

Three horizontal bars of varying lengths and colors (blue, dark blue, and grey) stacked on top of each other.

# **Sustainable Product and Service Specifications:**

## **User Guide**

District of Columbia Office of Contracting and Procurement

January 2015

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# Introduction

The District of Columbia recognizes its role as a responsible partner in its local and global community and strives to minimize negative impacts on human health and the environment. To support this goal, the District has embedded sustainable considerations in the solicitation process that are fiscally responsible, promote worker health, conserve natural resources, and prevent pollution. The Sustainable Purchasing Program aims to institutionalize environmentally preferable decision making into the District of Columbia procurement process. Working together the District can leverage its substantial buying power to benefit local and global environments, while advancing the District's sustainability goals.

This User Guide provides an overview of sustainable purchasing resources and tools and procedural requirements to support the District in procuring environmentally preferable products and services (EPPS) to the maximum extent practical. The Guide is best used as a supplement to “*Sustainable Purchasing 101*” training, and in conjunction with resources available on the [OCP Sustainable Purchasing webpage](#).

Environmental Specification Guidance was developed with input from District agencies, the market place, and following a review of best practices that other jurisdictions employ. Products and services which meet recommended EPPS specifications are available via the local and general marketplace, are high-performing, and are cost-competitive. If there are extenuating circumstances where utilizing sustainable specification guidance is not practical, District personnel should indicate the reason in PASS. Please see page 16 for detailed guidance.

The Sustainable Purchasing Team will be available to help guide you through this process. If you need assistance, please contact Jonathan Rifkin: [jonathan.rifkin@dc.gov](mailto:jonathan.rifkin@dc.gov) , email the Sustainable Purchasing Program at [sppdc@dc.gov](mailto:sppdc@dc.gov), call the OCP Customer Contact Center at: 202.724.4477, or visit: <http://ocp.dc.gov/page/sustainable-purchasing> .

We look forward to working with you!

## **About the Sustainable Purchasing Program**

The District of Columbia is committed to procuring quality goods and services in a timely manner and reasonable cost that support the District in meeting its sustainability goals.

The Sustainable Purchasing Program assists the District in procuring sustainable goods and services by developing environmental specification guidance, providing training, resources and consulting services, vendor outreach, and tracking progress toward sustainable spend goals. The development of the Sustainable Purchasing Program and newly released sustainable specification guidance was funded through a FY14 grant from the [Sustainable DC Innovation Challenge](#), a program of the [Sustainable DC initiative](#).

## **Meeting District Needs through Sustainable Purchasing**

Sustainable Purchasing is the procurement of products and services that have a lesser or reduced impact on human health or the environment, when compared to competing products or services. These products and services are often referred to as Environmentally Preferable Products and Services (EPPS).

Mayoral Order 2009-60 and the Procurement Practices Reform Act (PPRA) requires that the District purchase sustainable products and services to the maximum extent possible. Sustainable specifications were developed in accordance with the [Environmentally Preferable Products and Services \(EPPS\) Policy](#) and section [2-361.01](#) of the District Code and can be utilized in fulfillment of these requirements. Use of proposed environmental guidance will help agencies to comply with numerous environmental laws already enacted.

Sustainable specifications also facilitate meeting more than 15 environmentally sustainable laws, goals, policies, and initiatives, and 25% of the [Sustainable DC Plan](#) goals.

# List of Sustainable Products and Services

The District provides sustainable specifications for approximately 100 products across 14 broad product and service categories. A list of products and services for which resources have been developed is listed below. Agencies are encouraged to pursue sustainable purchases in product categories not listed below, and should work with the Sustainable Purchasing Program to explore new opportunities.

A list of EPPS supporting guidance and solicitation documents is available for all products listed below on the OCP [Sustainable Purchasing Program](http://www.ocp.dc.gov) webpage at [www.ocp.dc.gov](http://www.ocp.dc.gov).

