Aquarium Conservation Partnership

Working together to increase our conservation impact

Sustainable Purchasing Guide

This guide was made possible through support from:

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Introduction

Purpose and Background

The Aquarium Conservation Partnership (ACP) is a coalition of U.S. aquariums committed to sustainable practices and working together to conserve our ocean and freshwater ecosystems. As trusted, science-backed institutions that welcome millions of visitors each year, aquariums are uniquely positioned to engage the public in conservation. ACP leverages the collective resources of member institutions to mobilize audiences, advocate for policy change, and advance conservation at the local, state, and national levels. Our vision is that: our ocean, lakes, rivers, and streams are healthy and resilient. They sustain diverse communities of people and wildlife. Ocean and freshwater resources are equitably distributed and those most impacted are centered in decision making. Together, we can advance both conservation and equity by aligning our purchasing decisions with this vision.

This guide provides tips and recommendations, resources, third-party certifications, and other considerations to support purchasers at your aquarium or zoo in making sustainable purchasing decisions.

It was developed by the ACP Sustainable Purchasing Work Group, with consulting support from the Verdis Group. It includes additional input from ACP members provided through a member survey and in-person workshop during the 2023 AZA Annual Conference and additional feedback from ACP Work Group co-chairs and ACP staff. It has been cross-referenced with the mandatory AZA Green Practices Survey.

This work has been made possible through support from SSA Group.

ACP's Sustainable Purchasing Vision

Sustainable purchasing is the process of integrating environmental and social goals into procurement, purchasing, and supply chains. Aquariums and zoos have unique, expansive, and diverse purchasing needs. Purchasing decisions are made across many departments and in multiple categories including retail, food and beverage, business and facilities operations, building materials, animal care and exhibits, and more. Leveraging our members' collective purchasing power will send a signal to suppliers that sustainable solutions are in high demand and can help move markets toward more sustainable and equitable value chains.

The Aquarium Conservation Partnership's sustainable procurement program aligns our members' purchasing policies and practices with our conservation goals to advance equity and environmental justice, combat climate change, reduce the sources of plastic pollution, protect ocean and freshwater ecosystems and wildlife, and improve the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture.

This program will leverage our collective resources to accelerate sustainable procurement processes across our institutions in order to increase our conservation impact and strengthen partnerships throughout our local communities.

How to Use This Guide

The ACP Sustainable Purchasing Guide is a reference to help our members make informed purchasing decisions that will advance ACP's conservation goals, support our joint sustainable business commitments, and help you reach your institution's internal sustainability goals.

This is a living document that will be continually updated to guide members to relevant resources. These documents and resources will be updated and modified to reflect new information and best practices. ACP will support our members to use this guide, and will provide opportunities for members to share best practices, identify and share resources that will help other members, create innovative solutions, or ask questions through regularly scheduled meetings and a monitored listserv. We will constantly monitor suggestions and use them to help in the continuous improvement and update of this guide. Please sign up for the **ACP Sustainable Procurement Listserv here**.

This guide is intended for any employee who makes purchases, is involved in purchasing decisions, or sets, measures, and tracks sustainability goals and priorities. It considers a holistic set of criteria across a product's lifecycle, from the materials it is made from, to shipping, use, and end-of-life disposal. It is broken down into different sections, asking you to consider the following questions when making purchasing decisions:

1. Do you need to purchase a new product(s)?
2. What is the product made out of?
3. What will happen to the purchase when you are done with it?
4. How are you getting the product(s) you are purchasing?
5. Who are you purchasing the product(s) from?

There are many ways to make sustainable purchases and many different factors that go into purchasing decisions, and it will look different for every organization. We hope this guide and the included resources and tools will support your institution to more explicitly build sustainable purchasing policies and procedures.

Steps to implement recommendations in the guide, make sustainable purchasing decisions, and/or develop a successful sustainable purchasing policy at your institution include:

- Sharing this guide with any staff at your institution who makes purchasing decisions.
- Using this guide alongside other resources available to ACP members, such as tools to help measure and track Scope 3 - procurement emissions to capture the full impact of your organization's purchasing decisions. Using this guide will help you assess the impact of your current purchases beyond greenhouse gas emissions and track additional sustainability metrics.
- Using ACP's conservation goals and resources in this toolkit to build your business case for developing a sustainable purchasing policy.
- Aligning on your internal sustainability goals and deciding which recommendations to adopt. These recommendations should be balanced with your policies and budgets to identify feasible strategies for improving purchasing. Organizations should consider budgets holistically - while some products may cost more, overall net savings may occur with the introduction of reusable products or reduction of overall consumption at the organization.
- Creating a sustainable purchasing policy that is clear and understandable so that everyone making purchase decisions in your institution knows their responsibilities.
- Sharing any changes to your purchasing practices with all affected parties, both internal and external, and including such changes in future proposal requests to ensure partners can comply with your new policies.

Benefits of Sustainable Purchasing

Environmental Benefits

- Reduces overall resource use
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change
- Reduces pollution and toxins that affect wildlife
- Reduces or prevents the creation of waste
- Preserves biodiversity and protects ecosystems
- Addresses the main source of ocean and freshwater plastic pollution

Financial Benefits

- Reduces cost through reduction and reuse of materials and products
- Enhances your organization's image and brand to its customers and other interested parties
- Builds institutional flexibility to maintain compliance with regulatory changes

Organizational Benefits

- Provides clear alignment with your mission and conservation programs
- Supports progress toward ACP goals
- Reduces business risk in the supply chain due to climate change or climate related regulation
- Improves supplier relationships and advances innovation
- Promotes employee engagement

Socio-economic Benefits

- Develops and strengthen the market for sustainable products
- Supports fair wages and working conditions, helping to advance human rights
- Promotes a strong local economy
- Supports suppliers providing community services in the areas in which they operate
- Strengthens employee health and safety
- Supports historically disadvantaged groups

ACP Sustainable Business Commitments

ACP member institutions “walk the talk” by jointly committing to and adopting sustainable practices in all aspects of our operations, including: minimizing single-use plastic to only where needed for health and safety, measuring and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, setting climate neutrality goals, and sourcing sustainable seafood. We strive to innovate by adaptively modeling sustainability and by encouraging other businesses to join us.

Purchasing decisions impact each of ACP’s joint sustainable business commitments in:

- Equity
- Climate Change
- Plastic Pollution
- Sustainable Seafood Feed for Animals

Equity Commitment

The need to solve the threats facing our blue planet has never been greater, and every person deserves access to healthy aquatic ecosystems and the services they provide. Yet, these resources are rarely equitably distributed, and the environmental movement and its institutions of power have a history of colonialism, racism, inequity, and exclusion – one that persists today. Indigenous, Black, and Brown communities have been violently displaced, enslaved, and disenfranchised which has intentionally left them out of aquarium and zoo conservation, research, and education efforts.

Anti-racist and inclusive practices benefit everyone by engaging the perspectives, talents, and creativity of the full diversity of humanity. This applies to all aspects of your institution, including making purchasing decisions.

