

Procurers' note: applying the Government Buying Standard for office furniture

Glossary

Buying Solutions:

Now known as Crown Commercial Service (formerly Government Procurement Service).

Crown Commercial Service

The Crown Commercial Service was formed in January 2014 bringing together the Government Procurement Service (GPS), the commercial function of the Cabinet Office, and common goods and services procurement and commercial management previously undertaken by departments. Before January 2014 the delivery arm of Government procurement was known as the Government Procurement Service and before July 2011 it was known as Buying Solutions. See: <http://ccs.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/>

FIRA Technical Requirements for Furniture:

A report, sponsored by Defra and prepared by FIRA (Furniture Industry Research Association), published in October 2011. It lists the relevant UK technical and quality reparability fitness standards, or equivalent, for the serviceability of both materials specific and furniture-item-specific requirements and testing methods.

See: <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/documents/GBS-furniture-FIRA-TechnicalRequirements-2011.pdf>

GBS: Government Buying Standards

Formally known as “Buy Sustainable Quick Wins”, GBSs are designed to provide guidance and simplify processes to facilitate sustainable buying by Government. They include information and official specifications that all government buyers must follow when procuring a range of products.

See: <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/advice/public/buying/>

GGC: Greening Government Commitments

A series of agreed Government commitments to significantly reduce environmental impacts, cutting waste, reducing water consumption and making procurement more sustainable, that need to be taken by Government Departments and associated bodies.

See: <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/gov/green-government/commitments/>

GPP: Green Public Procurement

A Government policy to direct the spending power of Government towards environmentally friendly products and services by encouraging the public sector to take account of environmental factors in its actions and policies.

See: <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/advice/public/buying/background/green-public-procurement/>

GPU: Government Property Unit

The GPU is the property function of the Efficiency and Reform Group in the Cabinet Office and leads Government property strategy across the public sector. It is responsible for delivering targeted savings as well as improving the built environment and promoting economic growth where possible.

GPS: Government Procurement Service (GPS)

The GPS is now known as the Crown Commercial Service.

Recycle: For the purposes of this document recycle refers to materials being redeployed in a form that is not necessarily the same as its original form. For instance wooden products can be processed and recycled as chipboard.

Reuse: For the purposes of this document, reuse refers to a product being redeployed for its original purpose.

Refurbish: For the purposes of this document, refurbish refers to the reuse of a product for its original purpose, but after the product has been repaired and cosmetically freshened. For example, reupholstering, repair, remanufacture as well as refurbishment shall be classed as refurbish

Remanufacture: For the purpose of this document, remanufacture refers to altering an item of furniture to better suit the needs of the user; an example would include turning a corner desk into a straight desk.

Units Conventional SI units and prefixes used throughout: {k, kilo, 1000} {M, mega, 1,000,000} {G, giga, 10⁹} {kg, kilogramme, unit mass} {t, metric tonne, 1,000 kg}

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1 Introduction

In February 2011 the Greening Government Commitments (GGCs) were launched. These laid out government commitments for greening operations and procurement across the Government Estate, and supersede the Sustainable Operations on Government Estate (SOGE) targets.

The Government Buying Standards (GBS) are a series of sustainability standards for the public procurement of about 60 goods and services. They provide a source of comprehensive knowledge and set out detailed guidance for buyers and suppliers about what does and does not constitute a sustainable product or service. The purpose of GBS is to reduce the environmental impact across the whole life cycle of a product or service and to enable purchasers to achieve long-term value for money and influence in the supply chain. The minimum standards are mandatory for all central government departments and their executive agencies. They can also provide a benchmark for the wider public sector.

In 2012, Defra proposed that government departments and their agencies should always consider the reuse of currently available furniture, or purchase reused furniture before procuring new. Extending product life and reuse are considered routes to reduce the environmental impact of products and also to lower the costs associated with the procurement of equipment.

This document provides guidance on the GBS for office furniture when equipping both new and refurbished facilities as well as site transfers and relocations. It is intended that this document be read in conjunction with the GBS for office furniture.

