



## Green Procurement Webinar

January 29, 2008

On Tuesday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, ACSI hosted its first online learning event, a webinar on green procurement. The workshop opened with a presentation by Mary Anne MacEachern and Lynda Rankin.

Lynda Rankin is a Pollution Prevention Specialist with Nova Scotia Environment and Labour. Her work focuses on the development of green/sustainable procurement policy and related initiatives within government, and on providing green procurement research and technical support to municipalities and hospitals. In 2004/05 Lynda led the development of Nova Scotia Environment and Labour's Environmentally Preferable Procurement Policy. She continues to support its implementation.

Mary Anne MacEachern is the Manager of Policy, Planning, and Process at Procurement Services, Nova Scotia Economic Development. Her work focuses on the development of a sustainable procurement policy and related initiatives within government, provision of advice and analysis on the Province of Nova Scotia (PNS) Procurement Policy and strategy, as well as, management of the compliance framework to monitor and ensure that departments are adhering to the PNS Procurement Policy.

Both Lynda and Mary Anne sit on the Sustainable Procurement Policy Working Group, which has been tasked with developing a Sustainable Procurement Policy for government by 2009 as identified in the new Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act (EGSPA).

A few highlights from the presentation:

- It's important to tie a green procurement policy back to an initial set of goals (as NSEL did) so that you can properly assess success and so that the policy is in line with other aspects of your business (i.e. other policies and procedures).
- NSEL took an informal approach to training its staff on the new green procurement policy. Different staff took informal responsibility for areas where they had had some experience and success (e.g. one person was a resource for green meetings, another for paper). This strategy worked very well for them and helped build champions for the policy.
- It's important to be able to evaluate the impact your new policy has. NSEL used several different calculators for this (see the ACSI website for links to some of the available calculators).
- You need to place your work on a continuum - it may not be possible to choose the 100% sustainable option right away, but you can start to work towards getting there.
- Start small and celebrate successes to build commitment. It's important to have commitment and leadership at both senior management levels and with staff on the ground.
- It's very important to do your research into products (e.g. taking into account the full life cycle of products) and also to engage with suppliers and industry to find out what options are out there.
- Start working on what you can, where you can. You may not be able to change everything at once, and change may happen incrementally over time, but you



can't wait for everything to be in place, you just have to begin and then keep moving forward.

- The goal is to have a government-wide sustainable procurement policy in place by 2009. A working group with reps from a number of departments is already in place and moving forward with research.

Please see the presentation (available on the ACSI website under Resources), or the Department of Environment and Labour's website on Sustainable Procurement ([www.gov.ns.ca/enla/sp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/sp)) for more detailed information.

### Questions and Discussion

#### **Q1: Is there a tip sheet on green meetings available?**

A: Check the website for tip sheets on:

- Choosing An Environmentally Preferable Vehicle
- Greening Your Office Equipment - Choices and Settings
- Greening Your Meetings and Events
- Teleconferencing & Web Conferencing
- Environmentally Responsible Janitorial Services

#### **Q2: Did you conduct any surveys?**

A: Yes, summer student staff surveyed employees to find out what equipment, supplies, etc. were already being used and where different offices were in terms of their performance. They are now starting to survey suppliers about their products and services.

#### **Q3: Is there a list of preferable products for those products commonly used in an office?**

A: It really has to be done on a product by product basis. Different calculators can be used for different products, for example, the paper calculator provided by Environmental Defense (<http://www.environmentaldefense.org/papercalculator/index.cfm?tagID=1654>).

#### **Q4: How do you chose vehicles? How do you rationalize the additional cost for something like a hybrid vehicle?**

A: They are now factoring in the environmental costs into procurement decisions now - for example, a hybrid vehicle may cost more initially, but it will save money over the long-term due to lower fuelling costs. They also use the Natural Resources Canada website to get mileage ratings for vehicles (see <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/transportation/tools/fuelratings/ratings-search.cfm?attr=8> for fuel consumption ratings).

#### **Q5: What is the definition of sustainable procurement?**

A: The province has not finalized their definition yet - a definition will be drafted as part of the consultation process on the Sustainable Procurement Initiative. An operating definition is on the website, <http://www.gov.ns.ca/tenders/enviro/default.asp>

#### **Q6: What are other provinces doing in this area?**

A: Nova Scotia is a leader on this in the Atlantic region, but Manitoba and BC are also doing good work.



**Q7: What gaps in information are there in relation to making sustainable procurement decisions?**

A: There is lots of missing information. They are always looking for new and better tools to assist the decision-making, and this usually just has to be done one issue at a time. It can be frustrating because they lack access to the information they need sometimes, or suppliers provide them with information that is not comparable, but it is getting better over time.

Resource documents (all available on the ACSI website)

*Local Food Procurement Policies: A Literature Review*

Prepared by the Ecology Action Centre

[http://www.ecologyaction.ca/food\\_action/publications/LocalFoodProcurementPolicies.pdf](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/food_action/publications/LocalFoodProcurementPolicies.pdf)

*A Guide to Developing a Sustainable Food Purchasing Policy*

*Purchasing Guide*, Prepared by the Municipality of Whistler

*Seven Steps to Procurement Heaven*, Prepared by Forum for the Future

Links

Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/econ/publications/default.asp>

Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/pollutionprevention/docs/2020FactSheet.pdf>

Government-wide Sustainable Procurement Initiative: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/sp>

Nova Scotia Sustainable Procurement: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/tenders/enviro/default.asp>

Federal Office of Greening Government Operations

<http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/greening/text/proc/decision-e.html>

Environmental Defense paper calculator:

<http://www.environmentaldefense.org/papercalculator/index.cfm?tagID=1654>

Fuel consumption ratings for vehicles, Natural Resources Canada:

<http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/transportation/tools/fuelratings/ratings-search.cfm?attr=8>

Social Purchasing Portal: <http://www.sppcanada.org/canada/index.cfm>

Presentation on Social Purchasing Portals: [http://www.ccednet-](http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/~ccednet/files/ccednet/W-118_Social_Purchasing_Portals.pdf)

[rcdec.ca/~ccednet/files/ccednet/W-118\\_Social\\_Purchasing\\_Portals.pdf](http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/~ccednet/files/ccednet/W-118_Social_Purchasing_Portals.pdf)