



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Buying Greener

Draft Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027

Draft for Public Consultation

Prepared by the Department of
The Environment, Climate and Communications

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1 Introduction

1.1 Sustainable Production and Consumption - The Circular Economy

Our current linear production and consumption model (based on produce, use and dispose) is significantly carbon and resource intensive. An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development study of four countries' Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions found emissions arising from material management accounted for between 55% and 65% of national emissions. Ireland's material consumption is well above the EU average, indicating that there is scope for savings in GHG emissions through maximising the efficiency of our material use.

We need to move to a more sustainable production and consumption model by changing how we consume materials and resources; how we design the products that households and businesses use; and how we extend the productive life of all goods and products in our society and economy. The circular economy offers an alternative to today's linear ('take-make-waste') model of production and consumption. This involves:

- Minimising the consumption of raw materials associated with the production and use of those goods, products and materials, and delivery of services.
- Keeping goods, products, and materials in use for as long as possible thereby further reducing the consumption of raw materials and impacts harmful to the environment.
- Extracting the maximum economic value from goods, products, and materials by the persons using them.
- Recovering and regenerating goods, products and materials at the end of their useful life.

We have been making policy progress in advancing sustainability production and consumption objectives with, for example, the enactment of the Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 and the publication of the Whole-of-Government Circular Economy Strategy 2022-2023.

One of the important areas of the economy that can play a key role in helping Ireland to become a more resource-efficient and circular economy is Green Public Procurement. In Ireland public bodies (excluding utilities) spend an estimated €18.5 billion a year on goods,

services and works.¹ This provides Ireland's public sector with significant influence to stimulate and actively encourage the provision of more resource-efficient, low carbon, less polluting goods, services and works across the public sector.

The Whole-of-Government Circular Economy Strategy published in December 2021, emphasises that public procurement policies can be an important contributor to the circular transition and demonstrate Government's commitment to supporting green purchasing and improved availability and affordability of sustainable goods and services.

1.2 United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12 – Ireland's Commitment

In 2015, UN member countries adopted 'Transforming Our World', the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Integral to the 2030 Agenda are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Each of the goals has a number of sub-targets for a total of 169 targets across the 17 goals which cover three dimensions of sustainable development; economic growth, social inclusion and the protection of the environment.

Goal 12 of the UN SDGs deals with responsible consumption and production, one aspect of which – target 12.7 – aims to: *Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.*

Ireland is committed to achieving the SDGs and information on Ireland's approach for implementation of the SDGs is set out in the Second National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024².

1.3 Green Public Procurement as a vehicle for Climate Action, Energy Efficiency, Environmental Protection, and our transition towards a Circular Economy

Sustainable public procurement, which incorporates green public procurement and socially responsible public procurement, achieves value for money on a whole life-cycle basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the purchasing entity, but also to society more generally and the economy, whilst significantly reducing negative impacts on the environment. In many jurisdictions, sustainable public procurement is incorporated into a

¹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/06f1e-procurement-reform-annual-reports/>

² <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/ff4201-17-sustainable-development-goals/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/sdgs/>

broader sustainability strategy to aid public bodies in addressing the UN SDGs. In practical terms, when using sustainable public procurement public bodies seek to achieve an appropriate balance of the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental – at all stages of the procurement process.

Green Public Procurement (GPP) is defined as: *a process whereby public bodies seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured.*³

GPP can be used to address a wide range of environmental, climate and energy issues such as:

- Reducing GHG emissions, for example through the purchase of goods and services with a lower carbon footprint throughout their life-cycle.
- Improving energy efficiency.
- Requiring the use of goods that meet the highest environmental standards.
- Addressing resource use, for example by choosing goods, which are more efficient from an environmental perspective and implementing environmentally conscious design principles in line with circular economy best practice.
- Improving air, water and reducing noise, for example by requiring suppliers to use goods with appropriate eco-design standards.
- Reducing soil and water pollution, for example by controlling chemicals and limiting the use of hazardous substances.
- Eliminating or reducing waste, for example by specifying processes or packaging which generates less waste, or by encouraging reuse and recycling of materials.
- Optimising water use, for example through choosing more water-efficient fittings.
- Making agriculture more sustainable, for example by purchasing organically produced food.
- Supporting afforestation, for example through the purchase of wood and wood products from legally harvested and sustainably managed forests.

³ Communication from the European Commission, *Public Procurement for a Better Environment*, COM (2008), July 2008

Importantly, GPP can act as a useful channel for raising environmental awareness for those involved in public procurement by identifying greener options and/or more sustainable goods, services and works.

GPP is also about influencing the supplier market. By promoting and using GPP more systematically, public bodies can provide industry with real incentives for developing green technologies, and more sustainable products. In some sectors, public bodies command a significant share of the market (for example, public transport and construction, health services and education) and so their spending decisions potentially have considerable impact and leverage in terms of setting GPP standards. Introducing 'green' tendering criteria, including related contract clauses, can therefore not only influence the marketplace but incentivise new suppliers of environmental technologies and products to tender.

GPP also has the potential to deliver wider economic benefits where significant savings can be made over the whole life cycle of a purchase both for public bodies and for society in general. For example, use of more energy efficient ICT equipment will lead to cost savings in energy use.

Over time, a clear Government strategy on GPP will create more demand for greener products and services which will potentially increase competition as a result of new entrants to the marketplace therefore potentially reduce prices.

Featuring as a key component in the Climate Action Plan 2023 in terms of Public Sector climate action, GPP is one of the ways in which public bodies can help to shape a transition to a Circular Economy, and to help meet the 2030 legally binding targets for reducing GHG emissions and improving energy efficiency. By using their purchasing power to choose goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact, public sector expenditure can make an important contribution towards national and international sustainability goals.

1.4 Ireland's commitment on Green Public Procurement

Green Tenders – An Action Plan on Green Public Procurement, published in 2012, was the first action plan on GPP in Ireland. Significant changes in climate policy have occurred since then and actions on GPP have featured prominently in more recent Government policies and documents. This new GPP Strategy and Action Plan has been prepared against the background of significant changes in climate, energy, sustainability, and procurement policies in the intervening period.

Government Circular 20/2019 instructs Government Departments to consider including green criteria in public procurement processes in circumstances where clearly defined, quantifiable, verifiable and measurable criteria have been developed and are relevant to the

specific procurement process. In September 2021, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published *Green Public Procurement: Guidance for the Public Sector* and GPP guidance criteria for ten product/sectoral groups. This follows a comprehensive review and update of the original guidance that was published in 2014.

The Programme for Government (PfG) 2020 “Our Shared Future” sets out that the Government will mandate the inclusion of green criteria in all procurements using public funds, to be completed within three years.

Following a government decision to review Green Tenders, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), as the lead Government department in developing Ireland’s GPP policy, is publishing a new GPP Strategy and Action Plan which will cover the period 2023-2027. Preparation of a new GPP Strategy and Action Plan is also commitment in the Climate Action Plan 2023.

The key objectives of this GPP Strategy are to:

- Enhance GPP as a key tool for the Public Sector in helping Ireland’s transition to a sustainable, circular and low carbon economy.
- Ensure GPP is a core and integral component of the public procurement process and associated governance structures in Ireland.
- Set out measures to ensure that all procurement using public funds include green criteria, where possible.
- Support further development of GPP criteria, enhance GPP knowledge and expertise and facilitate Ireland’s participation in international collective efforts to use GPP as a lever for sustainable production and consumption, and;
- Support market conditions needed to deliver sustainable and innovative solutions for GPP.

This GPP Strategy and Action Plan are intended to reflect key step changes in EU energy and climate policy that have occurred over the last number of years. Underpinning this GPP Strategy and Action Plan is an acute awareness that the systematic deployment of GPP criteria across the public sector can contribute in a meaningful way to the achievement of Ireland’s climate and energy efficiency targets, in addition to contributing to sustainability at a more global level.

The PfG commits to evaluating and managing the environmental, economic, and social impacts of procurement strategies within the State. This includes developing and implementing a sustainable procurement policy. Sustainable public procurement is a wider concept than GPP that also includes a social dimension. The social component of

sustainable public procurement is not the focus of this GPP Strategy and Action Plan. Such an integrated approach that addresses both GPP and social considerations will form part of a Sustainable Public Procurement Strategy to be delivered at a future date.

Appendix I lists the actions to be undertaken over the period of the strategy, the key organisations involved in their delivery, and the timeline for implementation. Appendix II lists specific targets for key sector and product categories. Appendix III sets out the minimum GPP criteria where no national or EU guidance is available.

2 Public Procurement in Ireland – Context

2.1 National Public Procurement Policy Framework

Public procurement is governed by EU and national rules. The National Public Procurement Policy Framework sets out the overarching policy framework for public procurement in Ireland.⁴ The National Public Procurement Policy Framework consists of five strands:

- Legislation (Directives, Regulations).
- Government Policy (Circulars).
- Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) for public works.
- General Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services.
- More detailed technical guidelines, template documentation and information notes as issued periodically by the Policy Unit of the Office of Government Procurement (OGP).

The OGP, which is an office of the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, was established in 2013 and commenced operations in 2014 and, together with Health, Defence, Education and Local Government sectors has responsibility for sourcing common goods and services on behalf of the public service. In addition, the OGP has responsibility for procurement policy and procedures for the entire public sector. Through the central purchasing model, the public service speaks with ‘one voice’ to the market for each category of expenditure covered by the Central Purchasing Bodies (CPBs), eliminating duplication and taking advantage of the economies of scale of public procurement to best

⁴ Office of Government Procurement, *National Public Procurement Policy Framework*, November 2019.

effect. This model has led over time to a shift from a decentralised to a centralised model of procurement for sixteen categories of spending.

The OGP shapes the future of public procurement by:

- Putting in place procurement solutions to meet public service needs.
- Securing value for money for the Exchequer.
- Providing policy advice, guidance, and training.
- Providing procurement systems such as eTenders.
- Analysing procurement data.
- Focusing on green and social procurement.

For certain categories of goods and services, the OGP establishes Framework Agreements (FWAs) and Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS) for use by public service bodies. The OGP facilitates mini-competitions under these FWAs and enables other call-off mechanisms such as direct drawdown, cascade and rotation. Some FWAs allow contracting authorities run their own mini-competitions. Individual contracting authorities are accountable and responsible for any contracts awarded from an OGP FWA or DPS. Government policy is that public bodies, where possible, should make use of all such central arrangements.⁵ Where public bodies do not use central procurement frameworks they should be in a position to provide a value for money justification. Value for money justifications should take into account the full costs of running a public procurement competition.

