



Sustainable Procurement: 6 step process

- **Is the product free trade/ethically manufactured:** It is well documented the importance of paying fair and living wages to individuals in less developed countries. In doing so, one of many positive benefits is that there is a better chance of women and children becoming educated. This enables the most vulnerable a chance to get out of poverty and an opportunity to make decisions that can help the well-being of their community and environment. Some say this might be the first step towards fighting climate change.
- **Is the product part of the 5 Rs of the Circular Economy (Recycle, Rethink, Reuse, Redesign, Reduce):** Is the product made from recycled products? Can it be directly recycled, reused, redesigned? Keeping the product in the economy reduces destruction of the environment.
- **Timeless over Trendy:** Long lasting products reduce the extraction of materials from the environment, which can both positively indirectly and directly affect the environment. Choosing products that can stand the test of time, reduce overall environmental impact.
- **Is the product environmentally labelled:** Labels such as FSC approved wood, or OEKO-Tex are certifications that are granted to products based on a set of criteria established by the third-party organization. These labels are extensive and can encompass products with low/no VOC emissions, to a certification of organic. The list goes on depending on the product. Strict environmental guidelines are the driving force behind these labels.
- **Is the product manufactured within a country with controlled environmental standards:** Each country has their own set of environmental standards. Unfortunately, the lack of standards or minimal ones in some countries can not only be disastrous to the environment itself, but typically the most vulnerable populations are the most directly affected with disease and other health consequences as a result. Understanding where and how a product is manufactured is of paramount importance. Ask the questions.
- **Is the product natural/biodegradable:** When a product leaves the circular economy and ends up in landfill, the importance of the product being natural and biodegradable is paramount. When a product is completely biodegradable, the product breaks down into earth and ultimately gives back to the environment.