

Sustainable procurement guide: Cleaning services

Sustainable procurement guide: Cleaning services

Version	Date	Comments
v1.2	November 2018	Published
v1.3	July 2025	Minor updates made – highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHPW corporate branding • Machinery-of-government changes • Hyperlinks verified and updated or removed • Document date updated • New version history log and 'Administration' section added • Updated document title
v1.4	August 2025	Minor updates made - Queensland Government Corporate Branding

The State of Queensland (Department of Housing and Public Works) 2025.



<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.en>

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Australia Licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this work, as long as you attribute by citing 'Sustainable procurement guide: Cleaning services, State of Queensland (Department of Housing and Public Works) 2025'.

Contact us

We are committed to continuous improvement. If you have any suggestions about how we can improve this document, or if you have any questions, contact us at betterprocurement@hew.qld.gov.au.

Disclaimer

This document is intended as a guide only for the internal use and benefit of government agencies. It may not be relied on by any other party. It should be read in conjunction with the Queensland Procurement Policy, your agency's procurement policies and procedures, and any other relevant documents.

The Department of Housing and Public Works disclaims all liability that may arise from the use of this document. This document should not be used as a substitute for obtaining appropriate probity and legal advice as may be required. In preparing this document, reasonable efforts have been made to use accurate and current information. It should be noted that information may have changed since the publication of this document. Where errors or inaccuracies are brought to attention a reasonable effort will be made to correct them.

Administration

Version 1.4 of this document replaces all previous versions of this document and takes effect immediately.

Table of Contents

Purpose.....	4
Target audience	4
How to use this guide.....	4
Introduction	4
Scope	4
Fitness for purpose	4
Cleaning services: Summary of sustainability impacts and responses	5
Material choice.....	5
Working environment	5
Cleaning processes.....	5
Suggested criteria.....	6
Material choice.....	6
Working environment	10
Cleaning processes.....	13
Integrating sustainable procurement throughout the procurement process	15
Procurement planning	15
Supplier engagement	16
Managing supply arrangements	16
References.....	17

Purpose

This guide aims to support government buyers in implementing sustainability considerations when procuring cleaning services, and to signal to industry government's expectations in relation to the sustainability of service providers responsible for providing cleaning services.

Target audience

Minimum performance criteria are benchmarks for industry performance within the supply market.

For industry: this guide provides insight into current and potential government expectations in relation to the sustainability of service providers responsible for the provision of cleaning services.

For procurement professionals: this guide provides information to guide the integration of sustainability principles into the procurement of cleaning related services.

How to use this guide

This guide is commodity specific to cleaning services.

Sustainability considerations should be incorporated at every stage of the procurement process. Opportunities and strategies exist to address environmental and social impacts during procurement planning (including demand analysis), supplier engagement and through the management of supply arrangements. The procurement process is described in more detail later in this guide.

The suggested criteria contained in this guide may be applied at any stage of the procurement process. The interpretation, modification and suitability of the criteria, must be considered by the contract manager at the time of planning a procurement arrangement. Consideration should also be given to where in the procurement process they should be applied for maximum benefit.

The suggested specifications will not be suitable for all agencies, or relevant in all markets or procurement contexts. The sustainable procurement responses may be affected by factors including market readiness, availability of supply, product complexity and maturity, and organisational needs. Each procurement arrangement will be different.

Introduction

Scope

For the purposes of this guide, cleaning services encompass all indoor activities typically required to clean commercial and public buildings including offices, schools and administration areas. This guide does not consider:

- residential buildings
- maintenance of exterior areas such as parking lots, grounds, or picnic areas
- industrial cleaning (e.g. manufacturing process cleaning).

Fitness for purpose

For the purpose of this guide, it is assumed that the surface areas cleaned and frequency of cleaning will match the original specification supplied by the client when the service provider was engaged.

It is also assumed that the cleaning products and equipment used by the service provider shall be fit for their intended application and the purpose for which they were manufactured.

