

Sustainable Procurement Action Plan for Northern Ireland

1. Introduction

Sustainable development must embrace and integrate economic, social and environmental issues (including biodiversity) in a way that is balanced and takes account of the wider sustainability issues. Moving to a sustainable economy will help to drive the social progress which reduces deprivation and inequalities, minimise demand for natural resources and protect the environment.

Equality of opportunity and sustainable development are integral to government policy as a whole and are cross-cutting themes for all subsidiary policy and practice. Key drivers for integrating these goals into public procurement include the Government's strategic priorities and the public sector's legal obligations.

The Programme for Government 2008 – 2011 sets out two cross-cutting themes which will underpin the approach to delivering the Executive's priorities. These are:

- A shared and better future for all: equality, fairness, inclusion and the promotion of good relations
- Sustainability: building a future that is sustainable – economically, socially and environmentally - will be a key requirement for all policies and programmes.

These cross-cutting themes are embedded in the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008 – 2018 which has economic, societal and environmental objectives. These objectives “can be mutually reinforcing, helping to ensure that development is sustainable.” The Strategy sets out the framework for creating a sustainable 21st century infrastructure delivering around £6bn of infrastructure in the next three years and approaching £20bn in the next 10 years.

Given how much public money is spent through procurement, and the range of infrastructure, services and goods covered by this spending, it carries enormous potential to achieve equality of opportunity and sustainable development.

The Programme for Government and Investment Strategy reinforce the importance of achieving these outcomes. They also provide the high-level context in which procuring authorities can identify the specific equality and sustainability goals to achieve from each procurement.

Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy

The Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy – “First Steps towards Sustainability” launched in May 2006 sets out the principles which must underpin all our decision-making processes in order to ensure that we can achieve our objectives of a healthy environment, a thriving economy, prosperity and quality of life for all.

Implementation of the Strategy is focused on six priority areas with specific targets and actions attributed to Government Departments. The priority areas are:

- *Climate Change and Energy*
- *Sustainable Consumption and Production*
- *Natural Resource Protection/Environmental Enhancement*
- *Sustainable Communities*
- *Governance for Sustainable Development*
- *Learning and Communication*

Successful implementation requires the integration of sustainable development into the core business of Departments and public procurement is seen as a catalyst for this integration through satisfying, to a greater or lesser extent, the twelve underlying principles of procurement policy. (*see para 2*)

Sustainable Procurement Action Plan for Northern Ireland

The Sustainable Procurement Action Plan for Northern Ireland presents a number of overarching actions which will assist in the delivery of the Programme for Government commitment to support the wider Public Sector in taking account of sustainable development principles when procuring works, supplies and services. Underpinning this plan will be the requirement for Centres of Procurement Expertise to produce their own Sustainable Procurement Action Plans by December 2008.

2. Procurement Policy and Legislative Framework

Northern Ireland Procurement Policy

The Executive's policy is that all public procurement should be based on best value for money, having due regard to propriety and regularity. Best value for money is defined as the "optimum combination of whole life cost and quality (fitness for purpose) to meet the customer's requirement"¹. While "best value for money" is the primary objective of procurement policy, this definition allows for the inclusion, as appropriate, of social, economic and environmental goals within the procurement process.

Principles governing procurement

Twelve principles govern public procurement. These are :

- i. **Accountability:** effective mechanisms must be in place in order to enable Departmental Accounting Officers and their equivalents in other public bodies to discharge their personal responsibility on issues of procurement risk and expenditure.
- ii. **Competitive Supply:** procurement should be carried out by competition unless there are convincing reasons to the contrary.
- iii. **Consistency:** suppliers should, all other things being equal, be able to expect the same general procurement policy across the public sector.
- iv. **Effectiveness:** public bodies should meet the commercial, regulatory and socio-economic goals of government in a balanced manner appropriate to the procurement requirement.
- v. **Efficiency:** procurement processes should be carried out as cost effectively as possible.

