



Based on the information submitted by Environmental Protection Department officials to the Panel on Environmental Affairs of the Legislative Council for discussion on December 20, 2006, Green Council officials have prepared the following written comments for Panel members' consideration:

GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

Paragraph 3:

1. Main comment

The Government Logistics Department (GLD) should expand the number and range of bulk purchasing items which are subjected to environmental preferability considerations. In addition, individual departments should be given greater environmental preferable product purchasing guidance including specifications for more product categories.

2. Further comment

GLD officials should expand the number and types of categories of environmentally preferable products (EPP) being purchased (e.g. office equipment, electrical equipment, textiles, garments, etc.) under the GLD's electronic tendering system -- <https://www.ets.com.hk/English/TenderNotice/Notice.asp>.

In China, the Ministry of Finance and the State Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) published the "Implementation Guidance on Public Procurement Based on Environmentally Labeled Products" (環境標誌產品政府採購實施意見) on October 27, 2006, which is to take effect on January 1, 2007 at central level and on January 1, 2008 at provincial level. The "Guidance" requires that when a public authority uses the financial fund for procurement, environmentally labeled products listed in the 'China Environment Labeling Scheme Certified Products for Government Procurement Checklist' (環境標誌產品政府採購清單) are to be considered first. In addition, a **10% price difference** between green products and alternatives is acceptable for Government procurement.

From July 18, 2006, the Ministry of Finance, People's Republic of China has required all government departments, when purchasing energy conserving appliances, to select from a checklist of over 2,000 electrical appliances certified with Energy Conservation Certification (<http://www.ccgp.gov.cn>) issued by China Standard Certification Centre (<http://www.cccp.org.cn>)

Since 2000, the Japanese Government has established and maintained a “designated procurement items list” that currently includes 214 types of EPPs ranging from stationery, machines, electric appliances, and interior fixtures, to public works projects and services.

Purchasing of EPPs by other departments should be encouraged. Some form of strong guidance and/or a directive should be prepared and disseminated that instructs officials of all departments to incorporate green purchasing considerations and decisions. This will give a strong signal that the Government is proceeding, in a significant way, with green purchasing.

3. *Further comment*

For product categories with environmentally preferable alternatives identified, Government officials should establish purchasing targets for the environmentally preferable products. Specifically, percentage levels of total products purchased within each category should be set and pursued. For example, Government officials should set a target percentage of A4 recycled paper within the total A4 paper category.

PUBLIC WORKS

Paragraphs 7 & 8:

4. *Main comment*

With reclamation work having decreased and the establishment of the crushing plant in Tuen Mun Fill Bank, Government officials should mandate that all public works projects must utilize recycled aggregate. Further, Government officials should require public works project contactors to select and use environmentally preferable construction alternatives with respect to concrete, bricks, paints, pipes, carpets, etc..

5. *Further comment*

Purchasing of recycled aggregate will not only reduce the amount of construction and demolition (C&D) waste requiring disposal, but also stimulate and assist the local recycling industry. While recognizing that current engineering contracts include clauses to adopt recycled construction materials including recycled aggregate, Green Council officials have comments regarding the following three specific C&D waste aspects:

- (a) Amount of C&D waste converted to public fill and recycled aggregates;
- (b) Relative amounts of recycled aggregates and non-recycled aggregates purchased by public works officials; and
- (c) Availability, identification and selection of environmentally preferable construction material alternatives.

For item (a), and with the Construction Waste Charging Scheme having now been operational since 1 December 2005, Government officials should keep a clear record on the amount of C&D material received in landfills, public fill reception facilities and sorting facilities, in order to measure and assess the effectiveness of the scheme.

For item (b), based upon information available from the Civil Engineering and Development Department and through its web site -- (<http://www.cedd.gov.hk/eng/services/recycling/index.htm>), the crushing plant has adequate handling capacity to accommodate higher levels of demand for recycled aggregate. In addition, Buildings Regulations should be amended to allow recycled materials (e.g. aggregate) to be used in construction works (e.g. highways, roads, etc.) and construction materials.

For item (c), Government officials should encourage and pursue greater purchasing levels of recycled construction materials and/ environmentally preferable construction material. Targets should be set for readily available environmentally preferable construction materials (e.g. concretes, paints, paving materials, etc.).

WAY FORWARD

Paragraph 15:

6. Main comment

In all purchasing decisions, Government officials should always consider to ‘buy green’ whenever possible. To stimulate and assist in this regard, broad green purchasing guidelines and principles should be provided to appropriate decision-making officials in all departments, along with green product specifications.

7. *Further comment*

As of the end of November 2006, and almost one year after the publishing of “A Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)”, Environmental Protection Department officials have posted on their website -- (http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/how_help/green_procure/green_procure.html) – green product specifications for 15 products with recycled content and 16 EPPs for government-wide reference. In this regard, Green Council officials have the following comments:

- A government-wide education campaign should be undertaken to provide officials in all government departments with simple and straightforward information on the benefits of green purchasing and the availability of these green specifications.
- Training should be developed and provided to procurement officers to instruct them on when and how to include these green specifications in their procurement procedures and activities.
- Strong guidance should be conveyed to government departmental officials on environmental performance preference purchasing considerations and procedures to be applied during the sourcing of products. It could be emphasized that preference should be given to high-quality EPPs (e.g. products that are certified by and display ecolabels of recognized and credible third-party organizations like the Green Council's Hong Kong Green Label).
- A definition/description of “economically rational” should be developed and disseminated to all government departments that includes identification of an “acceptable” price difference(s) for commonly purchased environmentally preferable products (e.g. paper products and stationery).
- Guidance, assistance and support should be provided on the preparation and application of green specifications for product categories not yet available and posted on the EPD website when government officials choose to initiate such work within their own specific departments.
- Along with the provision of green purchasing guidance, a mechanism must be developed and implemented to track individual bureaus' and departments' levels of activity and to determine cumulative overall government achievements. Without such a mechanism, it will be impossible to assess how much, or even whether the Government is “heading towards being green”.

8. *Main comment*

Government officials should develop and adopt a position paper/directive on balancing price, quality and environmental preferability in the selection of products for purchase. In addition, mandatory green specifications should be imposed during purchasing whenever possible and appropriate.

9. *Further comment*

Along with the preparation of a position paper/directive on balancing price, quality and environmental preferability, GLD officials should develop and disseminate a corresponding “balancing”/scoring system for incorporation into routine departmental product evaluation procedures.

For some EPPs, such as certain paint and cleaning products, the performance may be different if the same application method as for non-environmentally preferable products is used. To address this, Government officials should establish separate quality standards and user instructions for these EPPs.