



Catering Supplies and Services Procurement Category – incorporating SRS considerations

Summer 2018 update

A full implementation plan is available from the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability.

What this category includes:

Procurement in the Catering Supplies and Services category covers a wide range of goods and services, including:

- Beers, Wines, Spirits & Alcoholic Drinks
- Bakery Products
- Dairy Produce
- Frozen Foods
- Groceries (Dried Goods)
- Large Catering Equipment
- Catering Equipment, Maintenance & Repair
- Meat (Fresh)
- Soft & Non-alcoholic Drinks
- Tableware, Crockery, Cutlery
- Vending Equipment, Consumables & Charges
- Fruit & Vegetables (Fresh)

- Fish & Seafood (Fresh)
- Confectionary, Sweet & Savoury
- Catering Services, Outsourced
- Hot Beverage (Products and Machines)

Total category spend – £3.1M p.a.

Note: This briefing summarises srs risks and opportunities associated with procurement and provision of University catering. The University's Department for Accommodation, Catering and Events (ACE) manages an internal service which includes cafes and delivered catering for events. Despite this, many departments are also known to use unapproved external suppliers. This practice is considered high risk because the University has no knowledge or oversight over these providers. We will continue to engage with departments about this issue in the coming year.

Key issues

Innovations in the last half of the 20th century brought about a huge increase in food production, which improved food security and reduced hunger for millions of people. However, the activities associated with producing, processing, trading, transporting, selling, consuming and disposing of food and drink within our globalised and energy-intensive food system also have numerous negative environmental and social impacts. These include deforestation, soil degradation, high greenhouse gas emissions, resource waste, worker exploitation, animal suffering and poor public health. There are now concerns as to whether our current methods of producing and consuming food are sustainable in the long term.

The major challenge for our food system going forward is to provide sufficient, safe, appropriate and nutritious food for all people, justly and fairly,



without compromising the ability of future generations to feed themselves. This briefing considers the many social responsibility and sustainability (srs) impacts of food supply chains, and considers how University food provision and procurement can contribute to this goal.

Climate change

The food system is responsible for between 19 - 29% of the human-caused greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change. Animal agriculture (**meat and dairy** farming) is the biggest source of emissions, primarily from the methane released by livestock, the inputs to produce feed and land use change (e.g. deforestation for grazing and growing feed).

Intensive crop production also emits significant greenhouse gases, from the energy used to manufacture synthetic fertilisers, soil management practices and, again, land use change. **Alcoholic drinks, bakery products, groceries, hot beverages, confectionary and fruits and vegetables** are therefore considered high risk.

Fossil fuels are used to manufacture, package, process, chill and transport foods through often long and complex supply chains. Storing **chilled and frozen foods** is energy intensive and estimated to be responsible for a third of hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) emissions (all University refrigeration equipment is disposed of in line with legislation). Energy is also consumed in manufacturing, transporting and running **vending equipment, catering equipment and beverage machines**.

It is important to recognise that there are often sustainability trade-offs in the food system. For example, intensive farming systems may be more carbon efficient but typically have lower standards of animal welfare. Products with fewer food miles may support the local economy but do not necessarily have a smaller carbon footprint than imported items.

Materials and hazardous materials

Hazardous materials & emissions: Water, air and soil pollution can arise at many points in the food system; including from livestock & fish farming, the application of fertilisers & pesticides and food processing. **All categories** are thought to be high risk.

Biosecurity: Bioaccumulation of toxins in the food chain, particularly in fish, is a concern. So are the health impacts of pesticides on farm workers as well as consumers.

Scarcity and security of supply: The food system crucially depends on and is the dominant global user of many scarce and non-renewable natural resources such as land, soil organic carbon, water, biodiversity, minerals and fossil fuels. Agricultural production is threatened by the unsustainable use of these resources, and by changing weather patterns and temperatures due to climate change. Political and economic factors also play a role in the availability of many products.

Agroecological methods, new technologies (e.g. drip irrigation, low till and precision agriculture) and new crop varieties have the potential to improve resource efficiency and make our food system more resilient to climate change.

Waste

A third of all food is lost or wasted globally. In the UK, consumers are responsible for approximately 40% of food waste. Upstream of consumers, food can be wasted for cosmetic reasons or from overproduction due to



demand uncertainty. Perishable items like **fruits & vegetables, bakery, fish & seafood, meat** and **dairy** are particularly high risk of being lost throughout the supply chain.

Front and back-of-house food waste is collected separately from University catering outlets and recycled through anaerobic digestion. Food waste arising outwith outlets is not currently recycled.

Packaging waste arises within **most categories**. Although the catering team recycles back-of-house, and products are bought in bulk to reduce waste, packaging and single-use catering items are still a significant source of waste within the University. Bottled water and coffee cups are a particular concern. Coffee cups are not currently recyclable.

Biodiversity

Agriculture is estimated to be responsible for 60% of global terrestrial biodiversity loss. The main driver is the conversion of forests and grasslands for livestock, animal feed production (e.g. soy) and commodities like cocoa, tea, coffee, sugar and palm oil.

Overfishing and practices like trawling and dredging harm marine biodiversity. Aquaculture can also negatively impact the environment by causing habitat loss (e.g. destroying mangroves for prawn farming), spreading disease and introducing invasive species. The University currently does not buy species from the MCS list of Fish to Avoid. There may be other ways to reduce **fish & seafood** supply chain risks by further improving our sourcing practices.

