GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Information for suppliers

Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland
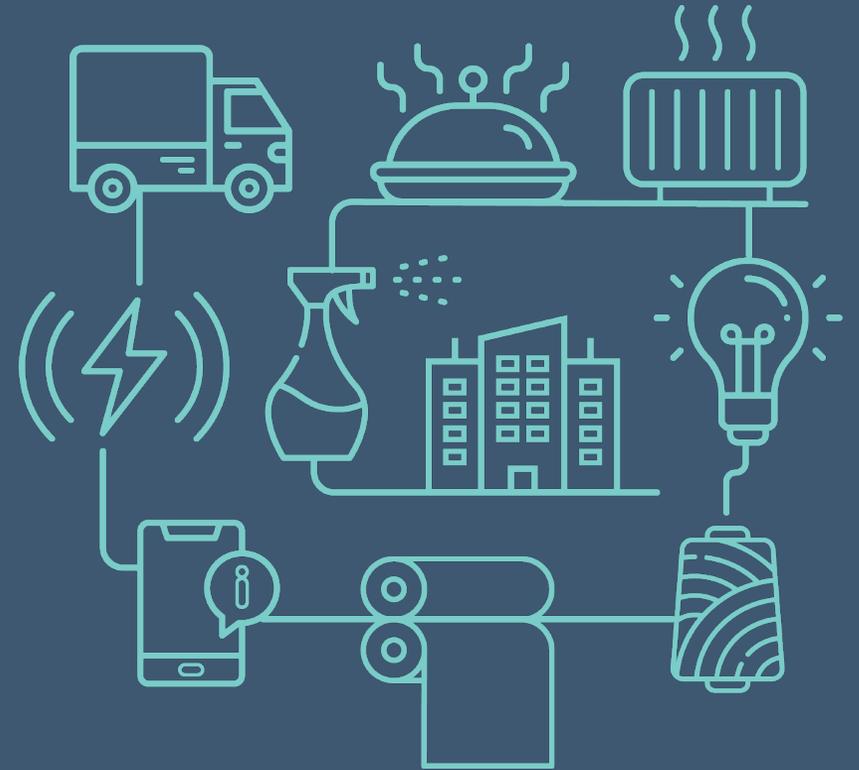
WHAT IS GPP?

Green Public Procurement is about the public sector choosing more sustainable products and services

In Ireland, public procurement is worth more than **€21 billion each year**

From major infrastructure investments, through to small local deliveries, each contract has an environmental impact

A breakdown of public sector procurement spending by product and service category can be found in the *Public Service Spend and Tendering Analysis Report* (Office of Government Procurement). Note that this does not include all public sector procurement, only the addressable spend which falls within the remit of the OGP and the Central Purchasing Bodies (CPBs) for Health, Education, Local Government and Defence. 53% of the analysed spend for 2018 was with SMEs.

€21 BILLION

IRELAND'S COMMITMENTS

Ireland has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by

51% by 2030,

and reaching

net zero **by 2050**

Public bodies must deliver a

50% improvement in

energy-efficiency

by 2030

Under the Programme for Government, **all procurement using public funds has to include**

green criteria by 2023

Other targets apply in specific sectors, e.g. **food waste to be**

halved by 2030

under the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:
- *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* (setting out the 2030 and 2050 commitments)
- Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland *Annual Report 2020 on Public Sector Energy Efficiency Performance*
- Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (2020) *Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy*
- Department of the Taoiseach (2020) *Programme for Government: Our Shared Future*

EU LAW & POLICY

EU public procurement rules allow environmental considerations to be included at each stage of a tender

For some purchases, public bodies must apply minimum environmental criteria, e.g. **energy-using products, buildings and vehicles**

Under EU Green Deal mandatory GPP will be introduced in some areas, e.g. **batteries**

There is increasing focus on **circular economy** considerations, e.g. in the Ecodesign regulations

REFERENCES:

- European Commission (2016) *Buying Green: A Handbook for Environmental Public Procurement*
- European Commission (2019) *Communication and Roadmap on the European Green Deal*
- European Commission (2021) *'Fit for 55': delivering the EU's 2030 Climate Target on the way to climate neutrality*
- Updates on the changes to EU legislation under the Green Deal/Fit for 55 are available at: Latest EU policy actions on climate change - Consilium (europa.eu)

ABOUT GPP

GPP is about specific actions which suppliers and service providers take in delivering public contracts

GPP criteria are designed to be fair to all bidders – and require proof of the green claims made

GPP **isn't about** green marketing or general corporate commitments

EXAMPLE: GPP IN ACTION

The Office of Public Works commissioned an environmental impact assessment for its furniture procurement

Specifications, award criteria and contract performance clauses were developed to address a range of impacts e.g. legal and sustainable timber, adhesives, finishes, emissions and waste

There was no increase in costs and suppliers adopted practices in their other business, leading to some cost reductions

The furniture was delivered wrapped in blankets rather than plastic packaging; general switch from acid- to water-based lacquers

Full case study available **here**

CASE STUDY

EPA GUIDANCE ON GPP

Fully updated in 2021 to reflect legislation and best practice for GPP

Explains concepts such as market engagement, needs assessment, GPP criteria and life-cycle costing

Includes advice on implementing, monitoring and reporting on GPP

Suggests what type of evidence to request from bidders and contractors

Gives overview of environmental impact of 12 product/service sectors and includes criteria sets on 10 priority sectors

The EPA guidance on GPP (second edition) was published in September 2021 and can be accessed at:
www.epa.ie/publications/circular-economy/resources/green-public-procurement.php

It was drafted with input from the Office of Government Procurement, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, and other stakeholders. A consultation on the draft guidance was held with supplier bodies, environmental organisations and public sector purchasers. Training on GPP has been delivered to over 100 public bodies through an EPA-sponsored programme.

