



## How The Football Association is using BS 8903 to become a sector leader in sustainable procurement

### At a glance

- The Football Association Group (FA) was formed in 1863, becoming the world's first national football association. It is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the amateur and professional game in England.
- The FA is committed to securing continual improvements in its environmental performance and to preventing pollution from its activities.
- As part of this, the FA has already established objectives, targets and action plans to maximise the positive impacts of its procurement activities and minimize the negative impacts.
- With the publication of BS 8903, the FA has now set a target of achieving Level 5 in the UK Government's Flexible Framework, and of becoming a sector leader in sustainable procurement by 2015. It will use the guidance in BS 8903 to help attain these goals.

### About BS 8903

BS 8903 provides expert guidance as to how sustainable procurement can be done in practice. Individuals and organizations of all sizes can use the standard to understand better what sustainable procurement means, and the business case for adopting it. They can also use the standard to embed best-practice approaches to sustainable procurement into their supply chains.

### What is sustainable procurement?

BS 8903 defines sustainable procurement as “only purchasing goods that are really needed, and buying items or services whose production, use and disposal both minimize negative impacts and encourage positive outcomes for the environment, economy and society.” The standard adds that “Sustainable procurement is good procurement and should not be viewed as an abstract, idealistic goal, but as a practical and achievable objective for all organizations, large and small.”

### What are the benefits of sustainable procurement?

Sustainable procurement brings three types of benefits. It can achieve a positive change or impact in a specific area. For example, it can reduce carbon emissions, or reduce end-of-life disposal costs, or improve social diversity in the supply chain. Procuring sustainably can also mitigate risks for an organization. So it can prevent or uncover things a supplier might do that could damage an organization's reputation or lead to loss of revenue, cost, litigation or loss of shareholder confidence. Finally, sustainable procurement can support competitive differentiation and advantage. So an organization might create new green or ethical products or gain entry into previously unavailable markets as a result of sustainable procurement.

### Why did the FA choose to work with BS 8903?

The FA accepts that cost and improved efficiency are fundamental to most buying decisions. That said, it also understands that the initial cost of a product or service should not be the only consideration. Sustainability is about driving a more holistic approach that will manage risks better and take the total lifecycle and disposal costs into account. The idea of total lifecycle costing (or 'total cost of ownership') sits at the heart of the FA's sustainable procurement agenda.

The FA also sees that sustainable procurement can create new commercial opportunities. 'Green' credentials can attract new clients and revenue, as well as retain existing clients and attract additional sponsorship. A positive corporate image can also attract and retain employees, as well as improve job satisfaction and productivity.

Against this backdrop, the FA identified that BS 8903 is the leading source of guidance on sustainable procurement. The Association therefore decided to use the standard to develop their approach to sustainable procurement even further. The aim is to achieve Level 5 in the UK Government's Flexible Framework by 2015 and to become a sector leader.

### How the FA used BS 8903

#### Putting the fundamentals in place

BS 8903 says that a sustainable procurement policy and strategy are 'fundamental'. They provide the strategic context to support sustainable procurement practices, and provide the strategic direction that informs and guides all subsequent purchasing activity.

For its part, the FA has used BS 8903's definition of sustainable procurement as the basis for developing a clear sustainable procurement policy statement and related objectives. These include such things as aiming to minimize carbon emissions, energy use, water use and waste generation from procurement decisions. The objectives have been embedded within the overarching procurement strategy. This will help make sure that sustainable procurement becomes an integral part of the way that the FA does business internally, and with its suppliers.

#### Embedding the enablers

With the fundamentals in place, the FA then put in place the additional 'building blocks' of sustainable procurement; what BS 8903 calls 'enablers'. These are:

- Leadership and governance
- People
- Risk and opportunity assessment
- Engagement
- Measurement

<sup>1</sup>BS 8903 acknowledges that the terms "policy" and "strategy" are used in various ways by different organizations.





