

Set of Guidelines for Suppliers

June 2024



Introduction

In addition to the *PostNL Terms and Conditions for providing Products and/or Services*, this *Set of Guidelines for Suppliers* of PostNL is a specific clarification of the [PostNL Business Principles](#) and the [OECD Guidelines](#), and acceptance is mandatory when contracting suppliers of PostNL through Procurements & Services.

The *Set of Guidelines for Suppliers* is not exhaustive but rather serves as a guideline for the main areas of focus.

An important part of the [OECD Guidelines](#) is about responsible supply chain management. Therefore, PostNL expects its suppliers not only to have things in order in their own organisation but also to take their responsibility further down the supply chain and to carefully monitor whether everything is in order there as well.

1.1 Laws and certified management systems

Legislation

Suppliers must comply with all applicable laws and regulations, in particular those concerning hazardous substances, environmental performance, labour conditions and work facilities, and must be in possession of all the required permits. Suppliers must comply with local and other industry standards if these are more stringent than local statutory regulations. In addition, suppliers are required to fight any restrictions on free trade, unless this is provided for under the applicable national or international laws.

Management systems and certification

PostNL itself employs a variety of internationally recognised management systems and aims for certification of these systems in as many segments of its organisation as possible. The standards involved cover areas such as Quality Management (ISO 9001), 'healthy and safe work' (ISO 45001), Environmental Management (ISO 14001) and standards and benchmarks in the field of diversity (such as the [Diversity Charter](#)), sustainable entrepreneurship and social employment. PostNL urges its suppliers – in line with its own internal policy – to implement these types of internationally recognised management systems (preferably based on SA 8000 or ISO 26000).

Corporate Responsibility (CR)

PostNL requires its suppliers to take a proactive approach in introducing and maintaining socially responsible labour conditions and to take environmental care seriously, including by:

- collecting and evaluating, in a timely manner, adequate data and information relating to the effects of their activities on the environment, health and safety;
- setting measurable targets, whose relevance must be assessed on a periodic basis;
- regularly monitoring and assessing the progress of objectives in striving to improve environmental performance and socially responsible labour conditions.

PostNL strongly urges suppliers that are to be contracted or recontracted to have their CR performance assessed by organisations such as the [MVO-Register](#) foundation, [Fira](#) or [Ecovadis](#) and to share the results with PostNL. The results may give cause to agree on specific improvement actions during the contract period to be agreed.

1.2 Supplier relations & supply chain responsibility

PostNL expects its suppliers to adopt a proactive attitude and take an innovative approach, if possible, in improving the social, environmental and ethical aspects regarding the goods or services they provide. In doing so, they expressly take responsibility for the supply chain and identify CR risks.

PostNL firmly believes that compliance with the [OECD Guidelines](#) serves both its own interests and those of its suppliers, as they improve the continuity and success of our business operations in the long term.

PostNL reserves the right, prior to or after placing an order, to check all facilities where its products are manufactured or services are performed – including subcontractors, production facilities and subsuppliers – prior to, during and after the (production) process.

1.3 Intermediaries, subsuppliers and subcontractors

In most cases, intermediaries are likely to work with subsuppliers and subcontractors; this represents an additional step that renders the link between PostNL and any risks affecting PostNL less manageable. The intermediary will have to make as great an effort in relation to these subsuppliers as PostNL does in relation to its own suppliers. Traceability and transparent practices with regard to the intermediary are essential in this context. This means, among other things, that the intermediary will need to be able to indicate who its suppliers are and provide other relevant data about them to PostNL. PostNL reserves the right to make unannounced site visits to these suppliers, either accompanied by the intermediary or otherwise.

The PostNL contract partners (i.e. intermediaries or direct manufacturers) bear responsibility and guarantee that products or services that they have purchased or procured from third parties either in whole or in part comply with applicable laws and regulations and do not violate the [OECD Guidelines](#).

In the event of doubt, the intermediary must discuss this with PostNL.

