



UPPSALA  
UNIVERSITET

# Guide to Environment- friendly Purchasing

---

Adopted by Environmental Manager Karolina Kjellberg  
on 30 May 2017

# Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Labels	2
1.1 Environmental labels	2
1.2 Other labels	2
2. Environmental advice on specific product groups	2
2.1 Vehicles: purchase, lease and hire	2
2.2 Flowers	2
2.3 Catering and food orders	3
2.4 Disposables	3
2.5 Fruit baskets	3
2.7 Hotels and conference centres	4
2.8 IT equipment (computers, monitors, printers, copiers etc.) and white goods	4
2.9 Coffee and tea	5
2.10 Office supplies	5
2.11 Office furniture	6
2.12 Travel	6
2.13 Textiles	6
<b>Appendix 1. Instructions for conferences and meals: food and the environment</b>	<b>7</b>

## 1. Labels

A good test of whether a product is environment-friendly or not is to look for environmental or some other kind of labelling.

The following trustworthy, independent labels, environmental and otherwise, are used on numerous products.

### 1.1 Environmental labels



From left: the Nordic Ecolabel (Svanen, ‘The Swan’); Bra Miljöval (‘Good Environmental Choice’); the EU Ecolabel; KRAV (for organic production methods); Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for fish; the EU label for organic farming; TCO certification (for quality and environmental impact); the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC); and the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS).

### 1.2 Other labels



From left: Fairtrade, Energy Star, Svenskt Sigill (‘Swedish Seal’) and Öko-Tex.

## 2. Environmental advice on specific product groups

### 2.1 Vehicles: purchase, lease and hire

In Sweden today, vehicles bought, leased or hired by state agencies are required to meet certain environmental and safety criteria. These requirements are implemented in the University’s activities pursuant to [UFV 2010/1647, Riktlinjer för köp, leasing och användning av tjänstebilar](#) (‘Guidelines for purchase, leasing and use of service vehicles’, in Swedish only).

### 2.2 Flowers

Flower-growing or floriculture requires a great deal of energy and water. Conventional market gardens in developing countries often use chemicals that are banned in Europe. The workers suffer from insecure employment situations, low salaries and health problems due to the use of chemicals.

There are **Fairtrade-certified roses**. While promoting organic production, Fairtrade is also about the farm labourers’ working conditions.

**Dutch flowers** can be certified with the **MPS-A** ecolabel.

When you buy cut flowers and potted plants, try to demand those with Fairtrade or MPS-A certification. Alternatively, ask for **Swedish or locally grown flowers**. In the spring season in

Sweden, **KRAV-labelled tulips** and tulips with Svenskt Sigill certification, i.e. meeting the independent IP standard for food and flowers, are available. Swedish roses can be purchased all the year round.

### 2.3 Catering and food orders

What we eat and drink affects the environment in many ways. There are various significant factors, such as how far the food we eat has been transported; growing conditions (presence of fertilisers, chemical pesticides etc.); and the kinds of fish and meat we select (beef has a greater environmental impact than chicken, lamb and venison, and meat from livestock kept in natural conditions in Sweden helps to keep the landscape open).

Try to choose goods that are locally produced, organic and/or Fairtrade-certified, and select produce according to season. Today, organic options are available for most foods (such as coffee, tea, milk, sugar, fruit and butter). The ecolabels used for food are KRAV, the EU's labelling for organic farming and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for fish.

In catering and ordering food, you can make various requests to the restaurant or catering firm regarding the food to be served. Possible requests for a more environment-friendly meal (see the Appendix to this Guide, which can be sent to the conference centre) are for:

- tap water and water carbonated on the premises; no bottled water
- organic and Fairtrade-certified coffee and tea
- organic, Fairtrade-certified and/or locally produced fruit
- locally produced and seasonal food and beverages; Swedish raw materials are always worth seeking out
- fish greenlisted in the WWF's sustainable seafood guide for Sweden (in Swedish only)<sup>1</sup>, to obtain sustainably caught fish.
- meat greenlisted in the WWF's sustainable meat guide for Sweden (in Swedish only)<sup>2</sup>, to minimise environmental impact
- if possible, getting a vegetarian meal that can suit everyone.

### 2.4 Disposables

Sometimes disposable products, such as single-use crockery and cutlery, are needed in activities. Choose ecofriendly single-use materials made of corn starch, paper or wood in preference to plastic disposables.

### 2.5 Fruit baskets

Many departments or equivalent subscribe to fruit baskets. It is preferable to choose a fruit basket that contains organically grown fruit and in which the selection is seasonally adjusted. Organic fruit-growing means that fertilisers and chemical pesticides are not permitted in cultivation.

