

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2023-2025

Our vision for world-leading sustainable procurement



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Introduction

Western Spends about \$500M annually on goods and services. Every dollar of this spend has social, environmental, and economic impacts—both positive and negative. Western has the responsibility and opportunity to create positive change through purposeful and pro-active spending and supplier relations. To meet this challenge, Western is developing a Sustainable Procurement Program. This Program will help guide Western in transforming our procurement activities and supplier engagement to act as critical enablers in achieving our environmental, social and governance goals.

Where are we starting from?

A current state and benchmarking study conducted in Summer 2022 compared Western's practices to a fully formed, effective program. It highlighted that Western is not starting from ground zero, but building upon an existing commitment to sustainable procurement, including some important wins such as energy-efficient freezer replacements and committing to being a Fairtrade campus. Full Program benchmarking can be found in the Sustainable Procurement Current State Report.

What is in this Strategy?

The purpose of the Strategy is to provide an overview of our framework and vision for incorporating sustainable procurement into Western's procurement activities. It is the first part of a two-part Sustainable Procurement Strategy and Action Plan:

- **Part One: Strategy** – This sets out our mission and vision for the program before outlining our Program goals and key tactics for the next three years.
- **Part Two: Action Plan** – This is an internal facing document that provides a more detailed roadmap of actions, opportunities, and governance required to implement the vision documented in the Strategy, over the next three years.

The Plans' implementation will be led by Procurement Services with support from Sustainability and staff and faculty involved in procurements across Western.



OUR STRATEGY

1.1 Overview

Western's Strategic Plan [Towards Western at 150'](#) centers sustainability as an imperative and strategic priority for the future. Effectively implemented sustainable procurement acts as a foundation feeding upward to achieve sustainable and other organizational strategic priorities. Accordingly, our Sustainable Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2025 (the Plan) represents a meaningful commitment to achieving Western's mission.

Defining Sustainable Procurement

Sustainable procurement means making sure that the products and services we buy are as sustainable as possible, with the lowest environmental impact and most positive social results, while achieving best overall value.

Sustainable procurement embeds relevant sustainability considerations into processes for selecting goods and services, alongside traditional considerations like price, quality, service, and technical specifications. Entrenching sustainability into procurement involves requirements to be integrated into each major type of procurement process, whether pre-qualification lists, multiple quotes, or competitive processes like request for proposals (RFP). It means looking beyond short-term needs and considering the longer-term impacts of sourcing anything from office supplies and furniture to procuring food products and consultancy services.

What are our ESG Priorities?

Every procurement has a different set of environmental, socio-economic, and governance objectives (ESG) related risk or opportunities. Our Program will address all elements of ESG, but the issues below will be prioritized in the first three years.



Through our Program, Western will incorporate carbon and waste reduction, empowering local, minority and indigenous communities and responsible labour practices as criteria in key purchasing decisions, shifting from a narrow focus on "price" to a calculation based on value throughout the life cycle of products and services. We will ensure procurement decisions consider all requirements around cost, quality, and trade agreements, while also seeking to advance positive sustainability impacts and reduce potential negative impacts or mitigate potential risks. Sustainable products and services can sometimes have higher upfront cost. To support the long-term success of our Program, sustainability will be balanced alongside other essential criteria used in procurement decision making.

1.2 Our Sustainable Procurement Mission and Vision

Our Program mission and vision will drive the development and implementation of sustainable procurement practices towards a future state where Western's procurement is leveraged to establish a position of leadership in the higher education industry for sustainability. Procurement decisions will drive positive environmental, social, and governance supply chain outcomes, catalyze innovative processes within our organization, and support the commitment to be accountable to the communities that Western serves.

OUR MISSION

Procurement Services enables Western's staff and faculty to consistently integrate sustainability as a meaningful factor in purchasing decisions.

OUR VISION

Western's procurement is seen as world-leading for its contribution to a low carbon, circular and inclusive economy.





