



# ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PURCHASING (EPP)

*Providing Buyers, Catalogers and Item Specialists*

*The Information Busy People Need to Keep Current*

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A free software model that helps select the best environmentally performing building products based on a wide range of attributes. Brought to you by the National Institute for Standards and Technology.

## **Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPG)**

EPA expected to have CPG IV (without the carpet category) and CPG V published in the Federal Register by the end of October, but it has been delayed. New date is unknown. Updates will be in future newsletters as they become available.

## **Biobased Products**

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) Federal Register announcement "Proposed Guidelines for Implementing Section 9002 of the Farm Bill" has been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and USDA received only minor comments. They expect to resolve them shortly and to publish the announcement sometime during the month of November. For details on the purpose and contents of the notice, see last month's newsletter at: <http://www.dlis.dla.mil/epp/pdf/Oct%2003%20Update.pdf>.

## **Third Party Certification - A Pilot Program**

In November 2002, the Joint Group on Environmental Attributes (JG-EnvAtt) discussed adopting Third Party Certification as an environmental attribute for the EPP program, but did not reach a decision to implement. Third Party means that a vendor has submitted its products to an independent Third Party organization for testing against a performance standard, and has received a certification that the products meets the standard after being tested using established test protocols. The EPA has issued guidance regarding use of Third Parties for identifying environmentally preferable products and encourages their use. EPA's fact sheet is at: <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/guidance/ngefact.htm>. To be considered a credible third party, an organization must fulfill certain requirements of transparency, no conflict of interest, technical competence, financial stability, formal operating rules and existence of an appeal process.

Currently, most products listed in DLA's green catalogs (products designated as environmentally preferable through the use of an Environmental Attribute Code (ENAC) in FLIS) have been only certified by the vendor. This is known as self declaration. The question put before the JG-EnvAtt was "should Third Party also be an attribute"? The idea is that vendors willing to go through the effort and expense to have an independent Third Party certify their products should somehow be differentiated from products

determined to be preferable only by a vendor's own declaration. The JG-EnvAtt accepted the principal, but withheld approval because of a concern that Third Party certification isn't really an attribute. Technically, an attribute is defined as an inherent

characteristic of a product, such as it's energy efficient or it contains no VOCs. So, in order to maintain the purity of the ENACs as designating attributes, the JG-EnvAtt wanted to know how would DLA implement a way to differentiate Third Party certified products. To answer this question, DLA DSS-E commissioned a pilot project to develop options for implementing Third Party. Under this project, a Third Party organization will be identified that has certified products that are managed by DLA. The product center managing the products will take whatever actions are necessary to be sure a DLA customer can place an order for the Third Party certified products, and not receive "equivalent" products that are not Third Party certified. This often happens when ordering against NSNs. DLIS would then determine how best to modify FLIS to designate Third Party certification. There are a number of options. It could be done using an existing, but unused, code called EPPC; expanding the size of the existing ENAC field; adding additional designators to the existing list of ENACs; or finding some other, as yet undiscovered way to reflect Third Party in FLIS. The pilot project is in its early stages, but updates will be provided in this newsletter.

### **Study to Screen New Potential Environmental Attributes**

DLA Headquarters (DSS-E) has commissioned a study to screen 8 potential environmental attributes. They are:

1. Mercury-free
2. Chlorine-free
3. Ozone Depleting Substance (ODS) alternatives/substitutes
4. Persistent Bio-accumulative Toxins (PBT) alternatives
5. Rechargeable (i.e., batteries)
6. Organic (for food)
7. Environmentally Friendly Packaging, and
8. An Environmental Attribute - to be determined

Some of these potential attributes were reviewed in the February 03 Supplemental newsletter. They were: organic, biobased, NESHAP Compliant (National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants), Mercury Free, and PBT Alternative (Persistent, Bioaccumulative & Toxic pollutant). For a copy, visit: <http://www.dlis.dla.mil/epp/pdf/supplementalfeb03.pdf>. An initial draft report for DLA to review is expected around the middle to end of November. Ideas for the as yet undecided attribute are welcome. Please feel free to provide your ideas by return email.

### **Legacy Ordering Systems and Identifying Environmentally Preferable Products**

EMALL does a good job of showing DLA's customers which products are environmentally preferable, and even provides a special green product section. But what about legacy ordering systems? If your customers do not use EMALL, ask them how they can tell if they're ordering an environmentally preferable products. EMALL identifies environmentally preferable products by pulling the ENAC from FLIS and showing a green tree next to the green products. However, legacy systems predate the Environmentally Preferable Program and funding to update legacy system has been scarce since BSM. Therefore, it may be possible that legacy systems do not capture ENACs and do not designate environmentally preferable products. Product centers and Customer Service Representatives may wish to consider asking customers about this. If customers cannot identify green products, DoD may not be compliant with federal requirements for green product procurement and even more importantly will lose sales of green products. Your newsletter editors are interested in this issue, so feel free to provide input by return email.

### **Building for Environmental and Economic Sustainability (BEES)**

BEES is a software product developed by the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) in cooperation with the EPA that helps select cost-effective, environmentally preferable building products. DLA managers of products that can be used in construction may want to familiarize themselves with the tool and inform their customers. BEES includes environmental and economic performance data for over 200 building products and evaluates them against twelve environmental impacts. It is unclear how CPG construction items, which must be given preferential procurement by Federal agencies, score using BEES. Download BEES 3.0 free at: <http://www.bfrl.nist.gov/oae/software/bees.html>