



GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CASE STUDY

Contracting Authority: Bus Éireann Procurement of Uniforms and Related Services

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.

Bus Éireann actively considers the environmental, social, and governance impact of its supply chain. The procurement department works in partnership with the wider business to develop green specifications and embed sustainability criteria into contracts.

This procurement focused on greening the supply of uniforms for drivers and garage staff.

Procurement Objective

Bus Éireann's aim in this tender was to:

- Use sustainable materials in the manufacturing of uniforms.
- Reduce the number of garments issued to employees.
- Extend the rollout period of uniforms.
- Recycle garments.
- Reduce the number of uniform deliveries.

The aim was to raise the sustainability criteria from a level of 10.8% to a minimum threshold of 20%.

Procurement Approach

The uniform procurement process placed a strong emphasis on both sustainability and functionality.

- The materials selected included >20% recycled polyester or sustainably sourced cotton.
- Durability was a key consideration. The uniform lifecycle extended from 12 to 18 months, and the replacement cycle for raincoats extended from 12 months to 3 years. This reduced the frequency of procurement cycles, leading to less consumption of resources and decreased operational emissions.
- Innovative design was used to reduce the total number of garments supplied to staff. Instead of issuing separate gilets and jackets, a single jacket with removable sleeves was introduced, reducing the total number of garments required.

The circular economy was considered, and a partnership is being developed between Bus Éireann, We Make Good (social enterprise contractors), and their uniform supply contractor to make used uniforms into new products where possible. This collaboration involves identifying uniform items that can be transformed into useful items that can be used within the company (for example, lanyards, coin holders, seat belt cushioning, tote bags).



Criteria Used

These specific criteria were included and addressed the following:

Supply Chain Management

- Uniform supplier is Eco Vadis approved, a globally recognized sustainability rating platform used in supply chain management to evaluate suppliers and benchmark sustainability maturity. Suppliers had to outline their supply chain and sign a code of conduct to ensure that as far as reasonably practicable, the supply chain was ethical and legal.

Garment Durability

- Extend the uniform lifecycle from 12 to 18 months, to reduce the frequency of rollouts, resulting in fewer deliveries and less material consumption over the contract lifecycle.
- All garments must be manufactured using high-quality materials capable of withstanding daily wear for at least 18 months. This eliminated two rollout cycles, resulting in a 40% reduction in transport-related CO₂ emissions and considerable cost savings from garments no longer required.
- Carbon emissions associated with this contract are tracked and reported annually.

Sustainability Over Life of Contract

- Choosing fabrics that were more sustainable (recycled polyester, sustainably sourced cotton).
- Recycling a portion of the used uniforms.
- The contractor is expected to sign up to Bus Éireann's code of conduct and support Bus Éireann achieve its targets and sustainability goals.
- Use of sustainable packaging.

Award Criteria Marks Assigned to Green Criteria

Approximately 30%

Year Contract Signed

2025

Outcome

The inclusion of green criteria in this procurement process will have the following significant impacts:

- Transitioning from a 12-month to an 18-month uniform rollout is projected to save approximately 40% in delivery costs, an estimated €20,000 for 2,250 staff, including a 10% return rate. This change will also significantly reduce transport-related CO₂ emissions.
- By innovating the design and combining the gilet and jacket into a single convertible garment, Bus Éireann has eliminated the need for one garment—resulting in a reduction of 6,750 garments. This change is estimated to save approximately €125,000, in addition to reducing the environmental impact associated with garment manufacturing.
- Moving from an 18-month to a 3-year raincoat replacement cycle will reduce material use and manufacturing by one-third over the life of the contract. This change is expected to save just under €45,000 over the life of the contract.



Lessons Learned/Challenges/Success Factors

Success Factors

- **Extended Uniform Lifecycle:** One of the most impactful changes was extending the uniform lifecycle from 12 to 18 months in terms of saving material used to manufacture uniforms, delivery costs and CO₂ emissions.
- **Supplier Collaboration:** Bus Éireann is working in partnership with social enterprise contractor, 'We Make Good', which helped identify sustainable solutions for some used uniforms.
- **Staff Involvement:** Active participation from drivers and garage staff through wearer trials, meetings, and feedback helped shape the final uniform design.

Challenges

- **Engagement Levels:** Approximately 10% of the driver population participated in the online survey. Of those, 70% supported the move to an 18-month rollout, and 60% agreed with a proposed 3-year coat cycle. While this is a fair sample, broader engagement would strengthen future decision-making.

Contact Details

procurement@buseireann.ie



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Headquarters

PO Box 3000,
Johnstown Castle Estate,
County Wexford,
Ireland

T: +353 53 916 0600
F: +353 53 916 0699
E: info@epa.ie
W: www.epa.ie
LoCall: 0818 33 55 99