists](#)

For further information on any of the issues addressed in this Product Sheet, please consult the **Sustainable Procurement Guidelines for Office Furniture - Background Report**.

Section 1: Sustainability and verification criteria for Office Stationery

Advanced requirements

SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA	VERIFICATION
<p>A – Procurement planning: subject matter (defining what will be purchased)</p>	
<p>Provision of office furniture produced in a sustainable manner</p>	
<p>B – Requirement definition: specifications (compulsory requirements that product must fulfil)</p>	
<p>SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA BELOW ARE RELATED TO THE <u>MATERIALS</u> USED TO PRODUCE THE PRODUCTS</p>	
<p>Labelled plastic material for recycling</p> <p>All plastic parts ≥ 50g shall be marked for recycling according to ISO 11469 or equivalent and must not contain additions of other materials that may hinder their recycling.</p>	<p>Products carrying the Nordic Swan ecolabel will be deemed to comply.</p> <p>For products which do not carry this label bidders must provide a description of the plastic materials that are present and the quantities used, the way in which they are labelled and how they are attached to one another or to other materials.</p> <p>Any other appropriate means of proof demonstrating that the criteria are met will also be accepted, such as a technical dossier from the manufacturer, a test report from a recognised body showing compliance, or a declaration from the manufacturer. 'Recognised bodies' are test and calibration laboratories and certification and inspection bodies which comply with applicable regional, national and/or international standards.</p>
<p>Sustainably logged wood</p> <p>At least 70% of the virgin wood or wood-based materials (including solid, laminated, veneer and wood used for the production of plywood) shall come from forests that are certified as being managed so as to implement the principles and measures aimed at ensuring legal and sustainable forest management.</p> <p>In Europe, these principles and measures shall at least correspond to those of the Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management, as endorsed by the Lisbon Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (2 to 4 June 1998). Outside Europe they shall at least correspond to the UNCED Forest Principles (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992) and, where applicable, to the criteria or guidelines for sustainable forest management as adopted under the respective international and regional initiatives (ITTO, Montreal Process, Tarapoto Process, UNEP/FAO</p>	<p>Products carrying the Blaue Engel (German ecolabel), or the Nordic Swan will be deemed to comply.</p> <p>For products which do not carry one of these labels verification must be provided by a credible third party that the claimed percentage of timber meets the standards. Certificates of chain of custody for the wood fibres certified as FSC, PEFC or any other sustainable forest management standard where the percentage of certified wood is indicated, will be accepted as proof of compliance for that percentage.</p>

SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA	VERIFICATION
<p>Dry-Zone Africa Initiative).</p>	
<p>Adhesives and glues</p> <p>The VOC content of adhesives used in the assembly of furniture shall not exceed 10% by weight.</p>	<p>Products carrying the Nordic Swan or the Umweltzeichen (Austrian ecolabel) will be deemed to comply.</p> <p>For products which do not carry one of these labels bidders must present a list with all adhesives used in the assembly of furniture and their Security Data Sheet, or equivalent documentation, where the amount of VOCs is displayed, demonstrating compliance with the above criteria.</p> <p>Any other appropriate means of proof demonstrating that the criteria are met will also be accepted, such as a technical dossier from the manufacturer, a test report from a recognised body showing compliance, or a declaration from the manufacturer. 'Recognised bodies' are test and calibration laboratories and certification and inspection bodies which comply with applicable regional, national and/or international standards.</p>
<p>Surface coating of wood, plastic and/or metal parts</p> <p>The products used for the surface coating shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not contain hazardous substances that are classified as carcinogenic, harmful to the reproductive system, mutagenic, allergenic when inhaled or harmful to the environment according to [insert relevant national, international quality standard1]; - Not contain halogenated organic flame retardants, phthalates, aziridine and polyaziridines or lead, cadmium, chrome, mercury and their compounds; - Not contain heavy metals; - Not contain more than 5% by weight of VOCs. 	<p>Products carrying the Nordic Swan (if they comply with the criteria R17 of the ecolabel) or the Blaue Engel (German ecolabel) will be deemed to comply.</p> <p>For products which do not carry one of these labels bidders must present a list with all surface treatment substances used for each material present in the furniture and their Security Data Sheet or equivalent documentation demonstrating compliance with these criteria.</p> <p>Any other appropriate means of proof demonstrating that the criteria are met will also be accepted, such as a technical dossier from the manufacturer, a test report from a recognised body showing compliance, or a declaration from the manufacturer. 'Recognised bodies' are test and calibration laboratories and certification and inspection bodies which comply with applicable regional, national and/or international standards.</p>
<p>Recycled metal content</p> <p>At least 20% of the aluminium and/or steel used for the production of the aluminium and/or steel shall be recycled (second fusion).</p>	<p>Products carrying the Nordic Swan or the Umweltzeichen (Austrian ecolabel) will be deemed to comply.</p> <p>Any other appropriate means of proof demonstrating that the criteria are met will also be accepted, such as a technical dossier from the manufacturer, a test report from a recognised body showing</p>

SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA	VERIFICATION
	<p>compliance, or a declaration from the manufacturer. 'Recognised bodies' are test and calibration laboratories and certification and inspection bodies which comply with applicable regional, national and/or international standards.</p>
<p>Plastic parts free of certain substances</p> <p>Plastic parts shall not contain halogenated flame retardants, phthalates or substances based on lead, cadmium, chrome (VI), mercury and their compounds.</p>	<p>Products carrying the Nordic Swan or the Umweltzeichen (Austrian ecolabel) will be deemed to comply.</p> <p>For products which do not carry one of these labels bidders must provide a list of the additives used in the different plastic materials present in the furniture pieces and the relevant documentation to prove compliance.</p> <p>Any other appropriate means of proof demonstrating that the criteria are met will also be accepted, such as a technical dossier from the manufacturer, a test report from a recognised body showing compliance, or a declaration from the manufacturer. 'Recognised bodies' are test and calibration laboratories and certification and inspection bodies which comply with applicable regional, national and/or international standards.</p>
<p>Environmentally-friendly foams and padding materials</p> <p>The padding material used for the furniture meet the ecological criteria related to the product itself and production processes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Certipur standard (full criteria document available at http://www.europur.com/index.php?page=certipur) - the European Ecolabel (full criteria document available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2002/l_133/l_13320020518en00290041.pdf) <p>or equivalent.</p>	<p>Products carrying the Blaue Engel (RAL-UZ 117 for upholstered furniture – German ecolabel), the Nordic Swan, the European Ecolabel or the Certipur label will be deemed to comply.</p> <p>For products which do not carry one of these labels bidders must provide a list of the substances used in foam and padding materials present in the furniture pieces and the relevant documentation to prove compliance.</p> <p>Any other appropriate means of proof demonstrating that the criteria are met will also be accepted, such as a technical dossier from the manufacturer, a test report from a recognised body showing compliance, or a declaration from the manufacturer. 'Recognised bodies' are test and calibration laboratories and certification and inspection bodies which comply with applicable regional, national and/or international standards.</p>
<p>Environmentally-friendly textiles</p> <p>The textile materials used for the furniture meet the ecological criteria relating to the product itself and production processes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Oeko-Tex Standard 100 (full criteria document available at: http://www.oeko-tex.com/xdesk/ximages/470/16459_100def2007.pdf) - the European Ecolabel (full criteria document available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2002/l_133/l_13320020518en00290041.pdf) 	<p>All products carrying the Blaue Engel (RAL-UZ 117 for upholstered products – German ecolabel), Nordic Swan, Oeko-Tex, Umweltzeichen (Austrian ecolabel), European Ecolabel or the Eco Mark Japan ecolabel will be deemed to comply.</p> <p>Any other appropriate means of proof demonstrating that the criteria are met will also be accepted, such as a technical dossier from the</p>

