



Sowing Sustainable Food Systems + Procurement *through Contract Language*

For the University of Michigan Procurement Services +
University Leadership | *June 2023*

Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary

This report aims to highlight the findings of the **2023 Winter Sustainable Food Procurement Research Project** conducted for MDining with sponsorship from the University of Michigan President’s Advisory Committee on Labor Standards and Human Rights (PACLSHR). The research project was conducted during the 2023 Winter semester with a team of student research assistants, support staff, and university leaders. Procurement, particularly within large institutions like the University of Michigan, represents a powerful force for change. As environmental and social consequences of unsustainable food practices grow, the need to leverage this change in creating positive value throughout food systems increases rapidly; these project efforts further advance the understanding of these processes and how to improve them through contract language for procurement solicitation and contract creation.

Sustainable food procurement practices also significantly encompass the immense impact that food systems and their supply chains have on ecosystems – but social ecosystems are a vital aspect of sustainable food procurement. The recent impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated inequity and gaps in access to procurement opportunities for diverse and disadvantaged suppliers. A report, “A Procurement Path to Equity: Strategies for

Government and the Business Ecosystem,” published in 2020, found that Black small business ownership fell by 26%, Asian business owners by 21%, and Hispanic business owners by 19%.¹ Moving forward, sustainable food procurement practices and design must be inclusive, equitable, and accessible to suppliers who have historically been excluded from processes.

The primary sections of this report cover the research project background and research project. The background behind the Winter 2023 contract language research project, including the use of the National Association of College and University Food Services (NACUFS) benchmarking tools and contract language developed by previous student teams, is outlined. NACUFS has created frameworks that have helped many schools assess and improve their food sustainability and allowed the University of Michigan to identify gaps within procurement that began to be addressed in the latter half of 2022, such as nearly decade-old guidelines of what defines food as sustainable. Details of the various phases of this contract language research project are discussed, including Phase 1 - General Research + Discovery, Phase 2 - Supplier Scorecard, Phase 3 - Contract Language, and Phase 4 - Review, Report, and Presentation.

Challenges to sustainable food procurement, such as consumer buy-in, transparency, and a lack of support for producers and guiding policies, are also explored. In a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report, “Sustainable Public Procurement How to “Wake the Sleeping Giant,” 57% of respondents from a 2016 survey noted that the main driver of sustainable procurement is policy, goals, action items, and top-down leadership. Additionally, 33% of respondents indicated that a barrier to sustainable procurement is the perception that sustainable products and services are more expensive.² However, qualitative research on food service operations at hospitals, colleges, and universities suggests that meeting a 25% purchasing level of local, organic, and sustainably grown food is achievable without incurring significant increases to operating budgets; survey data also showed that food service buyers from colleges and other institutions could increase purchases from local growers by up to 38% of their produce budget without confronting significant barriers.³ Moreover, considering the total life cycle cost of procuring unsustainable food – previous notions and ideas must be challenged to reimagine a more sustainable and livable future.

The final sections of this report offer remarks on this research project and final recommendations to the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) and university leadership. Some of the recommendations include piloting new contract language, developing action plans and policies to guide efforts forward, enhancing communication and outreach to expand awareness of opportunities for suppliers, breaking up procurement asks to make them more accessible, and forming cross-sector coalitions based around procurement.

The appendix of this report provides information about the University of Michigan, including sustainability goals, procurement

processes and programs, and planning and visioning efforts underway at the university. As the end date of 2025 for many of Michigan’s sustainability objectives approaches, guidelines for the new Vision 2034 must be set, the achievement of which significantly relies on progress made by the Procurement Services team through their sourcing and purchasing decisions.

The appendix also defines sustainable food procurement, sustainable food systems, and the importance of both topics. Agriculture and livestock production creates large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions, and food systems are ripe with injustices such as food insecurity and unfair labor practices. Procurement can be leveraged as a tool for sustainable change through the careful analysis and selection of suppliers promoting positive action, as purchasing from suppliers perpetrating these issues may be tantamount to supporting these harmful practices. The appendix also highlights examples of successful sustainable food procurement practices across various academic, governmental, and philanthropic organizations. Innovative approaches from the University of California, the University of Cambridge, the Good Food Purchasing Program, the United Nations, and others highlight the importance of bold action and policies to meet sustainability goals; collaboration was also a critical factor in their successes.

Additional conversations will benefit from knowledge sharing, coalition building, and refinement of the team’s currently developed contract language. The goals of this work are to help set more environmentally- and socially-conscious expectations for future University of Michigan food vendors, in addition to sharing the deliverables with other institutions to raise the bar for sustainable food procurement by institutions.



Project Background

NACUFS is a professional organization that supports and promotes excellence in collegiate dining by providing resources, training, and networking opportunities to food service professionals in higher education institutions.⁴

To better understand how sustainable food procurement and university operations were, MDining staff and others utilized a benchmarking tool to create a baseline assessment and understanding. Through this system audit, the university could better understand areas of improvement and where to focus future efforts.

The NACUFS Sustainability Benchmarking Tool is a comprehensive assessment system designed to help large institutions in the higher education sector measure and improve their sustainable food procurement practices. This tool allows institutions to evaluate their performance across various sustainability indicators, such as local sourcing, waste reduction, and energy efficiency. By utilizing the NACUFS benchmarking tool, they can identify areas for improvement, set sustainability goals, and track their progress over time, ultimately promoting environmentally responsible food service operations within the academic community.

Michigan Dining (MDining) represents a significant portion of the food consumption within the University of Michigan system, serving nine different dining halls at various locations across the Ann Arbor campus. Due to their significant impact, MDining has engaged with the university community to achieve campus sustainability goals, such as supporting local businesses and carbon neutrality.

This project is part of a continued effort from University of Michigan leadership in MDining and others to direct food procurement and other university efforts in a more sustainable direction. Efforts not only aim to develop sustainable procurement processes but align with university goals to cultivate a more inclusive, diverse, and culturally welcoming environment for all students and vendors with whom the university partners (see Appendix A). A timeline of these efforts is shown in Figure 1.1.

Like many other universities, university leadership turned to industry tools and standards that various other higher education institutions and industry experts also utilize to understand their gaps and successes within sustainable procurement and food services; university leaders adopted and utilized widely used resources and evaluation methods from a national network of food service professionals: The National Association of College and University Food Services (NACUFS).

TIMELINE: MAKING FOOD SYSTEMS + OPERATIONS AT MICHIGAN DINING MORE SUSTAINABLE

After internally evaluating MDining’s performance with the benchmarking tool, a student team from Dr. Sara Soderstrom’s Winter 2022 semester ENVIRON391 class entitled “Sustainability and the Campus” was chosen to draft sustainability-focused contract language that could be used by the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) that ultimately determines how MDining and the university work with contracted suppliers, the quality of goods procured, and performance rendered.

The current Sustainable Food Procurement Research Project underway in the Winter 2023 semester is the most recent iteration of sustainable food procurement efforts; however, this does not encompass all of the sustainable food procurement research and efforts underway at the University. Beyond this project, professors, subject matter experts, and students are working independently and collaboratively to understand how to improve sustainability within food systems and procurement. One example of these interdisciplinary efforts is a report, “Assessment of Food Waste Reduction Strategies,” developed by graduate students Celia Bravard, Colton Babladelis, Janet Genser, and Marney Coleman for Michigan Dining as a master’s project within the School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS). The report identifies food waste interventions and solutions to reduce negative externalities and strengthen the value chain.

This research project and the final report concluded in June 2023, but these efforts will continue to expand beyond this project, research, and recommendations.

INTERNAL
efforts to make food procurement services more sustainable

ANALYSIS
of general campus sustainability and scope 3 emissions related to food procurement

OUTREACH
to NACUFS network and internal audit with self-assessment and benchmarking tools

INITIAL
contract language development with ENVIRON 391 student team + faculty lead Sara Soderstrom

CURRENT
PACLSHR sponsored Winter 2023 Sustainable Food Procurement Research Project

Figure 1.1



Sustainable Food Procurement: Winter 2023 Contract Language Research Project

The purpose of this research project and report is to further sustainable food procurement efforts at the university through conducting research, discovering industry best practices, and developing contract language for the University of Michigan Procurement Services

(UMPS) request for proposal (RFP), request for information (RFI), and other solicitation and contract creation processes. Some of the goals and objectives are multifaceted and ongoing efforts surrounding continued research and implementation of industry best practices (see

Appendix B). As those continue to take shape, project leadership, support, and the research team identified concrete deliverables that were outlined to help reach some of the broader goals and objectives of this project and the university at large. These goals and objectives also consider the state and health of regional, national, and global ecosystems.

The project began in January 2023 and was initiated by Michigan Dining (MDining) with the sponsorship of the University of Michigan President's Advisory Committee on Labor Standards and Human Rights (PACLSHR); the project was completed in June 2023. The stakeholders central to this work's completion include MDining, PACLSHR, the support team of staff from MDining and PACLSHR, and the research team. As the deliverables were shared throughout the various stages of the project, additional feedback was provided by other industry experts.

The research project had four phases: Phase 1, General Research + Discovery; Phase 2, Supplier Scorecard; Phase 3, Contract Language; and Phase 4, Review, Report, and Presentation. A timeline of the various phases is shown in Figure 2.1. Each phase had its unique deliverable (see Figure 2.2) designed to help advance the mission of sustainable food procurement and implement developed contract language; the developed contract language was derived from previous language creation, current contracts in service, industry standards, and research regarding the subject matter. The main objective was to develop contract language that the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) can embed within RFPs, RFIs, and other solicitation and contract creation documents to foster more partnerships with suppliers that can help the university achieve its goals and mission while improving the overall social, environmental, and economic ecosystems that the university impacts.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative exploratory research project aimed to acquire a nomothetic understanding. The research focuses on general industry practices with more specific cases of how sustainable food procurement strategies are applied and the modes used to apply them.

Initial discovery and literature review were conducted through the exploration to understand best industry practices and standards and who might be leading the path forward in sustainable food procurement and innovation. Qualitative data was collected from internal university stakeholders and attendees from the University of Michigan 2023 Conference on Sustainable Food Procurement by Institutions; the research team; and secondary sources from academic and other journals, institutions, agencies, policies, and governments.

Each phase of the project explored various topics within sustainable food procurement, including but not limited to third-party certifications; supplier scorecard design and standards; contract language and policies from institutions, governments, and agencies; and various methods to implement sustainable food procurement broadly to understand how contract language and tools can be designed to encompass innovation and drive the mission forward at the university.

ESG FRAMEWORK

Throughout this research and deliverable development, the research team opted to use the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) framework to guide development processes. The ESG framework is a set of criteria used to assess the sustainability and ethical impact of an organization and is seeing large growth in usage across the

TIMELINE: THE SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT CONTRACT LANGUAGE JOURNEY

business world.⁵ Utilizing three separate categories provides the dual benefit of ensuring the definition of sustainability is both comprehensive, extending beyond environmental issues alone, and compartmentalized to avoid confusion or misunderstanding (see Appendix C). Throughout this research, the research team adhered to set definitions for each criterion within ESG for consistency.

ENVIRONMENTAL

The environmental aspect of the ESG framework considers how a company manages its impact on the physical environment and natural resources through carbon footprint, energy efficiency, types of resources used, greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, waste management, water usage, and pollution and climate change mitigation.⁶

SOCIAL

The social aspect of the ESG framework considers how a company manages its impact on consumers, employees, suppliers, and the community; it considers workplace and board diversity, labor standards, human rights, social justice, pay equity, community relations and contributions, health and safety, supply chain management, privacy and data protection, talent management.⁷

GOVERNANCE

The governance aspect of the ESG framework considers how a company is controlled and directed. It includes all of the rules, policies, and systems the organization has in place to dictate corporate behavior and considers strategic sustainability oversight and compliance, corporate board composition and structure, executive compensation, political contributions and lobbying, and bribery and corruption.⁸

PHASE 1

DISCOVERY

February 16 to
February 24
2023

PHASE 2

SUPPLIER SCORECARD

February 27 to
March 13
2023

PHASE 3

CONTRACT LANGUAGE

March 12 to
March 27
2023

PHASE 4

REVIEW, REPORT, + PRESENTATION

March 27 to
June 14
2023

Figure 2.1

Phases of the Project

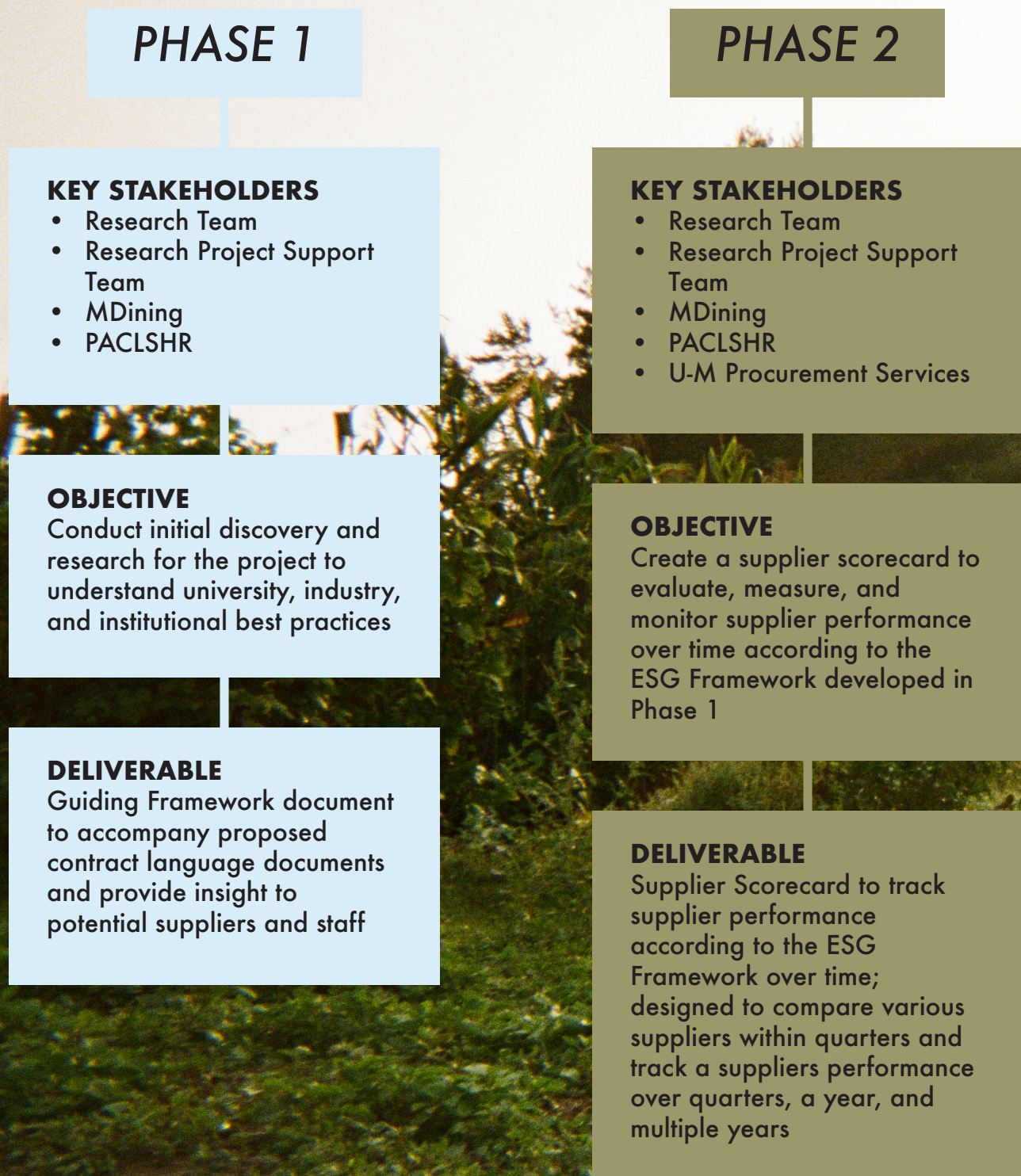


Figure 2.2

PHASE 3

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Research Team
- Research Project Support Team
- MDining
- PACLSHR
- U-M Procurement Services