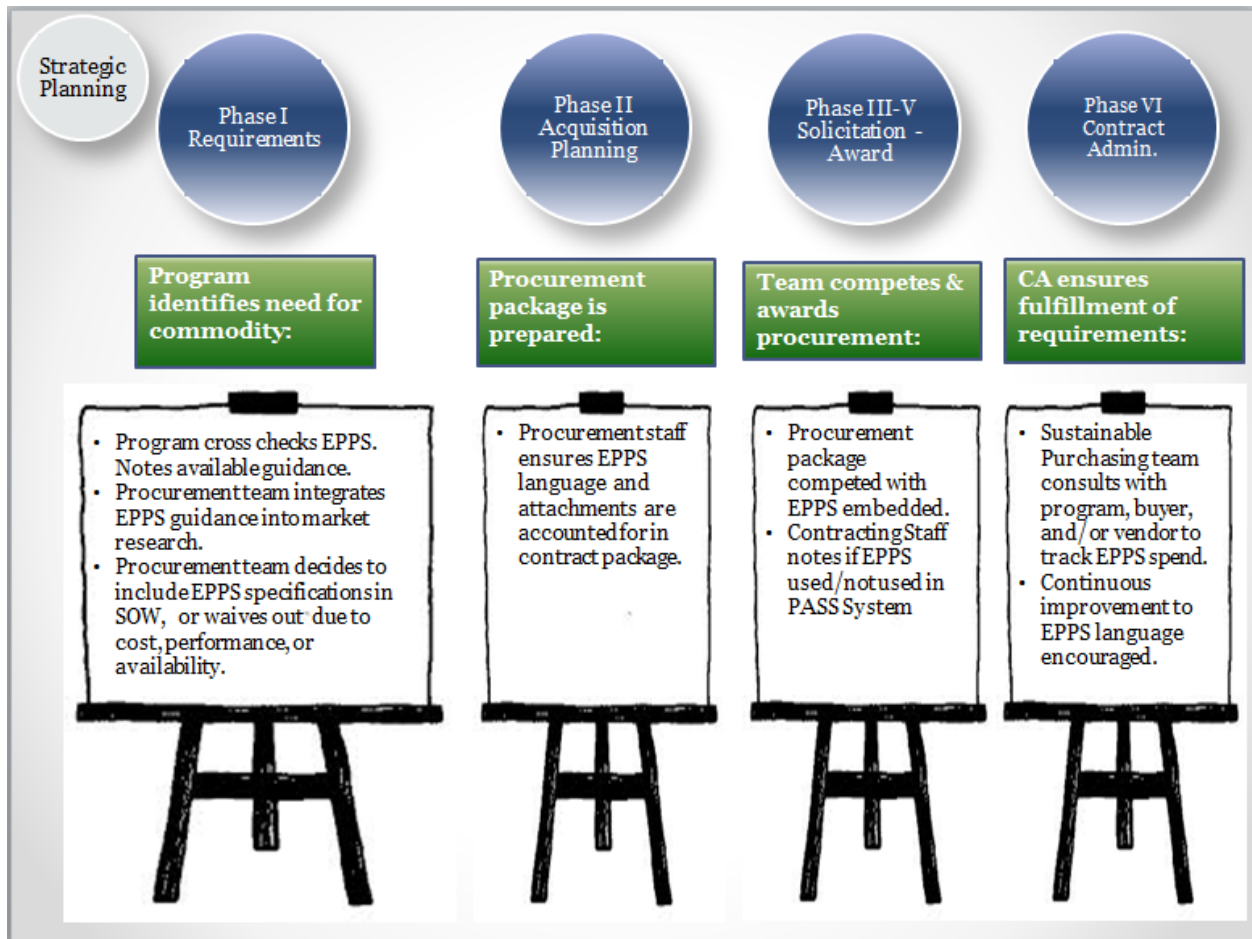
PRODUCT OR SERVICE CATEGORY	SUB-PRODUCT CATEGORY EXAMPLES (NOT COMPREHENSIVE)
Appliances	Dishwashers, refrigerators, freezers, room air conditioners, ovens, fryers, griddles, ice makers, hot food holding cabinets, steam cookers, clothes washers, water coolers, vending machines, televisions
Automotive Fleet	Fleet light-duty vehicles
Automotive Products	Tires, hubcaps, rims, lubricants, anti-freeze, hydraulic fluids
Cleaning Supplies	General purpose cleaner; degreasers; bathroom cleaners; carpet and cleaners; glass, mirror, and window cleaners; disinfectants; floor cleaners, strippers, and finishes; hand soaps, hand cleaners, and hand sanitizers; paper towels; toilet paper; trash bags
Computers	Desktops, laptops, monitors
Food Services	Food sourcing, packaging, food waste reduction, water and energy conservation, solid waste recycling, and composting.
Furniture	Chairs, cubicles, desks, modules, shelves, sofas, storage cabinets, tables, work stations
Imaging Equipment	Copiers, printers, fax machines, multi-functional devices, toner cartridges
Janitorial Services	Janitorial services, including any information on types of products utilized.
Office Supplies - General	Batteries, binders, calendars, clipboards, construction paper, correction tape, corrugated containers, crayons, desk trays, easel pads, envelopes, facial tissue, files and pocket folders, markers and highlighters, napkins, notebooks, notepads, office paper, padded mailers, paper clips, pens and mechanical pencils, post-it notes, report covers, toner, waste baskets, wood pencils; Breakroom Supplies: cleaning products, cups, paper towels, plates, trash bags.
Paper	Copy paper (all sizes), printer paper (all sizes), notepads (all sizes), construction paper, newsprint, offset
Printing Services	Printing services for business cards, brochures, pocket folders, mailers, flyers, banners, posters, labels, stickers, decals, paychecks, and security clearances
Landscaping Services	Landscape maintenance services including: pest control, fertilizer, native plants, mulch, planting, gardening, trimming, yard waste, compost
Toner	Black inkjet cartridges, laser cartridges, and other toner cartridges for copiers, printers, multi-function devices, and fax machines

List last updated Jan. 1, 2015

# Integrating Sustainable Purchasing Into the Procurement Process

In accordance with District law and policy, the Sustainable Purchasing Program has developed Environmentally Preferable Products and Service (EPPS) specification language for designated products and services. The visual below highlights the key points throughout the procurement process when procurement stakeholders should utilize Sustainable Purchasing Program resources.

Exhibit 1: Integrating Sustainable Considerations into the Procurement Process



Though it is ultimately incumbent upon the program end-user to use or not use EPPS specification language procurement staff should be aware of sustainable approaches, and work to ensure that programs have given proper consideration to sustainable approaches. The following sections expand upon steps illustrated in Exhibit 1.

## Pre-Procurement Cycle: Strategic Planning

### Use of the Strategic Acquisition Planning Tool (OAPT)

Program references the Sustainable Purchasing Program list of products and services to see if sustainable specification guidance is available. See p.3 for a list of EPPS products and services.