1.4 Monitoring and inspection

Information and reports

At PostNL's request, suppliers must provide PostNL with information free of charge regarding their performance in all areas specified in this *Set of Guidelines for Suppliers*. Suppliers must guarantee the accuracy and completeness of this information. At PostNL's request, suppliers are required to provide information of the locations at which individual orders are fulfilled. Suppliers authorise PostNL and its intermediaries (including any third parties) to monitor compliance with this set of guidelines. All documents that must be consulted in order to monitor this compliance must be available at the suppliers, including test reports, internal-audit reports, inspection reports and proof of other relevant measures.

Just like PostNL protects information and properties received from third parties, PostNL expects its suppliers to do the same regarding information and properties they receive from third parties. Preferably the supplier works on the basis of the ISO 27001 standard for information security.

Client visits at supplier sites

Depending on a supplier's risk category, PostNL (or a designated third party) will be able to check compliance with this *Set of Guidelines for Suppliers* onsite. If PostNL or a third party designated by PostNL concludes that a party has failed to fully comply with the set of guidelines, it will determine what corrective measures are required in order to guarantee compliance within a timescale agreed between the parties.

Non-compliance

Insofar as suppliers are not or not yet able to comply with the provisions of this *Set of Guidelines for Suppliers*, PostNL will discuss with them what measures are necessary to ensure compliance in the near future. PostNL strives to work together with its suppliers in order to raise awareness of their CR performance. PostNL will point out methods for sustainable procurement to its suppliers in order to realise the desired sustainability of the supply chain. However, in all cases where a violation of the provisions of this *Set of Guidelines for Suppliers* is observed, PostNL reserves the right, depending on the seriousness of the violation, to terminate the relationship with immediate effect – at PostNL's discretion – and cancel pending orders. In such a case, the supplier is not entitled to any payment or other form of compensation.

1.5 Anti-corruption and anti-competition

It is not permitted to abuse a position of power that has arisen (by one or more persons) to grant unauthorized favours to oneself or others (the latter case often in exchange for services in return or as a favour to friends).

It is not permitted to offer or accept bribes in order to secure or grant contracts, services or financial or other benefits. It is not permitted to reward employees or offer them expensive gifts or entertainment if, in accepting these offerings, they might give the impression of entering into obligations.

Employees of PostNL or people representing PostNL are not allowed to benefit themselves from business opportunities that fall to PostNL.

Carrying out actions with the aim of forcing competitors out of the market or preventing them from entering or remaining in the same market is not permitted.

Any attempt or opportunity for abuse of power or bribery must be immediately rejected and reported (see also 1.6).

1.6 Conflicts of interest

Suppliers are obliged to report to PostNL every transaction or relation that reasonably leads/could lead to a conflict of interest. This applies for every violation of policies and procedures that are applicable within PostNL, violation or supposed violation of existing rules and regulations or any other possible irregularities. The report can be submitted to the contact person at PostNL. If this person is part of the irregularity, the report can be submitted to their direct manager, or otherwise to the *PostNL Audit & Security department* through integriteit@postnl.nl. Reports will be dealt with immediately and on a strictly confidential basis.

1.7 Working conditions

PostNL expects all its suppliers to honour fundamental human rights. Suppliers are required to treat all employees with dignity and respect. PostNL wishes to only conduct business with suppliers that honour the rights of employees, as set out in the [OECD Guidelines](#) and included in the provisions below.

Freedom of employment/humane treatment

PostNL disapproves all forms of forced and bonded labour. Suppliers are not allowed to use forced, bonded or involuntary prison labour. Employees may not be required to pay a security deposit or submit their identity documents to their employer and must have the freedom to leave their employer, provided they give the appropriate notice. Physical or psychological abuse and disciplinary action, threats of physical violence, sexual and other violence and other forms of abuse, along with verbal abuse and other forms of intimidation, are not permitted. All disciplinary measures must be documented.

Child labour

PostNL stands for good and social working conditions for everyone who works for us. We comply with the law, work according to the rules and our own [PostNL Business Principles](#) and expect the same from our suppliers and contractors. This also applies to the use of minors. In doing so, the guidelines of [UNICEF/ILO](#) and the [UN](#), as described in the [1989 United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) must be followed. In all cases, as a minimum, local national labour legislation must be complied with.

