



The Great Green North

Environmental purchasing has taken root in Canada through multiple efforts embracing the benefits of collaboration.

BY SCOT CASE

The Canadian federal government currently spends \$23.5 billion on goods and services and has plans to improve the environmental performance of most of its purchasing decisions. Many Canadian provincial and local governments have similar green purchasing efforts under way.

With the support of a national environmental label identifying greener products, good collaboration among green purchasing professionals and extensive environmental purchasing policies, Canadian government purchasers have a lot to teach the rest of the world about

integrating environmental and social considerations into the purchasing process.

Early Canadian federal focus

Canadian government purchasers at the federal, provincial and local levels have been promoting greener purchasing since the 1980s. Recognizing the connection between environmental challenges and purchasing decisions, former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney made green purchasing a

national priority at a June 1988 global warming conference in Toronto.

At the event, Mulroney announced the creation of his "Environmentally-Friendly Goods Campaign." The central focus of the campaign was creation of a national environmental label to make it easier for consumers and government purchasers to identify and buy more environmentally preferable products. Making it easier to buy greener products would increase demand for those products, thereby reducing the adverse environmental impacts of their manufacture.

A few weeks later, Environment Canada, the Canadian equivalent of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, launched the EcoLogo program. Modeled after the German Blue Angel program created in 1978, EcoLogo became North America's first environmental leadership standard certification and labeling program.

Like its German counterpart, EcoLogo is an environmental label awarded to goods and services that meet a tough environmental standard. Consumers can look for products bearing the EcoLogo certification mark, and government purchasers can require that products be EcoLogo-certified.

manufacturing, distribution, use and disposal of the products.

After a product or service passes an independent audit to confirm it meets the EcoLogo standard and pays a licensing fee to support the program, the product can use the EcoLogo certification to promote its environmental superiority.

Canadian government purchasers rely extensively on EcoLogo certification to identify more environmentally preferable products. Contracts for cleaning products, paints, copiers, electricity, and more than 100 other products routinely require EcoLogo certification.

While originally launched in Canada, EcoLogo is used by purchasers throughout North America.

Toronto: Green procurement pioneer

Under the leadership of Lou Pagano, Toronto's director of purchasing and materials management, and others, Toronto has long managed one of North America's premier green purchasing programs. Like similar programs, Toronto began with a focus on recycled paper and other recycled-content products in the mid-1980s. As the purchasing managers

CCD-77, which addresses paper mill efficiencies, bleaching methodologies and other environmental factors in addition to recycled content.

According to Lou Pagano, other recent green purchasing focus areas include:

- Alternatively fueled vehicles
- Asphalt containing 20% recycled asphalt
- Envelopes certified to EcoLogo CCD-80
- Fuel- and water-efficient street sweepers
- Green electricity (at least 25% of electricity purchases)
- Integrated pest management services
- Janitorial cleaning chemicals certified to one of several EcoLogo standards
- Lighting
- Low-VOC work stations, office furniture and entry mats
- Non-toxic pens and markers
- Paint certified to EcoLogo CCD-76
- Plywood for use indoors certified to the GreenGuard standard
- Recycled content plastic lumber meeting EcoLogo CCD-127 for use in boardwalks and park benches
- Recycled toner cartridges
- Recycled-content plastic traffic channelizers
- Rot-resistant FSC-certified lumber without chromium copper arsenate
- Toilet paper certified to EcoLogo CCD-82 and FSC
- Water-based traffic paint

GIPPER: Working collaboratively to buy green

While Toronto has a sizable purchasing budget (\$1.5 billion in 2009), the Toronto purchasing managers decided early on that they could be most successful by collaborating with other cities to multiply the environmental and financial benefits of their green purchasing program. In the late 1980s, Toronto purchasing managers worked closely with purchasing managers from Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and others to develop common approaches, policies and purchasing requirements as part of a group known as Canadian Cities on Environmentally Sound Strategies.

Working with another related group of government purchasers, Governments Incorporating Procurement Policies to Eliminate Refuse (GIPPER), Toronto and other Canadian cities began jointly producing and publishing the *GIPPER's Guide to Environmental Purchasing.*

Like the German Blue Angel, Green Seal and other legitimate environmental labels, EcoLogo standards are developed in an open, consensus-based process and are designed so that only the top 20 percent of offerings in a given product or service category can meet the standard. The EcoLogo standards are based on an examination of the environmental impacts that occur throughout a product's life cycle from the impacts of the raw materials, the

learned more about the environmental impacts of their purchasing decisions, however, they began expanding their focus beyond a narrow focus on recycled content to include additional environmental considerations.

Toronto strives to examine multiple environmental considerations as part of every purchase. More than 90 percent of the copy paper it purchases (236.8 million sheets), for example, contains recycled content. The copy paper is also certified to EcoLogo

"[The cities] shared information and made it known to suppliers that we were looking for greener options," explains Pagano. "We also worked together to adjust specifications as required."

Unlike some U.S. cities, the Canadian cities never offered price preferences as an enticement for suppliers to provide greener offerings. "We relied on our purchasing volumes instead. Our volumes collectively were high enough to attract competing suppliers and keep prices low," remembers Pagano.

