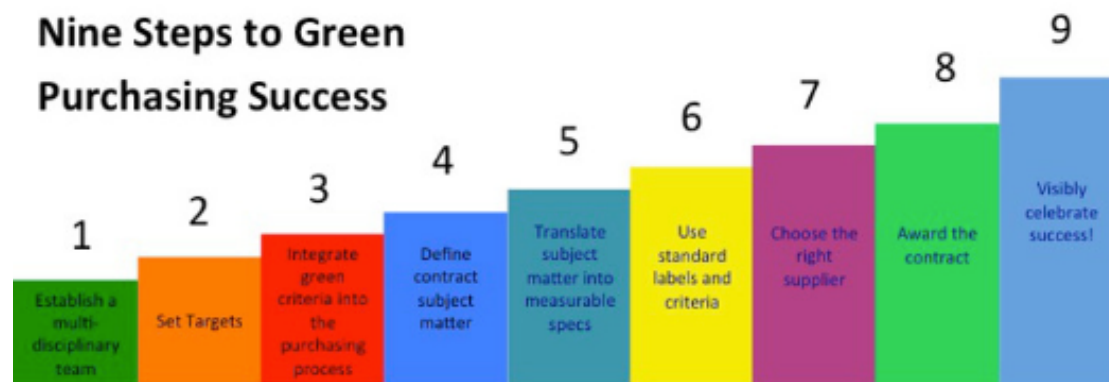


HCWH Europe's Nine-Step Purchasing Guide

Green purchasing is not something new: it boils down to understanding the environmental impact of what you buy, and adding criteria to the purchasing process to reduce that impact.

In that sense, there is a new knowledge-set to bring into the process. However, many institutions have already gone down that path. Much of their experience is available and much of it designed to be replicated elsewhere.

The basic steps to implementing green purchasing are as follows:



1. Establish a Multi-Disciplinary Team

Someone with expertise in the environmental hazards in healthcare, with the ability to work with other teams, understanding their needs, and able to put together implement a strategy for improvement.

2. Set Targets

When starting out, keep it simple: choose to use more recycled paper, for example, and aim to reduce packaging waste by 20% over two years. Don't forget that you can look at the entire supply chain, from manufacture through to disposal, as well as primary features such as energy consumption.

3. Integrate Green Criteria into the Purchasing Process

Refer to ÖkoKauf (EcoBuy), a guide to implementing green criteria throughout the purchasing process. The EU handbook Buying Green is also full of detailed information.

4. Define the Contract Subject-Matter

The buyer is theoretically free to set whatever criteria they want for the product they wish to purchase (within the limits of EU law, which forbids "local", for example). However, criteria can be too strict, which can lead to costly delays in the purchasing process.

It is therefore important to do market research for the general availability of products meeting your requirements, and look at what other hospitals are doing — if they are having success with, for example, PVC-free enteral nutrition sets, that is a good indicator this product is readily available.

5. Translate Subject-Matter into Measurable Specs

Specifications have to be clear, transparent criteria that provide a measuring-stick against which tenders can be evaluated. Translate the contract subject-matter into measurable specifications. Clarity is key: it prevents time being wasted with unsuitable offers, and eliminates the possibility of accusations of improperly favouring one supplier over another.

6. Use Standard Labels and Criteria

Eco-labels indicate that products meet a set of ready-made environmental standards. This saves effort evaluating the product and developing independent criteria. Although eco-labels themselves cannot be specified during the public tender process, it is possible to demand that a product meet the standard that the label sets. Recently, the Nordic Swan began testing its standard for haemodialysis equipment. [More Information](#).



7. Choose the Right Supplier

You are entitled to exclude companies that have broken environmental regulations and legislation. You can also state that suppliers have to demonstrate a certain degree of technical competence in environmental management.

EMAS and ISO 14001 certification can serve as evidence of technical capacity, although (as with products) it is not possible to demand that a supplier meet a specific standard, only the criteria the standard sets. [More Information](#).

8. Award the Contract

Most contracts are awarded primarily on a cost basis. However, life-cycle costing can reveal budget savings even for initially more expensive items.

9. Visibly Celebrate Success

Celebrating achievement of environmental goals can create a lot of energy for raising standards and generate pride in your institution among staff and the public. Patients generally feel better-disposed towards hospitals with good environmental performance. Every year the Austrian hospital SMZ Florisdorf presents its environmentally best-performing unit with Floskar, the environmental Oscar.