



Request for Proposals

The Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council (SPLC) seeks a consulting technology partner to create an online benchmarking system that enables diverse organizations to: 1) assess their sustainable purchasing activities against a maturity model for leadership in sustainable purchasing; and 2) benchmark the maturity of their sustainable purchasing activities against those of other organizations. The Benchmarking System will be developed iteratively, starting with a basic version that includes bare minimum functionality, and progressing to a complete version that has been enhanced over time with additional features based on user feedback. We request proposals only for the basic version, but we provide below a description of a sample user experience for the complete version as it is currently envisioned.

Description of Sample User Experience (Complete Version)

A purchasing organization requests access to the system. Once this request is approved by SPLC, an Administrator account is created for the organization. The account Administrator may approve the creation of additional accounts for other employees of the organization who are authorized to enter information into the system.

An authorized user responds to a series of questions (the “question set”). The question set is expected to include a total of approximately thirty (30) questions.

Each question offers the user: 1) five mutually exclusive multiple choice answers; 2) an opportunity to provide additional text comments; and 3) an opportunity to attach one or more supporting documents. For each supporting document added, the user may provide a title for the document and a description of its relevance to the response provided.

Users may respond to as few or as many of the questions as desired. For each response, the user may select whether or not the response to the question, the supplementary text comments, and/or supporting documentation should be “shared” (made visible to users from other organizations). The user may set a default choice for sharing (e.g., “share responses and text comments but not supporting documentation”) but may also selectively alter this default choice for a specific response or component thereof.

Once the user has finished responding to the question set, the user clicks “Submit,” and the responses are recorded into the system. At this point, any other authorized user from the organization may view the submitted responses. Any authorized user from the organization may also edit the responses, including choosing to delete a response completely or add supplementary comments or documents. No benchmarking functions are possible at this point.

Once the organization is ready to participate in benchmarking, any authorized user may click “Publish,” and the responses are published into the system. Once the responses are published, benchmarking is possible. For any question to which the organization has provided a response, the level of maturity associated with that response is indicated, and the organization can benchmark how its response compares to the average of other organizations’ responses for that question. For any question for which the organization has indicated a willing to share its responses, the organization is able to benchmark its responses directly against the responses of others who are willing to share their responses for the same question. Similarly, for any question for which the organization is willing to share its text comments and/or supporting documents, the organization is able to see the text comments and/or supporting documents provided by other organizations responding to the same question. In other words, this is a system in which “the more you give/share, the more you get/see” at every scale.

Benchmarking may be conducted against all other participants in the system or against a subset of participants in the system. Each participating purchasing organization is required to provide basic identifying parameters, initially including: scale of annual spending (e.g. \$10M ~ 100M); class (e.g. state government entity), sub-class (e.g. department of transportation) from a standard list of scales of spending, classes and sub-classes. Organizations may then choose to benchmark themselves against all organizations in the system or against a custom “comparison set” in which they may or may not be included. For example, a public state university might choose to benchmark itself against: a) all other public universities; b) all other universities; c) all organizations of any type with a similar scale of spend; d) all private sector purchasers; or any other custom comparison set defined using available parameters.

Benchmarking results will be displayed in a graphical format that enables the organization to understand visually how its responses position it on SPLC’s maturity model and also how it compares to other organizations in the selected comparison set. These results may also be exported as a well-formatted and annotated PDF.

Additional Information about the System

- SPLC will initially make the system available for free to all members of SPLC and approved partner organizations.
- In the future, SPLC may charge a fee for access to the system, potentially with rates determined by SPLC membership status, organization type, organization size, or other factors.
- A participating organization may be a “parent” to other organizations participating in the system, which are referred to as its “children.” For example, the State of Massachusetts might use the system to benchmark its sustainable purchasing activities, and it might also act as “parent” to its Department of Transportation and Department of Education, which also use the system to benchmark their respective sustainable purchasing programs. In these cases, any of the “child” participants could use the system to benchmark against its “siblings.” The “parent” could also use the system to view comparative results across all participating “children.”
- The system will allow for the creation of networks based on “affiliations.” For example, members of the National Association of State Purchasing Officers (NASPO) might want to create a network based on this affiliation. These organizations and others would be able to use such affiliation as parameters in the creation of “comparison sets” for the purpose of benchmarking. For example, an organization might choose to benchmark itself against all other members of the NASPO network.
- Any organization, of any size, in any sector, will be welcome to use the system.
- SPLC may target one or more “priority sectors” for the 2016 launch as a way to focus
- At a minimum, the system will include a set of **required** questions that address aspects of purchasing common across all sizes, types, and sectors of purchasing organizations. The total number of required questions will be the minimum necessary to provide a comprehensive understanding of the level of sustainable purchasing leadership exercised by a participant. The total number of required questions is not expected to exceed **30 questions**.
- For each question, guidance will be provided, including a sample response and suggestions about how to secure the information necessary to answer the question.
- Subject to the capacity of SPLC to develop additional sections, the system may also include **optional, sector-specific, and contingent** sections.

- *Optional* sections will address aspects of purchasing that may not be relevant to all organizations, but which some organizations may wish to report on. Examples might include sections specific to purchasing of certain types of products.
- *Sector-specific* sections will address those aspects of purchasing unique to a specific sector. Examples might include sections related to policy drivers for sustainable purchasing by government agencies.
- *Contingent* sections will collect additional detail on specific topics, based on an organization's response to questions in other sections. Examples might include questions about categories of purchasing identified by a purchaser as high priority based on their own analysis.
- Participants will be provided access to their own responses and will be able to see how their responses compare to average and mean responses for other relevant groups of participants. Note that participants will only be able to see average and mean responses for those sections of the question set that they completed in the system. This approach will be used to encourage organizations to complete as many sections as possible.
- All question responses become intellectual property of SPLC, but the confidentiality of individual participants will be maintained. At no time will the individual responses of any organization be attributed by SPLC to that organization without permission of that organization.
- The question set and the baseline maturity levels reflected in the responses received will, in the future, provide a framework for development of SPLC's proposed Rating System.
- To the extent possible, SPLC will harmonize its questions with those asked by other relevant systems and surveys (e.g., Global Survey on Sustainable Procurement; TSC KPI's)
- "I don't know" will be an acceptable response for any question, since this lack of clarity or information will be valuable to SPLC (and to participants) in understanding the current state of sustainable purchasing and related information/data management within organizations.
- During the initial launch phase, participants will be able to enter information and see their own results, but no peer-to-peer comparison will be possible until at least twenty (20) participants have published responses in the system.
- The system should be capable of exporting all data in a linked database format that would allow SPLC to transfer the entire system (including user management system data) to a new platform, if desired.
- In exchange for a discounted rate of service, SPLC is willing to provide public recognition of the technology partner within the system and/or at a public presentation of the system at the 2017 SPLC Summit.

