

GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Quick Guide



QUICK GUIDE TO GPP

FINDING AND APPLYING APPROPRIATE TENDER CRITERIA

Note: The following information is an extract from the EPA [Green Procurement Guidance for the Public Sector](#) (2025 edition). Please refer to that document for further information on GPP.

The Irish GPP criteria can be accessed on the EPA website or using the GPP criteria search tool. The criteria are designed to be inserted directly into tenders and contracts and are accompanied by notes on the relevant legislation, standards and labels in each sector, as well as information on how the criteria can be evaluated and verified. The criteria are applicable to different modes of procurement: one-off purchases, framework agreements, service contracts, lease or licence arrangements etc.

The updated Irish GPP criteria:

- Enable compliance with the mandatory GPP requirements set out in legislation, in the [Buying Greener Strategy and Action Plan](#) (Buying Greener) and in [Circular 17/2025](#)
- Aim to ensure acceptable levels of competition (including by SMEs), cost and quality as well as measurable environmental gains
- Are capable of verification with reference to commonly available certifications, tests and standards.

The term 'GPP criteria' includes technical specifications, selection and award criteria, and contract performance conditions. They are divided into two different levels of ambition:

- The **core criteria** can be applied by any Irish public body, and are expected to have minimal effect on costs or verification effort.
- The **comprehensive criteria** go beyond the core requirements to target enhanced environmental performance and may imply some additional costs or verification effort.

The criteria are updated regularly to reflect new legislation and policy, as well as feedback from public, private and third-sector bodies. They currently cover 11 product/service categories:

	Road transport vehicles and services
	ICT products and services (including data centres and cloud services)
	Food and catering services
	Cleaning products and services
	Building design, construction and management
	Furniture and related services
	Indoor and outdoor lighting (including road lighting and traffic signals)
	Heating equipment (including cogeneration, trigeneration and heat pumps)
	Energy-related products (white goods/appliances, electronic displays, vacuum cleaners)
	Paper products and printing services
	Textile products and services (including uniforms and laundry services)

Not all of the criteria for a given product/service category will be relevant for each tender. The principles of **proportionality** and **equal treatment** must be considered in every procurement, and these are relevant to both the selection of appropriate GPP criteria and their evaluation. While the Irish and EU GPP criteria are designed to respect these principles and offer all operators (including SMEs) the opportunity to compete, the following steps are recommended to ensure a good response to the criteria:

1. Identify the **main environmental impacts** associated with the specific goods, services or works being procured. A summary of the most relevant environmental impacts for each of the categories covered by the Irish and EU GPP criteria is included at the start of the criteria documents.
2. Conduct a **needs assessment** to identify the scope for reducing demand and/or introducing greener alternatives.
3. **Inform and engage the market** about your planned use of GPP criteria, and to confirm capacity to respond to them.
4. Finalise your **procurement strategy and tender documents**, including appropriate GPP criteria from Irish, EU or other sources. The EU criteria are available on [this page](#), and examples of minimum environmental criteria for categories not covered by the Irish/EU criteria sets are included on page 76 of [Buying Greener](#).
5. Evaluate compliance and performance under the GPP criteria, based upon the **verification provisions** which are part of the criteria.
6. Put in place robust **contract management measures**, including monitoring and reporting on GPP and measures to promote continuous improvement.

Further relevant guidance on (pre-) procurement and sustainability is available from the following Office of Government Procurement publications:

[Opportunities and approaches for Sustainable Public Procurement](#)

[Public procurement guidelines for goods and services](#)

If you are buying **professional services** (e.g. consultancy, financial or legal services, technical advisory, research, recruitment, advertising)...

While there are no pre-defined criteria for these services, they are covered by the 'Comply or explain' mandate so contracting authorities must include appropriate green criteria in tenders. Two key points need to be kept in mind:

1. GPP should always be about identifying and rewarding enhanced environmental offers, rather than simply rewarding business-as-usual or encouraging vague claims.
2. All criteria must be **linked to the subject-matter of the contract**, meaning they should relate to the specific services being provided and not general policies of the bidders.

Within these parameters, the following specific approaches could be considered:

- **Selection criteria:** Require an environmental management system/ supply chain management system, or award marks for these. Request evidence of capacity to implement environmental measures, staff training and qualifications. Where appropriate, require examples of previous contracts implementing similar environmental measures.

- **Technical specifications/Project requirements:** Limit travel under contract or specify modes (e.g public transport/ walking/cycling wherever possible); eliminate or reduce printed outputs and require file sharing rather than attachments; require environmental impacts to be evaluated in advance and reported for all project activities; if equipment or materials will be purchased to fulfil contract, specify environmental requirements.
- **Award criteria:** Award marks for specific proposals which will result in measurable reductions in emissions, energy or resource use associated with the contract. You can either leave it open to bidders to propose actions, or define a list of environmental measures specific to the contract. In some cases, the provision of staff training linked to the environmental impacts of the contract may be relevant. The proposed actions will form part of the contract with the successful bidder.
- **Contract performance clauses:** Include specific environmental commitments made in tenders with timelines, monitoring, reporting, escalation and remedies; hold periodic reviews to increase environmental performance levels; provide for shared financial or other incentives linked to CO₂e, energy or waste reduction.

Note that all of the above considerations are **directly related to the services to be provided under the contract, rather than general corporate commitments such as a net zero policy**. This is required under the public procurement rules, as all criteria must be linked to the subject-matter of the contract and not concern general corporate policies (Art. 67/Recital 97 of Directive 2014/24/EU). This also helps to avoid **greenwash** or vague environmental claims which cannot be enforced in contracts.

If you are buying **software, cloud services** or **ICT development/support services**, in addition to the above criteria one or more of the Irish GPP criteria for ICT products and services may be relevant, for example:

- **Selection Criterion (SC1):** Environmental Management Capacity of Service Providers
This evaluates the capacity, skills, resources and experience of candidates with regard to the specific environmental requirements of the contract, for example: developing, designing and operating systems which minimise environmental impacts across their life-cycle; energy management; and the specification, sourcing, operation and end-of-life management of hardware (where relevant).
- **Award Criterion (AC1):** Environmental Impact of Services Provided under Contract
This evaluates specific proposals made by bidders to address the main environmental impacts of the services being provided. Bidders are required to identify the expected impacts of the contract in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, energy use, biodiversity, resource consumption and waste. Bidders must list the specific measures which they, and if relevant their partners and subcontractors, will take to address these impacts, and the effect they expect each measure to have.

Please refer to the Irish GPP criteria for ICT products and services (Section 3) for the full wording of these criteria, along with the verification clause which details the evidence to be provided.

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