



Practical guide for using TCO Certified in public sector Sustainable IT procurement

Guidance for use before, during and after the procurement process for including environmental and social criteria for IT products and their manufacture.

www.tcodevelopment.com/tco-certified
purchasing@tcodevelopment.com

Introduction

TCO Certified is the most comprehensive sustainability certification for IT products in the world today. The certification includes a broad scope of environmental and social criteria connected to the manufacturing, use and end of life handling of IT products. The criteria in TCO Certified strike a balance between driving sustainable development and at the same time providing the IT industry with realistic targets.

TCO Certified is available in eight product categories: displays, notebooks, tablets, smartphones, desktops, all-in-one PCs, projectors and headsets. Product-specific criteria sets are in place for each product category. The criteria in TCO Certified are also updated regularly, in line with the rapid development of new technologies.

A key aspect of the TCO Certified system is that an independent third party verifies that product models and their manufacturing facilities meet the criteria in TCO Certified before they are certified. TCO Development also carries out annual spot checks to monitor continued compliance after certification.

When non-conformities with the sustainability criteria are discovered, we investigate and address them with suitable measures to ensure quality and a credible certification for all parties. Therefore, when you as a purchaser specify TCO Certified as a requirement you don't have to spend time on verification of sustainability criteria, and managing non-conformities yourself.

For procurement of sustainably designed and manufactured IT products, refer to the whole criteria document for the relevant product category. It is also important that you ask for the latest version of TCO Certified to get sustainability criteria that are up to date. Also specify as a requirement that your IT vendors present "TCO Certified certificates or equivalent" as proof that the products included in the tenders meet the criteria, and provide the vendors with attached checklist to clarify what you mean by equivalent proof of compliance. Then there is a high probability that you will get certified products, since it is more complicated for the vendor to show compliance with the criteria in any other way.

Don't equate TCO Certified with other certifications like "Certification Environment" or "Certification Energy". TCO Certified includes a broad scope of environmental and social criteria, and has thorough verification system, which ensures compliance with the criteria over time.

There is no other certification or label that is equivalent to TCO Certified.



Always use the latest version of TCO Certified to make sure that your procurement includes tough sustainability criteria throughout the product life cycle, and that are also realistic for the IT industry to meet.

1) Guidance before procurement

Internal commitment

Make sure your organization is committed to sustainable procurement, and that top management establishes an overall sustainability policy with measurable targets and that includes procurement of IT products. The policy then clarifies your commitment to sustainability, designates procurement as a tool for driving sustainability in the organization and makes IT products a priority.

The EU public procurement directives require that EU member states shall take appropriate measures for environmental and social concerns alongside the principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, proportionality, transparency and mutual recognition. IT products represent a risk category that should be prioritized, as they present several environmental and social challenges in all phases of the life cycle: manufacturing, use and end of life handling.

Make sure to include persons with sustainability competence in the reference group for procurement of IT products. Then you can more effectively include sustainability before, during and after procurement.

Dialog with vendors

Initiate dialog with your IT vendors and tell them that you will require that IT products in future procurements shall meet the criteria in the latest version of TCO Certified.

Also tell them that you will require “TCO Certified certificates or equivalent” as proof that the products you choose meet the criteria. You can also provide your vendors with the attached checklist, which outlines alternative forms of documentation accepted as proof of compliance. Then there is a high probability that you will get certified products, since it is more complicated for vendors to show compliance with the criteria in any other way.

Also tell your vendors that you will not accept any other certifications or labels, since there are no others that include the same broad scope of environmental and social criteria and also include the same thorough verification system which ensures compliance with the criteria over time.

By putting your requirements for TCO Certified in a wider context you can also increase your vendor’s awareness and understanding. You could for instance explain to your vendors that:

- Your organization’s sustainability goals are reflected in your procurement practices, and the products you buy should be compatible with society’s goals for environmental and social responsibility.
- Your organization’s IT procurement is an important part of your sustainability program and should contribute toward the organization reaching its overall sustainability objectives.
- The IT products you purchase should have minimal negative environmental and social impact throughout the product life cycle; manufacturing, use and end of life handling.
- The IT products you purchase must be of high quality and offer long usable life.

Email the information above about your requirements for TCO Certified in future procurement to your vendor contacts. This will make it easier for them to spread the information internally in their organizations.

2) Guidance during procurement

Be clear with your sustainability ambitions in your procurement. This can be reflected in document titles, for example: "Procurement of sustainably designed notebooks" or "Procurement of sustainably designed tablets".

Selection criteria

Specify as a requirement the latest version of TCO Certified for relevant product categories in the selection criteria listed in procurement documents. This should be done regardless if you evaluate the tenders according to "lowest price", "lowest life cycle cost" or "most economically advantageous tender".

Also specify as a requirement in your procurement documents that the products have to fulfill the sustainability criteria in TCO Certified during the entire contract period. It's common for IT products to go through technology refreshes during contract periods, so it is therefore important that you require TCO Certified certificates or equivalent for updated product models.

Contract performance clauses

For a product category where there is a smaller choice of TCO Certified products than you prefer, you can require that the products shall fulfill the sustainability criteria in the latest version of TCO Certified for the relevant product category in the contract performance clauses of your procurement documents. The criteria then have to be met at the start of the contract or soon thereafter, which gives the vendors more time to ensure that their products fulfill the sustainability criteria in TCO Certified. Also in this case specify as a requirement in your procurement documents that the products have to fulfill the criteria in the latest version of TCO Certified during the entire length of the contract period.



