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Eco-procurement in community development: A systematic review of multi-dimensional sustainability outcomes and policy implications

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Abstract: *Purpose*: This study examined how eco-friendly procurement practices influence the sustainability of projects that promote community development for environmental, social, and economic benefits. *Methodology*: A systematic literature review integrating several studies on sustainable procurement in community development project contexts. A qualitative methodology was employed to provide a comprehensive perspective on eco-friendly procurement procedures and their beneficial impact on the sustainability of projects for community development. *Results*: The study revealed a positive influence of eco-procurement practices and sustainability of projects for community development. The findings also indicate a distinct environmental benefit, especially in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and resource efficiency. Sustainable procurement fosters community empowerment and social fairness at the societal level. Organizations gain economically by enhancing their brand image and lowering costs. Nonetheless, obstacles persist, particularly the need for robust policy frameworks and stakeholder involvement. *Theoretical Contribution*: This study adds to the theoretical understanding of sustainable procurement by combining socioeconomic advantages in community development initiatives with environmental stewardship. It demonstrates the significance of sustainable practices in achieving long-term sustainability objectives. *Practical Implications*: This research elucidates the need to establish consistent policy frameworks and engage the community in decision-making, enhancing the long-term viability of development projects. In addition to improving an organization's environmental effect, sustainable procuring promotes social and economic equality.

Keywords: eco-procurement, environmental sustainability, social responsibility, community development projects,

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sustainable development goals (SDGs), sustainable procurement

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; **SDG 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities; **SDG 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production; **SDG 13:** Climate Action; **SDG 17:** Partnerships for the Goals

1. Introduction

The global pursuit of sustainability has established green procurement practices as fundamental to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Fei *et al.,* 2021). Numerous community development projects will facilitate sustainability via green procurement (Wong, San Chan & Wadu, 2016)—the strategic acquisition of goods and services that minimize environmental and social impacts over their whole lifecycle (Huang *et al.,* 2020). These methods mitigate environmental degradation and result in enduring socioeconomic benefits for communities (Mazzi, 2020).

Organizational commitment, leadership support, and institutional competence (Sönnichsen & Clement, 2020) contribute to diverse sustainable procurement strategies (Mamun, 2020). A fundamental tenet of organizational resource-based theory emphasizes the essential function of resource management in minimizing environmental footprints via green procurement (Mohamed, 2023) and its strategic integration with supply chains to enhance financial performance (Ebledzi, 2024). Moreover, it fosters collaboration and trust among stakeholders, essential for the longevity and efficacy of community-level programs (Alormasor & Tetteh, 2024). However, these approaches necessitate robust policy support to promote stakeholder engagement and capacity development for their effectiveness (Tuffour *et al.,* 2024).

Participatory strategies that promote local ownership of projects enhance community development (Wanjue, 2023). Empirical research indicates community involvement in decision-making processes and resource management significantly enhances project outcomes and sustainability (Lo & Janta, 2020; Zikargae, Woldearegay & Skjerdal, 2022). This study addresseseco-friendly procurement and sustainable livelihood, with strategic interventions that integrate environmental sustainability with socioeconomic development (Opoku, 2025). This research advances sustainable development by identifying policy deficiencies and increasing stakeholder incentives to participate in marine debris reduction, utilizing experiences from several stakeholder categories.

2. Literature review

A key focus of the initiative involves strategic interventions in community development projects aimed at enhancing the socioeconomic conditions and the standard of living for particular communities (Wijoyo, Aseh, Kenny & Pathmathan, 2020). These projects encompass diverse activities, including infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and environmental conservation (Yu, Appiah, Zulu & Adu-Poku, 2024). Nevertheless, escalating land degradation and resource depletion have generated apprehensions over their long-term viability (Mukherjee, Patel & Kumar, 2020). Traditional procurement strategies primarily emphasize cost, performance, and operational efficiency, frequently neglecting the environmental impact of commodities and services (Khan, Yu & Farooq, 2023). Therefore, it is imperative to integrate eco-friendly procurement practices to advance sustainable community development projects, addressing the highlighted gaps.

