



Joint Statement of Demand on Circular Office Furniture

BUYING A CIRCULAR FURNITURE FUTURE



Interreg
North Sea Region
ProCirc
European Regional Development Fund



THE HIDDEN SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES OF OFFICE FURNITURE



Almost all organisations buy office furniture, but currently this is not always done sustainably

WASTE



1.2 million office desks and 1.8 million office chairs end up in UK landfill each year. In Europe as a whole, 80-90% of all furniture ends its life in landfill. (Source: WRAP)

DESIGN



Furniture is often designed in a way that does not enable it to be repaired easily, further limiting reuse opportunities.

MATERIALS



High carbon emissions and the use of toxic substances in production, highlight the incompatibility of furniture products and business models with the circular economy.



WHAT IS CIRCULAR PROCUREMENT?

In contrast to a 'linear' *take - make - use - dispose* flow of materials and products through the economy, circular economy is a system designed to maximise the value of products and materials while in use, then to recover and repurpose them at the end of their lives. This will reduce waste, reduce environmental impact from sourcing virgin materials, and reduce embodied greenhouse gas emissions.



A subsection of sustainable procurement, circular procurement, focuses on closing material loops within supply chains. Many of the opportunities follow principles, such as:

- Specifying the inclusion of recycled or reused/remanufactured products or materials.
- Specifying or using evaluation criteria regarding design for longevity, durability and ease of reuse at the end of life.
- Leasing or sharing products rather than purchase and ownership, to maximise the amount of use (and therefore value) that can be gained from each product.



IF OFFICE FURNITURE IS TO BECOME COMPATIBLE WITH THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY, BUSINESSES AND PUBLIC ORGANISATIONS NEED TO CONSIDER IT BEFORE POINT OF DISPOSAL, AND DRIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE CHANGE IN THE WAY IT IS PRODUCED.

THIS STARTS WITH PROCUREMENT.

CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR INNOVATION



A Joint Statement of Demand (JSD) presents a shared set of asks that procurers are committed to including in their future tenders. A JSD approach recognises that harnessing collective purchasing power can drive innovation and accelerate a shift to a sustainable future. Partners in the [Interreg NSR ProCirc project](#) are working on a JSD on Circular Office Furniture

CIRCULAR PROCUREMENT CHALLENGES

KNOWLEDGE BARRIERS

Procurers are not experts in sustainability or circularity and often do not know what to ask for.

MARKET BARRIERS

There are relatively few circular products available on the market.

INFLUENCE BARRIERS

Businesses feel that they have little influence if they are just one customer buying from their supplier.



HOW A JSD CAN HELP

CO-CREATE

Work with other procurers and industry experts on a set of future-focused circular asks for a product category.

SUPPORT INNOVATION

Showing commitment to adopt circularity in future tenders provides the basis for suppliers to invest and innovate.

COLLECTIVE INFLUENCE

Harnesses collective power to make change by committing to join likeminded buyers in adopting the JSD asks.

EXPERTISE THAT WE ARE BUILDING ON



Partners and pilots in the Interreg NSR ProCirc project have significant prior experience working on office furniture and fitout sustainability which makes us well placed to deliver this project.

BITC led the Circular Office Initiative which included a series of workshops in major cities across the UK

- [The Circular Office Guide](#) brings together key recommendations and insights from our Circular Economy Taskforce, including major companies operating in the office furniture and fitout sector
- [How to Deliver a Carbon Friendly Workplace Transition](#) is a guide for businesses on how to use furniture and fixtures in a circular way when downsizing or moving offices post-covid

City of Malmo, was a supporting buyer in creating a [Joint Statement of Demand on Circular and Fair Smartphones](#), which inspired ProCirc's JSD approach.

Four Nordic public buyers, that are major consumers of smartphones, declared actionable circular ambitions to include in their procurement by 2025, including on:

- Increased transparency of supply chain and end-of-life
- Service agreements that expand the lifespan of products, including covering repairs or replacement of components
- Ability to procure second-life devices

A market dialogue with a group of suppliers was held as part of the development process of the JSD.



The Agency for Facility Operations of the Government of Flanders (AFFO) aims to reduce the amount of office furniture in government entities that ends up as waste within their Interreg NSR Pilot.

One of the main tools of the pilot was to set up a system that coordinates the furniture needs of the government's various entities, which have offices in various locations. This required finding a partner that could coordinate the collection, storage, refurbishment, distribution and sale of surplus furniture through a dedicated webshop.

One of the innovations is its credit system. Government entities that feed surplus furniture into the system receive credit that they can use to buy furniture through the system's webshop – either immediately or at a later date. This not only saves furniture from being wasted but also money that would otherwise be spent on new furniture.



DFØ – FURNITURE PILOT



The Norwegian Agency for Public and Financial Management (DFØ) moved offices in October 2021.

Focus on reuse of existing furniture, redesign of old shelves (picture), procurement of used furniture as well as procurement of new furniture with circular qualities was a central sustainability strategy in the moving process.

This saved 50 tons of CO₂eq and 3 million NOK compared to a scenario of procuring only new furniture. Additionally it stimulated the SME market to develop new circular design solutions, like the one in the picture to the right.



HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED



The JSD on Circular Office Furniture will be co-created by a **Procurement Trailblazer Group** formed of forward-thinking procurers.

We are looking for procurers (who can be joined by another representative from your organisation) to join the group and help to shape this exciting initiative by:

- Determining the category scope of the JSD
- Creating a shortlist of circular procurement asks, with the support of an Advisory Group of sector experts and innovative suppliers
- Ensuring that their organisation becomes a signatory to the JSD to drive change
- Sharing the JSD with suppliers and a broader audience to amplify its impact

We envisage your contribution being primarily through attending a series of four workshops, held from October 2022 – February 2023. The first workshop is scheduled to take place on **27th October 10:00 – 11:30 GMT / 9:00-10:30 CET.**

If you are interested and would like to arrange a preliminary conversation, please contact your regional Interreg NSR ProCirc partner