



Welcome to the first quarter of 2024 update bulletin from the national [Responsible Procurement Group \(RPG\)](#).

An update from each of the sub-groups follows, as well as information on future responsible procurement events, details of the next steering group meeting and how to get in touch.

## Supplier Assurance

The supplier assurance task & finish group is made up of thirteen sustainability and procurement professionals from across the HE sector.

Drawing from experiences and knowledge the group is generating a concise simple guide: *'Supplier assurance for responsible procurement'*. This guide is currently in draft, and the intention is to share this with the sector in summer 2024. The guide considers assurance in the context of three areas: supplier onboarding, defining scopes of works and contracts & organisational assurance. It will provide a starter guide for those new to assurance, as well as common pitfalls and handy links.

## Circular Economy

After prioritising the most relevant areas of focus for circular economy and waste reduction in HE/FE, it was decided at the summer meeting to then focus on one area at a time and invite subject matter experts to each meeting / workshop to help inform discussions and outcomes.

The November 2023 meeting was therefore focussed on ICT. UCISA was contacted to provide nominees to cover the university ICT community and they duly kindly appointed Henrick Brogger (University of Reading) and Rob Moore (Leeds Beckett University) to join us for the workshop, with Aimee Cormack (Inverness College / UHI Inverness) separately volunteering to represent colleges. The workshop was very positive with several action areas being identified to commence. With the discussions going well on some key subject areas, it was agreed dialogue needed to continue into a second ICT workshop which took place on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

Angus Warren (APUC) has passed on his interim chairing of this group to Joint Chairs, Jo Dainton (UWE) and Sion Pickering (University of Edinburgh). Henrick Brogger has now

volunteered to become a permanent member of this group. The group is well served by Sustainability Managers, but it remains light in terms of numbers of Procurement Managers (currently only 2) so additional Procurement experts would be warmly welcomed onto this Sub-Group; please contact Jo and Sion to find out more: [joanna.dainton@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:joanna.dainton@uwe.ac.uk) / [sion.pickering@ed.ac.uk](mailto:sion.pickering@ed.ac.uk).

## Social Responsibility

The social responsibility sub-group has produced a guidance document on wellbeing, signed off at the meeting on 17th January 2024 and now available to share widely. The guidance aims to help procurement teams, contract managers and sustainability teams on the subject of wellbeing.

You can [download the guide here](#).

## Supply Chain Climate Action Planning

The sub-group discussed priorities for decarbonising the supply chain. Many issues that arose overlapped with those being worked on already by the supplier assurance group. To avoid duplication of effort, the supply chain climate action group will therefore be disbanded, with members invited to join one of the other sub-groups depending on their interests.

The group has also discussed taking a deep dive into the biggest areas of emissions such as ICT, construction or laboratory purchases. Given there are substantive efforts already underway on ICT and construction, and laboratory supply chain action is relatively under-developed, we will instead set up a working group to do a deep dive into decarbonising the laboratory supply chain. Anyone who has a strong interest, expertise or resources available and would like to join that working group should contact Harriet Wallace: [h.wallace@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:h.wallace@imperial.ac.uk).

## GHG measurement & Reporting

The HESCET development sub-group is pleased to release an updated version of the Higher Education Supply Chain Emissions Tool (HESCET).

You can [download the latest tool – V3.9, released in December 2023 – here](#).

Colleagues can also review the [accompanying notes](#) summarising changes from the previous version of the tool.

## Next meeting

The next meeting of the national Responsible Procurement Group will be held on 23 April 2024 at 14:00 via Teams.

The group plan to meet in person in summer 2024.

## Future events

- International Working Group on Ethical Public Procurement Annual Gathering – 12th March, Lisbon
- ICLEI Procura Plus Conference (large focus on circular economies) – 13th and 14th March, Lisbon
- Electronics Watch Annual Conference – 6th and 7th November, Brussels

## Get in touch

The national Responsible Procurement Group welcomes feedback and ideas from its key stakeholders.

To get in touch, please contact Ashley Shelbrooke: [ashley@hepa.ac.uk](mailto:ashley@hepa.ac.uk)