Program notes whether planned procurement is potentially EPPS in the Office of Contracting and Procurement Acquisition Planning Tool (OAPT). See the OAPT section of this document for more information on how to utilize the OAPT.

### The Procurement Cycle:

- 1) **Requirements — Program identifies need for a given commodity.**
  - a. Program consults [EPPS List](#) to determine if sustainable guidance is available.
  - b. Program integrates information available via Environmental Specification Guidance Document, and focused training sessions into normal market research activities.
  - c. Program determines if the use of EPPS guidance is feasible, i.e. does not result in undue pressure on cost, performance, and availability.
- 2) **Acquisition Planning –Procurement Team identifies procurement method and assembles solicitation package including SOW and supporting documents.**
  - a. Procurement staff chooses procurement method and prepares procurement package. Procurement staff should use supporting EPPS solicitation documents and resources, as needed.
- 3) **Solicitation & Award – Procurement staff competes and awards solicitation via use of the PASS Buyer, Sourcing, and Contracts Modules.**
  - a. Program and procurement staff work together to ensure that the EPPS Indicator is accurately completed.
    - i. Procurement stakeholders should indicate “Yes” in the EPPS indicator if EPPS was utilized, and note the relevant product category from the EPPS drop down menu in PASS.
    - ii. If EPPS Guidance is not utilized the buyer should indicate “No” in the EPPS indicator, and choose from one of four acceptable reasons for not soliciting EPPS: Cost, performance, availability, or N/A.
- 4) **Contract Administration – Contract Administrator and Procurement Staff work together to ensure that the Contractor is fulfilling all requirements of the contract.**
  - a. The Sustainable Purchasing Program may consult with the Contract Administrator, procurement staff, and/or vendor throughout the life of the contract to capture EPPS spend against the contract. Sample report templates are further explained in later sections of this User Guide.

# Sustainable Specification Solicitation Documents

A series of environmental guidance documents and templates are available to assist District agencies when issuing solicitations. Recommended EPPS specification language is included in the following resource documents which are located on the OCP webpage and can be accessed by clicking [here](#):

1. Environmental Specification Guidance Document
2. Statement of Work Environmental Guidance Document
3. Environmentally Preferable Small Purchase Attachment
4. EPPS Request for Quote Template
5. EPPS Contractor Report Template

The following sections provide a more detailed explanation of each resource document and how it can be utilized when developing a sustainable procurement.



# The Environmental Specification Guidance Document

The Environmental Specification Guidance Document provides the scope, specification language, background information, environmental impacts, and relevance to District sustainability laws and goals. The document is educational in nature, and is meant to help programs, procurement staff, and the vendor community to understand recommended environmental specifications. This document is most useful when conducting market research for a planned procurement. Please note that specification language included in the guidance document, are typically mirrored in the requirements section of the Statement of Work Environmental Specification Guidance Document, which is outlined on P. 9 of this document.

## Exhibit 2: Environmental Specification Guidance

**Guidance Document Overview**

**Preamble**      **Scope**      **Background Information**      **Environmental Hotspots**

**Benefits**      **Specification Language**      **Significance to the District**

The following is a brief summary of each component of the Environmental Specification Guidance Document.

- **Preamble** – Links to other solicitation documents, guidance documents and templates for small and large purchase and reporting.
- **Scope** – Provides the range of products to which the sustainable specifications is applicable.

- **Specification Language** – The specification language section details the environmental requirements that a solicitation should contain to be deemed a sustainable purchase.
- **Benefits** – Provides environmental and cost benefits of utilizing the sustainable specification.
- **Background Information** – Provides information about key environmental standards, certifications, or best practices used in the sustainable specification. Key terms and references are linkable in the document. End-users can use this to better understand environmental requirements.
- **Environmental Hotspots** – Highlights the most important environmental attributes for a given product category, and explains how chosen specification language mitigates environmental impacts.
- **Significance to the District** – Provides information as applicable on how using the environmental specification helps the District to comply with existing laws, support environmental initiatives, and contribute to existing environmental programs such as the Sustainable DC Initiative or LEED certification.

## Statement of Work Guidance

Statement of Work (SOW) Environmental Specification Guidance provides environmental solicitation language and guidance for all relevant sections of a statement of work for a large purchase. While the SOW Guidance document is most applicable for use with a large purchase, procurement stakeholders should still utilize the document when pursuing a Small Purchase procurement method, as it provides useful context and information about the product or service being purchased.

The SOW Guidance includes environmental solicitation language that is formatted so that it can easily be transferred into an RFP or IFB template. Sections include all relevant sections of a statement of work, including: Background, applicable documents, definitions, environmental requirements, deliverables, Section H requirements (when applicable), and proposal evaluative factors for Request for Proposals (when applicable).

## Section Guidance

A brief “Guidance” box is included for each relevant section of the SOW guidance document. The section guidance provides contextual information about the recommended environmental specification language and how to best utilize the language. When appropriate, points of contact are provided to help guide the user through the process of building the solicitation document. The following exhibits provide two examples of how an end-user might use the SOW Guidance document.