¹ NI Public Procurement Policy online at <http://www.cpdni.gov.uk/>

- vi. **Fair-dealing:** suppliers should be treated fairly and without unfair discrimination, including protection of commercial confidentiality where required. Public bodies should not impose unnecessary burdens or constraints on suppliers or potential suppliers.
- vii. **Integration:** in line with the Executive's policy on joined-up government, procurement policy should pay due regard to the Executive's other economic and social policies, rather than cut across them.
- viii. **Integrity:** there should be no corruption or collusion with suppliers or others.
- ix. **Informed decision-making:** public bodies need to base decisions on accurate information and to monitor requirements to ensure that they are being met.
- x. **Legality:** public bodies must conform to European Community and other legal requirements.
- xi. **Responsiveness:** public bodies should endeavour to meet the aspirations, expectations and needs of the community served by the procurement.
- xii. **Transparency:** public bodies should ensure that there is openness and clarity on procurement policy and its delivery.

The Procurement Legislative Framework

The EU Procurement Directives set out the legal framework, detailed procedures and criteria for specification, selection and award of contracts above certain thresholds. Even below these thresholds, the EC Treaty-based principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment, transparency, mutual recognition and proportionality apply. The Directives have been implemented into UK law by Statutory Instrument².

In its Interpretative Communication of 4 July 2001³, the European Commission sets out the possibilities offered by Community law to integrate environmental considerations into public procurement procedures. The European Commission has also clarified how Community law offers numerous possibilities to public purchasers who wish to integrate social considerations into public procurement procedures in its Interpretative Communication of 15 October 2001⁴. The Court of Justice has further clarified those possibilities. The public procurement directives adopted on 31 March 2004 consolidate and complement the legal context. They specifically mention in their recitals and provisions the possibilities for adopting social and environmental considerations in technical specifications, selection and award criteria, and contract performance clauses.

The European Commission has also produced a handbook on environmental public procurement to help public authorities. It explains the possibilities offered by European Community law in a practical way, and looks at simple and effective solutions that can be used in public procurement⁵.

² S.I.2006/5 (Public Contracts) and S.I. 2006/6 (Utilities Contracts)

³ Commission of the European Communities, 2001, '*Commission Interpretive Communication: on community law applicable to public procurement and the possibilities for integrating environmental considerations into public procurement*', Brussels, online at <http://www.bipsolutions.com/pdf/com274en.pdf>

⁴ Commission of the European Communities, 2001, '*Commission Interpretive Communication: on community law applicable to public procurement and the possibilities for integrating social considerations into public procurement*', Brussels, online at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52001DC0566:EN:NOT>

⁵ Commission of the European Communities, 2004, '*Buying Green!*' – *A handbook on environmental public procurement*, Brussels, online at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/buying_green_handbook_en.pdf

Northern Ireland Statutory Duties

In addition to working within the framework set down by the European Union and the Public Procurement Regulations which apply to public and utilities contracts the Northern Ireland Public Sector must also ensure adherence to two statutory duties in relation to sustainable development and the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

In relation to sustainable development Section 25 of the NI (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 places a statutory duty on Northern Ireland government departments and district councils to ensure that the principles of sustainable development underpin all decisions and actions. The legislation also requires that local authorities have regard to guidance issued by Northern Ireland Departments. In due course, consideration will also be given to what other bodies should be designated.

As regards equality, public authorities in Northern Ireland, which have been designated under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (s.75), are required to make equality and good relations considerations central to their policy making and to prepare an equality scheme to show how it will promote equality of opportunity in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland.

All public procurement exercises must be carried out within this legal and policy framework. When seeking to advance sustainable development aims through procurement, contracting authorities must ensure that they achieve best value for money and act consistently within the law relating to public procurement. The main drive of best value for money is free and open competition. Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) has published specific guidance to help public procurers take forward economic, environmental and social issues in their procurement practice within this domestic policy and legal framework⁶.