Freedom of association and the right to collective negotiation

PostNL recognises the fundamental right of employees to organise themselves in order to be able to represent and protect their interests. Suppliers recognise and honour this right of their employees to join (or not join) organisations of their choice (including trade unions) or establish such organisations, without needing to request their employer's permission. When hiring new employees, it is not permitted to stipulate that prospective employees refrain from joining a trade union or that they cancel their existing membership. Furthermore, union membership must never be a reason for dismissal or any other measures taken against an employee. Suppliers are not permitted to become involved in labour organisations or to finance them or otherwise attempt to control such organisations. Within the parameters set by laws and regulations and by means of the applicable labour relations and procedures, suppliers are required to honour the right of their employees to be represented by trade unions and other employee organisations. Suppliers are required to aim for agreement regarding the labour conditions by means of negotiations, either directly or through an employers' organisation.

Fair payment

The wages and benefits for a standard working week are at least in accordance with the applicable national standard (or the standard agreed for the industry, if this is higher). The wages for a standard working week (excluding overtime) should be sufficient to cover employees' basic needs and also guarantee a certain amount in disposable income. Prior to commencing employment, all employees must be provided with comprehensible written information regarding their wages under employment law and must subsequently receive a pay slip for each payment for the period in question. It is not permissible to deduct amounts from wages not provided for by national legislation, unless this is done with the express consent of the employee concerned.

Working hours and overtime

Working hours (including overtime) must comply with national laws or with general industry standards if these provide more protection. Overtime is voluntary and paid at an increased rate in accordance with national legislation or an applicable collective labour agreement.

Discrimination and intimidation

Suppliers are required to treat their employees equally in their employment and profession and ensure that they all have equal opportunities. Suppliers must pay employees in similar positions equal pay for equal work. No form of intimidation or discrimination is permitted with regard to employment (i.e. hiring, remuneration, training opportunities, promotion, termination, retirement, etc.) and profession, including discrimination based on race, caste, national origin or socioeconomic background, skin colour, sex, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, union membership, language, religion, political convictions, ownership, birth or otherwise.

Inclusion and diversity

Suppliers are expected to be committed to diversity and inclusiveness and preferably develop associated policies, built around the key themes of gender equality, multicultural diversity, acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ group, age differentiation, diversity in thinking and helping people gain and maintain access to the labour market.

Labour force participation and distance from the labour market

Suppliers are expected to be committed to bringing people with a distance to the labour market into the workforce. The reasons for distance from the labour market can be very diverse, such as age, a language or cultural barrier, mental, physical or sensory disabilities, but also psychosocial reasons such as long-term unemployment, detention, trauma, addiction or severe financial problems.

For employing people with a distance to the labour market, there are (at least in the Netherlands) several financial and other schemes, and there are several agencies that can help with advice and experience.

Regular employment and employment contract

All work is carried out in accordance with local national legislation. The supplier is not allowed to evade applicable laws and regulations regarding employees in terms of labour and social security. The use of learning programmes without a real intention to impart knowledge or acquire skills is also not allowed. Suppliers are likewise not permitted to evade regular terms of employment by relying excessively on fixed-term employment contracts.

Whistleblowers

Suppliers are expected to give employees (including temporary personnel and trainees) the opportunity to report alleged wrongdoing without suffering possible adverse consequences from a report of, for example, bullying, disregard, discrimination, withholding or reduction of salary, demotion, withholding of promotion, transfer or dismissal.

Suppliers with 50 employees or more are expected to have an internal reporting procedure for this purpose whereby reports can be made to a manager or confidentially to a confidential adviser.

1.8 Health and safety

PostNL sets strict requirements for its suppliers with regard to their employee health and safety policy.

Health and safety at production and office sites

Suppliers are required to provide their employees with a safe, clean and healthy workplace that complies with all applicable laws and regulations, taking into account the relevant expertise within the industry and any specific dangers involved. Suppliers should take effective measures to prevent accidents and injuries during or related to the work and should minimise risks in the working environment.

Suppliers will take appropriate and effective measures to protect the health and safety of their employees, for example by providing personal protective equipment, first aid/emergency facilities and adequate lighting, safety and climate systems. Employees are provided with written safety instructions and/or regularly attend documented safety training courses; these courses are provided again for the benefit of new or transferred employees. Evacuation drills are held regularly, but at least once a year.