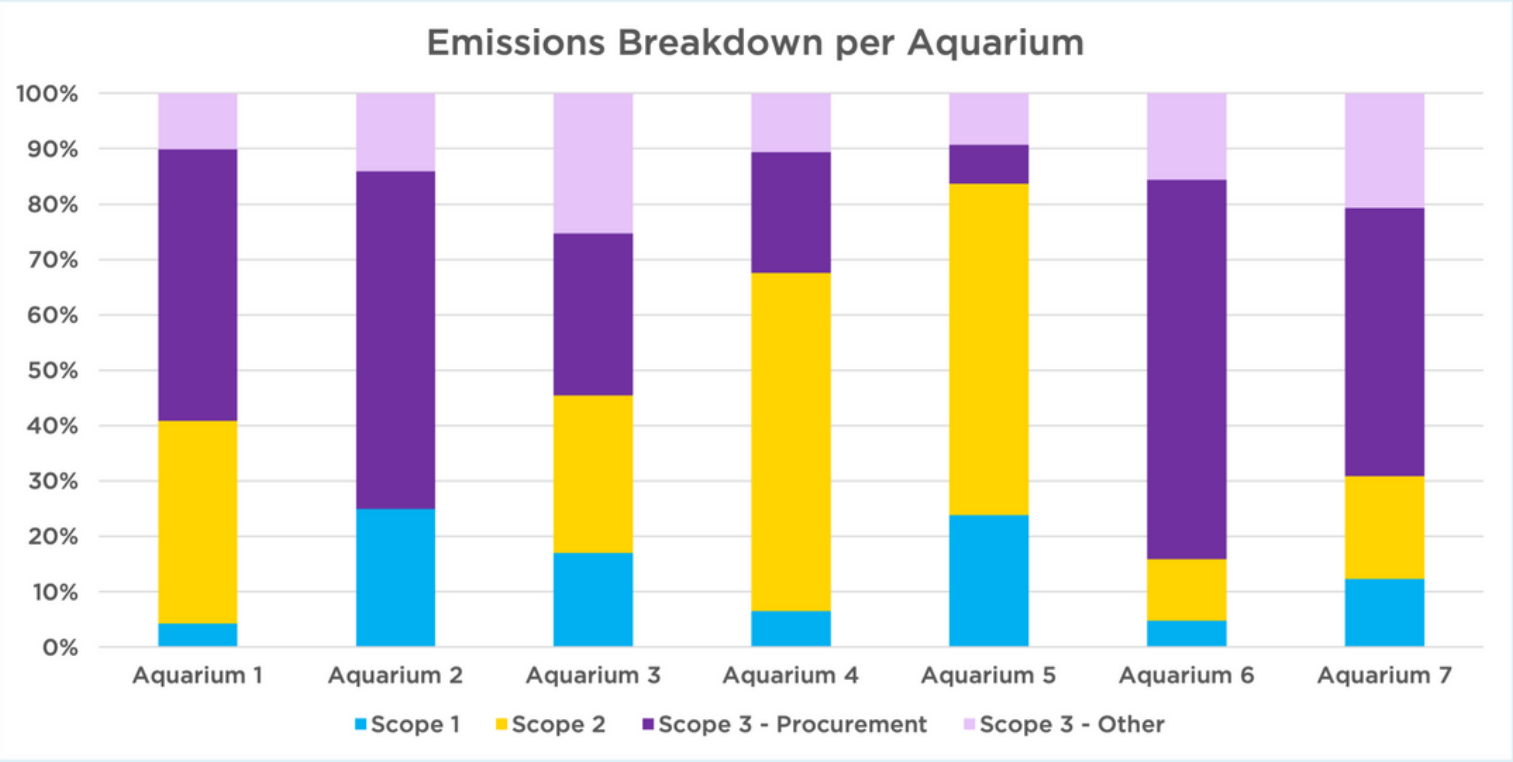
ACP is currently developing a new joint commitment to build a race equity culture which asks ACP members to center anti-racism, racial equity, inclusion, and belonging in our policies and procedures.

Actions to adopt this commitment will include ACP members completing an equity assessment and racial equity action plan. The ACP Equity Work Group will also provide a guidance document that will share practices to build and support a diverse workforce for aquariums and zoos and engage a diverse community. The guidance document will include how to address racial injustice through supplier diversity programs and promote an inclusive approach to procurement, which is described in detail in this guide. Adopting such programs will support the fifth promise for AZA's Strategic Plan to "advance diversity, equity, access, and inclusion practices in the profession and integrate these as values into our organizational cultures."

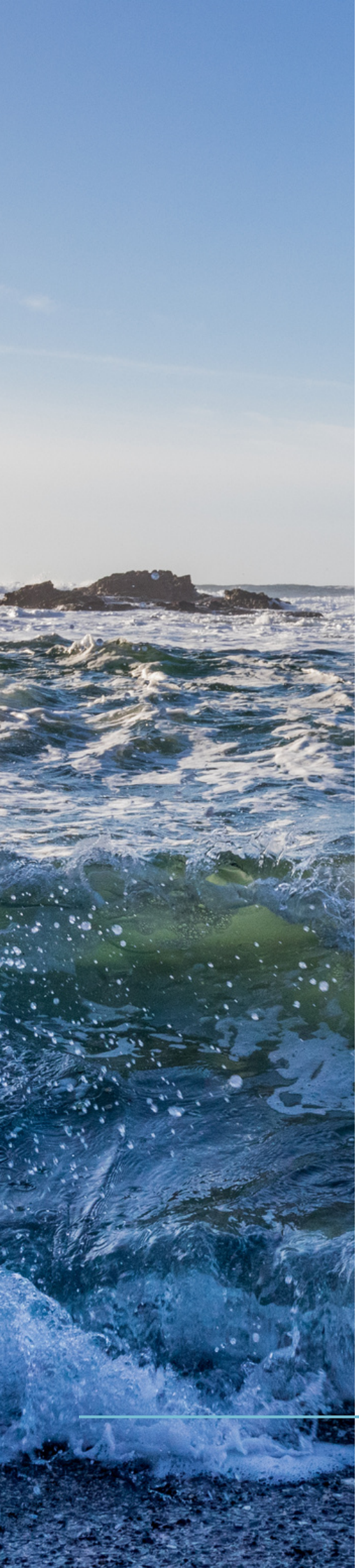
Climate Commitment

Climate change is the greatest threat to the future of our planet, of our ocean and freshwater systems, and of people - particularly Black,Indigenous, People of Color, and disenfranchised communities. For decades, the global ocean has been literally taking the heat for climate change, absorbing more than 90% of the excess heat and nearly a third of the carbon dioxide from greenhouse gas emissions. The result is an ocean that is warmer, more acidic, starved of oxygen, and less habitable for fish and marine wildlife. The impacts are equally as serious in freshwater ecosystems. These impacts affect us too — through sea level rise, more intense storms and droughts, and reduced seafood catches. Often the communities most impacted by climate change are those harmed from histories of racial and environmental inequities.

The adoption of sustainable purchasing practices presents a significant opportunity for ACP members to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and our collective contribution to climate change. According to ACP members' baseline greenhouse gas inventories that were completed in support of our joint climate commitment, procurement made up an average of 41% of total annual greenhouse gas emissions.



Purchased goods and services are one of the largest categories of Scope 3 emissions, the indirect emissions related to purchasing including business travel, waste disposal, commuting, food supply, and other purchased goods and services. While our members do not have direct control over other industries' emissions, we could collectively have indirect influence over these emissions by choosing how to conduct our business. We can request transparency around the impacts of purchases from vendors, which can motivate manufacturers to seek emissions reduction opportunities.



For the well-being of people and all life on Earth, we must take immediate and significant action to address the climate crisis. Working together, we can reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, slow the pace of climate change, and adapt to the impacts already in motion. Our aquariums and zoos play unique and powerful roles in promoting climate solutions. ACP members have shown true leadership in educating the public about conservation and climate change, adopting sustainable business practices, inspiring conservation behaviors, influencing change, and advocating for science-based policies in decision making.

With a long-term goal of achieving carbon neutrality, participating ACP members made the following joint commitments to combat climate change on April 22, 2023:

By April 2023, ACP members:

- Completed initial greenhouse gas inventories for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions.
- Determined the priority categories for Scope 3 emissions and determined a timeline for completing Scope 3 inventories.

By April 2024 or sooner, each ACP member will:

- Determine their carbon neutrality goal(s) and timeline(s).
- Develop an emissions reduction plan and determine a timeline for completing the plan.

Annually, members will:

- Measure and report greenhouse gas emissions.
- Identify, share, and implement strategies to (1) reduce greenhouse gas emissions from operations and (2) remove greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere.
- Support strong nature-based solutions in international, federal, and state climate policies
- greenhouse gas emissions.

Plastic Pollution Commitment

As plastic production continues to rise, so does the amount of plastic pollution in our ocean, rivers, lakes and streams. This plastic is impacting hundreds of species of wildlife and contaminating entire aquatic ecosystems, from the ocean surface to deep sea sediments to the waters of the Great Lakes. In addition to its impacts on ecosystems and wildlife, plastic is a climate issue, as a significant source of greenhouse gasses at every step of the production and disposal process, as well as a human health issue. These impacts affect systemically marginalized communities, particularly Black, Indigenous and other communities of color.

Since forming in 2016, ACP members have taken action to reduce single-use plastic in our operations, and have worked with regional businesses to do the same. We did this by collaborating with each other, and working closely with our vendors and suppliers to identify and source more sustainable products. These changes included offering products and packaging that are reusable or made of alternative sustainable materials, installing water refilling stations throughout our properties, and messaging to our visitors about the reason behind these changes.

In July 2017, ACP members made the following collective commitments:

1. Immediately eliminate single-use plastic bags and plastic straws.
2. Eliminate plastic beverage bottles by 2020.
3. Showcase innovative alternatives to single-use plastic.

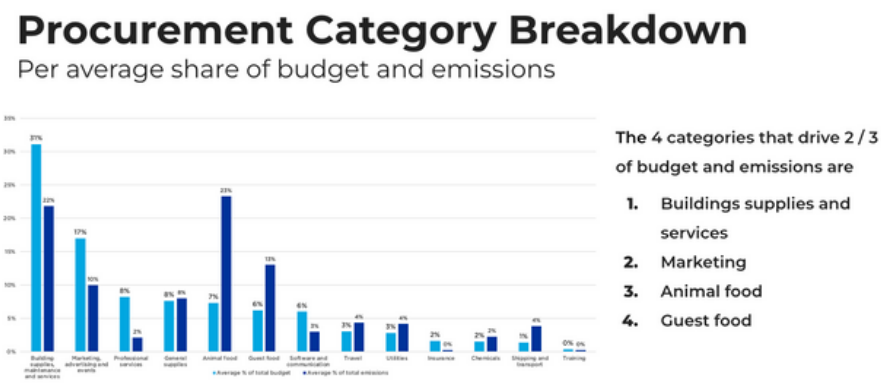
In April 2019, ACP members made the additional commitments:

1. Significantly reduce or eliminate single-use plastic packaging in retail products.
2. Dining area tableware (including plates, cups, lids, dishes and utensils) are single-use plastic free.
3. Reduce single-use plastic in back of house operations.