2.1. The role of eco-friendly procurement in sustainable development

According to Waqar, Othman, and Shafiq (2025), eco-friendly procurement, often called sustainable procurement, entails incorporating environmental considerations into every procurement process, from planning to disposal. By prioritizing suppliers and materials that adhere to environmentally responsible methods, the objective is to mitigate the ecological imprint of community initiatives (Lăzăroiu *et al.,* 2020). Incorporating sustainable principles into procurement processes

effectively mitigates environmental harm while serving as a robust and enduring approach to executing long-term projects (Opoku *et al.,* 2022). Transitioning to sustainable procurement techniques mitigates the adverse effects of production and consumption and significantly contributes to environmental conservation (Esfahbodi, Zhang & Watson, 2016). Empirical research indicates that green procurement techniques may yield tangible environmental advantages, including less carbon emissions, improved air and water quality, and enhanced biodiversity (Onukwulu, Agho & Eyo-Udo, 2023). It also connects with broader sustainability aims, integrating environmental, social, and economic components with development initiatives (Zaidi, Mirza, Hou & Ashraf, 2019).

2.2. The multi-dimensional impact of eco-friendly procurement

The significance of sustainable procurement in promoting the three pillars of sustainability is considerable (Ishak & Thiruchelvam, 2024). From an environmental perspective, green purchasing reduces ecological footprints by promoting resource efficiency, waste reduction, and pollution abatement (Gadeka & Henaku, 2024). It ethically provides an equitable labor structure, encourages local enterprises, and fosters social justice among individuals (Hamdan, De Boer & Baer, 2021). Sustainable procurement enhances project life cycle viability by decreasing operational costs, optimizing resource utilization, and fostering long-term economic sustainability (Adebayo, Paul & Eyo-Udo, 2024). Local vendors are more likely to understand their environmental, along with social and economic context (Stoffel, Cravero, La Chimia & Quinot, 2019), thereby increasing the likelihood of adopting sustainable practices, a crucial strategy for sustainable procurement aimed at reinforcing the community-based economic system (Cravero, 2023). In order to align with sustainability goals, procurement frameworks and structures must provide selection criteria, including environmental performance indicators and ethical sourcing requirements (Fayezi, Zomorrodi & Bals, 2018).

2.3. Strategies for enhancing sustainable procurement in community development

Growing concerns regarding the environment and corporate social responsibility (Fallah Shayan *et al.,* 2022) have heightened the significance of sustainability in community development initiatives (Winston, 2022). This prompts governments and companies to implement green procurement strategies to diminish their environmental impact and foster sustainable economic development (Salman & Wang, 2024). Among these are life cycle assessments of the environmental impact of goods and services, ethical sourcing (human rights-respecting labor policies in supply chains), green supplier selection (picking suppliers with a track record of ethical and environmental performance) (John, 2024), and sustainable material use (using recyclable or renewable materials to lessen environmental degradation) (Winston, 2022). Such strategies are further bolstered by legal incentives and technical advancements that facilitate environmentally friendly procurement practices (Mensah & Ameyaw, 2025).

2.4. Challenges and opportunities in implementing eco-friendly procurement

While sustainable procurement's benefits are well-documented, many impediments often hinder adoption (Khandare, 2024). The primary obstacles include substantial initial expenditures, as eco-friendly products and services generally require greater upfront investments (Bidin *et al.,* 2020), which may dissuade stakeholders despite potential long-term financial advantages; inadequate supplier commitment (Hassan, Wafy, Hewedi & Ali, 2022), as suppliers may lack interest in adapting to sustainability objectives; and regulatory impediments (Belokrylov *et al.,* 2021), given that policies are poorly enforced and often inconsistent. Nonetheless, opportunities are emerging from policy-driven incentives, technological advancements, and increasing awareness among stakeholders (Kundu *et al.,* 2025). The increasing consumer demand for sustainable and environmentally friendly productsand advancements in sustainable technologies underscore a significant motivation for adopting eco-friendly procurement (Oyewobi & Jimoh, 2022).

