



Circular furniture in an office move

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Introduction

The Norwegian Agency for public and financial management (DFO) moved to new office buildings in October 2021. The organisation aimed to reuse as much of its furniture as possible in its various locations. This was achieved either by directly reusing furniture, or by putting it through a round of maintenance and simple repair. Any additional needs were met by procuring new furniture with circular characteristics.

Procurement process

The procurement process was the result of a collaboration between DFO's procurement department and sustainability advisors. As DFO advises the entire public sector in Norway on green public procurement, the furniture project was seen as a chance to walk the talk. All the

parties agreed on the common goal of *reusing as much furniture as possible*.

A framework agreement for the procurement of new circular furniture was established, including Green Public Procurement criteria related to quality, warranties, reparability and maintenance information as well as the absence of toxic chemicals. In addition to that agreement, another one was established for the procurement of used furniture. Unfortunately, it came just too late, as the supplier did not have enough time to provide sufficient quantities of used furniture to satisfy DFO's needs. However, DFO was able to obtain 60 used tower cabinets and a few other used items from other Norwegian agencies. This meant that the furniture needs were covered by: a) using and reusing the furniture already owned by DFO, b) obtaining used furniture from other agencies,



and c) procuring new furniture with circular characteristics. Additionally, as DFO had reduced its use of paper documents, many of the storage shelves in the new office building were not needed. A redesign project was initiated that used some of these shelves to create new flexible room dividers, as illustrated in the picture. The results in terms of carbon and waste savings were calculated using an Excel tool developed by the sustainability advisors contributing to the pilot.



Results

- NOK 3.1 million in savings
- 50 tonnes of CO₂-eq saved
- 30 tonnes of waste avoided

To access the carbon and waste footprint calculation tool, please contact DFO. The savings here are estimated in comparison with a scenario where DFO only procured new furniture.

Lessons learned

- Close collaboration around a joint reuse SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-based) goal should be established in the planning phase of the procurement process. The reuse process can be seen as a chain where subsequent links are only as strong as the link that precedes them. Establishing a SMART goal represents the first link in the chain. With a SMARTer goal, DFO could have achieved even better results.
- The furniture category provides ample opportunity to set minimum circular criteria, whereas the use of award criteria is more challenging. But the lowest hanging sustainability fruits are associated with procuring used furniture or extending the lifetime of existing furniture.