



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

Criteria for the Sustainable Public Procurement of **Office Supplies**

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These criteria for Sustainable Public Procurement were developed by NL Agency at the request of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM). The programme for sustainable operational management for public authorities (DBO) is a joint initiative of the Dutch Government, the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), the Association of Provincial Authorities (IPO) and the Association of Water Boards (UvW).

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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 Manual 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 Supplies 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/duurzaaminkopen/criteria, available in Dutch only.

1.1 Definition of the product group

The Office Supplies product group comprises storage and filing facilities, labels, self-adhesive notepads and writing utensils.

The selection of office items targeted by these criteria is based on a summary of the most often sold items by the organisation Quantore (distributor of Office Supplies to the professional Office Supplies trading sector). A decision was taken not to prepare separate criteria for writing pads. This is because the sustainability aspects related to writing pads are primarily focused on how the paper is used. A separate product group for paper was created however. The criteria for this product group will be reviewed over the course of this year. Once this review is complete an assessment will be carried out to determine how best to specify the criteria for writing pads.

During the preparatory stage of this document, its stakeholders suggested that the scope of this product group be expanded and that criteria be developed for staplers and computer supplies, for example. In view of the currently limited procurement of these products – based on the Quantore data – this idea was rejected for the time being.

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. This selection is by no means exhaustive or complete. The contracting authority retains responsibility for compiling the correct set of CPV codes that matches the relevant tender.

The following CPV codes apply to this product group:

30192000-1 Office Supplies

30199500-5 Box files, letter trays, storage boxes and similar articles

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. Specific points for consideration regarding procurement for the Office Supplies product group are:

Economising

The purchase of Office Supplies can be minimised by economising. Economising can be realised by designing the administrative aspects of a business process differently. For example, the use of file folders and ring binders can be minimised through electronic filing, to the extent this is feasible in actual practice. (NOTE: electronic filing may not be adequate in all instances and a 'paper-based' filing system may for example be required for legal reasons.) Economising in the use of labels can for example be realised by sending documents electronically. It is impossible to demonstrate that increased digitisation in actual practice leads to a reduction in the need for Office Supplies.

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 Supplies. 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 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

Storage and facilities

Minimum requirement no. 1	<p>The following requirements pertain to the storage and filing facilities to be delivered (and the materials used to manufacture them):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The material must not consist of polyvinylchloride (PVC).2. The material must not contain any of the following materials:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- colouring agents;- optical whiteners;- inks;- surface finishing materials;- glues and coatings,- that are classified as hazardous to health with the following R phrases: R40, R45, R46, R61 and R63 and/or are classified as hazardous to the environment with the R phrases R50, R51, R52 and R53 in accordance with the 99/45/EC Directive.3. To the extent that the substances identified under Point 2 are not classified as described under Point 2, they may only be incorporated provided they do not contain any arsenic, chromium (VI), lead or zinc in concentrations that exceed the detection limit*. Colouring agents must not contain more than 100 mg of copper/kg.4. The glues used to manufacture the product (excluding any labels) must not contain more than 1% in volatile organic substances.5. (Applies to paper and cardboard): At least 90% (w/w) of the fibrous materials used must be derived from used paper.6. (Applies to paper and cardboard): None of the following complex formers may be used during the production of the material: EDTA, DTPA and APEO.7. (Applies to paper and cardboard): No glyoxal must have been added to the material.8. (Applies to paper and cardboard): The material must not have been bleached using elemental chlorine, unless an elemental chlorine-free (ECF) procedure was used.
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	<p><u>Means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A statement of compliance with (this requirement in) the Schedule of Requirements submitted as part of the proposal.
Notes for purchaser	<p>Sufficient storage and filing materials are available on the European market that can meet all of these criteria.</p> <p><u>Verification of means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No further verification of the statement of compliance. <p>*Re Point 3: A detection limit is the lowest concentration of a component in a sample whose presence can still be quantitatively established with a certain level of reliability. In fact the requirement aims to entirely exclude the use of the specified heavy metals from the colouring agents, inks and pigments used. Due to trace elements, it is however impossible to obtain zero measurements.</p>

