
Sustainable Procurement Leadership: Supplier Standards, Spend and Impact Training Course

26 – 30 October 2026
Cape town





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Programme Summary

Sustainable procurement leadership is the subject of this one-week training course for procurement directors, heads of sourcing and sustainability leaders at strategic level, ending in a sustainable procurement action plan for one spend category. Buying decisions fix most of an organisation's supplier-related environmental and social impact, yet policy and tender practice often diverge. The programme moves from policy and spend analysis to supplier standards, tender criteria and impact measurement. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on sustainable procurement leadership to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Procurement shapes cost, risk and reputation at once. A supplier with weak labour or emissions practice becomes the buyer's own exposure, and a policy that tenders do not test remains a statement of intent. Directors who connect spend data, supplier standards and measured outcomes can defend responsible sourcing choices to boards and investors, because each award shows the criteria applied and the result tracked.

- Supply Chain Risk: Falls as supplier standards are screened before award and monitored afterwards.
- Whole-Life Cost: Becomes visible as life-cycle costing replaces price-only comparison.
- Reporting Quality: Improves as supplier impact data follows a defined and auditable route.

Principles and Evidence Base

- ISO 20400 Sustainable Procurement Guidance: Frames policy, organisational enablers, process and supplier engagement, applied in Sessions 1, 3 and 4.
- Life-Cycle Costing Logic: Compares acquisition, use and disposal cost rather than price alone, applied in Session 3.
- Spend Analysis Logic: Ranks categories by value and exposure so effort goes where impact is greatest, applied in Session 2.
- Decent Work Principles in Supply Chains: Link buying decisions to labour conditions at suppliers, applied in Sessions 2 and 4.



Intended Participants

- Leaders who set procurement policy and approve category strategies.
- Heads of sourcing who award contracts and manage strategic suppliers.
- Sustainability leaders who set supplier expectations and report supply chain impact.
- Managers who own supplier risk, ethics or compliance reviews.
- Finance partners who test whole-life cost in sourcing decisions.

Typical settings include manufacturing, construction, healthcare and public bodies.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate a procurement policy against the ISO 20400 guidance and identify gaps.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose spend by category to rank sustainability exposure.
3. Participants will be able to construct tender criteria and weightings that test supplier sustainability alongside price and quality.
4. Participants will be able to justify an award using life-cycle costing evidence.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise suppliers for engagement, improvement plans or exit.
6. Participants will be able to construct indicators that report supplier impact to senior decision makers.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Sustainable Procurement Leadership: Policy and Governance

What must a procurement policy settle before category teams can act on it?

- ISO 20400 Policy Clauses Review
- Stakeholder Expectation Map
- Governance and Decision Rights Chart
- Policy Gap Assessment
- Supplier Code of Conduct Outline

Day 2: Spend Analysis and Supplier Exposure

Which categories and suppliers carry the greatest sustainability exposure?

- Spend Cube by Category and Region
- Exposure Scoring Matrix
- Decent Work Risk Screen
- Supplier Segmentation Grid
- Hotspot Prioritisation Table



Day 3: Tender Criteria and Whole-Life Cost

How can an award test sustainability fairly alongside price and quality?

- Specification Wording Review
- Weighted Award Criteria Model
- Life-Cycle Cost Worksheet
- Supplier Questionnaire Design
- Evaluation Moderation Record

Day 4: Supplier Engagement and Performance

What keeps suppliers improving after the contract is signed?

- Supplier Improvement Plan
- Contract Clause Library
- Scorecard and Review Cycle
- Audit and Evidence Protocol
- Escalation and Exit Criteria

Day 5: Sustainable Procurement Action Plan for One Category

Do the earlier tools form one plan that a board could approve?

- Applying the Session 2 Hotspot Prioritisation Table
- Testing the Session 3 Weighted Award Criteria Model
- Reviewing the Session 4 Supplier Improvement Plan
- Impact Indicator and Reporting Route Design
- Completing the Sustainable Procurement Action Plan

Methodology

The programme uses a structured exercise on one prepared category case with spend data, a draft policy, a supplier list and tender documents. Participants decide each step, record the reason in a common format and compare results in small groups before applying the same tools to a category from their own organisation.

- Suggested activity: Scoring a supplier list for exposure and ranking the hotspots.
- Suggested activity: Weighting tender criteria and testing them on two sample bids.
- Suggested activity: Drafting an improvement plan for a supplier that misses its standards.



Capstone Output

Each participant completes a sustainable procurement action plan for one spend category. It holds a policy gap list, an exposure ranking, tender criteria with weightings, a supplier improvement plan and a set of impact indicators. The plan is used at work to brief the leadership team and to guide the next sourcing round for the category.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is sustainable procurement training suitable for leaders new to sustainability topics?

Yes. Sustainable procurement is taught through a worked category case. The programme assumes procurement or sourcing experience at managerial level, but no earlier sustainability role or technical background.

Which references does sustainable procurement training rest on?

Sustainable procurement training rests on the ISO 20400 guidance, together with life-cycle costing logic, spend analysis logic and decent work principles in supply chains.

How is the action plan from sustainable procurement training used at work?

You use the sustainable procurement action plan to brief your leadership team, set tender criteria for the next sourcing round and track supplier improvement against agreed indicators.

How does sustainable procurement differ from supply chain risk training?

Sustainable procurement training centres on buying policy, tender criteria and supplier standards, while supply chain risk training centres on disruption, continuity and resilience planning.