

# OP 7: Dining Service Procurement

## Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions with dining service programs that support sustainable food systems and low carbon dining through their purchasing by prioritizing sustainably and ethically produced products, plant-based foods, and social impact suppliers.

## Applicability

Applicable to institutions with dining services operated by the institution or a contracted food service management company.

## Points available

A maximum of 8 points are available for this credit.

## Criteria

### 7.1 Percentage of food and beverage spend that meets sustainability criteria

An institution earns 6 points when the weighted cost of purchased food and beverage products that meet the sustainability criteria outlined in Table I is at least equal to the total food and beverage spend. Incremental points are available and earned as outlined in Tables II through IV.

Table I. Food and beverage sustainability criteria

Scope	Sustainability criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fresh food, e.g, produce, meat, eggs, fish, and shellfish</li><li>• Packaged or prepared food, e.g., spices, oils, sugar, grains, baked goods, candies, frozen food, dairy products, and processed foods</li></ul>	<p>A. Sustainably or ethically produced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certified to one or more of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ An organic standard that is endorsed by <a href="#">I-FOAM Organics International</a> or requires conformance to an I-FOAM endorsed organic standard</li><li>○ An <b>ISO Type I ecolabel</b> or sustainability standard for food and beverage products that is developed or administered by a farm/food workers' organization or an ISEAL Alliance or Global Ecolabelling Network member organization</li><li>○ An environmental sustainability, fair trade/labor, or animal</li></ul></li></ul>

- Beverages, e.g., liquid and packaged sports and soft drinks, fruit juices, tea, coffee, and bottled water

welfare standard recognized at Level 1, 2, or 3 in the [Anchors in Action Aligned Framework](#) (US) or an AASHE-approved equivalent standard (in countries other than the US).

- Recommended by Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch (Best Choice, Certified, or Good Alternative) or a regional sustainable fish and seafood program approved by AASHE.
- Produced by campus farms or gardens using **sustainable or ethical methods**

AND/OR

- Grown, raised, or caught by **small producers** using **sustainable or ethical methods**, as evidenced by or documented through one or more of the following:
  - **Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)**
  - **Short food supply chain (SFSC)**
  - Small Producers' Symbol (SPP)
  - World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) or Fair Trade Federation (FTF) membership
  - An alternative verification program led by farm/food workers, academic or student researchers, an NGO, or a producer cooperative

AASHE maintains an [updated list of qualifying certifications and programs](#).

#### B. Plant-based foods

- **Unprocessed and minimally processed** fruits, vegetables, sprouts, legumes, pulses, soy foods, nuts, seeds, herbs, spices, seaweed, algae, fungi, whole grains (e.g., flour, oats, and rice), coffee beans, and tea leaves
- **Culinary ingredients** obtained directly from plants (e.g., oils, syrups, starches, and sweeteners)
- **Processed foods** that are predominantly derived from plants and/or fungi and contain no ingredients derived from animals. Examples include preserved fruits and vegetables, fruit and vegetable juices, tofu and tempeh, plant-based alternatives to meat and dairy, and products certified to a standard for vegan or plant-based foods (e.g., V-Label, Plant-Based Food Association, or SCS-109).

Products predominantly composed of ingredients of neither plant/fungi nor animal origin that are not intended as alternatives to meat or dairy (e.g., packaged mineral water with fruit flavoring) do not qualify as plant-based.

Table II. Points earned for sustainably or ethically produced food and beverage products

Percentage of food and beverage spend on products that are sustainably or ethically produced		Factor		Points earned
	×	0.06	=	

Table III. Points earned for plant-based foods

Percentage of food and beverage spend on plant-based foods		Factor		Points earned
	×	0.06	=	

Table IV. Total points earned for indicator 7.1

Points earned for sustainably or ethically produced food and beverage products (Table II)		Points earned for plant-based foods (Table III)		Total points earned
	+		=	Up to 6

## Measurement

Report the most recent data available from within the previous three years. An institution may track purchases over a full one-year time period or use a **representative sample** that includes data from an academic term or similar period. When using samples, an institution must accommodate seasonal and other variations in food and beverage availability and purchasing, for example, by including an equal number of months within and outside the local growing season.

