Royal College of Art

Responsible Procurement Policy 2023-24

1. Introduction

The Royal College of Art recognises its responsibilities to reduce the environmental impact of its activities and constantly improve its sustainability performance, with a goal of reaching net zero carbon by 2035.

The College aims to create a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion within its community, providing a dynamic working and learning environment, where all members are valued for their contribution and individuality, providing equality of opportunity for all.

The College helps businesses, entrepreneurs and communities achieve their innovation potential through a wide range of activities, which span collaboration with industry, academic and student enterprise, and creative and executive training opportunities.

It is vital that as the world's most influential postgraduate institution of art and design, a public institution and a charity, we uphold the responsible use of resources in the acquisition of goods, services and works we need.

2. Purpose

The College's Responsible Procurement Policy seeks to attain best value for money in the acquisition of goods, services and works for the College in a manner that is environmentally, ethically and economically sustainable.

The College seeks to promote a circular approach by first ensuring that the procurement of goods, services and works is absolutely necessary, seeking more sustainable and circular alternatives that reduce waste and use of natural resources, and evaluating such needs consistent with a lifecycle perspective.

We want to manage our supply chain in a manner that reflects the College's values of integrity, inclusion, collaboration and curiosity. We expect the values to be embedded both in our procurement processes and in our requirements of suppliers.

3. Principal Objectives

3.1 Responsible procurement is concerned with the economic, social and environmental impacts of purchasing decisions. The College's Responsible Procurement Policy is designed with four principal objectives in mind:

3.2 Environmental Sustainability: *To procure goods, services and works in a way that minimises negative impacts and encourages positive impacts on the environment and biodiversity throughout the entire lifecycle of the goods, services or works.*

3.3 Ethical Sourcing: *To exercise due diligence in our higher-risk spend categories that will promote respect for human rights, equality and diversity.*

3.4 Health and Safety: *To ensure that our procurement practices help protect the health and safety of College students, staff, visitors, contractors and other users of our buildings and facilities.*

3.5 Start-Ups: *To contribute to the growth of InnovationRCA's Start-Ups by bringing their creativity and entrepreneurship into the College's supply chain wherever possible.*

4. Responsible Procurement Policy

4.1 This policy will be applied to the College's procurement activities in an open and transparent manner.

4.2 The policy is aligned to the College's existing Environmental Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy, anti-discrimination statements and the College's annual Statement on Slavery and Human Trafficking.

4.3 The College will adopt a pragmatic approach to supplier engagement, encouraging and influencing our suppliers to improve their sustainability practices, and will seek to inspire others by sharing knowledge and awareness of responsible, best practice procurement with fellow institutions.

5. Implementation and Review

This policy will be communicated across the College to all staff involved in the acquisition of goods, services and works. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team.

6. Strategy

6.1 For Environmental Sustainability, we will:

- Minimise the College's environmental impacts in its supply chain in order to progress towards our net zero aspirations in our procurement activity;

- Engage with our critical and carbon-intensive suppliers to collect data on GHG emissions and to reduce their emissions in line with a science-based net zero target;

- Apply circular principles to procurement and apply the materials hierarchy, particularly minimising materials which are challenging to recycle or harmful to the environment;

- Prioritise local suppliers to minimise the carbon and environmental impact of transport;

- Review procurement practices and apply this policy during the procurement process where appropriate;

- Consider environmental sustainability from the outset of the procurement process as part of bidder selection criteria and as part of any business case valued at £50,000 and above;

- Include a suitable assessment of environmental impacts among award criteria for contracts valued at £50,000 and above, which should carry a weighting of at least 10%, with consideration of the impacts of goods and services throughout their lifecycle;

- Expect our critical and carbon-intensive suppliers to have an accredited environmental management system (eg ISO 14001, EMAS, BS7750) and have set, or committed to setting, science-based net zero targets aligned to the SBTi guidance; and

- Develop and report on our understanding of our supply chains and systematically analyse and improve that footprint wherever possible.

6.2 For Ethical Sourcing, we will:

- Work with our suppliers in higher-risk spend categories to monitor and improve conditions for workers; and

- Use our affiliation to Electronics Watch to help monitor the supply chains of our suppliers in higher-risk spend categories.

6.3 For Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, we will:

- Manage the College's supply chain so that it lives our values and is inclusive of the communities we serve, by buying more goods, services and works locally when we can;

- Strive to remove those barriers in our procurement approaches and processes that inhibit Small to Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), businesses owned by People of Colour and community sector organisations from easily entering our supply chain;

- Monitor and report upon the value of our business awarded to SMEs and businesses owned by people of colour and community sector organisations; and

- Encourage our suppliers to extend employment and apprenticeship opportunities to our students and our communities wherever appropriate.

6.4 For Health and Safety, we will:

- Ensure that our contracts and specifications are updated regularly to reflect changes in health and safety standards.

6.5 For Start-Ups, we will:

- Help businesses, entrepreneurs and communities achieve their innovation potential by encouraging Start-ups that were incubated at InnovationRCA to bring their creativity and entrepreneurship into the College's supply chain wherever possible.

- Support researchers to use responsible procurement processes where appropriate and harness our research insights to inform our responsible procurement and supply chain approaches.

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