OBJECTIVE

Create contract language and documents for RFP, RFI, and other solicitation processes within the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS); align deliverables with UMPS practices for implementation

DELIVERABLE

Contract language documents for UMPS RFP and RFI solicitation processes specific to various categories pertaining to food procurement, environmental sustainability, social equity, and compliance standards

PHASE 4

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Research Team
- Research Project Support Team
- MDining
- PACLSHR
- U-M Procurement Services
- University of Michigan Conference on Sustainable Food Procurement by Institutions attendees

OBJECTIVE

Present findings of the University of Michigan 2023 Conference on Sustainable Food Procurement by Institutions; develop research project report; amend developed contract language based on feedback; share developed contract language with UMPS and others

DELIVERABLE

Final Research Project Report; Presentation for University of Michigan 2023 Conference on Sustainable Food Procurement by Institutions; refined contract language

Figure 2.2

Phase 1: General Research + Discovery

Phase 1 of this project laid the research project's foundation by exploring literature from secondary sources (see Appendix B) and internal policies and practices pertaining to procurement processes and university goals and values (see Appendix A). With this foundational understanding, the research team began exploring sustainable food procurement efforts beyond the university walls to better understand where innovation within the industry occurs and how it compares to internal university procurement processes.

It is crucial to understand not only how and where procurement innovation is occurring but how these processes shape the environment and what environmental, social, and governing processes can ensure greater sustainability; this phase fostered that information. By understanding the best practices of environmental stewardship, social justice and equity, and guiding governance to ensure uniform standards and requirements – contract language can later be designed to direct efforts toward the best practices.

INDUSTRY & PROCUREMENT RESEARCH

Understanding internal procurement processes is essential, providing insight into any gaps or obstacles that may be limiting sustainable food procurement. At an institution like the University of Michigan, this can be difficult. Large numbers of vendors serving residential dining halls, cafés, and hospital food service systems bring discrepancies in demand and inventory tracking systems. Therefore, the University of Michigan has a large team of procurement agents to manage the size of this undertaking. Although this compartmentalization is beneficial for handling purchases within a large school and health system, it can make a thorough

understanding of the sustainability of procurement efforts challenging.

Through conversations with Michigan Dining, the Office of Campus Sustainability, and the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) staff, the research team acquired solicitation and contract materials in use to understand areas of improvement and target areas and gaps to address first. Efforts were expanded from previous research and contract language development from a collaboration between Michigan Dining and ENVIRON 391; with this collaboration, the foundation of the contract language documents was formed. Initial research was conducted to understand pertinent topics for contract language question development. Four documents were developed by students prior to this project that focused on the intersection of various aspects of sustainability, such as social equity, biodiversity, waste reduction, and animal welfare. Six documents were developed to specifically address food categories, including dairy, meat, produce, linens, ingredient transparency, and coffee.

With the provided documents, initial discovery, previous insights, and other developed tools such as the National Association of College & University Food Services (NACUFS) Benchmarking Tool and Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (AASHE STARS), the research team began to lay the foundation of what should be considered and addressed when developing contract language for sustainable food procurement – a broad topic.

By exploring food and other sustainable procurement initiatives through the lens of academia, governments, and philanthropy (see Appendix B), the research team developed a holistic picture of how the various agencies and actors work together to shape contract language and procurement endeavors and the social and environmental ecosystems. Doing so expanded the understanding of topics that are pertinent to the topic of sustainable food procurement (see Appendix C), including but not limited to production methods, ecological conservation, resource management, labor standards and issues, hazardous materials, waste management and reduction, biodiversity, animal welfare, the lack of supply chain transparency and more. Through this research, the research team was able to highlight and understand the pressing issues that impact not only food procurement but the quality of life for those who keep the supply chain running and the various impacts that come with food production globally.

For example, looking at how academic institutions are procuring food more sustainably and which stakeholders are involved strengthened the understanding of how similar processes might look at the university. It is also vital to understand the efforts of others and how institutions can align to bolster sustainability impacts and initiatives. Looking at government standards, policy, legislation, and reports (see Appendix B) gave insight into how procurement processes and contract language can align with wide-scale initiatives to create efficiencies and make room for coalition building in the future; this also highlighted which standards and certifications are being utilized at global, federal, state, and local levels. Exploration into philanthropic agencies and efforts brought an understanding of how local movements are transforming practices through community efforts on the ground and how these processes impact vulnerable populations,

workers, and others. Additionally, non-profits often fill the gaps between academic and government institutions, pointing to areas of harnessed frontline innovation often catalyzed by local community members doing the work on the ground – an essential perspective in this work.

GUIDING FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

A Guiding Framework (see Appendix D) was developed in this phase to set the scope of exploration, define terms and ideas, and identify resources and standards such as third-party certifications. From previous discoveries, documents, and tools, the research team identified pertinent topics and aspects of sustainable food generally and the procurement of it. The topics were sorted according to the relevant category of the ESG framework. The intention is that this document can also be used as an educational resource for the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) agents, current suppliers, and suppliers in consideration.

Topics within the Framework address locality and its definition; community contributions and collaborations and what might be considered; diverse supplier criteria and certifications; environmentally friendly practices and processes; renewable energy, waste reduction processes, well-being; nutrition; labor standards and human rights; and more. Resources and direct links are embedded in the document for ease of further research and exploration; additionally, some support services were identified, such as agencies or organizations that help diverse vendors reach and maintain certifications and compliance to better access federal and other procurement opportunities.

Certifications that the University does not formally identify as accepted were also identified to broaden the opportunities for suppliers who may not be able to afford specific

certifications or may have certifications that uphold equivalent standards to other certifications. For suppliers interested in receiving audits and certifications to ensure optimal practices and access to more procurement opportunities, some of the certifications listed may be more feasible and provide entry to other certifications that certify optimal standards are met.

The Guiding Framework informed and was referenced throughout the project and subsequent phases to ensure the most comprehensive final deliverables and ensure consistency; it helped the project team map out essential aspects and ensure there were no major gaps for further contract language development.

Additionally, providing the Framework as a resource during the solicitation process in tandem with the proposed contract language from Phase 3 could be beneficial for small and medium vendors and generate understanding and buy-in from suppliers regarding the importance of these considerations and adopting more sustainable methods within operations.



Phase 2: Supplier Scorecard

One effective tool for the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) is a supplier scorecard, a performance measurement system that evaluates and ranks suppliers based on a set of predetermined criteria. These criteria often encompass aspects such as product quality, delivery performance, and cost competitiveness. Supplier scorecards are essential as they assist organizations in identifying the best-performing suppliers, facilitating better decision-making, driving continuous improvement, and fostering healthier vendor relationships; they provide a way to measure performance over time and create opportunities for stronger partnerships and ways to identify areas of improvement for future contracts and solicitation.

IMPORTANCE OF A SUPPLIER SCORECARD: METRICS

As an essential tool for evaluating the performance of suppliers, a holistic supplier scorecard enables institutions to make informed decisions in selecting partners that align with their sustainability goals in addition to cost and performance criteria. By incorporating key performance indicators (KPIs) such as environmental impact, social responsibility, and economic viability, the scorecard helps identify suppliers that demonstrate a solid commitment to ethical and sustainable practices, both in the present and future. Incorporating sustainability-related metrics such as locality and waste reduction with traditional scorecard metrics such as on-time and in-full helps ensure that procurement teams truly consider these factors within their decisions. This usage of being weighed next to traditional supplier scoring can aid in showing the prominence of sustainability factors more than a code of conduct that is simply referenced externally and

is difficult to quantify or qualify.

SCORECARD DEVELOPMENT: SCORECARD INDICATORS

To develop a scorecard that incorporates sustainability factors, specific performance indicators were selected to assess suppliers and highlight standards for the suppliers being evaluated. The broad and holistic nature of sustainability can make this selection difficult, as too many indicators can create difficulties with both tracking and assessment. Additionally, the unique procurement and food production situation of different administrations means that the currently selected indicators may be subject to change in the future and are not necessarily applicable to other institutions that may hold different values.

The indicators the research team chose for sustainability were divided into six sections following the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) structure previously established (see Appendix E); the remaining indicators address more traditional and logistical concerns.

The selected key performance indicators (KPIs) categories include:

- Environment
- Social
- Governance
- Service
- Quality
- Pricing

Each of the six categories was given a specific weight within the scorecard totaling to 100%. Measurable indicators were then grouped into respective categories to address specific topics and issues that were previously identified in the Phase 1 Guiding Framework. The multiple areas of concern addressed in Phase 1 were

condensed into various general indicators that cover the various aspects and topics of each indicator with a focus on the quantifiable components of each subject.

The supplier scorecard (see Appendix E) was created in Microsoft Excel to allow for ease of adjustment with the various indicators and to utilize different data processing tools within the program. The indicator weights can be adjusted as needed and correlate to a chart that denotes the various scores awarded for the KPIs over various time frames. The scoring system ranges from one to five, with five being an excellent score and one being a poor score; the scores are color coated from green to red to assist with the review.

The various evaluation types are broken down by sheets within a file that allows for those evaluating to compare performance between suppliers; a single supplier within the current quarter, previous quarter, and previous fiscal year; a single supplier over four quarters; and a single supplier over a year (12 months) (see Appendix E). This flexibility allows for staff to review various suppliers based on needs. For example, a newer supplier may be reviewed over the 12-month time frame, and a supplier within a contract may be reviewed over the last quarter and previous year if they are in good standing.

Additionally, a brief description is provided for each indicator to assist staff and pertinent stakeholders during a review.

ENVIRONMENT

For the **environment category**, which accounts for 20% of the total scorecard weight, the most weight, 50% of the category, was placed on carbon neutrality due to its focus by the University of Michigan and the issue's expansiveness. Other indicators include

resource conservation (10%), waste reduction (10%), sustainable methods/operations (10%), renewable energy usage (10%), and non-certifiable measures/processes (10%), which all total to 100% within the category.

The **carbon neutral indicator** addresses the process of reducing, preventing, and recapturing Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs) from fossil fuel combustion through food purchases, such as favoring plant-based foods. Measurement of this indicator might include the supplier's investment to reduce carbon emissions; if a supplier has active efforts to reduce carbon emissions; the efficiency of carbon emission reductions; and other adjacent efforts to advance carbon neutrality within operations.

The **resource conservation indicator** considers efforts to conserve and protect natural resources such as land, water, and air directly/indirectly through practices, operations, and policies. Measurement of this indicator might include a supplier's water management plan, substantial efforts to reduce or recycle water, efforts to reduce deforestation, and efforts to reduce or eliminate harmful pollutants and toxins.

The **sustainable methods/operations indicator** addresses the specific methods in place, such as efforts to regenerate biodiversity. This indicator might measure the policies and processes in place to ensure biodiversity, the protection of necessary resources, and the specific methods used to reduce carbon emissions or other harmful impacts.

The **renewable energy use indicator** addresses the use of renewable energy/materials/methods (e.g., solar power, geothermal power, hydropower) and efforts/programming to expand renewable energy more broadly within and outside operations.

Measuring this indicator might consider the amount of renewable energy a supplier uses, the number of units of renewable energy sources provided, and the active efforts to expand renewable energy through policy or other means.

Lastly, the non-certifiable measures/processes indicator considers sustainability measures, methods, and/or processes that have not been formally certified by a third party but are supported by references or other means. This indicator provides an opportunity for sustainable measures that may not have been documented by a third party but can be supported or verified through reference or other accepted means; for small or medium vendors, this may be an opportunity to highlight sustainability efforts that meet certification standards or go beyond them.

SOCIAL

The **social category**, which accounts for 20% of the total scorecard, places the greatest emphasis, 35% of the category, on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within employment practices; other indicators include locality (20%), well-being (15%), education (10%), business demographics (10%), and network strength (10%), which total to 100%.

The **employment diversity, equity, inclusion, + accessibility indicator** considers a supplier's programs, processes, and/or policies that increase diverse representation within the workforce and generally; ensure equity and equal opportunities for underserved populations; cultivate an inclusive environment where everyone feels safe and welcome to participate in; and ensure accessibility for all within and outside of operations. Measuring this indicator might include evaluating workforce demographics, physical accessibility measures in

place, policies or programs to actively ensure equity and opportunities for underserved populations, and training to increase education around issues of historical and current discrimination for specific people.

The **locality indicator** addresses the physical location of the principal office and other operation locations of a supplier. The locality is defined on multiple tiers based on distance from Ann Arbor, Michigan (250 mi. and 400 mi.) and Michigan state borders. This indicator provides the opportunity to prioritize more local suppliers for sustainability and other reasons; more local suppliers can reduce transportation externalities and bolster local economies. Measuring this indicator requires registration information and data from the supplier.

The **well-being indicator** considers efforts to improve the quality of life for individuals, society, and public health, which might include supporting/increasing access to nutritional foods; ensuring stable employment, wages, and housing; and providing healthy working conditions that are in accordance with or go beyond regulation or standards. Measuring this indicator might include the number or type of policies or procedures in place, outside efforts to improve well-being through policies and legislation, and increasing access to healthy and nutritional foods through external programs or product offerings.

The **education indicator** addresses programming, curriculum, and/or training that bolsters awareness of sustainability, including public training, awareness campaigns for climate conditions, training to install renewable energy, and more. Measuring this indicator could consider the number and type of programs a supplier offers to expand educational opportunities for employees, training for employees and others for green jobs

to advance sustainability efforts, and community training or workshops to raise awareness about sustainability.