At a minimum, the analysis must include food and beverage expenditures by the institution's self-operated dining services or the institution's contracted food service management company (e.g., Aramark, Bon Appétit Management Company, Chartwells, or Sodexo). Outlets that are unique to the institution or its food service management company (e.g., retail concepts developed and managed by the institution or contractor) should be included. Franchises (e.g., regional or global brands), independent operators, convenience stores, vending services, concessions, and de minimus purchases by other entities may be excluded.

If a product category or type is excluded from the analysis (e.g., due to data tracking limitations), the exclusion must be disclosed in the methodology documentation field provided.

Products sourced from a campus farm or garden, but not purchased, may be accounted for based on estimated market value.

For transparency, an inventory of qualifying purchases must be provided. The inventory may be in any format as long as sufficient information is provided to justify each product's inclusion, including its name/description and the sustainability criterion met (i.e., a specific certification/ecolabel or a note that the product was sourced from a qualifying campus farm/garden or small producer). [A template is available](#). For plant-based foods, an itemized inventory is not required (see guidance below), however sufficient information must be provided about the broad categories used in the analysis to allow an independent reviewer to understand how the percentage of spend on plant-based foods was determined. This information may be included in the template or provided in the relevant narrative documentation field.

### Sustainably or ethically produced products

An institution may report on purchases that meet the Real Food Standards (US) or another set of standards that adhere to the Anchors in Action Aligned Framework in lieu of the sustainable/ethical criteria provided. For example, an institution may report its verified Real Food percentage as the “percentage of food and beverage spend on products that are sustainably or ethically produced” and upload its Real Food Calculator results as evidence.

A purchase that meets more than one sustainable/ethical criterion may not be double-counted. For example, purchased coffee that is both certified Organic and Fairtrade certified may only be counted in the sustainable/ethical spend once. A purchase that is both sustainably/ethically produced and a plant-based food, however, should be included in both percentage figures.

To claim points for a recommended fish or seafood product that is not third party certified, an institution must have sufficient information on the specific species and where and how it was caught or farmed to be able to affirm its recommended status.

Products that are sustainably or ethically produced and products that are conventionally produced must be reported separately to the extent possible. In cases where a single-ingredient product is gathered from multiple farms or boats and aggregated prior to distribution (e.g., fluid milk), a purchase may qualify as sustainably or ethically produced if the distributor is able to verify that more than 50 percent of the product (by volume) meets the criteria.

A product from a secondary processor (e.g., an artisan, baker, cheese/yogurt maker, or coffee roaster) qualifies as sustainably or ethically produced if the predominant/defining raw ingredient (or more than 50 percent of ingredients, by weight, salt and water excluded) is sustainably or ethically produced. Examples of predominant/defining raw ingredients include the flour in bread, the milk in cheese, and the tomatoes in tomato sauce.

### Plant-based foods

To quantify the spend on plant-based foods, it is recommended that an institution only count as plant-based those broad categories of food purchases for which all items clearly meet the criteria, e.g., fresh produce; whole grains; canned, jarred, and frozen fruits, vegetables, and legumes; and plant-based alternatives to meat and dairy. A more refined approach, e.g., based on a line item inventory, is welcome, but is not required and may not result in a significantly higher score.

## Documentation

Report the following information in the online Reporting Tool, with percentage figures provided within a range of 0 to 100.

- Performance year for food and beverage purchasing (required). The year the performance period ended.
- Percentage of food and beverage spend on products that are sustainably or ethically produced (required). AASHE maintains an [updated list](#) of qualifying certifications and programs.
- Percentage of food and beverage spend on plant-based foods (required)
- Inventory of qualifying food and beverage purchases (required). Upload. A [template](#) is available.
- Description of the methodology used to determine the spend on products that are sustainably or ethically produced (required). Include information on the scope of the analysis (e.g., food service establishments and product types included/excluded) and any data limitations that may have influenced the results.
- Description of the methodology used to determine the spend on plant-based foods (required). Include information on the scope of the analysis and any data limitations that may have influenced the results. If the institution's spend on plant-based foods is not detailed in the inventory provided above, sufficient information must be provided here to allow an independent reviewer to understand how the percentage of spend on plant-based foods was determined.