This guide will help members in meeting the commitments by recommending sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic and sharing new resources as they become available.

Sustainable Seafood Feed for Aquatic Animals in Aquarium Care

Animal feed is a key element of the sustainable purchasing journey for aquariums and zoos, as **animal feed represents 23% of reporting ACP members' greenhouse gas emissions associated with procurement.** Making sustainable purchasing decisions for animal feed involves a number of key factors including the environmental and social impact of the feed source, its nutritional value, as well as location-specific considerations



Seafood for aquatic animal feed faces even bigger sustainability considerations. Overfishing, lack of effective resource management, a changing climate, and humanity's consumption habits are just a few factors contributing to a decline in wild fish populations. Sustainable seafood, defined by Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program, comes from fisheries or aquaculture operations that minimize harmful environmental impacts, assure good and fair working conditions, and support livelihoods and economic benefits throughout the entire supply chain.

AZA-accredited institutions procure an estimated 17 million pounds of seafood a year for animal diets. Data from a 2020 survey indicates that over 50% by species and 22% by volume of seafood fed to the animals under human care is considered unrated in the US.

Aquariums and zoos represent a large purchaser of seafood with an opportunity to leverage our collective buying power to support sustainable fishing practices.

ACP, in collaboration with the AZA SAFE Sharks and Rays program, launched a sustainable seafood feed business commitment pilot program in 2023, led by a Sustainable Seafood Feed Work Group. The Work Group is partnering with the AZA Nutritional Advisory Group (NAG), suppliers, seafood vendors, retail, and catering partners to consider all the factors involved in seafood feed purchases including environmental sustainability, social responsibility, nutritional value, pricing, availability, and reliability. This guide will be updated as this work progresses.

General Purchasing Tips

When making purchasing decisions or developing standards of practice at your institution, we encourage you to choose products that minimize waste and negative impacts, and focus on sustainable end-of-life practices. Use the recommendations, tips, and decision trees in this guide to help you make the most sustainable purchasing choices for your institution.

✓ **Reduce unnecessary purchasing.** Aim to increase the useful lifetime of products by sharing, repairing, and repurposing, as well as by encouraging a circular economy (which eliminates end-of-life). Waste prevention is considered by the U.S. EPA to be the best waste management option for achieving climate goals. Use this decision tree to help.

✓ **Reduce the purchase of single-use items.** Single-use items are more likely to present a higher environmental impact over time compared with reusable items as they are constantly contributing to material extraction, manufacturing, and waste generation. Reusable and multiple-use products present a better solution to single-use items and should be prioritized when feasible. See the section on Preferred Alternatives for more.

✓ **Choose products made out of sustainable materials when possible**. Many times there are multiple material options when selecting an item to purchase. It can be challenging to identify the "best" or "most sustainable material". Before purchasing a new item, reference the What is the product made out of? section for guidance on how to select an appropriate alternative material.

✓ **Buy in bulk.** Prioritize coordination with other departments to purchase items you all use in bulk. Your institution may consider, for example, setting limits around ordering outside of group ordering windows to reduce the number of shipments and amount of unnecessary packaging. See the section on How are you getting the product(s) you are purchasing? for more information.

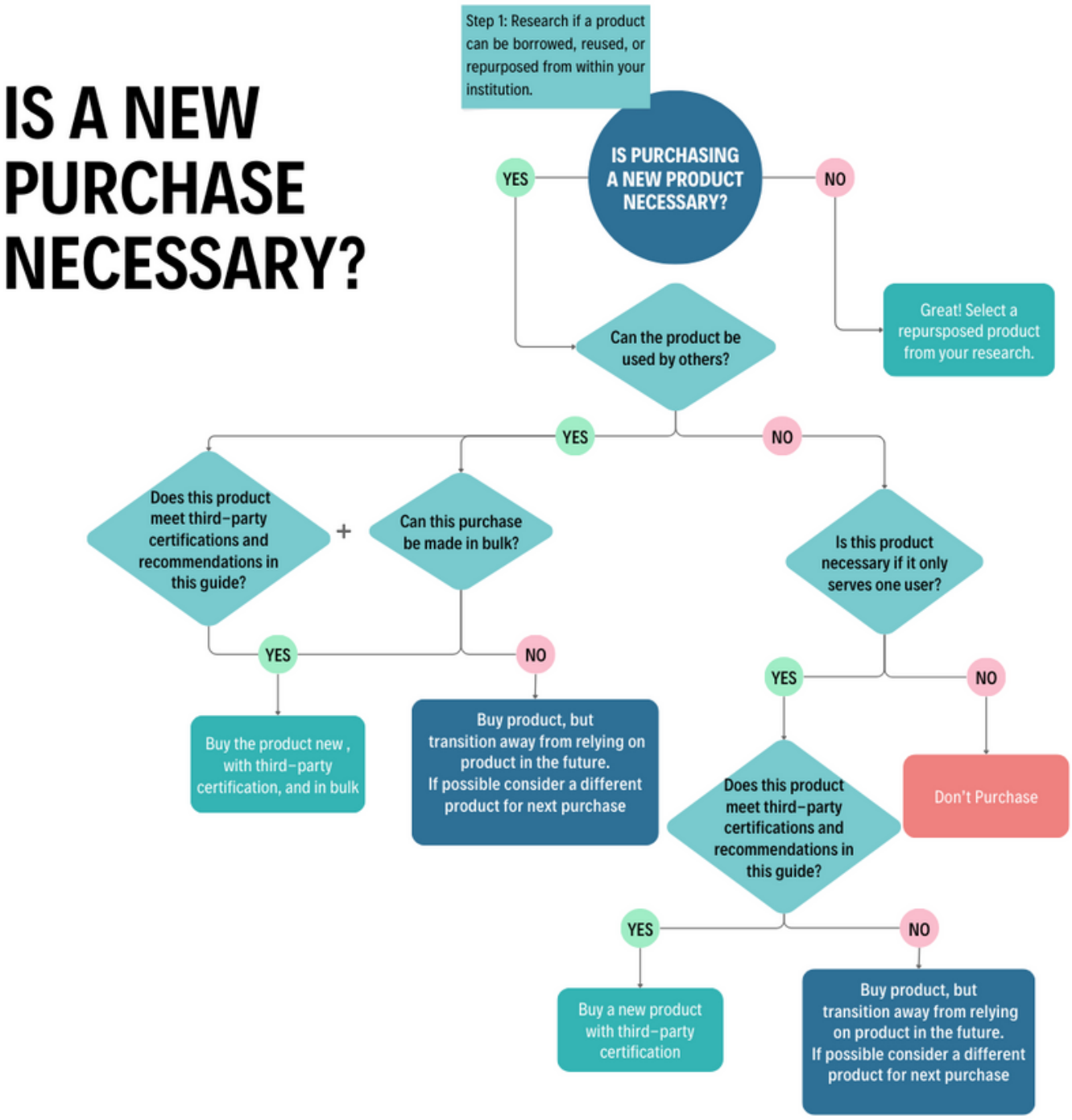
✓ **Use products more efficiently**. For high volume product purchases, like paper or food, see if there are opportunities to reduce their overall use, cost, and waste. See Appendix B: Resources and Tools for monitoring and tracking tools by category. For products that use resources such as energy or water, buy energy efficient ones that are third-party certified. See Appendix A: Third Party Certifications by Purchasing Category.

✓ **Give preference to diverse and sustainable suppliers.** "Sustainability" goes beyond environmental impact – diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice are essential components of sustainability. Your sustainability goals will only be achievable if your key suppliers understand their role in your sustainability journey. See the section Who are you purchasing the product(s) from? for more.

Questions to Guide Purchasing Decisions

Do you need to purchase a new product?

When possible, purchasing reused or refurbished items in good condition should be prioritized over purchasing new items to reduce the impact of acquiring the item. For example, can you share or borrow the product from another department instead of purchasing? **The most sustainable choice you can make is to not purchase something you don't need.**



What is the product made out of?

When selecting a product its durability, performance, and price typically play a role in your decision. When you want to minimize the impact of your product on the environment, an important step is purchasing a product based on what material it is made from.

Some sustainability criteria for material selection are applicable across many different products. Use the following guidance for purchases across multiple categories, and see Appendix A and Appendix B for resources for specific purchasing categories for aquariums and zoos.