You should also, where possible, choose locally grown or Swedish fruit.

The ecolabels used for fruit are KRAV (for organic production methods) and Fairtrade (for social considerations).

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.wwf.se](http://www.wwf.se), search *fiskguide*.

<sup>2</sup> [www.wwf.se](http://www.wwf.se), search *köttguide*.

## 2.6 Vending machines for beverages, sweets, sandwiches etc.

Vending machines for food and beverages operate at full capacity round the clock. The amount of electricity used by a vending machine mainly determines the environmental impact from its use and its operating cost.

Compare various vending machines' electricity use and choose an energy-saving machine.

## 2.7 Hotels and conference centres

Hotels and conference centres chosen can have a major bearing on the environmental impact to which hotel stays and/or conferences give rise.

For an environmentally sound stay or conference:

- Choose hotels and conference centres that are accessible by public transport.
- Choose facilities that carry out active environmental work – that are, for example, environmentally certified according to ISO 14001, the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), the Nordic Ecolabel (Svanen, 'The Swan') or the EU Ecolabel.
- Make requests to the hotel or conference centre at the time of booking meals. See the information on *how* in section 2.3, Catering and meals.

## 2.8 IT equipment (computers, monitors, printers, copiers etc.) and white goods

Every year, the University purchases a large quantity of IT equipment and other office machines. The environmental impact of IT hardware and office machines, in life-cycle terms, is composed largely of their use of energy during the use phase.

Ahead of the purchase of IT equipment, **life-cycle cost** is a useful aid. 'Life-cycle cost' means the total cost of a product throughout its life cycle. Taking life-cycle cost into account, a product with a high purchase price and low energy use may be more advantageous in aggregate economic terms than a low-cost product with high energy use. Moreover, a low-energy product has less environmental impact.

When life-cycle cost is used to assess electronic products, it is important to take into consideration their **energy use both in standby mode and in full-capacity operation**. Life-cycle cost is particularly relevant in purchases of products with high energy use, such as laboratory freezers and some IT products.

For IT hardware, such as computers, monitors, printers and copiers, guidance is available through the **Nordic Ecolabel (Svanen, 'The Swan')**, **EU Ecolabel**, **Energy Star** (energy efficiency) and **TCO** (quality and environmental impact).

**White goods are energy-labelled**, A+++ being the highest rating.

When electronic products are purchased, **brominated flame retardants** should be avoided. It is advisable to ask about this before buying.

**The University's product web** contains both 'environmentally superior' and inferior products. It may be difficult to find ecolabelled products among those listed in the 'product web'. It is advisable to get help from your computer manager, the environmental coordinator or the IT department to find the environmentally best products in their respective categories.

## 2.9 Coffee and tea

Coffee selection is often governed by flavour, price and habit. For coffee purchasing, there are two forms of ecolabelling for your guidance: **KRAV** (in terms of organic production methods) and **Fairtrade** (labelling for social considerations). Today, organic coffee is available from all coffee suppliers. Several kinds of coffee are labelled with both **KRAV** and **Fairtrade**.

A very large selection of teas with **KRAV** labelling and **Fairtrade** certification are available.

## 2.10 Office supplies

The framework agreements used by the University in sourcing office materials contain a wide range of materials to choose from. Ecolabelling is a great help.

Besides the usual ecolabelling systems, several suppliers of office materials have their own internal ecolabels. It is advisable to ask what these labels mean and what distinguishes them from established ecolabels such as the **Nordic Ecolabel** (Svanen, 'The Swan') and the **Forestry Stewardship Council** (FSC).

**Notepaper** (academic and other notepads, flip charts etc.): choose ecolabelled paper (the **Nordic Ecolabel** Svanen, 'The Swan'). Avoid paper that is coloured, waxed, laminated or covered with glue that is water-insoluble, since all these make recycling harder.

**Pens**: choose ecolabelled pens (the **Nordic Ecolabel**, Svanen, 'The Swan') for writing on a whiteboard or flip chart and highlighting. Refillable pens are a good option. If disposable pens are needed, choose those with the pen body made of recycled paper, or a ballpoint pen in recovered polypropylene plastic. The company **Svenskt Arkiv**'s ballpoint pen is an example of one with the pen body made of recycled material.

**Document files**: these are available in recycled materials— both recycled paper and recovered polypropylene. Ask for these when you make purchases. Polypropylene plastic products can be labelled with the following symbol:



**Copy paper**: in purchasing copy paper, one must take several factors into account: quality, function, price and environmental impact. Ecolabels are the simplest way to ensure that paper is environmentally sound.