## 7.2 Percentage of dining service spend with social impact suppliers

An institution earns 2 points when at least 10 percent of the spend managed by its dining services is with **social impact suppliers**. Partial points are available. An institution for which at least 5 percent, but less than 10 percent, of its dining service spend is with social impact suppliers earns 1 point.

### Measurement

Report on the most recent annual (fiscal or calendar year) data available from within the previous three years. An institution may track suppliers over a full one-year time period or use a **representative sample** that includes data from an academic term or similar period. When using samples, an institution must accommodate seasonal and other variations in food and beverage availability and purchasing, for example, by including an equal number of months within and outside the local growing season.

At a minimum, the analysis must include the food and beverage spend managed by the institution's self-operated dining services or its contracted food service management company (e.g., Aramark, Bon Appétit Management Company, Chartwells, or Sodexo), but may also include expenditures on other goods and services (e.g., supplies, equipment, and cleaning services) at the institution's discretion. Expenditures on items other than goods and services are excluded (e.g., salaries, wages, benefits, employee expenses, insurance, interest, taxes, utilities, and building leases). Outlets that are

unique to the institution or its contracted food service management company (e.g., retail concepts developed and managed by the institution or contractor) should be included. Procurement managed by other entities (e.g., franchises) may be excluded.

The analysis may be limited to the dining program's Tier One **suppliers** (e.g., its food distributors and other direct suppliers), focus on its Tier Two suppliers (e.g., the producers that supply its food distributors and other direct suppliers), or include multiple tiers in the supply chain as long as double-counting is avoided.

Double-counting must also be avoided when identifying social impact suppliers. For example, the spend with a supplier that is both employee owned and a Certified B Corporation may only be counted once.

## Documentation

Report the following information in the online Reporting Tool, with the percentage figure provided within a range of 0 to 100.

- Does the institution have sufficient data on its dining service spend to pursue this indicator? (required)

*If Yes, the following four fields are also required. If No, zero points are earned for this indicator and no further information is required to complete it.*

- Performance year for social impact dining service purchasing. The year the performance period ended.
- Percentage of dining service spend with social impact suppliers
- Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the dining service program's social impact suppliers
- Description of the methodology used to determine the spend with social impact suppliers. Include information on the scope of the analysis (e.g., food service establishments, product types, and tiers included/excluded) and any data limitations that may have influenced the results.

## Glossary

**Culinary ingredients** – Substances obtained directly from unprocessed or minimally processed foods or from nature by industrial processes such as pressing, centrifuging, refining, extracting, or mining. Culinary ingredients are used to prepare or enhance foods and are not typically consumed on their own. [Adapted from the NOVA food classification system.]

**Employee owned enterprises** – Organizations that are at least 51 percent owned (or eligible to be owned) by their employees through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), worker or farmer owned cooperative, or the equivalent.

**Enterprises owned by people from marginalized groups** – Enterprises that are at least 51 percent owned by people who identify as members of marginalized groups. This includes, for example,

businesses that are formally designated as minority owned, women owned, LGBTQ+ owned, Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs), or the equivalent. Marginalized groups include:

- Ethnic, national, religious, and linguistic minorities
- Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals
- Indigenous peoples
- LGBTQ+ individuals
- Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers
- People with disabilities
- Racialized people
- Residents of economically divested areas
- Roma, Sinti, and Travelers
- Survivors and veterans of conflict
- Women

**ISO Type I ecolabel** – A voluntary, multiple-criteria based, third party program that awards a license that authorizes the use of environmental labels on products indicating overall environmental preferability of a product within a particular product category based on life cycle considerations. The International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) has identified three broad types of voluntary labels, with ecolabelling fitting under the strongest Type I designation:

- Type I environmental labeling: for eco-labelling schemes where there are clearly defined criteria for products
- Type II self-declared environmental claims: for products and services where there are neither criteria nor labeling schemes
- Type III environmental declarations: for specific aspects of products using a life-cycle approach

[Adapted from the definitions used by the Global Ecolabelling Network and ISO.]

**Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)** – Locally focused quality assurance systems that certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks, and knowledge exchange. [Adapted from the definition used by I-FOAM Organics International, which maintains a [PGS directory](#).]

