# RBGE SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT ACTION PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable procurement can be defined as:

*"A process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis and generates benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society, the economy and the environment"*. Sustainable procurement is not new to Scotland - many organisations, including the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, have been purchasing sustainably in various ways for a number of years.

This Action Plan outlines a whole organisation approach to successful sustainable procurement. A whole organisation commitment to making more sustainable choices is required to deliver sustainable procurement. This means identifying more sustainable ways of meeting requirements and designing sustainable procurement specifications accordingly. The approach should address the social, economic and environmental implications of product and service choices. It should embrace whole life costing and address how aspects such as design, manufacturing materials, operating costs, energy consumption, waste and recycling options support a more sustainable approach. Adoption of the Action Plan will contribute to improved sustainability in procurement activity and will also make a significant contribution to Climate Change targets.

It is important to note that sustainable procurement does not relate solely to environmental issues but also includes social issues, for example equalities, diversity and fair and ethical trading and economic issues, for example opportunities for small and medium sized enterprises and Third Sector organisations to successfully compete for public contracts

## GOVERNANCE

The Procurement Group within the Environmental Management Group will drive sustainable procurement by:

* Involving relevant staff in the development of specifications;
* Reporting progress via additional information provided in the Contracts Register
* Meeting regularly to discuss progress

The Board will keep progress under continual review to ensure that sustainable procurement is embedded across RBGE and that new sustainable supply solutions are encouraged. The Board will consider further opportunities to promote sustainable procurement as appropriate

## ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan sets out key steps and associated actions which RBGE will implement to effect sustainable procurement.

Key Steps:

* COMMITMENT WITHIN THE ORGANISATION
* MAKING THE COMMITMENT PUBLIC
* ORGANISATIONAL BUY-IN
* PRIORITISING
* SPECIFYING SUSTAINABLY
* SUSTAINABILITY IN THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS
* WORKING WITH SUPPLIERS
* PUBLICISING YOUR SUCCESSES

## 1. COMMITMENT WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

Senior Management must demonstrate leadership and a genuine commitment.

**ACTION 1.1**: Nomination of a senior management champion for Sustainable Procurement

2. MAKING THE COMMITMENT PUBLIC

A public commitment to sustainability demonstrates commitment both to staff and external parties including suppliers and potential suppliers.

* The commitment should be made public through websites, publications and policy procedures.
* It will cultivate an expectation amongst suppliers that they should focus on supplying goods and services in a more sustainable manner.

**ACTION 2.1**: Public commitment by RBGE to Sustainable Procurement to appear on websites and relevant internal and external communications.

## 3. ORGANISATIONAL BUY-IN

Sustainable procurement is a product of sustainable thinking throughout the whole organisation. The organisation must share the drive, responsibility and the commitment and this should be reflected in policies, strategies and procedures.

**ACTION 3.1**: Awareness raising.

## 4. PRIORITISING

* Making use of collaborative contracts and framework agreements which already offer sustainability advantages
* Supporting the inclusion of sustainability aspects into future contracts

## 5. SPECIFYING SUSTAINABLY

The greatest benefits arise through embedding sustainability into the earliest stages of procurement - when requirements for goods and services are being identified, justified and planned. It is at this crucial stage, before the procurement specification is defined, that detailed requirements can be reviewed in the light of sustainability, market capability and value for money. Contract Strategies for all regulated procurements should include a "Sustainability Test" which takes full account of sustainability issues, including:

* Testing whether requirements can be reduced or avoided altogether by delivering the outcome in some other way
* The need for cost-effective requirements taking account of whole life costs including purchase, installation, running costs including energy costs and disposal costs
* Ensuring requirements take account of social, economic and environmental issues where appropriate

How essential requirements can be defined to minimise resource consumption - *reduce, reuse* and *recycle.*

As mentioned previously there are three strands to sustainable procurement - Social, Economic and Environmental. A few indicators of how these individual elements can be addressed in procurement activity are given below.

Social aspects

Consideration must be given to:

* Usability for all those who will be affected by the goods or services covered by the contract
* Whether diversity and equality issues have been addressed
* Whether the documentation is in plain English
* Whether the terms and conditions are appropriate for the nature of the contract and any associated risk
* How the requirement is going to be advertised

All of this can assist organisational commitments on diversity and equality and encourage interest from a wide range of suppliers including smaller suppliers and Third Sector organisations.

Supported Businesses and Factories

Guidance has been published by the Scottish Government explaining the provision in the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations which makes it possible to reserve a requirement for competition by Supported Businesses and Factories. Note that the Guidance produced by the UK Government's Office of Government Commerce has been updated.

## 6. WORKING WITH SUPPLIERS

The social and economic aspects of sustainable procurement include giving all suppliers an equal opportunity to compete for business. In order to do that potential suppliers need to understand what is required of them.

RBGE via our Publicly facing contracts register, Procurement Policy and Procedures Manual and tender documentation will facilitate this.

RBGE will ensure that requirements are given adequate publicity as required by legislation and are advertised in such a way that they attract the attention of an appropriate range of suppliers.

RBGE uses The Public Contracts Scotland on-line portal which provides a single facility for suppliers and purchasers alike, where Scottish public sector requirements can be advertised. The portal supports publishing contract advertisements on OJEU where above EU threshold requirements must still be advertised and it provides a point of reference for below threshold requirements and free e-mail alerts to suppliers.

## 7. PUBLICISING YOUR SUCCESSES

As RBGE makes progress, we will publicise our successes. This will demonstrate progress to internal and external stakeholders and emphasise the message to suppliers that the organisation is committed to Sustainable Procurement allowing them to prepare accordingly.