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Tantia University

Policy title	Policy on Ethical Sourcing
Effective date	08-01-2024
Next scheduled review	Three years after the effective date, or earlier if applicable rules change

The University is committed to procure all food and supplies in a responsible and sustainable manner that safeguards human rights, protects the environment, and supports local and global communities. Ethical sourcing means ensuring that products are obtained in ways that treat workers fairly and safely, minimise environmental harm, and consider social impacts across the supply chain.

This policy applies to all food and supplies procured using university funds or under the university's name, including dining halls, cafeterias, hostels, catering for events, vending, and associated materials such as packaging, cleaning products, and kitchen equipment. It covers purchases made directly by departments; central procurement, student residences, and any contracted vendors providing food or supplies on campus. All staff involved in procurement, as well as contracted service providers, are expected to adhere to the principles and commitments outlined in this.

Guiding Principles

The university's approach to ethical sourcing is founded on the following principles, drawn from international good practice in sustainable food purchasing.

- **Environmental sustainability:** Prioritise products and suppliers that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve resources, minimise waste, and protect ecosystems.
- **Social justice and human rights:** Work only with suppliers who provide safe working conditions, fair wages, and prohibit child labour, forced labour, and discrimination.
- **Animal welfare:** Prefer animal-derived products that are produced in line with credible welfare standards and avoid inhumanely produced meat, eggs, and seafood.
- **Local and small business support:** Favour local and regional producers and small enterprises where feasible to reduce transport emissions and strengthen local economies.
- **Transparency:** Encourage suppliers to disclose information on sourcing, certifications, and sustainability performance and include such criteria in procurement decisions.

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Commitments for Food

The university will progressively increase the proportion of food that is local, seasonal, plant-forward, and certified as ethical or sustainable. Key commitments include:

- Sourcing a significant share of staple foods (such as fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy) from local or regional producers where quality and affordability permit.
- Promoting plant-based and minimally processed options in menus to support health and lower environmental impacts.
- Prioritising certified products—such as organic, Fairtrade, or equivalent—for commodities with known social and environmental risks (coffee, tea, cocoa, sugar, etc.).
- Preferring sustainable seafood that avoids endangered species and follows recognised standards where available.

Dining services and catering vendors must demonstrate progress against these commitments through periodic reporting to the designated sustainability or IQAC office.

Commitments for Supplies and Packaging

For non-food supplies, including packaging and cleaning materials, the university will:

- Reduce single-use plastics and unnecessary packaging by favouring reusable, durable, recycled, biodegradable, or compostable alternatives.
- Prefer products with recognised environmental certifications or those produced using verified sustainable practices.
- Encourage suppliers to adopt circular-economy practices, such as recycling schemes, take-back programmes, and low-waste logistics.

Procurement specifications will reflect these priorities and be reviewed regularly to incorporate emerging best practices in sustainable materials.

Supplier Standards and Due Diligence

All suppliers and vendors engaged for food and supplies must meet minimum ethical and sustainability standards. The university will assess suppliers based on:

- Compliance with applicable labour, health, safety, food-safety, and environmental laws and regulations.
- Policies that explicitly forbid child labour, forced labour, and discrimination and promote fair treatment of workers.

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- Evidence of sustainability initiatives, such as environmental management systems, traceability, and relevant certifications.

Contracts will include clauses requiring adherence to this policy and may be reviewed or terminated if a supplier is found to be in serious or repeated breach.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Office of Sustainability:** Provides technical guidance, aligns indicators with SDG. Implement the policy in menu planning and supply ordering, engage indirectly with vendors (through purchase committee), and track food and material use and waste.

Students and staff are encouraged to support and provide feedback on ethical sourcing practices through existing governance and communication channels.

Implementation, Awareness, and Food-Waste Reduction

Procurement procedures will be updated so that ethical and sustainability criteria are incorporated at each stage—from need assessment to tender evaluation and contract management. The university will organise periodic training and awareness campaigns on sustainable diets, fair-trade principles, and responsible consumption for staff, students, and vendors.

Food-waste reduction is a core part of ethical sourcing. Dining units will right-size orders, monitor food waste, and, where permitted by law, donate suitable surplus food to recognised organisations or channel it to composting and other recovery options. Similar waste-reduction and recycling measures will be adopted for packaging and non-food materials.

Policy Review Cycle

This policy shall be reviewed at least once every three years or earlier when required by changes in University requirements, applicable regulations, professional guidance or identified campus need.

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