



Responsible Purchasing Toolkit for Tourism Operators



4VI gratefully acknowledges that we live and do business on the territories of Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth and Kwakwaka'wakw Nations. Our corporate office is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation in Nanaimo, BC.

4VI is committed to advancing reconciliation in our work and is committed to the calls to action identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada as well as the implementation of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

4VI is deeply committed to responsible purchasing as a core facet of our vision for the socio-economic and cultural well-being of Vancouver Island. With a firm belief in tourism's role as a collaborative partner in sustainable community development, we prioritize inclusive and equitable practices, ensuring that tourism contributes positively to the communities across the island. By encouraging residents to invest in and experience local tourism offerings, we aim to foster a robust socio-economic environment. We recognize tourism as a vital contributor to the preservation and celebration of Vancouver Island's diverse cultural heritage. By actively promoting Indigenous-owned tourism experiences and encouraging residents to partake in them, we aim to elevate and honor the rich tapestry of cultural voices that define our island's identity.

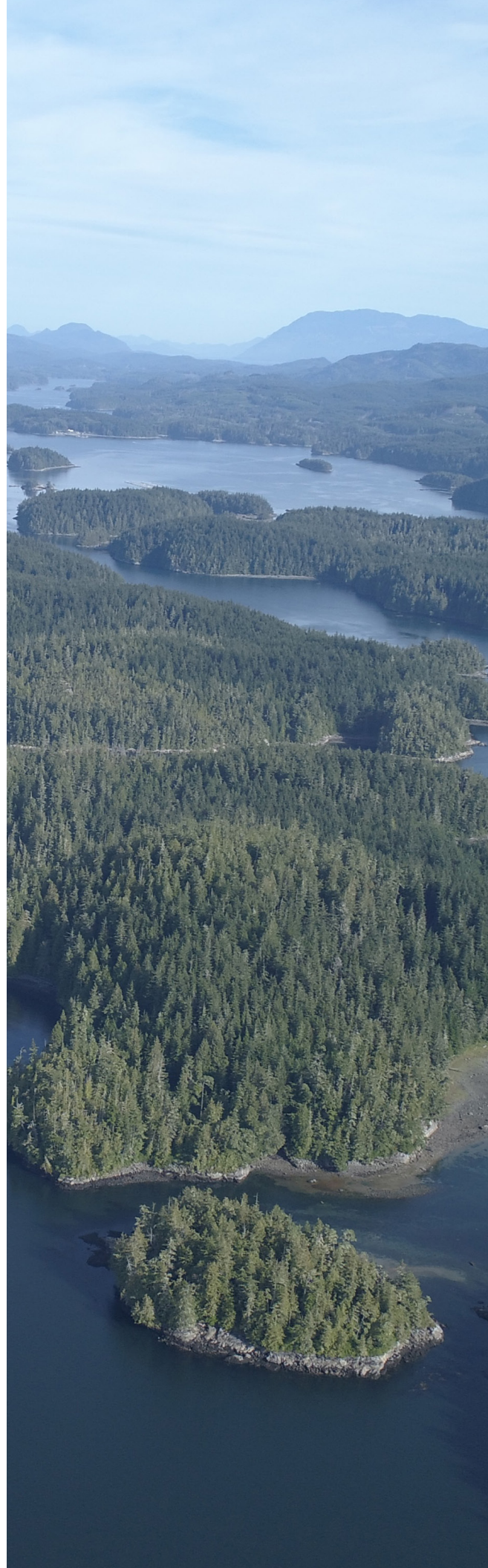


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What is responsible purchasing?

Introduction & purpose

Responsible purchasing is a key component of developing a socially conscious business. It takes different forms, such as choosing eco-friendly products, reducing plastic waste, opting for local ingredients, etc. When your business applies a responsible approach in sourcing its products, the benefits are economic, social and environmental. Implementing responsible purchasing practices within your supply chain is a great way to develop strong values and showcase your business as a sustainability leader.