2 What is the GBS for office furniture?

The Government Buying Standards (GBS) have been introduced to promote sustainable procurement criteria at both minimum and best practice levels to provide value for money over the whole life of the product and reduce the environmental impact of governmental purchasing practices.

More specifically for office furniture, the GBS has been developed after consultation by Defra with UK stakeholders and provides a process by which furniture can be reused, re-furbished and re-upholstered, as well as requiring design to enable easy repair and to ensure that components will be available for five years.

Full text of the GBS for furniture is available at <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/advice/public/buying/products/furniture/>.

Full text of the FIRA report is available at <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/documents/GBS-furniture-FIRA-TechnicalRequirements-2011.pdf>

3 Why comply with the GBS?

Compliance with this GBS:

- mandatory for the organisations covered by the Greening Government Commitments.
- ensures compliance with the UK Government procurement policy on timber. Mandatory for organisations covered by the Greening Government Commitments.
- helps ensure that sustainability is 'built in' to the design and construction of furniture, thereby contributing to more efficient use of furniture and to subsequent reduction in costs.
- influence the supply chain towards sustainable manufacture and sourcing.
- help achieve long-term value for money.
- reduces environmental impact across the whole life cycle of products by acknowledging the environmental impact of manufacturing and other activities and demonstrating how these impacts can be mitigated.
- standardises the furniture procured, facilitating future reuse of furniture.
- help comply with other criteria such as EU Ecolabel, Nordic Swan and NF Environment.
- helps meet EU Green Public Procurement targets. It is the UK Government's policy to be at the forefront of sustainability and to extend GBS beyond the GPP where practical. Defra has shown that compliance with the UK GBS for furniture is at least equivalent to the EU GPP targets, and is aimed at surpassing them.
- drives the office furniture industry to become more sustainable.

3.1 *Who needs to comply*

The GBS for office furniture applies to all organisations covered by the Greening Government Commitments; they are required to ensure they meet at least the Technical Specifications as specified in the GBS.

Since 2011 the scope of Greening Government Commitments includes all Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Executive Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), and non-Ministerial Departments in England. They do not apply to the estates and operations of the Devolved Administrations, their Executive Agencies and related bodies.

4 Scope

The GBS for office furniture includes items such as chairs, desks, tables, desk screens, shelves, filing cabinets, cupboards, reception and lounge furniture etc. It does not include other related items such as wall and floor coverings (e.g. curtains and carpets), furniture procured for outdoor use or domestic furniture.

4.1 Reuse and refurbishment

The GBS requires the reuse and refurbishment of furniture to be considered before procurement of new. The term reuse can mean different things to different people. For the GBS, reuse is associated with products (e.g. chairs, tables) and should not be confused with recycling, which focuses on the reuse of materials (e.g. plastic, wood, glass).

Products, or components of complete products (e.g. a table top), that are used for their original purpose can be considered to be reused. New products that are claimed to be made up of recycled material cannot be considered as reused (reused products that contain recycled materials can be considered as reused).

Products can be considered for reuse after one life cycle. Within this context, furniture should have been in use in at least one role prior to being considered for reuse.

The GBS also requires departments to consider the use of refurbished furniture or to consider having existing furniture refurbished. For the purposes of this GBS, this includes both actions to freshen furniture ready for use (including reupholstering) and remanufacturing activities where furniture is being altered to better fit the needs of the user. Hence, any activity that extends the life of an item of office furniture, such as re-upholstering, repair, remanufacture or refurbishment will be classed as refurbished.

4.2 Procurement procedure

The procurement procedure is summarised below:



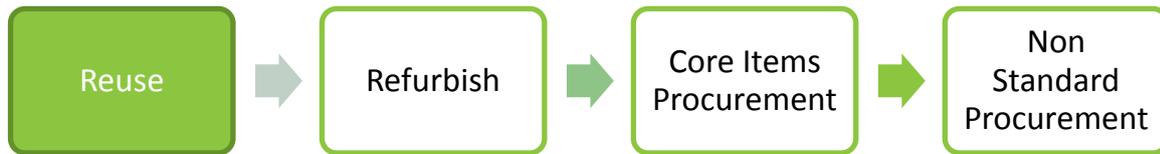
Whenever possible, and where the Value for Money over the whole life of the furniture can be justified, existing or incumbent furniture should be reused. If reuse is not immediately possible then the furniture should be retained until an opportunity for reuse arises elsewhere. Where the furniture is not suitable for reuse, it should be made available for refurbishment.