The **business demographics indicator** considers the business size, ownership model, and area of operations (e.g., international, regional); this also includes diverse or disadvantaged suppliers (e.g., Underrepresented Group-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE), Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB)) that identify as such or are certified through a third party. Measuring this indicator might include awarding additional points to suppliers that are cooperatives (co-ops) or are considered to be small- or medium-sized suppliers.

The **network strength indicator** addresses the number or strength of network relationships, connections, contracts, and collaborations between enterprises and individuals within an industry or sector. Measuring this indicator might include evaluating the number of partnerships or organizations the supplier collaborates with to advance sustainability issues. For example, suppliers participating in commissions or collaborating with universities to advance sustainable measures might score higher within the evaluation. Additionally, suppliers that actively aim to work with communities and local organizations to address well-being and public health issues might be awarded a higher score.

GOVERNANCE

The **governance category**, which accounts for 10% of the total scorecard, is largely focused on policies and certifications catered towards human welfare, which accounts for 60% of the category. Other indicators include animal welfare (20%) and third-party certifications (20%).

The **human welfare indicator** considers programs or processes that improve the physical and mental well-being of humans, from employees to local communities and from local to national and international scales. This indicator also considers compliance and efforts to uphold labor standards and human rights within and outside of the workplace. For example, a supplier working to advance wage equity or safe working conditions for disadvantaged populations and others through policies or programs might receive a higher score than a supplier that has recently received a labor standard violation or does not have any public policies in place. Efforts to eradicate discriminatory policies may also be measured favorably here.

The **animal welfare indicator** addresses programs or processes that improve the physical and mental well-being of animals from local to national and international scales. Measuring this indicator might include evaluating a supplier's practices or policies to ensure healthy and clean-living conditions for animals, the type of fodder/feed used within operations, and if the practices are free range. Concentrated animal feeding operations (or CAFOs) would likely receive a lower rating compared to a supplier that maintains a free-range and organic operation through clear policies and goals.

The **third-party certifications** indicator considers the number of third-party certifications related to environmental, social, and governance efficiency (e.g., USDA-certified organic) that a supplier maintains. This indicator would measure the number and type of valid certifications.

SERVICE, QUALITY, PRICING

The remainder of the scorecard is divided into three categories that focus on more traditional supplier analysis topics: service (10%), quality

(20%), and pricing (20%).

Service, which accounts for 10% of the total scorecard, is determined by indicators of customer service/support (15%), communication and completeness (55%), and transparency and reporting (30%). For sustainability purposes, the transparency and reporting indicator is essential but challenging to measure. It considers a supplier's willingness to provide detailed business and reporting information, such as carbon emissions data or employee turnover. Additionally, without transparency and reporting, it will be difficult for the university to know if it is working toward reaching its mission to reduce scope 3 carbon emissions – suppliers tracking and reporting carbon emissions and other environmental impacts are essential for the University to reach its goals.

Quality, which accounts for 20% of the total scorecard, has indicators for the quality of goods/services (20%), in full deliveries (20%), on-time deliveries (20%), correct invoicing (15%), and lead time (15%). These traditional

indicators consider if product quality is optimal and meets standards, the number of rejected or defective products delivered and occurrences, if the terms are met, if invoices are accurate, and if orders are timely and consistent.

Pricing, which also accounts for 20% of the total scorecard, is further broken down into unit costs (60%), transportation costs (30%), and discounting (10%), which total to 100%. Considering sustainability, the transportation indicator can be important for prioritizing supplier practices that consider environmental or social impacts within operations. For example, suppliers that aim to reduce carbon emissions within transportation might receive a higher score than suppliers not innovating.

These indicators were added to allow procurement teams to continue assessing vendors based on currently used and important qualities and emphasize the importance of their consideration on the same level or higher as vital sustainability-related factors.



Phase 3: Contract Language

Creating proposed contract language for more sustainable food procurement is one of the foundational elements driving this project forward. The language and design of procurement contracts can help create the pathways to change by asking questions that lead to outcomes, making the process more accessible and inclusive for some vendors, and helping to capture and measure metrics that align with goals and standards. For this phase, the research team combined previous sustainable food procurement efforts from Phase 1 and Phase 2 and research with the findings of industry best practices and innovation; the team also brainstormed on how to fill the gaps and ensure the language covers the many aspects of the ESG framework.

In doing so, the research team cultivated contract language (see Appendix F) that considers various vendors and sizes; operations and production methods, such as agroecological farming practices; and overall language that is inclusive and accessible to diverse vendors. For example, certifications are an essential aspect in ensuring that contracts and bids reach vendors that are utilizing environmentally and socially sustainable methods of operation. The research team also considered framing the language to be inclusive of those who are already producing in sustainable ways and are in the process of certification or working toward it.

The research team's goal was to create outcome-driven procurement contract language that aligns with the university and industry goals more broadly. With this strategy, the efforts were more encompassing of needs along the supply chain and help regenerate social, ecological, and economic ecosystems through procurement.

IMPORTANCE OF CONTRACT LANGUAGE

The procurement contract language is vital in understanding if and how potential and current suppliers strive to meet or exceed the sustainable food procurement criteria. It affords the opportunity for the university to better understand if procurement services and practices are efficiently aligning with goals and directives to procure in a manner that supports the university's social responsibility, diversity, and environmental sustainability values; this is essential in the university's ability to realize goals set and values in a meaningful way.

SOLICITATION

The language used during solicitation processes also fosters the opportunity to begin to secure, measure, and monitor the data needed to obtain goals such as reducing and eliminating carbon emissions. It does this by understanding the capacity of a potential supplier and understanding if they can or are willing to meet standards. For example, if the university aims to award 50% of contracts to diverse suppliers, the contract language can prompt a potential supplier to disclose this information within the RFP or RFI to later account for and track this information to ensure progress is being made to achieve the goal. The same is true for monitoring and managing waste and carbon emissions.

With the responses provided in the solicitation process, the terms and conditions of contracts can be developed and negotiated based on supplier demographics and goods and services offered. These processes can provide insight into a supplier's operations, willingness to implement sustainable methods and practices, and the externalities the university might incur should

they award them a contract. Considering this, a comprehensive set of solicitation questions should be asked to increase transparency and better align investments with others moving the needle forward on sustainability.

Additionally, to remain inclusive and meet the goals of increasing supplier diversity, the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) should build contracts according to supplier demographics and capacity outlined within the solicitation process.

CONTRACTS: TERMS + CONDITIONS

The language within the terms and conditions of a contract should reflect the institutional values and missions, such as reducing carbon emissions, which requires acquiring data, measuring, and monitoring. This method holds vendors accountable to standards and goals by requiring suppliers to disclose necessary information, adhere to labor standards and human rights laws, and utilize materials with a lower environmental impact.

For example, terms and conditions outlined within a code of conduct could prohibit suppliers from using packaging foam or expanded polystyrene (EPS) for food service items within the contract. The terms and conditions of an agreement could also require that a supplier utilizes bulk packaging, uses locally recyclable or compostable material, and uses reusable packaging for product packaging. The contract could address transparency issues by requiring the supplier to comply with university carbon emissions tracking requirements and adequately label all packaging with ingredients, especially food allergens. Agreements could also require the supplier to authorize university officials to audit or inspect facilities to ensure optimal standards are consistently met. Other ways to align contracts with solicitation responses include

prohibiting suppliers from further deforesting to expand operations, operating concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), and practicing broodstock or ranching within seafood harvesting.

Another beneficial strategy is developing a sustainable procurement policy that is embedded within contracts, highlighting the university's concrete goals and values and ensuring suppliers adhere to or align with standards. The policy can provide insight and guidelines to suppliers to help inform practices while providing resources, such as definitions and explanations that assist with adherence. Additionally, contracts should explicitly state that violations of sustainability standards within the agreement constitute a breach of contract, fostering an environment of commitment within the agreement. Doing so can help the university enforce sustainability standards built on solicitation processes and university goals and standards. It will ultimately ensure it aligns with suppliers that understand the importance of sustainable methods in operations – from labor standards and human rights to environmental and social ecosystem well-being.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

To initiate language development, the research team explored publicly available contract language from various sectors to build upon portions of previously developed language from university students and staff. Resources and tools from the National Association of College & University Food Services (NACUFS) Benchmarking Tool and Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (AASHE STARS) were used to understand industry standards and points of importance, along with government and other institutional documents to design questions for procurement solicitation. This included resources

from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); United States General Services Administration Sustainable Facilities Tool such as the Green Procurement Compilation; the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); Center for Good Food Purchasing; and more. These resources provided an understanding of various aspects of sustainable food procurement, the challenges that should be addressed within contract language, and what industry innovators are doing to address issues to align language with those efforts best.

The research team used topic areas previously identified within the ESG framework to guide language, and contracts were built to be inclusive and expansive enough to generate space for suppliers within the solicitation process to provide a clear business profile. Doing so helped ensure the language was inclusive and encompassing. Secondary resources, such as “A Procurement Path to Equity: Strategies for Government and the Business Ecosystem,” from philanthropic and other organizations designed to address inequity in procurement, were utilized to ensure language and other recommendations considered survey findings to ensure processes are equitable and inclusive. Government diversity programs also guided these efforts. If implemented and completed in full by the supplier, the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) and other university staff should be able to develop profiles of suppliers to understand where stronger partnerships can be built to expand social responsibility, diversity, and environmental sustainability values within and beyond the university. Additionally, various aspects of sustainable food and systems were considered to shape language. For example, issues of biodiversity loss, soil depletion, waste management, lack of transparency, labor

standards and human rights concerns, and other topics were explicitly addressed within the relevant contract language documents to highlight sustainability issues. For example, resources and reports from the EPA and FAO specifically address nutrition and waste management issues. Understanding the various issues within sustainability generally was a critical aspect of this work to ensure that questions adequately addressed the elements of these challenges.

Research team efforts aimed to ensure that the language and contract questions developed also centered the values and goals of the university by highlighting the importance and purpose of specific questions in the language to encourage potential suppliers to provide answers and explanations regarding the various topics covered, such as biodiversity. The goal is to provide understanding and education within the contract language to not only make the language more inclusive but to depict what is vital to the university: increasing transparency and collaboration to better ensure positive outcomes and sustainable social, environmental, and governance ecosystems.

The category-specific contract language documents developed include:

- Beverages
- Bread/Wheat
- Coffee
- Disposables
- Equipment
- Ingredient Transparency
- Linen/Uniforms/Laundry Services
- Livestock
- Maintenance
- Office Supplies
- Produce
- Seafood
- Universal Language
- Vendor Prepared Food
- Visiting Vendors/ Food Trucks

Each document (see Appendix F) contains solicitation questions to be utilized within the RFP and RFI process, along with language that



such as biodiversity, social equity, waste reduction, animal welfare, and governance or compliance, which considers third-party certifications and more. It is the largest contract document, containing 54 questions between the various ESG categories. The purpose of the University Contract Language document is to be a key document that can be referenced when procuring for specific food categories, such as coffee or produce. The questions broadly apply to food procurement and procurement in general. This document also contains the broad sustainability topics previously identified, including biodiversity, social equity, waste reduction, and animal welfare – many of these topics pertain to all food category contracts and sustainability as a whole; therefore, these questions are housed within one document.

Additionally, when preparing solicitation documents, staff may find questions that are not category-specific but still applicable. The document also provides introductory language to be used in all of the other category-specific, which includes statements of prioritizing diverse and disadvantaged suppliers; encouragement to place a bid regardless of standing or business size; University of Michigan goals and values; sustainability goals and importance, and more. The intention is that the language will cultivate an encouraging and inclusive process that is less intimidating and highlights the value of working with businesses with diverse demographics; it also provides an opportunity to develop an understanding of why specific questions are being asked.

Some of the questions within the Universal Language Contract document inquire about a supplier's mission; locality; land ownership; diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA+) policies and training; labor standards and human rights; transportation methods; use of renewable materials; efforts to reduce single-use products; water conservation

highlights university goals and missions. Questions were designed to also provide insight as to why specific questions are being asked while highlighting important issues such as safe working conditions and exposure to hazardous materials; labor standards and human rights issues such as slavery and child labor; and the impacts that the lack of transparency causes within the supply chain.

This contract language design allows for solicitation information to be tailored to a specific procurement ask or need, such as bread, by providing the option for procurement staff to utilize food category-specific contract language within solicitation for only produce, coffee, seafood, and other categories should Procurement Services decide to do so. Doing so makes procurement opportunities more accessible to smaller vendors specializing in one specific food production or distribution area.

UNIVERSAL CONTRACT LANGUAGE + ELEMENTS

A Universal Language Contract document was created to encompass topics that should be considered within each category,

procedures; scope 3 carbon emissions breakdown; research and innovation efforts and investments; community contributions and collaborations; business ownership model; goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG); education and training for employees and the public; data collection and tracking; third-party certifications; and more. Many questions prompt the supplier to explain data collection and tracking methods regarding carbon emissions, energy use, resource use, and other topics to bolster transparency and ensure internal goals to reduce scope 3 carbon emissions are actively being met within procurement.

BIODIVERSITY

The biodiversity component of the contract language aims to inquire about how potential suppliers address issues of biodiversity loss, how they manage practices that impact biodiversity loss, and any supplier efforts that pertain to biodiversity regeneration. Considering the state of the environmental ecosystem and rapid biodiversity loss globally due to poor supply chain management and processes, it is crucial that the language developed prompts potential suppliers to provide information regarding their practices to ensure the university is not further supporting environmental degradation through investments and procurement.

Some examples of contract language topics consider biodiversity-supporting initiatives such as prescribed burns, conservations of wildlife habitats and corridors, cultivating native wildlife species or plants, soil management plans, resource conservation, use of fertilizers, and more. This component of the contract language also invites potential suppliers to share the general plan and management of practices that positively impact the environment, such as utilizing agroecological farming processes with cover crops or utilizing renewable energy sources within operations.

SOCIAL EQUITY

The social equity component of the contract language focuses on how potential suppliers address issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within their organization and their broader supply chain. The social equity aspect of contract language is a vital aspect of procurement services solicitation material, considering the often-exploitative labor that targets vulnerable populations and the exclusion of diverse suppliers and institutional discrimination. This aspect aims to evaluate suppliers' commitment to fair labor practices, equitable working conditions, and inclusive opportunities for underrepresented groups.