Benefits of a responsible purchasing policy

Implementing a responsible purchasing policy offer several positive benefits for your business, your suppliers, and your community:

- Build a positive reputation and strengthen your business' image
- Reduce your costs and minimize waste
- Ensure that your suppliers are reliable and consistent
- Create authentic relationships with your stakeholders
- Attract conscious customers and stakeholders
- Positively Impact your community by choosing local suppliers

Leading the way with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #12



SDG 12 ensures sustainable consumption and production throughout the entire lifecycle of products and services. It encourages businesses to be more mindful of the use of natural resources and waste generated.



Responsible purchasing: Key criteria

When thinking about criteria to include in your responsible purchasing policy, it is important to keep in mind four fundamental themes: environmental considerations, social responsibility, ethical sourcing and economic viability.

Environmental considerations

- **Reducing environmental footprint:** Opt for products and services that minimize waste, use renewable resources, and have a low carbon footprint.
- **Recyclability and biodegradability:** Choose easily recyclable or biodegradable items to decrease landfill waste. Select products with minimal packaging.
- **Energy-efficient products and services:** Prioritize energy-efficient products (lightbulbs, etc.). This also includes low-emission transportation options.
- **Biodiversity preservation:** Support products and services that protect and promote biodiversity. This can involve choosing products that protect natural habitats and ecosystems, such as reclaimed wood or locally-sourced food.



Supplier evaluation & criteria matrix suggested weighting: 30%

Social responsibility

- **Fair & ethical labor practices:** Ethical treatment of employees is the cornerstone of responsible purchasing. Prioritize suppliers who guarantee fair wages, safe working conditions, and humane treatment for all employees.
- **Health & safety:** Make sure your suppliers have implemented measures to protect their employees' well-being, providing a healthy and secure working environment.
- **Diversity & inclusion:** Promoting diversity and inclusion is essential to cultivate a more equitable and representative business ecosystem. Partner with suppliers from different perspectives and backgrounds, such as Indigenous or women-owned businesses.



Supplier evaluation & criteria matrix suggested weighting: 25%

Responsible purchasing: Key criteria

Ethical sourcing

- **Transparency & traceability:** Choose suppliers that maintain transparency about their sourcing practices. Prioritize suppliers that adhere to stringent ethical standards and provide comprehensive traceability in their supply chains.
- **Animal welfare:** Responsible sourcing encompasses the treatment of animals involved in producing or sourcing goods. Partner with suppliers that display ethical standards regarding animal welfare and apply them throughout their operations.
- **Community engagement and local purchasing:** Support local businesses that contribute positively to your local communities. Partner with other local businesses and non-profits to create a broader impact.
- **Certifications and labels:** When researching suppliers, look for certifications. Those validate adherence to ethical standards, making it easier to identify products and suppliers committed to responsible practices.



Supplier evaluation & criteria matrix suggested weighting: 25%

Economic viability

- **Supplier financial stability:** Assessing the financial stability of suppliers involves evaluating suppliers' financial health to guarantee reliability, consistency, and sustainability. If possible, compare your suppliers' finances to industry norms to mitigate risks.
- **Regulations and standards:** Suppliers' compliance with industry standards is a non-negotiable aspect of responsible purchasing. Suppliers must adhere to legal frameworks and industry-specific standards to ensure ethical and lawful operations.
- **Long-term partnerships:** Building long-term partnerships fosters trust and stability within the supply chain. Prioritizing relationships with suppliers committed to responsible practices enhances continuity and encourages mutual growth.
- **Local economic impact:** Supporting local businesses stimulates economic growth and bolsters community development, creating a more sustainable and resilient economic environment.



Supplier evaluation & criteria matrix suggested weighting: 20%

Make the most of your responsible purchasing policy

Sustainable sourcing platforms

When choosing products or services for your business, many platforms provide access to a network of suppliers committed to sustainable practices. We encourage you to explore the links on the right to discover suppliers who embed environmental, social and economic considerations in their operations. Looking for specific products or suppliers? Do not hesitate to reach out to the 4VI team to help you in your research.