⁶ Central Procurement Directorate guidance, online at <http://www.cpdni.gov.uk/>

3. The Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy

The NI Sustainable Development Strategy – “First Steps Towards Sustainability” sets out Northern Ireland’s response to the challenges of securing a better future for the present generation and protecting the future for generations to come.

One of the objectives of the Strategy is “to make the Northern Ireland Public Sector a UK regional leader in sustainable procurement”. The Strategy also identifies three key targets to take this objective forward. These are:

- By 2008 ensure that all public sector procurement is channelled through recognised Centres of Procurement Expertise (COPE’s)⁷;
- By 2008 ensure that Sustainable Development principles guide capital investment decisions on all major publicly funded building and infrastructure projects; and
- By 2008 produce a Sustainable Procurement Action Plan for Northern Ireland.

Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) has been tasked with the delivery of a Sustainable Procurement Action Plan for Northern Ireland by 31 March 2008 including the consideration of how the recommendations of the UK Sustainable Procurement Taskforce⁸ can be applied to Northern Ireland with particular reference to access for Small Medium and Social Economy Enterprises.

The UK Task Force was established in May 2005 under the Chairmanship of Sir Neville Simms and presented its report to the Prime Minister in June 2006. The Task Force identified six key areas for Government to address with the need for better scrutiny in each area and challenged Government to maximise the potential of the whole of the public sector's procurement expenditure. These key areas are as follows; stronger leadership, clearer priorities, better standards, improved capacity, better market

⁷ Details of CoPEs are set out at Annex B

⁸ DEFRA, “Procuring the Future” – The Sustainable Procurement Task Force National Action Plan, online at <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/procurement-action-plan/index.htm>

engagement, enhanced scrutiny and the removal of barriers which are an impediment to progress. Government has agreed with the broad thrust of the Task Force conclusions.

The importance of producing a sustainable procurement action plan was further underlined by the publication of the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change⁹ which clearly amplifies the need for public investment decisions to reflect fully the costs, avoided costs and future risks of climate change. The review sets out the scale of the challenge represented by climate change, demonstrating that the global costs of inaction would far exceed the cost of tackling climate change, and that coordinated international action is the only way to address the issue. Policy decisions within the public sector will need to take the findings of the review into account and ensure any implications for procurement policy are properly considered.

In producing this action plan CPD will also contribute to the achievement of the other two key targets underpinning the objective to make Northern Ireland a UK regional leader in sustainable procurement. Implementation of this Action Plan will also progress other important steps set out in the Strategy supporting the transformation of Northern Ireland into a UK regional leader in sustainable procurement. These are;

- i. developing training and guidance on sustainable procurement for all public sector purchasing officers;
- ii. embedding whole life costing into procurement decisions and policy;
- iii. underpinning the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland with excellence in construction programmes that integrate sustainable development principles;
- iv. ensuring that public sector housing and public properties are constructed or refurbished to maximise sustainability and flexibility of use; and
- v. promoting market transformation and the work of WRAP

⁹ HM Treasury, October 2006, 'Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change', online at www.sternreview.org.uk

4. The Challenge

The Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy sets Departments the challenge - to pursue sustainable development objectives through purchasing and expenditure decisions and make Northern Ireland a regional leader in sustainable procurement.

The Northern Ireland Sustainable Procurement Action Plan in the form of a Balanced Scorecard sets out the objectives, measures, targets and actions to enable Departments to meet this challenge. Annex A of The Plan identifies 4 (of the 6) priorities set out in The Sustainable Development Strategy to which procurement can make a significant contribution. These are:

- Sustainable Consumption and Production
- Natural Resource Protection / Environmental Enhancement
- Sustainable Communities
- Climate Change and Energy

It is recognised that District Councils operate under a different and separate framework of accountability and under existing legislation, compliance with public procurement policy could only be on a voluntary basis. However like Departments, District Councils have a statutory duty to ensure that the principles of sustainable development underpin all decisions and actions and may wish to adopt the Sustainable Procurement Action Plan in discharging the statutory duty.

