



**Oifig an
Rialaitheora Pleanála**
Office of the
Planning Regulator

Office of the Planning Regulator

Corporate Procurement Plan

2020-2023

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1 Introduction

The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) was established in April 2019 under the provisions of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018. As part of the establishment efforts, a wide range of goods and services were required to be procured in order to enable the organisation to begin its functioning to deliver our statutory role.

As the OPR transitions from its establishment phase and as part of our strategic and budgetary planning process, this Corporate Procurement Plan has been prepared to demonstrate our commitment to achieving value for money and implementing the most effective procurement processes within the OPR.

The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 requires state bodies to prepare a Corporate Procurement Plan as set out in section 8.20 of the code.

8.20 Corporate Procurement Plan

The OGP policy framework requires that all non-commercial State bodies complete a Corporate Procurement Plan. This plan is underpinned by analysis of expenditure on procurement and the procurement and purchasing structures in the organisation. The plan should set practical and strategic aims, objectives for improved procurement outcomes and appropriate measures to achieve these aims should be implemented.

The OPR's Statement of Strategy 2019 to 2024 identifies good corporate governance and controls as a key driver for the achievement of the organisation's strategic goals and that a key outcome is to ensure full compliance with the relevant provisions of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

This plan sets out how the OPR undertakes its procurement functions in compliance with section 8.20 of the Code of Practice.

2 Objective of the plan

The Office of the Planning Regulator's Corporate Procurement Plan (CPP) is a 3-year strategy and its purpose is to set out the organisation's strategic approach to procurement, identify our procurement priorities, identify and address risk and plan for our future procurement needs.

The primary objective of this plan is to ensure the OPR's ongoing compliance with EU and national procurement legislation, circulars and guidelines (see Appendix 1).

This plan will be reviewed annually by our Executive Management Team (EMT) and the Procurement Officer.

The plan promotes the use of central procurement frameworks and contracts established by the OGP. The benefits arising from usage of such frameworks and contracts includes best value for money, administrative savings from reduced duplication of tendering, greater procurement expertise, improved consistency, enhanced service levels and legal certainty.

A Procurement Officer has been appointed in the OPR and continues to keep abreast of relevant procurement policies to ensure the provision of support to all staff within our organisation. Any revisions to legislation, guidelines, procedures and policies are circulated to all staff, providing a description of what each change means.

All staff must discuss potential procurement with their line manager to ascertain the required members of staff to be involved when creating request for quotations and tender documents,

utilising the OPR's experts in specific areas. Assistance is provided by the Procurement Officer and the Corporate Services Team in identifying appropriate procurement methods, preparing RFT/RFQ documents, evaluating tenders and quotes received. In addition, it is the Procurement Officer's responsibility to circulate procurement circulars, policies and procedures to all staff.

3 Procurement expenditure analysis

As a public body, the OPR utilises central contracts put in place by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) when procuring a range of commonly acquired goods and services. Where no central contract is available, the OPR operates in accordance with European Union (EU) Procurement Directives.

Following the establishment of the OPR, a range of goods and services were required to be procured in order build the organisation's operational capability from the outset.

A number of OGP frameworks have been utilised shortly after establishment, including the appointment of legal advisors, outsourced accountants, banking services and stationery suppliers.

Appendix 3 provides an analysis of the OPR's procurement including a full list of the central government frameworks used by the OPR. Additionally, a full set of financial statements is published annually on the OPR website following certification by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

4 Procurement structures

4.1 OPR Procurement model

Due to the size of our organisation, the OPR carries out procurement management using the Hybrid model. All staff members can carry out procurement that totals <€25k, enlisting support from management and the Procurement Officer where needed. Where procurement costs are expected to exceed €25k, staff must discuss the required procurement need with their line manager and the Procurement Officer. All staff members involved will collaborate in procuring required goods/services, adhering to National and EU guidelines, policies and legislation.

4.2 OPR Procurement systems

Within our internal systems, templates are available to all staff for documentation required for procurement. Policies, guidelines, legislation and procedures are included within this library. A standardised request for quote template is available. Other documentation includes closing documents.

A procurement database is kept, updated and held by the OPR, which is maintained by the Procurement Officer. All members of the Corporate Services Team have access to this database, which lists all suppliers paid by the OPR, total cost paid to each supplier by year, procurement method used and expiry dates of contract where applicable. This database is used to monitor costs and upcoming contract expiry dates.

