

GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CASE STUDY

Contracting Authority: Bus Éireann Procurement of Non-Hazardous Waste Collection Services¹

Background

Bus Éireann is the State's national bus company, serving schools, towns and cities across Ireland. Bus Éireann's purpose is to sustainably connect people with who and what matters to them, helping to make life better.

The generation of non-hazardous waste from Bus Éireann's operations is actively managed as a risk through the company's Environmental Aspects and Impacts Register. Consequently, it was essential for Bus Éireann to incorporate Green Public Procurement criteria into the 2024 contract and ensure that the contract aligned with circular economy national objectives, legislative obligations and the company's strategic goals related to reuse, waste reduction and recycling.

Procurement Objective

The purpose of the contract was to provide waste collection (residual, recyclables, biowaste) management and recycling services across all Bus Éireann depots, offices, and garages.

The contract is designed to ensure that waste management practices are aligned with Bus Éireann's Sustainability Strategy, support national recycling targets, and comply with the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System requirements. The contract aims to standardise practices across all facilities, minimise landfill waste, and promote sustainable, cost-effective waste handling solutions that reflect the company's commitment to environmental responsibility.

¹ Not including construction waste collection services



Procurement Approach

As part of the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ), it was a mandatory requirement that all applicants possess an Environmental Management System in compliance with ISO 14001 or equivalent. Applicants were required to demonstrate their compliance with all applicable waste legislation and waste authorisation requirements related to a) waste management facilities and b) waste collection services associated with this contract.

The specification outlined the following additional key requirements:

- The contractor must actively contribute to achieving and surpassing the company's targets: 70% recycling rate by 2030, 50% reduction in waste volume compared to 2019.
- The tenderer must demonstrate a clear plan and set objectives to support the circular economy.
- A minimum three-bin system is required in some locations (some locations did not have biowaste considerations), facilitating proper segregation of organic, recyclable, and general waste. Bins and containers are colour-coded in accordance with national standards to facilitate ease of use and compliance.
- Mandatory waste audits are conducted at least four times a year to ensure compliance and identify areas for improvement.
- Appropriate Key Performance Indicators must be established to measure the performance of the contract effectively.
- All tenderers must sign and adhere to Bus Éireann's supplier codes of conduct, which establishes clear expectations and standards for ethical and sustainable business practices.

Criteria Used

At award stage, approximately 20% of the total available marks were allocated to green criteria, with the following criteria applied:

- Account management and subject matter experts
- Reporting
- Training
- Sustainability in delivery of the contract and innovation to meet Bus Éireann sustainability targets.

Year Contract Signed

2025

Outcome

The impacts and outcomes resulting from the inclusion of green criteria will be assessed through the mandatory waste audit process and regular performance review meetings. These reviews will incorporate quarterly key performance indicators (KPIs) focused on waste volumes and recycling rates, to meet Bus Éireann's strategic goals of a 70% recycling rate and 50% reduction in general waste by 2030 (based on comparison to 2019 starting point). These targets fall within the life of the contract so it will be key to achieving them.

A similar approach was applied under the previous non-hazardous waste contract, which led to a 20% reduction in overall waste volumes and approx. 12% increase in recycling rates from 2019 to Q4 2024.



Lessons Learned/Challenges/Success Factors

Lessons Learned

- Regular performance reviews and the use of both desktop and site-based waste audits are essential to drive continuous improvement and achieve positive outcomes in waste management.
- Bus Éireann implemented a tracker of 'waste collected per site', which was used to identify areas for the contractor to target.
- Consistent waste infrastructure in all locations (including colour coding and signage) on internal and external bins to support proper waste segregation.

Success Factors

- Bus Éireann have invested in waste segregation infrastructure to support the performance of the non-hazardous waste management contract. The internal bin infrastructure for the entire country is estimated to cost between €75k and €85k. The cost of this contract is expected to remain the same as the previous contract but be more cost effective in terms of cost per lift.

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