

Solutions for Sustainable Supply Chain



Professional Services

A significant portion of TRU’s spend each year is with professional service contracts that range from financial, legal and business to engineering and architectural services. Service providers have an important leadership role to play in demonstrating environmental, social and ethical business practices.

What to look for in a professional service provider

Professional service providers demonstrate commitment to sustainability by:

1. Compliance with all legal obligations
2. Following basic environmental, social and ethical good practices
3. Managing their supply chain for sustainability good practices
4. Following environmental, social and ethical leadership practices, and,
5. Doing business with suppliers following sustainability leadership practices.

Look for a balanced approach to sustainability performance that includes environmental, social and ethical components:

Environmental	Social	Ethical
Responsible management of the company’s carbon footprint and other environmental impacts.	Support for local communities through inclusive hiring and contracting and volunteerism.	Upholding human rights, fair labour practices and the health, safety and well-being of the workforce.

What about company size?

Professional services firms come in many sizes, from sole proprietors to large privately held and public corporations. It may be helpful to categorize them as:

1. Microbusinesses (1-9 employees)
2. Small and medium enterprises (10-25 employees)
3. Large businesses: (26+ employees)

Large public corporations may have more resources to invest in leadership sustainability practices, while micro and small businesses create thriving local economies and may be more flexible and responsive to local needs.

Industry Best Practice

The highest available certification standard for sustainable professional services is the NSF/ANSI 391.1 (2017)

As a complement to specific criteria, allowing open-ended answers for prospective vendors to express how they meet the environmental, social and ethical good practice principles can help smaller businesses share their sustainability story.

What are basic sustainability good practices?

The table below lists a selection of criteria considered basic good sustainability practice by NSF/ANSI 391.1 – 2017. The standard further recommends that half of all points assigned to sustainability reflect these basic practices:

Environmental	Social	Ethical
Look for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy inventory • Environmental policy • Evidence of addressing corporate environmental impacts like recycling or web conferencing in lieu of travel • Sustainable procurement policy and practice 	Look for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring or subcontracting to local and Indigenous individuals or businesses • Evidence of considering diversity and inclusion in hiring, with tracking and reporting on progress • Community volunteerism and pro bono work 	Look for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical code of conduct • Rate of employee turnover • Employee handbook • Written policy on harassment and discrimination • Health and safety policies • Sustainability reporting

What are leadership sustainability practices?

The table below lists a selection of criteria considered leadership sustainability practice by NSF/ANSI 391.1 – 2017. The standard further recommends that half of all points assigned to sustainability reflect these leadership practices:

Cross-cutting		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems in place to track and report transparently on goals and progress • Third-party sustainability reporting • Sustainable financial investment strategy • Management incentives linked to sustainability performance • Thought leadership in sustainable operations 		
Environmental	Social	Ethical
Look for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental management system • Public GHG inventory • Reduced energy use & GHG emissions • Renewable energy usage • Property with green building certification 	Look for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Board of Directors • Tracking and reporting annual supplier diversity spend • Community investment strategy 	Look for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to public disclosure on governance and ethical business practices and performance • Commitment to mitigating adverse impacts on stakeholders • Leadership labour practices, such as: fair compensation/living wage, worker benefits and resources