If suitable reused furniture is not available, consideration should be given to refurbishment of existing furniture or the procurement of refurbished furniture.

If suitable furniture is not available for reuse or refurbishment, it should be made available for the subsequent refurbishment of other furniture. Unusable components should then be sent for recycling.

If these options are not practical, new furniture can be procured using the Core Items Furniture list (Appendix B of the GBS) and the requirements in Annex A of the GBS.

If specialist furniture is required, where possible, procurement should be according to Annex A of the GBS.



5 When reuse should be considered

Whenever office furniture is required, consideration must first be given to the possibility of re-using furniture.

5.1 *How reuse should be performed*

When furniture is required, first consideration should be given to the internal reuse of current items. If the items currently in use are not suitable, such as in the case of facility relocation, the reuse of incumbent furniture should also be considered.

Where internal stock is not sufficient to meet the requirements, (or you have stock that is no longer required), use the Crown Commercial Service's reuse service website <http://cabinetoffice.gov.uk/reuse-service> to identify spare furniture stock in other government organisations.

When it becomes clear that some furniture items will no longer be needed in future (e.g. due to an office move), items suitable for reuse should be flagged well in advance on the above mentioned website, with a deadline for removal.

5.2 *How reuse should be reported*

Under the Greening Government Commitments Departments will be asked to report on compliance with the GBS, including questions on reuse policy.



6 When refurbishment should be considered

If suitable reused furniture cannot be sourced, consideration must be given to refurbishment of existing departmental furniture stock or stock from other government organisations. If existing stock cannot be refurbished, consideration will be given to the procurement of reused or refurbished furniture.

6.1 *How refurbishment should be performed / refurbished furniture procured*

Refurbished furniture involves the repair/refresh of existing stock.

When existing stock is being refurbished, the furniture may be temporarily unavailable. Good practice will involve a phased refurbishment programme to minimise disruption.

Refurbished furniture can be acquired from elsewhere e.g. under government framework Lot 4 of RM1501 – the service of repair and refurbishment when suitable reused or refurbished furniture is unavailable from departmental stocks or from other government organisations.

Furniture that is unsuitable for refurbishment should be used as a source of components for the refurbishment of other furniture. If not needed internally it should be advertised on the Crown Commercial Service’s reuse service website <http://ccs.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/i-am-buyer/reuse> for other government organisations to use.

As at the time of publication, the Crown Commercial Service’s framework does not allow the purchase of refurbished furniture, only the refurbishment of existing furniture. It is hoped that the next iteration of the framework will include refurbished furniture. In the interim it is accepted that this may not be feasible for Departments. A Department may however, procure refurbished furniture through their own routes, if they can demonstrate the business case. Such a business case could be strongly supported by evidence from WRAP in a 2013 consultation with industry stakeholders^a. Through this work the resale value of re-manufactured products has been estimated to be between 30-60% of the original price.

The Furniture Reuse Network, is a not-for-profit organisation that helps the user locate the various charities in their area which can supply second-hand furniture. <http://www.frn.org.uk/donate-furniture-and-electricals.html>. (This link is provided for information purposes only and departments should ensure any procurement of refurbishment/services is in accordance with their procurement rules.)

This refurbished furniture (either procured or from existing stock) should adhere to national ergonomic and safety standards, a summary of which are set out in FIRA’s ‘Technical Requirements for Furniture’ published in October 2011.^b

^a Cox V., Boulos S., Fitzgerald, J., Vinogradova, M., Buckland, T., Thoung, C. “Economic Impacts of Resource Efficient Business Models” (2013) Project code: RBM200-009; See:

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Economic%20impacts%20of%20resource%20efficient%20business%20models%20final%20report.pdf>

^b Technical Requirements for Furniture (FIRA/Defra): (<http://sd.defra.gov.uk/documents/GBS-furniture-FIRA-TechnicalRequirements-2011.pdf>.)