Criteria you should consider when comparing materials based on sustainability factors include:

- What is the material's impact on the environment?
- Are there toxic materials that may impact environmental, animal, and/or human health?
- What does the material's end-of-life look like, and are there alternatives that have less impact?
- Are there third-party certifications for the material used? See Appendix A: Third-Party Certifications by Category
- Do you know the product's full life cycle, or cradle-to-cradle analysis?

TIP: Research a product's Life Cycle Analysis (LCA), which documents environmental impacts of a product during different lifecycle phases – from cradle (extraction), through manufacturing and consumption, to grave (disposal). While many individual manufacturers have not conducted LCAs, or publically published them if they have, it is likely that a similar product has a publically accessible LCA that can be helpful when trying to decide between different material types. The Greenhouse Gas Protocol provides an updated list of publicly available LCA databases that you and your team can explore. Other LCAs for specific materials can be found in Appendix B of this guide.

Material Considerations

When making a purchasing decision based on what a product is made of, review the descriptions of the different types of material and take into account their sustainability considerations on the following pages.

Type of Material	Description	Considerations
Biodegradable	"Biodegradable" refers to a material's end-of-life behavior, regardless of its component materials, which can include biological material, fossil fuels, or both. Biodegradability represents a material's ability to decompose upon its interactions with biological elements. It may disintegrate completely or partially, depending on its level of biodegradability, the microorganisms contacting it, and its environmental conditions.	The term biodegradable is not regulated and there is no official way for ensuring biodegradability in the U.S. Biodegradable products may contaminate compost and should be disposed of in trash collection destined for landfill.
Compostable	Compostable is used to describe a product that can disintegrate into non-toxic, natural elements. It also does so at a rate consistent with similar organic materials. Compostable products require microorganisms, humidity, and heat to yield a finished compost product (CO_2, water, inorganic compounds, and biomass). *Compostable plastic* is certified to break down under specific conditions, like those of an industrial composting facility - these items will not break down without the heat and pressure associated with commercial composting infrastructure, so when disposed of in landfills they persist and do not decompose.	Products labeled as compostable must be tested to meet US industrial composting standards. These standards require that compostable products biodegrade and disintegrate within 90 days and leave no harmful residue. Look for the third-party certification BPI Compostable for their natural ability to decompose under a specific time frame. Packaging that is labeled as compostable should be disposed of in a compost bin and processed in a commercial composting facility. Compostable plastics can lead to all of the same problems that non-compostable biodegradable plastics can, with the exception that in limited circumstances, certified compostable plastic bags can be useful for improving waste management systems.

Type of Material	Description	Considerations
Recyclable	Recyclable materials are those that can be made into new products to be reused with little to no waste. Plastics, glass, metal, paper, textiles, and organics – the six main categories of household waste – are all recyclable materials that, instead of getting discarded, can be remade into new products to be reused.	A recycling symbol on a product can have multiple meanings, but it does not necessarily mean that the product is recyclable in your recycling stream. Many states have specific regulations that require retailers to recycle certain materials. Your institution must comply with these regulations and develop recycling practices that meet the requirements of the states in which you do business. Checking with your local waste processing facilities to confirm their acceptance and processing of the material in question and request an annual notice on which materials are recyclable. There may be third-party programs that will capture items not accepted by municipal recyclers, though they may charge for their services.
Recycled	Products that are made up of materials that were once used in another product.	Recycled products are often made of mixed materials. They are therefore hard to recycle themselves because materials must be isolated to effectively process and reuse them.
Reuseable	Products that are durable and intended for multiple uses.	Reusable items may have increased upfront costs and some products may require specific infrastructure (e.g. dishwashing for reusable foodware in your dining operations). See Upstream's "Reuse Wins" report here for the business case on reusables.

Product End-of-Life

The end-of-life stage of a product begins when the used product is discarded by the consumer and ends when the product is returned to nature (e.g. incinerated) or allocated to another product's life cycle (e.g. recycled). When purchasing products, consider options for when they have fulfilled their original use. Can the product be:

- Repurposed, repaired, or refurbished to extend its use?
- Reused by another person or department at your aquarium or zoo?
- Returned to the vendor (toner cartridges, laptops, etc.)?

If not, then:

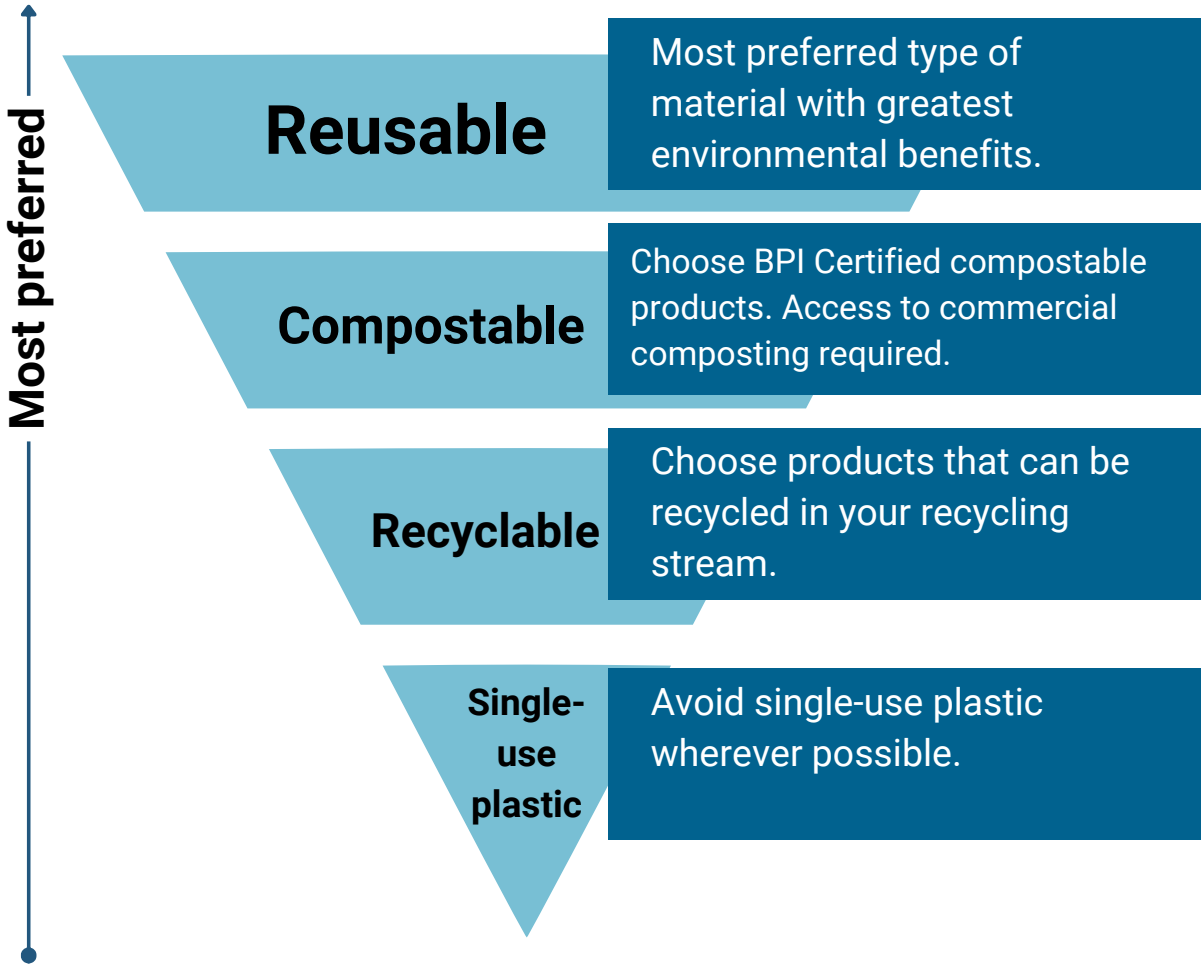
- How will the product be permanently disposed of?
- Can the material be composted or recycled, and do you have the structures in place to do so?

Use the table above and graphic below for guidance.

TIP: Make sure you have appropriate bins (compost, recycling, trash) and signage for the products you purchase. Further, ensure that your organization has the appropriate relationships/ contracts in place to have recycling hauled on-site, and not co-mingled with trash.

Preferred Alternatives

Based on the sustainability considerations described in this section, the graphic below outlines the most preferred alternatives to the least preferred ones.



Plastic Greenwashing

Materials and products that replace single-use plastic should be designed with a demonstrated end-of-life strategy that strives to retain resource value. “Greenwashing” is a marketing strategy where companies misleadingly promote their products as sustainable when they are not. It's important to distinguish greenwashed products from genuine, sustainable, eco-friendly alternatives.

Common greenwashing terms are defined below, with sustainability considerations. For more information, the Federal Trade Commission’s Green Guides are designed to help marketers avoid making environmental claims that mislead consumers.