3. Research methods

A systematic literature review was performed to collect information about the influence of environmentally friendly procurement practices on the sustainability of community development projects. This study offers a systematic review to address the research question: How do green procurement techniques affect environmental, social, and economic sustainability in the execution of community projects? The identification, selection, and critical evaluation of pertinent research papers, data extraction, and synthesis of findings constituted a systematic, complete, and transparent approach. The impacts of eco-friendly procurement strategies on environmental, social, and economic sustainability in community development initiatives were assessed. A protocol outlining the review procedure was established. This protocol encompassed a baseline overview of the significance of sustainable procurement for developing communities and delineated clear analytical findings about the potential environmental, social, and economic implications of sustainable procurement practices. Mandate that exploratory assessments for development projects incorporate eco-conscious procurement strategies and comprehensive sustainability outcomes as part of their eligibility criteria. Thematic analysis was used to synthesize the qualitative and quantitative data, while descriptive statistics were used to synthesize the quantitative data. Data analyses were conducted using narrative syntheses.

4. Research results

The analysis of empirical studies reveals that eco-procurement practices have a significant and multi-dimensional impact on the sustainability of community development projects. The research synthesizes evidence from diverse sectors, highlighting that sustainable procurement reduces operational costs and enhances environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic resilience.

From an economic perspective, adopting sustainable procurement strategies, such as resource efficiency, waste minimization, and investment in renewable energy-has led to measurable cost reductions. For instance, organizations implementing these practices report operational cost savings ranging from 9% to 16%, attributed to improved resource utilization and reduced waste generation. These financial benefits are further amplified by investments in long-term solutions like solar energy, which lower energy expenses and increase project scalability.

Environmentally, eco-procurement practices contribute to significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, promote energy-efficient technologies, and encourage the adoption of circular economy principles. Lifecycle assessment (LCA) methodologies, especially in construction projects, guide the selection of materials with minimal environmental impact, thus supporting long-term ecological sustainability.

Socially, sustainable procurement fosters community empowerment and social justice by prioritizing ethical sourcing, fair labor standards, and including local suppliers and SMEs. Programs like Danone's sustainable sourcing initiatives have improved small-scale farmers' incomes and food security, while broader procurement frameworks ensure safe working conditions and reject exploitative labor practices.

Moreover, integrating sustainability criteria into procurement processes enhances regulatory compliance, reduces legal risks, and strengthens supply chain resilience. Engaging suppliers in collaborative innovation further drives the development of environmentally friendly solutions and shared responsibility for sustainability outcomes.

Despite these benefits, the research identifies persistent challenges, including the need for robust policy frameworks, consistent enforcement, and greater stakeholder engagement. The empirical findings emphasize that while sustainable procurement offers substantial advantages, its full potential is realized only when comprehensive strategies, capacity-building, and participatory approaches are supported.

Table 1 summarizes empirical findings on the impact of eco-procurement practices across key dimensions of sustainability in community development projects. Each row details a specific focus area- cost reduction, environmental sustainability, ethical sourcing, or supplier engagement- alongside the principal findings from the literature and representative studies. The table illustrates the benefits associated with sustainable procurement, including operational cost savings, enhanced social equity,

reduced environmental impact, and improved regulatory compliance. It also highlights practical examples, such as using lifecycle assessments in construction, investment in renewable energy, and support for local suppliers, providing a comprehensive overview of how eco-procurement advances sustainability objectives in diverse project contexts.