Examples of contract language topics in this category include policies that promote equal opportunities for employment and career advancement, measures to prevent and address discrimination or harassment, wage equity, and efforts to support the needs of people with disabilities. Additionally, the language may inquire about suppliers' engagement with local communities and any initiatives that contribute to social and economic development, such as partnerships with minority-owned or women-owned businesses, support for local food systems or small-scale farmers, and involvement in educational or training programs. This language aims to identify potential suppliers that provide training and education regarding social equity and social justice to ensure inclusive and healthy work environments that work to advance equality and equity. This language includes but is not limited to how a supplier treats employees, the safety protections in place from hazardous materials and chemicals, the support a supplier provides for essential amenities, protections from harsh working environments, and more.

WASTE REDUCTION

Waste reduction is a vital aspect of sustainability, considering the negative externalities it can impose on environmental and social ecosystems. Waste generates a considerable amount of environmental impact and is best addressed by diverting or reducing waste at the source. The waste reduction contract language considers active efforts to reduce the amount of waste that goes into landfills and its consequences through various methods, including but not limited to composting, recycling, anaerobic digestion, and source reduction. Waste reduction not only considers the active efforts and strategies to reduce material and food waste but also the waste of resources such as water. Other methods such as recycling, composting, and anaerobic digestion are considered, as they can be beneficial for different aspects of sustainability, such as converting waste into usable soil or fertilizer for food production.

Some of the questions that pertain to waste reduction prompt suppliers to denote active waste reduction methods along with if/how they track their waste reduction, which includes water reclamation systems and more. If applicable, suppliers are asked how much waste was diverted in the last fiscal year to begin to increase transparency and ensure internal goals are being met.

ANIMAL WELFARE

For the procurement of meat and dairy, animal welfare is an essential aspect of sustainability and ensures that the university is working with ethical suppliers; for religious reasons – this is essential for ensuring an inclusive campus environment for students looking for halal and kosher items. The questions pertaining to animal welfare inquire about a supplier’s practices to provide clean

and healthy conditions for animals, including but not limited to the living environment, access to water, food/fodder type used, slaughter methods, and more. Suppliers are also prompted to denote if antibiotics, growth hormones, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and poor-quality fodder are used within operations to increase transparency. These questions align with policies and legislation from the USDA and others that also monitor these efforts to ensure optimal health and quality.

Some of the questions asked regarding animal welfare include the raising of animals; if the supplier maintains large feedlots or contained animal operations (e.g., concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs)); how sick animals are handled; breeding for genetic traits; welfare goals of animal welfare, and more.

CERTIFICATIONS + COMPLIANCE

Selected third-party certifications were identified to ensure compliance with the other aspects of the contract language, such as fair labor practices and environmentally friendly processes, to increase transparency with outside audits. Additionally, the language creates space for potential suppliers who practice compliance with third-party certifications but may not yet be certified or cannot afford the cost of attaining certification; references from the suppliers are requested. Additionally, the university might consider offering support to vendors to attain certifications to ensure compliance, build partnerships, and bolster positive outcomes.

The current recognized 3rd party certifications at the university listed in alphabetical order include:

- AGA Grassfed (Beef)
- American Humane Certified
- Animal Welfare Approved

- Canada Organic Biologique certified
- Certified Humane Raised and Handled
- Certified Organic by an IFOAM-endorsed standard
- Certified Sustainable
- Demeter Certified Biodynamic
- European Union (EU) Organic
- Fair Trade Certified
- Global Animal Partnership Certified
- Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Certified
- Protected Harvest Certified
- Rainforest Alliance Certified
- Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC) or “Bird Friendly”
- USDA Certified Organic

BEVERAGES

The beverages contract language document addresses any soft drink, water, juice, and other types of drinks offered at the university. The main concerns regarding this specific category include ingredient transparency, the nutritional value and healthiness of the product, and the reduction of ultra-processed items.

Additionally, sustainability concerns consider the types of packaging used for beverages, considering it is often a single-use and plastic item.

Some examples of the solicitation questions include prompting the supplier to disclose the use of ultra-processed ingredients such as caramel coloring and potassium bromate; if the supplier has policies to reduce single-use plastics within operations and production; and active efforts to reduce individually wrapped packaging. Other considerations include reducing individual and disposable packaging for milk, creamers, and other items that might be purchased.

BREAD/WHEAT

The bread and/or wheat contract document specifically addresses any wheat-based or bread items including but not limited to bagels, bread, and other baked goods. Wheat production has a large footprint that can entail significant environmental impacts. The language was designed to address sustainability practices within production, such as inquiring if a supplier utilizes agronomic production methods or sources from secondary suppliers that do to ensure optimal soil health, promote natural resource conservation and biodiversity protection, and aim to increase access to healthy and nutritional foods by reducing harmful ingredients and improving quality through sustainability practices.

The contract language questions specifically address fertilizer use, percentage of application, and reason for use; agronomic processes such as no-till methods, integrated pest management, and crop rotations; the type of irrigation optimization techniques; the practices and policies in place to ensure healthy work environments for employees working in harsh outdoor conditions; collaborations with universities and others to advance innovation and research; and participation in commissions/organizations such as the U.S. Wheat Associates (USW).

COFFEE

The coffee contract language document addresses all purchased coffee from various perspectives within the supply chain, with a preference for suppliers that aim to cultivate short food supply chains (SFSCs) to increase transparency and reduce externalities.

Additionally, like wheat and other crops that can involve large-scale production, prompt further deforestation, and impact employees – this solicitation language was designed to

address various aspects of coffee procurement. Birds and other habitats are greatly endangered by deforestation, which is indirectly and directly tied to coffee and other production; therefore, it is an important aspect of this language.

For example, some of the contract questions prompt the supplier to elaborate on production processes, such as utilizing canopy covers or cover crops within agroecological farming processes to regenerate biodiversity. It also asks if the supplier or their secondary producer(s) produce or source coffee from deforested lands and inquiries about who is responsible for the deforestation (e.g., an explanation if the deforestation occurred prior to land ownership). It then asks about efforts to reduce deforestation. Additionally, questions about coffee processing are asked, such as “wet processing” and the steps to treat the wastewater from those processes. Questions also address Indigenous Peoples’ land ownership and if the supplier or secondary producer has documented consent to produce on such land. Other questions aim to increase supply chain transparency by asking who produces and processes the coffee, considering there are often long supply chains from the production to consumption of coffee.

DISPOSABLES

Disposables are an important aspect of sustainable food procurement from production to waste accumulation. They are relevant to many other food categories and almost every facet of food consumption. The language denotes that preference is given to suppliers that utilize green or environmentally conscious products, aim to reduce waste and single-use products, utilize products that reduce energy and resource use, and eliminate or actively aim to minimize the use of harmful materials for the safety of employees, consumers, and the environment.

Some examples of the topics covered in the solicitation questions prompt the supplier to note if alternatives to plastic bags are offered; the composition of the material used to produce the products, such as post-consumer or bio-based materials; if the products offered are recyclable or compostable; the practices in place to ensure optimal health and safety for employees, specifically regarding hazardous materials or chemicals used during production; and safety training or equipment provided to employees within production and other spheres of the supply chain. This language aims to understand if and how a supplier considers the safety of its employees, consumers, and the planet with a product that often generates significant impacts.

EQUIPMENT

The equipment contract language document addresses any food-related equipment that might be purchased, including but not limited to refrigerators, grills, and other electronics utilized within food services. Key issues of this contract language consider the energy use and resources used within production and product offerings, the elimination or minimization of harmful materials from product use and production, and any detrimental impacts on employees or consumers from the equipment offered.

Examples of topics addressed within the solicitation questions include prompting the supplier able the eco-friendly alternatives to equipment that are more energy efficient; if the products offered are composed of post-consumer materials; the type of recycling programs or benefits the supplier offers; safety procedures and training provided for employees to ensure optimal health and well-being within production and distribution; and any ecolabels the products have attained such as ENERGY STAR or EU Energy A.

INGREDIENT TRANSPARENCY

The ingredient transparency contract language is another document that provides language that applies to other category-specific contract language. This document aims to increase transparency within the supply chain to ensure optimal health and well-being for those with allergies and others while also procuring partnerships that lead to collaboration through shared data and monitoring to reduce carbon emissions and other negative externalities. Understanding the contents of products is essential to procurement and ensuring products are sustainable and healthy.

Some examples of key questions or topics address the amount of carbon emissions associated with the product and production, related explicitly to scope 3 emissions; the willingness of the supplier to share any data with the university regarding carbon emissions and other factors such as waste reduction and resource management; the labeling of ingredients and nutritional values on products if applicable; the use of harmful ingredients or common allergens; any certifications that assure products maintain halal or kosher standards if advertised; the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs); if products are organic; and more.

LINEN/UNIFORMS/LAUNDRY SERVICES

The linen/uniforms and laundry services contract language considers all linens, staff uniforms, textiles used within food services, and the laundry services that accompany the use of those items. The language denotes a preference for suppliers that utilize post-consumer or bio-based textile materials while considering the sustainability methods used within operations. Textiles and laundry services significantly impact ecological and social ecosystems, from the large amount of waste generated and labor standard

concerns of forced and child labor within the supply chain.

Key topics within this language consider the type of products or methods used within laundry services, including but not limited to the type of bleach, detergent, or fabric softeners; the composition or materials of the linen/uniforms; the use of harmful cleaning agents such as ammonium sulfate and formaldehyde; the use of vegetable-based products as opposed to petroleum-based; the use of Safer Choice labeled products to treat linens/uniforms; the use of organic materials; the efforts to reduce and eliminate child and forced labor; and the compliance of regulations with the Fair Labor Association (FLA) Labor Code for manufacturing.

LIVESTOCK

Like coffee and other items that consume large amounts of resources for production and pose a significant risk to environmental and social wellbeing – livestock is an essential component of sustainable food procurement. The livestock contract language document includes but is not limited to the production and procurement of cattle/beef, sheep, pork/hogs, chicken/poultry, goat, veal, rabbit, duck, and turkey, dairy (i.e., cheese, milk), and eggs. Preference is given to suppliers that increase transparency within the supply chain, advance ethical practices, promote animal and human rights, and aim to reduce environmental impacts from livestock production, which often involves large-scale deforestation to make way for production.

Key aspects and question topics within the language include the type of production and methods used and if they are regenerative; land tenure and efforts to reduce deforestation; the handling of animal waste and manure; the treatment of and slaughter methods utilized; the use of prohibited feed ingredients such as

manure or arsenic; the living environment of the animals and if it is considered to be a concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO); the compliance with the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act; the breeding for genetic traits; and more.

MAINTENANCE

The maintenance contract language document addresses the procurement of maintenance services within food services and university facilities. The area of focus with this contract language category pertains to labor standards and human rights and the management of potentially hazardous and chemical products used within services. The language denotes a preference for contracting and working with vendors/suppliers that utilize green products, minimize the use of chemicals for maintenance services, and reduce the exposure to harmful impacts from maintenance products/services.

Some examples of topics addressed within the solicitation questions and language include prompting the supplier about utilizing green cleaning products that have been certified with ecolabels and other means; the measures taken to manage and handle the disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste material; the onboarding programs or training provided to employees to ensure safe and healthy working conditions and optimal standards; and other relevant efforts to ensure sustainability within practices.

OFFICE SUPPLIES

The office supplies contract language pertains to sustainable purchasing for office supplies that include but are not limited to paper, printing ink and cartridges, binders, writing utensils, trash can liners, notes, and other office items. The focus area of this contract language pertains to the materials used within products and the

preference for suppliers that offer items composed of post-consumer, biodegradable, or recycled materials. Additionally, priority might be given to suppliers that provide recycling programs for ink cartridges and other items that can be refilled, which reduces waste and production of single-use items.

Some examples of the language used within the office supplies document pertain to the offering of energy-efficient printers and other office electronic equipment; the various types of recycled paper types offered and the composition of the paper; measures used to reduce packaging; if writing utensils such as pens, highlighters, or markers are certified to be a non-toxic, low odor, and safe from harmful components; the availability of recycling programs and recycled ink and toner cartridges for printing; and if any products have ecolabels that certify energy efficiency and safety for consumers and others.

PRODUCE

Like the livestock contract language document, produce is another major component of sustainable food procurement, considering its demand and substantial resource use of land, water, labor, and more. The focus of this contract language looks at the methods and practices of a supplier, along with the quality of the product, through efforts to increase transparency. Additionally, social aspects of human rights and labor standard conditions are essential aspects of this contract language, along with many others. Produce workers often face harsh and extreme weather and working conditions. Pay equity and the supplier's efforts to ensure worker and consumer well-being are vital.

Some examples of the issues addressed in the produce contract language document include the use of pesticides or fertilizer; policies or

goals to align crops with seasonable recommendations from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs); if products are organic; habitat conservation and soil management plans; policies, goals, or procedures to ensure adequate access to housing, food, and water for employees; policies to reduce impacts of working in harsh or extreme conditions; and certifications to ensure products are handled safely to reduce microbial food safety hazards.

SEAFOOD

The seafood contract language document addresses all purchased seafood, which might include fish, shellfish, and sushi products. A focus of this contract document was to increase transparency and ensure optimal sustainability methods to maintain biodiversity in a sector that is significantly depleting it. Additionally, there are concerns about the quality and contents of the product, along with the harsh working conditions employees endure throughout the seafood supply chain. The language denotes a preference for suppliers willing to increase transparency and share data and documentation, along with suppliers who actively aim to conserve habitats and biodiversity within operations.

The questions consider if the supplier follows recommendations of programs such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch to avoid fishing species marked as “avoid;” if the products are wild-caught or farm-raised by aquaculture; the use of fishing methods that deplete wild stocks and contribute to biodiversity loss; the use of antibiotics or chemicals within operations; working with other organizations to advance marine ecosystem conservation; the reporting of harvests to formal agencies; the assurance of accurate storage and handling of products; and efforts to ensure

livable wages and reduce forced and child labor.

VENDOR PREPARED FOOD

The vendor prepared food contract language addressed any food products that arrive packaged and prepared for sale. Considering the prepared items are not created within the university system and standards, transparency, labeling, packaging, and handling are key focus areas for this language. The language denotes a preference for suppliers that work to increase transparency, source from local and ethical suppliers, and aim to reduce environmental and social impacts within their operations.

Some of the solicitation questions and language address the menu offerings of the supplier and how much of it is vegetarian, vegan, and organic; sustainability policies and procedures; the willingness to provide detailed food item purchase lists to help with carbon emission foot printing; the disclosing of information related to ingredients, processing, transportation, origin, and sensitivities such as food allergens or ultra-processed ingredients; and the handling and maintaining of products and the quality during shipment and other aspects of service.

VISITING VENDORS/FOOD TRUCKS

Similar to vendor prepared food contract language, visiting vendors/food trucks also aims to increase transparency, product quality, and other components of sustainable operations. Some of the focus areas of this language should also address transportation methods and efforts to utilize post-consumer, recycled, or energy-efficient modes of operation. Additionally, consideration should be given to the supplier’s general sustainable operations and business, as they might be visiting campus and should best align with the values of the university.