Key Components of Complete Version

The complete version of system will include the following key components, not all of which need to be included in the basic version. Prospective consulting technology partners are asked to propose, at a minimum, an outline set of technical requirements for a basic version, ideally as a series of sub-components, together with a good faith estimate of the cost of developing each component and sub-component. Estimates may be provided as a range. Components that are a priority for the initial basic version are indicated in normal type. Components that are optional in the basic version are indicated in grey typeface in descending order of priority.

User / Content Management System

- User additional, removal, and management
- Ability for SPLC to modify questions and/or scoring methodology using a "back end"
- Creation of "families" including "parents" and "children"

- Creation of “networks” based on affiliation

Data Collection Interface

- Ability to enter identifying parameters
- Inclusion of core question set
- A method within the user interface to provide guidance to users for each question.
- Ability to attach supporting documentation
- Ability to provide metadata (title, description) for supporting documentation
- Ability to select default visibility (sharing) settings for all responses
- Ability to select visibility (sharing) settings for specific responses
- Ability to select visibility (sharing) settings for supporting documentation
- Inclusion of optional sections
- Inclusion of sector-specific sections
- Inclusion of contingent sections
- Conditional/skip logic to guide participants from “core” to optional, sector-specific, and contingent questions
- Ability to add different question types in the future such as tables, numeric, multi-select, etc.

Benchmarking Functions

- Ability to benchmark against maturity model
- Ability to benchmark against minimum, maximum, and average of all other participants
- Ability to benchmark against other participants anonymously
- Ability to benchmark against other participants by name (once sharing function is in place)
- Visual display of benchmarking results (maturity model)
- Ability to benchmark against a custom comparison set
- Visual display of benchmarking results (comparison set)
- Visual display of benchmarking results (maturity model and comparison set)

Pilot Phase

As shown in the timeline, the first prototype (basic version) will be piloted by an initial group of purchasing organizations. We have partnered with the National Association of State Purchasers (NASPO) to assist with recruiting pilot participants, and we will also recruit participants from within the SPLC membership. We expect from 10 to 100 participants in the pilot. We are able to limit the number of participants in the pilot if necessary. We do not initially have resources for on-demand customer support, so the system will need to be sufficiently self-explanatory.

Calculation of Benchmarks

As shown in the maturity model matrix, each question could have five responses, each of which is assigned a “level”. On the back end, each level will have a value (say 1-5). We are not committed to any aggregation at all, but if we do aggregate scores we will pro-rate weight of each question so that each of the 15 operational outcomes has equal weight, and each of the leadership outcomes has equal weight.

In the basic version, when a user benchmarks their results, they see themselves against the minimum, average, and maximum results of all other participants. In more advanced future versions, they will be able to choose a comparison set that could include, for example: one organization (if that org has agreed to share its identity); all other organizations of a similar spend size; all other organizations in the same sector; etc.

Family, Parent, Child, and Networks Functionality

Family, Parent, Child and Networks functionality is not needed in the basic version, but we would like the system to be “ready” to implement this functionality in the future. We assume that, if we start with “entities” (regardless of size/complexity) in the first version, then we can later build in functionality that creates relationships among those entities. So, for example, if a state department of transportation and a state department of education both participated in the first version, they would initially just be disconnected entities, and we wouldn’t have a way to identify that they were both agencies from the same state. But in the future, we could start to build that functionality in, and we want to be prepared for that.

Timeline

As noted above, this project is being developed iteratively, and the estimated timeline for development of the initial basic is extremely rapid, as follows:

Feb 03	Issue RFP
Feb 10	Deadline for questions
Feb 14	Responses to questions
Feb 17	Deadline for proposals
Feb 20	Award of contract; begin work
Mar 06	Working prototype of basic version
Mar 17	Open basic version to pilot participants
Apr 14	Deadline for participants to publish results
Apr 21	Enable benchmarking capability
Apr 28	Deadline for feedback from pilot participants
May 05	Deadline for revisions by technology partner
May 09	Public presentation at 2017 SPLC Summit

Budget

SPLC has a limited cash budget for the initial phase. The budget range for this project is \$10,000 to \$20,000 to launch the basic version. We ask that respondents indicate how much (if any) functionality could be provided at the \$10,000 level, and how much additional functionality (if any) could be provided by increasing the budget to \$20,000. Respondents are also optionally welcome to indicate, if desired, a projected budget and approach for continuing to develop more advanced versions.

Requested Information

Respondents to this proposal are requested to provide the following information:

- **Scope of work.** Please describe a scope of work that is feasible to complete within the proposed timeline for a cash budget of \$10,000 and the additional scope that would be possible for an additional \$10,000. Be as specific as possible, formatting your response as a set of proposed technical requirements and associated line item costs, to the extent possible.
- **Existing technology.** Please specify which feature requirements are available “out-of-the-box” based on your technology’s current functionality, and which requirements would be new features. Please describe how you will address the SPLC’s aggressive timeline for features that are not “out-of-the-box”. Please describe the ability to add different question types in the future such as tables, numeric, multi-select, etc. Please describe any limitations or cost implications for the number of users participating in the pilot. Please describe data security features of your current technology.

