



green tourism

in newfoundland and labrador

Going Green: Purchase Planning

Your operation, when purchasing products and services, is making environmental choices each and every day. By taking the time to consider how routine business expenses can impact the environment, you can reduce your operation's consumption, decrease waste going to the landfill, lower carbon emissions, and realize cost savings.

This process is often called “*sustainable purchasing*” or “*green procurement*”. While it is true that there may be higher costs involved in some aspects of sustainable purchasing, the transition to green products and practices – if done properly – is generally considered to be cost neutral and in many cases can save a business on costs. It is important not to consider each product in isolation; if the costs of some goods increase this will often be balanced by savings made with other products.

Below are the basic considerations to take in to account when balancing environment and cost in your business' procurement.

➤ BUY LOCALLY

One of the first avenues your business can explore is whether your business needs are available locally. A product produced locally does not have the negative environmental impact of being transported (air, sea, land) from out of province. The use of local products can enhance the attractiveness of your tourism operation; travellers visit to experience Newfoundland and Labrador, and so the more authentic and original the experience the better. Finally, by buying locally your business will be making a contribution to the local economy, supporting the community, and building relationships with local suppliers.

Procuring and serving local and seasonal food is particularly beneficial to the environment and local economy, and an action that is increasingly being viewed favourably by travelers. Making use of what we produce ourselves throughout the year is better for the planet than importing out of season goods from far away markets. Of equal importance is the preserving of foods - a longstanding part of Newfoundland and Labrador culture.



The Restaurant Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (RANL) provides excellent information on sustainable purchase planning for a restaurant on its website: <http://www.ranl.ca/>.

➤ GROWING ON-SITE

If the food product is not available locally, there may be an opportunity to grow on-site. There are a number of establishments throughout Newfoundland and Labrador who are growing their own food supplies with great success. This practice also creates added value and experience for customers.

➤ AVOID SINGLE-USE PRODUCTS

Single-use products should be avoided. Disposable cutlery, plastic cups, single-use coffee pods, bottled water, are all examples of single-use items. These products must be (1) manufactured, (2) packaged, and (3) shipped to arrive in Newfoundland and Labrador – each stage at which there are significant environmental implications. Ultimately these items are (4) disposed of in the local landfill.

Here are some helpful tips to avoid the purchase of single-use products:

- Keep your kitchen stocked with cutlery, dishes, and use durable towels, tablecloths, and napkins.
- Avoid purchasing bottled water when your water supply is clean and safe.
- Use real cups or glasses. Plastic cups and paper coffee cups are significant sources of waste and are clogging landfills.
- Make your coffee the old fashioned way, with a pour-over, french press, or pot. Single use coffee pods are an increasing source of needless waste.
- Do not rely on individually packaged items such as sugar, sweetener, salt, ketchup, cream, or milk. These can all be more economically provided in bulk in containers.

➤ BUY ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

What is a “green” product? A green product is one that is less environmentally harmful than the next best alternative having characteristics including, but not limited to, the following:

- Is recyclable. Ensure that local facilities exist that are capable of recycling the product at the end of its useful life;
- Is biodegradable;
- Contains recycled material—post-consumer recycled content;
- Is recycled or refurbished;
- Has minimal packaging and/or the manufacturer will take-back the packaging;
- Is reusable or contains reusable parts;
- Has minimal content of and use of toxic substances in production;

- Produces fewer and/or less polluting by-products during manufacturing, distribution, use and/or disposal;
- Produces the minimal amount of toxic substances during use or at disposal;
- Makes efficient use of resources - a product that uses energy, fuel or water more efficiently or that uses less paper, ink or other resources;
- Is durable - has a long economically useful life and/or can be economically repaired or upgraded

As a consumer, it would be difficult to understand what environmental impact each product you purchase might have. That is why there are a number of standard “green” certifications which guarantee a degree of environmental performance for any given product. Reputable green certifications for products are shown in a table below.

Keep an eye out for these logos on products you are purchasing, and beware of products which claim to be “green” or “sustainable” which do not carry one of these certifications.

	<p>Cradle to Cradle The Cradle to Cradle Certified Product Standard guides designers and manufacturers through a continual improvement process that looks at a product through five quality categories — material health, material reutilization, renewable energy and carbon management, water stewardship, and social fairness.</p>
	<p>Energy Star Energy Star is an international standard for energy efficient consumer products. Devices carrying the Energy Star service mark, such as computer products and peripherals, kitchen appliances, buildings and other products, generally use 20–30% less energy than required by federal standards.</p>
	<p>Forestry Stewardship Council FSC certification ensures that wood and wood-fibre products come from responsibly managed forests that provide environmental, social and economic benefits.</p>
	<p>Green Guard The GREENGUARD Certification Program gives assurance that products designed for use in indoor spaces meet strict chemical emissions limits, which contribute to the creation of healthier interiors.</p>
	<p>Green Seal The Green Seal mark represents compliance with a rigorous set of criteria designed to achieve leadership levels in sustainability.</p>
	<p>EcoLogo The Canadian helps you identify products and services that have been independently certified to meet strict environmental standards that reflect their entire life cycle — from manufacturing to disposal. EcoLogo standards are designed so that only the top 20% of products available on the market can achieve certification.</p>

'Environmentally friendly products' often conjures images of cleaning or office products. But it is important to remember that this applies to products of all kinds – from paints to carpet to fuel.

➤ BUYING IN BULK

- Buying products in bulk can be significantly cheaper than buying in smaller quantities. Bulk items can include office supplies, condiments, spices, cleaning products, etc.
- Buying in bulk helps you avoid the environmental cost of unnecessary individual packaging and labelling. It will also decrease the amount of waste your business generates, which means lower tipping fees.
- There may be opportunities to work with other organizations in the community to work cooperatively to purchase goods in even greater quantities to realize more cost and environmental savings.

➤ FORMALIZING THE PLAN

A written procurement policy will serve to keep you and your employees focused and on task, and as a point of promotion for your business. Your business green procurement policy may include the following elements:

- a commitment to buying locally where possible;
- a list of products to avoid, e.g. single-use items;
- a commitment to consider all stages of a product's life cycle: production, distribution, consumption, and disposal to help make the best purchasing choices;
- a preference for certified products; and/or
- a price differential, where the business is willing to pay a reasonable percentage more than the alternative for a "green" product (to a maximum amount).