Cleaning services: Summary of sustainability impacts and responses

Material choice

Choice of cleaning product

Hazardous substances, emissions and pollutants

Ensure the cleaning services provider uses cleaning products that do not contain potentially hazardous ingredients and are readily biodegradable.

Packaging

Ensure the cleaning services provider purchases cleaning products in quantities that minimise the amount of packaging required, with packaging that contains no toxic substances and is committed to recycling of packaging materials.

Choice of cleaning equipment

Give preference to cleaning services providers that can demonstrate initiatives to use cleaning equipment with minimised environmental impact (e.g. equipment with increased energy or water efficiency).

Working environment

Employment practices

Ensure the working conditions do not adversely affect cleaning staff wellbeing, by engaging a cleaning services provider that applies fair employment practices and is compliant with legislative requirements.

Operational procedures

Ensure the cleaning services provider has comprehensive operational procedures, policies, continuous improvement and systems to address the environmental and social impact of their business.

Staff training

Ensure the cleaning services provider provides continuous training to all cleaning staff in correct procedures for safety, equipment operation, techniques and pertinent environmental standards.

Cleaning processes

Resource use and emissions

Ensure the cleaning services provider utilises cleaning techniques that minimise the amount of cleaning products, water and electricity used and reduce the impact of cleaning on indoor air quality.

Waste management

Ensure the cleaning services provider has appropriate waste reduction policies (e.g. recycling policies, procedures and systems in place for management and safe disposal of waste and hazardous chemicals used in the cleaning process).

Contribution to clients' sustainable practices

Engage cleaning services providers that can demonstrate initiatives to contribute to clients' sustainability practices and goals.

Suggested criteria

Material choice

Choice of cleaning product

Hazardous substances, emissions and pollutants

- **Issue.** Cleaning products may contain a range of hazardous chemicals including carcinogens, corrosives and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) which are harmful to human health and the environment. Cleaning products disposed into sewer systems can contaminate local freshwater supplies, negatively affecting soil and aquatic ecosystems.
- **Response.** Ensure the selected cleaning services provider uses cleaning products in the correct doses, do not contain potentially hazardous ingredients and are readily biodegradable.

Packaging

- **Issue.** Packaging utilises resources and generates environmental impacts during its production and disposal. If not disposed of correctly, packaging can create pollution problems, particularly if it contains toxic substances.
- **Response.** Ensure the cleaning services provider purchases cleaning products in quantities that minimise the amount of packaging required, with packaging that contains no toxic substances and is committed to re-use or recycling of packaging materials.

Minimum performance criteria	Best practice performance criteria
<p>Minimum specification:</p> <p>Cleaning products If products utilised by the supplier do not meet the best practice specifications, then efforts should be made to work with suppliers to source these products.</p> <p>For uncertified products, offerors are required to submit a declaration stating that the products comply with the requirements specified below:</p>	<p>Best practice specification:</p> <p>All cleaning products used by the successful offeror in carrying out the cleaning service must be certified by a Type 1 environmental label that was developed in accordance with the ISO 14024 or equivalent. Where the product is not certified by a Type 1 ISO 14024 environmental label a technical dossier of the manufacturer or a test report from a recognised testing authority will be accepted as proof of compliance.</p>
<p>1. Restricted products The following cleaning products may not be used in carrying out the cleaning service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chlorine-based sanitary cleaners and strongly acidic toilet and bathroom cleaners with inorganic acids (unless specified within a healthcare facility) • chemical air fresheners • chemical drain cleaners • sprays containing propellants. 	