Employees have free access to clean sanitary facilities, drinking water and, if applicable, equipment to store foodstuffs. Where applicable, suppliers must provide their employees with clean and safe housing that meets their basic needs.

The supplier will ensure that the employees concerned are equipped for their tasks and are able to carry them out properly. Illness reports must be respected without pressure being exerted to work anyway. Where specific safety or other training or certificates are required for the work, the supplier will ensure that the relevant employees have attended/acquired them.

Road traffic safety

PostNL aims to actively contribute to traffic safety. That is why PostNL asks its suppliers to:

- maintain their vehicles carefully and on a regular basis in order to be able to ensure maximum safety;
- pay close attention to the proper functioning and use of safety devices (e.g. helmets, protective/reflective clothing, safety belts, daytime running and other lights, blind-spot mirrors, camera systems, etc.);
- preferably have the employees concerned attend traffic-safety training courses.

Serious injuries

PostNL requires its suppliers, sub-suppliers and subcontractors to report all serious injuries (illnesses that may have been caused by a work-related problem, hospitalisation, permanent injury or death) that arise during the performance of work for PostNL to the PostNL contact person immediately. If, for whatever reason, this is not possible, PostNL Security can be reached via telephone number +31 88 868 61 12 or by email at security@postnl.nl.

1.9 The environment and hazardous substances

Environment

PostNL expects its suppliers to comply with the applicable environmental laws and regulations regarding environmental protection and take measures in order to protect the environment in the broadest sense of the term. In addition, suppliers are expected to work in accordance with internationally agreed targets on climate change and biodiversity.

Suppliers must adopt a proactive attitude and take an innovative approach, if possible, in improving the environmental aspects of the goods or services they provide.

CO₂ emissions

Suppliers must make a consistent effort to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels (such as gas, oil, coals, diesel, etc.), limiting electricity consumption and stimulate energy generation and storage based on renewable sources (e.g. biogas, tides, hydropower, wind power, solar energy, etc.) to limit CO₂ emissions to the lowest level that is reasonably achievable.

For transport services (including contractors driving on behalf of PostNL), suppliers must opt for the most fuel-efficient and least environmentally damaging way of transport available, provided this is economically feasible.

Pollution prevention

Suppliers are responsible for ensuring demonstrable and continuous improvement of their environmental performance in a variety of areas, including reducing emissions, noise and waste, plus a reduction of their dependency on natural resources and hazardous substances based on clear targets and an effective improvement programme.

Product development

In close collaboration with the customer, designer and producer, every stage of product development and production must take the environmental impact (including the waste stage) into account as much as possible (according to the *people-planet-profit* concept), preferably based on a circular economy or *cradle-to-cradle* (C2C) design philosophy.

Waste

The supplier has a procedure in place for the safe handling, storage, transport, use and disposal of all industrial waste (and in particular hazardous industrial waste) according to applicable laws and regulations. Provided this is economically feasible, waste collection will be segregated in order to ensure maximum reuse.

Hazardous and/or environmentally harmful substances

Suppliers, factories and subcontractors must ensure that the delivered goods are manufactured in accordance with all applicable environmental laws and regulations, including tightened and/or different national standards in individual EU Member States, and that there are no obstacles to the admission of these goods to the European Union and/or the country of destination.

Water use

Climate change and increasing water use increase the risk of water scarcity. To avoid this, water should be used more consciously. Our suppliers, the factories they use and subcontractors also play a role in this. They are asked to reduce and optimise their water use wherever possible, e.g. through more efficient production, treatment and reuse of wastewater, or the collection and use of rainwater.

1.10 Biodiversity, land conversion and deforestation

Procurement and/or production of goods may not lead to or contribute to land conversion or deforestation. The same applies to financial investments. Ecosystems must not be disrupted to such an extent that this has a significant impact on biodiversity.

By land conversion, we mean the change from a natural ecosystem to a different land use or a radical change in the species composition of the natural ecosystem, the structure or the function.

Deforestation we define as the loss of natural forest due to conversion to agriculture or land use other than forest, conversion to a plantation or severe or sustained degradation.