Greenwashing Phrase	Description	Consideration
Bio-based plastics	Plastics that are partly or entirely made from biological feedstock such as sugar cane, corn, or potato starch. Most bio-based plastics also contain fossil fuel-based materials, which can in some cases make up as much as 75% of the product.	These blended materials, as well as purely bio-based polymers, are often chemically and functionally identical to conventional plastics, especially once they reach the marine environment.
Biodegradable plastics	Plastics that can, under certain environmental conditions, be broken down by microorganisms like bacteria and fungi into water, carbon dioxide, and naturally occurring minerals. All compostable plastics are biodegradable, but not all biodegradable plastics are compostable.	Substituting conventional plastics with biodegradable plastics would not help reduce plastic waste, and could even hamper current waste recovery efforts.
“Made of Fully Recyclable Plastic”	This is a marketing claim a company may make - however “recyclable” does not mean it will be recycled.	Less than 9% of all plastics ever made have been recycled. Even when it is melted down for reuse, plastic is not truly recycled like other materials. A more apt term is “downcycled,” as recycled plastics are mixed with new plastics and toxic chemicals to produce other items. Although recycling will likely always be a component of the strategy to manage plastic waste, today’s U.S. recycling processes and infrastructure are grossly insufficient to manage the diversity, complexity and quantity of plastic waste.
“Made of Ocean-Bound Plastic”	A commonly used phrase by companies selling products made of plastic that *could be* discarded in coastal environments in proximity to oceans and also lakes, rivers, and streams.	While this label may give the impression that a product is helping divert plastics from waterways, it has no actual weight. In reality, most plastics end up in landfills and the environment, including in oceans and other waters.

How are you getting the products you are purchasing?

Reducing the environmental impact of shipping involves minimizing the amount of materials used for packaging and reducing the emissions produced from the distribution and transportation of the product.

TIP: Engage with suppliers to identify opportunities to reduce the impact of delivering your purchase. It is likely some suppliers already have existing programs, while others may require some collaboration and coordination to set up programs that reduce the impact of transportation, shipping, and distribution.

Packaging

To reduce packaging, and therefore waste, consider requiring at least one of the criteria listed below be used when you select a supplier to transport, ship, or distribute your purchase:

- ✓ **Bulk packaging vs. 🛑 Individually wrapped**
- ✓ **Reusable packaging (e.g., totes reused by delivery service for next delivery)**
- ✓ **Innovative packaging that reduces the weight of packaging, reduces packaging waste, eliminates plastic materials, or utilizes packaging that is a component of the product**
- ✓ **Uses locally recyclable or certified compostable material**

Transportation, Shipping, and Distribution

Where a product comes from, how it is sent to you, and how often it is ordered impacts its sustainability. When making purchasing decisions, consider the frequency of orders and the location of purchase origin.

- Can the product(s) be ordered in bulk, or can the order be combined with other items from the same supplier to reduce the impact of shipping?
- Do you need the item quickly, or can it wait until the department or office puts in a bulk order with the supplier?

TIP: When possible, your institution should limit the number of transactions with a supplier to both reduce the amount of packaging materials used to ship the purchases and the number of delivery trips that are made. Consider a policy that sets limits around ordering outside of group ordering windows to reduce the number of shipments.

"Supporting local" is the practice of purchasing from businesses that are locally owned and operated (within 100 miles). Supporting local businesses helps curtail transportation charges and the carbon footprint of transporting products across vast areas. Additionally, local sourcing helps increase local jobs, boost the regional economy, and strengthens relationships in the community. When possible, make your purchase from a local supplier to reduce the impact of shipping. See the section on Who are you purchasing the product(s) from? on more considerations for buying from local businesses.

Who are you purchasing the product(s) from?

There are many factors to consider when selecting a supplier, including price point, reliability, and customer service. In addition to these conventional factors, there are sustainability factors that you should consider. This section provides details and recommendations for the following considerations:

1. Supplier Diversity
2. Local Businesses
3. Fair Labor Practices
4. Sustainable Business Practices

It is unlikely that any supplier will excel in every factor. We recommend that you carefully weigh all options and select suppliers that align with your organization's sustainability goals and ACP's commitments and priorities.

TIP: Include the criteria you want suppliers to meet (described in the following sections) in your Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and Requests for Information. Ask respondents to provide any information including policies or practices they have. Example RFPs and contract language can be found in Appendix D, and a Supplier Survey in Appendix E.

Supplier Diversity

"Sustainability" goes beyond environmental impact – diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice are essential components of sustainability. To align with ACP's commitment to equity and environmental justice, members are encouraged to prioritize supplier diversity.

Supplier diversity is an inclusive approach in procurement that encourages the use of suppliers from a range of different backgrounds, including small businesses, minority-owned, women-led, and other historically underrepresented groups.

It extends beyond simply meeting quotas or checking boxes; it's about opening doors to innovative ideas, diverse perspectives, and new market opportunities.

We recommend that members develop a supplier diversity policy including:

- Assessing how new vendor opportunities, including RFPs and RFIs, are shared and approved so that they reduce barriers for diverse suppliers to participate successfully.
- Enabling certified diverse vendors to gain access to procurement opportunities at your aquarium or zoo.

See the ACP Equity Commitment Guidance Document for more information (coming soon).

A **certified diverse supplier** is a vendor that can demonstrate that their business is at least 51% owned, operated, and managed by a diverse person or group of members by presenting a certificate issued by an independent certifying government agency, quasi-government or non-governmental-organization (NGO). Many states also have their own certification for minority-owned and women-owned businesses.

Examples (with links) include:

Certified Diverse Supplier Program	Description
MBE Certification	Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) certification requires that businesses are at least 51% owned, managed, and controlled by qualified minority group members (at least 25% Asian-Indian, Asian-Pacific, Black, Hispanic, or Native American).
Minority Controlled Company (MCC) and Minority Publicly Controlled Company (MPC)	Newer certification that applies to minority-owned companies that have taken on investment capital to grow their business, and as a result may no longer meet the stringent ownership guidelines of MBE certification.
WBENC Certification	Certification for businesses that are fifty-one percent (51%) owned, operated, managed, and controlled by an LGBTQ person or persons who are either U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents.
Certified LGBTBE®	Certification for businesses that are fifty-one percent (51%) owned, operated, managed, and controlled by an LGBTQ person or persons who are either U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents.
Small Business Certification	The U.S. Small Business Association (SBA) provides specific qualifications and registration forms. Generally, unless your business involves commercial farming, if you have fewer than 100 employees, and if total income plus your cost of goods sold is less than $7.5 million, then you would qualify as a Small Business.
Veteran Small Business Certification (VetCert)	Certified small business for at least 51% Veteran ownership.

Local Businesses

As described in a previous section, supporting local businesses has many benefits including reducing greenhouse gas emissions from purchasing. It should not be done, however, at the expense of other sustainability factors. For example, it is not sustainable to purchase a locally manufactured product if that product is more toxic than its non-local competitors.

TIP: Ask for the headquarters address of potential suppliers and what, if any, local presence they have in your area of operation in Request for Proposals (RFPs) or Request for Information (RFI). Some online platforms, including Amazon, allow you to filter listings by local suppliers, making it easier to select product options with a lower transportation impact.

Fair Labor Practices

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on fair labor practices as more and more companies outsource their labor to countries with lower wages and fewer worker protections. This criteria includes businesses that uphold the dignity of workers, ensure they are working under safe conditions, provide them with a livable wage, and protect their rights.

Factors to consider include:

✓ **Age Verification**. Does the business have standards and verification mechanisms to ensure that child labor is excluded from their operations?

✓ **Living Wage**. Do employees earn enough to support themselves and their family based on regional calculations? Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) provides a free, publicly accessible living wage calculator for the United States.

✓ **Forced Labor.** Does the business do its due diligence for the potential of forced labor in countries where their products and raw materials are sourced? The Responsible Sourcing Tool can help you understand, identify, prevent, and address the risks and harms to workers through forced labor.

Sustainable Business Practices

Your sustainability goals will only be achievable if your key suppliers understand their role in your sustainability journey. This ideally means that their goals are aligned with your sustainability goals and conservation priorities. To do this, select suppliers whose sustainable commitments match your own, or work to establish collaborative processes with suppliers to get there.

Criteria to consider include whether the supplier:

- Tracks and reports on their greenhouse gas emissions?
- Sets sustainability goals, has a sustainability plan publically available, and/or uses third-party reporting?
- Is able to respond on how they can help you to meet your sustainability goals including areas of innovation?
- Supports workforce development?

Steps for selecting sustainable suppliers from Sievo. See Appendix E for a Supplier Survey.

TIP: Purchasing teams are encouraged to build strong, collaborative relationships with your high-impact vendors. See Appendix E for a supplier survey for ACP members to assess your vendors' existing sustainability practices. This survey should be used by Your purchasing and sustainability teams should use this survey to (1) build relationships with your vendors over time and (2) identify potential solutions that advance both party's sustainability goals.