Minimum performance criteria	Best practice performance criteria
<p>2. Restricted substances</p> <p>Cleaning products used by the successful offeror in carrying out the cleaning service must not contain the following substances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> halogenated organic substances or solvents (e.g. chlorinated methane or ethane, fluoropolymer additives) analine based amines the phthalates DEHP, DBP, DAP or BBP aziridine or polyaziridines polybrominated diphenyl ethers, or short-chain chlorinated organic flame retardants alkyl phenol ethoxylates (APEO) or derivatives thereof xylene sulfonates or other linear alkyl benzene sulfonates reactive chlorine compounds (e.g. hypochlorites) organic chlorine carriers (e.g. triclosan) benzalkonium chloride butoxyethanol optical brightening agents the following fragrances: moskusxylene, moskusambrette, moskene, moskustibetin, moskusketone the chelating agents EDTA, DTPA, NTA or phosphonates¹ <p>any substances listed as class 1 or 2a carcinogens by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)².</p>	
<p>3. Heavy metals</p> <p>Cleaning products used by the successful offeror in carrying out the cleaning service must not contain heavy metals in concentrations greater than listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> arsenic must not exceed 0.5mg/l lead must not exceed 0.5mg/l cadmium must not exceed 0.1mg/l chromium must not exceed 0.5mg/l mercury must not exceed 0.02mg/l. 	

¹ Exception may be made for phosphonates if hydrogen peroxide is present in solutions at concentrations greater than 1 per cent by mass, provided than no greater than 1g/kg of solution (0.1 per cent by weight is present).

² Refer to: <https://monographs.iarc.who.int/>.

Minimum performance criteria	Best practice performance criteria
<p>4. Biodegradability Cleaning products used by the successful offeror in carrying out the cleaning service must only contain surfactants and organic ingredients that are aerobically readily biodegradable. Ready biodegradability is defined under OECD guidelines for testing of Chemicals (301-A-F), ISO test methods (ISO 9439, ISO 10708, ISO 10707 or ISO 7828) or Thai Standard for Detergents, TISI 578.</p>	
<p>5. Phosphorous Cleaning products used by the successful offeror in carrying out the cleaning service must not contain more than 1 per cent by weight of phosphorus.</p> <p><i>Product packaging</i> Cleaning products used by the successful offeror in carrying out the cleaning service must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be purchased in quantities that minimise the amount of packaging used and delivered in bulk or concentrated form • be packaged in materials that are recyclable and easily separable into component parts • contain cardboard packaging that has a minimum 50 per cent recycled content • use pump sprays rather than aerosols. <p>Offerors must provide a written declaration to demonstrate compliance with the above requirements.</p>	
<p>Contract performance clause The contractor must submit quarterly reports indicating the name, quantity, any environmental certifications and use of the cleaning products. For any products not mentioned in the initial offer, proof of compliance with the specifications must be submitted.</p>	
References: 4, 5, 6, 9 (see <i>References</i> , below).	

Choice of cleaning equipment

- **Issue.** Equipment used in the provision of cleaning services utilises resources (including water and energy) and has the potential to generate unnecessary amounts of waste.
- **Response.** Give preference to cleaning services providers that can demonstrate initiatives to use cleaning equipment or techniques that achieve reduced environmental impact (e.g. equipment with increased energy or water efficiency).

Minimum performance criteria	Best practice performance criteria
<p>Minimum specification: Offerors are required to demonstrate that steps have been taken to identify the environmental impacts of equipment used for the provision of the cleaning service and increase the use of equipment with reduced environmental impact.</p> <p>This may include the use of equipment with increased energy or water efficiency, equipment made out of recycled material, or equipment that is recyclable and contains no toxic substances.</p>	<p>Best practice specification: Powered equipment use and maintenance Offerors are required to provide a copy of the plan for the use and maintenance of powered cleaning equipment which maximises efficient use. The plan must encompass the phase out of equipment that does not meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vacuum cleaners must operate at an average sound power level less than 70 decibels (dB) when measured at a distance of 10 metres (m) powered floor maintenance equipment (e.g. polishers) must be equipped with controls or other devices for capturing and collecting particles and operate at an average sound power level less than 70dB when measured at a distance of 10m propane powered or other combustible fuel burning floor equipment must not be used (unless specified by the floor manufacturer) powered scrubbing machines must be equipped with a control mechanism for varying the dispensing rate of cleaning fluids in order to optimise their use. <p>This plan should include a quarterly maintenance program (or as recommended by the equipment manufacturer) for powered cleaning equipment.</p>
<p>Contract performance clause – Minimum</p>	
<p>The contractor is required to use the following cleaning equipment in the provision of the cleaning service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reusable microfiber clothes instead of disposable cloths microfiber mops automatic dispensers that do not result in overuse of the product equipment that avoids dust emissions energy efficient vacuum cleaners and polishers. 	
<p>Contract performance clause – Best practice</p>	
<p>Bin liners The contractor must ensure plastic garbage bin liners used do not contain phthalates or halogenated plastics and contain a minimum of 10 per cent recycled content.</p>	
<p>The contractor must progressively increase the use of biodegradable garbage bin liners.</p>	
<p>References: 2, 7, 9 (see <i>References</i>, below).</p>	

