

# GREENER PATHWAYS:

## TOP TIPS FOR A SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN



In 2024 the Southwark Climate Collective (SCC) supported over 140 businesses to reduce carbon emissions, cut costs and increase efficiency. Supply chains are a significant source of emissions, but by rethinking procurement, streamlining operations and reducing waste, you'll be well on your way to a greener future.

Ready to take action? Check out these top tips for a greener, more sustainable supply chain!

### 1. PRIORITISE LOCAL, COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPLIERS

#### WHY?

- **To reduce transport emissions:** transporting goods over long distances is carbon-intensive and more expensive.
- **Support the local economy:** strengthening local businesses bolsters your community.
- **Encourage collaboration:** Smaller, local suppliers are often more agile and open to sustainability initiatives.

#### HOW?

- Audit your supply chain to identify goods produced internationally that could be sourced locally.
- Switch to local suppliers where feasible.
- Engage with suppliers to explore opportunities for joint decarbonisation efforts.

### 2. ORDER IN BULK TO REDUCE DELIVERY FREQUENCY

#### WHY?

- **To lower emissions:** fewer deliveries mean fewer trips and reduced fuel use.
- **To cut costs:** bulk orders can reduce transportation and purchasing expenses.
- **To streamline operations:** consolidating orders saves time and simplifies inventory management.

#### HOW?

- Review your ordering patterns and identify opportunities for bulk purchases.
- Discuss delivery consolidation options with suppliers to reduce trip frequency.
- Assess if all purchases are necessary or if some can be eliminated.

### 3. EMBRACE CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRINCIPLES

#### WHY?

- **To minimise waste:** circular practices keep materials in use longer and reduce environmental impact.
- **To save resources:** recycling, reusing and composting save costs and resources.
- **To boost sustainability:** eco-friendly procurement and waste strategies align with environmental goals.

#### HOW?

- Prioritise products made from recycled or sustainable materials.
- Introduce circular programmes such as coffee ground composting, keep cup incentives and waste reduction staff training.
- Use eco-friendly packaging and refillable services for regularly procured goods and consider procuring secondhand items.
- Keep the waste hierarchy in mind when purchasing a new product eg how can you prevent, reduce, reuse, recycle that product before disposing of it?

### 4. CONSOLIDATE SUPPLIERS PROVIDING SIMILAR PRODUCTS

#### WHY?

- **To simplify supply chains:** reducing supplier numbers streamlines operations and reduces logistical complexity.
- **To foster sustainable partnerships:** prioritising suppliers with strong sustainability commitments amplifies your impact.

#### HOW?

- Review existing suppliers to identify overlaps in products or services.
- Merge similar procurement needs with fewer suppliers.
- Select suppliers already implementing sustainable practices.

## 5. REDUCE WASTE ACROSS THE SUPPLY CHAIN

### WHY?

- **Save costs:** waste reduction often translates to cost savings in materials and disposal.
- **Improve sustainability:** effective waste management reduces your overall environmental impact.
- **Build awareness:** engaging staff and suppliers fosters a culture of sustainability.

### HOW?

- Conduct Life Cycle Assessments (LCA) on products to evaluate their environmental impact.
- Implement food waste reduction strategies, such as inventory management, stock rotation, portion control and food donations.
- Opt for eco-friendly packaging like biodegradable or plastic-free options for goods transport.
- Increase staff awareness and training on recycling and waste minimisation.

Decarbonising your supply chain isn't just a responsibility - it's an opportunity to future-proof your business, strengthen relationships and build a more sustainable world.

**For more resources visit [Southwarkclimatecollective.co.uk](https://southwarkclimatecollective.co.uk)**

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