The environmental impacts addressed go beyond carbon and energy, including e.g. water consumption and impacts on biodiversity/land use.

IRISH GPP CRITERIA

Road transport vehicles and services

Indoor and outdoor lighting

ICT products and services (including data centres)

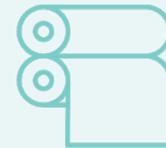Heating equipment (including boilers, cogeneration, trigeneration and heat pumps)

Food and catering services

Energy-related products (white goods/appliances, electronic displays, vacuum cleaners)

Cleaning products and services

Paper products and printing services

Design, construction and management of office buildings

Textile products and services (including uniforms and laundry services)

IRISH GPP CRITERIA

Detailed criteria covering 10 priority product and service groups

Based on EU GPP criteria, with some adjustments to reflect the Irish market

WHAT DO THE CRITERIA INCLUDE?

Specifications, selection and award criteria and contract performance conditions

Relevant standards, legislation, certifications and ecolabels

Purchasing recommendations for electricity and professional services

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PRIORITY SECTORS

GPP & THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Circular economy is about moving away from the 'take-make-use-waste' model by maintaining the value of resources

GPP criteria address the entire life-cycle, e.g. raw materials, manufacturing and processing, use phase and end-of-life

EXAMPLES:

The ICT criteria include requirements for rechargeable battery performance, repairability and design for disassembly

The food and catering services criteria include requirements for organic and sustainable production, packaging and redistribution of excess food

- European Commission (2017) *Public Procurement for a Circular Economy: Good practice and guidance*
- **EPA Circular Economy Programme:** www.epacirculareconomy.ie
- **EU Circular Economy Action Plan:** https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/circular-economy-action-plan_en
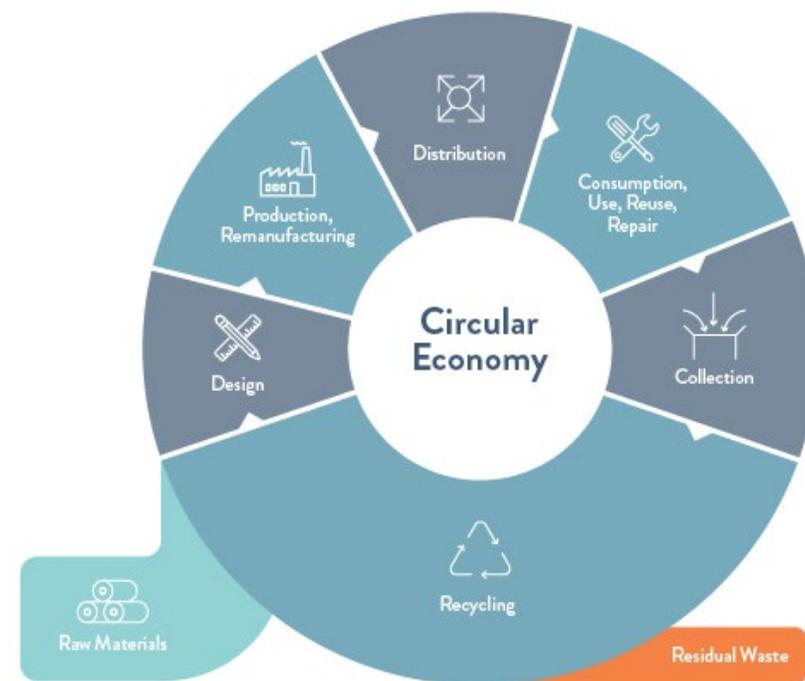
Source: EPA Circular Economy Programme

WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT IN TENDERS

Exclusion grounds will include breaches of applicable environmental law

Selection criteria may ask for evidence of environmental management systems, supply chain management systems, previous experience, technical capacity and staff training/qualifications

Technical specifications will set minimum environmental requirements

Award criteria may target enhanced environmental performance

Contract performance clauses will enforce the environmental aspects and set requirements for monitoring and reporting

HOW TO PREPARE

Ask your public sector clients about their plans to implement GPP

Keep up to date with developments at EU level, including **new editions of the GPP criteria** and **changes to legislation**

Consider how you will demonstrate compliance with GPP criteria in the sector(s) in which you operate

Invest in relevant training and independent certification to demonstrate your firm's green credentials

Measure the environmental impacts of your activities and set targets to reduce them

There are many freely available resources for measuring organisational/product environmental footprint:
- **Greenhouse Gas Protocol:** ghgprotocol.org/
- **Carbon Disclosure Project:** www.cdp.net/en
- **Product Environmental Footprint:** https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/initiative_on_green_claims.htm
- **Global Reporting Initiative:** www.globalreporting.org/

LINKS & RESOURCES

EU GPP website:
ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm

Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications GPP website: www.gov.ie/en/publication/efa12-green-public-procurement-gpp/

EPA Circular Economy Programme: www.epacirculareconomy.ie

Office for Government Procurement Circulars and Information Notes: www.gov.ie/en/organisation/office-of-government-procurement/