Platform
BC Marketplace
Shop First Nations
Buy Social Canada
BC Farmers' Markets
South Island Indigenous Business Directory

Certifications

Certifications are great tools in your research for sustainable products and services, as they officially validate sustainable practices. Look for the most common certifications below while researching suppliers. Keep in mind that not all certifications apply to every business!

Certification
 BIOSPHERE The Biosphere certification recognizes businesses' comprehensive sustainability efforts based on the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
 GreenStep SOLUTIONS GreenStep Solutions recognizes businesses with robust sustainable practices (energy and waste audit; carbon footprint, etc.)
 BC GREEN BUSINESS BC Green Business offers different levels of certifications based on sector-specific checklists (assessment and audit).
 ENERGY STAR Certified B Corporation B Corp is a strong and holistic certification for social, environmental, and governance standards.
 ENERGY STAR EnergySTAR identifies energy-efficient products and practices for reduced energy consumption.
 FAIRTRADE CANADA Fair Trade Canada ensures fair wages, ethical treatment, and support for communities.
 ECOLOGO ECOLOGO recognizes products meeting stringent environmental standards (scientific testing and auditing).
 OCEAN WISE Ocean Wise focuses on sustainable seafood and aims to make it easy for consumers to buy seafood that supports a healthy ocean.

Tools for your journey towards a responsible purchasing journey

Creating and implementing a responsible purchasing policy requires different tools. Communicate your sustainable values and purchasing choices to your suppliers, teams and customers by customizing the documents available below.



Supplier letter

A supplier letter is a document that communicates important information such as your commitment to responsible purchasing practices. This ensures your suppliers and your business are aligned on the same values.



Supplier code of conduct

A supplier code of conduct is a set of principles that your suppliers are required to adhere to. It usually covers themes such as fair labor practices, environmental sustainability, etc. A supplier code of conduct helps you mitigate legal risks.



Supplier criteria and evaluation matrix

A supplier criteria and evaluation matrix is an internal document to help you evaluate your potential suppliers against specific criteria (e.g. cost, quality, financial stability, etc.). Weightings are assigned to each criterion to reflect its importance for your business.



Responsible purchasing policy statement

A responsible purchasing policy statement outlines your business' commitment to sustainable purchasing decisions. It revolves around goals such as environmental considerations, ethical sourcing, economic viability and social responsibility.

Thank you for being part of the community of responsible businesses on Vancouver Island. For support and assistance in developing your business, don't hesitate to contact the 4VI team: info@ForVI.ca



Leaders in responsible purchasing: Black Rock Oceanfront Resort

Black Rock Oceanfront Resort, Restaurant & Spa is located on a dramatic headland above the crashing waves of the Pacific Ocean. The Resort is surrounded by the Wild Pacific Trail and the rugged rocky coast of West Vancouver Island. Their stunning Ucluelet resort is minutes from Vancouver Island's amazing beaches, forests, restaurants and attractions, including Pacific Rim National Park, Long Beach, Ucluelet Aquarium and Barkley Sound.

What does responsible purchasing mean to Black Rock Oceanfront Resort?

Responsible purchasing means that we make sure that the products and services we buy are as sustainable as possible, with the lowest environmental impact and most positive social results. We always strive to take initiative for our planet and being where we are, on the ocean, it makes it easy for our guests and team members to see what we are protecting.

What motivated the resort to implement a responsible purchasing policy?

On one front, to meet this new demand, and on the other, to ensure compliance with environmental and social legislation. Implementing a responsible purchasing policy helps reduce costs. Compliance with certain environmental and socio-economic criteria drastically reduces energy costs and high consumption but most important, to support our local businesses and to strive for 100% sustainability.

How does your responsible purchasing policy align with the values and goals?

We continue to look for sustainable items and shop as local as we can. We strive for a zero-waste model and continue to implement greener

practices. Our core values are community, integrity, sustainability & fun which are in our thoughts throughout everything we do.

What were the key considerations and challenges in developing your purchasing policy?

Our primary focus has consistently been on sourcing sustainable products, preferably locally. However, we encounter challenges related to price points and product reliability.

What steps has your business taken to ensure that employees and suppliers understand and comply with the responsible purchasing policy?