Table 1: Empirical findings

Focus	Empirical Findings	Studies
Cost Reduction	Sustainable procurement contributes to lower operational costs through resource efficiency and waste reduction.	Arora, Arora, Sivakumar & Burke (2020)
Empowerment of Small-Scale Farmers	Danone's sustainable sourcing programs improve farmers' incomes and food security.	Sjauw-Koen-Fa (2018)
Environmental Sustainability	Sustainable procurement focuses on renewable energy, energy-efficient technologies, and circular economy principles to minimize greenhouse gas emissions.	Shahzad, Rehman, Zafar & Masood (2024)
Ethical Sourcing & Labor Standards	Choosing suppliers that endorse ethical labour or safe working conditions and reject child/forced labour.	Mamic (2017); Bayer & Anthony-Cooper (2019)
Investment in Renewable Energy and Technologies	Investing in solar energy for the long run reduces costs and guarantees project scalability.	Dobrotkova, Surana & Audinet (2018)
Lifecycle Assessment (LCA)	Construction LCAs can even guide you in selecting materials less harmful to the environment in the long run.	Mojumder, Singh, Kumar & Liu (2022)
Recycling & Waste Reduction	Adoptrecycled materials and low-emission concrete helps reduce landfill waste and preserve ecosystems.	Alkadry, Trammell & Dimand (2019)
Regulatory Compliance & Risk Management	Adhering to sustainability regulations reduces legal risks, and a diverse pool of suppliers improves risk resilience.	Negri, Cagno, Colicchia & Sarkis (2021)
Supplier Engagement & Innovation	Partnering with suppliers in sustainable practices encourages innovation and creates shared responsibility.	Fontoura & Coelho (2022)
Support for Local Suppliers & SMEs	Sustainable procurement approaches drive local economic renewal and social inclusion.	Anderton & Turner (2022); Govindan, Kaliyan, Kannan & Haq (2025)

5. Discussion of the results

The empirical findings underscore the potentially transformative impact of environmentally friendly procurement in community development projects by synergistically integrating social, environmental, and economic objectives. It is a strategic asset tool that integrates resource optimization with sustainability objectives for resilience and self-sufficiency. The literature generally concludes that sustainable procurement can mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by facilitating the transition to renewable energy, adopting energy-efficient technologies, and implementing circular economy principles (Shahzad, Rehman, Zafar & Masood, 2024). The lifecycle assessment (LCA) procurement method, particularly for construction projects, offers a systematic framework for choosing sustainable materials and minimizing environmental harm over time (Mojumder *et al.,* 2022). This empirical finding aligns with the broader discourse on sustainability, advocating for a transition from linear supply chains to circular systems, emphasizing resource recovery, waste reduction, and material reintegration (Geissdoerfer, Savaget, Bocken & Hultink, 2017).

Furthermore, instances in the construction sector, such as using recycled materials and low-emission concrete, illustrate how sustainable procurement aids ecosystem preservation (Alkadry, Trammell & Dimand, 2019). These findings endorse the notion that purchase decisions influence overall supply chain dynamics, impacting the production and consumption trajectory towards sustainability. This technique reduces dependence on raw materials, diminishing ecological impacts and promoting long-term economic sustainability.

Ethical sourcing and labor standards are crucial to sustainable procurement, impacting community well-being. Selecting suppliers that comply with ethical labor standards safeguards workers' rights, fosters safe working environments, and forbids exploitative practices, including child and forced labor (Mamic, 2017). Socioeconomic development is crucial, exemplified by Danone's implementation of sustainable sourcing programs that offer training and capacity-building for small-scale farmers (Sjauw-Koen-Fa, 2018). Sustainable procurement encompasses the evaluation of labor conditions. It extends to establishing equitable and socially just circumstances, fostering local suppliers and bolstering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as integral components of the region's economic revitalization (Anderton & Turner, 2022). This kind of localized procurement aligns with Porter and Kramer's (2011) concept of "Creating Shared Value" (CSV), wherein enterprises provide economic value while concurrently tackling societal concerns. Sustainable procurement prioritizes inclusivity, enhances income distribution, and fosters community resilience by considering fair trade practices (Govindan, Kaliyan, Kannan & Haq, 2025).

A notable empirical finding is the cost-saving potential of sustainable procurement. The financial advantages are further exemplified by the potential reduction of typical operational costs by 9–16% through enhanced resource utilization and diminished waste (Arora, Arora, Sivakumar & Burke, 2020). This supports earlier studies indicating that cost savings from sustainability arise from process enhancements, material efficiency, and reduced energy use (Carter & Rogers, 2008). Moreover, investment in renewable energy sources such as solar technology contributes to long-term financial stability and project expansion (Dobrotkova, Surana & Audinet, 2018). This study aligns with the worldwide transition to renewable energy, showing that companies implementing sustainable procurement methods may experience reduced operational risk and enhanced competitiveness.