All documentation and correspondence relating to a procurement must be saved to the OPR internal systems. It is the responsibility of staff conducting procurement to send this information to the Procurement Officer who will then update the relevant folders. Correspondence and documentation includes but is not limited to, emails to suppliers requesting quotes, any response received from potential and successful contractors, RFTs, RFQs, evaluation forms and scoring sheets, final signed contracts.

The OPR has access to the OGP and e-Tenders website. Access to login details for these websites are available through the Procurement Officer or the Director of Corporate Services.

4.3 OPR Procurement processes

As a part of our business planning and budgeting, managers in each team are consulted regarding their upcoming procurement needs. The type of process used for procurement depends on the value and nature of the requirement. The stages in the procurement process are summarised below:

Planning:

- Where goods/services are required, staff liaise with the Procurement Officer to identify best procurement method to be used. Estimated cost of goods/services are required when deciding on the most appropriate method.
- Approval is required as per the OPR's Purchase to Pay approval authorisations (Appendix 2).
- Staff identify the OPR requirements and complete Request for Quote/Tender documents as necessary. Templates are available for RFQs to all staff.
- Where comprehensive documents are required, staff must complete these along with their line manager and support from the Procurement Officer.

Selecting:

- When quotes are received, they are evaluated as per method of Procurement used.
- Quotes <€5k are selected on best value for money/cheapest quote received.
- Quotes >€5k require a comprehensive evaluation to be conducted, using scoring sheets and criteria set out in the RFQ and RFT documents.
- Where an OGP framework was used, evaluation is taken place with members of staff from the OGP and selected based on the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) award criteria.
- Quotes received via eTenders are selected on the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) award criteria.

Control:

- Staff who have conducted procurement of a good/service are responsible for monitoring the contract and ensuring duties are carried out as set out in the contract's schedule.
- The Procurement Officer is responsible for monitoring costs being processed by the OPR and ensuring contracted total cost is not exceeded.
- The Procurement Officer is responsible for monitoring contract dates and must inform staff availing of the good/service that contract expires at least two months prior, to ensure adequate time to extend contract where applicable or conduct a new procurement.

Closing:

- Closing documentation must be completed where a contract with an expiry date was signed and is the responsibility of the staff involved in procuring a good/service to complete.
- A procurement checklist must be completed for all procurement conducted and is the responsibility of the staff involved in procuring a good/service to complete.
- The Procurement Officer will make final sign off on closing documentation to ensure contract has been fulfilled and closed properly.

Where procurement is <€5k:

- OGP website is checked for contracts that can be used
- Where no contract is available or suitable, verbal/email quotes are obtained (minimum three quotes)
- Lowest price/most suitable is selected

Where procurement is between €5K and €25k:

- OGP website is checked for contracts that can be used
- Where no contract is available or suitable, we contact various suppliers (minimum three quotes) providing an RFQ and a timeline for responses. All responses received are evaluated and scored objectively against specified requirements.
- Highest scoring tenderer is selected.
- Notification is sent to all tenderers on the award of the contract.

Where procurement is >€25k:

- OGP website is checked for frameworks available
- Where no framework is available or suitable, a formal process is conducted.
- The OPR have access to e-Tenders where an RFT is advertised with a timeline for responses.
- Tender evaluation is carried out using MEAT criteria. Highest scoring tenderer is selected. Notification is published on the award of the contract.

4.4 Staff roles and responsibilities regarding procurement

It is the responsibility of each member of staff to familiarise themselves with our Procurement Plan including management of procurement.

It is the Procurement Officer's responsibility to monitor costs and expiration of contracts using the OPR's procurement database. This monitoring is carried out on a monthly basis and Director of Corporate Services is advised when this task is carried out. Procurement database is updated with timestamp when monitoring has taken place.

Expiration of contracts is also monitored by those who conducted the procurement.

For contracts procured <€25k, when costs total €20k, the OPR's procurement database highlights this. The Procurement Officer will bring this to the attention of those who have procured the contract and the Director of Corporate Services. It is the responsibility of the staff members then to discuss and evaluate if a new contract should be procured, providing results of the outcome to the Procurement Officer and Director of Corporate Services.

When contracts are being finalised, staff member's line manager must be consulted and approval as per the OPR's Purchase to Pay Authorisation limits must be sought and received. All correspondence is saved to the OPR's internal procurement files.