The PfG tasked the OGP to update all procurement frameworks in line with green procurement practice over the first three years of the Government's term. In line with this commitment, the OGP and its partner CPBs have been reviewing all central purchasing arrangements to identify opportunities to include green considerations.

By the end of 2022, 156 out of the current 244 arrangements were updated in line with GPP policy.⁶ Additional FWAs will be evaluated for the potential to include green procurement practices as they are renewed or when new FWAs are developed.

It should be noted that it is not possible for public bodies to include a new GPP award criteria in FWA mini competitions unless this was expressly allowed for in the Request For Tender

⁵ DPER, Circular 16/13 Revision of arrangements concerning the use of Central Contracts put in place by the National Procurement Service.

⁶ [https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-03-21/359/#:-:text=The%20OGP%20and%20its%20partner,Public%20Procurement%20\(GPP\)%20policy](https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-03-21/359/#:-:text=The%20OGP%20and%20its%20partner,Public%20Procurement%20(GPP)%20policy)

setting up the FWA. All public bodies may set up their own single or multi-party FWAs particular to their needs and include appropriate GPP criteria in their tender documents.

A DPS is a completely electronic system which may be established by a public body to purchase commonly used goods, works or services that are generally available on the market. It is unlikely to be suitable for one-off, bespoke and/or highly complex requirements. All public bodies, including CPBs, may set up a DPS. The DPS is more flexible in many respects than the use of FWA, particularly as suppliers may join the DPS at any time during its period of validity, which can be of any reasonable duration.

2.2 Procurement Governance

The Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service is used by each Department and Office to guide the development of their individual governance frameworks.⁷ Departments and Offices should publish their governance arrangements in accordance with the principles set out in the Standard. The Standard includes reference to compliance with Procurement Directives.

The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies provides a framework for the application of best practice in corporate governance by both commercial and non-commercial State bodies. State bodies and their subsidiaries are required to confirm to their relevant Minister that they comply with the Code in their governance practices and procedures. The Code identifies procurement as one of several activities requiring special attention, including having a Corporate Procurement Plan.⁸

The OGP has produced Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services, which are aimed at promoting best practice and consistency of application of the public procurement rules in relation to the purchase of goods and services above and below the EU contract value thresholds.⁹ The guidelines are dynamic in nature and are subject to amendment and review periodically.

Future updates to the Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services that are planned should seek to further strengthen commitments to GPP policy implementation and the important role that the public sector must play in progressing GPP objectives.

⁷ Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, *Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service*, April 2019

⁸ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0918ef-code-of-practice-for-the-governance-of-state-bodies/>

⁹ Department of Public Expenditure and Reform/Office of Government Procurement, *Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services*, January 2019.

Adherence to national GPP policy and public sector senior management commitment to GPP should be clearly set out in all public bodies' corporate policies, particularly in terms of the scope of procurement activities covered, staff training commitments on GPP, how GPP compliance will be monitored, and outcomes reported.

Staff should be given adequate time to consider the impact of the changes and identify any specific steps which need to be taken on their part (for example procurement/GPP training). In 2020, the OGP updated its Information Note on the Corporate Procurement Plan,¹⁰ and includes references to green public procurement. The note highlights that a corporate procurement plan can help align procurement with priorities and objectives, for example, GPP, sustainability, innovation, and employment of people in long-term unemployment and people who are disadvantaged.

Organisations can also seek to achieve a standard accreditation as a way of driving sustainable procurement within their organisation. ISO 20400:2017 provides guidance to any organisation, independent of their activity or size, on integrating sustainability within procurement, as described in ISO 26000. It is intended for public and private bodies involved in, or impacted by, procurement decisions and processes.

2.3 Social considerations

As mentioned previously, sustainable public procurement is a wider concept than GPP, in that it includes social and economic considerations. As GPP implementation and social procurement considerations become further developed, it is considered appropriate that a sustainable public procurement strategy, encompassing both green and social considerations be prepared.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ce1f7-corporate-procurement-plan-december-2020/>

2.4 Actions

ACTION	
PUBLIC PROCUREMENT GUIDELINES, CENTRAL PURCHASING ARRANGEMENTS, CORPORATE PROCUREMENT PLANS	
A1	The next iteration of the OGP's Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services take account of this GPP Strategy and Action Plan and the latest EPA GPP Guidance for the Public Sector.
A2	With immediate effect, all future Central Purchasing Arrangements published shall include contract specific GPP criteria, where possible, including minimum environmental/sustainability criteria (refer to Appendix III, for example).
A3	OGP and partner central purchasing bodies to provide up to date online information on central purchasing arrangements that have included GPP criteria.
A4	By end of 2024, OGP to amend Goods and Services template RFTs and template contracts to increase awareness, where relevant, of the option to include GPP selection and award criteria and technical specifications, and associated contract performance clauses.
A5	All public bodies in updating their corporate policies and strategies, and Corporate Procurement Plans are to set out how they will adhere to GPP Strategy and Action Plan obligations related to their organisation.
A6	All public bodies with an annual public procurement spend (on average over the previous three years) above €200m to secure ISO 20400:2017 accreditation by the end of 2025.

3 Legislative and Policy Context

Under the European Green Deal, the EU has increased its climate ambition and aims at becoming the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

The revised Energy Efficiency Directive,¹¹ published on 20th September 2023, significantly raises the EU's ambition on energy efficiency. It establishes 'energy efficiency first' as a fundamental principle of EU energy policy, giving it legal-standing for the first time.

¹¹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOL_2023_231_R_0001&qid=1695186598766

In line with 2020 Circular Economy Action Plan, the European Commission will propose minimum mandatory GPP criteria and targets in sectoral legislation and phase in compulsory reporting to monitor the uptake of GPP without creating unjustified administrative burden for public bodies. In terms of other EU sectoral legislation and ongoing proposals that will have direct impact in terms of accelerating GPP, examples include the new Batteries Regulation¹², the Sustainable Products Initiative¹³, Construction Products Regulation¹⁴, Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation¹⁵, Energy Performance of Buildings Directive¹⁶, and the legislative framework for Sustainable Food Systems.¹⁷

3.1 EU and National Procurement Legislation

The rationale for the EU public procurement regime is to open the internal market and to ensure the free movement of goods, services and works within the EU. This is reflected in primary EU law where the EU Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union promotes the fundamental principles of non-discrimination, free movement of goods and services and freedom of establishment. These principles are reinforced in secondary EU law where the EU Directives on public procurement set out precise rules and procedures designed to ensure equal treatment, mutual recognition, proportionality, and transparency in the awarding of public contracts.

The EU Directives are:

- The EU Directive (2014/24/EU) on public procurement
- The Utilities Directive (2014/25/EU) on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport, and postal service sectors
- Directive 2014/23/EU on the award of Concession Contracts
- The Defence and Security Directive (2009/81/EC)
- Directives 2007/66/EC and 92/13/EC on Remedies

¹² https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/waste-and-recycling/batteries_en

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12567-Sustainable-products-initiative_en

¹⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/49315>

¹⁵ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-packaging-and-packaging-waste_en

¹⁶ https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency/energy-efficient-buildings/energy-performance-buildings-directive_en

¹⁷ https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/farm-fork-strategy/legislative-framework_en

To create a level playing field for all businesses across Europe, EU law sets out minimum harmonised public procurement rules for contracts valued over a determined value threshold. These rules govern the way public bodies and utility operators (including Ireland's Commercial Semi-State companies) purchase goods, works and services. The rules are set out in five EU Directives. For tenders of lower value, national rules apply that also must respect the general principles of EU law.

The EU Procurement Directives were transposed into Irish Law by way of national Regulations contained in a number of Statutory Instruments.¹⁸ Across the EU, GPP is a voluntary policy instrument, which means that Member States can determine the extent to which they implement GPP provided the procurement rules and EU Treaty principles are respected. Further information on legislation relevant to procurement is set out in Section 2 of the EPA's GPP Guidance for the Public Sector.¹⁹

3.2 Green Tenders – An Action Plan on Public Procurement

Green Tenders – An Action Plan on Public Procurement, published in 2012, was the first action plan on GPP in Ireland. This set out 64 actions with a focus on eight sectors (construction, energy, transport, food and catering services, cleaning products and services, paper, uniforms and other textiles, and ICT), and a set of overarching key actions to embed GPP in public procurement policies and practices across all sectors.

In December 2021, a government decision was taken to review and update Green Tenders, to provide an updated and fit for purpose plan for greener public sector purchasing. Whilst several actions have progressed (for example the introduction of energy efficiency related regulations), others have been superseded by more recent policy actions, especially in relation to climate action.

In 2022, the DECC carried out a targeted pre-consultation seeking views from Government departments and bodies under their aegis and other key stakeholders, to help inform the

¹⁸ S.I. No. 284 of 2016 – European Union (Award of Public Authority Contracts) Regulations 2016.

S.I. No. 286 of 2016 – European Union (Award of Contracts by Utility Undertakings) Regulations 2016.

S.I. No. 203 of 2017 – European Union (Award of Concession Contracts) Regulations 2017.

S.I. No. 62 of 2012 – European Union (Award of Contracts relating to Defence and Security) Regulations 2012.

S.I. No. 130 of 2010 – European Communities (Public Authorities' Contract) (Review Procedures) Regulations 2010.

S.I. No. 327 of 2017 – European Communities (Public Authorities' Contracts) (Review Procedures) (Amendment) Regulations 2017

¹⁹ <https://www.epa.ie/publications/circular-economy/resources/GPP-Guidance-for-the-Irish-Public-Sector.pdf>

preparation of this GPP Strategy and Action Plan. Key aspects highlighted from the feedback included:

- Several organisations who responded have incorporated available EPA national GPP guidance into their procurement approach.
- There is a demand for GPP criteria to be produced for sectors where national GPP guidance does not currently exist.
- Barriers to GPP implementation include a lack of education and awareness, perceived costs of 'green' products and availability of green goods and services.
- Tools considered as effective in implementing GPP include training, online toolkits, frameworks, and availability of case studies demonstrating GPP practice.
- Support for considering socially responsible procurement as well as GPP.
- Suggestions to develop sectoral networks to advance GPP objectives.
- Specific GPP reporting and inclusion of GPP in Annual Reports in terms of monitoring GPP implementation.

3.3 Circular Economy Policy

The Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 became law in July 2022. This landmark legislation defines the Circular Economy for the first time in Irish domestic law and provides a legal basis for many of the actions that the Government will take to support the circular transition. The Act represents a robust legislative framework for significantly improving Ireland's recycling and re-use rates, and for reducing the use of a wide range of single-use disposable items. In the area of construction, for example, the streamlining of end of waste and by-product determination processes will support the procurement and increased use of recycled aggregates, and the use of secondary materials over virgin materials.