**Plant-based foods** – Foods and beverages that are predominantly derived from plants and/or fungi and contain no ingredients derived from animals. [Adapted from the definitions used by the PAS 224: 100% Plant-Based Foods Standard, the SCS-109 Plant-Based Standard, and the Plant Based Foods Association.]

**Processed foods** – Products made by adding culinary ingredients such as oils, salt, and sugar to unprocessed or minimally processed foods using preservation methods or industrial processes to enhance nutritional or sensory quality and/or guarantee food safety. [Adapted from the NOVA food classification system.]

**Representative sample** – A subset of a statistical population that accurately reflects the members of the entire population or a subset of performance data that accurately reflects an institution's overall performance. A representative sample should be an unbiased indication of what is being measured. For example, in a student population of 1,000 students in which 25 percent of the students are enrolled in a business school, 50 percent are enrolled in humanities programs, and 25 percent are

enrolled in science programs, a representative sample might include 200 students: 50 business students, 100 humanities students, and 50 science students. Likewise, a representative sample of purchases, for example, should accurately reflect the institution's total purchases, accounting for seasonal and other variations in product availability and purchasing.

**Short food supply chain (SFSC)** – A supply chain with a minimal number of intermediaries (ideally, no more than one) between identified farms, boats, or harvesters and the institution. SFSCs pass transparent information about the origin, production method, and sustainability of the product to the consumer and provide full traceability through all stages of production, processing, and distribution. Examples include direct sales, contract production, regional food hubs, local farm-to-institution programs, organic growers' cooperatives, and community-supported fishery programs. [Adapted from the work of the Short Supply Chain Knowledge and Innovation Network (SKIN) and the European Commission.]

**Small producer** – A producer who is not structurally dependent on permanent, year-round hired labor and/or manages their production activity primarily with a family or owner-operator workforce. Also known as small-scale producers, smallholders, or family farms, small producers play an important role in sustainable food systems, but may not operate at scales that make third party certification programs financially viable. Therefore, they may rely on low cost forms of verification such as Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) and transparent short food supply chains that give customers the opportunity to scrutinize their sustainability claims. [Adapted from the definitions used by FLOCERT, Fairtrade International, and the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO).]

**Social enterprise** – An operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. A social enterprise operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner that involves employees, consumers, and other stakeholders affected by its commercial activities. The term “social enterprise” encompasses businesses:

- For which the social or societal objective of the common good is the reason for the commercial activity, often in the form of a high level of social innovation;
- Whose profits are mainly reinvested to achieve this social objective; and
- Where the method of organization or the ownership system reflects the enterprise's mission, using democratic or participatory principles or focusing on social justice.

Examples include fair and ethical trade organizations, self-help organizations, cooperatives, community owned enterprises, and charity or non-profit organizations. [Adapted from the definition used by the European Commission.]

**Social impact supplier** – Consistent with the Anchor Learning Network, social impact purchasing is defined as purchasing that is directed toward improving societal health and well-being and catalyzing prosperity for all, particularly those impacted by a legacy of divestment and discrimination. Social impact suppliers therefore include:

- **Enterprises owned by people from marginalized groups,**
- **Employee owned enterprises,**
- **Social enterprises,** and
- Certified B Corporations.



**Supplier** – A service provider, contractor, vendor, or other entity entering into a contract or subcontract directly or indirectly with the institution. Tier One suppliers are direct suppliers. Tier Two suppliers are enterprises that serve as vendors and/or subcontractors to the direct suppliers.

**Sustainable or ethical methods** – Production methods that are consistent with:

- The [Principles of Organic Agriculture](#) (IFOAM Organics International),
- The [FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries](#) (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations),
- The [10 Principles of Fair Trade](#) (World Fair Trade Organization), AND/OR
- The [Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare](#) (World Organisation for Animal Health).

**Unprocessed and minimally processed foods** – The edible parts of materials such as plants and fungi after separation from nature, either unaltered or altered by industrial processes such as removal of unwanted parts, drying, powdering, squeezing, crushing, grinding, fractioning, steaming, poaching, boiling, roasting, pasteurization, chilling, freezing, combining, placing in containers, vacuum packing, non-alcoholic fermentation, and other methods that do not add salt, sugar, oils, fats, or other food substances to the original food. [Adapted from the NOVA food classification system.]