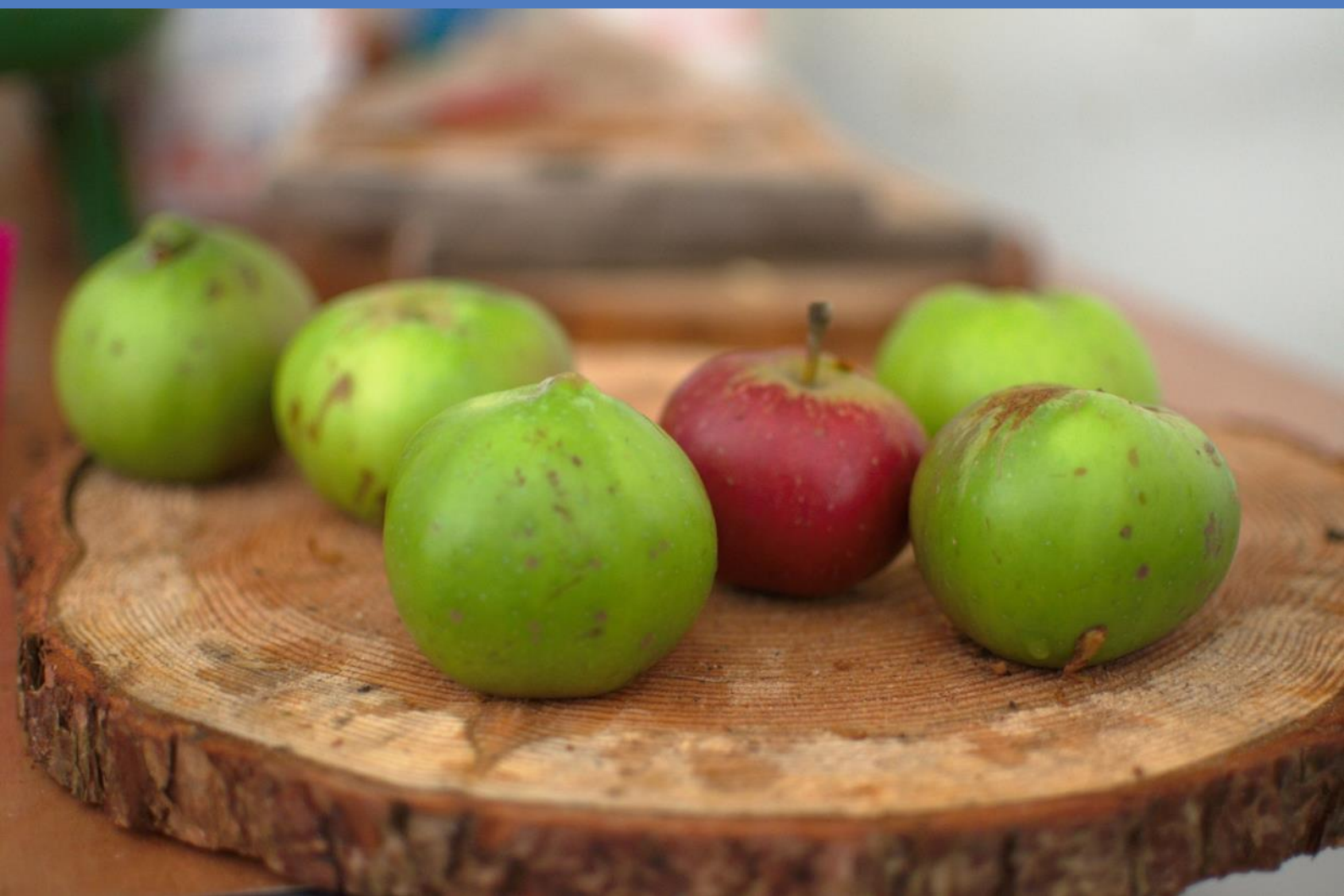# Sustainable Procurement at the University of Edinburgh

A Guide for our Catering Suppliers

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Sustainable Procurement at the University of Edinburgh

A guide for Our Catering Suppliers

Introduction

This document aims to review sustainability and social responsibility risks in the catering supply and services sector. It introduces our procurement priorities and policies for this sector and suggests possible strategies for improving the sustainability of your business. Here we build on our general guidance about sustainable procurement at the University, for suppliers from all sectors.

Contents

Social responsibility and sustainability risks in the catering sector

Social responsibility and sustainability risks in the catering sector include:

- Risks to environmental sustainability and biodiversity
- Risks to animal welfare
- Risks to fairness, safety and human rights in labour, operations and governance

Catering supplies can have long and complex supply chains, involving multiple sustainability and social responsibility risks from production, preparation, processing, transport and disposal. Here we briefly highlight some of the biggest risk areas in the sector. Some risks may be directly relevant to your business, while others could apply to your supply chains or the consumption of your products.