6.2 *How refurbishment should be reported*

Under the Greening Government Commitments Departments will be asked to report on compliance with the GBS, including questions on use of refurbished furniture.



7 When procurement should be considered

Procurement of standard office furniture should be considered where it is not possible to reuse or refurbish current stock or to procure reused or refurbished furniture.

7.1 *How approved procurement should be performed*

Any necessary purchases should be made from a core list of items, included with the GBS as Appendix B^a. The aim of this list is to reduce the variety of furniture types procured, which in turn should encourage more reuse and refurbishment. Where possible, procurers should specify items on this list. Procurers may wish to use Crown Commercial Service’s framework, see: <http://ccs.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/contracts/rm1501> but should note that **not** all products available on the Framework will be compliant with the GBS.

Procured furniture must also be compliant with the Technical Specifications and the procurement process must involve assessment against the mandatory Award Criteria set out in Appendix A of the GBS for furniture. Appendix A also identifies optional best practice criteria which are aspirational and for which no cost benefit analysis has been undertaken. Where a service contract is established, the procurer should require the service provider (and their suppliers) to comply with the mandatory technical specifications and assess against the mandatory Award Criteria set out in the GBS. See Section 9: Meeting the requirements of Appendix A for details on how to apply these criteria to furniture procurement.

7.2 *How approved procurement should be reported*

Under the Greening Government Commitments Departments will be asked to report on compliance with the GBS.

^a It should be noted that this list is different to what is referred to by Crown Commercial Service as core products



8 Non-standard furniture procurement

Whilst procurers are encouraged to always use the Core Items Furniture List (Appendix B of the GBS) of products, there will occasionally be the need to buy furniture that is not on the core items list (non-standard furniture).

8.1 *How non-standard furniture procurement should be performed*

All procured furniture must be compliant with the Technical Specifications and the procurement process must involve assessment against the mandatory Award Criteria set out in Appendix A of the GBS for furniture. Appendix A also identifies optional best practice criteria which are aspirational and for which no cost benefit analysis has been undertaken. Where a service contract is established, the procurer should require the service provider (and their suppliers) to comply with the mandatory technical specifications and assess against the mandatory Award Criteria set out in the GBS. See Section 9: Meeting the requirements of Appendix A for details on how to apply these criteria to furniture procurement.

8.2 *How criteria procurement should be reported*

Under the Greening Government Commitments Departments will be asked to report on compliance with the GBS.

9 Meeting the requirements of Appendix A

Verification: Upon award suppliers must provide verification as per the table below. Prior to that bidders will need to declare that they will be able to comply.

9.1 Mandatory Technical Specifications

GREEN DESIGN

Design for reuse, refurbishment and repair
All procured furniture must be designed for disassembly to facilitate reuse, refurbishment, repair and ultimately recycling, either in part or as a whole.
Status
Mandatory technical specification
Verification
Suppliers must provide technical documentation that demonstrates that their product can be disassembled with standard tools, thereby allowing reuse, refurbishment, repair and recycling of components.
Guidance
The reuse and refurbishing of office furniture reduces costs and lessens the environmental impact of furniture production. Producing furniture that can be easily taken apart, repaired and refurbished will extend its useful life. All procured furniture must be designed so that it can be disassembled. Furniture should not be designed with permanent fixings (such as glue) and have ready access to spare parts.

Spare Parts
Components and spare parts will be made available by the supplier for at least 5 years after sale to extend the product's lifetime through repair, as far as reasonably practical.
Status
Mandatory technical specification
Verification
Suppliers must provide appropriate documentation to demonstrate compliance with these standards.
Guidance
In order for furniture to be repairable, spare parts need to be available over a long period of time. This will extend the life of the furniture, reducing the overall costs of ownership and its environmental impact.