Working environment

Employment practices

- **Issue.** The cleaning industry is particularly vulnerable to exploitation due to its large reliance on casual and transient workers and migrant employees. Poor working conditions and low wages are an ongoing issue in the cleaning industry.
- **Response.** Ensure working conditions do not adversely affect cleaning staff wellbeing by engaging a cleaning services provider that applies fair employment practices and is compliant with legislative requirements.

Minimum performance criteria	Best practice performance criteria
<p>Minimum specification:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offerors are required to provide documented evidence that they are compliant with the <i>Australian Fair Work Act 2009</i>. 2. Offerors must provide a written declaration providing details of any court proceedings that they have been involved with relating to unsafe work practices or breaches of minimum employment awards in Australia. 3. Offerors are required to provide a written declaration to demonstrate that all employees are covered by a relevant federal or state award or certified industrial agreement. 	<p>Best practice specification:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offerors are required to provide documented workplace practices or a written declaration to demonstrate alignment with international labour standards (International Labour Organisation Core Conventions).
<p>Contract performance clause</p> <p>If at any time during the term of the arrangement the contractor is found to be the subject of court proceedings for breaches of Australian employment awards and workplace health and safety laws, the contractor must immediately notify the contract manager.</p> <p>The employment of subcontractors will only occur with the consent of contract manager and the contractor will ensure that such subcontractors also meet the criteria in this document.</p>	
References: 9 (see <i>References</i> , below).	

Operational procedures

- **Issue.** Inadequate internal operating procedures and policies increase the risk of socially and environmentally detrimental activities resulting from the provision of the cleaning service.
- **Response.** Ensure the cleaning services provider has comprehensive operational procedures, policies and systems to address the environmental and social impacts of their business.

Minimum performance criteria	Best practice performance criteria
<p>Minimum specification: <i>Environmental management</i> Offerors must provide a copy of an environmental policy operating within the company and evidence that this policy is clearly communicated to all staff.</p> <p><i>Operating procedures</i> Offerors are required to provide a copy of the written guidelines that define the standard operating procedures for the cleaning service. These guidelines must include direction on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • storage and use of chemicals (e.g. instructions on the dilution of chemicals) • procurement of suitable cleaning products • equipment use, inspection and maintenance • training requirements • quality assurance procedures • reporting and record keeping procedures • procedures for hazard control • accident report procedures and forms • disposal of products, packaging and other waste materials. <p>Offerors must provide evidence that these guidelines are clearly communicated to all cleaning staff. Care should be taken to ensure the guidelines are understood by staff from a non-English speaking background.</p>	<p>Best practice specification: <i>Environmental management</i> Offeror must provide a copy of current documentation that formally demonstrates a system of environmental management is operating within the company. The system should encompass identification, evaluation, improvement and monitoring of environmental performance of the company</p> <p>The environmental management system must especially include a framework for action on hazardous chemicals, energy use and waste management. The system of environmental management may be ISO 14001 certified, in which case, a copy of the valid certificate is to be provided</p> <p><i>Health and safety</i> Offerors are required to provide a copy of an independently verified occupational health and safety management system that complies with AS/NZ 4801:2001 Occupational health and safety management systems.</p> <p><i>Site-specific cleaning procedures</i> Offerors are required to provide a copy of documentation that defines the cleaning methodologies for different sites, surfaces and usage types (e.g. bathroom, office, windows) and energy efficiency measures e.g. team cleaning and waste disposal.</p>
<p>Contract performance clause The contractor must produce work instructions on environmental, health and safety practices in carrying out the cleaning service. These work instructions must be displayed at each work site and be able to be accessed by cleaning staff at any time.</p>	
References: 1, 7, 8, 9 (see <i>References</i> , below).	