The successful delivery of the targets contained in this action plan will require a joined up approach from Departments, Centres of Procurement Expertise and suppliers alike. In particular the following challenges will be faced;

- Departments must ensure that policy makers take full account of the need to consider the integration of social, economic and environmental policies and priorities into spending decisions;
- Centres of Procurement Expertise and procurement professionals must ensure that they provide best practice advice and guidance on the development of innovative procurement solutions which facilitate the integration of these policies and priorities; and
- Suppliers must rise to the challenge of meeting the needs of the Northern Ireland Public Sector for procurement solutions that integrate sustainable development considerations including presenting innovative options.

It is within this context that the Northern Ireland Sustainable Procurement Action Plan has been drawn up.

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT ACTION PLAN

for the

NORTHERN IRELAND PUBLIC SECTOR

2008 – 2011

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT ACTION PLAN

KEY AREAS AND OBJECTIVES

PRIORITIES	PROCESS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To maintain a Sustainable Procurement Framework that reflects sustainable development strategic priorities. 2. To support the public sector in implementing procurement policy by producing and promulgating advice and guidance on the integration of sustainable development considerations within the public procurement process. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To integrate sustainable development strategic priorities within the public procurement process where appropriate. 6. To underpin improvements to Public Sector infrastructure and social housing with excellence in construction programmes that incorporate sustainable development principles. 7. To set clear and measurable targets on sustainable procurement for the Government Estate.
CONTRACTORS	PRACTITIONERS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To engage with key markets to secure capacity within the marketplace to deliver sustainable development priorities. 4. To increase access to public sector procurement opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Social Economy Enterprises (SEEs) through the public tender process or participation in supply chains. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. To make sustainable procurement an integral part of public sector procurement in Northern Ireland. 9. To provide professional training and development that helps to embed sustainable procurement principles within Northern Ireland Public Sector procurement processes.

PRIORITIES				
OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
1. To maintain a Framework (see Annex A) that reflects sustainable development strategic priorities	An up-to-date Framework.	To maintain a Framework (See Annex A) that enables the delivery of strategic sustainable development priorities over the period of the plan.	Framework to be updated as necessary to reflect agreed priorities for the period up to 2011.	Depts / CPD
		COPEs to develop and agree individual sustainable procurement action plans by 31 December 2008 to deliver the Framework for the period up to 2011.	[By 31 December 2008] CoPEs to produce individual action plans in line with the Framework and this Action Plan and revise these plans to reflect changes to the framework.	COPEs
2. To support the public sector in implementing procurement policy by producing and promulgating advice and guidance on the integration of sustainable development considerations within the public procurement process.	Sustainable procurement policy advice and guidance.	To produce and promulgate advice and guidance over the period of the plan – April 2008 – March 2011.	Promulgate guidance on the Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Sector Procurement, once approved	Departments
			Draft and disseminate further policy advice and models on integration into public sector procurement.	CPD
			As an ongoing programme of work, develop and disseminate a suite of best practice guidance, including examples of best practice, in integrating sustainable development considerations in the procurement process, with supporting case studies, to be identified and collated and published by CPD.	CPD with input from Depts & CoPEs

CONTRACTORS

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY		
3. To engage with key markets to secure capacity within the marketplace to deliver sustainable development priorities.	Sufficient capacity within the marketplace to deliver the Framework.	To develop awareness and commence implementation of a supplier development programme by April 2009.	Undertake key contractor spend analysis and identify high sustainability impact contractors.	CoPEs		
			Develop supplier awareness on sustainability issues through a programme of early and continuous engagement on procurements and through sharing best practice.	CoPEs		
			Encourage the phasing out of products and services that fall below environmental standards of good practice.	CoPEs		
	Public Sector acting as a driver for innovation, creativity and design.	To encourage the use of innovation to meet the needs of public sector bodies throughout the period of the Plan – April 2008 – March 2011.	Produce and disseminate guidance on procuring innovative solutions and promote the use of innovative solutions through working with Departments to ensure contracts allow for innovative tendering.	CPD/CoPEs		
				To encourage implementation of architectural policy “Architecture and the Built Environment” throughout the period of the Plan 2008 – 2011	Promote quality of design construction and performance of publicly funded development.	DCAL/ CPD/CoPEs