Exhibit 3: Section Guidance in SOW Guidance Document

**Section C Specifications/Work Statement Environmental Guidance ¶**

**C.2 → APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS ¶**

**Guidance ¶**

The following is a list of laws, regulations or other documents that are pertinent to the sustainable specifications detailed in this large purchase environmental guidance document. Please note that each requirement listed in Section C includes reference to the relevant applicable documents. ¶

¶

**Contract Language to Insert into IFB or RFP ¶**

The following documents are applicable to this procurement and are hereby incorporated by this reference. ¶

Item No. □	Document Type □	Title □	Date □
1 □	Legislation □	Procurement Practices Reform Act (Section 2-361.01 Green Procurement) ¶ <a href="http://ocp.dc.gov/publication/procurement-practices-reform-act-2010">http://ocp.dc.gov/publication/procurement-practices-reform-act-2010</a> □	2010 □
2 □	Policy □	OCP EPPS Policy 2000-05 — Pending □	□
3 □	Policy □	Mayoral Order 2009-60 □	2009 □
4 □	Standard □	ASTM D-4236, Standard Practice for Labeling Art Materials for Chronic Health Hazards ¶ <a href="http://www.astm.org/Standards/D4236.htm">http://www.astm.org/Standards/D4236.htm</a> □	2011 □
□	Law □	Labeling of Art Materials Act, Federal Hazardous Substances Act (Sect. 23 [15 U.S.C. §1277]) □	Most Recent □

Section Guidance

## Contract Language to Insert in IFB or RFP

Each relevant section of the statement of work contains contract language formatted so that it can be easily pasted into the statement of work for the procurement being created. Section guidance notes instances where it is recommended that contract language be tailored for particular solicitations.

Exhibit 4: Contract Language to Insert in IFB or RFP

**Section C Specifications/Work Statement Environmental Guidance**

**C.2 - APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS**

**Guidance**

The following is a list of laws, regulations or other documents that are pertinent to the sustainable specifications detailed in this large purchase environmental guidance document. Please note that each requirement listed in Section C includes reference to the relevant applicable documents.

**Contract Language to Insert into IFB or RFP**

The following documents are applicable to this procurement and are hereby incorporated by this reference:

Item No.	Document Type	Title	Date
1	Legislation	Procurement Practices Reform Act (Section 2-361.01 Green Procurement) <a href="http://ocp.dc.gov/publication/procurement-practices-reform-act-2010">http://ocp.dc.gov/publication/procurement-practices-reform-act-2010</a>	2010
2	Policy	OCP EPPS Policy 2000-05 - Pending	
3	Policy	Mayoral Order 2009-60	2009
4	Standard	ASTM D-4236 Standard Practice for Labeling Art Materials for Chronic Health Hazards <a href="http://www.astm.org/Standards/D4236.htm">http://www.astm.org/Standards/D4236.htm</a>	2011
	Law	Labeling of Art Materials Act, Federal Hazardous Substances Act (Sect 23-15 U.S.C. §1277)	Most Recent

Contract Language  
to Insert into RFP  
or IFB



## Request for Quote (RFQ) Template

A Request for Quote (RFQ) template is available for product categories for which there are numerous line-item purchases typically associated with the purchase such as paper, office supplies and cleaning products. The RFQ template is an excel spread sheet that programs or contracting staff can use as a template to track collection of bids from bidders for sustainable products or services.

The template mirrors basic product environmental requirements established in specification guidance for products. The RFQ Template can be revised to meet the needs of your particular procurement. For example, items can be added or deleted based on the needs of the solicitation. When desired, the EPPS requirement can be edited to be more aggressive than what is recommended in the guidance documents. The document can also be used as a support solicitation document when making large purchases, as appropriate.

Exhibit 6: Request for Quote Sample Template -- Small Purchase Attachment

# RFQ Template

Please edit the list below as needed to complete your request for Office Supply products. Sustainable Requirements have been pre-populated for your convenience. Please populate product detail and or SKU numbers when needed.

Item Service Description	Product Detail	Minimum EPP Requirement	SKU	Unit Type	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Calendars (coated)	2014 Desk Calendar	10% PCRC	#41503	Pack	1		
Calendars (non-coated)	2014 Wall Hanging Wall	30% PCRC	#68904				
Corrugated Containers	3 Pack, Packing Boxes, cardboard.	25% PCRC					
Envelopes	3"x5" self-sealing.	30% PCRC					
Facial Tissue		10% PCRC/ 100% TRC					
File folders and pocket folders		10% PCRC					
Napkins		30% PCRC/ 100%TR					
Notebooks, notepads, easelpads		30% PCRC					
Office Paper		30% PCRC; FSC					
Paper towels		40% PCRC					
Post-it notes		30%PCRC					
Report covers (pressboard)		20% PCRC					
Toilet Paper		20% PCRC					
Binders		25% PCRC; no antimicrobial coatings					
Clipboards, clip portfolios		50% PCRC; no antimicrobial coatings					



# **PASS Sustainable Purchasing Features**

The Sustainable Purchasing Program made two notable improvements to the PASS system: 1) The Environmentally Preferable Product and Service (EPPS) Indicator was enhanced to allow for more accurate tracking of sustainable spend, and 2) a “Green Field” was added to the PASS Acquisition Planning Tool to allow users to note forthcoming sustainable procurements. This section includes detailed information on both of these new features.