The first Whole-of-Government Circular Economy Strategy published in December 2021 covered the period 2022 and 2023.²⁰ The Strategy sets out a vision for Ireland's transition to circularity, explains the concept of the circular economy, describes what initiatives are already happening, what opportunities are available, and how Government will drive the changes required.

²⁰ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b542d-whole-of-government-circular-economy-strategy-2022-2023-living-more-using-less/>

The next Circular Economy Strategy is currently being prepared in accordance with the Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 and will be published in 2024. It will include targets for several sectors of the economy. For instance, targets will cover:

- Reductions in material resource consumption and the use of non-recyclable materials.
- Increases in the use of re-usable products and materials.
- Increased levels of repair and re-use of products and materials.
- Improved maintenance and optimised use of goods, and materials.

The Strategy must include sectoral targets in relation to:

- construction;
- agriculture;
- retail;
- packaging;
- textiles;
- electronic equipment.

The Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 requires that the Circular Economy Strategy promotes the use of criteria relating to the circular economy in public procurement. After the next Circular Economy Strategy is adopted, detailed guidance on the application of GPP criteria relating to the circular economy will be published by the DECC.

The three Regional Waste Management Planning Lead Authorities are currently preparing a National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy. It is expected that the Plan will help accelerate the transition to a circular economy by influencing sustainable consumption through procurement, improving the capture of all wastes, optimising circular potential, and enabling compliance with policy and legislation. The Plan is expected to include targets on:

- Consumption
- Contamination
- Reuse
- Repair

3.4 Climate Action

3.4.1 Public Sector Leading by Example

Ireland's Climate Action Plan sets out the commitment for the public sector to play a leadership role in driving far-reaching climate action across its buildings, transport, waste, and energy usage.

The public sector emission reduction target is to reduce its GHG emissions by 51% in 2030. Each public body has a responsibility to endeavour to reach this target. Public sector bodies' progress towards this target will be tracked and monitored through the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) monitoring and reporting system. Every Government department is responsible for the bodies under its aegis.

To support public sector bodies leading by example, a Public Sector Climate Action Mandate applies to bodies covered by public sector decarbonisation targets, except for Local Authorities, Commercial Semi-State bodies and the school sector. The mandate must be implemented by those bodies to which it applies. The responsible Departments will annually review the Climate Action Mandate. The Department of the Environment, Climate, and Communications will review the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate annually. The latest Public Sector Climate Action Mandate, included in the Climate Action Plan 2023, was approved by Government in May 2023.²¹

The Public Sector Climate Action Mandate requires public bodies to show leadership in climate action by taking, and reporting on specified actions related to targets (for example as regards GHG emission reductions and energy efficiency improvements), people (for example, the setting up of green teams and the appointment of Sustainability Officers), collaborative ways of working (for example, reporting on the implementation of the mandate), and procuring buildings and vehicles (for example, the phasing out the use of parking in buildings where public transport and alternative mobility options are available).

The Public Sector Climate Action Mandate is supported by a government approved Public Sector Climate Action Strategy²² (setting out leadership and governance structures) and climate action roadmaps produced by public sector bodies (setting out the path by which the public sector body will implement the mandate). Public sector bodies will update their roadmaps each year, in line with the mandate which is reviewed annually.

The SEAI and the EPA are responsible for publishing guidance for preparing Climate Action roadmaps. The Climate Action Roadmaps guidance will be revised annually as necessary in line with any changes required due to updates to the public sector climate action mandate. GPP is a key component of the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate (see Box 1 below).

²¹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/337b6-public-sector-climate-action-mandate/#public-sector-climate-action-mandate>

²² <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/337b6-public-sector-climate-action-mandate/#public-sector-climate-action-strategy>

BOX 1 - 2023 Public Sector Climate Action Mandate – GPP focus

Directly related GPP actions already committed to in the 2023 Public Sector Climate Action Mandate include the following:

- Review any paper-based processes and evaluate the possibilities for digitisation so it becomes the default approach.
- Eliminate paper-based processes as far as is practicable.
- Where paper must be procured, ensure that recycled paper is the default.
- Implement GPP, in line with the EPA GPP Guidance and using GPP criteria search where appropriate. All public bodies shall:
 - Cease using disposable cups, plates and cutlery from any public sector canteen or closed facility, excluding clinical (i.e., non-canteen healthcare) environments
 - Specify low carbon construction methods and low carbon cement material as far as practicable for directly procured or supported construction projects from 2023
- The public sector will not install heating systems that use fossil fuels after 2023, in
 - (1) new buildings, and
 - (2) “major renovation” retrofit projects (as defined in the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)) unless at least one of a number of specified exceptions apply.
- Procure (purchase or lease) only zero-emission vehicles from the end of 2022, enabling Ireland to go beyond the requirements of the EU Directive, amending Directive 2009/33/ EC on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles (EU Directive 2019/1161, the Clean Vehicle Directive) and act as an international leader in this area. An exception applies where the vehicle is exempt under European Communities (Clean and Energy-Efficient Road Transport Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations (S.I. 381 of 2021).
- Public sector procurement contracts for delivery and haulage should specify zero emissions vehicles where possible.

Other actions in the Mandate are also relevant to GPP including, for example, establishing and resourcing green teams that report to senior management, and incorporating appropriate climate action and sustainability training into learning and development strategies for staff.

3.4.2 Local Authorities

Every local authority in Ireland signed a Climate Action Charter in 2019.²³ This includes commitments relating to GPP, which are reflected in Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030.²⁴

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 requires each Local Authority to prepare a Local Authority Climate Action Plan for its administrative area. Once adopted, each plan will be valid for five years. Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines have been issued.²⁵

The four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) ensure a coordinated approach on climate action across the local authority sector.

3.4.3 Commercial Semi-State Bodies

Because of the nature of commercial Semi-State companies, a separate (climate) framework was required which sets out how they could achieve wider public sector goals in relation to climate action.

The Climate Action Framework for the Commercial Semi State Sector was approved by Government in July 2022.²⁶ The Framework consists of five commitments one of which relates to the circular economy and GPP where the targeted approach includes:

- Demonstrate leadership by example in Ireland's transition to a circular economy.
- Engagement with the OGP and other CPBs to use procurement frameworks which include relevant environmental considerations.
- Set out, in the company's annual reports, corporate policy on GPP, measures taken to give effect to GPP and the data around measuring and monitoring this activity.
- Consider introducing a plan for the incremental growth of GPP.
- Incorporate circular economy principles in GPP.

The New Economy and Recovery Authority (NewERA) monitor the implementation of the commitments set out in the Framework and report biannually on progress to the DECC.

²³ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d914a-local-authority-climate-action-charter/>

²⁴ <https://www.caro.ie/delivering-effective-climate-action-2030/goals-objectives>

²⁵ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/f5d51-guidelines-for-local-authority-climate-action-plans/>

²⁶ NewERA, Climate Action Plan 2021 Action 55: Framework for the Commercial Semi-State Sector to address climate action objectives.

3.4.4 Schools

The School Energy Retrofit Pathfinder Programme is paving the way for a much larger national programme for the decarbonisation of schools built prior to 2008. A new climate action multi-annual Summer Works Scheme will be developed and open for applications in 2023. Budget 2023 includes funding from the Climate Action Fund to provide photovoltaic panels (up to 6kW output) on all schools, which will reduce energy costs and support the decarbonisation of our school buildings.

In March 2023, the Department of Education published the School Sector Climate Action Mandate,²⁷ which includes a commitment to implement GPP. The Department of Education will review the School Sector Climate Action Mandate annually.

3.4.5 Actions

ACTION	
Circular Economy Strategy, Public Sector Climate Action, Local Authority Sector, Commercial Semi-State Sector	
A7	DECC to develop guidance on the application of GPP criteria relating to the circular economy and the Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy.
A8	The GPP Strategy and Action Plan and associated targets to be reflected in the annual review of the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate, where appropriate.
A9	Examine options for coordinating action to help progress GPP implementation in the local authority sector.
A10	Monitor progress of GPP implementation by the Commercial Semi-State sector.

²⁷ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a1673-school-sector-climate-action-mandate/>

4 Green Public Procurement Implementation – Key Developments

4.1 Government Circular on Green Public Procurement

Circular 20/2019, *Promoting the use of Environmental and Social Considerations in Public Procurement*, was issued to Government departments in October 2019, and instructed Government departments to consider including green criteria in public procurement processes.²⁸ It introduced reporting on GPP for Government departments only. It also highlighted the potential of procurement to address wider social aims, for example employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged groups, disability access, promoting social inclusion and social enterprises.

The Climate Action Plan 2019 assigned lead responsibility to the EPA for measuring and reporting GPP implementation by Government Departments on an annual basis, starting with reference year 2020. The EPA produced a GPP reporting template that was issued to all Government departments. Reports on GPP monitoring and reporting by Government departments were published by the EPA for the reference years 2020 and 2021.²⁹ The EPA has reported a low level of green criteria used in public procurement by Government departments to date.

As GPP policy is evolving, Circular 20/2019 will be updated by a new government circular reflecting key actions listed in this GPP Strategy and Action Plan for the public sector, including GPP reporting requirements.

4.2 Green Public Procurement Guidance and Criteria

In 2014, the EPA published GPP Guidance for the Public Sector accompanied by national GPP criteria for eight sectors, based on the EU GPP criteria. This guidance has been substantially revised, with a second edition published in September 2021.³⁰ The guidance, reflecting legislation and policy in place as of March 2021, is aimed at procurers in central and local government, state agencies and other public bodies such as universities, hospitals, and schools. The guidance is also relevant for public bodies covered by the Utilities Directive

²⁸ <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/circular-20-2019/>

²⁹ <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/circular-economy/green-public-procurement/>

³⁰ <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/circular-economy/green-public-procurement/>

and directly relevant to potential tenderers as it explains how GPP criteria will be applied in practice and what should be included in tender submissions, in response.

The main guidance looks at, for example:

- the legal and organisational context for implementing GPP in Irish public bodies.
- each stage in the procurement process to identify how GPP can be implemented from early market engagement through to contract management.
- explanation of the process and thinking behind the GPP criteria proposed for each sector, including an analysis of the main environmental impacts associated with each product and service group, and an overview of how these have been addressed in the criteria developed at EU level and for Ireland.