Sustainable Procurement Guidelines for Office Furniture

Product Sheet. **Advanced** Requirements. **All Regions**



SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA	VERIFICATION
<p>lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2002/l_133/l_13320020518en00290041.pdf)</p> <p>- or equivalent.</p>	<p>manufacturer, a test report from a recognised body showing compliance, or a declaration from the manufacturer. 'Recognised bodies' are test and calibration laboratories and certification and inspection bodies which comply with applicable regional, national and/or international standards.</p>
<p>SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA BELOW ARE RELATED TO THE <u>FUNCTIONAL</u> ASPECTS OF PRODUCTS AND HOW PRODUCTS ARE <u>SUPPLIED</u></p>	
<p>Durability Minimum of 5 years guarantee and availability of replacement pieces for the same amount of time.</p>	<p>Bidders must provide appropriate documentation where the guarantee is stated.</p>
<p>Quality, reparability, fitness for use and ergonomics (see Implementation Note) Furniture pieces must meet [insert relevant national, international quality standard] or equivalent regarding serviceability (e.g. safety, abrasion resistance, tensile strength, light fastness, rub fastness, deformation by compression, ergonomics).</p>	<p>Bidders must provide the appropriate documentation to demonstrate compliance with these standards.</p>
<p>Maintenance Cleaning furniture pieces must be possible without the use of products containing organic solvents. For this reason, the product should be made of materials that can be easily separated for recycling purposes.</p>	<p>Bidders must provide information regarding cleaning for maintenance purposes.</p>
<p>Recycling and re-use The furniture pieces must be recyclable or adequate for reuse. To ensure this, the pieces must be made of materials that can be easily separated for recycling purposes.</p>	<p>Bidders must provide appropriate documentation to demonstrate compliance with these standards.</p>
<p>Environmentally-friendly packaging Points shall be awarded for products for which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The packaging for the paper/paper consumables does not contain PVC or other chlorinated plastics. • The packaging materials are able to be separated into mono-material parts, and at least 80 percent of the packaging by weight consists of materials that are readily recyclable (with locally available recycling systems) or can be composted. • The cardboard packaging consists of 80% recycled material. 	<p>Bidders must provide a list of the different packaging materials used for the product, their weight and a declaration by the packaging producer/s where the percentage of recycled content for cardboard in their packaging is specified.</p>

SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA	VERIFICATION
C - Sourcing Suppliers (use in pre-qualification)	
<p>Compliance with environmental legislation (see Implementation Note)</p> <p>Bidders shall not be permitted to take part in a contract if they:</p> <p>Have been found guilty of grave professional misconduct, including non-compliance with environmental legislation, proven by any means which the contracting authorities can demonstrate; or have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which he/she is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority.</p>	<p>Bidders must provide a declaration that they meet this criterion. Upon request, they may be asked to provide documentary proof to support this declaration.</p>
<p>Production of the product according to international labour standards (independent third party certified)</p> <p>The bidder shall provide proof from an independent third party certification body that the manufacturer of the product complies with the international working standards (ILO Core Conventions) throughout the whole supply chain listed below. The supply chain includes producers and manufacturers of all furniture pieces that are the subject of this contract. Furthermore it includes contracted labour (contract manufacturers) that may design, market, manufacture and/or provide goods and services that are used to manufacture and supply the final product.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise (No. 87) • Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining (No. 98) • Forced Labour (No. 29) • Abolition of Forced Labour (No. 105) • Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) (No. 111) • Equal Remuneration (No. 100) • Minimum Age (No. 138) • Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182) 	<p>The bidder is required to submit independent third party verification that the requirements are met.</p>
<p>Operational, third-party certified, environmental management system</p> <p>The bidder shall provide certificates from the manufacturer(s) that they and all companies throughout the whole product supply chain engaged in the design or manufacture of the product have an operational, third-party certified, environmental management system that meets one of three recognised systems: ISO 14001, European EMAS, U.S. EPA Performance Track, or equivalent.</p>	<p>The bidder is required to provide certificates for all the companies in the supply chain of the third-party certified environmental management system, such as ISO 14001, European EMAS, U.S. EPA Performance Track, or equivalent.</p>

SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA	VERIFICATION
<p>E - Contract Clauses (include in contract conditions)</p>	
<p>Production of the product according to international labour standards (independent third party certified)</p> <p>The contractor shall ensure that the producers and manufacturers of the stationery items comply with the international working standards (ILO Core Conventions) listed below throughout the whole supply chain during the term of the contract. The supply chain includes producers and manufacturers of all stationery items that are the subject of this contract. Furthermore it includes contracted labour (contract manufacturers) that may design, market, manufacture and/or provide goods and services that are used to manufacture and supply the final product.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise (No. 87) • Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining (No. 98) • Forced Labour (No. 29) • Abolition of Forced Labour (No. 105) • Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) (No. 111) • Equal Remuneration (No. 100) • Minimum Age (No. 138) • Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182) 	<p>Upon demand the bidder is required to submit independent third party verification that the requirements are met.</p>
<p>Emissions from transport of the product</p> <p>The contractor shall provide information in terms of figures regarding the amount of CO₂ emissions from the transportation of products supplied for the contract.</p> <p>By the end of the contract, the contractor shall demonstrate the efforts made of trying to reduce the emissions of CO₂ through transportation of products.</p>	<p>A report shall be provided by the contractor calculating the CO₂ emissions from transportation of products for the contract.</p>

Implementation notes

B – Requirement definition – Specifications – Environmentally-friendly foams, padding materials and textiles

Other relevant ecolabels may also exist in your region and may also be included here. Please check if they are a Type I ecolabel, according to ISO 14024. For more information on ecolabels and environmental labels and their use in the UN procurement process, please consult: “A Guide to Environmental Labels for United Nations Procurers” published by UNOPS and UNEP (as part of the SUN initiative) (May 2009).

B – Requirement definition: specifications – Quality, reparability, fitness for use and ergonomics

Quality standards that either refer to or are in line with international or European standards such as ISO and EN standards are usually in place at the

Sustainable Procurement Guidelines for Office Furniture

Product Sheet. **Advanced** Requirements. **All Regions**



national/federal level of each country. Smaller sized companies might be more familiar with the national standards than with European or international standards. Therefore, as it is not possible to provide a full list of all the different quality and durability standards, the contracting authority (purchaser) will need to identify the appropriate standard to refer to.

B – Requirement definition: specifications – Explanation of sustainability criteria regarding functional aspects and how the products are supplied

The criteria “durability”, “quality, reparability and fitness for use” and “modularity” all concern quality and aesthetics regarding the furniture pieces purchased. However, these aspects have been included as sustainability criteria as they concern the extending or maximising the lifetime of a product, which can greatly reduce the overall environmental impacts of the product group for an organisation. This is because production impacts - the most important part of the life-cycle analysis for furniture - will be reduced if fewer products need to be made.

B – Requirement definition – Specifications – References to labels in Verification

Other relevant ecolabels may also exist in your region which may also be used to verify compliance. Please check if they are a Type I ecolabel, according to ISO 14024, and ensure they demonstrate compliance with the criteria presented here. For more information on ecolabels and environmental labels and their use in the UN procurement process, please consult: “A Guide to Environmental Labels for United Nations Procurers” published by UNOPS and UNEP (as part of the SUN initiative) (May 2009). For more information regarding ecolabels available globally, please consult the website of the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN): <http://www.globalecolabelling.net>

C – Sourcing suppliers – Compliance with environmental legislation

Where appropriate, the contracting authorities should ask bidders to supply relevant documents and, where they have doubts concerning the personal situation of a bidder, they may seek the co-operation of the competent authorities in the particular country.

The exclusion of such economic operators should take place as soon as the contracting authority has knowledge of a judgement concerning such offences. If national law contains provisions to this effect, non-compliance with environmental legislation or legislation on unlawful agreements in public contracts which has been the subject of a final judgement or a decision having equivalent effect may be considered an offence concerning the professional conduct of the economic operator concerned or grave misconduct.

Exclusion of suppliers on the basis of non-compliance with environmental legislation may prove impractical in situations where a strong legal framework and enforcement is not in place. The procurer will need to assess their own situation.

D – Evaluation: Award/evaluation criteria

Where the market availability of products meeting the Specifications is less certain. The procurer may wish to use certain specifications as Evaluation/Award criteria instead, indicating that such characteristics are preferred but not required. It is advisable to do some small market research before procurement.