- **Budget.** Please provide a line item budget that enables SPLC to prioritize completion of components based on cost. Please also indicate any potential discounts available in exchange for public recognition or other ways that SPLC could provide benefit in exchange for service.
- **Partnership.** Please also indicate any partnership ideas or in-kind contributions that might be requested from SPLC to make the scope and budget work. We currently conceive this as a “white label” project, since we expect the Benchmarking System to be a signature SPLC program, but we are open to input on alternative models or approaches that might be appropriate to this project.
- **Description of approach.** Please describe how you would approach this project, with particular attention to how your unique expertise, background, and resources may benefit the project. Please include basic information about the technical platform and language(s) that you would use for the project.
- **Data portability.** Please confirm your ability to build a system from which the entire dataset could be readily exported for import onto another platform, if desired. Please describe how you would approach this, and indicate any costs or limitations that might affect such export.
- **Visualization of results.** Please indicate how you would approach the visualization of benchmarking results, including samples, if available. Please also document your demonstrated ability to develop and/or customize appropriate visualization formats for the presentation of quantitative data. Where possible, please provide visuals of the user interface of your existing technology solution(s), including, e.g., benchmarking views, maturity model rating, etc.
- **Benchmarking functionality.** Please explain if and how your technology is currently capable of combining responses within each survey section and across the entire survey to give both an overall maturity rating and a maturity rating for each leadership outcome.
- **Content management system (CMS).** Because content development will continue iteratively in parallel with technology development, SPLC needs to be able to quickly and easily update question sets and scoring methodology. Please provide a description of this process and any associated costs/timeframe (if any) for each change to the question set or scoring methodology.
- **References & Work Samples.** Please provide at least two (2) references to relevant projects. For each, briefly describe the project and its relevance, include links and/or screenshots if available, and provide the name and contact information for the project client.

Attachments

The following attachments are included as background.

- **Benchmarking System Proposal.** This internal proposal explains the project and its objectives in the context of SPLC’s broader mission and activities.
- **Maturity Model.** This provides an overview of the maturity model against which participants responses would be initially benchmarked. The model provides the basic material for core questions and responses.
- **Question Set.** This is a re-formatting of the maturity model in the form of a question set that would be embedded within the requested online system.

Questions

The deadline for submitted questions is Feb 10 2017. Questions may be submitted to info@sustainablepurchasing.org. Please include “Benchmarking RFP” in the subject line. Responses will be provided by Feb 13 2017.



PROPOSAL

SPLC 2016 Benchmarking System

Prepared July, 2016 (v05) PUBLIC VERSION

SPLC will create an online benchmarking system that enables diverse organizations to: 1) assess their sustainable purchasing activities against SPLC's *Guidance for Leadership in Sustainable Purchasing*; and 2) benchmark the maturity of their sustainable purchasing activities against those of other organizations. The assessment framework developed for the Benchmarking System will inform the Rating System that SPLC plans to develop in 2017.

General Information

Outcomes

Insight. SPLC will gain an accurate understanding of the current “state of play” for leadership in sustainable purchasing across a diverse range of organizations, enabling us to confidently establish baseline definitions for “maturity levels.”

Benchmarking. System participants will be able to benchmark their own activities against those of other organizations, within their own peer group and beyond.

Program Development. SPLC will be positioned to develop additional programming, which could include customized support for participants based on their results or derivative projects, such as a Rating System and/or Challenge Campaign, based on the 2016 responses.

Impact Assessment. Over time, responses in successive years will enable SPLC to track the development and evolution of sustainable purchasing in the marketplace.

<i>Timeline</i>	Jun-Jul 2016	Create initial draft of system Convene working group (could be subcommittee of TAC) to establish role, timeline, expected outcomes, review draft question set
	Jul-Oct 2016	Pilot questions with working group and finalize Create guidance materials Upload question set into tool Establish partnerships, if any
	Oct 2016	Issue question set to pilot group Refine question set based on feedback
	Nov 2016	Open system for wide participation Run webinar to encourage participation
	Feb 2017	Deadline for inclusion of responses in 2016 benchmarking
	Mar 2017	Analyze results
	Apr 2017	Share benchmarking results with participants
	May 2017	Publish report on benchmarking results

Strategic Value

Alignment This project directly aligns with SPLC’s mission to support **guidance, measurement, and recognition** of leadership in sustainable purchasing. By basing the question set on SPLC’s *Guidance*, we continue to encourage alignment with SPLC’s *Guidance* as the *de facto* standard for leadership in the marketplace. The system will represent the first direct SPLC contribution to supporting **measurement** and benchmarking, and the responses will provide necessary input for baselines and a maturity model to formalize our *Guidance* in a *Rating System* that supports **recognition** of leadership.

Leverage The project leverages SPLC’s existing *Guidance* and volunteer community (TAC and TAG’s). The question set will be based on SPLC’s *Guidance*, and sections of the proposed question set will be shared with relevant TAG’s for input.

If possible, we will also leverage the networks of partner organizations to broaden participation in the system. We may use one or more such partnerships to focus marketing of the system to a specific group.

Scaling We expect that participants will choose to update their responses every year or every other year (TBD). If the same questions can be maintained over time, this will allow us to use the system to measure market-wide progress on sustainable purchasing.

External Context

Need We consistently hear from our Founders and members that benchmarking of leadership practices is one of the most important solutions that they expect SPLC to provide. To date, we have not meaningfully addressed this need, and it is not elsewhere addressed in the marketplace.

Unique Value No other organization is currently benchmarking leadership in sustainable purchasing, and SPLC is uniquely positioned to fill this role. At an international level, the UN’s 10 Year Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) conducts a bi-annual Global Review of Sustainable Procurement, with an emphasis on public procurement, and covering a mix of fact-sheets of national governments’ SPP programs, with a broader stakeholder survey reflecting opinions about SPP. We see this system as complementary to those efforts and well aligned with SPLC *Guidance*.

Opportunities We have an opportunity to align some portions of our question set with the 10YFP Global Review which is expected to be published in November 2016. For those portions that overlap, we would be able to benchmark responses to our questions against global responses to the 10YFP survey.

We have heard enthusiasm from CPO’s in large organizations about using the system to benchmark the performance of different department against one another, and to support healthy competition among them. We may be able to leverage this enthusiasm into funding and/or find a way to deliver a fee-based offering that supports use of the system by organizations internally to develop “challenges” and other forms of healthy internal competition and benchmarking activities.