Some of the questions within this contract language document prompt the supplier to explain their mission as a business; the efforts to source ingredients from local producers; the inclusive of dietary restrictions such as halal or kosher within the menu, policies or procedures to maintain product quality and safety; and business demographics, including but not limited to the size and composition of the staff that will be at the university.

Sustainability looks different depending on the subject matter, but there are still similarities in the issues being addressed and the necessary steps to get there. Issues of biodiversity loss and regeneration may call for different actions depending on where the supplier is within the supply chain; however, some of the measures to address these issues might apply to all contract language documents. For example, waste reduction was a subject that arose in almost every subject and food category investigated, along with resource conservation and ethical treatment of people and animals. The levers to address these wicked issues might also share similarities.

The gaps identified within solicitation and contract language also share similarities and point to a need for diverse supplier input to best inform practices, methods, and challenges; further exploration from subject matter experts in respective fields, such as coffee production, to understand nuances within the supply chain; a need for guiding policies and goals to create clear pathways in the contract language; and support to address the significant challenges and barriers that come with a lack of transparency within food systems and supply chains.

The University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) and university leadership can better reach and attain sustainability goals by implementing comprehensive solicitation and

contract language through a sustainability lens. This will require providing support to suppliers throughout the processes and transition of implementation, educating others, and marketing opportunities in an inclusive way to generate positive impacts. Through piloting this language and working with suppliers, university staff and leadership can shift investments to more sustainable methods and opportunities that better align with the university's current and future visions, goals, and values.

Phase 4: Review, Report, + Presentation

In the final phase of the research project, the research team presented their findings and developments at the University of Michigan 2023 Conference on Sustainable Food Procurement by Institutions, where the research team gained valuable input from various stakeholders. This contributed significantly to the continuous feedback process between Michigan Dining and the project team as the research team refined the contract language in response to evolving definitions of sustainability and emerging insights.

2023 CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROCUREMENT BY INSTITUTIONS

The first step of the Winter 2023 research project's Phase 4 was a *Reimagining Contract Language* breakout session presentation (see appendix G) at the 2023 Conference on Sustainable Food Procurement by Institutions hosted by the University of Michigan President's Advisory Committee on Labor Standards and Human Rights and Michigan Dining. The conference attracted a diverse audience, including students, food service professionals, and procurement officers from a multitude of

universities, along with representatives from a variety of organizations throughout food systems. Here the project team was able to field the research topic and development process for contract language in addition to gaining input from a variety of stakeholders. Opportunities to share developments in areas of sustainable food procurement, such as the conference, prove beneficial for multiple reasons. Not only does it become easier to gain outside perspectives and facilitate discussions by different stakeholders, but this sharing of knowledge creates a strong base for forming purchasing coalitions, which can share resources and create more robust demands for industry suppliers.

REVIEW, FEEDBACK, REFINE

Due to the expansiveness of the contract work, shifting definitions of sustainability, and insights gained from the 2023 Conference on Sustainable Food Procurement by Institutions, the refining of the project's contract language is continuous. Members of Michigan Dining and the research project team have actively worked to provide feedback that incorporates newly developed language or University policies and should continue these practices in the future.

Who do you think plays the biggest role in sustainable procurement?

10 Answers



Big ag

Consumers

Consumers

manager

Financial decision makers at buyer companies, and suppliers. And government (especially in EU, or USDA in US)

Policy makers

Availability of sustainable alternatives

Communication/collaboration

Current supply chain disruptions



Challenges

Like many aspects of operations within the supply chain, sustainable food procurement practices and procurement generally face significant challenges throughout the process, from supply to demand. Additionally, this research project experienced hurdles along the way, such as a lack of access to proprietary contract language information and the limited time frame of this project.

CONSUMER BUY-IN

The challenge of consumer buy-in or acceptance in the context of sustainable food procurement cannot be overstated. This notion was reinforced during the 2023 Conference on Sustainable Food Procurement by Institutions, where the research team engaged with procurement representatives, students, and sustainability

workers from various organizations and universities. Many attendees identified consumers as both the most influential stakeholders in sustainable procurement and the largest barriers to its success, pointing to factors such as resistance to dietary changes and the difficulty in securing widespread buy-in.⁹

While procurement teams can make progress in sourcing lower carbon, plant-based, and sustainable foods, the ultimate success of these initiatives depends on the willingness of the end-users or consumers to embrace and support these sustainable options. Institutions face the challenge of catering to diverse tastes and preferences while simultaneously educating and raising awareness about the benefits of sustainable food choices. Additionally, ingrained habits and cultural attachments to certain food items may hinder the adoption of more plant-forward and sustainable diets.¹⁰

To effect meaningful change, procurement teams must collaborate with stakeholders, including students, staff, and food service providers, to foster a comprehensive shift in consumption patterns and drive a demand-side transformation that aligns with sustainable procurement efforts. This approach aligns with the recommendations outlined in the 2020 University of Michigan PCCN report on food decarbonization, which emphasizes the importance of campus culture, plant-forward food substitutions, and choice architecture in promoting sustainable food consumption and subsequent procurement practices.

POLICY

A lack of policy does not always translate to a lack of serious commitment to values and efforts to make procurement processes more sustainable – but it is an essential component of successful sustainable food procurement programs and practices.¹¹ Like other university

and institutional policies such as labor standards or conducting ethical research, policies for sustainable food procurement can help guide the process, bolster training and education, and ensure that action items or strategies tie back to general goals or standards in the form of a policy.¹² Cultivating policies also creates opportunities for cross-sector buy-in and participation while harnessing the potential for political support and coalition building.¹³

Without policies, there can be a lack of commitment from staff and others involved in processes and a lack of accountability or responsibility for reaching sustainable food procurement targets. Moreover, without clear policies in place, procurement staff and others may not uniformly assess potential vendors according to demographics, sourcing and production methods, and types of operations; value-based procurement may not be widely implemented. Through policy implementation, more substantial incentives can be developed, and access to funding opportunities to support endeavors may be increased – it also ensures the sustainability of efforts over time despite staff turnover or system shifts.

COALITION-BUILDING

Building coalitions between institutions or universities to increase group purchasing power and establish more robust sustainability demands within food procurement presents several inherent challenges. First, coordinating and aligning sustainability goals and metrics among different institutions can be complex, as each organization may have unique priorities and definitions of sustainability. Second, the varying sizes and resources of the participating institutions may result in disparities in their ability to contribute to the coalition, potentially creating imbalances in decision-making power and benefits distribution. Third, the negotiation process with vendors can become more intricate

as the coalition needs to balance the demands of multiple institutions while ensuring the vendors can meet their sustainability requirements and maintain adequate supply chain transparency. Lastly, establishing effective communication and collaboration mechanisms within the coalition can be time-consuming and resource-intensive, potentially impeding progress toward achieving shared sustainable food procurement goals. Despite these challenges, building coalitions remains a valuable strategy for leveraging collective influence to drive change in the food procurement landscape.

TRANSPARENCY

In the context of sustainable food procurement, achieving transparency within supply chains poses a significant obstacle.¹⁴ The inherent opacity of food supply chains makes it difficult for buyers to ensure equity, as the lack of transparency hinders effective supplier auditing and accountability. This often forces buyers to rely on third-party certifications as a proxy for sustainability, which can lead to negative effects for small suppliers who may be unable to afford certification. Furthermore, large food conglomerates may actively resist transparency, as it could expose predatory profiteering or incite public backlash. While these corporations sometimes argue that sharing such information would put them at a competitive disadvantage, this resistance ultimately impedes progress toward more sustainable and equitable supply chains.

Even when corporations choose to disclose information through self-regulated programs, they may be incentivized to hide unfavorable information, leading to an incomplete picture of the supply chain's true sustainability status.¹⁵ During the research team's discussions at the 2023 Conference on Sustainable Food Procurement by Institutions, one attendee of the

presentation aptly stated that "transparency in the supply chain is impossible." This remark underscores the ongoing challenges institutions face in promoting transparency within their food procurement processes and achieving sustainability goals.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Vendors in sustainable food procurement confront the challenge of insufficient infrastructure for tracking and reporting sustainability metrics. Smaller vendors may lack the necessary resources, labor, or technology to implement effective tracking systems, resulting in incomplete or inconsistent data and limited supply chain transparency. Additionally, vendors might need to track different metrics for various buyers, increasing their workload and complexity. For example, a buyer may require an advanced waste management system for precise measurement and monitoring of waste generation, potentially entailing a significant expense without a subsidy or guarantee of business for the vendor.

Moreover, the absence of standardized systems and frameworks complicates the accurate measurement and reporting of sustainability data when definitions vary across buyers. This infrastructure gap ultimately creates barriers for universities when assessing and comparing various vendors' sustainability, which could potentially hinder progress toward achieving their sustainable food procurement goals.

FUNDING + SUPPORT FOR SMALL + MEDIUM VENDORS

A significant challenge for vendors and producers who are smaller in size, historically disadvantaged in some way, or both, is the lack of adequate resources to support the sustainability demands of large institutional

buyers. Although supporting minority-owned, woman-owned, and small businesses is often a primary goal of institutions, there may be contradictory barriers within the procurement process that prevent this from happening. One such barrier arises from the definition of sustainability used by the procurement and monitoring teams of buyers. Often, third-party certifications such as USDA Organic or Certified Humane are used to simplify the process of tracking sustainable food procurement progress. However, the steep price of the certification process can prevent smaller producers from receiving them regardless of if they are otherwise qualified.¹⁶ However, some institutions may forgo certification requirements and accept equivalent practices in order to help negate the problem of their affordability.

This lack of resources may extend beyond the ability to afford expensive certification audits. Vendors may be asked other resource-intensive questions, such as the amount of food waste they generate by weight or conducting a life cycle assessment of their products. While this information is beneficial for both suppliers and buyers in assessing the sustainability of their operations, it may require vendors/producers to purchase additional equipment or employee hours to collect this data. Additionally, the great length that a request for proposal may reach when incorporating a mass of sustainability questions may appear too time-consuming for small and disadvantaged businesses who worry about not being selected due to their size. Therefore, it's important for institutions to recognize the support they may need to offer to vendors, as opposed to expecting vendors to meet all sustainability standards and requirements immediately. Buyers and vendors should rather build mutually beneficial relationships that can advance progress towards sustainability goals for both parties. The first step towards this is active collaboration.

CHALLENGES WITHIN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

ACCESS TO PROPRIETARY INFORMATION (CONTRACT LANGUAGE)

A significant challenge during this research was the limited accessibility to the internal procurement processes and documents of outside institutions, such as other universities or institutions; these documents are often kept confidential. This lack of transparency of other institution operations made it difficult to identify successful examples of contract language that universities have employed to achieve their sustainability goals. The proprietary nature of procurement processes poses an obstacle to cross-organizational learning and collaboration, as it can inhibit the sharing of best practices and the development of innovative, mutually beneficial solutions.

There is a pressing need for increased collaboration between procurement teams at different organizations, as it fosters knowledge exchange and collective problem-solving, which are crucial to advancing the field of sustainable food procurement. Institutions can identify and implement impactful strategies more effectively by actively sharing experiences, successes, and challenges, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable and responsible food system. Encouraging openness and cooperation in this domain would not only benefit individual institutions but also drive broader progress in achieving sustainability goals across the sector.

LIMITED RESOURCES (TIME)

The research project team faced significant challenges due to resource constraints associated with working within a small group and the limited time frame of a school semester. Undertaking a project centered around sustainability and food procurement proved to

be particularly complex due to several factors. First, the multifaceted nature of sustainability, which encompasses environmental, social, and governance dimensions, adds an additional layer of complexity to the research process. Grasping the broad concept of sustainability and navigating the various certifications, standards, and frameworks can be challenging.

Moreover, tailoring the findings and recommendations to meet the specific needs and characteristics of the University of Michigan requires a comprehensive understanding of its internal procurement processes, stakeholder interests, and existing sustainability initiatives. Gaining in-depth knowledge of these aspects within a short timeline while simultaneously developing documents for internal procurement teams proved to be a difficult task, given the project’s limited resources. This highlights the need for effective prioritization and collaboration to maximize the project’s impact on promoting sustainable food procurement practices, in addition to an emphasis on the continued development and refinement of the work in order to match changing university

goals and cultural environments.

OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS

- How can institutions meet small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBES) needs to ensure equity and access to the procurement process?
- Is there a criterion for selecting or rejecting a potential supplier?
- Is there a program that supports vendors in attaining food procurement contracts?
- What might be some of the obstacles to implementing this language?
- How can suppliers and institutions collaborate to address shared challenges?
- Who has the biggest impact on implementing sustainable food procurement?
- What levers can be pulled to increase transparency within supply chains?

What are some obstacles you have experienced?

12 Answers



Buy in from all stakeholders

Resistance to adoption/change

Different priority levels within an Institution

Transparency in the supply chain is impossible.

Consumer buy in

Current supply chain disruptions

Need for upstream capacity building (expertise and resources), and need for dedicated sustainable sourcing budgets and roles at buyer companies

Ambiguity

Availability of sustainable alternatives

Conclusion

In closing, sustainable food procurement not only shapes food systems and access to healthy and nutritional food here on campus – it shapes environmental, social, and governance ecosystems within immediate communities, the state, the country, and the globe. Considering this, the university must collaborate with suppliers and other institutions to advance sustainable food procurement processes; fortify values through clear policies and action plans; adopt contract language reflecting its values; and pave the path forward to address environmental and social degradation within ecosystems.

Although the endeavors to enact this system change are significant, the university can begin to shift practices and outcomes through contract language and procurement solicitation that better aligns with the values of social responsibility, diversity, and environmental sustainability within procurement. The University of Michigan harnesses the power to transform food systems, well-being, and culture on campus while simultaneously driving innovation in markets and enhancing the quality of life for current and future generations through food procurement.

The University of Michigan is responsible for providing nutrition and access to healthy foods, advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, and adding value to the supply chain; procurement processes are foundational to these efforts. Moreover, as leaders within multiple sectors and industries, the university should expand sustainable food procurement efforts beyond its campuses to foster knowledge spillover and innovation with others aiming to achieve the same mission. Doing so will amplify positive outcomes and ensure that diverse perspectives and experiences shape the



efforts moving forward to be more inclusive, equitable, and just.

Considering food systems production and operations are a source of harmful labor practices, human rights issues, and injustice, it is imperative that the university acts boldly on these issues to ensure it represents the forces fighting to combat those issues, not further supporting them through procurement. The university and leaders should also work with community members and coalitions on the ground that have been driving this change forward for decades.