E – Contract clauses – Disposal

Although not included as a Contract Clause, a take-back system is an effective way to guarantee the recycling of products, however its effectiveness would depend on the recycling options available to suppliers regionally. Therefore, it is recommended that the purchaser make an assessment prior to beginning the purchasing or tendering process to obtain information from potential suppliers about take-back schemes and then consider whether to include this point as part of the Contract Clauses.

Section 2: Information sources

- Austrian ecolabel (“Österreichische Umweltzeichen” - the national Austrian ecolabel): <http://www.umweltzeichen.at/>. Specific criteria used:
UZ 06: Wooden Furniture
UZ 34: Office Stools and Chairs
- Bärsch, J (2001): The Feasibility of an EU Ecolabel for Furniture. Klaus Novy Institute e.V., prepared for the Umweltbundesamt (Federal German Environment Agency). Cologne/Deventer.
- Blue Angel (“Blaue Engel” - the German national ecolabel): <http://www.blauer-engel.de>. Specific criteria sets used:
RAL-UZ 38: “Low-emission Wood Products and Wood-Base Products”
RAL-UZ 117: “Low-Emission Upholstered Furniture
- CertiPUR Label for Flexible Polyurethane Foams (from EUROPUR – European Association of Flexible Polyurethane Foam Blocks Manufacturers): <http://www.europur.com/>
- Clement, S (2006): The Procura⁺ Manual 2nd edition: A guide to cost effective Sustainable Public Procurement. ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, Freiburg, Germany.
- Eco Mark Japan (Japanese national ecolabel): <http://www.ecomark.jp/english/>. Specifically: Product Category 130, “Furniture Version 1.4”
- European Commission GPP Training Toolkit: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/toolkit_en.htm
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) (environmental and social third-party certification scheme that promotes responsible management of the world’s forests): <http://www.fsc.org>
- Nordic Swan (Scandinavian ecolabel): <http://www.svanen.nu>. Specifically: Furniture and Fitments
- Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) (promotes sustainable forest management - environmentally, socially beneficial and economically viable management of forests for present and future generations - through independent third party forest certification): <http://www.pefc.org>
- Public Society of Environmental Management for the Basque Government (IHOBE) (2008): Manual on Green Public Procurement. Criteria for Office Furniture. Bilbao, Spain.
- Swedish Environmental Management (MSR) Council's procurement criteria for “furniture”: http://www.msr.se/en/green_procurement/criteria/Furnishing-and-textiles/
- UNON Supplier Sustainable Procurement Guidelines (Annex G)
- UNEP: UNEP Environmental Criteria for Office Furniture (RFP 230074/EM)
- UNOPS and UNEP (2009): A Guide to Environmental Labels for United Nations Procurers.

Annex 1: Check-list for selection of sustainable office furniture products (advanced requirements for all regions)

The following check-list is designed to:

- Provide an quick overview of the criteria presented above
- Be used by UN procurers/requisitioners in assessing different offers

The Check-list only includes general headings does not include the criteria themselves. The criteria are presented in the document above.

For specifications and sourcing criteria, the procurer should insert “yes” or “no” in the final column depending on whether the product or service meets the criteria presented above.

For each award/evaluation criteria, the procurer should assess the performance of the product or service being evaluated and decide how many points should be awarded.

Check-list: Office furniture	
B - Requirement definition: specifications (compulsory requirements that the product must fulfil)	Yes/No
Labelled plastic material for recycling	
Sustainably logged wood	
Adhesives and glues	
Surface coating of wood, plastic and/or metal parts	
Recycled metal content	
Plastic parts free of certain substances	
Environmentally-friendly foams and padding materials	
Environmentally-friendly textiles	
Durability	
Quality, reparability, fitness for use and ergonomics	
Maintenance	
Recycling and re-use	
Environmentally-friendly packaging	
C - Sourcing suppliers (use in pre-qualification)	Yes/No
Compliance with environmental legislation	
Production of the product according to international labour standards (independent third party certified)	
Operational, third-party certified, environmental management system	
E – Contract clauses – for Systems Contracts only – (include in contract conditions)	Yes/No
Production of the product according to international labour standards (independent third party certified)	
Emissions from transport of the product	