Issues The timeframe is tight, but we believe that we need to complete this before the end of the year to deliver on member expectations.

We will need to carefully balance the value of brevity (to encourage more responses) with the value of length (to gather more information and nuance).

We may encounter confidentiality issues by requesting supporting documentation.

Participants will likely have questions as they use the system, but we will have limited staff capacity to address those questions. Guidance can be produced and webinars held to somewhat mitigate the need for individualized support.

Organizations will likely need to pull information from multiple departments in order to answer the questions. This will be a challenge for them, internally, and also for us, as we seek to support them in use of the system. The need for internal review also affects choice the platform we choose to support the information gathering for the system and our subsequent analysis of the results.

SPLC Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Maturity Model

Revised Dec 01 2016

LEADERSHIP OUTCOMES

OPERATIONAL OUTCOMES

QUESTION

MATURITY LEVELS

Level	Outcome	Question	Initiating <i>Awareness with some ad hoc, non-systematic efforts</i>	Progressing <i>Systematic structure and format processes</i>	Optimizing <i>Advancing internally with continuous improvement</i>	Leading <i>Integrated within organization; demonstrates and recognized for some industry leading practices</i>	Transforming <i>Developing and implementing innovative practices that transform industry expectations</i>	
Organization	Senior leadership has a prioritized understanding of how the organization can best use its market role as a purchaser to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	U-1.1 How does your organization determine the range of issues included in its sustainable purchasing policy or program?	The scope is dictated by regulatory requirements.	The scope includes non-regulatory issues identified on an ad hoc basis.	The scope includes significant issues identified in a risk assessment.	The scope includes issues and opportunities identified through an analysis based on desk research (e.g., life-cycle assessment).	The scope includes issues and opportunities identified through an analysis based on desk research, supplemented by on-site audits and/or input from relevant civil society organizations.	
		U-1.2 To what extent does senior leadership have a prioritized understanding of opportunities?	There is no executive-level awareness of sustainable purchasing activities or opportunities.	Executive-level understanding of sustainable purchasing issues and opportunities is ad hoc.	An internal process exists to include executive leadership in the strategic prioritization process.	Strategic prioritization of issues is led or sponsored by an senior executive.	Executive leadership is regularly briefed on opportunities to use the organization's market role as a purchaser to advance collective goals.	
		U-1.3 How effectively have opportunities been prioritized?	Prioritization of issues is ad hoc or intuitive.	There is a systematic process to identify and prioritize issues and opportunities.	The process is documented and results are reviewed periodically.	The process and outputs undergo independent third party validation	All relevant staff receive guidance on how to identify and take action on opportunities.	The process and outputs are shared publicly and validated by relevant civil society organizations.
Employee / Buyer	Relevant staff know how to identify and take action on opportunities for the organization to use its market role as a purchaser to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	U-2.1 To what extent do relevant staff know how to identify and take action on opportunities?	Relevant staff identify opportunities independently on an ad hoc basis.	Relevant staff know which issues and opportunities have been prioritized for action.	Some relevant staff receive guidance on how to identify and take action on opportunities.	Influenced by benchmarking, research, and/or stakeholder engagement to identify and embed best practices.	A formal process exists for documenting and disseminating lessons learned.	
		U-2.2 What is the focus on the organization's continuous improvement and learning process for sustainable purchasing?	Developed on an ad hoc and non-systematic basis.	Focus is on ensuring and demonstrating regulatory or policy compliance.	Focus extends beyond compliance to include issues and opportunities identified through spend analysis.			Includes inreach and outreach to expand understanding and participation in best practices.
		U-3.1 To what extent are suppliers and other external stakeholders engaged in the process of understanding?	External stakeholders are not involved in the process.	No formal program exists to solicit external stakeholder input, but unsolicited input is reviewed and considered.	Written input from suppliers and other stakeholders is solicited.			The organization participates in relevant industry-specific and/or cross-industry initiatives to share information relevant to understanding its opportunities for influence.
Supplier / Stakeholder	Suppliers and other stakeholders are actively engaged in the process of understanding how the organization can best use its market role as a purchaser to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	C-1.1 To what extent is a sustainable purchasing program resourced?	Sustainable purchasing is conducted on an ad hoc basis.	A sustainable purchasing policy and/or program exists.	Sustainable purchasing program has a dedicated manager.	Sustainable purchasing program has a dedicated budget.	Sustainable purchasing program is authorized to retain savings for reinvestment in program.	
		C-1.2 To what extent has your organization developed an action plan for sustainable purchasing that is tightly integrated into management systems and strategic planning?	Action plan has informal/ verbal senior management commitment.	Action plan has a senior management-level sponsor.	Action plan has an executive-level sponsor.	Action plan is linked to annual (or business or strategic) planning process.	Action plan progress is formally approved by executive, included in executive order, and/or shared with Board.	
		C-1.3 How responsive is the action plan to (appropriate) strategic priorities?	Action plan development is ad hoc.	Action plan is based on a deliberate strategic prioritization process.	Action plan is development is informed by relevant experts and/or civil society advocates (NGO's).	Action plan progress is shared publicly.		
Organization	An executive-approved sustainable purchasing program and action plan—for using the organization's market role as a purchaser to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals—is lightly integrated into management systems and strategic planning.	C-2.1 To what extent are relevant staff engaged in development?	Relevant staff are not engaged in action plan development.	Staff engagement in development is limited or ad hoc.	Selected staff are invited to provide input on action plan development.	All relevant departments and/or staff roles have an opportunity to provide input on action plan development.	Action plan is developed by a cross-functional team on which all relevant departments and staff roles are represented.	
		C-2.2 To what extent are relevant staff engaged in implementation?	Many relevant staff are not aware of the action plan.	Not all relevant staff are aware of action plan.	Most relevant staff are aware of their role in delivering on action plan.	All relevant staff are aware of their role in delivering on the action plan.	Action plan includes department- and/or role-specific implementation guidance.	
		C-2.3 To what extent has your organization embedded sustainability into purchasing roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities?	There are no sustainable purchasing roles or responsibilities at the company.	Sustainable purchasing roles are not formally defined, but may be informally recognized.	A sustainable purchasing point person is formally assigned with overall responsibility for ensuring applicable requirements and commitments are implemented at the organization, or for a project.	Accountabilities and job-specific responsibilities are actively in place from management to applicable individual contributors.	Accountability for sustainable purchasing at the company is formally assigned to top or executive management of the company, and/or there is Board-level review and responsibility for purchasing-related sustainability performance.	
Employee / Buyer	Relevant staff are engaged in developing and implementing an action plan for using the organization's market role as a purchaser to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	C-3.1 To what extent are suppliers engaged in development?	Suppliers are not engaged in action plan development.	Supplier engagement in development is limited or ad hoc.	Selected suppliers are invited to provide input on action plan development.	All relevant suppliers have at least one opportunity to provide input on action plan development.	All relevant suppliers have multiple opportunities to provide input on action plan development.	
		C-3.2 To what extent are suppliers engaged in implementation?	Most suppliers are not aware of the action plan.	Not all affected suppliers are aware of the action plan.	Most affected suppliers are aware of their role in the action plan.	Action plan includes specific implementation guidance for suppliers.	Action plan includes specific implementation guidance for suppliers.	
		C-3.3 To what extent does the organization have a supplier engagement strategy?	No active supplier engagement strategy on sustainability.	Beginning stages of supplier engagement strategy and beginning to identify areas to focus efforts.	A dedicated budget exists for supplier engagement and development.	Supplier engagement is a key focus to our organization and we are seeing return on our efforts.		