While the Canadian cities never created a formal purchasing cooperative focused on greener goods and services, they did collaborate to publish a directory of greener products. Each of the participating cities solicited its supplier community to identify their greener product offerings. While some of the products highlighted in

the directory were of questionable environmental benefit, the directory was instrumental in demonstrating the importance government purchasers were placing on greener product offerings.

"One of the things we learned was the value of a robust certification program," Pagano explains. "We needed an independent third party like EcoLogo to verify environmental leadership."

As a result, Governments Incorporating Procurement Policies to Eliminate Refuse (GIPPER) began working with the EcoLogo program to ensure EcoLogo was developing the types of standards government purchasers needed. "EcoLogo needed to know what government purchasers cared most about."

The challenges of producing the green products directory eventually led to a shift in strategy. Working with another related group of government purchasers, GIPPER,

Toronto and other Canadian cities began jointly producing and publishing the *GIPPER's Guide to Environmental Purchasing*.

The GIPPER guide was one of the first comprehensive green procurement guides. GIPPER received requests from around the world for copies from purchasing programs seeking information on launching their own green purchasing programs. While it has not been updated in years, the 75-page 2002 version of the guide remains useful. It addresses purchasing policies and practices and suggests specifications for buying a variety of products from cleaning products to construction projects and can still be found online.

Green purchasing policies in Canada

Collaborating through GIPPER and other purchasing organizations, the Canadian green purchasing pioneers co-developed green purchasing policies. While the policies are not identical, they share common language and

Purchaser's Top Ten – Most Recognized Eco-labels by Location (2009)

	USA	Canada	
	88%	81%	
	61%	76%	
	59%	62%	
	44%	45%	
	33%	35%	
	31%	25%	
	28%	25%	
	28%	18%	
	23%	17%	
	20%	13%	



MasterCard® Prepaid Benefits Cards reduce disbursement costs, improve operational efficiency, and enhance service to recipients in several ways, including:

- On-time payments and easy access to funds.
- Ability to make purchases, pay bills, and access cash at millions of locations nationwide.
- No bank account required.



For more ways MasterCard can benefit you and recipients, visit mastercard.com/publicsector

©2010 MasterCard



approaches that acknowledge the connection between purchasing decisions and broader environmental challenges, stress the importance of the purchasing professional and encourage the use of environmental labels. Here are some of the common elements:

A Connection between Purchasing and the Environment.

Most policies formally recognize the connection between environmental challenges such as global warming or toxins in the environment and purchasing decisions. The Canadian federal government's April 2006 policy explains, "As part of its ongoing commitment to improve the environment and the quality of life of Canadians, this policy seeks to reduce the environmental impacts of government operations and promote environmental stewardship by integrating environmental performance considerations in the procurement process."

It goes on to state, "As part of its ongoing commitment to improve the environment and the quality of life of Canadians, this policy seeks to reduce the environmental impacts of government operations and promote environmental stewardship by integrating environmental performance considerations in the procurement process."

Definitions of Environmentally Preferable Products.

Every green purchasing policy includes a definition of greener products. Richmond, British Columbia, for example, defines environmentally preferable products as those "that are more responsible to the environment in the way they are made, used, transported, stored and packaged and disposed of."

The Canadian federal government policy goes into more detail, defining environmentally preferable goods and services as "those that have a

Greening the 2010 Vancouver Olympics

In addition to the beautiful new sports venues, one of the lasting legacies of the Vancouver Olympics is a \$2 billion boost to the procurement budget for green purchasing initiatives in Canada and around the world. Environmental considerations were included throughout the planning, operational and post-event phases of the games.

Working with the Buy Smart Network (formerly the Sustainability Purchasing Network), the Olympic Planning Committee developed an extensive set of green purchasing practices based on the input of 67 environmental, Aboriginal, labor, business and ethical sourcing organizations.

The effort included developing a purchasing database that included sustainability information for more than 5,000 Olympic suppliers. It also included extensive supplier outreach to inform suppliers about the Games' green purchasing goals, including environmental requirements, and desires to purchase from Aboriginal, minority-owned and small- to medium-sized enterprises. Suppliers were encouraged to improve their own environmental and sustainable purchasing practices.

Two suppliers, according to Coro Standberg, co-founder, and Bob Purdy, program manager of the Buy Smart Network, stood out for their efforts to improve their own practices as a result of their participation in the Olympic games. Jet Set Sports, a hospitality services sponsor, sourced greener uniforms, printed materials and attendee gifts. Birks & Mayors, the Games' jewelry sponsor, duplicated the ethical sourcing approach used at the Games and developed its own supplier code of conduct. Both sponsors received Sustainability Stars to recognize their efforts.

Vancouver Olympic Planning Committee members and the Buy Smart Network are currently working with future Olympic venues to help them go green.

STOP PEST BIRDS!

The Most Trusted Name in Bird Control

BIRD•B•GONE

The #1 Specified Bird Control Products by Architects & Government Agencies.

Keep Job Cost Down!