We consistently engage in discussions regarding sustainability and our commitment to safeguarding our local environment. The alignment between our community, residents, and team members in embodying these principles is self-evident, making it an unequivocal choice.

What achievement related to responsible purchasing are you the most proud of?

Promoting the prosperity of our local enterprises reciprocally fosters mutual support, creating a mutually beneficial arrangement.



© Black Rock Oceanfront Resort

Leaders in responsible purchasing: Mensch Kitchen and Catering

Mensch Kitchen and Catering is based in the Cowichan Valley and operates throughout Vancouver Island. Brothers Daniel and Michael Shipley along, with their team of experienced chefs and servers, have carved out a reputation as one of the premier caterers on the island, having won Best Overall Caterer in 2023 at the VI Wedding Awards. A Mensch is a person of honesty and integrity. That's the benchmark that they have set for themselves, and that sets the standard for what ingredients are brought through their kitchen doors.

What does responsible purchasing mean to you?

For us, responsible purchasing is an extension of our food philosophy. It is part of our efforts to limit our environmental impact and contribute to our local economy. There are two main considerations when bringing products into our kitchen: proximity and production methods. We source ingredients as close to home as possible, that are produced with care for the environment and community as much as for the product itself.

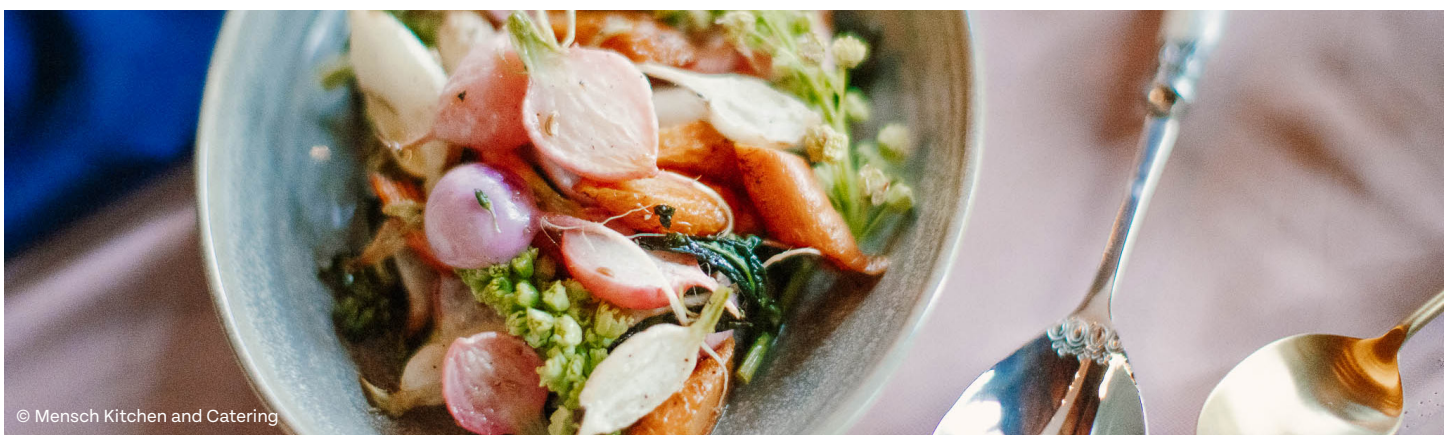
What motivated your business to implement a responsible purchasing policy?

Our purchasing practices are rooted in our chef's early experiences in the culinary world and exploration into agriculture soon after.

A curiosity for how ingredients are produced pushed him to leave the kitchen and get into the field. He spent two years working in different styles of food production, from organic market farming to an intensive rotationally grazed cattle operation. These experiences had a huge impact on his direction within the industry and over a decade later are still held as a compass for where we purchase our ingredients.

What success related to responsible purchasing are you most proud of?

We are very proud and grateful to have the relationships that have come from our purchasing ethics. We have been accepted into a community of some of the most talented growers and producers around and that empowers us to continue on the path we're on. We genuinely believe that using these products has contributed immensely to our reputation of culinary excellence. In recent years, we've been able to launch a sustainability menu as part of our wedding and event catering options. This initiative builds whole-animal sourcing into the menu and allows us to work with smaller regenerative farms who could not otherwise meet our protein needs for a large event. So far, we have been pleasantly surprised by the incredible uptake for this offering.