Labels and self-adhesive memo pads

Minimum requirement no. 2	<p>The following requirements pertain to the labels and self-adhesive memo pads to be supplied (and the materials used to manufacture them):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The material must not contain any of the following materials: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. colouring agents; b. optical whiteners; c. inks; d. surface finishing materials; e. glues and coatings, f. that are classified as hazardous to health with the following R phrases: R40, R45, R46, R61 and R63 and/or are classified as hazardous to the environment with the R phrases R50, R51, R52 and R53 in accordance with the 99/45/EC Directive. 2. To the extent that the substances identified under Point 1 are not classified as described under Point 1, they may only be incorporated provided they do not contain any arsenic, chromium (VI), lead or zinc in concentrations that exceed the detection limit*. Colouring agents must not contain more than 100 mg of copper/kg. 3. The organic solvent content of the glue used and of any silicones/'release coatings' at the time of application must not exceed 0.1% (w/w). 4. (Applies to paper and cardboard): The material must not have been bleached using elemental chlorine. Bleaching is permitted if an elemental chlorine-free (ECF) procedure is used. <p><u>Means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A statement of compliance with (this requirement in) the Schedule of Requirements submitted as part of the proposal.
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Notes for purchaser	<p>There are a sufficient number of labels and self-adhesive memo pads available on the European market that meet all of these criteria.</p> <p><u>Verification of means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No further verification. <p>*Re Point 2: A detection limit is the lowest concentration of a component in a sample whose presence can still be quantitatively established with a certain level of reliability. In fact the requirement aims to entirely exclude the use of the specified heavy metals from the colouring agents, inks and pigments used. Due to trace elements, it is however impossible to obtain zero measurements.</p>
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Writing utensils

Minimum requirement no. 3	<p>The following requirements pertain to the writing utensils to be supplied (and the materials used to manufacture them):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The material must not consist of polyvinylchloride (PVC). 2. The writing utensils must not contain any colouring agents and other additives that are classified as hazardous to health with the R phrases: R40, R45, R46, R61 and R63 and/or as hazardous to the environment with the R phrases R50, R51, R52 and R53 in accordance with the 99/45/EC Directive. 3. The permissible concentrations of the heavy metals listed below in the raw materials used to produce the plastic holders are for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - chromium: lower than 50 mg/kg; - copper: lower than 500 mg/kg; - lead: lower than 500 mg/kg; - zinc: lower than 2000/kg. 4. Water-based inks must be used for fountain pens, fineliners and roller ink pens. <p><u>Means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A statement of compliance with (this requirement in) the Schedule of Requirements submitted as part of the proposal.
Notes for purchaser	<p>Sufficient writing utensils are available on the European market that can meet all of these criteria.</p> <p><u>Verification of means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No further verification.

2.2.3 Award criteria

Award criteria

Labels and self-adhesive memo pads

Award criterion no.1	<p>(XXX) points are awarded for this section if the labels and self-adhesive memo pads to be supplied consist of 100% recycled paper fibres.</p> <p><u>Means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A statement of compliance with this criterion in the Schedule of Requirements submitted as part of the proposal. 	
Notes for purchaser	<p>Currently there are not very many labels and self-adhesive memo pads made of recycled materials available in the marketplace. This is why this criterion was not included as a requirement. On the other hand, by assigning an additional score, suppliers may be encouraged to make an environmentally friendly proposal in this case as well.</p> <p><u>Verification of means of proof:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No further verification. 	

2.2.4 Contract

No contract conditions 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:

Economising during the utilisation stage is also an area for attention. Also see Section 3.1. By designing the administrative aspects of a business process differently, for example, by using electronic filing and transmitting documents electronically, it is possible to limit the use of file folders and ring binders and labels.