There has never been a more critical time to act on these issues, to drive the necessary change forward on sustainable food procurement to cultivate healthier community conditions and address faults within supply chains. The university holds a unique position with its large footprint in the world, in-house expertise, and reputation as a leading academic institution to enact the needed transformation. Together, the University of Michigan staff, faculty, and students can generate the necessary change to ensure a more socially and environmentally sustainable future.

Looking Forward

The University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS), staff, faculty, students, and current suppliers should continue to review, refine, and adopt contract language and policies that align with university values and goals. These recommendations and considerations are not exhaustive, considering some of the challenges within the industry and timeline of this project; however, the materials produced within this research project are designed to be living documents. Considering this, efforts, resources, and funding should be further allocated to advance these efforts to ensure successful implementation and continued efforts on this vital aspect of university operations and culture.

As this phase of the project comes to a close, university staff, faculty, experts, and leaders are continuing the crucial conversation around sustainable food procurement that was underway before the initiation of this project. The UMPS is reviewing proposed material; leaders are holding conversations as plans and visions are developed; and aspects of this research will continue over the summer and beyond.

Future research recommendations to expand or improve the project include gathering primary and secondary resources and data to better understand obstacles within any procurement processes or contract language changes for small and medium suppliers; conducting a stakeholder analysis to build regional and national coalitions; understanding the best practices for coalition-building to bolster sustainable food procurement; identifying the action plans or policies that can guide this work forward; and developing tools and methods to capture the necessary data to track and monitor food procurement. University leadership, the

UMPS, and others involved in procurement must understand how sustainable food procurement efforts make opportunities more accessible or exclusive for Black, Brown, and other disadvantaged businesses that have experienced systemic discrimination. With mounting pressures and growing business closures from the COVID-19 pandemic and other obstacles, the university and others should carefully consider supplier demographics and how they apply standards within processes.

This work can be realized in several ways to advance sustainable food and other procurement at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor and other campuses (see Figure 3.1). First, the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) should begin to utilize and pilot the developed solicitation questions and language when conducting market outreach with requests for information (RFI), requests for proposals (RFPs), or requests for quotations (RFQs). Doing so will prompt potential suppliers to share practices with the university, and staff and leadership can understand how possible investments might align with goals and efforts.

The results from piloting language can help staff and others identify areas of improvement and lay the foundation to cultivate more progressive contracts and financial agreements with suppliers. The solicitation language should inform contracts, along with policies and university goals. Once contracts are secured, staff should begin to monitor supplier performance with the proposed supplier scorecard to track sustainability efforts within the environmental, social, and governance framework. Utilizing tools to track performance can ensure contract compliance and address areas of improvement within the contract duration.

Expanded communications and outreach are also vital in ensuring that solicitation and other processes generate interest from suppliers looking to amplify their sustainability efforts and advance environmental and social well-being. This will require tapping into new business networks and ecosystems, coalition-building, collaborating with others, and more. To ensure procurement processes are inclusive and equitable, it must ensure fair competition and access to opportunities for all suppliers interested. Doing so requires awareness of opportunities, which should reach beyond traditional communication pathways to ensure diversity within operations.

Additionally, breaking up procurement asks or opportunities will make opportunities more accessible to diverse and disadvantaged suppliers who may offer more sustainable products or services. This will also advance the universities goals and values to be more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. The solicitation language was designed to support these efforts. Category-specific language allows staff and leadership to generate bids for specific needs, such as produce or coffee, that can create more opportunities for specialty suppliers.

Second, university leadership and the UMPS staff should also bolster support within UMPS and elsewhere through training, education, and interdisciplinary collaboration. For example, establishing a working group with university leaders, subject matter experts, sustainability staff and leaders, and procurement staff allows for knowledge spillover and decision-making rooted in clearly identified and supported strategies and methods. Efforts such as this can be conducive to innovation and ensure that the best industry practices are considered.

Additionally, more support from UMPS for potential suppliers can provide adequate resources and guidance for suppliers navigating

the solicitation and contract development processes – this will ease challenges when piloting new language. Consistent training on university goals, plans, and policies can also support staff in aligning procurement with the university mission in a more tangible way. University leadership should also consider other programs and organizations that offer support and education services within procurement to advance sustainability. The Center for Good Food Purchasing Good Food Purchasing Program, EcoVadis, and Greenhealth are a few examples of third-party organizations that support institutions in attaining sustainable purchasing goals through developed methods, measuring supplier performance, offering supplier education and support, providing contract language, and more.

Third, policies and action plans focusing on sustainable procurement should be developed. Doing so would guide language, solicitation, and contract development forward and ground it to concrete terms to ensure accountability within agreements. This would also ensure that all staff is working toward the same goals in tandem and create transparency with suppliers and the public as to the standards held within the university. For example, establishing baselines, such as procuring from a specific percentage of diverse suppliers to advance the Supplier Diversity program, could be outlined within policies or action plans to foster more tangible outcomes.

Established working groups that specifically address sustainable food and other procurement can also assist with this, along with the feedback and insight gained from piloting this proposed language. There is an abundance of subject matter experts within the university, along with many students who are here to conduct similar or adjacent work during and following studies. Additionally, implementing subject matter that aligns with sustainable food and other

TIMELINE: MOVING SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROCUREMENT FORWARD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

procurement into curricula and programs can help shift the culture to adopt more sustainable purchasing and raise awareness of its importance of it.

Fourth, fostering cross-sector, regional, national, and international collaborations and partnerships through coalition-building can advance knowledge spillover, understanding of challenges and how to overcome them, and likely increases access to resources and support. Coalitions also harness greater power to influence markets to ensure investments are made into a more sustainable future; they also have more significant ability and weight to ensure transparency, pass legislation, and collectively call on others to join efforts. These efforts are vital in sustainable procurement at the university and institutions.

Lastly, piloting language, conducting more inclusive outreach, and bolstering staff support, among other action items, general baseline assessments, and cost analysis should be undertaken to understand the total life cycle costs of goods and services being procured. These efforts are a heavier lift and require support, tools, methods, and more to conduct an assessment of purchasing impacts and the benefits of sustainable purchasing. With the data, staff and leadership can better understand the total life cycle costs and benefits of investing in a more sustainable future.

Ultimately, the conversation does not end here. Because sustainable food procurement is embedded within many aspects of the university's goals, mission, and values – these efforts should, and will undoubtedly carry into the future. Additionally, outside pressures to address climate changes, social injustice, and breaks within the supply chain will require the university to address these issues head-on, considering that food procurement impacts all those aspects and beyond.

PILOT

new solicitation + contract language; supplier scorecard; expand outreach; break up procurement asks

BOLSTER SUPPORT

education + training for staff; strengthen staff support; develop working group(s); enlist outside support

POLICIES + PLANS

develop sustainable food procurement policies + plans; establish baselines; expand curricula

COLLABORATION

foster partnerships + coalition-building across sectors; understand challenges; engage markets

MEASURING + MONITORING

utilize tools, methods, + analysis to track efforts; gather data; conduct assessments

Figure 3.1

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University of Michigan: Procurement + Sustainability

For over 100 years, the university has been a leader in innovation and transformation, from scientific breakthroughs to social movements and change that have transformed the social and physical landscapes of Ann Arbor, the region, and the world.¹⁷ This research project is an example of the convening of industry leaders, experts, and drivers of change to consider the future of sustainable food procurement and who is shaping it.

Sustainable food procurement efforts will continue to be guided by previous efforts at the university to improve environmental and social ecosystems, such as the Carbon Neutrality goals cultivated from 2019 to 2021 by the University of Michigan President's Commission on Carbon Neutrality (PCCN) and the guidelines set by the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) and other university leaders. The goals

aim to eliminate Scope 1 emissions from direct, on-campus sources; achieve carbon neutrality for Scope 2 emissions from purchased electricity by 2025; and establish net-zero goals for Scope 3 emissions by 2025.¹⁸

The university has a multitude of initiatives underway to ensure sustainability on campus, including programs (e.g., Waste Reduction, Energy Management, Workplace Initiatives),¹⁹ over 800 courses, the Office of Campus Sustainability, the Planet Blue initiative, over 100 student sustainability groups, and more.²⁰ Within each aspect of the university, from Michigan Dining and other food services to facilities and management – sustainability plays a role in operations and planning efforts.

According to the University of Michigan Office of Campus Sustainability website, the

University of Michigan Ann Arbor achieved its goal of reducing GHG emissions by 25% in 2022, protecting Huron River water quality by minimizing runoff from impervious surfaces, and reducing chemical applications to campus landscapes by 40% by 2019. Currently, the university is working toward reducing carbon output per passenger by 30%, reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills by 40%, purchasing 20% of food from local and sustainable sources, and investing in sustainability culture and programs to track behavior, educate communities, and report on the progress over time.²¹

These goals were identified by the Campus Sustainability Integrated Assessment process (CSIA) led by the Graham Sustainability Institute and the Office of Campus Sustainability, which engaged students, faculty, and staff; the purpose of the assessment was to identify long-term goals, which were ultimately adopted in 2011.²²

Food procurement and procurement generally concern Scope 3 carbon emissions, which considers indirect emissions resulting from organizational activities such as purchasing goods and services, commuting, waste disposal, and sponsored travel.²³

A report conducted to address recommendations from the University of Michigan's President's Commission on Carbon Neutrality through the footprinting of the University's Scope 3 GHG emissions of purchased goods and services found that despite food and food-related expenses being a relatively small component in general expenditures – they created nearly a quarter of the GHG emissions within the 2020 fiscal year.²⁴ Still, much data is needed to fully understand this breakdown, requiring more rigorous monitoring and measuring within purchasing. Doing so will help the university better



understand how to attain sustainability goals to reach carbon neutrality and beyond once further goals are developed.

The contract language and RFPs for food procurement are foundational in ensuring the university meets its sustainability goals and actions. Through this language, the university can begin implementing change, such as capturing data through vendors; better aligning with vendors that meet university standards, values, and goals; and developing the systems and tools needed to monitor and measure these changes over time. These efforts will also require looking outside of contract language. Communications, outreach, education, and collaboration with current and potential vendors are essential for these changes to stick and cultivate over time.



University of Michigan Procurement Services

PROCUREMENT GENERAL POLICIES + PROCEDURES

The University of Michigan Procurement General Policies and Procedures is a part of the U-M Standard Practice Guide (SPG), more specifically outlined in SPG 507.01. The policy outlines procurement processes, ethical conduct, the competitive bid process, supplier maintenance, and more. Additionally, Clause V requires that purchasing reflects the university's values, which include social responsibility, diversity, and environmental sustainability; this clause states that the university is committed to providing business opportunities to businesses that support the university in these values.²⁹

The University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) is responsible for handling all procurement needs for the three campuses. They aim to ensure purchases at the university are spent ethically; support diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts by promoting a more diverse supplier base; support sustainability goals by partnering with suppliers that have environmental stewardship programs; reduce and contain costs; manage the Purchasing Card (PCard) Program; and offer essential business services such as space analysis, property control, printing, mailing, and more.²⁵ The University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) also maintains signature authority for all of the university's contracts and agreements pertaining to procurement and processes; this includes all licenses.²⁶ M-Marketsite, the university's online catalog ordering system for U-M employees,²⁷ and Collegiate Travel Planners (CTP), the university's designated travel partner, are also managed by the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS).²⁸

SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING PROGRAM

The University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) is also focused on "building a pipeline of socially impactful supplier options to procure sustainable products and services" through the Sustainable Purchasing Program by advocating for the sustainability goals of the university; encouraging environmentally friendly practices within the campus and supplier communities; and promoting suppliers that offer sustainable services and products. The University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) defines Sustainable Procurement as the acquisition of products that are made from recycled, environmentally preferable, or bio-based content; provide alternatives to hazardous or toxic chemicals; use energy- and/or water-efficient manufacturing processes; use alternate fuel and/or renewable energy; and use eco-responsible packaging.

Through this procurement program, value is increased within purchasing while bolstering efforts to achieve sustainable initiatives at the university. To highlight these efforts, the University of Michigan Procurement Services has a supplier webpage that breaks down

products and services according to location (USA-Based; Michigan-Based), diversity (Women-Owned; Minority-Owned), business size (Small Business), Sustainable Purchasing, and Internal Service Providers within the university. This program increases efficiency and access within the procurement process to focus efforts on procuring to align with the university's sustainable goals and values.³⁰

The University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) also offers eSettlements to suppliers to enable suppliers to submit invoices electronically; review orders, invoices, and payments; and maintain supplier information such as contracts. These electronic services and portal reduce costs through paperless transactions and information sharing; accelerate invoice presentment, approval, and payment; and allow suppliers to update supplier information, submit inquiries, and submit billing files in one single portal.³¹

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM

The mission of the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) Supplier Diversity Program is "to connect the campus community with diverse suppliers in alignment with the university's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion." These efforts at PS bolster U-M's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative led by the University of Michigan Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. Through this program, PS aims to enhance economic opportunities for underserved or underrepresented supplier groups, including but not limited to minority-owned (MBEs), women-owned (WBEs), veteran-owned, and small businesses (SBEs).

Objectives of the program include: foster partnerships between a diverse supplier base and all U-M units; promote a UM-wide commitment to expand competitive procurement opportunities that include all segments of the

business community; diversify U-M's supplier portfolio to secure better prices and higher-quality products and services through increased competition; develop and maintain a supplier population that reflects the diverse makeup of the university community the university serves; reflect university commitment to be an economic partner to the communities in which it conducts business; and provide U-M employees involved in the acquisition of materials and services with the tools and training they need to locate and use suppliers who meet their spending requirements while supporting diversity and socially responsible procurement. Some of the attributes that the university recognizes when designating a supplier as diverse include Minority-owned businesses, including, but not limited to, African American, Native American, Asian American, or Hispanic-owned businesses; small disadvantaged businesses; veteran-owned businesses; service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses; women-owned businesses; small businesses; and HUBZone small businesses (historically underutilized). The university recognizes self-certification by suppliers that are at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled by a person of a diverse background or demographic.³²

BUYING BLUE

In April 2023, the University of Michigan Procurement Services (UMPS) announced the launch of a new outreach initiative, Buying Blue, which promotes best practices, maximizes resources, and creates efficiencies across the Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Flint, and Michigan Medicine campuses. Buying reviews, networking, and training opportunities are now available to help the U-M purchasing community further the universities missions of research, patient care, and education.

The components of Buying Blue include (1) Partner Engagement, which is department-specific procurement reviews to discuss upcoming efforts and cost-saving initiatives; (2) Community of Practice, which is a campus-wide forum for procurement professionals to share knowledge and build community; and (3) Training, which aims to promote end-user successes.