Crop genetic diversity itself is also a concern. 90% of global food energy and protein now comes from only 15 plant and 8 animal species. Our reliance on

so few species has consequences for food security (because more diversity enables species to adapt to disease and environmental change) and nutrition.

Water

Food production accounts for roughly 70% of the world's fresh water usage. Food processing also consumes significant amounts of water. This demand on the world's fresh water resources is unsustainable.

It is useful to think about the University's impact in terms of the amount of 'virtual water' embedded in the catering products we buy; this is the amount of water that was used to irrigate, process and package an item. The UK is currently the 6th largest net importer of virtual water for agriculture, consuming vast amounts of water in the form of meat, dairy, soya, oil seeds, rice, coffee and cocoa. To make matters worse, these are often produced in water scarce countries.

The University also uses, and potentially wastes, water during food preparation and cleaning.

Animal welfare

Animal welfare considerations in livestock and fish farming include the conditions in which animals are raised (e.g. stocking density and access to outdoor space), the use of hormones and antibiotics, the use of fast-growing breeds and slaughter methods. Standards vary greatly depending on the farming system used.

The UK's animal welfare legislation largely comes from the EU. The UK's minimum requirements are higher in some cases, but UK standards are not considered 'high welfare'. Red Tractor is an assurance scheme that certifies food which has been produced to certain standards of food safety, hygiene,



traceability and welfare. It reflects standard industry practice in the UK. Roughly two thirds of the meat bought by the University is Red Tractor certified,

Higher welfare farming schemes like RSPCA Assured and organic offer a number of welfare benefits relative to conventional farming. The University does not currently buy higher welfare meat, however all shelled and liquid eggs are free range.

Any categories that contain animal products, including **dairy, meat, bakery, groceries, fish & seafood, vending, confectionary** and **hot beverages** are potentially risky.

Communities and Employment, skills and training

Public sector food procurement is an opportunity to support the Scottish economy, deliver high quality employment and contribute to good health and environmental sustainability.

The University already endeavours to source from Scotland where possible (e.g. we have local supply of **beef, dairy, bakery, alcohol, confectionary**) and uses local maintenance for **catering and vending equipment**. Edinburgh First, the commercial arm of the Department for Accommodation, Catering and Events, is accredited by Visit Scotland's Taste our Best scheme which recognises a high level of local sourcing

We note the trend towards more consolidated and intensive farming can impact rural communities and the rural economy.

Health and wellbeing

The way food is produced, distributed, marketed, priced and consumed has a significant impact on health. Processed foods like **confectionary, bakery, soft drinks** and some **grocery** products are particularly high risk categories because these foods contain high amounts of sugar, salt, fat additives, preservatives, colourings and flavourings, which can negatively impact health. **Alcohol** consumption also effects the health of individuals and communities.

There are also concerns about pesticide residues, hormones in milk, the health impacts of processed meat and lack of oily fish in modern diets.

The University aims to provide balanced, nutritious options, with Healthy Living and Food for the Brain Awards in place across all outlets. Still, a 2015 survey found that the majority of University of Edinburgh students were not eating 5 portions of **fruit & veg** a day.

Security and crime

Complex global supply chains are vulnerable to fraud and crime. **Fish & seafood, grocery** and **meat** are thought to be particularly vulnerable.

While food fraud is usually considered to be for economic gain (e.g. product substitution or mislabelling country of origin), recent cases have also highlighted food safety concerns. Shorter supply chains may be a solution, as they are more transparent. Farm assurance labels and certifications (e.g. Red Tractor) can also enable traceability.

Within the University there a risk of theft from vending machines and outlets, and therefore a risk to surrounding staff/students.



Fairly and ethically traded

Exploitation and human rights abuses are known to exist in food and drink supply chains. A large proportion of modern slavery and 60% of child labour is found in agriculture, fishing and food processing.

Modern slavery has been identified in the supply chains of some of the world's biggest food companies and everyday commodities including cocoa, seafood, sugar, fruit & veg and coffee. Other problems include paying below the minimum wage, denying pay, unpaid overtime, unsafe working conditions and gender discrimination. **All categories** are considered high risk. The University has produced a Modern Slavery Statement and action plan.

Additionally, producers of crops like sugar and palm oil have been accused of violating the rights of indigenous communities through land grabs and planting without free prior and informed consent.

Fairtrade is one approach that ensures better prices, working conditions and terms of trade for farmers and workers. The University is committed to promoting fair trade wherever possible, we continue to expand our use of fairly traded products in catering.

Equality

There are likely to be equality rights issues in catering supply chains (e.g. gender discrimination, mentioned above). Further research is needed. There are also concerns with the rise of food poverty and health inequalities in Scotland.

Fair work

The porous and seasonal nature of the UK agricultural labour market makes it susceptible to illegal activity. Investigations have documented inhumane

practices in the UK food industry, including deception, non-payment or underpayment of wages, intimidation, debt bondage and poor living conditions. In 2013, 22% of the UK's potential forced labour victims referred to services came from the food industry, maritime or agricultural sectors. The victims were mainly migrants from Europe.

Although not illegal, food sector jobs are often low paid, insecure and / or employ workers on temporarily contracts that do not always include protections or benefits afforded to full time workers.

The University pays the living wage to all catering staff.