# Using the EPPS Indicator in PASS

In FY 2015 the PASS “EPP Indicator” was renamed the Environmentally Preferable Product and Service, “EPPS Indicator” and a new set of drop down menus was added to the tracking tool. Accurately tracking Sustainable Purchases is integral to the development of the program, and is required in accordance with the Procurement Practices Reform Act “Green Procurement” section, and the District Environmentally Preferable Policy. **Please note that changes described below will not become active in PASS until the second half of FY2015.**

## Indicating “Yes” in the EPPS Indicator

When using a recommended sustainable specification, users should indicate “Yes” in the EPPS field, and choose the relevant product designation from the EPPS drop down menu. Clicking “Yes” will trigger a drop down menu of available EPPS Product Categories, as well as a category for “Other” if the end user makes an EPPS purchase that falls outside the scope of the current product list. Please note that users may designate spend as EPPS even if only a portion of the contract requests EPPS. This situation may arise when purchasing multiple line items through the same contract, i.e. office supplies, cleaning supplies, or for janitorial or food services.

The screenshot displays the Ariba Spend Management interface for a procurement entry. The 'EPPS (Environmentally Preferable Product or Service)' field is highlighted with a red circle and a callout box stating: 'Indicate “Yes” in the EPPS Indicator if utilizing an EPPS specification.' Below this field, the 'EPPS Category' dropdown menu is open, showing 'EPPS Office Supplies' selected. A callout box points to this menu: 'Choose EPPS Office Supplies from drop down menu and provide appropriate category'. Another callout box points to a link below the category: 'For more information about the EPPS program click here.' The interface also shows other fields like 'Commodity Code' (OFFICE SUPPLIES, GENERAL), 'Supplier' (No Preference), 'Contract Number' (C1038), and 'DC Supply Schedule Requisition' (Yes).

Users should indicate “Yes” or “Other” if any portion of the procurement utilized the Sustainable Purchasing Program EPPS guidance, located on the OCP webpage.

## Indicating “No” in the EPPS Indicator

When a program does not pursue a sustainable product or service, the user should click “No” in the EPPS Field. As stated in the OCP Policy, end users may decide not to utilize a recommended EPPS specification if doing so will cause undue financial burden, reduce performance in a meaningful way, or if pursuing the EPPS option limits availability in the marketplace. Clicking “No” in the EPPS field will trigger a drop down menu that prompts the user to choose one of four valid reasons for not using an EPPS product: 1) Cost 2) Performance 3) Availability/Competition and 4) Not Applicable, meaning no EPPS specification is provided for the product or service.

The screenshot shows the ARIBA Spend Management interface for a procurement requisition. The EPPS (Environmentally Preferable Product or Service) field is highlighted with a red circle around the "No" radio button. A blue callout box points to this field and contains the following text:

If Program opts not to use the EPPS SOW they must indicate reason:

- Cost
- Performance
- Unable to find EPPS
- Not Applicable

The EPPS Category dropdown is set to "Cost" and the EPPS Comments field contains the text: "Market research, the cost of notepads appeared to be 20% more than non-EPPS alternatives."

The user should indicate the reason for opting not to utilize District endorsed guidance, and include comments providing as much explanation for the decision as possible. Whether choosing “Yes” or “No” users should provide as much information as possible in the comments section. The end-user should insert any background information or context deemed necessary to help explain the approach. If procurement staff notices that a Requisition is provided with inadequate justification, they should first consult with the client agency to obtain a justification, and, if none can be obtained, note this in the comments section. Data collected via the EPPS indicator will inform future Sustainable Purchasing Policies and tactics.

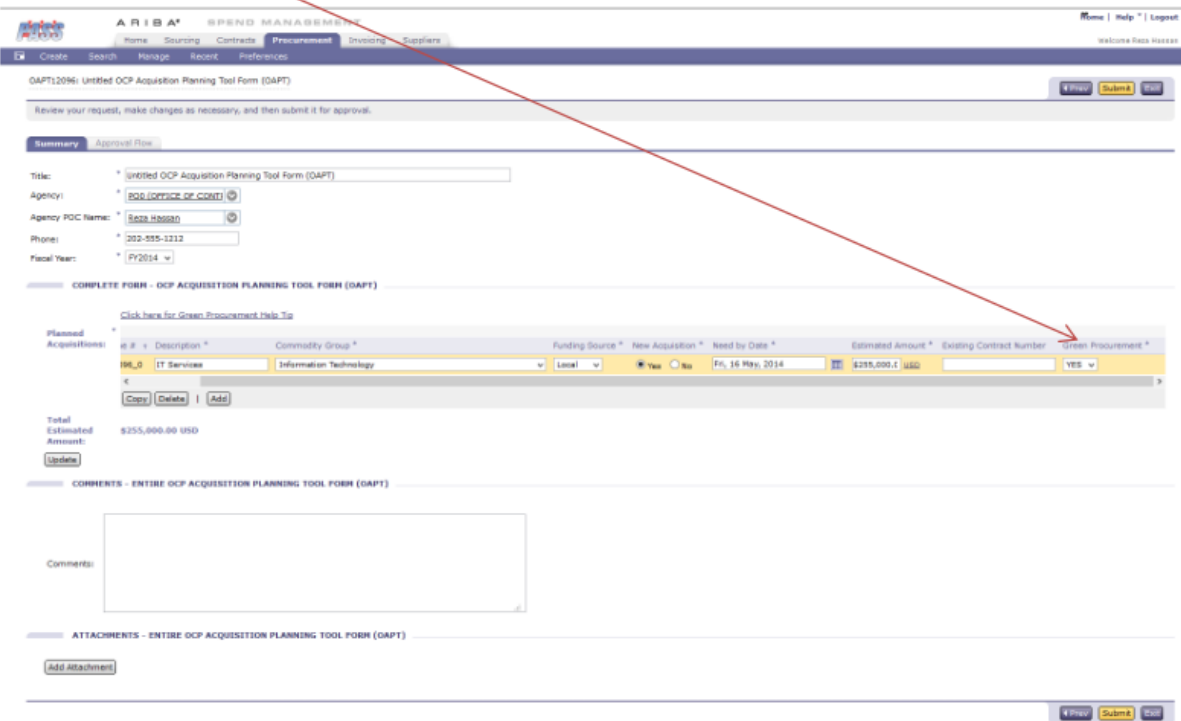
# Using the EPPS Indicator in the Acquisition Planning Tool (OAPT)

