



Environment and Spatial Planning
*Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and
the Environment*

Criteria for the Sustainable Public Procurement of **Office Soft Furnishing**

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1 Introduction

The Dutch government wants to take concrete steps towards a sustainable society, and to set a good example. Each year, government organisations spend more than EUR 50 billion on the purchase of Supplies, Services and Public works. By purchasing sustainably, the government can significantly boost the market for sustainable products. Governmental authorities have set clear objectives to achieve this: the central government is aiming for 100% sustainable public procurement in 2010, while the municipalities aspire towards 75% in 2010 and 100% in 2015. Provincial governments and water boards have set themselves the target of at least 50% in 2010. 100% Sustainable Public Procurement is understood to mean that all purchases meet the minimum requirements that have been set for the relevant product groups at the time of purchase. More information on this topic is available from the website Sustainable Procurement (www.agentschapnl.nl/sustainableprocurement).

NL Agency supports government authorities in various ways to help reach these objectives. These include developing criteria for Supplies, Services and Public works procured by these authorities. This document focuses on the criteria for the Office Soft Furnishing product group, the elaboration of the criteria in specification texts and a more detailed assessment of the criteria, as well as a number of points for attention in the pre- and post-procurement stages. Additional background information and considerations regarding the content of the criteria can be found in the criteria document on the website Sustainable Procurement www.agentschapnl.nl/sustainableprocurement/criteria, available in Dutch only.

1.1 Definition of the product group

The product group Office Soft Furnishing includes the supply and fitting of floor coverings and interior sun blinds. The product group does not include:

- Floors attached to the building, such as tiled and stone floors. These floors are part of the building and thus come into the product group Buildings;
- Subfloors and rubber floors are not included, because these are not often procured by government. Walk-off mats are indeed procured, but form a very limited fraction compared with the total amount of floor covering. These are therefore also left out of consideration;
- Wooden flooring (parquet, floor panels, laminate) and wooden sun blinds are only purchased to a limited extent by government and are therefore not included;
- Wall finishes and wall coverings, such as paint, spray finish, tiles and wallpaper. The majority of these products are part of the building and come within the product group Buildings. Glass fibre wallpaper (Scan) is generally also part of the building. Other wallpaper is indeed applied by project furnishers, but because little of this is procured, no criteria have been developed for it at the moment;
- Exterior sun blinds are seen as part of the building. These are therefore not included in Office Soft Furnishings. Internal sun and light blinds do belong to the product group.

When this product group is revised, the definition will be reconsidered.

Government procures soft furnishings for new building or renovation of an (office) building or during the utilisation of an existing building. In the case of new building or renovation, the choice of soft furnishing may be made by the architect, project developer or contractor (RSM Erasmus University, 2007). In the last case, it is important that criteria for the procurement of soft furnishings be part of the tender process for new building or renovation.

The fitting of floor coverings and sun blinds comes within works if the costs for said fitting are higher than those for the supply of the floor covering or blinds. If the cost of supply is higher, it is considered to be supplies.

For the benefit of the contracting authority, a number of CPV codes that might be of relevance to this product group have been included in this document. The selection is by no means exhaustive or complete. The contracting authority will remain responsible for compiling the correct set of CPV codes to match the relevant tender.

The following CPV codes apply to this product group:

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| 39114100-5 | Upholstering |
| 44112200 | Floor coverings |
| 39515410-2 | Interior blinds |
| 45212190 | Sun-protection works |
| 45430000 | Floor and wall covering work |

2 Sustainability in the procurement process

The criteria in this document have been classified in the various steps of the public procurement process. More information about these steps and how to combine them with sustainability can be found in the Sustainable Public Procurement Manual. This manual can be downloaded from the website Sustainable Procurement www.agentschapnl.nl/sustainableprocurement.

2.1 Preparatory stage (points for consideration)

Every purchase or call for tender starts with drawing up the inventory of the needs of the internal or external customer. Sustainability can be incorporated into this stage by considering whether the purchase is truly necessary and whether a more sustainable alternative might be available. For the points for consideration in the preparatory stage for this product group, a distinction is made between floor covering and internal sun shades.