Staff training

- **Issue.** Cleaning staff are exposed to many hazards as part of their work including hazardous chemicals and risk of ergonomic injuries. Inadequate training of cleaning staff can result in incorrect use of cleaning products and equipment, increasing the risk of injury to both the cleaning staff and building occupants.
- **Response.** Ensure cleaning services provider provides continuing training to all cleaning staff in correct procedures for safety, equipment operation, techniques and pertinent environmental standards.

Minimum performance criteria	Best practice performance criteria
<p>Minimum specification:</p> <p>Training policy</p> <p>Offerors are required to provide a copy of the organisation's training policy that demonstrates that all staff employed in carrying out the cleaning service are trained in correct procedures for safety, equipment, techniques and pertinent environmental standards. The training policy should encompass the appropriate training required by staff before they may commence cleaning duties and the requirement for ongoing training on a minimum annual basis.</p> <p>Site-specific training</p> <p>Offerors are required to provide a copy of the site-specific training plan that demonstrates that all staff employed in carrying out the cleaning service are trained in specific standards for the facility/area to which they are assigned (e.g. office or school).</p> <p>This tailored procedural training must cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedule of cleaning operations detailing the minimum frequency required to clean and maintain the area to a level that adequately protects human health and the environment • instructions for cleaning in areas with inadequate ventilation or poor lighting • training for servicing areas for vulnerable populations such as young children, pregnant women, elderly or people sensitive to chemical exposure • hazardous communication standards including client engagement in environmental awareness. 	<p>Best practice specification:</p> <p>Offerors are required to demonstrate that a minimum 50 per cent of staff employed in carrying out the cleaning service are undertaking or have achieved a Certificate III in Asset Maintenance (Cleaning Operations).</p>
<p>Contract performance clause</p> <p>Training records</p> <p>During the term of the arrangement, the contractor is required to provide a record of annual training for each cleaning staff member.</p> <p>This training should cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standard operating procedures including correct operation of equipment, chemical handling and proper sequence of cleaning steps • health and safety training including prevention of ergonomic injuries and reduction of exposure to hazardous chemicals • environmental practices including pertinent environmental standards and techniques that will result in reduced consumption of resources i.e. water, energy, chemicals and waste management. 	
References: 1, 2, 9 (see <i>References</i> , below).	

Cleaning processes

Resource use and emissions

- **Issue.** The cleaning process generates a range of environmental impacts among which are the use of resources such as water and energy, and poor indoor air quality. Altering the way the cleaning service is carried out has a major impact on the quantities of resources used.
- **Response.** Ensure the cleaning services provider utilises cleaning techniques that minimise the amount of cleaning products, water and electricity used and reduce the impact of cleaning on indoor air quality.

Minimum performance criteria	Best practice performance criteria
<p>Minimum specification: Cleaning practices and techniques The sites outlined in the scope of work must be cleaned using techniques that use minimal amounts of cleaning chemicals, water and electricity and reduce the impact of cleaning on indoor air quality.</p> <p>Offerors are required to indicate how they will achieve this for each of the sites outlined in the scope of work.</p> <p>Examples of practices to be commented on in responding to this requirement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the use of dry-cleaning techniques for linoleum flooring where appropriate • initiatives and techniques to eliminate or reduce the use of hazardous chemicals. 	<p>Best practice specification: None currently expected to be met by majority of the supply market.</p>
<p>Contract performance clause – Minimum Hazardous chemicals The contractor is required to maintain a register of all cleaning products for each work site specified in the scope of work, and maintain material safety data sheets (MSDS) for all listed chemicals. The MSDS should be freely available to cleaning staff and contract or site manager at all times during cleaning operations.</p> <p>Water use The contractor must ensure all equipment is used in a water efficient manner.</p> <p>Energy use The contractor must ensure all powered equipment is used in an energy efficient manner and is switched off when not in use.</p> <p>Contract performance clause – Best practice Hazardous chemicals The contractor must track quantities of cleaning chemicals used and provide quarterly reporting to the contract manager. The reporting must comprise name of cleaning product, quantity used and task for which the chemical is used.</p>	