The OAPT is a strategic planning tool that collects information from client agencies about planned procurements for the approaching year. Agencies are expected to indicate if a forthcoming purchase will be for a commodity included on the Sustainable Purchasing Program list of products and services. A full list of applicable products and services is available on the OCP webpage or in earlier sections of this User Guide.

Indicating that a product or services falls under one of the products or services with EPPS guidance will not obligate an agency to use the sustainable specification indicated. Agencies are asked to complete this exercise for planning purposes. By gathering information about potentially sustainable solicitations, the Sustainable Purchasing Program will be able to anticipate where training and resource efforts should be focused in the approaching year.

When completing an OAPT form in PASS and the commodity you are purchasing falls on the list of EPPS products indicate “Yes” in the EPPS Indicator. If for any reason you believe a product you are purchasing is EPPS, but it is not located on the EPPS list, you may still indicate “Yes” in the designated drop down menu.

If any of the items included in the table above are to be procured, indicate “Yes” in the Green Procurement Field.



The screenshot displays the OAPT form interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'ARIBA' and 'SPEND MANAGEMENT' logos, and a user profile 'Welcome Ross Hession'. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Sourcing > Contracts > Procurement > Inviting > Suppliers'. The main form title is 'OAPT12096: Untitled OCP Acquisition Planning Tool Form (OAPT)'. A 'Review your request, make changes as necessary, and then submit it for approval.' message is shown. The form is divided into sections: 'Summary', 'Approval Flow', 'COMPLETE FORM - OCP ACQUISITION PLANNING TOOL FORM (OAPT)', 'COMMENTS - ENTIRE OCP ACQUISITION PLANNING TOOL FORM (OAPT)', and 'ATTACHMENTS - ENTIRE OCP ACQUISITION PLANNING TOOL FORM (OAPT)'. The 'COMPLETE FORM' section contains fields for Title, Agency, Agency POC Name, Phone, and Fiscal Year. Below these is a table of 'Planned Acquisitions' with columns for #, Description, Commodity Group, Funding Source, New Acquisition, Issued by Date, Estimated Amount, Existing Contract Number, and Green Procurement. A red arrow points from the text above to the 'Green Procurement' dropdown menu in the first row of the table. The table shows one row with 'IT Services' and 'Information Technology' as the commodity group, and 'YES' selected in the Green Procurement field. Below the table is a 'Total Estimated Amount' of '\$255,000.00 USD' and an 'Update' button. The 'COMMENTS' section has a large text area, and the 'ATTACHMENTS' section has an 'Add Attachment' button.

#	Description	Commodity Group	Funding Source	New Acquisition	Issued by Date	Estimated Amount	Existing Contract Number	Green Procurement
1	IT Services	Information Technology	Local	Yes	Fr, 16 May, 2014	\$255,000.00 USD		YES

# Sustainable Purchasing Training

## Sustainable Purchasing 101

All procurement stakeholders including programmatic managers, statement of work writers, procurement staff, and Contract Administrators must take Sustainable Purchasing 101 training. Training addresses sustainable purchasing requirements, how to use sustainable specification guidance and tools, benefits of using available resources, and the ongoing support services provided by the Sustainable Purchasing team. Sustainable Purchasing 101 training is a prerequisite for taking any of the product focused trainings described. Sustainable Purchasing 101 Training can be provided at the request of any agency, or stakeholders can sign up for trainings by contacting the Sustainable Purchasing Team at [SPPDC@DC.GOV](mailto:SPPDC@DC.GOV). The OCP Sustainable Purchasing Webpage provides access to Sustainable Purchasing 101 training decks and more information about how to sign up for a Sustainable Purchasing 101 session.

## Product & Service Focused Trainings

The Sustainable Purchasing Program offers an in-depth training for the majority of the product and service categories for which EPPS specification guidance is available. Topics covered for each product or service focused training include:

- Specification details, rationale, & benefits
- Cost, performance, & availability
- Search tips for finding products and services that meet EPPS requirements
- Greening beyond the specification – additional guidance for consideration

It is recommended that stakeholders who purchase one of the recommended product or service commodities on a regular basis participate in the focused training sessions. Product & Service Focused Trainings will be held on a rolling basis, or at the request of users, and will typically be held via webinar. Training decks for product focused trainings are available on the OCP Sustainable Purchasing webpage under sustainable specifications.