The main EPA GPP guidance is currently accompanied by detailed guidance criteria for the following ten priority product/sectors:

- Road Transport Vehicles and Services
- ICT Product and Services
- Food and Catering Services
- Cleaning Products and Services
- Office Building Design, Construction and Management
- Lighting
- Heating Equipment
- Energy related products
- Paper Products and Printing Services
- Textiles

The sectors were chosen on the basis of public sector spend and associated environmental impact, availability and suitability of criteria at EU level, and their potential contribution to Ireland's emission reduction, energy-efficiency and waste targets. The main environmental impacts associated with each of these product and service groups, and the way in which the GPP criteria address them, are outlined in Section 5 of the main EPA GPP Guidance.

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, and information on how the criteria can be evaluated and verified.

This sectoral guidance is based on comparable guidance published by the European Commission with adjustments to reflect the Irish market and relevant national policies. The European Commission, in partnership with the Member States, industry, environmental and social NGOs and other stakeholders, developed GPP criteria for some twenty product and service categories. The Commission distinguishes between core criteria and comprehensive criteria as follows:

- *Core Criteria* are suitable for use by any public body and address the key environmental impacts of each product or service, including basic legal compliance. They are designed to be used with minimal additional verification effort or cost increases.
- *Comprehensive Criteria* are for public bodies who aim to purchase products with enhanced levels of environmental performance. These may require additional verification effort or a slight increase in the purchase price compared to other products with the same functionality.

4.3 Green Public Procurement Criteria Search

In 2022, the OGP led the development of GPP Criteria Search³¹, an online search tool to facilitate ease of use of the Irish GPP criteria published by the EPA. In just a few clicks, the user can find, select from, and download the criteria relevant for specific procurements, along with an appropriate method of verification, for a wide range of products and services. It was developed in collaboration with the EPA and the DECC and partially funded by the Public Service Innovation Fund. The OGP, EPA and the DECC are actively promoting this tool and the Climate Action Plan 2023 commits to promoting the use of the GPP Criteria Search tool in the public sector.

4.4 Actions

ACTIONS	
Government Circular 20/2019, National GPP Guidance Criteria, GPP Criteria Search	
A11	The OGP to replace Circular 20/2019 to include updated instructions to Government departments and the public sector regarding new GPP obligations as set out in the GPP Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027.
A12	The EPA's GPP guidance and criteria to be developed and updated on a regular basis, in consultation with key stakeholders and having regard to new policy, legislation and EU GPP guidance, and the practical experience of public bodies applying the current guidance. Further guidance to be developed on the principles of proportionality and equal treatment in the application of GPP criteria.
A13	New national GPP criteria to be developed by the EPA, including, for example public works projects (including retrofitting), furniture, paints, varnishes and road markings.

A14	All public bodies to actively promote the use of GPP Criteria Search within their organisations and include this commitment in their Corporate Procurement Plans.
A15	OGP to update, maintain and develop GPP Criteria Search when new or updated national GPP criteria become available. This includes continuing to respond to Feedback sent through the website.

5 Green Public Procurement - Key Principles and Rules

5.1 Applying Green Public Procurement Criteria

There are several important aspects of procurement that public bodies need to be aware of when considering using GPP criteria (as with any other criteria) in tendering processes. These include, for example;

- Link to the Subject Matter
- Equal Treatment
- Proportionality
- Mutual Recognition

Refer to the EPA GPP Guidance including Section 4.1 regarding the basic principles of Public Procurement.

Public bodies should be aware of the following in preparing tender documents and should refer to the EPA GPP Guidance for the Public Sector:

a) Mandatory Exclusion Criteria

In requiring contractors (and sub-contractors) to submit the European Single Procurement Document (ESPD) with their tender submissions, they self-declare that they comply with prevailing environmental, labour, and social legislation. Public bodies have the option of seeking evidence of compliance. If suppliers are found to be in breach of environmental legislation, their tender submission should be declared non-compliant.

b) Technical Specifications

These must be written in a manner which is non-discriminatory, which affords equal access to tenderers and does not create unjustified barriers to competition. Public bodies should rely on the EPA and EU guidance in setting technical specifications based on GPP principles (with reference to the essential characteristics of the supplies, services and works being procured),

which should be proportionate in all situations. It is not generally permitted to refer to a brand name or to a particular process or product feature which can only be provided by one company. Third party labels (such as EU Ecolabels) can be referred to in technical specifications provided they are *inter alia* directly linked to the subject matter of the contract and are based on objectively verifiable and non-discriminatory criteria.

c) Selection Criteria

Public bodies have several options in setting GPP-based selection criteria, which in most cases should be assessed on a Pass/Fail basis. Suppliers could be asked, for example, to provide:

- References where environmental and sustainable considerations were used in the delivery of public or comparable private contracts.
- Details (by way of a CV) of the environmental expertise, experience and qualifications of the resources named to deliver the contract.
- Samples of sustainable products.
- ISO environment, energy and/or product standards that are minimum requirements.
- Conformity assessment third party certificates.

d) Award Criteria

GPP award criteria should be applied, as appropriate, in all procurement procedures. EU and the EPA's GPP criteria give public bodies a wide range of options when it comes to setting award criteria, which in all cases must be proportional to the minimum requirements and must relate to the subject matter of the contract. Typically, at least 5% of the award marks could be allocated to GPP award criteria: rising to 10% should the project, for example, have the potential of securing significant GHG emission reductions and improved energy efficiency performance.

e) Contracts

To ensure that GPP commitments are respected in the delivery of contract, it is vital to include robust contract performance terms and conditions: always linked to the subject matter of the contract. The EPA's sectoral GPP guidance provide express recommendations as to how contract performing clauses can be inserted into public bodies' template contracts.

6 Accelerating Green Public Procurement Implementation

6.1 The Green Public Procurement Implementation Mandate

The Programme for Government 'Our Shared Future' includes commitments to progress GPP objectives such as mandating the inclusion of GPP criteria in all procurements using public funds, to be completed within three years of the lifetime of the Government. The Climate Action Plan 2021 includes an action to mandate the the inclusion of green criteria in all procurements using public funds, introducing requirements on a phased basis, and providing appropriate support to procurers.

This GPP Strategy and Action Plan commits to the overall target that **all** public bodies include GPP criteria in **all** tender competitions using public funds, where possible.

The following principles shall be adhered to by all public bodies that are using public funds as part of their procurement processes.

GPP Principle 1: Consider environmental sustainability when assessing need

When public bodies are considering procuring goods, services or works, environmental sustainability must be an intrinsic part of the needs assessment process, and business case where appropriate, and prior to a decision to procure being taken. Reducing overall consumption of resources is the single most effective environmental action public bodies and individuals can take. Consideration should be given to:

- Avoiding unnecessary purchases.
- Re-thinking how the demand can be met in a way that requires fewer or better value goods to be purchased.
- Considering resource sharing or reuse options.
- Building flexibility into contracts and frameworks so that the nature and volume of supply best reflects changing and future needs.

GPP Principle 2: Insert GPP criteria in published tender documentation

When public bodies decide to procure goods, services or works, GPP criteria, especially technical specifications, where possible, must be included in published tender documentation. The purpose of the GPP criteria is to ensure that the product, service, or

works being procured will have a reduced impact on the environment. GPP criteria can be included in the procurement process;

- When defining the subject matter of the contract.
- As technical specifications, which have an environmental dimension.
- In the selection criteria such as the technical or professional ability of the tenderer.
- In the award criteria.
- In the application of Life-Cycle Costing.
- In contract performance or management clauses.

GPP Principle 2a: When inserting GPP Criteria, use national GPP criteria for goods, services or works, where available

All public bodies that are procuring goods, services or works for which national GPP criteria is available must include GPP criteria from such guidance in published tender documentation, where appropriate and proportionate. Currently GPP criteria is available from the EPA for the following sectors.

- Road Transport Vehicles and Services
- ICT Product and Services
- Food and Catering Services
- Cleaning Products and Services
- Office Building Design, Construction and Management
- Lighting
- Heating Equipment
- Energy Related products
- Paper Products and Printing Services
- Textiles

As new or updated national GPP guidance and criteria becomes available, such guidance and criteria must be used.

GPP Principle 2b: Use GPP criteria from other sources where no national GPP sectoral GPP criteria is available

Where national GPP criteria are not readily available, use GPP criteria from other sources (for example, EU GPP criteria), or best practices available from other countries. In addition such criteria can augment national GPP criteria that is already being used.

GPP Principle 2c: Use 'Minimum Sustainability/Environmental Criteria' where no national, EU GPP criteria or other guidance for the goods, services or works being procured are available.

There are scenarios where GPP criteria may not be available, fully developed, or have yet to be incorporated into OGP/CPB arrangements. Where there are no published criteria, Public

Bodies should endeavour to include criteria that will reduce the impact on the environment. To facilitate this approach, suggested Minimum Sustainability/Environmental Criteria are provided in Appendix III. Refer also to the EPA GPP Guidance which includes information regarding GPP in contracts for Professional Services, for example.

GPP Principle 2d: Where a sustainable or environmental solution is not available on the market, consideration should be given to using an innovative procurement procedure or the innovation partnership to find goods, services, or works that meet your needs.