Management of waste

- **Issue.** The cleaning process generates significant waste including hazardous chemicals, containers, worn equipment and packaging materials.
- **Response.** Ensure the selected cleaning services provider has:
 - appropriate waste reduction policies (e.g. recycling policies)
 - procedures and systems in place for management and safe disposal of waste and hazardous chemicals used in the cleaning process.

Minimum performance criteria	Best practice performance criteria
<p>Minimum specification:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offerors are required to demonstrate the steps that have been taken to minimise waste from the provision of cleaning services. This may include recycling policies aimed at reducing waste to landfill or re-use policies aimed at reducing single-use items whenever possible. 2. Offeror must demonstrate that there are procedures in place to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • re-use cleaning product containers where appropriate • recycle waste items from cleaning operation including paper, glass, plastics, cardboard and other packaging materials. 	<p>Best practice specification: None currently expected to be met by majority of the supply market.</p>
<p>Contract performance clause – Minimum The contractor must dispose of all hazardous waste according to manufacturer instructions and in compliance with the relevant local authority laws pertaining to the disposals of chemicals.</p> <p>Contract performance clause – Best practice Over the term of the arrangement the contractor is required to provide quarterly reports on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • volumes of waste recycled, including type of materials recycled • volumes of waste generated from the provision of the cleaning service • initiatives implemented to minimise waste from the provision of cleaning services. 	
References: 6 (see <i>References</i> , below).	

Contribution to clients' sustainable practices

- **Issue.** During the provision of the cleaning service, service providers have an impact on their client's sustainability performance through the consumption of the client's resources and influence on the client's waste management. Additionally, staff engaged in carrying out the cleaning services are able to contribute to their client's sustainability performance by identifying opportunities for improvement in clients' sustainability practices.
- **Response.** Engage cleaning services providers that can demonstrate initiatives to contribute to client's sustainability practices and goals.

Minimum performance criteria	Best practice performance criteria
Minimum specification: None currently expected to be met by majority of the supply market.	Best practice specification: None currently expected to be met by majority of the supply market.
Contract performance clause Over the term of the arrangement, the contractor is required to contribute to client's sustainable practices by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> liaising with clients to meet the client's sustainability objectives and goals (e.g. supporting client's waste management initiatives/ recycling initiatives/ energy or water conservation policies) encouraging clients to adopt and incorporate sustainable practices and procedures into their business (e.g. reconsidering the cleaning frequency, cleaning at times when facility occupants are not present in order to reduce exposure to harmful chemicals/dust) identifying opportunities for improvements and recommending actions to assist the client to improve their sustainability performance (e.g. recognising when there is excessive consumption of toiletries or an unnecessary number of rubbish bins) encouraging the use of electronic reports and invoicing.
Reference: 1 (see <i>References</i> , below).	

Integrating sustainable procurement throughout the procurement process

Sustainability considerations should be incorporated at every stage of the procurement process. Prior to incorporating any specifications or information contained within this guide:

- consider the specific market conditions and organisational needs prior to deciding if and where to apply these criteria.
- document the options and decisions for how sustainability will be addressed in a plan for significant procurement or a business case.

Procurement planning

Demand analysis

Rethinking the need for a purchase can help avoid unnecessary consumption. Consider both the 'need' for the cleaning service and how the service is being managed. For example, this may include scoping the requirements for the cleaning service in a way that will require different cleaning practices and frequency for different areas. Additionally, it may involve considering how the supplier may be able to contribute to the organisation's sustainability practices and goals.