For more information about the Sustainable Purchasing Program, or if an Agency encounters any solicitation for which guidance is not clear, please reach out to the Sustainable Purchasing Program at [SPPDC@dc.gov](mailto:SPPDC@dc.gov), or call Jonathan Rifkin, Sustainable Purchasing Program Manager at 202-724-3676, or call the OCP Customer Contact Center at 202-724-4477.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is an environmentally preferable product or service?**

An environmentally preferable product or service (EPPS) is a product or service that has a lesser or reduced impact on human health and the environment when compared to competing products or services. An EPPS considers environmental factors such as recycled content, toxicity, energy or water consumption, waste, air emissions, and end of life disposal, as appropriate to a given product or service. This is the definition utilized in [Mayoral Order 2009-60](#), [D.C. Official Code Section 2-361.01](#), and [OCP Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy 7000.00](#).

### **What is sustainable purchasing and how does it differ from environmentally preferable purchasing?**

For the purposes of the Sustainable Purchasing Program “Sustainable Purchasing” and “Environmentally Preferable Purchasing” are synonymous terms. However, when using terms in a technical context, environmentally preferable purchasing is an activity that focuses primarily on environmental impacts, whereas sustainable purchasing encompasses how purchases impact the environment, economy, and people today and in future generations. All environmental issues fit within the rubric of sustainability.

### **Is using sustainable specification guidance required by law or policy?**

Three directives require District employees to procure environmentally preferable goods and services to the “maximum extent practical.” These laws include: section [2-361.01](#) of the District Code, Procurement Practices Reform Act of 2010 (PPRA); [Mayoral Order 2009-60](#); and [OCP Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy 7000.00](#). According to [OCP Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy 7000.00](#), utilizing EPPS specifications found in the guidance is sufficient to meet environmentally preferable purchasing requirements detailed in [2-361.01](#) of the District Code, Procurement Practices Reform Act of 2010 (PPRA). The policy also states that contracting staff shall utilize tools and resources and procedures outlined in the Sustainable Purchasing User Guide to support the use of EPPS specifications to the maximum extent practical.

### **I work for an agency that is not under OCP’s procurement authority? Is my agency required to use sustainable specification guidance?**

Section [2-361.01](#) of the District Code, Procurement Practices Reform Act of 2010 (PPRA); [Mayoral Order 2009-60](#) which require the District to procure environmentally preferable goods and services to the maximum extent practical, applies to all agencies. Sustainable specification documents may still be utilized by independent agencies to meet the requirement of these directives or may choose to use alternative approaches to meet the requirements of these directives.**How do I receive education on sustainable purchasing?**

All procurement stakeholders should sign up to take “Sustainable Purchasing 101” education. To sign up for a course please contact the Sustainable Purchasing Program, Program Manager,

Jonathan Rifkin. Additionally, Product Focused Trainings are expected to be offered for those who wish to learn about a specific product category in the second half of FY2016. To sign up for trainings please e-mail [jonathan.rifkin@dc.gov](mailto:jonathan.rifkin@dc.gov), or follow steps outlined on the OCP Sustainable Purchasing webpage.

**Who do I call if I need help understanding guidance documents or developing an EPPS solicitation?**

The Sustainable Purchasing Team, led by the Sustainable Purchasing Program Manager, Jonathan Rifkin, is available to answer any questions you may have about the program. He can be reached by e-mail at [jonathan.rifkin@dc.gov](mailto:jonathan.rifkin@dc.gov). You may also email the Sustainable Purchasing Program at [sppdc@dc.gov](mailto:sppdc@dc.gov), [call the OCP Customer Contact Center at: 202.724.4477](tel:202.724.4477), or visit: <http://ocp.dc.gov/page/sustainable-purchasing>.

**If some of the products included in the solicitation meet EPPS requirements and others do not, what should I do?**

For products like office or cleaning supplies where the solicitations contain a number of individual products, it is likely some products being required will be sustainable and others will not. In such instances, it is recommended that the user split the requirements section into two parts including sustainable products, and a second with sustainable language included. When categorizing a requisition, solicitation or contract award in PASS, if one or more products being procured by the agency is an EPPS product, please select “Yes” using the EPPS indicator in PASS and make a note in the comments that provides as much information as possible about the nature of the procurement.

**What if my agency would like to use an environmental requirement that differs from requirements indicated in the specification language? Should I still indicate ‘Yes’ using the EPPS indicator in PASS?**

The Sustainable Purchasing Program encourages District agencies to pursue specification requirements that are equal to or more aggressive than District guidance. For example, while the paper specification recommends 30% post-consumer recycled content, agencies can specify higher levels of recycled content if this meets their agency’s goals. In this case, please indicate ‘yes’ in the EPPS indicator in PASS.

In other instances, an agency may be considering using an environmental specification requirement that is not included in the specification guidance because it was not deemed to meet the District’s sustainability, cost, performance, or availability needs. To inquire about a requirement you would like to include that is not in the guidance, please contact the Sustainable Purchasing Program Manager, Jonathan Rifkin at [jonathan.rifkin@dc.gov](mailto:jonathan.rifkin@dc.gov). If you use an alternative specification and do not contact the Sustainable Purchasing Program Manager in advance, please indicate ‘No’ in the EPPS indicator in PASS, select ‘Performance’ as the reason the specification was not used, and provide detail on the alternative specification used and a contact with which to follow-up in the comments field.

**My agency is really into sustainability! We want to be a sustainable purchasing leader in the District! How can we take it up a notch?**

Whoa! I love your enthusiasm! I'm glad you asked. The Sustainable Purchasing Program offers product-focused trainings for those who would like to learn more about how to use resources for a specific product or service. These trainings each include a section called, "Beyond the Specification." Here we will teach you ways to make your specification more aggressive. The slides for each product specification will be added to the sustainable specification web page for each product type as they become available.