CONTRACTORS

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
4. To increase access to public sector procurement opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Social Economy Enterprises (SEEs) through the public tender process or participation in supply chains	Public Procurement opportunities freely available to SMEs and SEEs.	To have appropriate systems in place by 30/09/08 to allow access by SMEs and SEEs to opportunities for doing business with public sector organisations.	Develop and operate effective systems to provide accessible procurement opportunities within the Northern Ireland Public Sector for all potential suppliers.	CPD/CoPEs
			Contracts to require main contractors to publish opportunities for sub contracting.	

PROCESS				
OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
5. To integrate sustainable development strategic priorities within the public procurement process where appropriate.	Sustainable development priorities integrated within public procurement processes.	By 1 October 2008 all public procurement exercises to include consideration of integrating sustainable development , and all public contracts that exceed the EU thresholds awarded after 1 October 2008, where appropriate, to develop a strategy to include relevant social, economic or environmental outcomes.	Disseminate guidance and develop best practice on integrating sustainable development considerations into all procurements, including at specification stage and conditions of contracts, where appropriate.	CPD
			The weighting to be given to sustainability within contract evaluations to be considered on a case by case basis and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract.	Depts/CoPEs
			Adopt the Gateway review process to ensure sustainability issues are appropriately incorporated.	Depts/CoPEs
			Analyse annual procurement spend data and identify key areas for delivering positive sustainability impacts.	CPD/CoPEs
			Departments to consider sustainable development outcomes when developing business cases, including whole life costing, where appropriate.	Depts

PROCESS				
OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
		Increase the use of the OGC/DEFRA schedule of environmentally friendly products ("Quick Wins") during 2008-2009 to 100% usage of the schedule by March 2009	Keep Quick Wins schedule up to date and publish on the CPD website. Use schedule to identify products and specifications.	CPD
			Quick Wins to be considered at the early stage of the procurement process.	Depts/CPD/CoPES
		A minimum of 95% of the value of procurement spend should be subject to the influence of a Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs), and where this minimum is not met Departments, their agencies and NDPBs must seek to reduce non-CoPE spend by 25% year on year over the period of the Plan.	Departments, Agencies, NDPBs and Public Corporations to agree SLAs with CPD or relevant CoPE to carry out their procurement activities.	Depts, CPD & CoPEs
			DFP to review progress at six months intervals and report to the Procurement Board annually.	CPD
		Monitor and review progress on the Action Plan	Report progress against the Action Plan twice yearly to the Procurement Board	CPD

PROCESS				
OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
6. To underpin improvements to Public Sector infrastructure and social housing with excellence in construction programmes that incorporate sustainable development principles.	Achieving Excellence Initiative operating fully in all construction related projects.	By Dec 2008 Capital investment decisions on all major buildings and infrastructure projects which are publicly funded or to be leased should be guided by sustainable development principles.	Develop and maintain the Policy Framework for Construction Procurement throughout the period of the plan 2008 - 2011	CPD
			Provide advice to Government Construction Clients on sustainable development principles relating to construction procurement consistent with the Policy Framework for Construction Procurement.	CPD/CoPEs
			All major construction procurements over the EU threshold to include sustainable development considerations and the requirements of the Policy Framework for Construction Procurement.	Government Construction Clients/SIB

