

Encouraging your organisation to purchase recycled mixed plastic products

It is one thing to understand the range of benefits provided by recycled mixed plastic products but another to ensure purchases are made.

This factsheet will help you put recycled mixed plastic at the top of the decision making process.

People

Firstly, identify the people in your organisation who make purchasing decisions, where recycled mixed plastic products may be applicable, and think about the facts they will need to inform their decision. The next step is to provide them with those facts, including this toolkit.

It is important to remember that senior management will have different motivations than employees in operational roles, so you will need to target each group with the information most relevant to them. Senior managers may be more focussed on the cost and return on investment, while operational employees may be looking for information about the application of recycled mixed plastic products.

Policy

A formal organisational commitment to purchase recycled mixed plastic products is important as it empowers employees to buy these products. Let all employees know about this commitment and give guidance on how the policy can be implemented.

The City of Yarra (Victoria) includes the following clause in its procurement policy:

Buy Recycled:

“The Council is committed to buy recycled/part recycled products to optimise consumption and stimulate demand for recycled products, promoting the collection and reprocessing of waste and working towards zero discharge to landfill.”

Policies supporting recycled products can be found on ECO-Buy's Recycled Mixed Plastic Purchasing Toolkit page: <http://ecobuy.org.au/recycled-plastics-toolkit>

Process

Purchasing process – whole of life costing

One of the strongest arguments for buying recycled mixed plastic products is that they offer good value for money over the long term.

Your procurement process should take into account whole of life costs including purchase, installation and maintenance. If this is the case, then you have a good case to support the purchase of recycled mixed plastic products.



Our calculator can help you evaluate the total costs of recycled mixed plastic products over the life of a project. It can be found on our Recycled Mixed Plastic Purchasing Toolkit page: <http://ecobuy.org.au/recycled-plastics-toolkit>

Supplier process - specifications

For reporting purposes, it is important to have correct data regarding the amount of recycled content contained in products. Suppliers should be asked to specify this information. For example:

Recycled content:

'Tenderers are required to specify the percentage of recycled content of the product.'

Supplier process – green credentials

If you are promoting the environmental benefits of recycled mixed plastic products, it is important for your suppliers to demonstrate their green credentials. Ask them to provide information regarding how they manage energy, waste and water in the production and delivery of the product.

Ask if the supplier has any third-party sustainability certifications such as Forest Stewardship Certification (FSC). These may or may not relate to recycled content.

Engaging suppliers

Suppliers of recycled mixed plastic products have experience working with customers (and potential customers) to develop new and innovative solutions. Working closely with suppliers provides an opportunity to:

- o Have your specific requirements met
- o Develop new products over time
- o Ask detailed questions about the products (see out fact sheet – technical design guide)
- o Ensure after sales service
- Tip** o Develop a long term relationship with your supplier

Suppliers of recycled mixed plastic products required plastic waste as input. There provides strong opportunities for you to collaborate with suppliers by supplying them with waste plastic and buying back products created from that waste.

Measurement and reporting

It is important to record the amount of recycled content in the products you purchase and use for a number of reasons.

Firstly it will help you track the performance of the product over time. It will provide a comparison between the performance of products with the same, more or less percentage of recycled content. Secondly, it will allow you to examine the costs associated with products that have different proportions of recycled input material.

Set up a simple tracking and reporting system to measure and monitor recycled content purchases within your organisation.

These resources have been developed by ECO-Buy with the support of the Australian Packaging Covenant, Zero-Waste South Australia, and Sustainability Victoria in consultation with users and suppliers of recycled mixed plastic products.

For further information contact ECO-Buy <http://ecobuy.org.au/contact/>