



### **Sustainable local purchasing**

Every day individuals and industries procure various goods and services to sustain and complement lives and businesses. The tourism business especially has a plethora of procurement needs including; cleaning products, foods and beverages, curios and labor. In pursuit to attain sustainability in business practice, responsible procurement is a key component. Responsible procurement (also known as sustainable/green procurement, environmentally preferable purchasing [EPP] or sustainable/responsible purchasing) is a process by which environmental, social and ethical considerations are taken into account when making a purchasing decision ([The Green Hotelier](#)).

Local purchasing is a key aspect of responsible purchasing. **Local purchasing** is a preference to buy locally produced goods and services over those produced farther away. The possibility of local sourcing is dismissed by bigger businesses and hotel chains that often take the option to centralize their buying. While this may be the case, there is a very direct link between sustainable local purchasing and responsible tourism.



Image courtesy of [mother nature network](#)

Local purchasing has the potential to create various benefits for tourism facilities and the local communities they engage with. They include;

#### **Creation of employment opportunities**

Buying locally from neighboring communities and spending at local independent businesses, generates more jobs and wealth in the local economy compared to spending at absentee-owned businesses, including corporate chains.

#### **Benefit to the environment**

Bringing goods from afar generally requires using more energy than transporting goods locally. Some environmental advocates see this as a serious environmental threat. This is because of implications of air pollution from vehicle and air craft emissions. The most significant of these emissions is Carbon IV Oxide which has a great impact on global climate change.

#### **Promoting a sense of community**

As a tourist accommodation facility, working with locals bring about a sense of community. By promoting their local businesses and improving their economy, there is a greater likelihood to be accepted as part of the community rather than a visitor. This goes a long way in ensuring sustainability of the tourism business through the support from the local community.



[benefits of buying local](#)

The Ecotourism Kenya Eco-rating Certification standard has a criterion that assesses purchasing/ procurement. It emphasizes on a procurement policy that incorporates; environmental consideration (buying in bulk to reduce packaging, reusable packaging), sustainability (products should be sourced in a manner that does not compromise their availability for use in the future), ethical consideration (fair pricing, no child labour) and social/ community consideration (buying locally when feasible)

Among the eco-rated facilities, [Serena Mountain Lodge](#) is a good example of a facility that promotes local purchasing despite it being in a chain of hotels. Located on the slopes of Mt. Kenya, it is one of the oldest hotels in the country, opened in 1971. Along with its rich history, is the commendable best practice of empowering local communities by supporting local businesses. The facility buys fruits and vegetables for their guests and employees from local suppliers. Examples of their local suppliers include; Kiwama Enterprises from Nanyuki, Green Veg enterprises from Kiganjo, Mutindwa Green grocers from Meru as well as individual farmers from the nearby Nyeri Villages and town. This practice has contributed to employment opportunities, growth of the local economy and has built a great sense of community within the area.