Organization	The organization delivers meaningful results, measured using appropriate indicators, against clearly stated goals for how the organization will use its market role as a purchaser to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	R-1.1 To what extent does the organization achieve meaningful results?	Goals were not met.	Goals were partially met. (50%)	Goals were mostly met. (75%)	Goals were fully met. (100%)	Goals were exceeded.	
		R-1.2 To what extent does the organization measure and report its results?	Results are not measured or reported.	Reporting measures extent of implementation of action plan.	Reporting includes estimated contribution to collective goals using relevant units.	Estimated contribution to collective goals is validated by an independent third party.	Results are shared publicly.	
		R-2.1 To what extent are staff trained to support implementation of action plan?	No training program.	Some relevant staff receive training	Most relevant staff receive training.	All relevant staff receive training.	All staff receive enough information about action plan to identify latent opportunities for improvement.	
Employee / Buyer	Relevant staff receive training and are evaluated on helping the organization to use its market role as a purchaser to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	R-2.2 To what extent are staff evaluated on contribution to action plan success?	Staff are not evaluated on contribution.	Contribution is included in performance evaluation for some relevant staff.	Contribution is included in performance evaluation for all relevant staff.	Staff receive recognition through a formal award program within their department.	Staff receive recognition through a formal organization-wide award program.	
		R-3.1 To what extent are sustainability criteria embedded in product evaluation?	<TBD>	<TBD>	<TBD>	<TBD>	<TBD>	
		R-3.2 To what extent are action plan priorities embedded in supplier selection through a supplier code of conduct (or equivalent criteria set)?	Supplier code of conduct is posted on website and included in its contracts.	Suppliers are required to review, sign, and return the code of conduct periodically or upon changes.	Require executive-level signature from supplier confirming compliance to code of conduct.	Suppliers are provided information about opportunities to receive training on sustainability.	Annually review supplier code of conduct high risks and perform desk audits and/or site visits, as appropriate.	
Supplier / Stakeholder	Suppliers receive training and are evaluated on helping the organization to use its market role as a purchaser to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	R-3.3 To what extent does the organization actively support development of supplier sustainability capabilities?	Suppliers are assessed on their sustainability performance.	Suppliers are assessed on their sustainability performance relative to peers.	Suppliers are provided information about their sustainability performance assessment.	Suppliers are provided information about opportunities to receive training on sustainability.	Supplier training on sustainability is provided, hosted, or subsidized by your organization.	
		I-1.1 What proportion of eligible procurements does include non-financial award criteria?	None.	Some.	Most.	All.	<TBD>	
		I-1.2 What proportion of eligible procurements use performance-based specifications?	None.	Some.	Most.	All.	<TBD>	
Organization	The organization actively manages its market role as a purchaser to encourage and support new approaches and ideas that advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	I-1.3 What proportion of eligible procurements are evaluated using full life cycle costing?	None.	Some are evaluated for total cost of ownership (TCO).	Most are evaluated for total cost of ownership (TCO).	All are evaluated for total cost of ownership (TCO), and some are evaluated for full life cycle costs (LCC).	All are evaluated for total cost of ownership (TCO), and most are evaluated for full life cycle costs (LCC).	
		I-1.4 To what extent does the organization use its influence to encourage a marketplace of innovation?	Publicly communicates successful new solutions for adoption by others in the marketplace.	Collaborates with other purchasers to foster innovation in a particular category or joint procurement.	Proactively supports and defends organizations and initiatives that promote innovation to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	Proactively supports and defends organizations and initiatives that promote innovation to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	Proactively supports and defends organizations and initiatives that promote innovation to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	
		I-2.1 To what extent does the organization provide training and recognition for staff on the use of processes and specifications that foster competition and innovation in procurement?	No training or recognition programs.	Training for some relevant staff.	Training for all relevant staff.	Ad hoc recognition of staff for activities that promote market innovation.	Through a formal program, recognizes staff for activities that promote market innovation.	
Employee / Buyer	The organization trains and rewards staff to develop new approaches and ideas that enhance the organization's ability to use its market role as a purchaser to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	I-2.2 To what extent does the organization provide training and recognition for staff on the elimination of anti-competitive practices from procurement?	No training or recognition programs.	Training for some relevant staff.	Training for all relevant staff.	Provides whistleblower protection for staff who identify anti-competitive practices in procurement.	Proactively rewards staff who identify anti-competitive practices in procurement.	
		I-3.1 What proportion of eligible procurements are made SME-friendly by splitting tenders into lots and/or encouraging consortia to bid?	None.	Some.	Most.	All.	<TBD>	
		I-3.2 To what extent does the organization actively promote supplier innovation?	Offers an opportunity for all suppliers to provide input on procurement processes.	Hosts a meeting for all interested suppliers at least once per year, to receive input in procurement processes.	Actively engages the supplier community on a pre-competitive basis at least 6 months notice in advance of tendering, for some large procurements.	Actively engages the supplier community on a pre-competitive basis at least 6 months notice in advance of tendering, for most large procurements.	Actively engages the supplier community on a pre-competitive basis at least 6 months notice in advance of tendering, for all large procurements.	
Supplier / Stakeholder	The organization engages and prefers suppliers who develop new approaches and ideas that enhance the organization's ability to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.	I-3.3 To what extent does the organization promote supplier diversity?	No focus on using diverse suppliers.	Include diverse suppliers as contractors when requested by internal customer.	Subcontract to diverse suppliers at every opportunity, regardless of whether customer asked for it.	Active with supplier diversity agencies and councils to pursue new diverse suppliers to work with.	Established mentoring programs to develop and grow diverse suppliers.	
		T-1.1 In the past year, what actions did your organization take to encourage the sharing of sustainability-related product information?	Requested sustainability-related product information for some relevant solicitations.	Requested sustainability-related product information for some relevant solicitations.	Requested suppliers to disclose sustainability-related product information.	Supported and/or participated in multi-stakeholder initiatives to encourage sharing of sustainability-related product information.	Lobbied for regulations requiring disclosure of sustainability-related product information.	
		T-1.2 To what extent does the organization share relevant sustainability information with the broader purchasing community?	Sustainable purchasing policy and/or related documents are available online.	Relevant solicitation language is available online or on request.	Actively share relevant solicitation language with appropriate purchaser networks (e.g., ISM, NASPO, RPN, SPLC).	Share sustainable purchasing successes and/or challenges through documented case studies.	Collaborate with other purchasers to develop information sharing networks.	
Employee / Buyer	Relevant staff are encouraged and empowered to solicit and disclose information about the environmental, social, and market integrity performance of purchased goods and services.	T-3.1 To what extent does the organization require disclosure of beneficial ownership for its suppliers?	Require disclosure for some suppliers.	Require disclosure for all suppliers	Require public disclosure for some suppliers.	Require public disclosure for all suppliers.	Lobby for regulations requiring public disclosure of beneficial ownership.	
		T-3.2 In the past year, to what extent did you give preference to suppliers that publicly report targets, timelines, and progress toward improving their sustainability performance?	No solicitations.	Some solicitations.	Most solicitations.	As a standard preference in all solicitations.	Conducted or contracted spot audits to confirm supplier-reported information.	
		T-3.3 To what extent does the organization prefer suppliers who solicit and disclose information about environmental, social, and market integrity performance.	The organization prefers suppliers who solicit and disclose information about environmental, social, and market integrity performance.					