© Mensch Kitchen and Catering

Leaders in responsible purchasing: Eagle Wing Tours

Eagle Wing Tours is a Victoria-based, family-run company acquired by Brett Soberg and his business partner, Don Stewart, in 2005. A passion for the ocean and a drive to spark community action through ecotourism are at the heart of Eagle Wing Tours, which can best be described as a conservation organization that happens to run whale watching tours!

What motivated you to implement a responsible purchasing policy?

Implementing a Green Purchasing Policy in 2017 was one of the key steps we took toward a more sustainable business model. Our core mission is to build ocean awareness through tours, education and outreach; to protect the marine environment through conservation and research; and to promote environmental stewardship through industry-leading sustainability initiatives. We are certified “Green” by the Vancouver Island Green Business Collective and “Surfrider Approved” as an ocean-friendly business. We have been carbon neutral since 2010—reducing what we can, and offsetting through Wilderness International.

Can you describe the process of developing your responsible purchasing policy?

The Green Purchasing Policy was developed in 2017 in partnership with both GreenStep Sustainable Tourism and Synergy Enterprises, with whom we have been working for many years to raise the bar for sustainability in the eco-tourism industry.

How does your responsible purchasing policy align with your values and goals?

Everything we do at Eagle Wing Tours revolves around environmental awareness. We are always looking for innovative ways to reduce our footprint. We measure, reduce and offset

in all our business operations. Our staff Green Team meets regularly to evaluate all aspects of the business and ensure accountability. In 2021 we developed a UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Decade of Action Plan. A Green Purchasing Policy ensures the most sustainable and responsible decisions are made at every step of the operations.

How does Eagle Wing Tours evaluate suppliers based on its responsible purchasing policy criteria?

Preference is given to local companies, those that offer refillable, compostable and recycled products, those with low-emission vehicles, those with responsible corporate policies like fair trade, with emphasis on gender equality, health care and education.

What success related to responsible purchasing are you most proud of?

The installation of a water bottle refill station which has saved over 101,000 plastic water bottles from the landfill since 2017! This is used not only by our guests but also by all visitors to Fisherman's Wharf.



© Eagle Wing Tours - Shorelines Photography

Leaders in responsible purchasing: Vancouver Island Refillery

Vancouver Island Refillery was developed to provide resources to the Nanaimo community and help change consumer behaviour. They firmly believe in providing customers with locally made environmentally friendly products in bulk that can help them reduce their waste and have a positive impact on their environmental footprint.

What does responsible purchasing mean to Vancouver Island Refillery and why is it important?

Being a refillery that focuses on supplying consumers with sustainable products, our whole business model is dependent on responsible purchasing practices. By ensuring that we are purchasing our products from local suppliers that have sustainability in mind and doing the necessary research to avoid greenwashing, we can be fully confident that we are providing our customers with items that are good for them and for the environment.

What motivated you to implement a responsible purchasing policy?

Our motivation from the beginning was to ensure we could provide our customers with resources,

information, and products that would help them have a positive impact on our local environment. Having a responsible purchasing policy helps us achieve this goal by ensuring our products are environmentally and socially responsible, and will have a positive impact on our customers' lives.

How does Vancouver Island Refillery evaluate suppliers based on its responsible purchasing policy criteria?

When we research new products and suppliers, we look at the values of the company. A great example of this is our partner Oneka Elements. This family owned company focuses on using simple organic ingredients, most of which are cultivated in their permaculture farm, that are safe for humans and animals alike, and won't contaminate our waterways. They also focus on water conservation by minimizing the amount of water used in their products and therefore the amount of water that is transported from their facilities to their customers and distributors. The owners are very invested in making sure their products use the minimal amount of plastics necessary for packaging, and they participate in a circular economy program reusing the containers that are returned to them.



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This toolkit has been developed by Synergy Enterprises.

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