

Frequently Asked Questions – Suppliers

1. What is the Sustainable Choice online database?

Sustainable Choice is a membership-based program to assist councils in NSW to integrate sustainability into their procurement systems. The database lists sustainable products and services that have been assessed and approved by the Sustainable Choice team against a number of sustainability indicators. Products and services are listed under a number of categories and corresponding suppliers are also displayed on a map enabling the user to easily locate suppliers within their local area. The Sustainable Choice database focusses on the overall sustainability of a supplier's business as well as how sustainable their product/service is.

2. What kind of products/services are on the database?

The database lists sustainable products and services across a number of categories relevant to Local Government. A sustainable product/service is one by which their manufacture and/or use reduces the impact on the environment, is socially responsible and financially viable. All products and services on the database have been critically analysed and researched for social and environmental credibility, ensuring that sustainability claims are verified.

3. How can I put my products/services on the database?

Assessment is a two-stage process. The first step is to apply for an account with Sustainable Choice online, and your company will be assessed. If you are successful in gaining an account, your products/services can be submitted online for approval and listing, and will be assessed against a number of sustainability indicators. You can apply online at www.lgnsw.org.au/sustainablechoice/user/register.

4. What are sustainability indicators?

The Sustainable Choice sustainability indicators are icons that may be attached to a company and/or its products/services on the database. When uploading new products/services you may apply for an indicator, but it will ultimately be left to the discretion of the Sustainable Choice Team as to which sustainability indicators your product/service is eligible for. Information on each indicator can be found at www.lgnsw.org.au/sustainablechoice/icons-explained.

5. Does it cost?

The Sustainable Choice database is free for suppliers to register and display their products/services and there are no ongoing fees. We only ask that you update your products/services regularly.

6. What if our organisation doesn't have a sustainability policy?

If your organisation does not have a sustainability policy, the Sustainable Choice team are happy to supply you with the tools and resources needed to help you create one. Having a sustainability policy with environmental targets is a requirement of registering your organisation on the Sustainable Choice database. If you do not have a sustainability policy and do not have plans to create one in the near future, it is unlikely your online application will be successful.

7. What is ISO 14001?

ISO 14001:2004 is a standard that sets out the criteria for an environmental management system. It does not state requirements for environmental performance, but maps out a framework that a company or organisation can follow to set up an effective environmental management system. An organisation with an ISO 14001 accredited environmental management system will have an advantage over those who don't. However, accreditation can be an expensive process and is not mandatory for listing on the database. Evidence of good environmental practices is sufficient for small to medium-sized businesses.

8. Will my products/services be advertised?

The display of supplier information, products and services on the Sustainable Choice online database in no way provides any endorsement, indicative or otherwise by Local Government NSW or the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, of the company, product or service provided. LGNSW and OEHS are not liable for any company, services or products obtained through this website. Sustainable Choice does not advertise or promote any of the products/services listed on the database. The program simply provides a platform for Local Government and sustainable suppliers to connect.

9. How can my business benefit from Sustainable Choice?

Local Government spends an estimated \$9 billion each year on products and services – listing your product or service on the Sustainable Choice database is an avenue for tapping into this market.

Councils are continually looking for ways in which they can better deliver services and manage assets for the benefit of their community. Section 8 of the *Local Government Act 1993* calls on councils "to properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible, in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD)".

Sustainable procurement is an effective way to meet these responsibilities while also addressing economic, environmental, social and governance considerations. For example, consider buying locally made and manufactured products, those with recycled content, and those that are non-toxic or have other environmental and social benefits.