When verbal/email quotes are received for goods/services <€5k it is staff's responsibility who are obtaining quotes to use the MEAT criteria when selecting successful quote.

The Procurement Plan is the responsibility of the Procurement Officer to monitor and maintain, including annual revisions, updates when a change to legislation, policy and/or procedures takes place. Final approval is required from the Executive Management Team before revisions are made live.

5 Review

The Corporate Procurement Plan will be reviewed annually by the EMT and the Procurement Officer.

The OPR's Corporate Procurement Plan (2020-2023) will continue to promote and support procurement policies and procedures to standards of best practice.

The main objective of this plan is to deliver value for money, whilst adhering to national and EU procurement directives and guidelines, and organisational policies and procedures.

The Action Plan set out in Appendix 4 will be monitored and reviewed regularly at EMT meetings to ensure goals and targets are achieved. The OPR endeavours to continuously improve our approach to procurement and support all staff in achieving our objectives.

Appendix 1 – Procurement legislation and guidance

Name	Source	Description
Directive 2014/24/EU	EU Directive	Current EU directive on public procurement (goods, services and works)
Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services	OGP	Comprehensive guidance on procurement processes for frameworks and above and below EU thresholds.
National Public Procurement Policy Framework	OGP	Sets out the overarching policy framework for public procurement in Ireland.
Code of Practice for the Government of State Bodies	DPER	Includes the requirement to publish a Corporate Procurement Plan.
Circular 13/13	DPER	The public spending code: expenditure planning, appraisal and evaluation in the Irish Public Service – standard rules and procedures
Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service	DPER	Guide to the development of each Department and Office's individual governance frameworks
Freedom of Information of Practice for Public Bodies	DPER – FOI Central Policy Unit	Includes the requirement to publish quarterly details of public contracts awards (including mini-competitions under existing framework agreements)
Freedom of Information Model Publication Scheme	DPER – FOI Central Policy Unit	Includes the requirement to publish procurement information under FOI Act, 2014.
Circular 2/16	DPER	Arrangements for digital and ICT related expenditure in the Civil and Public Service

Circular 2/11	DOF	Additional ICT requirements
Circular 20/19	DPER	Promoting the use of Environmental and Social Considerations in Public Procurement (Green Public Procurement) with special regard to Climate Action Plan 2021
Circular 20/19	DPER	Annual report must detail the number & value of contracts including Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria
Circular 20/19	DPER	CPP must state where GPP criteria will be used in upcoming procurements
Circular 16/13	DPER	Revision of arrangements concerning the use of central contracts put in place by the OGP.
Circular 5/13	DPER	Procurement of legal services and managing legal costs.
Circular 40/02	DPER	Revision of existing procedures for approval of certain contracts in the central government sector: Annual report to be submitted to C&AG in respect of contracts >25k awarded without a competitive process.

Appendix 2 – Purchase to Pay authorisation limits

Table 2: Authorisation Limits for the purchase of Goods and Services	
Grade or Equivalent	Default Limit for the Grade
Higher Executive Officer	Up to €10,000
Assistant Directors	Up to €50,000
Directors	Up to €100,000
Planning Regulator and Deputy Planning Regulator	Up to €150,000 (single); Above €150,000 (joint PR/DPR + Director)

*In the case of non-routine expenditure, approval must be sought from a senior manager (Assistant Director or above).

Appendix 3 – Expenditure profile

The OPR is funded under the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage subhead D.5. of Vote 34. Total administrative expenditure of the OPR in 2020, as per the

audited Financial Statements, amounted to €2,281,868 (of which €1,393,633 relating to staff costs).

Total administrative expenditure (non-pay) can be further analysed by expense category as follows:-

Item	Total Expenditure Subject to Procurement	Percentage	Description
Upkeeps and overheads	54,158	6%	Repairs and maintenance, telephone costs, insurance, acquisition services.
General expenses	132,655	15%	General office expenses, communications, IT running costs.
Service contracts	166,046	18.6%	Legal, Accounting, Fee per case, etc.
Item	Total Expenditure Not Subject to Procurement (outside of requirements)	Percentage	Description
Rental Expenses	343,579	39%	Office premises rental costs
Travel & Subsistence	3,722	0.4%	Staff travel and subsistence in line with Government policy
Other	188,075	21%	Depreciation expense, C&A audit fee, sponsorship of programmes
Total (Net of staff costs)	888,235	100%	Total (net of staff costs)