UNDERSTANDING

Relevant decision-makers understand how the organization can use its market role as a purchaser to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.

COMMITMENT

The organization formally commits to an action plan for using its market role as a purchaser to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.

RESULTS

The organization uses its market role as a purchaser to make measurable, meaningful contributions to collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.

INNOVATION

The organization uses its market role as a purchaser to actively encourage and support innovation that advances collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.

TRANSPARENCY

The organization uses its market role as a purchaser to actively solicit and disclose information about environmental, social, and market integrity performance.



SPLC Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Maturity Model Core Question Set v05

Revised Dec 01 2016

This Core Question Set is proposed for use as the basis for the pilot version of SPLC Benchmarking System, to be launched in early 2017. The Core Question Set will be integrated into an online platform which participants may use to: 1) obtain guidance and background information to support responding to specific questions; 2) collect relevant information from internal colleagues; 3) store responses to individual questions on a secure server; 4) upload supporting documentation, as appropriate; 5) benchmark their organization's sustainable purchasing program against: a) SPLC's definition of leadership in sustainable purchasing, and b) other organizations' sustainable purchasing programs. Participants may control how much of the information submitted is visible to internal colleagues, to SPLC staff, to other participants in the System, and to others.

The Core Question Set is based on the SPLC Maturity Model for Leadership in Sustainable Purchasing. In general, each question offers five possible responses, each of which is tied to a level of maturity within the Model. In order to provide a consistent basis for maturity assessment and benchmarking, the Core Question Set is necessarily generic and may not enable organizations to share the full details of their leadership efforts. Some participating organizations may benefit from providing supplementary information to support their responses to the core questions in the Maturity Model. Accordingly, a set of Supplementary Questions have been developed and are available in a separate document.

Understanding

- U-1.1 How does your organization determine the range of issues included in its sustainable purchasing policy or program?**
- A. The scope is dictated by regulatory requirements.
 - B. The scope includes non-regulatory issues identified on an ad hoc basis.
 - C. The scope includes significant issues identified in a risk assessment.
 - D. The scope includes issues and opportunities identified through an analysis based on desk research (e.g., life-cycle assessment).
 - E. The scope includes issues and opportunities identified through an analysis based on desk research, supplemented by on-site audits and/or input from relevant civil society organizations.
- U-1.2 To what extent does senior leadership have a prioritized understanding of opportunities?**
- A. There is no executive-level awareness of sustainable purchasing activities or opportunities.
 - B. Executive-level understanding of sustainable purchasing issues and opportunities is ad hoc.
 - C. An internal process exists to include executive leadership in the strategic prioritization process.
 - D. Strategic prioritization of issues is led or sponsored by a senior executive.
 - E. Executive leadership is regularly briefed on opportunities to use the organization's market role as a purchaser to advance collective goals.
- U-1.3 How effectively have opportunities been prioritized?**
- A. Prioritization of issues is ad hoc or intuitive.
 - B. There is a systematic process to identify and prioritize issues and opportunities.
 - C. The process is documented and results are reviewed periodically.
 - D. The process and outputs undergo independent third party validation
 - E. The process and outputs are shared publicly and validated by relevant civil society organizations.
- U-2.1 To what extent do relevant staff know how to identify and take action on opportunities?**
- A. Relevant staff identify opportunities independently on an ad hoc basis.
 - B. Relevant staff know which issues and opportunities have been prioritized for action.
 - C. Some relevant staff receive guidance on how to identify and take action on opportunities.
 - D. All relevant staff receive guidance on how to identify and take action on opportunities.
 - E. A formal process exists for documenting and disseminating lessons learned.
- U-2.2 What is the focus on the organization's continuous improvement and learning process for sustainable purchasing?**
- A. Developed on an ad hoc and non-systematic basis.
 - B. Focus is on ensuring and demonstrating regulatory or policy compliance.
 - C. Focus extends beyond compliance to include issues and opportunities identified through spend analysis.
 - D. Influenced by benchmarking, research, and/or stakeholder engagement to identify and embed best practices.
 - E. Includes inreach and outreach to expand understanding and participation in best practices.
- U-3.1 To what extent are suppliers and other external stakeholders engaged in the process of understanding?**
- A. External stakeholders are not involved in the process.
 - B. No formal program exists to solicit external stakeholder input, but unsolicited input is reviewed and considered.
 - C. Written input from suppliers and other stakeholders is solicited.
 - D. The organization hosts one or more events per year to solicit input from suppliers and other stakeholders.
 - E. The organization participates in relevant industry-specific and/or cross-industry initiatives to share information relevant to understanding its opportunities for influence.