The ecolabels **Nordic Ecolabel** (Svanen, 'The Swan') and **EU Ecolabel** are used for copy paper. Paper can also be labelled as **TCF** (Totally Chlorine-Free), which means that the paper has been bleached entirely without chlorine. It is advisable to ask whether the paper comes from sustainable forestry, i.e. **FSC**-certified forests, or is recycled.

For copy paper there is also **Paper Profile**, the environmental product declaration for paper production. Since this is **not** a form of ecolabelling, the manufacturers do not need to meet specific emission requirements etc. Instead, **Paper Profile** reports only on the emissions, energy use etc. to which the paper production has given rise.

**Envelopes**: the easiest way to make sure envelopes are environmentally sound is to choose those with an ecolabel. The **Nordic Ecolabel** (Svanen, 'The Swan') means that a third party has examined the product with respect to its environmental impact throughout its life cycle, from raw material to waste.

Choose address labels with water-based adhesives.

## 2.11 Office furniture

Environmentally labelled furniture is beginning to be increasingly common on the market. The ecolabel that is used for furniture, and may be requested, is the Nordic Ecolabel (Svanen, 'The Swan'). For textiles, the ecolabelling systems used are Svanen, Bra Miljöval ('Good Environmental Choice') and EU Ecolabel.

## 2.12 Travel

Every year, staff at the University travel the equivalent of more than 1,000 times round the Earth for work purposes. The environmental impact of this travel is heavy. Nevertheless, not all journeys can be replaced by more sustainable options. Advice that can reduce the environmental impact of work-related travel is given below.

**Flights.** Choose flights without unnecessary stopovers.

**Hire car.** Choose a hire car classified as 'green'. Hire car firms can offer this. Choose a car of the right size for your needs.

**Coach booking.** Choose the size of your coach according to the number of passengers.

**Taxi.** Choose a green taxi. Specify this requirement when you order.

## 2.13 Textiles

For textiles, a relatively new labelling system exists: the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). This label entails requirements that fabric should contain a minimum of 95% organic materials and that responsibility, both environmental and social, has been exercised in its production.

Textiles and fabric products can also be labelled with Bra Miljöval, the Nordic Ecolabel (Svanen, 'The Swan'), EU Ecolabel, KRAV and Fairtrade.

## Appendix 1. Instructions for conferences and meals: food and the environment

One of Uppsala University's aspirations is for its work to contribute to a better world. This aim permeates all activities. The work consists partly in reducing, in various ways, the adverse environmental impact that arises as a result of the University's efforts, for example in the form of resource use, emissions of gases affecting the climate, and the spread of chemicals in the environment.

The University's conference activities and meal arrangements of various kinds entail an impact on the environment. These harmful effects can be reduced by submitting, in advance, the following wishes regarding conference centres and organisers:

- In conference planning, there must be consideration of the scope for travelling to the venue by public transport.
- Where transport services are provided during the conference, this must be done primarily by means of public modes of transport or car sharing.
- Table water served must be tap water and home-carbonated water. No bottled water may be served.
- If fish and shellfish are served, they must not be species endangered by overfishing or redlisted in or the WWF Sustainable Seafood Guide for Sweden ([www.wwf.se](http://www.wwf.se) and search for *fiskguide*; in Swedish only). Supplementary reading: the UK Marine Conservation Society's Good Fish Guide ([www.goodfishguide.org/](http://www.goodfishguide.org/)).
- If meat is served, it must not be from animals redlisted in the WWF Sustainable Meat Guide for Sweden (see [www.wwf.se](http://www.wwf.se) and search for *köttguide*; in Swedish only). Supplementary reading: *Prime cuts: Valuing the meat we eat* ([http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/prime\\_cuts\\_food\\_report\\_feb2013.pdf](http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/prime_cuts_food_report_feb2013.pdf)).
- Organic and Fairtrade-labelled coffee and tea must be demanded.
- Organic, Fairtrade-labelled and/or locally produced fruit must be demanded.
- Organic, seasonal and/or locally produced food and beverages must be demanded. Swedish raw materials are always worth the effort to find.
- If the conference lasts for more than one day there should, for climate reasons, be one vegetarian meal that suits everyone.
- No single-use materials, crockery etc. must be used, unless absolutely necessary.

If you have any queries, contact the University's Environmental Coordinator at [miljo@uadm.uu.se](mailto:miljo@uadm.uu.se).