1.3 Our Sustainable Procurement Goals and Tactics

To ensure Western creates strong foundations for an effective, high impact Sustainable Procurement Program and starts to deliver positive environmental and social results immediately, our Program will focus on four main goals for the next three years:

- **Goal One:** Develop a long-lasting, high impact Sustainable Procurement Program, based on best practice.
- **Goal Two:** Meaningfully and regularly incorporate sustainability into all procurement decision-making.
- **Goal Three:** Significantly improve environmental performance and positive social outcomes as a result of our procurement practices.
- **Goal Four:** Become a sustainable procurement industry leader within the University Sector.

We will follow a 'two-track' approach to Program development. Meaning we will drive progress towards goal one, developing the 'building blocks' of our Program across the three years. At the same time, we will opportunistically be working towards goals two, three and four by actively incorporating sustainability into a shortlist of high impact procurement opportunities as well as through improving accessibility and awareness of sustainable options within Mustang Market.

Each Program goal is outlined below with an overview of the tactics we will employ to achieve each goal.

Goal One: Develop a long-lasting, high impact Sustainable Procurement Program, based on best practice.



TACTICS FOR ACHIEVING GOAL ONE:

Build our Program in line with an established best-practice 10-point framework

Effective sustainable procurement requires a coherent management framework within which activities can be systematically applied and integrated into regular operations. Aligned with the International Organization for Standardization's [ISO 20400 Guideline for Sustainable Procurement](#), the framework, created by the [Canadian Collaboration for Sustainable Procurement \(CCSP\)](#), identifies ten program elements of a high-impact Program.

Over the next three years we will work to progress our efforts in each of the 10 elements. Western will begin by formalizing our commitment to sustainable procurement and establish well-defined roles for Staff and Faculty. Specifically, sustainability will be integrated into our existing Procurement Policy and Procedures, and guidelines will be developed for those making procurement decisions.



Foster effective change management through regular training and communications

All efforts in building out our Program will be complemented with internal training, supplier engagement, and public-facing communications. A Training and Communication Plan will be implemented to ensure clarity of messaging and long-term buy-in from staff and other stakeholders. Instilling behaviour change is only possible when both the “heart” and the “smart” of decision making are equally supported and considered. As staff and faculty receive the knowledge, tools, and resources to be successful in implementing sustainable procurement, they will simultaneously be receiving key messages around the benefits and value add of the initiative.

Secure sufficient resourcing to create a high-impact Program

To achieve our vision and goals, we must ensure adequate staff and resourcing is allocated to build and maintain a high performing program. It will take a collective effort of staff and faculty across Western and success will be dependent on budget, time and a clear directive being provided. Sustainable Procurement has been identified as a priority area by the President's Advisory Committee on the Environment and Sustainability (PACES). As such, we will work to secure dedicated resourcing and staffing to support implementation.



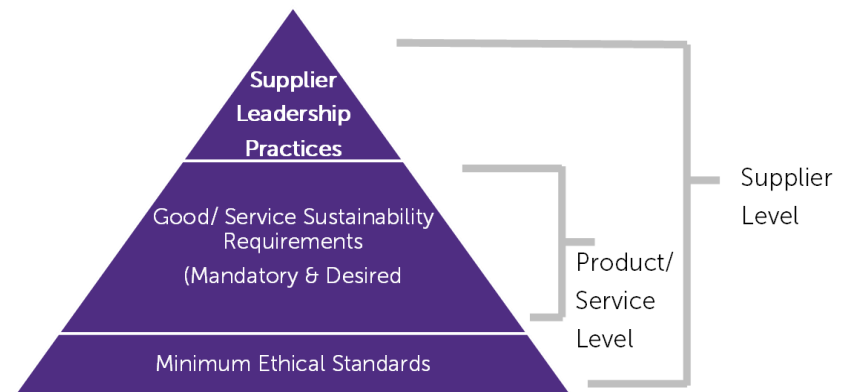
Goal Two: Meaningfully and regularly incorporate sustainability into all procurement decision-making.

TACTICS FOR ACHIEVING GOAL TWO:

Incorporate sustainability into all Western's competitive bid processes

Sustainability is multi-faceted, and there are different tiers for which it can be considered. Where applicable, we will evaluate suppliers on all three: compliance with minimum human rights standards, sustainable features of goods and services, and the corporate operations of the supplier.