Specific points for consideration regarding procurement for the Office Soft Furnishing:

- In order to achieve a long lifetime, the quality of the floor covering must be properly attuned to the usage envisaged. This also includes the maintenance of the floor covering: can the floor covering be cleaned easily, and is this important given the usage envisaged?
- Use of floor tiles in place of carpeting and smooth floor coverings on a roll has the advantage that stained tiles may be replaced easily. Besides this, after removal, tiles may possibly be re-used internally. The possibility of replacing tiles may however be limited by colour differences between old and new tiles. This is not the case when using the tiles known as 'dye bath independent'. These tiles are manufactured from coloured yarn at the time when new tiles are needed (so no stock of tiles needs to be kept). The newly-produced tiles thus always have the same colour;
- Choose as far as possible a neutral (not striking) and sufficiently variegated colour of floor covering. Floor covering with neutral, variegated colours (no light colours, because dirt is more noticeable) has to be replaced less soon than floor covering with a striking colour (if for example the furniture changes);
- It is possible to include the necessity to fit a subfloor or the need for levelling in the choice of floor covering (both cases involve extra environmental impact due for example to material usage). This also applies to the possible need to glue down the floor covering. If a subfloor does have to be opted for, the preference may for example be given to a subfloor largely manufactured from waste materials. The use of waste materials takes place for example in subfloors of wood fibre, needle felt or 'rebond PU'.

Specific points for consideration in the procurement of sun blinds are:

- In the procurement of sun blinds, it is recommended to take account of the energy-saving effects of sun blinds. Which type of sun blinds is the most energy-saving for the application intended? Information on this is available from the manufacturer;
- In the purchase of sun blinds, it is recommended to take account of maintenance: are the sun blinds easy to clean, and how (chemical cleaning, wet washing, etc.)?

2.2 Specification stage (criteria)

During the specification stage, the needs of the internal or external customer are translated into a tender document. This stage entails the formulation of:

- Criteria for supplier qualification. These could include grounds for exclusion, suitability requirements, i.e. requirements with regard to suppliers, and, in the case of restricted procedures, any selection criteria, i.e. wishes with regard to suppliers.
- A description of the minimum requirements pertaining to supply, service or task (the Schedule of Requirements).
- Award criteria, i.e. wishes regarding Supplies, Services and Public works. These are only applicable when the tendering process is based on the principle of the Most Economically Advantageous Offer ('Economisch Meest Voordelige Inschrijving' or EMVI).
- The contract stipulating the contract provisions.

More information on the various types of criteria and the various tender options can be found in the Sustainable Public Procurement Manual. Innovation is also included in the award criteria, where relevant. Innovation is oriented towards the development and introduction of new ideas and products.

The criteria in this document have been formulated to support the purchaser in the Sustainable Public Procurement of Office Soft Furnishing. The criteria have been subjected to legal review. However, every procurement and tender process is unique. For that reason, the drafting of a tender document remains the responsibility of the purchaser.

2.2.1 Supplier qualifications

No specific criteria have been formulated for this specific product group with regard to supplier qualification. More information on the possibilities of incorporating sustainability at this stage of the process can be found in the Sustainable Public Procurement Manual.