By biodiversity, we mean the variety of life (in all kinds of forms) on earth. Biodiversity includes the number of species, their genetic variation and the interaction of these life forms within complex ecosystems.

We expect our suppliers and their subcontractors not to engage in activities that have a significant negative impact on biodiversity or result in land conversion or deforestation. We would rather see them actively commit to a conversion and deforestation-free supply chain with an eye for healthy ecosystems.

1.11 Transparency

PostNL expects its suppliers to be transparent regarding their CR policy and activities. Sound reporting on CR efforts enables stakeholders to enter into a dialogue with the supplier and allows the supplier to improve itself through the constructive criticism of its stakeholders.

In an international context, there is the [Global Reporting Initiative](#), where companies can obtain information on how to report on CR and join the GRI Community.

For Dutch companies, the [Transparency Benchmark](#) of the Ministry of Economic Affairs provides transparency to the manner in which companies report on their CR activities.

PostNL encourages companies to have their CR performance independently registered and/or assessed by organisations such as [MVO Register](#), [Fira](#) or [Ecovadis](#).

1.12 Technology, privacy and information security

Due diligence is required of suppliers when applying technology, including the collection and use of data. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) should be observed in this regard. Preferably, the supplier should work according to the ISO 27001 guideline for information security. If ISO 27001 is not applied, the ISMS (*Information Security Management System*) process being applied may be inquired about.

1.13 Glossary – management systems

ISO 9001

ISO 9001 is an internationally recognised standard for establishing and certifying quality management systems. The standard describes what measures organisations must implement in order to comply with the applicable regulations and quality standards of its customers while at the same time improving customer satisfaction and continuously enhancing their performance in attempting to achieve these objectives.

ISO 14001

ISO 14001 is an internationally recognised standard for establishing and certifying environmental management systems in order to manage environmental aspects, improve environmental performance, reduce the damaging impact on the environment and improve environmental policy on an ongoing basis.

ISO 26000

ISO 26000 is an international guideline for the implementation of corporate responsibility (CR) in organisations. The guideline is based on a set of seven principles: accountability, transparency, ethical conduct, respecting the interests of stakeholders, compliance with laws and regulations, compliance with international standards, treaties/conventions and codes of conduct, and respect for human rights.

However, this document does not set any requirements and is therefore neither appropriate nor intended for certification. Nevertheless, organisations have an increasing desire to show that they are applying ISO 26000.

This is why the NEN Standards Committee on Social Responsibility has developed an ISO 26000 self-declaration (the Dutch code of practice NPR 9026).

For further information regarding this ISO 26000 self-declaration see:

<https://www.nen.nl/en/certificatie-en-keurmerken-publicatieplatform-iso-26000-mvo>

For more information on ISO 26000 see:

<https://www.iso.org/iso-26000-social-responsibility.html>

ISO 27001

ISO 27001 is a globally recognised standard in the field of information security. The standard describes how process-based information security should be handled, with the aim of ensuring the confidentiality, availability and integrity of information. This includes protecting personal and/or company data and protection against hackers and breaches.

For more information on ISO 26000 see: <https://www.iso.org/standard/27001>

ISO 45001

ISO 45001, as the successor to OHSAS 18001, will become the new internationally recognised standard for setting up and certifying an occupational health and safety management system to control and minimise the health and safety risks under which employees perform their work. By the way, the Dutch term ARBO will largely be replaced by healthy & safe working. Internationally, this is called; Occupational Health and Safety' (OH&S).

For further information, see: www.iso.org/iso-45001-occupational-health-and-safety.html

OECD Guidelines

See: <https://www.oecdguidelines.nl/oecd-guidelines/a/all-about-the-oecd-general-information>

SA 8000

This standard, issued by the human rights organisation *Social Accountability International* (SAI), is designed to enforce fair and decent working conditions within supply chains. SA 8000 is based on international standards for working conditions specified in the conventions of the *International Labour Organisation* (ILO), the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. This standard covers the areas of child labour, forced labour, health and safety, freedom of association and the right to collective negotiation, discrimination, disciplinary measures, working hours, compensation and management systems. For further information, see www.sa-intl.org.

UN Convention of the Rights of a Child

www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx

Questions?

Contact us at inkoopenservices@postnl.nl