The innovation partnership is a procedure that allows for the combination of research, innovation and procurement, in circumstances where the market cannot already provide a solution. There are three key phases to this procedure – the tendering phase, the collaborative development phase, and the commercial phase for the delivery of the final goods, services, or works. The innovation partnership has been used by contracting authorities across Europe to find green, social, and digital solutions.³² A Quick Guide³³ on the procedure was developed by practitioners for the European Commission, and more detailed guidance, including managing Intellectual Property Rights, is also available.³⁴

GPP Principle 3: *Comply or Explain*

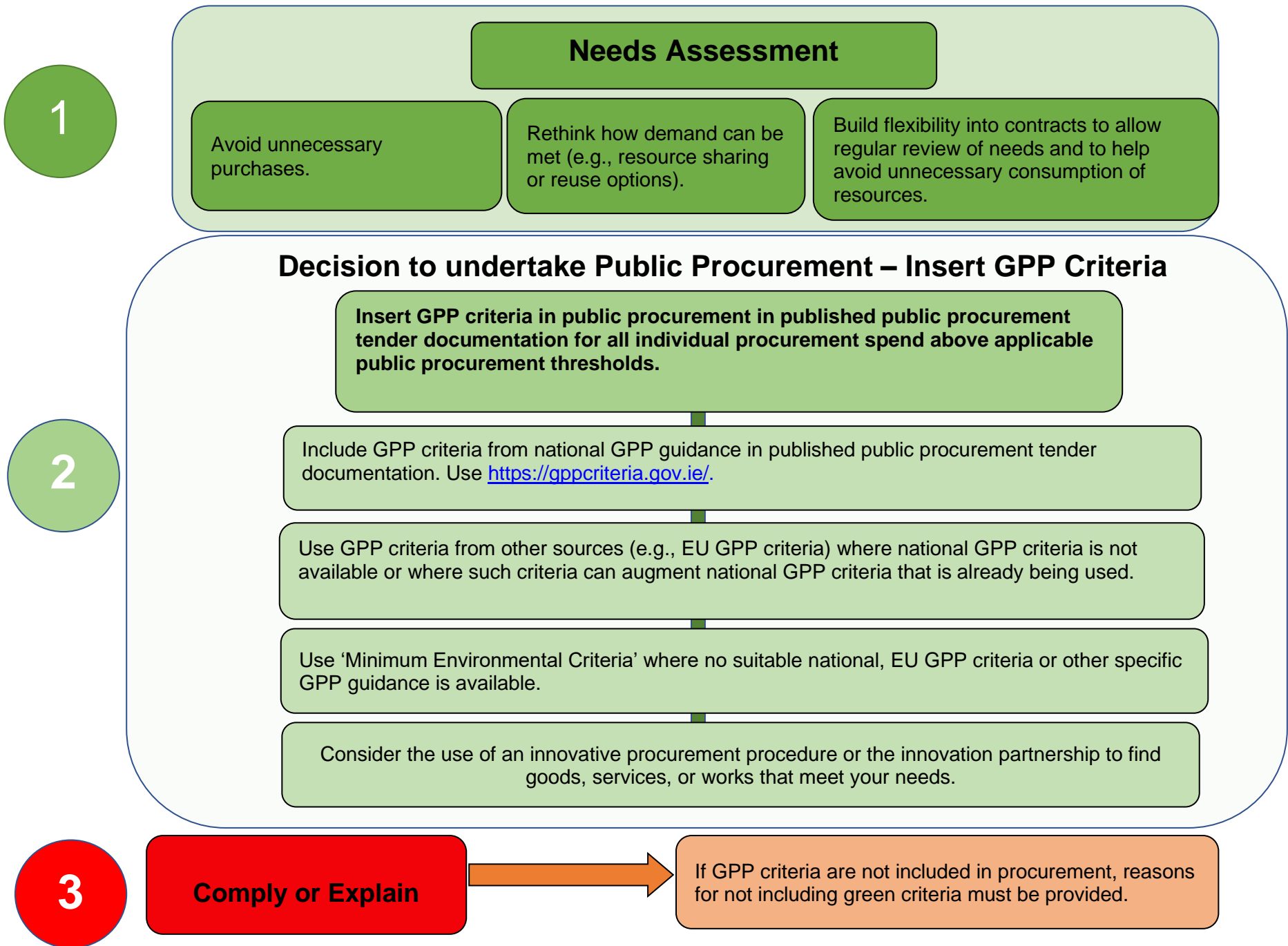
Having regard to the actions set out in the GPP Strategy and Action Plan (to be communicated by a Circular that replaces DPER Circular 20/2019), public bodies that do not include GPP criteria in published tender documentation, must provide justified reasons for not including such criteria in an annual report.

³² European Commission (2022) Study on the Innovation Partnership, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/growth/items/753394/en>

³³ European Commission (2021) Innovation Partnership: Quick Guide from Practitioners <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/47178>

³⁴ For more information, including guidance on innovation in procurement, see https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/tools-public-buyers/innovation-procurement_en

Figure 1 – GPP Implementation Mandate



6.2 Actions

ACTIONS	
The GPP Mandate from the publication date of the GPP Strategy and Action Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sector bodies where the individual procurement spend using public funds is above EU procurement thresholds³⁵ • Government departments where the individual procurement spend is above applicable national procurement thresholds³⁶ 	
A16	From the publication date of the GPP Strategy and Action Plan, all public bodies to include GPP criteria in all tender documents, where possible, in accordance with the GPP Implementation Mandate set out in the GPP Strategy and Action Plan (Figure 1).
The GPP Mandate from 2025	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sector bodies where the individual procurement spend using public funds is above applicable national procurement thresholds 	
A17	From 2025, all public bodies to include GPP criteria in all tender documents, where possible, in accordance with the GPP Implementation Mandate set out in the GPP Strategy and Action Plan (Figure 1).
The GPP Mandate - Minimum Sustainability/Environmental Criteria	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All public sector bodies to use Minimum Sustainability/Environmental Criteria where the individual procurement spend using public funds is above applicable national procurement thresholds 	
A18	From the publication date of the GPP Strategy and Action Plan, all public bodies to include 'Minimum Sustainability/Environmental Criteria' (see Appendix III for suggested criteria) in tender documents, where possible and proportionate, and where there are no national / EU / other GPP criteria.

³⁵ See <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3c1e1-thresholds/>

³⁶ The threshold above which contracting authorities are required to advertise all contracts for goods and services is now €50,000 (exclusive of VAT) and €200,000 for works (exclusive of VAT).

7 Sectoral Focus and Green Public Procurement Targets

In parallel with accelerating implementation of GPP in sectors, particularly where national GPP guidance and criteria is available, there needs to be a priority focus on sectors of the economy that have potentially a greater environmental impact and where GPP can play a critical role in assisting public bodies meet emission reduction obligations and general sustainability objectives.

To facilitate placing a priority focus on GPP in public bodies, initial targets have been specified for products and services included in this section (see also Appendix II). New targets will be developed over the term of the GPP Strategy as for example, climate, energy and climate action policy further develops. Such targets will be communicated to the public bodies by way of Government Circulars and/or climate policy action.

7.1.1 The Built Environment

Collectively, buildings in the EU are responsible for 40% of energy consumption, and 36% of GHG emissions.³⁷

In 2021, the built environment, which comprises the residential, public and commercial sectors, accounted for 12.3% of Ireland's GHG emissions. Sectoral Emissions Ceilings have been set for each of the sectors of the economy that contribute to the national GHG emissions profile, including the Built Environment (Residential and commercial/public services).

There are between 12,500 and 13,700 buildings in the public sector, including about 4,600 school buildings and 1,000 buildings in the Commercial Semi-State Sector. They consumed 2,191 GWh of thermal energy (heating) in 2019, 99% of which was from fossil fuels. Altogether they account for about half of public sector energy consumption and associated GHG emissions. GPP can play a key part in reducing the use of fossil fuels in public buildings and to achieving significant improvements in energy efficiency performance.

To report their annual energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions performance data, over 99% of public bodies and 79% of schools are using the online energy monitoring and reporting (M&R) system developed by the SEAI and the DECC. The SEAI's Annual Report

³⁷ https://commission.europa.eu/news/focus-energy-efficiency-buildings-2020-02-17_en

2022 on Public Sector Energy Performance³⁸ finds that efficiency gains are being achieved through the implementation of thousands of diverse projects, ranging from structured energy management, building and facility upgrades, retrofits, changes in transportation, better energy procurement and through behavioural change in organisations.

7.1.2 Climate Action Plan Commitments

Key Climate Action Plan targets and commitments relating to the built environment where GPP, in the construction design phase in particular, can play an integral role include:

- All new dwellings designed and constructed to Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) standard by 2025 and Zero Emission Building (ZEB) standard by 2030.
- Equivalent of 120,000 dwellings retrofitted to BER B2, or cost optimal equivalent by 2025, and 500,000 dwellings by 2030.
- 170,000 new dwellings using heat pumps by 2025 and 280,000 by 2030.
- 45,000 existing dwellings using heat pumps by 2025, and 400,000 by 2030.
- Prepare and Implement Public Sector Building Stock Plans and continue the phasing out of fossil fuels.
- Support the delivery of emissions savings of 375 KtCO₂ in public (and commercial) buildings and by 735 KtCO₂ by 2030.
- Promote and support building automation and control optimisation and smart building technologies to increase energy efficiency and monitoring.
- All new buildings designed and constructed to NZEB standard and using renewable energy sources.
- Install rooftop solar PV on new public buildings by 2027.

7.1.3 Public Procurement of Works

The procurement of a works project, both construction and civil, is complex and includes a number of discreet stages as set out in the OGP's Capital Works Management Framework. It is critical that environmental considerations such as energy efficiency, GHG emissions, energy use, water efficiency, specification for low carbon materials are incorporated into the project at the appropriate time to ensure the final delivery provides the optimal result in respect of energy efficiency and carbon footprint.

In terms of specifying the requirements for a works project, there are three key stages:

³⁸ <https://www.seai.ie/business-and-public-sector/public-sector/monitoring-and-reporting/public-sector-results/>

1. Preliminary Project Brief

The preliminary project brief is developed by the public body which sets out the output specifications (for example, size, scale, location, local constraints, environmental considerations, type of service to be delivered). It is at this stage that compliance with environmental regulations and Government policy can be specified including, for example, energy consumption, carbon footprint (both the construction phase and the operating stage), type of materials to be considered for use.

2. Engagement of Consultants and Detailed Design

The Preliminary Project Brief is issued to the consultants (for example, architects or civil engineers) to guide the development of the Definitive Project Brief. The consultant will be expected to meet the specifications set out in the Preliminary Project Brief but will have flexibility to develop the design to maximise the environmental aspects, explaining the reasons behind such decisions, where appropriate and subject to agreement of the public body.

3. Public Works Contract

The contractor is then appointed to deliver the project as specified in the Definitive Project Brief. Value engineering options within the Public Works Contract can facilitate further environmental benefits which the contractor may identify.

It is critical, therefore, that environmental specifications and GPP criteria are set out by the public body at the preliminary design stage to ensure their incorporation in the definitive design and final output. This will allow consultants and contractors to meet policy targets and objectives and exceed statutory requirements, where feasible and allow public bodies to demonstrate leadership in “greening” public works.

7.1.3.1 GPP Criteria for Buildings

Setting GPP criteria for the design, construction, renovation, retrofitting, demolition, and management of buildings can potentially deliver major environmental, climate and energy efficiency benefits. By investing in buildings and associated technical systems that have lower environmental impacts, public bodies can make an important and real contribution to reduce the direct environmental impacts and GHG emissions resulting from their activities. Moreover, by promoting and using GPP for buildings, public bodies can provide industry with real incentives for developing green technologies and products. It is important to note that resource efficiency including achieving energy efficiency objectives in the construction sector begins with the design phase.

