Sustainable Procurement Policy

1. Context

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, hereafter referred to as Trinity, is committed to becoming a sustainable University. As part of this commitment, the Procurement Office has incorporated the principles of sustainable procurement also known as 'green procurement' into our processes since 2019.

The Procurement office acknowledges that effectively addressing climate change requires substantial structural and behavioural changes in both how and what we purchase. We are dedicated to implementing meaningful reforms that lead to measurable reductions in environmental and social impacts across our supply network, and to support a broader sustainable transformation within the University.

2. Purpose

Sustainable procurement is a strategic approach that aligns with Trinity's sustainability goals and ensures compliance with the Government's policies and legislation.

The purpose of this policy is to support Trinity's overarching Strategic Plan 2025-30 by ensuring that all staff involved in the procurement of goods, services and works across the University consider appropriate environmental, social, and economical factors in their purchasing decisions.

3. Benefits

This policy is a statement of Trinity's commitment to sustainability initiatives, including the reduction of our carbon footprint and the management of the social and environmental impacts associated with our extensive supply network.

This policy establishes the guiding principles and practices for responsible procurement, ensuring that sustainability is embedded throughout the entire lifecycle of goods, services and works from the point at which a requirement is generated, through to delivery, use and end-of-life. It aims to promote long-term value, reduce negative impacts, and contribute to a more sustainable future for the University and its wider community.

4. Scope

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This policy applies to:

- All members of staff at Trinity who are involved in purchasing activities

- All purchases made using University funds, including awards & grants and overhead budgets
- All categories of goods, services, and works (excluding Capital works)
- It covers all stages of the procurement lifecycle, including planning, specification, tendering, contract management, and disposal

5. Principles

Trinity has a long-standing commitment to leadership in the area of sustainability. The Procurement office plays a key role in advancing this commitment by implementing and promoting sustainable purchasing practices across the University.

5.1. Support for Academic and Institutional Sustainability Goals: This policy is designed to support high-quality education, research and the efficient operations of service areas while contributing to Trinity's nature positive and net-zero ambitions. The procurement processes shall reflect environmental, social and economic considerations, and to be conducted in a transparent, fair, and equitable manner that aligns with Trinity's broader sustainability goals.

5.2. Environmental Responsibility: Trinity prioritises goods and services that reduce environmental impact across their lifecycle, including energy efficiency, low emissions across production, transportation, distribution, usage, and end-of-life disposal, minimal packaging, and sustainable resource use.

5.3. Promotion of Social Responsibility: Trinity is committed to ethical sourcing and social equity. Preference is given to suppliers who uphold fair labour practices, human rights, diversity, and community engagement.

5.4. Economic Value and Lifecycle Costing: Procurement decisions should consider total cost of ownership, durability, long-term value, and end-of-life disposal or recycling not just upfront price, ensuring responsible use of public and institutional funds.

5.5. Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency: The Procurement office is committed to managing the transition from linear to circular purchasing models. This includes prioritising products and services that can be reused, repaired, repurposed, or recycled, and reducing unnecessary consumption.

5.6. Compliance with Public Sector Mandates: All procurement activities must comply with relevant legislation, including the Government's Public Sector Climate Action Mandate and internal policies and procedures.

5.7. Transparency and Fairness: Procurement processes will be conducted with integrity, openness, and fairness, ensuring equal opportunity for suppliers and accountability in decision-making.

5.8. Supplier Engagement and Innovation: Trinity aims to work collaboratively with suppliers to promote sustainable practices, encourage innovation, and support continuous improvement in environmental and social performance.

5.9. Capacity Building and Awareness: Staff involved in procurement shall be supported through training and resources to ensure they understand and apply sustainable procurement principles effectively.

5.10. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement: Procurement regularly review procurement practices, monitor sustainability outcomes, and update policies to reflect evolving best practices and institutional priorities.

6. Definitions

Term	Definition
Approver	Individual(s) who has the authority to approve purchases in terms of category, value, project and cost centres.
Circular Economy	An economic model designed to reduce resource over exploitation, reduce waste and pollution, keep products and materials in use for longer, and regenerate natural systems.
Emissions	The release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, typically resulting from energy use, transportation, manufacturing, and waste. Reducing emissions is a key goal of sustainable procurement.
Lifecycle	The complete journey of a product or service.
Linear Purchasing Model	A traditional approach to procurement where products are bought, used and then discarded.
Resources	Purchased goods and services and human resources. Sustainable procurement aims to use resources efficiently and responsibly, minimising environmental and social harm.
Requester	Individual(s) who requires goods or services to be sourced.
Preparer	Individual(s) who logs onto Oracle and creates a purchase requisition on behalf of the requester.
Purchase Order Administrator (POA)	Individual(s) who are appointed by the School/Area to administrate and manage orders for their school/Area and receive and manage notifications related to the orders.
Value for Money	The optimal combination of cost, quality, and sustainability to meet the University's needs. It considers not only the initial purchase price but also long-term costs, environmental & social impacts and overall performance.