2.2.2 Schedule of requirements

Minimum requirements

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| Minimum requirement no. 1 | <p>Substances and preparations which are classified according to EU Directives 67/548/EEC and 99/45/EC and amendments as carcinogenic (R45, R49, R40), reprotoxic (R60, R61, R62, R63) or mutagenic (R46, R68) may not be used.</p> <p>Besides this, one of the following requirements must be fulfilled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The product may contain no preparations classified as environmentally damaging (R50, R50/R53, R51/53, R52/R53, R52, R53, R54, R55, R56, R58, R59). <p>Or:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The total amount of chemical substances classified as environmentally damaging (R50, R50/R53, R51/53, R52/R53, R52, R53, R54, R55, R56, R58, R59) must not exceed 2 per cent by weight of the product. The amount of each individual |
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| | <p>substance must not exceed 1 per cent by weight of the product.</p> <p>Classification according to EU Directives 67/548/EEC and 1999/45/EC and amendments.</p> <p>Finally, the product may not contain the following substances and preparations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dyestuffs and pigments containing Pb (lead), Cd (cadmium), Hg (mercury), Cr (total chromium) or Cr (VI). • Halogenated fire retardants. • The following phthalates: DEHP, DBP and BBP. <p><u>Means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statement to be included in this tender by the tenderer to confirm compliance with this minimum requirement. 2. The manufacturer's certificate or a product description, to be included in the tender as evidence of compliance with this minimum requirement. |
| Notes for purchaser | <p>R sentences (hazard and warning sentences) and S sentences (safety sentences) occur on packaging and in descriptions of chemical substances. The letter R stands for Risk while the letter S stands for Safety. R sentences indicate which characteristics of a substance cause intrinsic hazards and which must therefore be watched out for (warning sentences).</p> <p>In the requirements with respect to substances which are classified as environmentally hazardous (R50 to R59 and combinations of said sentences) the tenderer may choose between the two requirements. One of these two requirements must be complied with.</p> <p>Producers use the following labels: GuT (textile floor coverings), Nordic Swan (floor coverings), Blauer Engel (floor coverings) and Öko-tex 100 (home textiles). These may be included as part of the statement to demonstrate that one or more of the requirements are fulfilled.</p> <p><u>Verification of means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request for the manufacturer's certificate or product description which demonstrates compliance with this minimum requirement. 2. Obtain further information from the body which issued the document. |

2.2.3 Award criteria

Award criteria

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| <p>Award criterion no.1</p> | <p>If trimming waste from <floor covering/sun blinds> is collected and recycled by the tenderer, this part of the tender will be evaluated more highly.</p> <p>By recycling should be understood here: process-related treatment of waste with the objective of product or material re-use*.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product re-use is the renewed use of a product in its original function whether or not after treatment in the waste stage. • Material reuse refers to the renewed use of materials obtained from a waste material after treatment or processing, either in the same application or in a different application than it had originally been intended for. <p>* These definitions originate from NEN 5880:2006. Terms/definitions from NEN 5880:2006 are adopted with permission of NEN in Delft (www.nen.nl).</p> <p><u>Means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statement to be included in this tender by the tenderer to confirm compliance with this minimum requirement. 2. Description by the tenderer of the means by which collection and recycling are organised and guaranteed, which demonstrate that this award criterion is complied with. |
| <p>Notes for purchaser</p> | <p><u>Verification of means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request for description by the tenderer of the means by which collection and recycling are organised and guaranteed, which demonstrate that this award criterion is complied with. 2. No further verification of this means of proof. |

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| <p>Award criterion No. 2</p> | <p>The greater the percentage by weight of the <floor covering/sun blinds> which is recycled material, the higher this part of the tender will be evaluated.</p> <p>The percentage of recycled material will be calculated by dividing the weight of recycled material in the <floor covering/sun blinds> by the total weight of the <floor covering/sun blinds>.</p> <p>By recycled material should be understood here: 'post-consumer' material and trimming waste. Production waste is not included here. 'Post consumer' means after use by the end user.</p> |
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| | <p><u>Means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A statement to be included with the tender from the tenderer of the percentage of recycled material in the <floor covering/sun blinds>. 2. A detailed description of the product and materials from which the product is made up, with a specification of the weights and percentage of recycled material. |
| Notes for purchaser | <p><u>Verification of means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request for a detailed description of the product and materials from which the product is made up, with a specification of the weights and percentage of recycled material. 2. No further verification of this means of proof. |

2.2.4 Contract

No contract provisions have been formulated for this product group.

2.3 Utilisation stage (points for consideration)

Once the procurement stage has been concluded and a product or service has been purchased, there are opportunities for using the product in a sustainable manner. Specific points for consideration for this product group are:

- Ensure proper cleaning and maintenance of the floor covering. Proper cleaning and maintenance help extend the floor covering's life span. Ask the supplier for maintenance instructions.
- From a cost and environmental point of view, repairs to floor coverings and sun blinds are to be preferred to replacement.

Since this involves the contracting of a service, the relevant requirements and preferences are already incorporated in the procurement criteria.