Stainless Steel Bird Spikes



Bird Netting



Electric Shock Systems



Technical Assistance



On-Site Consultation

- Effective and Humane Bird Control
- Lowest Cost, Highest Quality Products Keep Job Costs Down!
- VIRTUALLY INVISIBLE / DISCREET SOLUTIONS!

Over 100 Products Available!

Call

1-800-392-6915

For Consultation, References Catalog & Samples

No Gimmicks... Just Guaranteed Solutions Since 1992!



BIRD•B•GONE™ Inc.
The Industry Leader Since 1992!
nobirds@birdbgone.com

Made in the USA!

www.birdbgone.com

GSA Advantage!
www.gsaadvantage.gov
GS-06F-0075P

Circle 10 on Reader Service Card or visit freeproductinfo.net/gp

lesser or reduced impact on the environment over the life cycle of the good or service when compared with competing goods or services serving the same purpose. Environmental performance considerations include, among other things: the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and air contaminants; improved energy and water efficiency; reduced waste and

support reuse and recycling; the use of renewable resources; reduced hazardous waste; and reduced toxic and hazardous substances.”

A Need to Balance Price and Performance. Manitoba’s purchasing policy, like many other Canadian green purchasing policies, recognizes the need to balance environmental considerations with price and

performance requirements. It states: “The Government of Manitoba recognizes that the purchasing decisions that its employees make have an impact on the sustainability of the province’s communities and environment. Accordingly, this means that product purchases shall be based on:

- Careful consideration of the good’s, material’s or service’s impact on the environment, economy, and human health and well-being;
- Consideration of market factors, such as specifications, quality, delivery date, and price of the good, material or service; and
- Preference being given to the purchase of environmentally preferable goods and materials whenever they perform satisfactorily and are available at a reasonable price.”

“It Is Imperative to Act Now”

Here is an excerpt from Prime Minister Mulroney’s launch of his “Environmentally-Friendly Goods Campaign’s Atmospheric Conference,” Toronto, 1988:
“Humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequence could be second only to a global nuclear war. The Earth’s atmosphere is being changed at an unprecedented rate by pollutants resulting from depositions of hazardous, toxic and atomic wastes and from wasteful fossil fuel use...These changes represent a major threat to international security and are already having harmful consequences over many parts of the globe...it is imperative to act now.”



Let us help **REDUCE** your **PROCUREMENT COSTS**

We can save you time, effort, and money!

- ★ Cooperative purchasing
- ★ Competitively solicited and publicly awarded agreements
- ★ National aggregate pricing
- ★ No fee to utilize our portfolio

NATIONALIPA

TO PARTICIPATE, REGISTER AT: **WWW.NATIONALIPA.ORG**

Circle 12 on Reader Service Card or visit freeproductinfo.net/gp

Efforts to Improve Specifications.

Buying greener products means revising purchasing specifications to reflect environmental priorities. Toronto's October 1999 policy includes language similar to other Canadian cities. It requires purchasing officials to "ensure that wherever possible specifications are amended to provide for the expanded use of environmentally preferred products such as: durable products, reusable products, energy-efficient products, low pollution products, products (including those used in services) that contain the maximum level of post-consumer waste and/or recyclable content, and products that provide minimal impact to the environment."

Use of Environmental

Labels. Canadian purchasing policies also encourage the use of legitimate environmental labels. The City of Richmond, British Columbia's policy, for example, states "Consideration may be given to those environmental products that are certified by an independent accredited organization." The text for the policy specifically mentions five programs – EcoLogo (formerly known as Environmental Choice), Green Seal, Energy Star, EnerGuide and PowerSmart.

Collaborating to succeed

One of the reasons Canadian federal, provincial and municipal purchasers have succeeded with their green purchasing efforts is their willingness to collaborate. Working together helps accelerate learning about the most effective ways of identifying and buying greener products. It also helps send clear messages to the supplier community about what purchasers are seeking. In addition, the federal government's creation of a single environmental labeling program allows purchasers and suppliers to unite behind a common set of environmental purchasing metrics.

We are beginning to see this kind of collaboration occurring at the international level as groups such as the International

Green Purchasing Network begin working with purchasing groups and environmental labels from around the world. Perhaps one day the Canadian model of collaboration will become the model for the rest of the world.

Resources:

Public Works and Government Services Canada – www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/ecologisation-greening/achats-procurement/index-eng.html
Buy Smart Network – www.buysmartbc.com

EcoLogo – www.ecologo.org

International Green Purchasing Network – www.igpn.org

About the author

Scot Case has been researching and promoting responsible purchasing issues for 16 years. He is vice president of TerraChoice Environmental Marketing, which manages the EcoLogo program. Contact him via e-mail at scase@terrachoice.com or in Reading, Pa., at 610-779-3770.

**Clean Air
Clean Water
Clean Streets
Clean Communities**

Let



Help Achieve These Goals



Model 600[®] Street Sweeper



Model 435[®] Mid-sized Sweeper



Model DST-6[®]
Dustless Sweeping Technology



Model 600[®] COMDEX[®]
Street Sweeper

For More Information Call 1-800-258-9626

www.tymco.com

TYMCO REGENERATIVE AIR SWEEPERS are AQMD Rule 1186 Certified PM₁₀-Efficient