Appendix A: Third-Party Certifications by Category

This Appendix includes a list of reputable third-party certifications for product categories with the highest spending and greenhouse gas emissions for ACP members. This list will continue to be updated and expanded.

Aquatic Animal Feed

- Seafood Watch - certification to recognize responsible seafood production.
- FishChoice -platform designed to help companies find seafood products that meet their sustainability needs.
- Marine Stewardship Council - certification for seafood products that indicates a product is certified sustainable, wild-caught, and traceable to a sustainable source.

Construction

- LEED - green building rating system for healthy, highly efficient, cost-saving buildings.
- Living Building Challenge - building rating system based on actual performance that address 7 performance areas: place, water, energy, health + happiness, materials, equity, beauty.
- Well Certified - performance-based system for measuring, certifying, and monitoring features of the built environment that impact human health and well-being, through air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort, and mind.
- Energy Star - building rating system based on performance standards set by the EPA that benchmarks energy use against other similar buildings.
- Passive House - standard for energy efficient construction that requires very little energy to maintain comfortable temperatures year-round.
- Green Seal - certified green products are proven to meet rigorous human and environmental health criteria.

Custodial

- ECOLOGO-See Paper certifications
- EPA's Design for the Environment (DfE) - a certification for antimicrobial products that meet the health and safety standards of the pesticide registration process required by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as well as other rigorous criteria required by the agency.
- EPA Safer Choice- Certified Products- a voluntary certification program that reviews product ingredients to ensure performance, pH, packaging and more are safer for you and your family.
- Green Seal Certified- a certification program that aims to protect human health and the environment by accelerating the adoption of products that are safer and more sustainable.

Appendix A: Third-Party Certifications by Category

Electronics

- Energy Star - products that meet energy efficiency standards set by the EPA.
- EPEAT - eco-label for electronics based on the life cycle of electronics.
- TCO Certified - sustainability certification for IT products that uses eight criteria areas: product and sustainability information, socially responsible manufacturing, environmentally responsible manufacturing, user health and safety, product performance, product lifetime extension, reduction of hazardous substances, and material recovery.
- R2 - standard for managing used electronics responsibly and sustainably.

Food Service Ware

- Biodegradable Product Institute - certification indicating compostability of a product.
  - **Disclaimer:** Biodegradable and compostable plastics should not be part of your organization's solution to plastics, see the Better Alternatives 3.0 case study for context.
- GreenScreen Certified - certification indicating free of PFAs and other concerning chemicals.

Guest Food and Catering/Special Events

- Fair Trade - certification with rigorous social, environmental, and economic standards, ensuring safe working conditions, environmental protection, sustainable livelihoods, and community development funds.
- Certified Organic (USDA) - certification ensuring that products meet USDA organic regulations.
- American Grassfed Association - standard for ruminant, pastured swine, and dairy concentrating on 4 main areas of production, including: 100% grass diet, pasture-raised, no antibiotics or hormones, and animals are born and raised on American family farms.
- Food Alliance - comprehensive sustainability standards and criteria for a wide range of agricultural products, including: fruits, vegetables, grains, livestock, eggs, dairy, shellfish, mushrooms, grains, legumes, horticultural products, and prepared food products made with Food Alliance certified ingredients.
- Humane Farm Animal Care - certification for food products that come from operations meeting precise, objective standards for farm treatment.
- Rainforest Alliance - standard that supports social, economic, and environmental pillars by focusing on forests, climate, human rights, and livelihoods of rural communities.
- Smithsonian Bird Friendly®- the environmental gold standard in sustainable coffee and cocoa production, preserving critical habitat for birds and wildlife, fighting climate change, protecting biodiversity, and supporting farmers committed to farming sustainably.
- Seafood Watch - certification to recognize responsible seafood production.

Appendix A: Third-Party Certifications by Category

Retail

- Rainforest Alliance - standard that supports social, economic, and environmental pillars by focusing on forests, climate, human rights, and livelihoods of rural communities.
- Fair Trade - certification with rigorous social, environmental, and economic standards, ensuring safe working conditions, environmental protection, sustainable livelihoods, and community development funds.
- Better Cotton Initiative - system designed to ensure the exchange of good practices, and to encourage the scaling up of collective action to establish Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity.
- Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) - processing standard for organic fibers, including ecological and social criteria, backed up by independent certification of the entire supply chain. Products may include fiber products, yarns, fabrics, clothes, home textiles, mattresses, personal hygiene products, as well as food contact textiles.
- Oeko-Tex - a set of standards that allow buyers to make responsible decisions and protect natural resources.
- Forest Stewardship Council - verifies that forests are managed to be environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable.
- Green Seal - certified green products are proven to meet rigorous human and environmental health criteria.
- UL ECOLOGO - voluntary, multi-attribute, life cycle-based environmental certifications that indicate a product has undergone rigorous scientific testing and exhaustive auditing to prove its compliance with stringent, third-party environmental standards on: materials, energy, manufacturing and operations, health and environment, product performance and use, and product stewardship and innovation.
- Biodegradable Product Institute - certification indicating compostability of a product.
    - **Disclaimer:** Biodegradable and compostable plastics should not be a part of the solution to plastics, see the Better Alternatives 3.0 case study for context
- GreenScreen Certified - certification indicating free of PFAs and other concerning chemicals.
- Cradle to Cradle - multi-attribute standard used globally across industries by designers, brands and manufacturers for designing and making products that enable a healthy, equitable and sustainable future.

Appendix A: Third-Party Certifications by Category

Paper

- Forest Stewardship Council - verifies that forests are managed to be environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable.
- Green Seal - certified green products are proven to meet rigorous human and environmental health criteria.
- UL ECOLOGO - voluntary, multi-attribute, life cycle-based environmental certifications that indicate a product has undergone rigorous scientific testing and exhaustive auditing to prove its compliance with stringent, third-party environmental standards on: materials, energy, manufacturing and operations, health and environment, product performance and use, and product stewardship and innovation.

Plastic

- Better Alternatives 3.0 - A case study on bioplastic products and packaging by 5Gyres.

Uniforms

- Fair Trade - Certification with rigorous social, environmental, and economic standards, ensuring safe working conditions, environmental protection, sustainable livelihoods, and community development funds.
- Better Cotton Initiative - system designed to ensure the exchange of good practices, and to encourage the scaling up of collective action to establish Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity.
- Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) - processing standard for organic fibers, including ecological and social criteria, backed up by independent certification of the entire supply chain. Products may include fiber products, yarns, fabrics, clothes, home textiles, mattresses, personal hygiene products, as well as food contact textiles.
- Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production - certification that ensures continuous improvement in 12 principle areas based on generally accepted international workplace standards, local laws, and workplace regulations.
- Oeko-Tex - a set of standards that allow buyers to make responsible decisions and protect natural resources.

Vendors

- B Corp - designation that a business is meeting high standards of verified performance, accountability, and transparency on factors from employee benefits and charitable giving to supply chain practices and input materials.

Appendix B: Resources and Tools

This Appendix includes a list of other resources and tools that ACP members may find valuable when making purchasing decisions. We invite ACP members to update this list with resources that you have created or used.

Construction

- Embodied Carbon Calculator - benchmark construction materials
- EPD Library - database of RPDs for product/material comparisons
- Sustainable Exhibit Design Toolkit- use to define and improve sustainability of exhibits
- STiCH Carbon Calculator - identify carbon footprint of materials commonly used in exhibit construction

Electronics

- EPA TCO Calculator - compare costs for Life Cycle management of IT equipment
- Computer Power Management Savings Calculator - estimate cost and emissions savings from Energy Star

Food Service Ware

- Understanding Packaging Scorecard - assess the impacts of foodware and packaging

Guest Food

- Fats, Oils, Grease Management - checklist
- Commodity Atlas - learn about forced labor practices to commodities
- Lean Path - program to reduce food waste
- Winnow - program to reduce food waste
- WRI Coolfood - reduce food impact
- CareIt - identify locations to donate food in your community

Plastic

- Better Alternatives 3.0 - report by 5Gyres that provides transparency around these plastic alternatives, their real-world behavior in the environment, and considerations that should be made before the widespread adoption of bioplastics in all sectors of society.

Paper

- Canopy Ecopaper Database - identify sustainable choices for paper products.
- Paper Calculator - estimate the environmental impacts of paper choices.

Other Resources

- State Specific Mandates - institutions should keep tabs on and align with any state mandates that are applicable to their purchasing choices.
- AZA - Green Guide - overarching resource published by AZA in 2013 that provides additional information about purchasing. A new version of the Green Guides is coming in 2024.
- Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council - global community of purchasers, suppliers, advocates, and experts committed to driving positive impact through the power of procurement.
- Retail Green Lease Primer - developed by the Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA), this primer provides an overview of what teams should consider when negotiating a new or modifying an existing lease agreement to improve the environmental sustainability of a the property and align with organizations sustainability goals."