CAD Diagrams
All furniture manufacturers must make available to the contracting authority details of their table tops. This should be in the form of CAD diagrams that show the location of screw holes and desk top sizes to

facilitate the refurbishment of the desk top.
Status
Mandatory technical specification
Verification
The supplier must provide a CAD diagram diagram (to the Contracting Authority), output to a PDF, showing information on the dimensions of the table top along with how and where fixings are applied.
Guidance
The reuse and refurbishing of office furniture reduces costs and lessens the environmental impact of furniture production. Having access to design documentation enables other manufacturers to refurbish and reuse desktops.
Glossary
CAD: Computer Aided Design

Plastic Parts
Plastic parts of greater than 50g in weight shall be marked for recycling according to ISO 11469 or an equivalent and must not contain additions of other materials that may hinder recycling. For such parts of 50g in weight or more, where a marking will adversely affect the consumer acceptance and aesthetic reasons, information regarding recycling may be included in the user's manual of similar literature.
Status
Mandatory technical specification
Verification
Verification: Suppliers should provide evidence that plastics included within the product are clearly labelled for recycling. Alternatively, this information should be included within the User's Manual or similar literature. Suppliers should also declare where materials within the product may hinder recycling.
Guidance
Plastics are non-renewable resources and plastic wastes are also environmental pollutants. In addition, the energy used to recycle plastics may be less than required to produce new plastics. For these reasons it would be advantageous to recycle plastics. Where a product has plastic parts that are more than 50g in weight, suppliers should clearly label their products with the appropriate recycling symbols. Alternatively, where a marking will adversely affect consumer acceptance of the product, information regarding recycling must be included within a User's Manual or within similar literature. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) sets the standards for recycling of plastics. These are outlined in the document ISO 11469, which also defines how the recycle logo should be displayed. The identification consists of a triangle made of arrows beneath which are abbreviated terms for polymers. Numbers within the triangle also correspond with particular polymers.
References
ISO documentation on plastic labelling:

Durability, Reparability, Fitness for Use and Ergonomics
All furniture must comply with the relevant UK technical and quality standards, or equivalent, for serviceability, as given in FIRA's "Technical Requirements for Furniture. Produced for Defra by FIRA International Ltd ^a . October 2011".
Status
Mandatory technical specification
Verification
Suppliers must provide appropriate documentation to demonstrate compliance with these standards.
Guidance
To avoid potential health problems such as repetitive strain injury (RSI) furniture needs furniture must be designed to meet the latest standards on ergonomics. The furniture must also meet standards on safety such as fire resistance. These standards are given in the document "Technical Requirements for Furniture"
References
"Technical Requirements for Furniture", which can be found at: http://sd.defra.gov.uk/documents/GBS-furniture-FIRA-TechnicalRequirements-2011.pdf

Adhesives and Glues
Where adhesives and glues are used, their VOC content shall not exceed 10% by weight.
Status
Mandatory technical specification
Verification
Suppliers must submit a list of all adhesives used in the assembly of furniture and their MSDS or equivalent documentation, demonstrating compliance with the criterion. Furniture carrying a Type 1 ecolabel will be deemed to comply. Suppliers should specifically ask to see either the Type 1 ecolabel or the section of the MSDS or other document that states the VOC content of the glue.
Guidance
By definition, Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) evaporate easily at room temperature and are thus easily released into the environment. These substances may have a wide range of long term adverse effects on human or animal health. A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) provides information on working with substances in a safe manner. These documents detail any environmental or health risks associated with a chemical.
Glossary
VOC: Volatile Organic Compounds MSDS: Material Safety Data Sheet

^a <http://www.fira.co.uk/>

Formaldehyde in Panels
The emissions of free formaldehyde from wood-based panels shall not exceed the E1 emissions limit as described in standard BS EN 13986: 2004 Wood-based panels for use in construction (referring to BS EN 312: 2003 Particleboards Specifications and BS EN 622-1 2003 Fibreboards Specifications for MDF).
Status
Mandatory technical specification
Verification
Suitable evidence, such as test reports, shall be supplied demonstrating compliance with this criterion and the standards quoted.
Guidance
Formaldehyde is used to make waterproof bonds in particleboard and fibreboard. This substance is a carcinogen. The emissions of free formaldehyde from wood-based panels shall not exceed the E1 emissions limit as described in standard BS EN 13986: 2004 Wood-based panels for use in construction (referring to BS EN 312: 2003 Particleboards Specifications and BS EN 622-1 2003 Fibreboards Specifications for MDF).
References
BS EN 312: 2003: http://shop.bsigroup.com/en/ProductDetail/?pid=00000000030129963 BS EN 622-1 2003: http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=00000000030087835