Supply market analysis

Collect information to identify the capacity of the supply chain to deliver the service in accordance with sustainability requirements.

Use the sustainability issues identified in this guide to develop a pre-tender questionnaire that will help lead discussion with suppliers.

Conduct pre-tender supplier briefings in order to:

- engage potential suppliers, identify existing sustainable suppliers and develop an overall understanding of the market's sustainability performance and capability

- determine whether the recommended minimum performance criteria identified in this guide are sufficient or if the best practice performance criteria would be more suitable.

Identify opportunities for collaboration between government and industry/specific suppliers in relation to sustainability issues outlined in this guide.

Industry specific initiatives aimed at improving the sustainability performance of the supply market may assist in identification of current environmental management practices and eco-efficiency projects in the industry.

Supplier engagement

The criteria in this guide can be used to develop requirements in the invitation to offer documents as follows:

- minimum performance criteria for cleaning services may be set as mandatory specifications:
 - ensure that 'mandatory' requirements are able to be delivered by the majority of potential suppliers – those who do not meet the mandatory specifications are not evaluated during the tendering process.
- best practice performance criteria for cleaning services criteria may be set as desirable specifications:
 - these criteria relate to industry leaders in the sustainability field and therefore it is unlikely that all suppliers will be able to compete on this level
 - best practice performance criteria provide a market for more sustainable products
 - specifying for best practices may incur a price differential; identify whether or not there is a price differential in the upfront cost and whether ongoing savings maybe realised in other areas – this may occur where the supplier will use cleaning techniques that utilise less water, energy and reduced consumables, or where they are able to proactively support the client's sustainability goals (e.g. while the purchase cost of microfiber cloths is higher than regular cleaning products (such as detergents and buckets), the use of reusable microfiber cloths can lead to labour cost reductions of up to 10 per cent for the service provider).

Managing supply arrangements

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are an effective tool to ensure suppliers implement progressive sustainability improvements during the term of the arrangement. For example:

- if at the specification development stage it is determined that the potential supplier does not have a capability or capacity to meet a particular sustainability requirement at that point in time, the sustainability criterion may be set as part of KPIs (e.g. the supplier may be required to achieve and use an ISO 14001: Environmental Management System within the next 12 months)
- best practice criteria that are set as KPIs could be used to progress a supplier towards best practice via continuous improvement over time.

Reporting and measurement

Contract reporting requirements should specifically demonstrate the environmental and social benefits achieved by procuring more sustainable products.

Incorporate sustainability reporting requirements into contract/arrangement terms and conditions.

Measurements of sustainability performance for cleaning services could include:

- reductions in the volume of hazardous chemicals used
- increase in number of more energy and water efficient cleaning equipment used
- reports of measures taken to minimise waste generated by the provision of the cleaning service
- number of successfully implemented initiatives that have been proposed/recommended by the cleaning services provider to the client to assist the client in improving their sustainability performance.

References

1. The Building Services Contractors Association of Australia (BSCAA), Ecoclean Certification Program - Guidelines for implementation (July 2009).
2. Green Seal (US), Proposed Environmental Standard for Commercial and Institutional Cleaning Services GS-42, September 2006.
3. Responsible Purchasing Network, Cleaning Products.
4. United States Environmental Protection Agency, Identifying Greener Cleaning Products, [online], accessed July 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts/identifying-greener-cleaning-products> (2025).
5. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs – UK Quick Wins, Cleaning Products, April 2008.
6. Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd – GECA (Australia), Cleaning Products, November 2007.
7. Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd – GECA (Australia), Cleaning Services, February 2008.
8. European Union Green Public Procurement (EU), Cleaning Products and Services, 2008.
9. Local Governments for Sustainability for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Sustainable procurement guidelines for cleaning products (basic and advanced), [online], accessed July 2025 <https://greeningtheblue.org/procurement>