Appendix C: Glossary

Circular Economy

A circular economy is “an industrial system that is regenerative by design. It replaces the end-of-life concept with restoration, shifts towards renewable energy use, eliminates toxic chemical use, and aims for waste elimination through superior design of materials, products, systems, and business models.” (World Economic Forum Report)

Greenwashing

Greenwashing is the act of making false or misleading statements about the environmental benefits of a product or practice. It can be a way for companies to continue or expand their polluting as well as related harmful behaviors, all while gaming the system or profiting off well-intentioned, sustainably minded consumers. (National Resource Defense Council)

Recycled-Content

The product was manufactured with recycled materials either collected from a recycling program or from waste recovered during the normal manufacturing process. (U.S. EPA)

Recyclable

Products that can be collected, processed and manufactured into new products after they have been used. These products do not necessarily contain recycled materials. (U.S. EPA)

Life Cycle Analysis

A life cycle assessment (LCA) is a systematic gate-to-gate, cradle-to-gate, and cradle-to-grave process that evaluates the environmental impacts of products, processes, and services. (National Renewable Energy Laboratory)

Living Wage

The remuneration received for a standard workweek by a worker in a particular place sufficient to afford a decent standard of living for the worker and her or his family. Elements of a decent standard of living include food, water, housing, education, health care, transportation, clothing, and other essential needs including provision for unexpected events. (Global Living Wage Coalition)

Compostable

Materials that have been certified to break down completely into non-toxic components (water, carbon dioxide, and biomass) that will not harm the environment, given the right conditions. Products that meet compostability standards should be marketed as “compostable.” (BPI)

Biodegradable

“Biodegradation” is the term used to describe the process of microorganisms consuming organic carbon in a material, and it is the name of an important test criteria in the ASTM compostability standard specifications. It is not technically incorrect to refer to certified compostable products as “biodegradable”.“Biodegradable” is not an appropriate marketing term or claim for describing end of life behavior because it lacks specificity on timeframe and environment. More importantly, the term is often used to describe non-compostable products intentionally made to look similar to certified compostable products. (BPI)

Appendix C: Glossary

Cradle-to-Cradle analysis
Cradle to Cradle is a term used in Life Cycle Analysis that strives to be essentially waste-free. All materials used are designated as either technical nutrients, which are non-toxic synthetic materials that are reused in continuous cycles, and biological nutrients, which can be disposed of into natural environments to decompose into the soil. (U.S. EPA)

Local Business
Businesses that are locally owned and operated (within 100 miles).

Environmental Justice
The just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability, in agency decision-making and other Federal activities that affect human health and the environment so that people are fully protected from disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental effects (including risks) and hazards, including those related to climate change, the cumulative impacts of environmental and other burdens, and the legacy of racism or other structural or systemic barriers; and have equitable access to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment in which to live, play, work, learn, grow, worship, and engage in cultural and subsistence practices. (U.S. EPA)

Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE)
A framework that focuses the collective expertise within AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums and leverages their massive audiences to save species. (AZA SAFE)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Gasses that trap heat in the atmosphere, primarily caused by the burning of fossil fuels.

Fossil Fuels
Fuels found in the Earth's crust that contain carbon and hydrogen, which can be burned for energy, such as coal, oil, and natural gas.

- **Scope 1 Emissions** - direct emissions that are owned or controlled by a company, such as gasoline-powered fleet vehicles or onsite burning of fossil fuels.
- **Scope 2 Emissions** - emissions that a company causes indirectly, such as through the use of electricity.
- **Scope 3 Emissions** - emissions that are not produced by the company itself and are not the result of activities from assets owned or controlled by them, but by those that it's indirectly responsible for up and down its value chain, including purchasing, employee commuting, leased assets, etc.

Sustainable Purchasing
Sustainable purchasing is the process of integrating environmental and social goals into procurement, purchasing, and supply chains.

IUU Fishing
Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing activities violate both national and international fishing regulations. IUU fishing is a global problem that threatens ocean ecosystems and sustainable fisheries. It also threatens our economic security and the natural resources that are critical to global food security, and it puts law-abiding fishermen and seafood producers in the United States and abroad at a disadvantage. (NOAA Fisheries)

Appendix D: Sample Request for Proposal (RFP) and Contract Language

This section provides example language that you can include in Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and/or contracts to support your sustainable purchasing goals. When drafting the terms of an RFP or contract, consider the following:

- Your conservation priorities and sustainability goals.
- Local and state regulatory requirements.
- Document requirements for certifications (i.e. minority-owned businesses).
- How the RFPs are distributed to increase visibility to local and/or small businesses.

Example RFP Language

ACP Priorities Alignment Example Language

As a member of the Aquarium Conservation Partnership (ACP), we are committed to safeguarding ocean and freshwater ecosystems and wildlife and sustainable business practices. Our commitment to conservation shows up within joint business commitments, including:

[Insert business commitments your institution has joined with ACP]

The *[organization]* expects proposers to partner with us in achieving these goals. Briefly describe how you are already aligned with the shared ACP goals, and how that will apply to our partnership moving forward.

Organization Sustainability Goals Alignment Example Language

[*Organization]* has committed sustainability goals for [year] that align with our institution's mission [mission]. Our institution's sustainability goals are:

List goals here

The *[organization]* requires proposers to partner with us in achieving these goals. Briefly describe how you are already aligned with each of our sustainability goals, and how that will apply to our partnership moving forward.

Example RFP Language continued

Optional Project/Goal Specific Questions

Project Specific Questions
Your institution may wish to ask specific questions relating to the RFP in question. For example, an RFP for a new building may include additional questions about sustainable building certifications, reference recent local projects, and/or qualifications of the team being proposed for the project.

Optional- Goal Specific Questions
You may choose to include specific questions related to any organizational sustainability goals that directly impact or are impacted by the proposed service or product. For example, if your institution has a waste diversion goal and is requesting proposals for a new food service provider, you may include specific questions around existing waste diversion practices with other partners, innovative practices they have employed, and/or waste data at similarly sized operations.

Product Specific Questions
You may consider asking suppliers to provide Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) to obtain specific information relating to occupational safety and health for specific substances or products.

Supplier Survey Questions
You may consider including questions from the ACP supplier survey in the RFP in order to ascertain additional information from proposers that are specific to the project and/or your institution's sustainability goals.

Example Contract Language

As applicable, *[the vendor]* is required to comply and when possible exceed with *[organization]*'s sustainability goals and policies to the maximum extent possible without jeopardizing the intended overall quality and intended end result delivered to the *[organization]*. This includes, but is not limited to *[list existing sustainability goals and policies]*.

If and when updates are made to the above listed goals and policies, the *[organization]* will inform *[the vendor]* and negotiate an appropriate timeline for compliance if changes are required of *[the vendor]*. If the changes present a prolonged negative impact on *[the vendor]*'s profitability the *[organization]* may consider amendments to vendor compensation.

[The vendor] is expected to produce summarized reports documenting their compliance with *[organization]*'s *[sustainability goals and policies] [quarterly, bi-annually, or annually]*. Data for these reports should highlight the current *[quarterly, bi-annually, or annually]* data and when possible previous *[quarterly, bi-annually, or annually]* data. The report shall include a brief explanation of the methodology used to calculate the data values, highlight changes that were made or external factors that may have influenced the *[vendor]*'s performance, and plans, if any, for the future that are expected to influence the *[vendor]*'s performance.

Appendix E: Supplier Survey

About the Supplier Survey

The purpose of this survey is for you to collect data from on your top suppliers (volume and/or spend) and/or high greenhouse gas emitters in an effort to:
Provide a better understanding of their current sustainability efforts, plans, and commitments;
Gather information that can help you in future requests for proposals;
Send a signal to your vendors about your conservation priorities and commitments which may spur innovation to further advance sustainability for both the vendor and your institution; and
Gain a better understanding of the present impact of the ACP member's supply chain.

The survey includes questions focused on emissions, waste, water, social impact, policy and advocacy, and sustainability innovation. Questions with an (*) are highly recommended and ACP members are encouraged to include these questions in their supplier survey. All other questions are considered optional and may be added as surveyors see appropriate. We recommend that you send this survey to your suppliers at least every two years, and we will create a version using a survey tool for easier sharing.

Sample Email to Send to Suppliers with Survey

Dear [Supplier Name],

As a valued partner of [your organization name], your collaboration will be instrumental in helping us achieve our sustainability goals. As a member of the Aquarium Conservation Partnership (ACP), we are committed to advancing conservation by advancing equity and environmental justice, combating climate change by [INSERT YOUR NET ZERO GOAL], reducing the sources of plastic pollution, protecting ocean and freshwater ecosystems and wildlife, and improving the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture. In line with our commitments, we are conducting a sustainability assessment to better understand the impact of our supply chain.

We kindly request your participation in a survey designed to evaluate and understand the sustainability practices in place at your organization.