PROCESS				
OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
7. To set clear and measurable targets on sustainable procurement for the Government Estate.	Sustainable development priorities integrated within public procurement processes.	CoPEs to provide contracts that support the Procurement Board's agreed decision that Departments and their Agencies and NDPBs should only use paper with at least 70% recycled content, with 100% recycled content being preferred, and that all future contracts for office paper include a range of recycled options.	Centres of Procurement Expertise to develop, agree and promote a procurement strategy to ensure that recycled office paper options are available to public sector bodies.	CPD/PPG S&S Sub-Group
		Reduce water consumption on the Government Estate by 3% by the end of 2011/12 based on establishing 2008/09 baseline data. By March 09 develop and agree strategy that will result in a reduction in water consumption of 3% by 2012;	Establish baseline consumption figures; Source drinking water from a mains supply rather than use bottled water dispensers.	DFP Properties Division / Government Construction Clients

		<p>Make the Government Estate carbon neutral by 2015.</p> <p>Procure and lease buildings in the top quartile of energy performance throughout the period of this plan (2008-11)</p>	<p>Produce a definition of Carbon Neutrality with respect to procurement and operation of the Government estate.</p> <p>Include appropriate measures in all construction, procurement contracts (including Workplace 2010 and lease Agreements) to ensure buildings are in the top quartile range of energy performance and include requirements as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction:- New build and major refurbishments procurements incorporate sustainable design principals (including low carbon design measures) Giving consideration to pricing carbon in life cycle analysis to minimise the carbon footprint; - Services:- contracts on all properties within the Government Estate to have carbon reduction and energy waste management targets together with appropriate energy monitoring and reporting procedures; - Electricity:- source at least 10% of electricity requirements from renewable sources - Maintenance:- ensure planned maintenance and Life Cycle Replacement (LCR) regimes specify energy efficient systems & equipment to ensure consistency with the requirement to reduce energy consumption 	<p>DFP Properties Division</p> <p>Government Construction Clients</p> <p>DFP Properties Division</p>
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PRACTITIONERS				
OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
8. To make sustainable procurement an integral part of public sector procurement in Northern Ireland.	Sustainable Procurement Advisers in all CoPEs.	By June 2008 Sustainable Procurement Advisers to be identified and established in all CoPEs.	All CoPEs to identify, appoint and train a procurement practitioner as a Sustainable Procurement Adviser.	CoPEs
	Provision of advice and guidance to the NI Public Procurement Community on sustainable procurement.	Guidance and information to help develop sustainable procurement practices to be easily accessible to procurement staff throughout the period of the Plan.	Sustainable Procurement website to be maintained, further developed and utilised to share best practice and case studies amongst public sector procurement community.	CPD
9. To provide professional training and development that helps to embed sustainable procurement principles within the Northern Ireland Public Sector procurement processes.	Procurement practitioners trained in sustainable procurement.	By 31 March 2009 all procurement staff to have received basic training to level 2 / 3 in sustainable procurement.	Identify suitable training providers. Develop & provide basic training to all procurement staff.	CPD CPD / CoPEs
		By 31 March 2010 Sustainable Procurement Advisers to have received in depth training to level 4 in sustainable procurement	Include sustainable procurement as part of the induction programme for new entrants to procurement organisations. Develop & provide in-depth training to Sustainable Procurement Advisers.	CPD / CoPEs CPD / CoPEs

PRACTITIONERS

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES	TARGET	ACTIONS	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
	Sustainable Procurement as a recognised Procurement Competence.	By April 2009 introduce a professional competence to recognise Sustainable Procurement in the Career Path Framework.	Draft the competency requirements for Sustainable Procurement and seek approval for their inclusion as a stand alone competence within Annex 3 of the Career Path Framework	CPD

Northern Ireland Sustainable Procurement Action Plan

Framework

This Framework sets out definitions of Sustainable Development and Sustainable Procurement and identifies Sustainable Procurement priorities :

Sustainable Development

“Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs¹⁰”

In principle this involves safeguarding and using existing resources in a sustainable way to enhance the long-term management of, and investment in, human, social and environmental resources.

