

## **One out of three Belgian employers chooses for fair or sustainable products on the workflow**

Only one out of three employers<sup>1</sup> currently chooses for fair or sustainable products on the workflow.<sup>2</sup> Price and quality are the main purchasing criteria<sup>3</sup>. 45% of employers that do not yet buy sustainable products are open to the idea of doing so in future.

The geographic difference is significant: In Flanders 34% purchases fair or sustainable products compared to 26% in Wallonia. Brussels does best with 43%.

### **Few sustainable products, much potential**

Employers are less willing to buy fair or sustainable products than individual consumers: 33% of employers purchase sustainable products compared to 54% of consumers<sup>4</sup>. This also shows in the fact that employers more easily purchase sustainable products if their purchasing officer takes decisions in the matter (34% against 16%).

More sustainable products are purchased by employers in the public sector (59%) than by the private sector (33%). Noticeably, 45% of employers that do not yet buy sustainable products are open to the idea of doing so in future.

### **Price and quality first**

Quality (91%) and price (75%) are the main purchasing criteria. The sustainability of products is only important for 41% of employers. This contrasts with the purchasing officers themselves, 63% of whom claim too little attention is paid to sustainability in the purchasing policy.

When employers purchase sustainable products this is usually because it is easy: 62% is satisfied with the products that they purchase or report that their regular supplier does not offer sustainable products (55%). Employers that do choose for sustainable products do so for ideological environmental or strategic reasons. Many of them point out that they selected suppliers from the own region.

### **Fair or sustainable?**

The top 3 of most purchased products on the workflow with a sustainability label consists of paper (16%), sugar (10%) and soap (9%). When asked which products with a fair trade label are purchased most, coffee (13%), paper (9%) and tea (9%) are the most cited categories.

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<sup>1</sup> This concerns both private and public enterprises. See the complete results and find out more about the poll.

<sup>2</sup> It concerns products offered to personnel and/or outsiders. It does not concern products that are manufactured or processed by the business itself.

<sup>3</sup> The findings in the press release are from the opinion poll "Sustainable products on the workflow" carried out by ProFacts for the Trade for Development Centre, November 2015.

<sup>4</sup> This figure is from [the opinion poll "Belgians and fair trade 2014"](#) carried out by Dedicated Research for the Trade for Development Centre, July 2014.

However, there is no such thing as paper with a fair trade label. This indicates that even though almost 9 out of 10 respondents have heard about sustainable and fair trade, there is still some confusion concerning fair trade and sustainable trade labels, organisations and brands. The study also showed that only few employers could spontaneously name a fair trade or sustainable trade label, organisation or brand. Oxfam Fair Trade (37%) and the Fairtrade label of Fairtrade Belgium (24%) were mentioned most.