Survey: LINK TO SURVEY

Your participation in this survey is important, and your insights will help inform our understanding of the impact [our organization] has, and the opportunities for further innovation that advance our goals, and benefit all parties.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this important survey, and we look forward to receiving your survey response by [Deadline].

Thank you for your ongoing partnership, we look forward to making a lasting impact together.

[Salutations]

Survey Questions

Emissions

1. *Does the organization track and calculate its greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol on an annual basis through a third party, or a third party verifier? If yes, please report the values from the most recent greenhouse gas report in MTCO2e.
    a. Scope 1 - direct emissions that are owned or controlled by the company, such as gasoline-powered fleet vehicles or onsite burning of fossil fuels?
    b. Scope 2 - emissions that a company causes indirectly, such as through the use of electricity?
    c. Scope 3 - emissions that are not produced by the company itself and are not the result of activities from assets owned or controlled by them, but by those that it is indirectly responsible for up and down its value chain?
        i. Which categories?
            1. Category 1 - Purchased Goods and Services
            2. Category 2 - Capital Goods
            3. Category 3 - Fuel- and Energy-Related Activities
            4. Category 4 - Upstream Transportation and Distribution
            5. Category 5 - Waste Generated in Operations
            6. Category 6 - Business Travel
            7. Category 7 - Employee Commuting
            8. Category 8 - Upstream Leased Assets
            9. Category 9 - Downstream Transportation and Distribution
            10. Category 10 - Processing of Sold Products
            11. Category 11 - Use of Sold Products
            12. Category 12 - End of Life Treatment of Sold Products
            13. Category 13 - Downstream Leased Assets
            14. Category 14 - Franchises
            15. Category 15 - Investments
2. *Has the organization set greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets? If yes, please list those targets, when they were set, and what the current progress toward the goal is.
    a. Scope 1?
    b. Scope 2?
    c. Scope 3?
3. *Does the organization purchase renewable energy/ RECs? If so, how?
4. *Please describe any practices or policies in place at the organization to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Water

1. *Does the organization track its annual water use?
2. *Does the organization have any practices in place to reduce its water use? If yes, please describe the practices in place.
3. *Does the organization have targets for reductions in water use? If so, please describe the target(s), when they were set, and current progress toward the goal.

Waste

1. *Does the organization track the waste generated from operations? If yes, please report the value in Metric Tons of each waste stream.
2. *Does the organization track its diversion rate of non-hazardous and non-construction solid waste? If yes, please report the diversion rate.
3. *Does the organization have a target for waste reduction and/or waste diversion rate? If yes, please describe the target(s), when they were set, and current progress toward the goal.

Social Impact

1. *Please check all that apply to your organization:
    a. Small Business*
        i. *The U.S. Small Business Association (SBA) provides specific qualifications and registration forms. Generally, unless your business involves commercial farming, if you have fewer than 100 employees and your total income plus your cost of goods sold is less than $7.5 million, then you have a Small Business.
    b. At least 51% owned, controlled, or operated by a socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s):
        i. Minority group
        ii. Member of the LGBTQIA+ community
        iii. Women/Woman
        iv. Veteran
        v. Service-Disabled Veteran
    c. If yes to any of the above, please list any third party certifications that speak to the business classification.
2. Does the organization prioritize partnerships with organizations that are owned, controlled, or operated by a socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s).
    a. If yes, please indicate the percent of the organization's spending that goes to businesses that are owned, controlled, or operated by a socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s).
3. *Has the organization crafted, approved, and maintained clear diversity goals, such as with regard to historically socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, and engage in active diversity initiatives toward recruitment and retention as well as development and advancement? If yes, please list the goals and describe the initiatives.
4. For aquatic feed providers only, are you a part of a community-based fishery?
5. Does the organization invest in community development activities in the markets you source from and/or operate within? If yes, please describe the activities.
6. Have you established age-verification mechanisms as part of recruitment processes?
    a. If yes, do you ensure the age verification mechanisms are used throughout your supply chains (including your sub-contractors and suppliers)?
7. Do all of the organization's employees, in-house contractors, and temporary employees receive at least a living wage? If yes, what verification mechanisms are used to confirm partner compliance?
    a. Living wages are regional to reflect the hourly rate that an individual in a household must earn to support his or herself and their family. MIT provides a free, publicly accessible living wage calculator for the United States: https://livingwage.mit.edu/
8. Does the organization provide health insurance (or a stipend to cover the costs of health insurance bought through a marketplace) for all full-time and part-time employees?

Policy and Advocacy

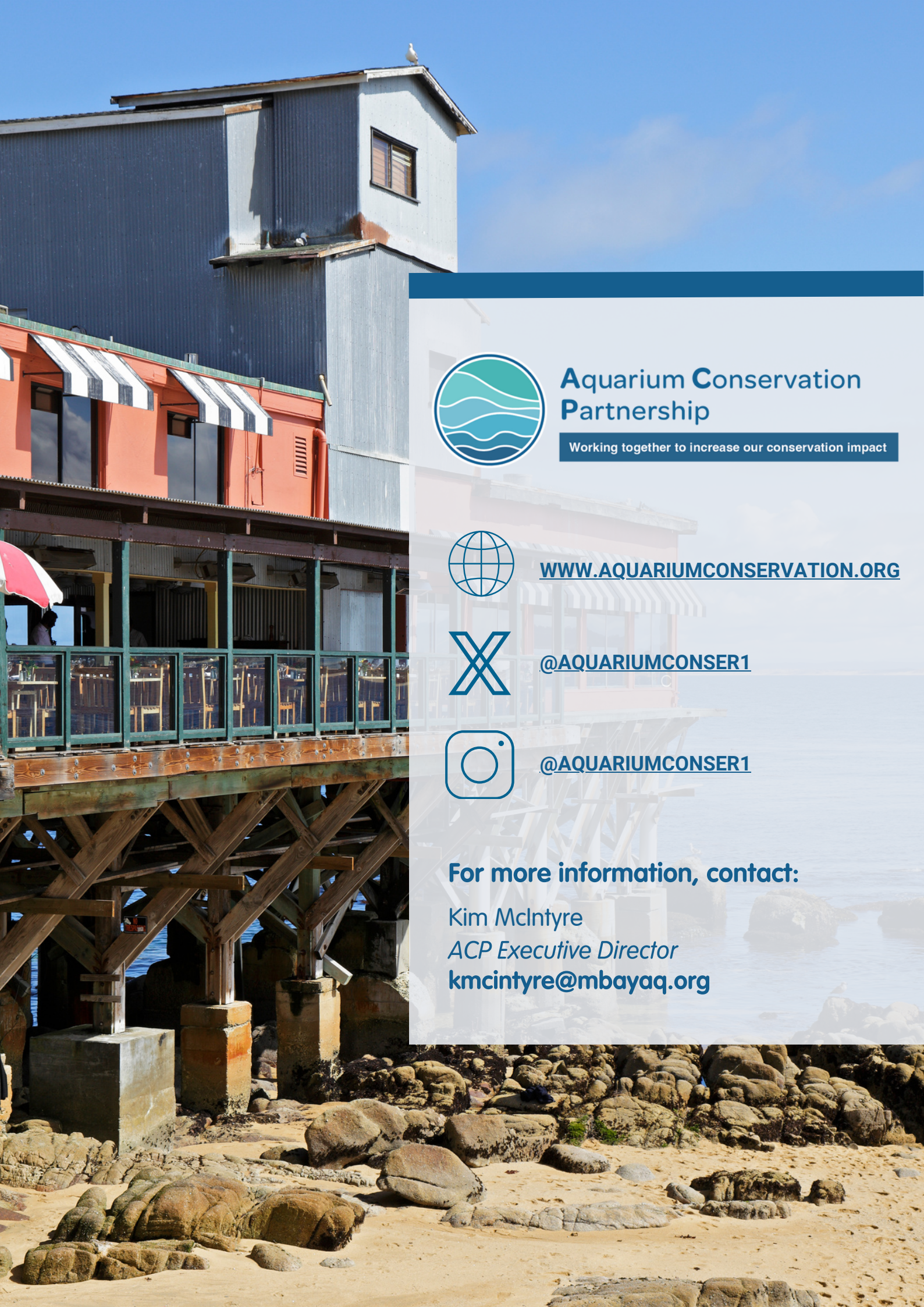
1. What, if any, sustainability regulations (local or national) have impacted or changed the way the organization operates?
2. Is your organization a member of an industry association or other form of coalition that engages in environmental policy advocacy at the state or federal?
    a. If so, please share the names of those partners here:

Sustainability Innovation

1. *Are you willing to work collaboratively to create innovations that will help us meet our sustainability goals? Are there any examples where you have collaborated with a partner to innovate?

Product Materials

1. Please share the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for __ products.



Aquarium Conservation Partnership

Working together to increase our conservation impact

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