In terms of retrofitting, where public bodies tender for the contractors to carry out retrofitting that is supported by the Exchequer, every effort should be made to include GPP criteria in the tender documents at preliminary design stage where possible. Also where grants are provided to beneficiaries (and in the event where procurement rules apply), contractors (including One Stop Shops) should be proactively encouraged by public bodies (including local authorities, SEAI and Approved Housing Bodies) to use sustainable building techniques and sustainable construction products, including those certified under the Construction Products Regulation.

The EU is in the process in developing GPP criteria for the design, construction, renovation, demolition, and management of buildings. The GPP criteria are anticipated to be centred on several themes including:

- Energy consumption and GHG emissions
- Material circularity
- Efficient use of water resources
- Occupant comfort and health
- Vulnerability and resilience to climate change
- Life cycle costing
- Biodiversity

Following publication of the EU GPP criteria for the design, construction, renovation, demolition and management of buildings, the EPA will prepare commensurate national GPP criteria for public building works contracts.

In the meantime, public bodies should include GPP criteria for works where national GPP guidance relevant to construction is available, notably:

- Office building design, construction, and management³⁹
- Heating equipment⁴⁰
- Indoor and outdoor lighting⁴¹

Public bodies should also consider, where appropriate and proportional, including GPP criteria in works tenders for the following based on EU sectoral guidance as follows:

- Road design, construction, and maintenance⁴²

³⁹ https://www.epa.ie/publications/circular-economy/resources/EPA_GPP_Criteria_Office_2023_06.pdf

⁴⁰ https://www.epa.ie/publications/circular-economy/resources/EPA_GPP_Criteria_Heating_2022_03.pdf

⁴¹ https://www.epa.ie/publications/circular-economy/resources/EPA_GPP_Criteria_Lighting_2022_03.pdf

⁴² [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/GPP%20criteria%20Roads%20\(2016\)%20203.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/GPP%20criteria%20Roads%20(2016)%20203.pdf)

- Wastewater infrastructure

The Irish Green Building Council has guidance and information on the implementation of circularity, whole life carbon and life cycle costing in public construction projects.⁴³ In addition, guidance and standards used in other countries are available that public bodies should consider. Examples include.

- Denmark's National Strategy for Sustainable Construction⁴⁴
- QualitEE Procurement Handbook for Energy efficiency Services⁴⁵
- World Green Building Council sustainable building certifications⁴⁶
- United Kingdom Buying Standards for construction projects and buildings⁴⁷

7.1.3.2 Capital Works Management Framework

The Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF), managed by the OGP, has been developed to deliver the Government's objectives in relation to public sector construction procurement reform. It consists of a suite of best practice guidance, standard contracts and generic template documents that form the four pillars that support the procurement of public works contracts.

For works not covered by EU or national GPP criteria (e.g., EPA GPP Criteria for the design, construction and management of office buildings), including works projects covered by the CWMF, public bodies are henceforth required to include the following in the preliminary project brief where appropriate (e.g., selection, technical, award criteria, where relevant):

- **Green Building Certification**
Building environmental assessment methods such as Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltiges Bauen (DGNB) and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) (or an equivalent).
- **Construction Steel**
Require evidence of compliance with the CARES sustainable constructional steels scheme.⁴⁸
- **Timber**

⁴³ <https://www.igbc.ie/resources/gpp-handbook/>

⁴⁴ https://im.dk/Media/637602217765946554/National_Strategy_for_Sustainable_Construktion.pdf

⁴⁵ <https://qualitee.eu/publications/procurement-handbook-for-energy-efficiency-services/>

⁴⁶ <https://worldgbc.org/sustainable-building-certifications/>

⁴⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-procurement-gbs-for-construction-projects>

⁴⁸ <https://www.carescertification.com/certification-schemes/sustainable-constructional-steel>

Require evidence that all timber or wood products are sourced in compliance with the EU Timber Regulation.⁴⁹ Tenderers must provide information on the operators or the traders who will supply the timber or timber products used in the construction.

- **Site Waste Management**

Waste arising during construction and renovation, excluding demolition waste, shall be less than or equal to eleven tonnes per 100m² gross internal floor area. A site waste management plan shall be prepared prior to the commencement of work on-site and shall establish systems for the separate collection of materials on-site for re-use, recycling, and other forms of recovery.

- **Construction and Demolition Waste**

Specify adherence with the EPA's Best Practice Guidelines for the preparation of resource and waste management plans for construction and demolition projects.⁵⁰

- **Building Energy Systems**

The following systems shall be designed, installed, and commissioned in conformance with the applicable specifications:

- Heating, cooling, and ventilation (HVAC)
- Low and zero carbon energy technologies
- Building Energy Management System (BEMS)
- Lighting control

7.1.3.3 Residential Housing

As part of the Housing for All (HfA) plan, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) is working to promote construction sector innovation and productivity, including the adoption of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) (an umbrella term used to capture a range of innovative construction processes like panelised housing or 3D volumetric/modular pods), to help in the faster delivery of high-quality (compliant), environmentally sustainable, and more-affordable housing. In this regard, DETE chairs a cross-departmental and cross-agency MMC Leadership and Integration Group to drive the development and greater adoption of MMC in residential construction. The Group brings together policymakers relevant to the success of the construction sector including on innovation, public procurement, sustainability, housing and the education and skills agenda.

⁴⁹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/10b28-eu-timber-regulation-forest-law-enforcement-governance-and-trade-flegt/>

⁵⁰ <https://www.epa.ie/publications/circular-economy/resources/CDWasteGuidelines.pdf>

7.1.3.4 Cement

The cement and construction sectors are separate activities but are highly interdependent. Cement production contributes 5% of Ireland's total GHG emissions. The State across all its activities is a significant market participant in terms of the construction sector and is a key demand-side entity that can effectively signal and drive a shift toward low carbon cement products.

The Climate Action Plan 2021 and 2023 identified the need to decrease embodied carbon in construction materials. Key elements outlined in the Climate Action Plan 2021 designed to facilitate cement and construction sector evolution include:

- Facilitating the use of alternative fuels and non-recyclable wastes in cement kilns.
- Prioritising longer-life and lower-carbon cement blends in public works (Green Public Procurement)
- Facilitating and promoting the development and use of alternative construction materials and techniques, using a performance-based approach.
- Extensive retrofitting programme and prioritisation of brownfield and compact development

DETE has established a Cement and Construction Sector Decarbonisation Working Group to develop actions necessary to reduce embodied carbon in the construction sector.

The Climate Action Plan 2023 includes the following targets/commitments:

- Decrease embodied carbon in construction materials produced and used in Ireland by at least 30% by 2030.
- Public bodies leading by example, shall specify low carbon construction methods and low carbon cement material as far as practicable for directly procured or supported construction projects from 2023.
- Prepare and submit to Government a public procurement policy to facilitate public bodies incorporating the principle of low carbon construction methods and materials and whole life-cycle analysis approaches in all publicly procured projects.

Public procurement will play a significant role in the wider adoption of low carbon building practices and materials. Given the significant procurement role of the State in construction, the intention is that public bodies will in future specify low carbon construction methods and low carbon cement or concrete standards and other building materials in directly procured or supported construction projects. This should be set out in the Preliminary Project Brief.

DETE's Working Group intends to provide the Government with a recommended approach to specifying low carbon cement or concrete products in public procurement, including measures to ensure a consistent approach by public bodies.

The following examples of GPP practice are informing this work:

- Low-Carbon Concrete and Construction: A Review of Green Public Procurement Programmes.⁵¹
- Low Carbon Concrete Route Map: setting the agenda for a path to net zero.⁵²
- Decarbonising the EU's road and construction sectors through GPP.⁵³
- Sustainable Public Procurement - Rijkswaterstaat (Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management).⁵⁴
- The Role of Cement in the 2050 Low Carbon Economy.⁵⁵

7.1.3.5 Energy Performance of Buildings

In December 2021, the European Commission adopted a major revision (recast) of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), as part of the 'Fit for 55' package. It proposes important amendments to the existing regulatory framework reflecting higher ambitions and more pressing needs in climate and social action, while providing Member States with the flexibility needed to consider the differences in the building stock across Europe.

The main measures in the new proposal are:

- The gradual introduction of minimum energy performance standards to trigger renovation of the worst performing buildings.
- A new standard for new buildings and a more ambitious vision for buildings to be zero-emission.
- Enhanced long-term renovation strategies, to be renamed national Building Renovation Plans.
- Increased reliability, quality, and digitalisation of Energy Performance Certificates; with energy performance classes to be based on common criteria.
- A definition of deep renovation and the introduction of building renovation passports.

⁵¹ <https://missionpossiblepartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/LowCarbonConcreteandConstruction.pdf>

⁵² <https://www.ice.org.uk/media/q12jklj/low-carbon-concrete-routemap.pdf>

⁵³ <https://www.sei.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/green-public-procurement-sweden-netherlands.pdf>

⁵⁴ <https://www.rijkswaterstaat.nl/en/environment/circular-economy/sustainable-public-procurement>

⁵⁵ https://cembureau.eu/media/cpvoin5t/cembureau_2050roadmap_lowcarboneyconomy_2013-09-01.pdf

- Modernisation of buildings and their systems, and better energy system integration (for heating, cooling, ventilation, charging of electric vehicles, renewable energy).

7.1.3.6 Construction Products

From 1st July 2013, under the Construction Products Regulation (CPR) (EU) No 305/2011, CE marking is mandatory for all construction products placed on the market in the European Economic Area and it is covered by a harmonised European product standard or a European Technical Assessment. These CE marks are used by manufacturers of products which are not covered by a harmonised European standard but who still wish their products to be CE marked.

The CPR aims to ensure that reliable performance-related data is made available, by means of Declarations of Performance, in relation to construction products being placed on the European market.

The proposal for a revised EU Regulation for the marketing of construction products will have a significant impact in terms of progressing GHG emission reduction objectives.⁵⁶ According to the proposal the manufacturers will be required to draw up a Declaration of Performance and a Declaration of Conformity for their construction products. Manufacturers will have to deliver environmental information about the life-cycle of their products. Other obligations will include:

- Respect minimum recycled content obligations and other limit values regarding aspects of environmental sustainability.
- Give preference to recyclable materials and materials gained from recycling.
- Make available, in product databases, instructions for use and repair of the products.
- Design products in such a way that re-use, remanufacturing and recycling are facilitated.

⁵⁶ Proposal for a Regulation laying down harmonised conditions for the marketing of construction products, amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and repealing Regulation (EU) 305/2011, COM (2022) final, March 2022.

