



Being green is easy after all

Eco-Eval tool helps you test your green procurement efforts

by Jeremy Brown

THE HARDEST PART of making an organization more environmentally friendly has always been how to go about it. With Eco-Eval it's as easy as a mouse click.

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) led the North American Green Purchasing Initiative (NAGPI). NAGPI develops a self-assessment tool called Eco-Eval (www.cec.org/eco-eval). Eco-Eval helps professional purchasers evaluate their organizations environmental procurement

initiatives, identify opportunities for improvement and benchmark themselves.

In addition to the evaluation questionnaire, Eco-Eval includes corresponding best practices from across North America. Eco-Eval can be used by any organization that maintains a structured purchasing system, including all levels of government, hospitals, schools, universities, and large corporations. Going through this process has helped organizations to better understand and communicate the sophistication and effectiveness of their environmental purchasing strategy in a quantifiable manner, as well as comparing one's policies and practices to best practices in North America.

"Greening your purchases doesn't mean they're going to be more expensive. That's something we're working to get the business community to understand," says Chantal Line Carpentier, head of the Trade and Environment program at the CEC. "In particular, Eco-Eval provides ideas for improvement by showing what other organizations and companies have done."

Eco-Eval also allows users to submit their own best practices – a way to keep the best-practices guide up to date. Purchasers can also share this tool with their suppliers to help them anticipate possible future needs. Current enhancements under development are the ability to customize the questionnaire and to share your assessment results publicly. The tool is currently available in English, French and Spanish. It is not limited to any specific product group and will apply to any commodity purchased.

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation is an international organization, created by the environmental provisions of the NAFTA, to address regional environmental concerns, help prevent potential trade and environmental conflicts, and to promote the effective enforcement of environmental law. The CEC launched NAGPI to work with public, private, and non-profit organizations to facilitate consensus on green product standards and practices. NAGPI's role is to improve, promote, and facilitate the development of green purchasing tools and activities across North America to create markets for environmentally preferable products and services, thereby producing economic, social, and environmental benefits. For additional information, visit www.cec.org and www.cec.org/nagpi.

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