OGP Contracts / e-Tenders

Implemented in 2019-2020	Implemented in 2021
Office supplies	OGCIO ICT services and equipment
Legal services	Internal audit services
Travel services	Graphic design services
Accounting services	Website hosting and maintenance
Fee-per-case assessors/reviewers	Legal advisors
Electricity provision to office premises	Taxi services
	Health and safety consultants
	Electricity provision to office premises
	Facilities management
	Mobile phone services

Appendix 4 – Procurement action plan 2020 – 2023

No.	Action	Output/result	Timeframe
1.	Review the corporate procurement register on a monthly basis to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plans are in place for any upcoming contract renewals expenditure under contracts are in line with estimates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts are extended or re-tendered in a timely manner Expenditure under a contract does not exceed the estimated value of the contract or breach of thresholds 	Monthly
2.	Prepare an annual procurement activity plan	Identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> planned tendering requirements for the following year identification of estimated costs and proposed procurement methods actions required (e.g. decisions re extensions or procurement) person(s) responsible for each tendering requirement. 	Annually
3.	Publish a list of all contracts awarded with a value over €25,000 on website with associated details	Increased transparency and compliance with the Freedom of Information Model Publication Scheme	Quarterly
4.	Publish a list of all purchases over €20,000 on website with associated details	Increased transparency and compliance with the Public Sector Reform Plan	Quarterly
5.	Review templates for low to medium value ICT goods and services RFTs and contracts	RFT and contract templates for low to medium value ICT goods and services. RFTs and contracts for higher value procurements will be considered on a case by case basis	Annually
6.	Publish award notices for OPR tenders on eTenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of award notices for all OPR tenders are up to date Tenders are closed as appropriate 	Ongoing
7.	Ensure compliance with GDPR	Procurement documents are in accordance with GDPR requirements.	Ongoing
8.	Review the Corporate Procurement Plan	An up to date Corporate procurement plan published on OPR website	Q1

9.	Review the OPR Purchase to Pay policy	An up to date policy will be circulated to all staff that outlines the principles that underpin the OPR's procurement activities	Annually
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Appendix 5- Procurement activity in 2022

The following list provides an overview of significant procurement activity that is planned for 2022:

- Extensions of the following terms of contract which will reach the end of their current contract term during 2022:

Good/service required	Procurement method used	Team
Legal services	OGP Framework	Corporate Services
Accounting services	OGP Framework	Corporate Services
Time and Attendance system	Request for quote (RFQ)	Corporate Services

- Goods/services to be procured:

Good/service required	Procurement method	Team	Estimated cost
Facilities Management	Request for quote (RFQ)	Corporate Services	€5k - €25K
Electricity Provision to office premises	OGP Framework	Corporate Services	€5k - €25K
Taxi Services	OGP Framework	Corporate Services	>€5K
Office Supplies	OGP Framework	Corporate Services	€5k - €25K
Health & Safety Consultants	OGP Framework/RFQ	Corporate Services	€5k - €25K
GIS software, services & datasets	Request for quote (RFQ)/eTenders	Plans Evaluation	€5k - €25K
Irish Translation Services	Request for quote (RFQ)	Plans Evaluation	€5k - €25K
Digital signature software	Request for quote (RFQ)	Corporate Services	<€5K
Email marketing services	Request for quote (RFQ)	Plans Evaluation	<€5K
ICT equipment	OGCIO	Corporate Services	€5k - €25K
ICT software	3 Quotes	All OPR	<€5K
Application development	OGP Framework/RFQ	Plans Evaluation	€5k - €25K
Digital Planning consultancy	Request for quote (RFQ)	Plans Evaluation	€5k - €25K
General staff training	OGP Framework/RFQ	Corporate Services	€5k - €25K
Professional planning services	Request for quote (RFQ)	Plans Evaluation	€5k - €25K

Professional planning and research consultancy	Request for quote (RFQ)	Reviews and Examinations	<€5K
Business analysis services	Request for quote (RFQ)	Reviews and Examinations	<€5K
CRM system	eTenders	Reviews and Examinations	>€25K
Conferencing	Request for quote (RFQ)	Research and Training	€5k - €25K
Media production	OGP Framework/RFQ	Research and Training	€5k - €25K
Research programme	Request for quote (RFQ)	Research and Training	€5k - €25K

The OPR will promote the use of green public procurement options in criteria set out in Request for Quotes (RFQs) where possible.