Risks from agriculture or aquaculture:

- Risks to biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions from conversion of natural habitats for agricultural production (e.g. deforestation). For example, livestock farming drives land conversion for growing feed and grazing
- Water usage for intensive agriculture
- Pollution, from the production and application of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides
- Fisheries bycatch and overfishing
- Methane (a greenhouse gas contributing to global climate change) emissions from livestock
- Cramped living conditions for livestock, often lacking access to outdoor space
- Breeding livestock for fast growth, causing bodily discomfort
- Use of antibiotics, hormones, and unnatural diets in livestock-rearing, for example rearing cows on a corn and soy-based diet rather than grass
- Violation of local land rights in the conversion of land for agriculture
- Violation of local water rights in the large consumption of water for intensive agriculture
- Unfair prices paid to producers
- Human rights abuses, including forced labour and child labour
- Unsafe working conditions, including exposure to chemicals or mental distress from working closely with animals in poor welfare conditions
- Unfair labour practices, including salaries that fall below living wage, excessive / involuntary overtime, use of insecure contracts and discrimination based on gender or other characteristics

Risks from food preparation and processing:

- Pollution from industrial processes
- Energy and water used for processing
- Human rights abuses, including forced labour and child labour
- Unsafe working conditions
- Unfair labour practices, including salaries that fall below living wage, excessive / involuntary overtime, use of insecure contracts and discrimination based on gender or other characteristics

Risks from transport, consumption and disposal:

- Greenhouse gas emissions from transport, including cold chain

- Greenhouse gas emissions from energy intensive storage involving chilling or freezing
- Waste generated from non-recyclable packaging
- Food waste throughout the supply chain

Our targets in procurement of catering supplies and services

In all procurements, where appropriate, we:

- Seek to embed community benefits requirements in line with our Community Benefits in Procurement Policy
- Promote Fair Work through procurement (as an accredited Living Wage organisation, we strongly encourage our suppliers to pay UK-based workers at least the Living Wage, currently £9/hr, in our contracts)
- Engage with suppliers on strategic issues to promote innovation, social inclusion, and better environmental performance, for instance through work on the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal, leading a programme of Data Driven Innovation (DDI). Please write to ddi@ed.ac.uk for more info about the DDI programme.

Our Good Food Policy sets out the University's commitments to sourcing sustainable and socially responsible food. Using this, and through our use of the Scottish Government's Sustainable Public Procurement Prioritisation Tool (SPPPT), we have identified key targets for improving the social responsibility and sustainability of our catering procurements. We want to **work with you** towards these targets:

Targeting environmental sustainability and biodiversity risks:

- Offering enticing vegetarian and vegan options in our outlets
- Sourcing more fruit and vegetables produced to more sustainable farming standards (e.g. LEAF Marque)
- Sourcing more meat to Red Tractor standards
- Avoiding fish on the Marine Conservation Society's (MCS) Fish To Avoid List
- Sourcing products that contain physical RSPO certified palm oil (or equivalent standard)
- Sourcing more local meat, dairy and vegetable to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in transport
- Using more efficient chillers and freezers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from food storage
- Exploring options to reduce food waste, in our supply chains and from our outlets
  - For example, our landscaping team is recycling used coffee grounds from our outlets as plant food on site
  - Making use of 'ugly' produce that would otherwise be wasted.
- Reducing the need for packaging and using recyclable packaging on food and drink available in our outlets
  - For example, we have introduced a 25p point of sale tax on disposable hot drinks cups, to encourage use of reusable cups
  - We are installing or upgrading 200 water points across the university to reduce plastic waste from disposable water bottle sales

Targeting animal welfare risks:

- Sourcing only free-range eggs, and ensuring that our suppliers meet this standard
- Sourcing more Red Tractor assured meat as a minimum standard of animal welfare

Targeting risks to fairness, safety and human rights in labour, operations and governance:

- Sourcing more fairly traded products
  - For example, our rice, coffee, tea, sugar, bananas, apple juice and much of our confectionary is Fairtrade Certified or fairly traded.
- Sourcing local meat, dairy and vegetables to support local producers
- Sourcing products from small to medium enterprises (SMEs)
  - For example, we are working with our suppliers Greencity Wholefoods and Bidfood to take on more SME suppliers
- Following the lead of our Department for Accommodation Catering and Events (ACE), encouraging our suppliers to pay the living wage and eliminate the use of inappropriate zero hours contracts

Taking action to improve the sustainability and social responsibility of your business

Using these targets as a starting point, there are many ways to proactively work towards improving your own sustainability and social responsibility.

Talk to us about ways we could work together to improve the sustainability of products bought by the University.

Research the impacts of your business and supply chains:

- Contact us to participate in a Sustain supply chain sustainability assessment, which will provide tailored and confidential recommendations for your business
- Contact us about hosting a sustainability-themed internship or Living Labs project, to provide students with practical experience and research sustainability questions relevant to your business

Set responsible sourcing standards, for example by choosing certified, transparent supply chains or writing a supplier code of conduct.

Innovate, for example by finding creative ways to increase resource efficiency and circular economy. Here are some organisations that may be able to help**:**

- The Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation's projects to support low carbon innovation
- Scotland Food and Drink's Make Innovation Happen programme
- Queen Margaret University's Scottish Centre for Food Development and Innovation

- Resource Efficient Scotland's funding, loans and free consultations to help businesses save energy, save water and reduce waste

Donate food waste arising from your business, for example to Fareshare.

Make a pledge or become certified, for example to:

- Resource Efficient Scotland's Resource Efficiency Pledge
- The Scottish Business Pledge
- Red Tractor standards
- Green Leaf Marque standards
- Organic standards
- Fairtrade standards
- The Marine Stewardship Council's (MCS) Blue Label

Look at the resources and training offered by these organisations:

- Sustainable Food Lab's publications and webinars covering a wide range of issues
- The Sustain Network's publications covering a wide range of issues
- The Cool Farm Alliance's Cool Farm Tool (an online greenhouse gas, water and biodiversity calculator)
- The OECD and UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains
- WRAP's food waste reduction resources for the foodservice and agricultural sectors
- The Food and Drink Federation's sustainability resource hub, which links to other initiatives and organisations

This publication can be made available in alternative formats on request.

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