

IMPERIAL

Sustainable Imperial



**Sustainable
procurement
strategy**

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Introduction to sustainable procurement

Imperial College London recognises that through our world class research and teaching, our influence extends across many boundaries, and this also includes our own supply chain. The university therefore takes very seriously the impact our procurement activities may have on the environment and society and the role of sustainable procurement in our sustainability agenda.

Sustainable procurement is a process whereby Imperial can meet its needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment.

Imperial interprets sustainable procurement as the identification, embedding and consideration of sustainability risks and opportunities into our procurement decisions. This requires considering the impact of purchasing services, products and built assets in obtaining value for money (VfM).

Sustainability areas that are impacted by our spend

Carbon

The university aims to achieve net zero carbon for scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2040, minimising scope 3 emissions wherever possible. We will achieve this while ensuring that Imperial continues to provide world class facilities to support its overall strategy of achieving enduring excellence.

Direct emissions – exhaust from vehicles, burning fuel to produce electrical power, or heat – aren't the only source of greenhouse gases. The embodied energy and carbon 'locked up' in products, materials and assets is also important to consider. Emissions are released when energy is used to extract raw materials, to transport goods, and in manufacturing, as well as in the use and disposal of objects.

We can all reduce our emissions by using less energy, reducing avoidable purchases, considering the impact of purchased goods and smarter product design with carbon considered. Being resource efficient and creating less waste by using less materials and recycling will also have carbon benefits.

[Scope busting: Getting to grips with scope 1, 2 and 3](#)
[Science based targets](#)

Biodiversity and ecosystems

Biodiversity and nature loss are inextricably linked to climate change, and everyone can play their part to be an agent of change. As rising temperatures cause the loss of plants and animals, protecting natural habitats can positively impact climate change. Examples of actions that we can take as a university include planting carbon-absorbing plants and trees around our campuses that provide cooling shade during the summer months, and completing our phase-out of beef in our catering operations given the known biodiversity impacts of global beef production.

Imperial aims to raise awareness of the university's natural environment and promote biodiversity across the university estate. We will act as stewards to safeguard our existing natural capital while also enriching it through thoughtful procurement of materials and services. Finally, we will ensure that construction or refurbishment work carried out by Imperial and contractors has a net positive impact on biodiversity and is considered at every stage of the development.

Procurement officers and major purchasers are at the forefront in coordinating how the supply chain can engage in driving our biodiversity action plan. It is important to ensure this aligns with legislative requirements and regional and national targets for protecting, conserving, and enhancing biodiversity

Waste management

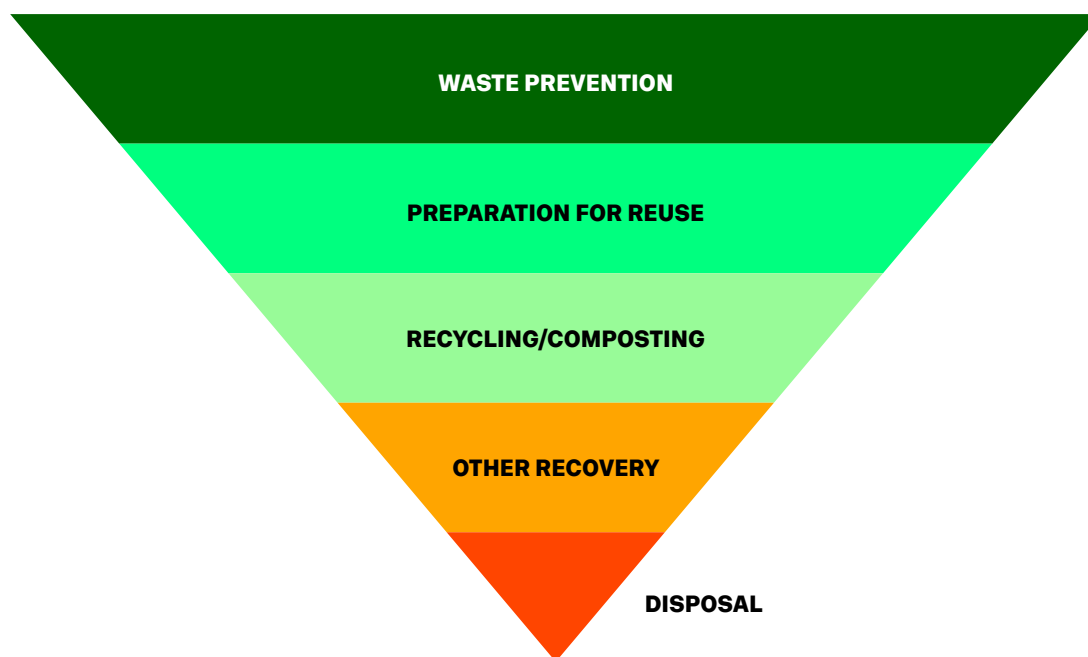
Imperial aims to ensure the responsible reduction and management of all waste streams from our activities. We will achieve this by using innovative solutions to reduce our consumption of single-use items, as well as reusing materials and recycling waste as much as possible. Most waste produced by the university on campus is through activities like:

- over-ordering
- ordering the wrong item
- order damage by mishandling
- material off-cuts
- inadequate storage
- not using the product within its expiry date
- unnecessary packaging of materials such as plastics and cardboard.

Each of these activities carries a cost for disposal and a carbon footprint that could otherwise be avoided. Reducing our consumption of raw materials and being more efficient with what we use results in a wide range of environmental and social benefits and cost savings for the university.

The figure on the next page shows Imperial's waste hierarchy, representing our waste processing path before eventual disposal. The procurement team is critical to its success at each stage within Imperial's waste hierarchy.

Figure 1: Waste hierarchy



Community engagement and investment

Imperial aims to work collaboratively with our local communities and the wider public to develop appropriate actions addressing sustainability challenges. We are creating public engagement opportunities related to sustainability locally, nationally, and globally.

Using community knowledge also empowers providers to deliver tangible benefits and better address social issues, such as inequality, public health, and climate change. For example, Imperial is working with local communities in White City to understand indoor air pollution and its impact on public health.

By engaging communities, we create opportunities for people to become co-creators and interpreters of knowledge. Sharing the knowledge that exists within universities with a wide array of community members can also improve our social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes.

Modern slavery

Sustainability's 'social dimensions', including human rights, diversity and inclusion, are integral to Imperial's activities. Modern slavery is when others exploit an individual for personal or commercial gain¹. Whether tricked, coerced, or forced, they lose their freedom. This includes but is not limited to human trafficking, forced labour and debt bondage.

Victims of modern slavery might face violence or threats, be forced into inescapable debt, or have their passport taken away and face being threatened with deportation. Many people have fallen into this trap because they were trying to escape poverty or insecurity, improve their lives and support their families.

Climate change and modern slavery form a vicious circle² in which the climate crisis forces people into work that actively contributes to environmental harm. As climate change threatens the very foundations of our society, we are beginning to see the heightened vulnerabilities that people experience as they are faced with losing their livelihoods and contemplating migration, making them even more at risk of exploitation³.

Modern slavery is a particular risk when procuring items in the following categories:

- agriculture: flowers, tea, coffee, sugar, seasonal foods
- cleaning: workers paid below National Minimum Wage
- construction: security services, any works being carried out, specialist labour supply
- electronics: phones, laptops, AV equipment, solar panels, and devices with multiple product parts that consume energy
- textiles: uniforms, bedding, fabric tablecloths

Imperial pays at or above London Living Wage for all staff and all outsourced staff. Our policy on this can be found on our website. We are also a member of the Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium and through that membership, an affiliate of Electronics Watch, allowing us the benefits of their supplier audits.

Sustainable procurement aims and objectives

Imperial will use its influence with suppliers and partners to procure environmentally friendly supplies and services. This is aimed at reducing consumption and, wherever possible, purchased goods and services that are manufactured, used, and disposed of in an environmentally responsible way.

The sustainable procurement guidance pack and checklist supports this commitment by using procurement as a catalyst for change and influence with the supply chain. As set out in the accompanying policy, the guidance will apply to all purchases undertaken by the university while considering relevance and proportionality.

¹ [What is modern slavery? | Anti-Slavery International \(antislavery.org\)](#)

² [Climate change and modern slavery: a vicious circle \(antislavery.org\)](#)

³ [Climate change and modern slavery: the nexus that cannot be ignored | International Institute for Environment and Development \(iied.org\)](#)