Adherence to sustainability laws mitigates legal liabilities and enhances resilience against supply chain disruptions (Negri, Cagno, Colicchia & Sarkis, 2021). Sustainable procurement is a strategic solution to develop adaptable and resilient supply chains, particularly through the diversity of supplier networks amid climate risk, geopolitical unpredictability, and resource shortage. Third, empirical research indicates that including suppliers in sustainable efforts fosters innovative and accountable supply chains (Fontoura & Coelho, 2022). This method enables companies and suppliers to cooperate and develop creative solutions together, encompassing new initiatives for emission reduction and waste management. Sustainable procurement partners may match environmental and social objectives with commercial goals through collaboration, rather than establishing transactional supplier relationships.

6. Conclusions, research gaps, and recommendations

The analysis of the findings underscores the significant role of sustainable procurement in enhancing the sustainability of community development projects by balancing economic, social, and environmental goals. This approach not only mitigates environmental pollution but also fosters socioeconomic equity. The key takeaways of the findings are:

- *Environmental Sustainability* – Sustainable procurement practices, especially lifecycle assessments (LCAs) and circular economy discoveries, drastically decrease greenhouse gas emissions, optimize resource use, and limit landfill contributions.
- *Social Benefits* – Based on an ethical supply chain approach, sustainable sourcing can uplift communities by protecting local employment and stimulating regional value creation by promoting SMEs and local suppliers.
- *Economic benefits* - cost savings due to increased efficiency and improved brand reputation, regulatory compliance, and resilience against supply chain disruptions.

6.1 Gaps in research and directions for future research

Notwithstanding these gains, significant research gaps persist, indicating avenues for future investigation. Sustainable procurement primarily emphasizes ecologically responsible, socially inclusive, and economically advantageous community development initiatives. However, numerous research gaps hinder its complete potential. A defined future research agenda should encompass policy development, stakeholder participation, impact quantification, technological innovation, and capacity-building. Investigation: Determine the criteria for environmentally friendly public procurement based

on an established basic framework and evaluate various countries' sustainable public procurement policies worldwide using data available until October 2023. We must enhance stakeholder involvement in procurement decisions and investigate participatory tools and structured engagement approaches. Empirical analysis of the economic and environmental impacts of sustainable procurement is also essential, involving econometric models as well as lifecycle assessment approaches. Emerging technologies like blockchain and AI can enhance transparency, traceability, and efficiency in procurement procedures; yet, their adoption in poor nations has been limited. The success and results of this transformation process depend on exchanging knowledge about sustainable procurement practices adapted to the industry and cultural context of businesses. This includes determining the best ways to incorporate sustainable concepts into university curricula and professional certifications offered by academic institutions. In summary;

- *Emerging technologies:* Advanced technologies, including blockchain and AI, offer opportunities to improve transparency, efficiency, and accountability in sustainable procurement, but their potential is still largely unexplored.
- *Measuring the impact:* Additional empirical research is needed to quantify green procurement's exact economic and environmental impacts in different community development contexts.
- *Stakeholder engagement:* Limited Fluent involvement of surrounding communities and suppliers is fundamental to procurement choices, limiting the execution of sustainability benefits. More participatory approaches may help to make implementation effective.
- *Standardize policy frameworks:* More holistic and universally acceptable policies should be around sustainable supplier selection and evaluation, performance tracking, etc.

To bridge these gaps and ensure the benefits of sustainable procurement are maximized, the following recommendations are made:

- *Develop global standards* – Governments, regulatory bodies, and international organizations should collaborate to develop transparent and standardized policies for sustainable procurement, such as supplier evaluation metrics and sustainability reporting frameworks.
- *Engaged in more rigorous quantitative research* – Future research should provide a more directional sector and region-based quantification of economic and environmental impacts from sustainable procurement practices.
- *Increase stakeholder engagement* – Companies should align with a participatory decision-making framework by listening to the local communities and bringing suppliers along. Workshops, training programs, and structured feedback mechanisms can be used to include everyone in this process.
- *Strengthening capacity building initiatives* – Governments, NGOs, and private sector actors should focus on training for suppliers and procurement teams to build competencies on sustainable procurement implementations.
- *Use technology* – Blockchain for supply chain traceability and AI for procurement optimization can help enhance accountability, reduce fraud, and improve operational efficiency.

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Conflicts of interest

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