

Creating Sustainable Product and Service Factsheets for Responsible Sourcing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Introduction

The aim of this project is to develop Sustainable Product and Service Factsheets to help inform more environmental, ethical and social purchasing decisions in large public institutions across Canada, including cities, universities and government agencies, for the Canadian Collaboration for Sustainable Procurement (CCSP). More Canadian organizations want to align their purchasing with their sustainability goals and their staff need simple tools to make sustainable choices when purchasing thousands of products and services every day.

Background

The primary goal of this project is to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG 12) to ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns as established by the United Nations¹. This includes the following targets as quoted by the United Nations²:

- **Target 12.2,12.3 and 12.4:** Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.
- **Target 12.5:** Substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.
- **Target 12.6:** Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.
- **Target 12.7:** Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.

For the same, 10 product and service factsheets have been developed. They consist of 2 pages of concise information and effective graphic design to make the content highly accessible and user-friendly. Each factsheet includes the most significant environmental and social impacts and other information related to the product or service such as:

- clear definition on what makes the product/service sustainable;
- the problems associated with the conventional product/ service;
- the benefits of choosing the sustainable product/service over the norm;
- trends in the product category related to more sustainable production;
- alternatives and new innovations that procurement professionals could consider;
- labels and certifications that are credible; and

¹ Sustainable Development Goals, from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

² Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-consumption-production/>

- any of relevant information or tools that it easier to find eco-products.

Methodology

The first step in this research was to identify what content must be a part of each factsheet. Existing factsheets from the CCSP archive were used to identify all types of content available, sorted, compared and narrowed them down to the most relevant content for this project.

Following that, existing factsheets from the CCSP archive were sorted and categorised. Based on that, the topic of the 10 factsheets to be developed were identified. They are:

- Bottled Water
- Professional Services
- Promotional Products
- Coffee and Tea
- Dinnerware
- Catering Services
- Computers and Laptops
- Multifunctional Devices
- Mobile Phones
- Concrete

For each identified title, the factsheets were developed based on extensive research about industry best practices, trends and challenges associated with them. Sources include publications, certification organizations, government policies, and purchasing guides from organizations like the Responsible Purchasing Network, Greenpeace etc.

Summary

With respect to sustainable procurement, usually an organization or a City's staff often lack resources like time, money and knowledge to ensure that their billion dollars of purchases meet their environmental, ethical and social sustainability goals. To help procurement professionals make more informed sustainable decisions, product and service factsheets in 10 identified key areas were developed. They will aid the reduction of GHGs, building a more circular economy, and for developing more inclusive, and equitable communities.