Sustainable development is itself sustained within a given society by the skills, knowledge, innovation and creativity of its citizens, while the protection of natural resources and the safeguarding of health are essential to the development and prosperity of every society.

A truly sustainable society must operate within a policy framework which supports social and environmental justice in every country, between countries and between generations.

Sustainable Procurement

“A process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of the effect not only on the organisation, but also on society, the economy and the environment.”

¹⁰ Our Common Future (The Brundtland Report) – Report of the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development.

Sustainable Procurement Priorities

The following priority areas have been identified as those where sustainable procurement by the public sector could make a significant contribution to sustainable development.

- ***Sustainable Consumption and Production***

Sustainable consumption and production is about improving resource efficiency and achieving more with less, which means not only looking at how goods and services are provided but also the impacts of products and materials across their whole lifecycle, building on people's awareness of social and environmental concerns.

Specific areas:-

Becoming more resource efficient i.e. promoting materials recovery, re-use and recycling through initiatives such as WRAP.

Making NI a regional leader in sustainable procurement.

Optimise the flexibility of retained and refurbished public buildings.

- ***Natural Resource Protection/Environmental Enhancement***

Natural resources are vital to our existence and that of communities throughout the world. We need a better understanding of environmental limits, environmental enhancement and recovery where the environment is most degraded to ensure a decent environment for everyone, and greater integration in policy development.

Specific areas:-

Facilitating the introduction of a Sustainable Urban Drainage policy for new build.

Minimise the number of properties at risk from flooding.

Maintain public historic buildings to secure protection and sustainable reuse.

Ensure protection and conservation of at risk historic buildings and monuments.

Protect, enhance and reduce loss of biodiversity.

- ***Sustainable Communities***

Sustainable communities will embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level. This will involve working to give communities more power and say in the decisions that affect them. Working in partnership at the local level to provide cleaner, greener, safer, thriving and well-connected communities where people want to live and work.

Specific areas:-

Increase the social and economic well being of the people of NI.

Increase the skills base of the workforce.

Increase investment in R & D and promote innovation.

Promote support for enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Encourage SMEs and SEEs to pursue public sector business.

Improve public sector infrastructure and social housing.

- ***Climate Change and Energy***

The effects of climate change can already be seen. We are experiencing more frequent incidences of severe weather, temperatures and sea levels are rising, ice and snow cover is declining all with potentially catastrophic consequences for the natural world and society.

Specific areas:-

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Promote energy efficiency and the use of renewables.

Support the development of renewable and alternative sustainable energy technologies.

Public sector procurers will define their requirements and choose solutions and providers that assist them to achieve progress towards the published sustainable operations targets related to these priority areas.

This can be achieved through adherence to :

- Procurement policy and best practice as set out in the guidance published on the Central Procurement Directorate's website - www.cpdni.gov.uk ;
- Government Approved Product Environmental Standards (Quick-wins);
- Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET) – www.proforest.net ;
- Fair and Ethical Trade (Fairtrade Foundation) – www.fairtrade.org.uk ;
- Food Procurement Guidance – DEFRA (NI specific guidance under consideration);
- Think, Create, Innovate Strategy – www.detini.gov.uk ;
- Developing a Successful Social Economy – www.detini.gov.uk .

Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs)

In addition to CPD, seven other CoPEs exist to provide a more integrated procurement service to public bodies throughout the public sector and to contribute to the development of operable policies. Each CoPE has a focus on a particular specialised area and longstanding links with their operational arms. Their procurement activities are heavily interlinked with the area of responsibility, which they support.

The seven CoPEs are:

- **Roads Service;**
- **Water NI;**
- **Central Services Agency - Regional Supplies Service;**
- **Northern Ireland Housing Executive;**
- **Health Estates,**
- **Education and Library Boards; and,**
- **Translink.**

In line with Northern Ireland Procurement Policy all NI Departments, their agencies, NDPBs and public corporations should carry out their procurement activities by means of a documented Service Level Agreement with CPD or a relevant Centre of procurement Expertise.