Currently, six departments are participating in the initiative, with virtual meetings occurring to foster opportunities for department leaders to review department contracts, sourcing events, travel and expense data, and spending habits.³³

THE ROLE + RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNIVERSITY

The university plays a significant role in shaping healthy campuses and communities through procurement; therefore, it is responsible for addressing social, environmental, and economic sustainability issues. Institutional food services, like cafeterias and dining halls, can employ choice architecture along with the strategic design of food options and environments to influence people's decision-making. By making healthy and sustainable choices more accessible, appealing, and convenient, they can shift consumption patterns without necessarily altering consumer preferences, such as making red meats available only upon request.³⁴

Additionally, large institutions such as hospitals and schools have much more purchasing power than individual consumers and, therefore, greater potential for impact on the practices of their suppliers. When food spend with a vendor can reach into millions of dollars, the threat of losing the university's business can be impactful. However, for very large food vendors, strict demands related to sustainability from a single buyer may not be enough. These

situations emphasize the importance of institutions forming coalitions in which they make equal demands to vendors, amplifying their purchasing power and influence even further in order to create positive change from their suppliers in the supply chain.

Regardless of whether acting as a single entity or within a coalition, the power of institutional buyers' requests and demands for influencing supplier practices should be recognized. Therefore, institutions harness a greater ability to change people's lives throughout the supply chain by adjusting both upstream procurement decisions through their purchasing power and downstream consumption habits through strategic design.³⁵

FOOD SUSTAINABILITY GOALS + STATUS

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS: PURCHASE 20% OF U-M FOOD FROM LOCAL AND SUSTAINABLE SOURCES BY 2025

In 2011, the University of Michigan created sustainability targets for 2025 for its Ann Arbor campus, one of which included purchasing at least 20% of its food from local and sustainable sources, measured based on proximity to campus and presence of environmental or social third-party certifications. Food service at the University of Michigan takes a variety of forms that are affected by this goal. Michigan Dining is responsible for campus dining halls and self-operated cafes, serving millions of meals annually to students. Additionally, the University of Michigan Health System prepares food for University hospitals and health centers.³⁶

In 2020, the university's progress towards this sustainable and local food purchasing goal was measured at 19%, up from 14% in 2019. This was measured to the best of campus and vendor abilities considering staffing limitations and other issues related to the COVID-19

pandemic, which “likely resulted in an over count of sustainable items” from vendor Gordon Food Service.³⁷ According to the university’s 2021 Sustainability Goal Fact Sheet: “U-M has discontinued the current time-intensive tracking process to dedicate more time and resources to establish new targets and accounting methodologies,” with future food purchasing goals focused on carbon footprint reduction.³⁸

FOOD SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES

The University of Michigan Sustainable Food Guidelines were developed in order to support the goal of purchasing 20% sustainable food, providing the framework for what qualifies as sustainable. To fulfill the food sustainability criteria, a purchase must meet all food safety requirements and qualify as local or hold a third-party sustainability-oriented certification.

For locality: “U-M defines local food as being grown in the state of Michigan or within 250 miles of the Ann Arbor campus. Processed foods are considered to be locally sourced if the processing facility is located within a 250 mile radius of Ann Arbor and where at least 50% of the ingredients (measured in annual \$ expenditures) are also sourced from within a 250 mile radius of the processing facility.”³⁹ Products from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), products with minimal nutritional value, and products whose raw ingredient is water are excluded from qualifying as local.

For third-party certifications, the university selected and approved 16 that are applicable across multiple food service categories, including USDA Organic and Fair Trade Certified, among other certifications related to organic growth, grassfed animals, animal welfare, biodiversity, and conservation. One of these certifications must be held by the supplier in order to satisfy the third-party certification

requirement of the food sustainability guidelines.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESIDENT’S COMMISSION ON CARBON NEUTRALITY

In 2020, the President’s Commission on Carbon Neutrality (PCCN) sponsored a report informing their recommendations pertaining to decarbonizing food at the University of Michigan to the university’s president. Many of the recommendations discussed by this team are examples of cultural change, including various methods to encourage the first priority of plant-based eating, such as taste-focused labeling, blended plant and animal proteins, and intentional choice architecture. These recommendations aim to teach consumers about the impacts of their food choices. The second priority emphasized in the report is the reduction and diversion of food waste from landfills. The recommendations for waste reduction include but are not limited to smaller portions, food repurposing, and further support for reusable products and composting programs.

One point of focus for the PCCN report was shifting institutional norms and the existing University of Michigan Sustainable Food Guidelines. Their suggestion leads with the fact that purchasing local and third-party certified foods can advance goals such as enhancing biodiversity, supporting fair labor practices, and building local economies. However, it emphasizes the importance of separating these goals from the goal of decarbonization, as local and third-party certified foods are not necessarily associated with lower carbon emissions. Therefore, if decarbonization is to be the main sustainability-related goal of the University of Michigan’s food procurement, then a focus on purchasing low-carbon food and tracking its progress is an important step. The PCCN report also identifies that a decarbonization focus will result in easier

tracking and compliance due to the challenges of tracing the point of origin for food items.

FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

VISION 2034

Currently underway is the Vision 2034 ten-year strategic visioning efforts that will continue to work toward these Carbon Neutrality goals and sustainability more broadly through the values developed by campus members. The vision includes all campuses (Ann Arbor, Dearborn, and Flint) and Michigan Medicine. Vision 2034 is anchored in the university values, integrity, respect, equity, inclusion, diversity, and innovation developed during the Culture Journey initiative that engaged campus members through various events and activities to identify values and related behavioral norms for the Ann Arbor campus and Michigan Medicine. Additionally, this visioning process engages campus members through activities such as unit-level information sessions, town halls, online submissions, a campus survey, and more. The goal of this process is to understand what the University of Michigan should look like in 2034; what the university will stand for; how can the university impact the community, region, or world; what are the responsibilities of the university; and what will the university aspire to achieve and how will it get there.⁴⁰

CAMPUS PLAN 2050

The University of Michigan Ann Arbor has launched strategic planning efforts for the Campus Plan 2050, which will realize the future of the Ann Arbor physical campus while incorporating values and the vision defined in the strategic visioning underway with Vision 2034. Focus Areas of Campus Plan 2050 include Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Arts + Culture/Health + Wellness; Climate Action,

Sustainability + Infrastructure; Landscape + Open Spaces; Space Planning, Development + Land Use; and Mobility. The timeline for the development of Campus Plan 2050 includes four phases: Discovery and Analysis, Planning Scenarios, Preliminary Plan Development, and Final Plan development. These efforts launched in the Spring of 2023, and the Plan is set to be finalized in Winter 2024, presenting a 5-, 10-, and 25-year draft of campus plans for sharing for campus community feedback.⁴¹

These visioning and planning efforts afford a significant opportunity for students and community members to voice their experiences and insights to help shape the university's future physical and social landscapes. Sustainable food procurement plays a significant role in this. Students have commented on access to local groceries and healthy foods, the desire to embrace and celebrate their cultures, and the concern for ensuring that future plans reduce and eliminate carbon emissions where possible. Addressing these issues is possible by procuring more sustainable food that represents the diversity of the student body and beyond. Considering the large carbon emission footprint food systems have, future plans must encompass goals to address these concerns through ambitious action plans, goals, and policies.⁴²

APPENDIX B

Sustainable Food Procurement in action



Sustainable food procurement may take shape in various ways according to the unique definition of it within each institution, government, or agency. By examining the outcomes and levers utilized within various settings, such as **(1) academia, (2) governments, and (3) philanthropy**, the impacts of these efforts can provide an understanding or clear picture of what is possible when stakeholders come together for common goals.

Some of the drivers of this change are:

- policies
- legislation
- action plans
- training
- commitment
- monitoring
- strong leadership
- product availability
- evaluation
- expertise⁴³

ACADEMIA

Institutions such as schools, hospitals, and other administrations have the power to leverage procurement to increase access to healthy diets and transform systems;⁴⁴ they shape food choices and norms along with economic, social, and environmental ecosystems through purchasing to meet the significant scale of public demand.

To better understand how sustainable food procurement has shaped academic landscapes, the research team explored the efforts of two institutions, the University of California and the

University of Cambridge, that are innovating and setting examples of what more sustainable campuses and futures could look like. Through exploring secondary resources and discovering practices at various universities, the research team selected these institutions based on their boldly implemented policies, procurement practices, goal progress, and publicly disclosed achievements.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The University of California (UC), which has ten campuses (UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Irvine, UCLA, UC Merced, UC Riverside, UC San Diego, UC San Francisco, UC Santa Barbara, UC Santa Cruz), six academic health centers, and three national laboratories, is effectively promoting sustainable food procurement and healthier campus conditions in a multitude of ways.⁴⁵ UC has made a significant impact through policy and clear goals guided by standards defined by Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (AASHE STARS) and Practice Greenhealth.⁴⁶

Each campus aims to achieve 30% sustainable food through purchasing and other means by 2030, procure 25% sustainable food defined by AASHE STARS,⁴⁷ and develop culturally-acceptable plant-forward menus while balancing affordability and accessibility for students.⁴⁸ To further reduce carbon emissions

and environmental impacts, UC's Policy on Sustainable Practices: prohibits the sale, procurement, and distribution of packaging foam for food containers; plans to reduce the use of single-use items by eliminating plastic bags within food service; calls for replacing single-use plastic foodware and accessory items with reusable or locally compostable alternatives; and aims to phase out single-use plastic beverage bottles. The Policy prompts the implementation of the provisions when leases or contracts are negotiated or renewed and generally throughout the duration of current leases and contracts. Preferences are given to suppliers that utilize locally recyclable and compostable packaging options when awarding contracts. Additionally, the Policy allocates a minimum of 15% of the points used during solicitations to sustainability. The sustainability criteria may include sustainable product attributes, supplier diversity, supplier practices, and contributions to health and well-being.⁴⁹

In 2022, \$27.2 million (19%) of food and beverage purchases met sustainability criteria, and \$40.5 million (29%) were plant-based. To achieve these successes, UC used the AASHE STARS criteria to guide sustainable food procurement. Purchased food or beverage product must fit the AASHE STARS definition for "sustainability or ethically produced," which requires one or more certifications/verifications that confirm the supplier utilizes sustainable agricultural, seafood, fair trade/labor, and humane animal care practices; exemptions are provided for NGO-recommended seafood and institution-affirmed production as outlined in the STARS 2.2 Technical Manual. Some examples of the qualified certifications include Rainforest Alliance Certified, Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch, Fair Trade Certified, and Certified Humane Raised and Handled.⁵⁰

Additionally, UC Sustainable Procurement Guidelines outline the various types of

certifications and levels of standards utilized within procurement: recognized certifications, required level, and preferred level. The required level ensures that minimum mandatory requirements are met, and preferred level criteria consider additional criteria where offerings are given preference during procurement; preferred criteria must also meet the mandatory level standards and criteria. Procurement catalogs provide labels for each product according to the category criteria. University of California's Green Spend Criteria help guide the procurement process and ensure that UC meets its sustainability goals. Detailed guidance is also outlined within category sections to provide further detail during procurement according to the scope and specifications of that scope; timelines to reach target goals are also provided. An example is the Foodware Green Spend Criteria which includes foodware items and foodware accessory items in the scope.⁵¹ One specification of the scope items is that "Products made 100% from paper, wood, bamboo or other obviously plant-based material, that are uncoated or unlined (such as wooden stir sticks or uncoated paper plates) automatically meet this commercial compostability requirement without certification, so long as they appear on the Cedar Grove Accepted Items list for commercial compostability, and the material type is disclosed." Other specifications address the composition, ingredients, and processing of products being solicited while considering the total life cycle of the products.⁵²

To help achieve sustainable procurement goals, UC works with EcoVadis, an independent sustainability company that works within international standards to assess suppliers and help UC meet its sustainability goals.⁵³ Some of the services they offer include registration, assessment, and the scoring and analysis of potential and current vendors while considering the vendor's size, location, and industry. The

EcoVadis and UC partnership aims to support the university campuses in accessing sustainable products more efficiently through data collection and monitoring, ensuring vendors align with university goals and values and that it can advance the university's corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts to improve its impact on society, the environment, and its employee's well-being.⁵⁴ The University of California also partners with Greenhealth, which supplies tools, information, resources, data, and expert technical support on sustainability initiatives to meet collective goals such as advancing sustainable food procurement; more than one in every four hospitals in the U.S. and Canada is a part of their network. Greenhealth provides services such as an Impact Purchasing Commitment (IPC) for Sustainable Food to help institutions and others achieve sustainability in healthcare by establishing baselines, initiating cost-effective policies, conducting assessments, and sharing partner expertise.⁵⁵ All UC campuses work with third-parties and vendors to continuously monitor and track progress throughout the procurement process.⁵⁶

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

The University of Cambridge also has successfully taken significant steps to advance sustainable food procurement that demonstrates its leadership in the area. Incorporating sustainability into supplier rankings, ambitious and material goals, and thorough metrics set the University of Cambridge apart. First, when ranking new catering companies for a potential food bid, product specification (including seasonality, locality, and diet restrictions) along with sustainability receive a 40% weight within the scoring system.⁵⁷ Not only does this ensure sustainability factors are not minimized by price competition, but it sets a high bar for the importance of sustainability for both the university and potential vendors. Second, the University of Cambridge has

effective goals that have already seen significant progress. One of these is the complete reduction of ruminant meat offerings from all university menus, which has been completed in almost all locations. Finally, the university's sustainable food policy lays out multiple robust performance indicators, despite the potentially intensive nature of collecting and analyzing this data. This allows them to track progress towards individual goals such as reduction of meat consumption along with overall carbon emissions reduction. Doing so accurately provides more figures than simply providing the percentage of total purchases rated as sustainable.⁵⁸

Additionally, the University of Cambridge has a sustainable food policy highlighting a variety of goals, such as: reducing ruminant meat and dairy offerings, minimizing food waste, ensuring animal welfare, and reducing the use of all plastic packaging. Many of these individual goals support the overarching target of reducing carbon emissions from food year on year, which is tracked through multiple performance indicators: carbon emissions from food by weight, by pound sterling of revenue, and per transaction. Other metrics include meat and dairy as a proportion of total food, kilograms of food waste generated, and the number of single-use disposables used.⁵⁹ Thorough data collection and monitoring by the University of Cambridge's Environment & Energy department allow for confident, quantifiable results that show the true impact of changes in policy and procurement practices.

To meet its goals, the University of Cambridge utilizes a number of category-specific sustainability requirements and third-party certifications, such as Red Tractor Assured⁶⁰ or equivalent meat and produce, Marine Conservation Society's seafood guidelines, Fairtrade certification for select products, and more. Notably, the university is also open to

other certifications, such as in its language for fruits and vegetables: “Food produce is to be Red Tractor Assured, equivalent or fully traceable.”⁶¹ Although exceptions for equivalents or full traceability may require more due diligence on behalf of procurement and monitoring teams, these allow producers more flexibility within their operations, particularly those who may not be able to obtain Red Tractor Assurance for monetary reasons.