**I would like to develop an EPPS solicitation for a product category for which sustainable guidance is not available, what should I do?**

Great! Please contact the Sustainable Purchasing Team, Program Manager, Jonathan Rifkin at [jonathan.rifkin@dc.gov](mailto:jonathan.rifkin@dc.gov). The Sustainable Purchasing Program will continue to develop guidance for new product categories on a rolling basis. We also are available to assist in developing solicitations for new EPPS categories as time allows. Please also notify us if your agency has developed an EPPS solicitation for a new product category as we'd welcome the opportunity to build upon your work and share it with other agencies. Please contact us to discuss how we can work together.

**I have a suggested improvement for guidance for a specification. What should I do?**

Please contact the Sustainable Purchasing Program Manager at [jonathan.rifkin@dc.gov](mailto:jonathan.rifkin@dc.gov).

**I am a contracting professional and my program has developed a statement of work for a product category for which EPPS guidance is available yet it does not appear that EPPS requirements are included in the statement of work or attachments. What should I do?**

In accordance with [OCP Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy 7000.00](#), if a program submits a requisition that falls under the scope of one of the established EPPS product categories, and it is clear that sustainability was not considered in their market research, as appropriate: contracting staff should 1) Explain that agencies are required to either incorporate EPPS specifications into statements of work for products where guidance is available or indicate that they were not included because of issues related to cost, performance, or availability. You may also want to refer them to the Sustainable Purchasing Program website, recommend enrollment in the next Sustainable Purchasing 101 Training, or call the Sustainable Purchasing Team.

**Which products and services does the District maintain sustainable guidance for?**

The SPP maintains in-depth resources and guidance for 14 product categories, encompassing more than 100 unique products. The 14 product categories are outlined on the [Sustainable Specifications](#) section of the SPP webpage.

**How were the sustainable product categories chosen?**

The District chose its current list of 14 product categories based on a prioritization exercise that considered District spend, legal precedence, alignment with Sustainable DC goals and priorities, availability of sustainable alternatives, cost effectiveness, and ease of implementation. A memo explaining the prioritization methodology along with a matrix that ranks sustainable product categories is included in [Attachment C of the Fiscal Year 13 Sustainable Purchasing Report](#). New product categories will be added on a rolling basis.

### **How were sustainable specifications developed?**

Sustainable specifications were developed with a heavy emphasis on stakeholder input. For a given product category the SPP conducted in-depth interviews with vendors and manufacturers, focus groups with DC program managers that use the product or service, and a review of sustainable specification language that other jurisdictions were already utilizing. The specs only include language for products and services that research suggests will be readily available, will meet the needs of a program, and are reasonably priced.

### **Is there a specific price percentage premium that I need to be aware of that indicates whether I need to purchase, or not purchase, a sustainable product?**

No. The Sustainable Purchasing Program does not establish a finite price premium percentage that informs the decision to purchase, or not purchase, a sustainable product. Rather, we rely on the judgment and good faith effort of our procurement teams to make this decision. Choosing a specific price premium percentage would have been exceedingly difficult to implement, and would have created unacceptable strain on our resources. Instead, the Sustainable Purchasing Program conducted basic price analysis on all relevant products as each specification was developed. If a sustainable product seemed prohibitively expensive, had questionable performance issues, or were not readily available in the marketplace, you will not find it in the specification.

### **Don't sustainable products cost more than normal products?**

It depends. There is a common misconception that all sustainable products will cost more than their counter parts but this is not true. Some products do cost more. There are also many products that are relatively similar in price, and a host of other products that are actually cheaper, especially when considering products that save energy over the course of their life. The background and benefits section of the specification guidance documents for each product category and product-focused trainings provide more information on the relative costs of sustainable products compared to conventional ones for each EPPS product category.

### **I am a vendor, how can I find sustainable solicitations? Can I register to be a vendor of sustainable products?**

The District does not maintain a unique certification for Sustainable Vendors, nor does it maintain a list of sustainable solicitation opportunities. Rather, the goal of the Sustainable Purchasing Program is to provide District agencies with sustainable specification language that can be included in market research. Vendors are encouraged to review sustainable specification



language available on the OCP webpage, and take steps to ensure such requirements can be met if a District agency includes sustainable requirements in future solicitations.

**I am a vendor and I believe one of the sustainable specifications can be improved. Who should I contact?**

If you have recommended revisions for an existing specification, please email your recommendation to [sppdc@dc.gov](mailto:sppdc@dc.gov). The Sustainable Purchasing Program plans will periodically review and update existing specification language. We will consider your recommendations during scheduled review. Please also register to receive ongoing updates about the Sustainable Purchasing Program on the "[Contact Us](#)" section of the webpage.

**Where do I find resources about the District's Sustainable Purchasing Program?**

The [Sustainable Purchasing Program webpage](#) is available on the OCP internet and Intranet page. The program webpage is located under the "Opportunities and Support" section of the Internet at [www.ocp.dc.gov](http://www.ocp.dc.gov), and under the "Sustainable Purchasing" link on the OCP Intranet page at [www.ocp.in.dc.gov](http://www.ocp.in.dc.gov). The webpage will provide information about the program, sustainable specifications and relevant guidance and resources for 14 relevant product categories, implementation guidance, and contact information.