7.1.3.7 Actions

ACTIONS	
The Built Environment	
A19	By the end of 2024, Capital Works Management Framework to include reference to available guidance, as appropriate, for public bodies on inclusion of low carbon construction related components and sustainable building processes, and reference to GPP criteria related to construction, including EPA GPP guidance, where appropriate.
A20	Public bodies must include specifications for low carbon construction related components and sustainable building processes, and reference to GPP criteria related to construction, including EPA GPP guidance, where appropriate in the Preliminary Project Brief.
A21	Life Cycle Costing to be used by all public bodies for all works contracts valued over €10m.
A22	For the procurement of low carbon cement material, public bodies and beneficiaries of grant (Exchequer) to implement construction related technical guidelines, once established by the Cement and Construction Sector Decarbonisation Working Group.
A23	EPA to establish updated national GPP Guidance on Buildings following publication of new EU GPP Criteria for Buildings.

SECTORAL TARGET 1	
T1	By 20XX, a minimum of X% of construction materials procured by public bodies under new contract arrangements comprise reused or recycled materials.

7.1.4 Food Procurement and Action to Tackle Food Waste

In 2019, a new seven-year strategy for the development of the Irish organic food sector was published.⁵⁷ The objective of the strategy is to develop a viable organic food sector in Ireland producing a wide range of organic products to meet the ever increasing domestic and export markets opportunities. There has been a strong uptake in the Organic Farming Scheme in recent years.

Ireland's Climate Action Plan sets a target of 10% of utilisable land area to be farmed organically by 2030. EU policymakers and international experts acknowledge the critical

⁵⁷ <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/6d16d9-doyle-launches-new-strategy-for-the-development-of-the-irish-organic/>

contribution that the purchasing power of national authorities in food makes to the development of sustainable consumption and production. Ireland's government can play a crucial role in helping to support organic farming. The recent Report of the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss included in Recommendation 81 that the State must support organic farming and locally grown produce: *"Sufficient resources must be deployed to support an ambitious implementation of Ireland's Strategy for the Development of the Organic Sector for the period 2019 to 2025, to ensure a more supportive environment for the development of organic food and farming in Ireland and for subsequent policies relating to the medium to long-term development of the sector"*.

Across the EU there are already a number of examples in Member States and regions where efforts are being made to increase the use of organic food in public procurement contracts.⁵⁸ These examples show the huge potential for the further development of organic farming in Ireland, which can increase the sustainability of farming and improve EU citizens experience and understanding of healthy eating.

In order to deliver on the stated ambition, from 1st January 2024, a minimum of 10% of food purchased via public procurement must be certified organic in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/848. The level of seasonal products should also be included as a key criteria in public sector procurement of food.

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy⁵⁹ commits to working with the public sector and public procurement specialists to ensure public bodies are supported in their efforts to prevent food waste and manage unavoidable waste through green public procurement.

The EPA's GPP Guidance Criteria for Food and Catering Services includes a GPP approach that focuses on, for example, sustainable and organic food production methods, reduced energy and waste consumption in kitchens, reduced impact of food transport, packaging and storage, and food waste prevention as part of public procurement of food and catering services.

Ireland is committed to reducing food waste by 50% by 2030 in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap 2023-2025⁶⁰, published in November 2022, aims to support this goal by setting out several priority

⁵⁸ See for example, The Danish Model The Organic Way: <https://agricultureandfood.dk/danish-agriculture-and-food/organic-farming> & <https://oes.dk/media/39012/strategi-for-groenne-indkoeb-engelsk.pdf>

actions, including public procurement, to bring the focus on food waste prevention, across key sectors in the food supply chain, together in a coherent manner. A focus area of food waste prevention includes looking at the role of the public sector in tackling food waste by improving procurement practices.

The Public Sector Climate Action Mandate includes a requirement for public sector bodies to cease using disposable cups, plates and cutlery from any public sector canteen or closed facility, excluding clinical (i.e., non-canteen healthcare) environments.

7.1.4.1 Action

ACTION	
Food Procurement and Food Waste Prevention	
A24	Update Central Purchasing Arrangements to include specific GPP criteria related to organic food procurement and food waste prevention.

SECTORAL TARGET 2	
T2	From 1 st January 2024, a minimum of 10% of food procured by public sector bodies under new contract arrangements is to be certified organic.
SECTORAL TARGET 3	
T3	From 2025, 100% of new contract arrangements related to canteen or food services to include measures that are targeted at addressing food waste, with a specific focus on food waste prevention and food waste segregation.
SECTORAL TARGET 4	
T4	From 2024, 100% of new contract arrangements related to canteen or food services (including food services for public sector organised conferences) to cease using disposable/single use cups, plates and cutlery from any public sector canteen, closed facility, and public sector organised conferences, excluding clinical (i.e., non-canteen healthcare) environments.

7.1.5 ICT Procurement

The ICT sector is currently responsible for more than 2% of global GHG emissions and this percentage is growing.⁶¹ In addition, the ICT sector is dependent on a wide range of rare minerals whose mining, production and waste phases have a very negative impact on the environment. The EPA GPP Guidance Criteria for ICT Products and Services includes an approach that focuses on, for example, energy efficiency, products that are free of hazardous substances or which contain minimal amounts that are considered safe, extended lifespan, durability, battery endurance and electrical performance, interoperability, reusability, and recycling,

SECTORAL TARGET 5	
T5	By 20XX, a minimum of X% of ICT products procured by public sector bodies under new contract arrangements are remanufactured or refurbished ICT products, where there is market availability of remanufactured or refurbished ICT products.

7.1.6 Textiles

European consumption of textiles has the fourth highest impact on the environment and climate change, after food, housing, and mobility.⁶² It is the third sector for higher use of water and land use, and fifth for the use of primary raw materials and GHG emissions. The primary environmental impacts associated with textiles arise from the production and processing of raw materials, including the application of pesticides, chemicals and dyes, energy, and water use in the production process. Secondary impacts arise during the use phase, particularly if fabrics require special care or cleaning (e.g., washing at high temperatures) or must be frequently replaced due to low durability, poor colour fastness or shrinkage.

The EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles⁶³ proposes actions for the entire lifecycle of textiles products, while supporting the ecosystem in the green and digital transitions. It addresses the way textiles are designed and consumed, including by looking also at sustainable technological solutions and innovative business models.

⁶¹ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/programmes/sustainable-public-procurement/ict>

⁶² <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/textiles-and-the-environment-the>

⁶³ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/textiles-strategy_en

The EPA GPP Guidance Criteria for Textile Products and Services includes a focus on, for example, textiles made from fibres that contain recycled materials, that use fewer and less harmful substances and chemicals, have reduced energy consumption impacts, are more durable, in addition to the approach of using contract services that minimise energy use, maintain textile and maximise potential for reuse and recycling of textiles.

SECTORAL TARGET 6	
T6	By 2027, polyester fibre products procured by public sector bodies under new contract arrangements must be manufactured using a minimum recycled content of 20%, where possible and proportionate.

7.1.7 Paper Products and Printing Services

Global paper consumption amounts to some 400 million tonnes per year, a quarter of which is consumed in Europe. Production and use of paper products has a heavy environmental footprint, including:

- Forest destruction, loss of biodiversity and climate change effects from unsustainable timber harvesting.
- Emissions to air and water during pulp and paper production, conversion, and printing.
- Energy consumption during pulp and paper production, conversion, and printing.
- Water consumption during pulp and paper production.
- Landfill due to failure to recycle paper products, especially where products also contain non-paper elements,

The EPA’s GPP Guidance Criteria for Paper Products and Printing Services aims to:

- Safeguard forests by ensuring paper products come from legally and sustainably harvested timber.
- Promote the appropriate use of recycled paper products.
- Reduce emissions to water, air and soil during the production process.
- Promote energy-efficient production of paper products.
- Reduce environmental damage or risks linked to hazardous chemicals.
- Promote responsible waste management for paper and stationery products.

In December 2021, the Government approved a requirement for Government and public Bodies to procure recycled paper as the default, signalling public sector leadership on sustainable purchasing. The Public Sector Climate Action Mandate 2023 includes a requirement to:

- Review any paper-based processes and evaluate the possibilities for digitisation so it becomes the default approach.
- Eliminate paper-based processes as far as is practicable.
- Where paper must be procured, ensure that recycled paper is the default.

SECTORAL TARGET 7	
T7	From January 2024, where office paper for printing and photocopying must be procured, 100% of the paper must be recycled paper.

7.1.8 Energy Related Products, Heating Equipment, Indoor and Outdoor Lighting

Energy related products, heating equipment, indoor and outdoor lighting have potential negative impacts in relation to energy consumption, air pollutant and GHG remissions, noise emissions, water consumption, poor durability, and longevity, in addition to end-of-life impacts from product disposal and replacement.

The EPA’s GPP Guidance Criteria for these products include a GPP approach that focuses on, for example, products that have reduced impacts in relation to the above.

SECTORAL TARGET 8	
T8	From January 2025, 100% of all tenders for the public procurement of energy related products, heating equipment, or indoor and outdoor lighting to include a requirement for tenderers to specify recommendations and options for the product, when the product or components of the product comes to the end of life, that consider environmental sustainability, including options for repair, reuse and recycling.
SECTORAL TARGET 9	
T9	From January 2024, 100% of all tenders for the public procurement of heating systems to not install heating systems that use fossil fuels, in (1) new buildings, and (2) “major renovation” retrofit projects (as defined in the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)) subject to exceptions as specified in the Public Sector Climate Action Plan Mandate 2023.

7.1.9 Indoor Cleaning Services

There are potential environmental impacts associated with indoor cleaning services such as during the manufacturing, transport and disposal of cleaning supplies and packaging,

emissions linked to chemicals in cleaning products, energy and water consumption and sorting for waste treatment. The EPA GPP Guidance Criteria for Indoor Cleaning Services includes a GPP approach that focuses on, for example, reduction in product usage and packaging by environmentally conscious cleaning methods, use of cleaning products with ecolabels, accessories and consumables with lower environmental impact and training of staff in water and waste management.

SECTORAL TARGET 10	
T10	From January 2025, 100% of all tenders for the public procurement of indoor cleaning services to include a requirement for tenderers to specify the training that will be put in place to ensure that all staff involved in delivery of the contract have the knowledge and skills to apply cleaning methods, which will reduce the environmental impact of the services.

7.1.10 Road Transport Vehicles and Services

The transport sector has been the fastest growing source of GHG emissions in Ireland over the past three decades, showing a 112% increase between 1990 and 2021, representing 15.7% of total GHG emissions in 2021. As well as GHG and air pollutant emissions, other key environmental impacts include noise pollution and potential impacts associated with waste disposal.

Promoting cleaner, safer, and more sustainable mobility is critical for climate policy, and it also represents an opportunity to improve our health, boost the quality of our lives, meet the needs of our growing urban centres, and connect our rural, urban, and suburban communities.

