

# Sustainability Purchasing Network Project News Issue 1: January 2006

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## Sustainability Purchasing Network Launched

On behalf of a number of sustainability-minded organizations, the Fraser Basin Council is pleased to announce the launch of the Sustainability Purchasing Network Project. With funding in place from BC Hydro, Mountain Equipment Co-op, and Vancity Credit Union, activities of the SPN are underway.

"The Fraser Basin Council is pleased to be working with a number of regional partner organizations on this project," says David Marshall, Executive Director of the Fraser Basin Council. "The project fits within a broader regional vision to support the development and application of more effective sustainability purchasing practices throughout B.C."

Typically when organizations set out to develop and implement sustainability purchasing policies there is little guidance or support for their efforts, as there is no one resource available to them. The Network has been created to help organizations along the path from inception to advanced practice.

### What is Sustainability Purchasing?

Sustainability purchasing can be described as, "selecting goods and services which promote a healthier community and environment by considering the costs as well as the environmental and social impacts of products and services through all stages of their lifecycle: from product/service development and manufacturing through product/service use and ultimately to the disposal of whatever remains of the product/service at the end of its useful life."

The goals of the Network include:

- support to purchasers in their efforts to improve their sustainability purchasing practices
- growth of sustainability purchasing practices in B.C.
- growth of the sustainable enterprise sector and the number of sustainability suppliers in B.C.
- positive social, economic and environmental impact throughout the province and beyond.

The project will reduce duplication of effort and enhance the quality of information and analysis available to the sustainability purchasing community. The Network provides services to its regional and provincial participants in the following areas:

- **Research and Resources:** provides a "portal" to best practices, trends, research, tools and resources for the development of sustainability purchasing practices
- **Education and Training:** offers workshops and practitioner learning circles for entry-level and advanced practitioners
- **Joint Problem Solving and Collaboration:** supports purchaser and supplier/purchaser platforms for joint problem solving and collaboration in addressing supply chain sustainability challenges and opportunities.

The New Year will begin the implementation of 2006 work plan activities.

## Network Origins

A year ago Charlene Easton, Tim Reeve and Coro Strandberg, three sustainability consultants, received support from a number of sustainability purchasing organizations to assess the needs and interests of sustainability purchasers to come together in a shared learning experience.

The *Assessment Study*, published in June 2005, presents the needs and views of sustainability purchasers, suppliers and institutions regarding capacity building requirements to enhance effective and efficient sustainability purchasing in the region. The Study solicited input from government, private sector, small business, labour and not-for-profit organizations. In a workshop later that month stakeholders expressed overwhelming support for the creation of a Sustainability Purchasing Network.

### Phase 1: The Assessment Study Funding Organizations

Alcan  
BC Buildings Corporation  
BC Hydro  
Greater Vancouver Regional District  
Hemlock Printers Ltd.  
Canadian Labour Congress Sustainable  
Communities Initiative  
Mills Basics  
Novex Courier  
United Way of the Lower Mainland  
Vancity Credit Union  
Western Economic Diversification  
Canada  
Vancouver Airport International Airport  
Authority

The *Business Plan*, October 2005, outlines the vision, goals and activities of the sustainability purchasing Network over a three year period (2006-2008). At the June workshop, the Fraser Basin Council was appointed as the interim secretariat for the initiative. The long-term home for the Network will be determined through a consultative process set out in the *Business Plan*. A substantial portion of the *Business Plan* funding is in place, with the balance under consideration.

Copies of the *Sustainability Purchasing Initiative Assessment Study* can be downloaded from the Fraser Basin Council's home page at [www.fraserbasin.bc.ca](http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca)

## Your Invitation to Join

The Network will become a community of purchasing personnel from organizations concentrated in the Greater Vancouver Region as well as throughout British Columbia. There are approximately 30 active participants to date and this number is expected to grow to over 50 within the next few months. Network participants will be drawn from a range of organizations including: private sector businesses, co-operatives and non-profits, business associations and networks, governments (all levels), labour organizations, academic institutions and consultants.

The Sustainability Purchasing Network recognizes three groups of interest and will tailor activities to target each of these in the coming years. These include: 1) a pre-policy/program group; 2) an entry-level policy/program development and implementation group; and 3) an advanced policy/program implementation group.

If your organization is interested in selecting goods and services that promote a healthier community and environment then the Network will be of service to you. Sustainability suppliers are also purchasers and are encouraged to join. To become involved, please contact, Tim Reeve at [tim.reeve@telus.net](mailto:tim.reeve@telus.net).

## **Upcoming Activities**

### **Participant Survey**

The project will canvas organizational needs and priorities for training, tools and resources through an on-line survey early in February, 2006. The results of this survey will be incorporated into the detailed planning of Network membership services related to training, research, and collaborative projects. Should you wish your organization to be included on the survey data-base, please submit a contact name, email and telephone number to **Coro Strandberg** at [cstrandberg@shaw.ca](mailto:cstrandberg@shaw.ca). This is your opportunity to set the agenda to meet your needs. We welcome and encourage your participation.

### **'Total Cost of Ownership' Workshop**

The project team will deliver the first in a series of workshops February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006. This workshop will focus on 'Total Cost of Ownership' and will be targeted to medium to advanced sustainability purchasers. For further information please contact Tim Reeve at [tim.reeve@telus.net](mailto:tim.reeve@telus.net).

### **Announcing the Project Steering Committee (SC)**

We are pleased to have in place a project steering committee made up of organizations that have a strong commitment to leadership in sustainability. These include:

- The City of Vancouver
- Purchasing Managers Association of Canada
- The Greater Vancouver Regional District
- Ministry of Management Services, BC Government
- Hemlock Printers Ltd.
- Public Works and Government Services Canada
- Vancity Credit Union
- Fraser Basin Council
- Mills Basics
- BC Hydro
- Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE BC)
- Bell Canada, Western Division

The SC provides strategic project direction to the launch and implementation of the Sustainable Purchasing Network activities, as well as to policy and organizational matters. The SC met late in November 2005 to approve a one year work plan. A second SC meeting was held Monday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006.

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