Don't put TCO Certified as part of your award criteria. If you do, there is a risk that offered products don't fulfill the sustainability criteria in TCO Certified.

Proof of compliance

When you require TCO Certified in the selection criteria in the procurement documents, also make sure to specify as a requirement that as part of the tender, the vendor must provide “TCO Certified Certificates or equivalent” as proof that products included in the tender comply with the criteria in the latest version of TCO Certified for each relevant product category.

When you require TCO Certified in the contract performance clauses in the procurement documents, also make sure to include a mutually agreed upon timeframe in the contract for when the vendor must provide you with the TCO Certified certificate or equivalent, showing that the products meet the requirements in the latest version of TCO Certified. Also add a clause giving you the right to cancel the contract with the vendor that doesn’t provide you the proof of compliance within the specified timeframe.

Provide the vendors with the attached checklist to clarify what you mean by equivalent proof of compliance. Then there is a greater probability that you will get certified products, since it is more complicated for the vendor to show compliance with the criteria in any other way.

Write this:

Notebook computers shall meet all criteria in the latest version of TCO Certified Notebooks.

Not this:

Notebooks shall meet all criteria in the latest version of TCO Certified Notebooks, “Environmental certification” or “Energy label”.

Write this:

Vendor shall provide a TCO Certified certificate or equivalent as proof of compliance with the criteria in TCO Certified Notebooks.

Not this:

Vendor shall provide a TCO Certified certificate, “Environmental certificate”, “Energy label” or equivalent as proof that the sustainability criteria in the procurement are met.

3) Guidance after procurement

Internal communication

For your IT procurement to have a positive impact on your overall sustainability objectives, it's important that all purchasing of IT products in your organization is done according to the framework contract of the procurement. By putting your requirements for TCO Certified in a wider context you can increase awareness and understanding in your organization.

You could for instance communicate that:

- Our organization's sustainability goals are reflected in our procurement practices, and the products we buy should be compatible with society's goals for environmental and social responsibility.
- Our organization's IT procurement is an important aspect of our sustainability program and should contribute toward the organization reaching its overall sustainability objectives.
- The IT products we purchase should have minimal negative environmental and social impact throughout the product life cycle; manufacturing, use and end of life handling.
- The IT products we purchase must be of high quality and offer long usable life.
- We have chosen to require TCO Certified since the certification includes a broad scope of environmental and social criteria connected to the manufacturing, use and end of life handling of IT products, and since it includes a thorough verification system which ensures compliance with the criteria over time.

Follow up during the contract period

Ask your vendors to provide TCO Certified certificates or equivalent proof of compliance for products that are updated or refreshed during the contract period, and if necessary, inform them about your right to cancel the contract if your requirement is not met.

Finally

Thank you for joining us in the effort to drive the development of more sustainably designed and manufactured IT products. By requiring TCO Certified in your procurement of IT products you're taking part in influencing the IT industry so that IT products and their manufacturing become more sustainable.

Don't hesitate to contact us at TCO Development when you have questions.

Together we can make a difference!

Appendix – Checklist for proof of compliance

The vendor proves that the IT products and their manufacturing, which are included in the tender, fulfill the criteria in the latest version of TCO Certified through one of the following alternatives.

1. TCO Certified certificate

- ☐ The vendor provides the buyer with valid TCO Certified certificates for the product models in the tender.

Or

2. Equivalent proof of compliance

The vendor provides the buyer with proof of compliance with all requirements listed below:

- ☐ The vendor commits that all products included in the tender fulfill the criteria in the latest version of TCO Certified, and if it during the contract period proves that they don't, provide the buyer with new products that fulfill the criteria and compensate the buyer with a penalty for damages such as damage to reputation caused by products failing to meet the criteria.
- ☐ The vendor shall provide the buyer with test reports from an independent test laboratory, accredited according to ISO 17025, showing that products included in the tender meet the criteria in the latest version of TCO Certified.
- ☐ The vendor shall provide the buyer with proof from a yearly follow up that the products included in the tender fulfill the criteria in the latest version of TCO Certified. The follow up shall be paid for by the vendor, and made by a third party test laboratory accredited according to ISO 17025 which purchases and tests a random sample of the products included in the tender according to the criteria in TCO Certified.
- ☐ The vendor shall provide the buyer with proof that the brand of the products included in the tender actively works with improving working conditions in manufacturing of the products by showing that the brand is certified according to SA8000 or has a full membership in EICC.
- ☐ The vendor shall provide the buyer with a complete list of all final assembly factories for the products included in the tender. The list shall include the status for when each of the factories was last subject to a social audit according to the criteria in the latest version of TCO Certified. The list shall only include audits that have been performed by independent auditors who have gone through SA8000 Advanced Auditor Training or equivalent.
- ☐ The vendor shall provide the buyer with a yearly report from social audits according to the criteria in the latest version of TCO Certified. The report shall be from a final assembly factory and be less than 12 months old.
- ☐ The vendor shall finance a third party review of the annual social audit report on the behalf of the buyer in order to assess whether the report shows compliance with the criteria for socially responsible manufacturing in TCO Certified, and how non-conformities should be addressed. The review shall be performed by an expert who has gone through SA8000 Advanced Auditor Training or equivalent.
- ☐ The vendor commits to allowing the buyer, or an independent third party designated by the buyer, to carry out spot checks at the final assembly factories of the products included in the tender, in order to verify compliance with the criteria for socially responsible manufacturing in TCO Certified.
- ☐ The vendor shall provide the buyer with an English-speaking contact person at the brand who is responsible for working conditions in manufacturing of the products included in the tender and has the mandate to address non-conformities.