Commitment

C-1.1 To what extent is a sustainable purchasing program resourced?

- A. Sustainable purchasing is conducted on an ad hoc basis.
- B. A sustainable purchasing policy and/or program exists.
- C. Sustainable purchasing program has a dedicated manager.
- D. Sustainable purchasing program has a dedicated budget.
- E. Sustainable purchasing program is authorized to retain savings for reinvestment in program.

C-1.2 To what extent has your organization developed an action plan for sustainable purchasing that is tightly integrated into management systems and strategic planning?

- A. Action plan has informal/ verbal senior management commitment.
- B. Action plan has a senior management-level sponsor.
- C. Action plan has an executive-level sponsor.
- D. Action plan is linked to annual (or business or strategic) planning process.
- E. Action plan progress is formally approved by executive, included in executive order, and/or shared with Board.

C-1.3 How responsive is the action plan to (appropriate) strategic priorities?

- A. Action plan development is ad hoc.
- B. Action plan is based on a deliberate strategic prioritization process.
- C. Action plan development is informed by relevant experts and/or civil society advocates (NGO's).
- D. Action plan is supported by relevant experts and/or civil society advocates (NGO's).
- E. Action plan progress is shared publicly.

C-2.1 To what extent are relevant staff engaged in development?

- A. Relevant staff are not engaged in action plan development.
- B. Staff engagement in development is limited or ad hoc.
- C. Selected staff are invited to provide input on action plan development.
- D. All relevant departments and/or staff roles have an opportunity to provide input on action plan development.
- E. Action plan is developed by a cross-functional team on which all relevant departments and staff roles are represented.

C-2.2 To what extent are relevant staff engaged in implementation?

- A. Many relevant staff are not aware of the action plan.
- B. Not all relevant staff are aware of action plan.
- C. Most relevant staff are aware of their role in delivering on action plan.
- D. All relevant staff are aware of their role in delivering on the action plan.
- E. Action plan includes department- and/or role-specific implementation guidance.

C-2.3 To what extent has your organization embedded sustainability into purchasing roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities?

- A. There are no sustainable purchasing roles or responsibilities at the company.
- B. Sustainable purchasing roles are not formally defined, but may be informally recognized.
- C. A sustainable purchasing point person is formally assigned with overall responsibility for ensuring applicable requirements and commitments are implemented at the organization, or for a project.
- D. Accountabilities and job-specific responsibilities are actively in place from management to applicable individual contributors.
- E. Accountability for sustainable purchasing at the company is formally assigned to top or executive management of the company, and/or there is Board-level review and responsibility for purchasing-related sustainability performance.

C-3.1 To what extent are suppliers engaged in development?

- A. Suppliers are not engaged in action plan development.
- B. Supplier engagement in development is limited or ad hoc.
- C. Selected suppliers are invited to provide input on action plan development.
- D. All relevant suppliers have at least one opportunity to provide input on action plan development.
- E. All relevant suppliers have multiple opportunities to provide input on action plan development.

C-3.2 To what extent are suppliers engaged in implementation?

- A. Most suppliers are not aware of the action plan.
- B. Not all affected suppliers are aware of the action plan.
- C. Most affected suppliers are aware of their role in the action plan.
- D. All affected suppliers are aware of their role in delivering on the action plan.
- E. Action plan includes specific implementation guidance for suppliers.

C-3.3 To what extent does the organization have a supplier engagement strategy?

- A. No active supplier engagement strategy on sustainability.
- B. Beginning stages of supplier engagement strategy and beginning to identify areas to focus efforts.
- C. A dedicated budget exists for supplier engagement and development.
- D. Supplier engagement is a key focus to our organization and we are seeing return on our efforts.
- E. Supplier engagement is a key focus to our organization and we are seeing return on our efforts.

Results

R-1.1 To what extent does the organization achieve meaningful results?

- A. Goals were not met.
- B. Goals were partially met. (50%)
- C. Goals were mostly met. (75%)
- D. Goals were fully met. (100%)
- E. Goals were exceeded.

R-1.2 To what extent does the organization measure and report its results?

- A. Results are not measured or reported.
- B. Reporting measures extent of implementation of action plan.
- C. Reporting includes estimated contribution to collective goals using relevant units.
- D. Estimated contribution to collective goals is validated by an independent third party.
- E. Results are shared publicly.

R-2.1 To what extent are staff trained to support implementation of action plan?

- A. No training program.
- B. Some relevant staff receive training
- C. Most relevant staff receive training.
- D. All relevant staff receive training.
- E. All staff receive enough information about action plan to identify latent opportunities for improvement.

R-2.2 To what extent are staff evaluated on contribution to action plan success?

- A. Staff are not evaluated on contribution.
- B. Contribution is included in performance evaluation for some relevant staff.
- C. Contribution is included in performance evaluation for all relevant staff.
- D. Staff receive recognition through a formal award program within their department.
- E. Staff receive recognition through a formal organization-wide award program.