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7. Policy

The objectives of the sustainable procurement policy are to guide Trinity's purchasers in incorporating environmental and social factors, as well as the total costs of ownership, into every purchasing decision. This includes not only the upfront cost but also long-term impacts such as maintenance, energy use, and disposal.

One of the most effective ways to achieve sustainable procurement is to **buy less**. This policy aims to shift traditional linear purchasing behaviours toward a circular economy model, where products and services are selected based on their ability to be reused, repaired, repurposed, or recycled, thereby reducing waste and environmental impact.

7.1. Pre-procurement Considerations: Before initiating any procurement activity, it is advisable for all purchasers to assess the necessity and sustainability of the proposed purchase. This pre-procurement stage should be guided by the 10R principles[1], which promote circular economy framework and responsible resource use.

10R Pre-procurement considerations (Appendix1):

7.1.1. **Refuse**: Assess the necessity of a purchase to evaluate whether a purchasing needs to be made at all to avoid unnecessary purchases and consumption.

7.1.2. **Rethink**: Consider alternative ways to meet needs with less impact. For example, use digital documents instead of printing, share existing resources.

7.1.3. **Reduce**: use items multiple times and avoid single use items. For example, consolidate orders to reduce packaging, transport and unnecessary energy consumption.

7.1.4. **Reuse**: extend the life of products by using them again or reuse by sharing it with other areas. For example, reuse lab equipment across different labs and multiple courses.

7.1.5. **Repair**: fix rather than replace. Repair and maintenance of defective or broken products to maximise the life cycle of the items whenever possible and feasible.

7.1.6. **Refurbish**: refurbish existing items for continued use e.g. IT hardware, office furniture.

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[1] Based on the 10R framework from Kirchherr et alii (2017)

7.1.7. **Repurpose**: find new uses for old items. Extend the life of products by finding a different purpose or use its parts in a new product with a different function. For example, use an unused bookshelf as a lab storage unit.

7.1.8. **Remanufacture**: rebuild products using recovered, reused, repaired parts e.g. remanufactured printer cartridges or products made with recycled materials.

7.1.9. **Recycle**: Choose recycled materials e.g. buying paper with high recycled content.

7.1.10. **Recover**: extract energy or materials from waste. Ensure proper disposal at end of life e.g. use of food waste from across Trinity for compost or collect worn-out uniforms or lab coats for fibre recovery.

7.2. All staff involved in the procurement process play a critical role in achieving Trinity's sustainable procurement objectives. For all purchases over the tender thresholds, staff must complete the Pre-Procurement Assessment (see Appendix 2) to maximise the lifecycle of existing resources and minimise costs and carbon footprint associated with the procurement activities.

7.3. All purchases valued **over the applicable national tender thresholds**: the government has mandated the use of the Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria for all government departments and public sector bodies where such criteria are available.

These GPP criteria are designed to support environmentally responsible purchasing by providing:
- Quantifiable and verifiable standards to enable assessment of environmental performance
- Measurable benchmarks that enhance transparency and consistency in throughout the tender process
- Lifecycle cost analysis tools that help identify long-term value and cost savings
- Alignment with national and international sustainability goals

By embedding GPP criteria into procurement processes, Trinity ensures that environmental considerations are not only included but are central to decision-making.

The Procurement Office is responsible for the selection and application of GPP criteria. Where no National, EU or other GPP criteria/guidance are available, Trinity will still endeavour to include criteria that will reduce the impact on the environment.

7.4. Purchases **below the applicable national tender thresholds:** While the use of GPP criteria is not mandatory for purchases below the applicable national tender thresholds,

Procurement strongly encourages all purchasers to consider the environmental impacts of both the suppliers and goods or services during the selection process.

7.5. Prioritise environmental, economic and social repercussions as well as economic factors when selecting a supplier.

7.6. After sourcing the requirement, ensure the efficient management through the use of any available systems and tools e.g. internal inventory, asset register, LabCup etc.

Staff involved in the purchasing process shall also refer to the overall purchasing manual on the Procurement webpage.

8.   Policy Owner

The Procurement Manager is the owner of this policy.

9.   Responsibility and Implementation

9.1. Procurement Manager: Leads on strategic decisions regarding Trinity's sustainable purchasing practices and overall procurement manual and sustainable procurement policy.

9.2. ESG Measurement and Reporting Manager: Has responsibility for implementing all aspects of the Trinity Sustainable Procurement policy.

9.3. Procurement Office: Has responsibility for the implementation of sustainable procurement practices and strategic planning. Provides guidance and training to the relevant stakeholders in their category and ensures compliance with relevant legislation and institutional goals.

9.4. Budget Holders, Financial Approvers and Heads of School, Area and Faculty: Ensure that procurement decisions within their areas align with this policy and support Trinity's sustainability objectives.

