



Sustainable Procurement Guide for Print Cartridges

Procurement professionals can take organizational sustainability goals to the next level by implementing a sustainable procurement strategy. This guide provides information for sustainable procurement of print cartridges using verifiable criteria and standards that should be available from any company that sells printing supplies.

What is EPEAT®?

EPEAT is an easy-to-use evaluation tool that allows for comparison and selection of electronic products based on environmental responsibility. Look for the EPEAT label to identify voluntarily-registered products that meet minimum performance standards for areas including energy efficiency, toxicity reduction, and materials selection.

Note that EPEAT printer information includes HP components and cartridges together, so double check all supplies in your printing system to ensure they meet the standard. Use of EPEAT-registered electronic products is required for all federal organizations and often by many state, local, educational and corporate organizations. Executive Order 13514, Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance and Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Subpart 23.704 both require federal acquisition of EPEAT-registered electronic products. See the EPA guidelines for federal purchasers at epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/epeat.pdf or learn more at www.epeat.net.

	Topic:	Why it matters:	What criteria should you look for?
 EPEAT Guideline	Indoor Air Quality (print system)	Americans spend an estimated 90% of their time indoors, and the levels of common air pollutants can be two to five times higher indoors than outdoors. ¹	Supplies in use with a compatible printer should guarantee indoor air quality as per international recognized ecolabel standard threshold limits.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPEAT 4.10.1.1 Indoor Air Quality Emission Requirements 		
 EPEAT Guideline	Take-back and recycling program	Support company waste reduction efforts and enable recycled products as raw material in new products.	Supplier should offer a print supplies take-back and recycling program for depleted supplies. A supplier is required by EPEAT to recycle both the plastic and the toner material after collecting the cartridges, and should provide annual reporting of the metrics.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPEAT 4.9.3.1 Provision of take-back and recycling service for cartridges and containers (includes process restrictions and reporting requirement) • EPEAT 4.9.3.3 Manufacturer recycles or reuses all plastic collected through its cartridge and container take-back program • EPEAT 4.9.3.2 Manufacturer recycles or reuses all toner material collected through its cartridge and container take-back program 		

Additional Requirements

	Topic:	Why it matters:	What criteria should you look for?
 EPEAT Guideline	Safety Data Sheet (SDS)	Documents Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) information. Tool to show if the toner or ink is hazardous or not.	Supplier to provide Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) for offered printer cartridges containing toner or ink (if hazardous, in local language).
 EPEAT Guideline	Recycled content	Efficient use of materials to help reduce environmental impact. Keep materials in use at their highest value rather than send to landfill.	According to the US EPA, "The Comprehensive Procurement Guideline (CPG) program is part of EPA's continuing effort to promote the use of materials recovered from solid waste." In 1995, EPA designated toner cartridges as an item that should contain recovered materials under the CPG. The EPA does not set forth a minimum level of recovered material.

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	Life cycle environmental impact (supplies)	Covers Life Cycle concept, requirements for Environmental Health and Safety, circular economy and design for environment of products.	The printing system (cartridges with printer) or cartridges should meet the requirements of recognized ecolabels covering environmental aspects during the lifecycle of the printing system (or cartridge). These criteria cover all lifecycle aspects besides Indoor Air Quality (covered above). Credibility is key to communicating the results of a lifecycle assessment. ISO 14040 requires critical reviews (peer reviews) to be performed on all lifecycle assessments supporting a comparative assertion disclosed to the public.
	Sustainability program	Transparency and credibility. Enables company to buy from a company that upholds human rights, labor conditions and environmental guidance in its own company and in its supply chain.	Company publishes sustainability metrics or a report on an annual or biannual basis and uses a third party standard such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).
	Cartridge characterization and substitution	Refilled and remanufactured cartridges are not standardized and can impact product quality and reliability and thus generate waste. Supplies should not be substituted without customer approval.	Supplier should provide the country of origin and one of the following designations for each cartridge: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Original cartridge (brand from printer manufacturer)• Non-Original remanufactured cartridge (some parts renewed)• Non-Original refilled only cartridge (no parts renewed)• Non-Original new-built cartridge (all parts new) No international standard available yet.
	Environmental Management System	The ISO14001 standards ensure a company is aware of its environmental impacts and provides a process for continuous improvement.	Printing supply manufacturers should be certified against the ISO14001 environmental management system and provide certificates.
	Page Yield	The page yield is connected to usability and number of pages possible to print based on a reliable standard—often a priority for public sector customers—and provides resource efficiency.	Cartridge page yield should be reported in accordance with ISO/IEC 19752, ISO/IEC 19798 or ISO/IEC 24711.
	Product quality and reliability	Product quality and reliability have both cost and environmental impacts, like reduction of waste and carbon footprint.	Supplier should be able to empirically demonstrate the quality and reliability of the products and provide reference to third party reports and data, where appropriate.



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For additional information on EPEAT guidelines for federal purchasers, visit <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/epeat.pdf>.

1. For more information, see <https://www.epa.gov/report-environment/indoor-air-quality>

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