Surface Coating of Wood, Plastic and/or Metal parts
The products used for surface coatings shall not contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more than 5% by volume Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) • Alkylphenoethoxylates • Isothiazolinone compounds • PFAS (Perfluorinated alkyl sulfonates) • Phthalates • Heavy metals except as a siccative • Volatile aromatic hydrocarbons • Halogenated Organic Solvents that are considered by MSDS to be harmful to human health.
Status
Mandatory technical specification
Verification
A declaration by the supplier demonstrating compliance with the criteria should be produced.
Guidance
<p>Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) evaporate easily at room temperature and are thus easily released into the environment. These substances may have a wide range of long term adverse effects on human or animal health. They are widely used in paints.</p> <p>The listed substances are known to be harmful to human health and the environment and have been previously used in coating formulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alkylphenoethoxylates are highly toxic to aquatic organisms, and in the environment degrade to more environmentally persistent compounds.

- Isothiazolinone compounds can cause irritation to the skin and mucous membranes.
- PFAS (Perfluorinated alkyl sulfonates) bio-accumulate in fish.
- Phthalates have been shown to be endocrine inhibitors; this can cause cancerous tumours, birth defects, and other developmental disorders.
- Heavy metals, in large quantities, are considered carcinogenic and hazardous to human health. A siccative is a curing compound (usually cobalt) for specific Alkyl paint types.
- Volatile aromatic hydrocarbons can have severe effects on the human body and the environment including being carcinogenic and having an effect on the reproductive system.
- Halogenated Organic Solvents considered by MSDS to be harmful to human health; long term exposure can cause kidney and liver damage.

Glossary

VOC: Volatile Organic Compounds

WOOD

Wood and Wood Based Materials

Timber must be purchased in accordance with the UK Government's timber procurement policy. Only timber and timber products originating either from independently verified legal and sustainable sources or from a licensed Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) partner can be purchased.

As an alternative, contracting authorities can demand recycled timber. Please refer to Timber Procurement Advice Note (TPAN) for the definition of recycled material.

All wood used in furniture must have evidence from the supplier that the products they are delivering comply with the policy. This evidence should certify that the supplied products are derived from legal and sustainable sources or are FLEGT licensed. Further details of how to achieve this are available on CPET's website. www.cpet.org.uk

Status

Mandatory technical specification

Verification

Suppliers should provide evidence covering both the source of the timber (Chain of Custody) and proof that it is legally and sustainably managed, or licensed by the FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade) Voluntary partnership. This evidence can come in two forms, Categories A (forest certification) and B (other type of evidence), as set out in the UK Government Timber Procurement Advice Note. It and further advice are available at www.cpet.org.uk

Documentary evidence and independent verification also apply to recycled timber, but focus on the previous timber use rather than the forest source. Recycled timber shall be supported with evidence tracing the timber back to the previous use.

Guidance

Illegal logging causes environmental degradation, habitat loss and can have a detrimental effect on both local communities and to the economies of producer countries.

The supplier must be able to provide evidence covering both the source of the timber (Chain of Custody) and proof that it is legally and sustainably managed. Three different types of licences are acceptable as

evidence. These are either a Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) license or Category A or Category B evidence.

Category A evidence is independent certification of the timber and timber products by any of the forest certification schemes that meet the policy requirements. Please refer to CPET website for a full list of approved schemes: <http://www.cpet.org.uk/uk-government-timber-procurement-policy/evidence-of-compliance/category-a-evidence/approved-schemes>

Category B evidence can vary widely and needs to be judged on a case by case basis. Therefore the procurer should be aware of the procedures necessary for compliance. To this end the UK government has provided a framework for evaluating Category B evidence.