Further integration of sustainability into the competitive bids process will be a critical component of advancing Western's Sustainable Procurement Program. Western already requires sustainability questions to be included in Requests for Proposals (RFPs) listed through Bonfire. We will establish and pilot specification tools, recommended weightings, evaluation criteria and performance goals to work towards competitive bids including sustainability specifications with a recommended 10-15% weighting. Priority will initially be placed on environmental requirements and, when in compliance with regional and national regulations, increasing opportunities for local, Indigenous, and diverse suppliers.



Develop a dedicated sustainable marketplace within Mustang Market

The vast majority of our spend is funnelled through Mustang Market, a web-based sourcing and requisition tool allowing staff and faculty to purchase various items from existing contracted vendors or new vendors. Across the course of Program implementation, we will work with our preferred vendors to increase awareness among staff and faculty of the availability and benefits of sustainable products and create a dedicated marketplace within the platform for sustainable products.

Develop a Supplier Code of Conduct and tools to assess risk and monitor compliance

Western cannot inadvertently compromise our own mission and credibility by allowing our supply chain to carry out business in a way that harms people. Child exploitation, discrimination, unfair practices, and forced labor cannot go unmitigated within the Western supply chain. To ensure adherence to national labor legislation, Western will begin by developing and enforcing a Supplier Code of Conduct and a supporting compliance mechanism, which may include issuing third-party audits for suppliers at a high-risk of code violations.

Goal Three:

Significantly improve environmental performance and positive social outcomes as a result of our procurement practices.



TACTICS FOR ACHIEVING GOAL THREE:

Prioritize High Impact Procurement Opportunities (HIPOS)

Simultaneous to building our Program over the next three years, we will be continually updating and activating on a targeted list of products, services or projects that are deemed to have a high sustainability risk for the organization, or categories that are deemed to have highly positive or easy to achieve sustainability impacts. While Western's entire procurement portfolio will need to be addressed to create a holistic Program, a staggered approach will be adopted, first integrating sustainability into areas that fall under the umbrella of Procurement Services. Procurement will then work in partnership with other departments to identify strategic opportunities to integrate sustainability in other product and service categories.

Use sustainable procurement as an engine to achieve our ESG goals

Our procurement makes a measurable difference on outcomes such as reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and providing employment opportunities for equity groups. Sustainable procurement is a useful tool for Western to delivery on key sustainability priorities and goals. We will use the priorities mandated in Western's Strategic Plan to direct our Program efforts. In doing so, our sustainable procurement practices will be an enabler to our Strategic Plan.



Western also aims to make progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

While sustainable procurement directly supports targets under SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production, it is also integral to achieving all SDGs. For example, we can source sustainable paper products to demonstrate climate action (SDG13) and protect life on land (SDG15) or buy general merchandise apparel made with better cotton to protect water quality (SDG6) or buy Fair Trade certified coffee to help end poverty (SDG1) and fight inequality (SDG10).





Goal Four: Become a sustainable procurement industry leader within the University Sector



TACTICS FOR ACHIEVING GOAL FOUR:

Track and report on our progress to celebrate success and grow our reputation as a sustainability leader

Western University is already a sustainability leader within the Canadian, and global, post-secondary sector. Amongst its accolades, Western holds a Gold AASHE Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System ([STARS](#)) rating and placed 3rd in the world in the 2022 [Times Higher Education Impact Rankings](#) - a global ranking of universities working toward the UN SDGs.

Western will continue to report on its broad sustainability progress against both the AASHE STARS rating and against the UN SDGs, as well as implementing specific sustainable procurement Program progress, activity and impact measures.

We will develop processes for collecting data, tracking KPI's, reporting on progress, and creating success stories that celebrate our advances. An accountability team will be established to monitor performance and increase accountability to our targets.

Work collaborative to ensure continued leadership and innovation

Collaboration with other organizations and sectors helps advance the field of sustainable procurement and build mutually beneficial resources for all stakeholders. Western will maintain and expand its involvement in aligned organizations including the Ontario University Professional Procurement Management Association ([OUPPMA](#)) and the Canadian Collaboration for Sustainable Procurement ([CCSP](#)), as well topic specific groups like [London's Anchor Initiative](#) on inclusive economy. Western will seek further opportunities to participate in collaborative initiatives to advance sustainable procurement, ensure participating staff are supported, and external recognition opportunities are identified.