R-3.1 To what extent are sustainability criteria embedded in product evaluation?

- A. <TBD>
- B. <TBD>
- C. <TBD>
- D. <TBD>
- E. <TBD>

R-3.2 To what extent are action plan priorities embedded in supplier selection through a supplier code of conduct (or equivalent criteria set)?

- A. Supplier code of conduct is posted on website and included in its contracts.
- B. Suppliers are required to review, sign, and return the code of conduct periodically or upon changes.
- C. Require executive-level signature from supplier confirming compliance to code of conduct.
- D. Include supplier code of conduct in supplier evaluation and scoring.
- E. Annually review supplier code of conduct high risks and perform desk audits and/or site visits, as appropriate.

R-3.3 To what extent does the organization actively support development of supplier sustainability capabilities?

- A. Suppliers are assessed on their sustainability performance.
- B. Suppliers are provided information about their sustainability performance relative to peers.
- C. Suppliers are provided an opportunity to discuss their sustainability performance assessment.
- D. Suppliers are provided information about opportunities to receive training on sustainability.
- E. Supplier training on sustainability is provided, hosted, or subsidized by your organization.

Innovation

- I-1.1 What proportion of eligible procurements does include non-financial award criteria?**
- A. None.
 - B. Some.
 - C. Most.
 - D. All.
 - E. <TBD>
- I-1.2 What proportion of eligible procurements use performance-based specifications?**
- A. None.
 - B. Some.
 - C. Most.
 - D. All.
 - E. <TBD>
- I-1.3 What proportion of eligible procurements are evaluated using full life cycle costing?**
- A. None.
 - B. Some are evaluated for total cost of ownership (TCO).
 - C. Most are evaluated for total cost of ownership (TCO).
 - D. All are evaluated for total cost of ownership (TCO), and some are evaluated for full life cycle costs (LCC).
 - E. All are evaluated for total cost of ownership (TCO), and most are evaluated for full life cycle costs (LCC).
- I-1.4 To what extent does the organization use its influence to encourage a marketplace of innovation?**
- A. Publicly communicates successful new solutions for adoption by others in the marketplace.
 - B. Collaborates with other purchasers to foster innovation in a particular category or joint procurement.
 - C. Proactively supports and defends organizations and initiatives that promote innovation to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.
 - D. Proactively supports and defends organizations and initiatives that promote innovation to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.
 - E. Proactively discourages, publicly condemns, and/or withholds support from organizations that impede innovation to advance collective environmental, social, and market integrity goals.
- I-2.1 To what extent does the organization provide training and recognition for staff on the use of processes and specifications that foster competition and innovation in procurement?**
- A. No training or recognition programs.
 - B. Training for some relevant staff.
 - C. Training for all relevant staff.
 - D. Ad hoc recognition of staff for activities that promote market innovation.
 - E. Through a formal program, recognizes staff for activities that promote market innovation.
- I-2.2 To what extent does the organization provide training and recognition for staff on the elimination of anti-competitive practices from procurement?**
- A. No training or recognition programs.
 - B. Training for some relevant staff.
 - C. Training for all relevant staff.
 - D. Provides whistleblower protection for staff who identify anti-competitive practices in procurement.
 - E. Proactively rewards staff who identify anti-competitive practices in procurement.
- I-3.1 What proportion of eligible procurements are made SME-friendly by splitting tenders into lots and/or encouraging consortia to bid?**
- A. None.
 - B. Some.
 - C. Most.
 - D. All.
 - E. <TBD>

I-3.2 To what extent does the organization actively promote supplier innovation?

- A. Offers an opportunity for all suppliers to provide input on procurement processes.
- B. Hosts a meeting for all interested suppliers at least once per year, to receive input in procurement processes.
- C. Actively engages the supplier community on a pre-competitive basis at least 6 months notice in advance of tendering. for some large procurements.
- D. Actively engages the supplier community on a pre-competitive basis at least 6 months notice in advance of tendering. for most large procurements.
- E. Actively engages the supplier community on a pre-competitive basis at least 6 months notice in advance of tendering. for all large procurements.

I-3.3 To what extent does the organization promote supplier diversity?

- A. No focus on using diverse suppliers.
- B. Include diverse suppliers as contractors when requested by internal customer.
- C. Subcontract to diverse suppliers at every opportunity, regardless of whether customer asked for it.
- D. Active with supplier diversity agencies and councils to pursue new diverse suppliers to work with.
- E. Established mentoring programs to develop and grow diverse suppliers.

Transparency

- T-1.1 In the past year, what actions did your organization take to encourage the sharing of sustainability-related product information?**
- A. Requested sustainability-related product information for some relevant solicitations.
 - B. Requested sustainability-related product information for most relevant solicitations.
 - C. Required suppliers to disclose sustainability-related product information.
 - D. Supported and/or participated in multi-stakeholder initiatives to encourage sharing of sustainability-related product information.
 - E. Lobbied for regulations requiring disclosure of sustainability-related product information.
- T-1.2 To what extent does the organization share relevant sustainability information with the broader purchasing community?**
- A. Sustainable purchasing policy and/or related documents are available online.
 - B. Relevant solicitation language is available online or on request.
 - C. Actively share relevant solicitation language with appropriate purchaser networks (e.g., ISM, NASPO, RPN, SPLC).
 - D. Share sustainable purchasing successes and/or challenges through documented case studies.
 - E. Collaborate with other purchasers to develop information sharing networks.
- T-3.1 To what extent does the organization require disclosure of beneficial ownership for its suppliers?**
- A. Require disclosure for some suppliers.
 - B. Require disclosure for all suppliers
 - C. Require public disclosure for some suppliers.
 - D. Require public disclosure for all suppliers.
 - E. Lobby for regulations requiring public disclosure of beneficial ownership.
- T-3.2 In the past year, to what extent did you give preference to suppliers that publicly report targets, timelines, and progress toward improving their sustainability performance?**
- A. No solicitations.
 - B. Some solicitations.
 - C. Most solicitations.
 - D. As a standard preference in all solicitations.
 - E. Conducted or contracted spot audits to confirm supplier-reported information.