Glossary

FLEGT: Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade
CPET: Central Point of Expertise on Timber

References

FLEGT is the European Union's action plan to reduce illegal logging. Further information can be found at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/flegt.htm>

Further information on evidence requirements can be found here:
<http://www.cpet.org.uk/uk-government-timber-procurement-policy/evidence-of-compliance>

Procurement Advice Note June 2013:
<http://www.cpet.org.uk/uk-government-timber-procurement-policy>

TEXTILES

Textile Materials and Fabrics

The products shall comply with the Government Buying Standards mandatory Technical Specification criteria for textiles.

See: <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/documents/spec-textiles.pdf>

Status

Mandatory technical specification

Verification

Verification: All products carrying the EU Ecolabel for textiles or a national or private label fulfilling the listed criteria will be deemed to comply. Any other appropriate means of proof, such as a technical dossier of the manufacturer or a test report from a recognised body will also be accepted.

Guidance

Many criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the importance of standards for textile and fabric purchasing. These include the effects of pesticide and dyes, ethical standards in production and the effect of the product on the environment over its total lifetime.

References

Further information can be found at:
<http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=00000000030112594>

Suppliers should be aware of the standards set out by the government in:
<http://sd.defra.gov.uk/documents/spec-textiles.pdf>

9.2 *Mandatory for inclusion as Award Criteria^a*

Product Materials
The tenderer should indicate the percentage by weight of recycled content and/or refurbished and reused components of wood based materials, plastics, and/or metals in the final piece of furniture.
Status
Mandatory Award Criteria
Verification
Suppliers must show documentation describing the percentage by weight of recycled, refurbished and reused content.
Guidance
Reuse, refurbishing and recycling furniture reduces its overall environmental burden. By including recycled materials as well as reused and refurbished components reduces the environmental burden of the product.

Product Materials
The tenderer should demonstrate that they have a take-back scheme for repairing and refurbishing products or recycling for products that have reached the end of their useful lives.
Status
Mandatory Award Criteria
Verification
Suppliers must provide documentation to demonstrate that they have the capacity to meet this requirement.
Guidance
Reuse and recycling of furniture reduces its overall environmental burden. By operating a take-back scheme the supplier is showing commitment to ensuring the furniture is disposed of in the most appropriate way.

Padding Materials
Products that contain padding materials shall comply with the EU Ecolabel Mattress criteria. For flame retardants (FR) used in foams, both additive and reactive flame retardants are permissible.
Status
Mandatory Award Criteria
Verification
All products carrying the EU Ecolabel or a national or private label fulfilling the listed criteria will be deemed to comply. Any other appropriate means of proof, such as a technical dossier of the manufacturer or a test report from a recognised body (EN ISO 17025 or equivalent certified) will also be

^a the procurement process must involve assessment against the mandatory Award Criteria. It is not mandatory that the criteria are met for award.

accepted. Suppliers will ensure compliance with UK flammability legislation.

Guidance

Certain flame retardants are known to be damaging to human health and the environment. It is important that a balance is struck between the need for a product to be safe but also non-toxic.

References

The UK flammability legislation with regard to padding materials and mattresses can be found at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/files/file24685.pdf>

Packaging Materials

The tenderer should indicate the percentage by weight of recycled content in the packaging materials (plastic and cardboard).

Status

Mandatory Award Criteria

Verification

Suppliers must provide a list of different packaging materials, their weight and a declaration by the packaging producer(s) stating the percentage recycled content in their packaging material.

Guidance

In order to efficiently recycle materials, packaging products must be easily separated into different categories. Also, to maximise the amount of recyclable materials, all the constituent parts should be recyclable.

Packaging Materials

The tenderer should demonstrate that their packaging system is designed to be reused for its original purpose.

Status

Mandatory Award Criteria

Verification

Suppliers must provide evidence in accordance with BS EN 13429: 2004 or equivalent. This states that the packaging should be able to do a significant number of trips under normal conditions of use without suffering significant damage upon loading and unloading; a system supporting packaging reuse is available. The packaging can be cleaned, washed and repaired as necessary, and still be able to perform its intended function without any risk to the health and safety of those doing so.