9.5. All Staff Involved in Purchasing (e.g. requesters, preparers, POAs, approvers, budget holders, finance managers): Are expected to complete all required training and familise themselves with this policy, as well as the University's Procurement Policy and Procedure Manual available on the Procurement website. Staff must ensure that environmental, social and enconomical impacts are considered in all purhcasing

decisions and that the principles outlined in this policy are consistently applied throughout the procurement process.
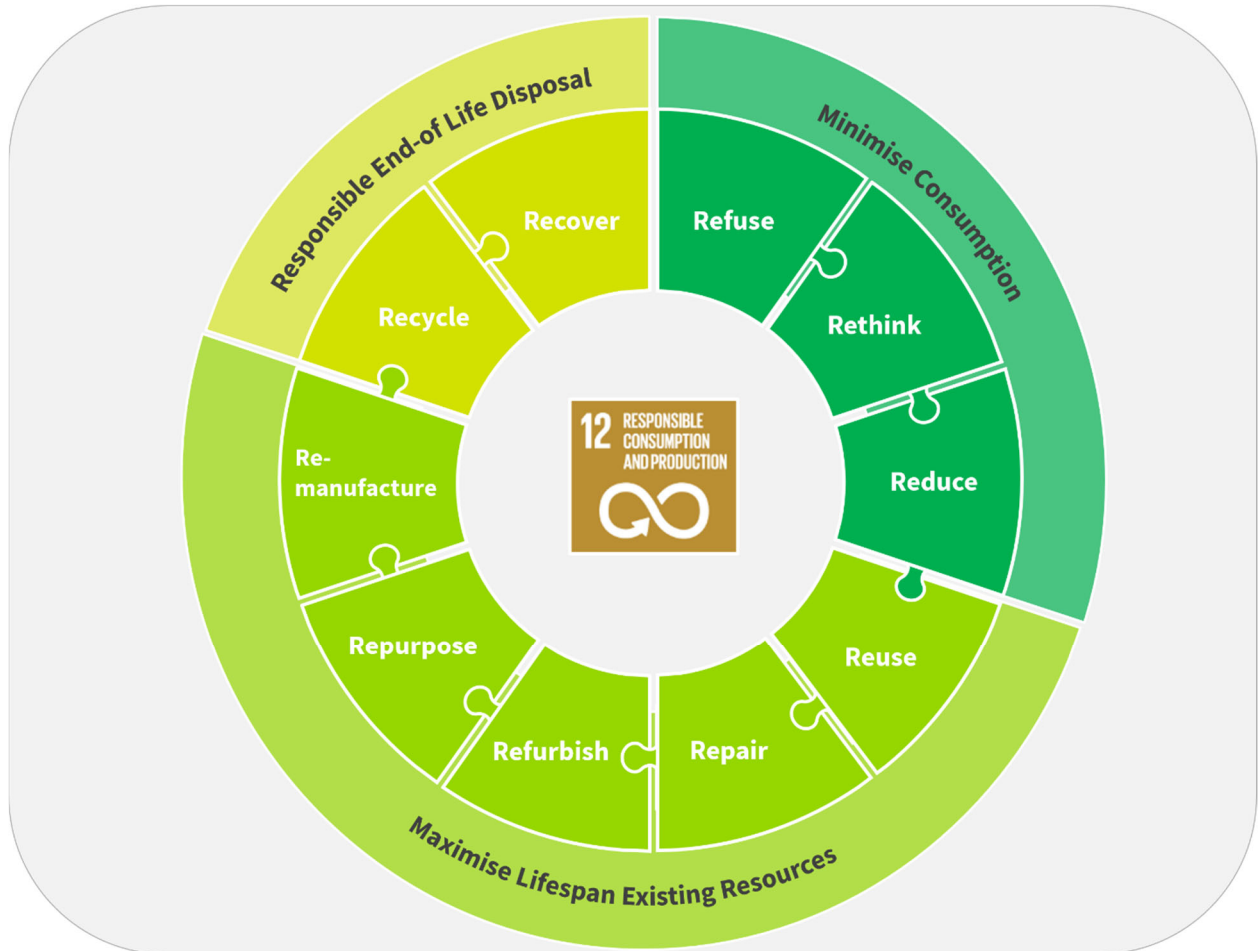
10. Related Documents

- Government of Ireland Public Sector Climate Action Mandate – Climate Action Plan 2025
- Buying Greener: Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027
- Green Public Procurement Guidance for the Public Sector
- Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2022 - 2023
- Trinity Strategy 2025-30
- Trinity Sustainability Policy
- Sustainable Procurement Strategy
- Procurement Policy and Procedure Manual

Document Control for Revised Policies

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11.2   Date revised policy approved: 28/01/2026

11.3   Date policy effective from: 28/01/2026

11.4   Date of next review: Academic Year 2030/2031

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APPENDIX 1 – Pre-Procurement Consideration (10R Principle)

APPENDIX 2 – Pre-Procurement Assessment Process