### Leadership and governance

The standard recognizes that the support of top management makes a crucial difference to an organization's achievement of sustainable procurement. In line with this thinking, the FA had already established a Green Team. This has cross-functional representation from senior management team members, meets quarterly and reports to the Boards. Its remit is to drive environmental strategy, and to set and review environmental objectives and targets which are implemented through associated Sub Groups.

A Sustainable Procurement Sub Group has been established to develop the strategy for sustainable procurement and to support the integration of sustainability across all procurement activities.

In addition, the FA has instituted a Governance Matrix which defines the procurement processes that should be undertaken. This mandates that a Sustainability Risk Assessment should be done for all contracts over £250k and should be considered for all high risk contracts above £50,000.

### Focus on people

BS 8903 states that people need to understand why sustainable procurement is desirable, and have the skills to play their part in its implementation.

To this end, the FA is delivering a training programme to key procurement staff. It involves a series of workshops and meetings which address various elements of sustainable procurement implementation – 'Managing performance and relationships', 'Implementing contracts' etc – and is adapted to meet the requirements of different stakeholder groups.

### Identifying risk and opportunity

The FA has also done a high level category spend and sustainability risk analysis to understand its key sustainable procurement priorities. Based on this, existing contracts are undergoing a review process and opportunities to improve the service or renegotiate the contract with regards to its sustainability are being identified.

The FA has also used a new e-procurement tool to help build an approved supplier database. The procurement department defined its supplier sustainability

requirements and used a questionnaire to collect base-line information on the environmental performance of its suppliers. The FA is also now working with suppliers on how they can improve sustainability and minimize risk.

### Engagement and measurement

BS 8903 points out that buyers can only influence sustainable business practice by engaging with stakeholders and suppliers up and down the supply chain. The Green Team's Marketing and Communication Sub Group had already run internal campaigns on waste and energy.

In addition, the Sustainable Procurement Sub Group has run a 'meet the buyer' event at the new National Football Centre, St George's Park. Around 60 local businesses met with the four national facilities management contractors who had been shortlisted to deliver services at St. George's Park. Each local supplier was given the opportunity to pitch their services to the contractors and win the business.

Meanwhile, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been developed to measure ongoing improvements in both the numbers of individual suppliers and the total value of spend influenced by sustainability considerations.

The FA has set a target that by 2015 all procurement activities with an estimated whole life cost over £250k will have an appropriate weighting in the tender evaluation, and sustainability focused KPIs included as part of the successful supplier's Service Level Agreement. A procurement report will give the FA Board monthly updates on progress.

## FA Sustainable Procurement Policy Statement

As part of its Environmental Strategies, the FA Group is committed to addressing sustainability (environmental, social and ethical) issues in its purchasing activities and to work effectively with its suppliers

to deliver better practice. In support of this commitment, the FA promotes a responsible attitude towards sustainability issues in its supply chains, purchasing agreements and contractual relationships.

## In conclusion

### What has resulted from using BS 8903?

The FA has now used BS 8903 to embed the concepts and methodology of sustainable procurement in its procurement process. For example, as part of a sustainable procurement guidance document, a questionnaire is being developed to help buyers establish why something is being bought, to investigate the need for it, and to look for ways to minimize the impact.

Likewise, an output/outcome specification is being developed for new procurement projects. This will define minimum product specifications and let suppliers decide how best to meet them; as well as allowing them the flexibility to identify alternative solutions.

A range of tools are also being used to evaluate sourcing options, including Whole Life Costing, Risk/Opportunity analysis and Weighted decision making.

### Summary

The FA believes that it has gone a long way to integrating sustainability into its procurement processes. The processes used at St George's Park – a £100m development on a 330-acre site – will be used as a case study to demonstrate what can be done at other locations and future projects. The procurement contracts were primarily for Facilities Management. They focused on well-established themes of sustainable procurement such as energy and resource use, waste disposal, etc.

The FA recognizes that moving forward it will be important to have a more direct impact on improving the sustainability performance of first and second tier suppliers. The biggest challenge they see will be to expand these principles to include less obvious categories which nevertheless represent high levels of spend, such as marketing, media production and professional services.



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