Guidance

In order to efficiently recycle materials, packaging products must be easily separated into different categories. Also, to maximise the amount of recyclable materials, all the constituent parts should be recyclable.

BS EN 13429: 2004 states that the packaging should be able to do many trips under normal conditions of use without suffering significant damage upon loading and unloading; a system supporting packaging reuse is available. The packaging can be cleaned, washed and repaired as necessary, and still be able to perform its intended function without any risk to the health and safety of those doing so. Suppliers must

provide evidence that they subscribe to the On-Pack Recycling Label Scheme and that they use appropriately sanctioned logos on their packaging.

References

BS EN 13429: 2004
<http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=00000000030094797>

Packaging Materials

The tenderer should demonstrate that the packaging material is clearly marked to aid recycling and disposal.

Status

Mandatory Award Criteria

Verification

Suppliers must provide evidence that they subscribe to The On-Pack Recycling Label Scheme and that they use appropriately sanctioned logos on their packaging.

Guidance

In order to efficiently recycle materials, packaging products must be easily separated into different categories. Also, to maximise the amount of recyclable materials, all the constituent parts should be recyclable.

BS EN 13429: 2004 states that the packaging should be able to do many trips under normal conditions of use without suffering significant damage upon loading and unloading; a system supporting packaging reuse is available. The packaging can be cleaned, washed and repaired as necessary, and still be able to perform its intended function without any risk to the health and safety of those doing so. Suppliers must provide evidence that they subscribe to the On-Pack Recycling Label Scheme and that they use appropriately sanctioned logos on their packaging.

References

BS EN 13429: 2004
<http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=00000000030094797>

9.3 Best Practice- Technical Specification

Padding Materials

The blowing agents of polyurethane foams (PUR-Foams) must not be HFC or methylene chloride.

Status

Best practice

Verification

Suppliers must present a declaration by the foam manufacturer of compliance with this criterion.

Guidance

Polyurethane foam is manufactured using blowing agents. These blowing agents must not be either hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) or methylene chloride.

HFCs are substances that, depending on the particular type of HFC, can damage the ozone layer or can

act as greenhouse gases.

Methylene chloride is predominantly used as a solvent and has several adverse health effects in both humans and animals including poisoning, damage to the optic nerve and chemical burns. In animals this substance is also linked with a variety of cancers and may be a carcinogen in humans.

Glossary

HFCs Hydrofluorocarbons

References

Further information can be found at

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/chemicals/files/studies/tno-methylene_chloride_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/chemicals/documents/competitiveness/hydrofluorocarbons_en.htm

9.4 Best Practice to include as Award Criteria

Textile Materials and Fabrics

Organically produced cotton and other natural fibres used in textiles in furniture. Bidders must indicate the proportion of cotton and other naturally produced fibres used in the textiles by weight derived from organic production. To be considered as such, the fibre must be produced according to Regulation EC No 834/2007.

Status

Best practice

Verification

Suppliers must provide evidence of the origin of the fibres used and the organic nature of their production, such as the EU Organic logo or other approved national logos for organic production.

Guidance

The production of cotton has serious environmental impact, particularly in the amount of pesticides used during growing cotton. Using organic cotton reduces the environmental impact of cotton cultivation.

References

The EU Regulations regarding organic production and the labelling of organic products is EC No 834/2007. Detailed information can be found at

http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=199667

Textile Materials and Fabrics

Bidders must indicate the proportion of the textile by weight made from recycled fibres, i.e. fibres originating only from cuttings for textiles and clothing manufacturers or from post consumer waste (textiles or otherwise).

Status

Best practice

Verification

Suppliers must provide appropriate documentation indicating the proportion of the textile by weight

made from recycled fibres. The supplier must also provide evidence of the origin of the recycled fibres used.

Guidance

Recycled textiles can be used as padding material, reducing the environmental burden of furniture production.

10 Reporting reuse

The GGC does not request detailed information on the amount of reused furniture. However, it would be useful if Departments could provide such data. To avoid double counting of reused furniture, only the department that is accepting and using the reused furniture should include the item in its reports.