These institutions are leading the path forward to sustainable food and other procurement within academia through clear action plans, policies, and ambitious standards. By collaborating with vendors and others, they have been able to achieve success and strengthen sustainability within their campus culture and beyond.

GOVERNMENT

Governments can have some of the most significant impacts in guiding food systems, production, and procurement forward through policy, legislation, and set standards that ensure broad and foundational changes. They hold the greatest weight in procurement.⁶²

NATIONAL

One example of a significant change in public procurement in the United States is President Biden’s Executive Order 14057, collectively referred to as the “The Federal Sustainability Plan,” which aims to reach net-zero emissions from greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 by setting science-based targets within federal procurement to ensure the production of sustainable goods while creating jobs within the sector. Key actions of the plan require major federal suppliers to publicly disclose GHG emissions and set targets to reduce them while considering the social implications of future economic damages from

climate change and continuing the status quo.⁶³

Additionally, the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 aims to offer funding, programs, and incentives for green acquisitions and transform economies and systems to more renewable and sustainable methods of operations; procurement is a part of that.⁶⁴

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) aims to further more sustainable purchasing in conjunction with the Federal Sustainability Plan and Inflation Reduction Act efforts through a Sustainable Marketplace where governments, institutions, manufacturers, and consumers can identify more environmentally sustainable products through ecolabels and other demarcations; procurement opportunities; and guidelines for green purchasing through recommended labels and other mechanisms.⁶⁵ The EPA also offers resources and guidance on the sustainable management of food, including waste prevention and diversion, food recovery, and how to foster circular economies, which aim to create resources from waste and more.⁶⁶ Considering one-third of the food produced in the United States is never eaten and composes over 22% of material landfilled – these considerations within procurement are essential to consider when selecting vendors to partner with and their efforts to be more sustainable.⁶⁷

The U.S. General Services Administration offers a Green Procurement Compilation (GPC), a resource for cafeteria and food services, laundry services, transportation services and more. The GPC identifies products that comply with mandatory and non-mandatory programs such as Safer Choice, WaterSense, and EnergyStar. The GPC provides basic life-cycle cost savings, information on the most up-to-date standards for green product designations, and resources and training for more sustainable food procurement for consumers and vendors.⁶⁸

INTERNATIONAL

Globally, various international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Bank are working together with various governments and nations to foster more sustainable development in the food sector and beyond. They collaborate to advance sustainable public procurement (SPP) generally, which includes food and food service, through research, development, programs, and initiatives.

Another global governmental effort that is advancing the mission of sustainable food procurement is the One Planet Sustainable Public Procurement programme developed in 2014 by the United Nations; over 130 stakeholders participate.⁶⁹ These efforts aim to advance one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 12, of the United Nations entities to ensure more "sustainable consumption and production patterns."⁷⁰ These efforts amplify and continue the previous efforts of the Sustainable Public Procurement Initiative (SPPI) launched in 2012 at the Rio+20 Conference, which extends efforts of the Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Public Procurement led by Switzerland from 2005 to 2011.⁷¹ Together, these global multi-stakeholder strategic efforts strive to reduce food loss and waste; increase value in public purchasing; foster integrity in public procurement through good governance; manage chemicals and waste; and more.⁷²

Institutions can align goals, action plans, and standards with governmental efforts to ensure access to funding and that actions are cohesive

to bolster sustainable food systems and procurement developments. Governments hold the most significant reach and power through procurement as the largest consumers, and through collaborations with institutions, sustainable food procurement goals can be advanced more effectively.⁷³

PHILANTHROPY

Non-profits and philanthropic organizations also play a significant role in shifting the tides of sustainable food procurement. Philanthropic organizations often work with agencies, institutions, and governments to advance missions, innovate, and harness and bolster the power and momentum of residents leading these efforts on the ground.

The research team selected three philanthropic organizations, the Center for Good Food Purchasing, Open Contracting Partnership, and the Aspen Institute Center For Urban Innovation, based on their innovation and impact on sustainable and equitable procurement practices and research within food and other sectors. These organizations have conducted impactful primary research that provides insight into being more inclusive, equitable, and just within procurement. Additionally, they aim to bolster transparency within the supply chain to ensure value-based outcomes are realized. The research team utilized these insights within language development and the research project to advance procurement practices by institutions.

THE CENTER FOR GOOD FOOD PURCHASING

One example of how philanthropy is shifting the tides of procurement to be more sustainable through social, environmental, and economic change is the Center for Good Food Purchasing, which manages the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP). The Center works

with institutions to foster supply chain transparency by shifting to a values-based purchasing model; collaborations with national partners and local grassroots coalitions in cities across the U.S. support the growing Good Food purchasing movement.⁷⁴ The Center was started in 2015 to guide the Good Food Purchasing Program, a replicable model of the Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC) program launched in Los Angeles in 2012. Over 63 institutions and 24 cities are participating in the Good Food Purchasing Program, harnessing over \$1.1 billion of spend nationwide and significant potential to invest in more sustainable food procurement and production.⁷⁵

The program includes baseline assessments to understand current purchasing efforts, goals and value creation, gathering data to understand what percentage of food is healthy and sustainable, and working with subject matter experts and analysts to create indicators. The Center works with stakeholders to enhance capacity, increase coordination, empower governments, activate policies, and leverage buying power;⁷⁶ recommendations from these strategies include shifting language embedded in procurement contracts and RFPs to create change over time.

Core values of the Good Food Purchasing Program include environmental sustainability, valued workforce, local economics, nutrition, and animal welfare. The Center denotes third-party certifications representing each value and set standards within the program; some examples include USDA Organic, Certified Humane Raised and Handled, Fairtrade America, and Marine Stewardship Council. Additionally, the program assists institutions with goal setting and measuring progress.⁷⁷ When an institutional partner realizes commitment within the program, the Center issues a Good Food Provider seal acknowledging transparency within the supply

chain; set standards are met; and reporting and verification are conducted.⁷⁸

With over 100 stakeholders and procurement experts involved, the GFPP was implemented in 2012 at the largest school district in the U.S., Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). With \$125 million in expenditures, the program ensures that over 650,000 students consistently have access to healthy food. The Program has also helped LAUSD save 19 million gallons of water by implementing “Meatless Mondays” and increased the percentage of local vegetables and fruits from 9% to 75%.⁷⁹

Since adopting the policy, LAUSD’s bread and produce distributor, Gold Star Foods, has transformed and strengthened to better align with GFPP values and standards. These efforts led to 65 full-time, living-wage jobs being created. The GFPP has also spurred production-side growth. In the search to find wheat farms that are willing to align with GFPP standards and values, Shepherd’s Grain was discovered in Portland, Oregon – which eventually expanded operations to generate a network of over 40 independent local wheat farms along the Northwest to California; Gold Star purchases 160,000 bushels of wheat from the sustainable agriculture companies.⁸⁰

Stories such as the LAUSD fulfilling their need to acquire more sustainable and healthy bread, which required sustainable agricultural practices and companies to rise to the occasion, debunk the narrative that sustainable options do not exist or that small producers cannot meet more considerable demands.⁸¹ Through collaboration with those who have similar values and are willing to invest effort in meeting demands – healthier and more sustainable food production is possible. Similar shifts in food procurement are occurring in major cities such as Chicago, Austin, New York, Boston, and Washington, DC through the GFPP.

The GFPP has helped \$4.3 million in aggregate spending - an increase of over 250% - toward environmental sustainability and production that reduces or eliminates synthetic pesticides and fertilizers; protects biodiversity and wildlife habitat; conserves soil and water; reduces greenhouse gas emissions through energy and resource consumption; and avoids the use of GMOs, hormones, or antibiotics in food production. The Program has also helped redirect over \$20 million toward suppliers that value and practice fair labor standards and rights, including fair compensation throughout the supply chain, safe working conditions, and the right to organize; jobs have also been created as a result of program participation.⁸²

OPEN CONTRACTING PARTNERSHIP + THE ASPEN INSTITUTE CENTER FOR URBAN INNOVATION

Another critical aspect of sustainable food procurement is social sustainability and vendor diversity within the supply chain. An example of this is the collaboration between two philanthropic agencies, the Open Contracting Partnership and the Aspen Institute Center for Urban Innovation, which came together to produce research to better understand the issues of supplier diversity within procurement, specifically regarding the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the supply chain. The Open Contracting Partnership is a “silo-busting” collaboration across governments, businesses, and civil society to transform government contracting globally. They push for transparent contracting through data to promote competition, combat corruption, and improve efficiency.⁸³ The Aspen Institute Center for Urban Innovation is a network hub that catalyzes and supports movements to define and implement a value-based approach to development, regulation, piloting, and more – they connect and support diverse stakeholders and leaders to kick-start change and idea

creation across sectors.⁸⁴

The Open Contracting Partnership and The Aspen Institute Center for Urban Innovation came together in 2020 to create a report called “A Procurement Path to Equity: Strategies for Government and the Business Ecosystem,” which convened 35 experts to outline obstacles and possible solutions to overcome inequity in procurement for small minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBES) and others. The report provides recommendations and insight regarding culture and values; open data and processes; planning; solicitation and submission; and award and implementation.⁸⁵

Some of the recommendations to address inequities and cultivate more inclusive procurement processes include fostering cultures and values through reform by improving access for small businesses within procurement and bolstering coalitions for support; increasing access and information through open data and digital processes and understanding barriers; planning for clear communication within the marketplace to develop an understanding of institutional needs and how to address them; expanding outreach through information sharing and releasing forecasts of upcoming opportunities and bids so vendors can prepare to meet asks; and building confidence and security within the award and implementation process by providing contract management and timely payments so vendors can continue to meet contract goals. Additionally, setting goals for the number of contracts to be awarded to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and MWBEs to increase equity; designing user-friendly systems and tools grounded in the understanding of barriers; supporting outcomes- and value-based procurement approaches; helping MWBEs and SMEs qualify for more bids by breaking up large procurement asks and remaining flexible with experience

requirements; and paying vendors on time.⁸⁶

Successful sustainable food procurement is equitable, inclusive, and fosters environments where diverse vendors and business ecosystems thrive. It is vital that procurement services consider the aspects of social sustainability by collaborating and engaging those impacted.⁸⁷

APPENDIX C

Sustainable food procurement

Food procurement and procurement generally shape every aspect of our lives, from access to healthy foods to those who produce food to the place of origin of the food. It also nourishes well-being or hinders it. These decisions made by procurement staff and others have a profound impact on daily life for current and future generations. For decades,

procurement has been viewed as a driver and tool of economic policy and strategies. However, procurement also shapes the social and environmental landscape that impacts public health and the quality of life for populations at all scales, from those employed within distribution to farmers tending the fields and the countless others that move products along within supply chains that ultimately lead to food on the table for many. It can also create conditions that lead to a lack of access to healthy foods for those most in need of it.⁸⁸

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROCUREMENT?

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), sustainable procurement is “[a] process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, while minimizing damage to the environment. When sustainable procurement is conducted by public authorities we speak of Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP).”⁸⁹ These processes focus on procuring food-related goods, services, and works and utilities.

Sustainable food procurement specifically might consider all efforts within the supply chain. It encompasses the type of seeds planted, agricultural methods, processing, transportation, locationality, packaging, labeling of products, how institutions use products, and more. Additionally, food procurement considers the diets and demands of consumers,⁹⁰ the transparency of the product for safety and cultural beliefs,⁹¹ and the overall values of the consumers and procuring institutions. These efforts will look different depending on the location institutional capacity, consumer needs, and more.

Traditionally, institutions and procurement agents heavily consider cost, quality, and resource capacity in processes – but sustainable food procurement goes above and beyond those considerations. These considerable efforts significantly shape the environmental, social, and governance ecosystems that make food procurement and food systems possible.⁹²

Sustainable food procurement also considers the cost as it relates to the life cycle of goods and how they impact not only economic processes but social and environmental outcomes

from purchasing.⁹³ It considers the cost of raw material extraction and processing; product manufacturing; packaging; distribution; consumption; and disposal of goods. In doing so, procurement services and institutional leaders can view procurement through a more holistic lens and begin to understand how investments either cost more throughout the life cycle of goods or save in the long run. Such a holistic approach and vision are necessary if the goal is systems change to ensure a more livable future and climate today. Institutions and procurement staff are responsible for ensuring long-term, sustainable benefits.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Who institutions procure from can reinforce social structures that create social inequity and further the wealth gap for those already facing systemic discrimination; it can further impact environmental ecosystems by sustaining degrading practices that emit greater greenhouse gases (GHGs) compared to other agroecological and regenerative practices.⁹⁴ Food procurement focused on economic efficiency alone has led to soil depletion, biodiversity loss, public health issues, and externalities from overproduction, such as excess waste and loss of resources. Procurement also holds the power to spur employment, reduce waste, and address malnutrition.⁹⁵

Sustainable food procurement generates significant environmental, social, and governance benefits throughout the value chain.⁹⁶ Environmentally, it incorporates sourcing, producing, and distributing food in a manner that preserves biodiversity, reduces carbon emissions, and minimizes waste. Socially, it fortifies values of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and more to ensure fair labor practices, support for marginalized communities, and equitable food access.⁹⁷ Local communities and small-scale disadvantaged

producers can be supported through targeted food purchases. Additionally, purchasers' reliance on a single corporate supplier can be reduced, granting more power to make demands for change.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Food systems can either improve or exacerbate the negative impacts of climate change on society and quality of life. Agriculture and life depend on the climate – from changes in rainfall, pollination, frost-free days, and the uptick in wildfires or floods. These implications also impact the workers that keep the food systems running, often burdening the most disadvantaged populations. The ozone quality, which is affected by greenhouse gas emissions and other climate changes, can also stall photosynthesis in plants, leading to more extended growth periods and reductions in production.⁹⁸

The most recent Agriculture and Forestry Greenhouse Gas Inventory (1990-2013) reported that 595 million metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) were emitted from agricultural uses alone. These findings highlighted that 45% of these emissions came from soils, 28% came from livestock production, and the rest of the emissions came from livestock waste and energy use.⁹⁹

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), "A sustainable food system (SFS) is a food system that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised.

This means that: It is profitable throughout (economic sustainability); It has broad-based

benefits for society (social sustainability); and it has a positive or neutral impact on the natural environment (environmental sustainability)."¹⁰⁰

Although food systems reach beyond agriculture, which employs 11% of U.S. workers,¹⁰¹ one can begin to see the impact institutional spending and procurement can have on the environment. Food production alone produces over a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG); through procurement, institutions can shift outcomes and reduce negative externalities.¹⁰²