The EPA GPP Guidance Criteria for Road Transport Vehicles and Services includes a GPP approach that focuses on, for example, maximum carbon emissions for cars and vans, low or zero-emission technologies for heavy duty vehicles, tyre pressure monitors and rolling resistance of tyres, minimum energy efficiency for electric cars and minimum battery warranties.

The Public Sector Climate Action Mandate 2023 includes a requirement to procure (purchase or lease) only zero-emission vehicles from the end of 2022, and public sector procurement contracts for delivery and haulage should specify zero emissions vehicles where possible.

SECTORAL TARGET 11	
T11	100% of all tenders for the public procurement of vehicles to procure zero emissions vehicles only, subject to exceptions as specified in the Public Sector Climate Action Plan Mandate 2023.

7.2 Social Enterprises and Community Based Organisations

Social enterprises and community-based organisations play an important role in advancing GPP objectives particular in relation to circular procurement and promoting reuse and repair. A new Green and Social Virtual Trade Fair was launched by Community Resources Network Ireland (CRNI), with support of the Regional Waste Management Plan Offices in 2022. This innovative virtual platform⁶⁴ gives visitors the opportunity to explore green and social procurement opportunities provided by reuse, repair and recycling social enterprises and community-based organisations across Ireland. The virtual platform includes categories such as furniture upcycling and office fit outs; bike donations, upcycling, and repair; reducing food and drink waste; recycling electric and electronic equipment; reducing plastic waste; specialist social recycling and repair schemes, textile reuse and upcycling, paint reuse and recycling; events, education, and workshops.

7.2.1 Actions

ACTIONS	
Social Enterprise and Community Based Organisations	
A25	Support social enterprises and community-based initiatives that promote GPP and circular procurement by bespoke training through relevant public sector training bodies.
A26	Government Departments to capture data in their annual reports regarding tenders awarded to social enterprises, voluntary and community organisations where GPP criteria have been applied.

⁶⁴ <https://greenandsocial.virtualeventspace.io/>

8 Green Public Procurement Verification

Compliance with GPP criteria should be put to the test at the tender evaluation stage. Tenderers make environmental claims in their submissions about their products and services, often with reference to a growing list of standards, certification schemes and labels.

The EPA's GPP criteria include verification provisions that, for example, request the submission of evidence where a specific ecolabel or product certification, or equivalent is referenced. National GPP Criteria helps to ensure capability of verification with reference to available tests and standards. Refer to the EPA GPP Guidance for the Public Sector for guidance on understanding the different types of evidence.

8.1 The EU Ecolabel

The 2014 EU Directive on Public Procurement (Article 43) specifies the characteristics of labels and the requirements for labels to be used in public procurement. Label requirements have to be based on objectively verifiable and non-discriminatory criteria.

The EU Ecolabel is the official EU voluntary label for environmental excellence.⁶⁵ Established in 1992, and recognised across Europe and worldwide, the EU Ecolabel certifies products with a guaranteed, independently verified low environmental impact. To be awarded the EU Ecolabel, goods and services should meet high environmental standards throughout their entire life cycle: from raw material extraction through production and distribution to disposal. The label also encourages companies to develop innovative products that are durable, easy to repair and recyclable.

Through the EU Ecolabel, and some 88,000 are in place, suppliers can offer true and reliable eco-friendly alternatives to conventional products, empowering public bodies to make informed choices in setting sustainable procurement criteria.

⁶⁵ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy/eu-ecolabel-home_en



A wide range of ecolabels exist, however the ones which are of greatest use for procurement, and which are referred to in the GPP criteria, are 'Type I' or ISO 14024. Type I ecolabels have underlying criteria set by an independent body, are based on life-cycle analysis and are monitored by a certification and auditing process. As such they are a highly transparent and reliable source of information about the environmental characteristics of a product or service.

As outlined in the EPA's GPP guidance, EU Ecolabels may be used in two different ways as part of procurement:

- To define technical specifications, award criteria or contract performance clauses; and
- To verify compliance with technical specifications, award criteria and contract clauses.

The 2014 Procurement Directives allow public bodies to make reference to one or more specific ecolabels, provided the labels are appropriate to define the characteristics of the goods or services being purchased, and:

- the requirements for the label are drawn up on the basis of scientific information;
- the label requirements are adopted using a procedure in which all stakeholders, such as government bodies, consumers, manufacturers, distributors and environmental organisations can participate; and
- they are accessible to all interested parties.

Most Type I ecolabels will meet these requirements, although they may also contain requirements which are not specific to the product or service being purchased, such as general management requirements. For this reason, it is important to always review the

criteria/specifications underlying a given ecolabel (which should be freely available online) prior to referring to it in tender documents.

The EPA's GPP sectoral guidance identifies where the EU Ecolabel or other international ecolabels are available. Where reference is made to a particular ecolabel, equivalent labels or evidence must also be accepted.

8.2 Certificates

Certificates may be granted by a public or independent regulatory authority, or by a private industry body. Companies operating an environmental management system, for example, will receive a certificate (for example, ISO 14001, EMAS). Public bodies should request essential evidentiary documents, or equivalent, from the preferred tenderer prior to contract award.

8.3 Environmental Product Declarations

Requiring Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) as part of a tender's technical specifications is good practice. EPDs are particularly used in the construction sector. They are based on life-cycle analysis and include information about a range of environmental impacts in addition to quantifying carbon footprint impacts. In Europe, EPDs must conform to the standard EN 15804. Product Category Rules (PCRs) determine the information to be included and methodology, so that EPDs enable comparison between products fulfilling the same function. Further information about EPDs is available on the website of the Irish Green Building Council. EcoPlatform is a machine-readable digitised database of EPDs from across Europe.

8.4 Self-Declaration and Test Reports

In some cases, objectively verified third-party evidence may not be considered essential or may not be available. In these cases, a signed self-declaration, for example regarding compliance with environmental regulations, may be relied upon. A technical dossier is another form of self-declaration, but one which provides detailed technical information about manufacturing processes or the contents of a product, for example.

Third party certified test reports may provide evidence regarding the performance of a product or a specific aspect of its production. For example, when purchasing vehicles test reports may be requested both in relation to the declared emission levels of the vehicle and the durability of individual components. Public bodies should request essential evidentiary documents from the preferred tenderer prior to contract award.

8.5 Life-Cycle Costing

At the award stage, the cost of a tender is usually one of the most influential factors. In order to accurately assess the costs of an asset, Life-Cycle Costing (LCC) should be applied wherever significant costs will arise within the lifetime of the product or service which are not reflected in the purchase price. LCC can range from a relatively simple calculation of energy or fuel consumption, time to replacement and end-of-life costs/revenues, through to a more complex assessment including GHG emissions reductions (where a nominal cost is assigned to these).

According to the 2014 EU Directive on Public Procurement (Article 68) LCC shall cover parts or all the following costs over the lifecycle of a product, service or works:

- Costs borne by the contracting authority or other users, such as costs relating to acquisition, costs of use, maintenance costs, end of life costs.
- Costs imputed to environmental externalities linked to the product, service or works during its life cycle, provided their monetary value can be determined and verified; such costs may include the cost of GHGs and of other pollutants emissions and other climate change mitigation costs.

While a number of different methodologies are available and appropriate for different sectors, the most important considerations are the transparency with which the methodology is presented, the ability of tenderers to provide the information requested, and the ability of the public body to assess and verify the costs.

LCC may not be suitable for every contract, but it can play a key role in making a business case for the use of GPP criteria in sectors where upfront costs may be higher. For example, lighting, vehicles or heating equipment.

LCC should be used both at the planning stages of procurement and when assessing tendered costs. At planning stages, the methodology should be identified and the period over which costs will be assessed identified, as well as the discount rate for any future costs (if applicable). This will allow public bodies to identify the information which will be needed from tenderers in their submissions.

In 2019, the European Commission made LCC tools available that are specifically designed for public procurement.⁶⁶ Each of these tools offers the optional possibility to include environmental external costs in the form of the costs of GHG emissions from the energy consumption of the product.

The tools are accompanied by detailed user guides. The spreadsheets are designed to be included directly in the tender documents with tenderers completing the relevant fields. Where LCC is suitable, the EPA's GPP sectoral guidance provides an explanation as to the recommended methodology to be used.

The UNEP Guide on Sustainable Procurement for the UN System provides guidance on products and services that are best suited for Whole Life Costing in procurement decisions.⁶⁷

9 Green Public Procurement Training and Awareness

There is an onus on every public body to ensure that officials engaged in procurement are fully familiar with the relevant EU and national rules and are compliant with these rules when performing a procurement function.

Training and awareness on GPP for staff with a procurement role is essential in order to facilitate better understanding of GPP and its benefits, and to provide the tools and know how when setting out to include GPP criteria in procurement.

9.1 Government and Public Sector GPP Training and Awareness

The EPA has funded GPP training to over 200 public sector procurers from a hundred different organisations over the last three years. Training supports on GPP to suppliers have also been developed by the EPA. The Climate Action Plan 2023 commits that GPP training will be provided for public sector bodies including local authorities.

⁶⁶ Currently, specific LCC tools exist for computers and monitors, imaging equipment, indoor lighting, outdoor lighting, and vending machines. More information is available at <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/lcc.htm>

⁶⁷ https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sites/default/files/from-crm/bfabw_final_web_1.pdf

In terms of capacity to lead on the delivery of climate action, the Climate Action Plan 2023 outlined a review been undertaken to identify the resources, knowledge, skills, training, and abilities needed within the civil service for this role.

While GPP training has been made available to many public bodies, organisations should identify bespoke training needs with a priority focus on needs assessment and applying GPP criteria that are relevant to their own organisations. A commitment to delivering GPP training should be included in all public bodies' corporate policies and strategies and included in the Public Sector Climate Action roadmaps.

The OGP has brought together information and knowhow for procurement practitioners across the breadth of sustainable public procurement (incorporating both green and socially responsible public procurement) in one place.⁶⁸ This includes information on GPP and sustainable public procurement case studies.

9.1.1 Local Authority Climate Action Training

A Local Authority Climate Action Training Programme is being delivered to develop the capacities and skillsets of local authority staff in relation to climate action. The Programme is made up of six tailored programmes targeted at various roles and functions across local authorities and includes GPP. Training is coordinated by the Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASNTG) in collaboration with the CAROs.

9.1.2 GPP Queries

In 2010, the European Commission set up a helpdesk on GPP as one of the means for supporting public authorities to green their purchasing decisions.⁶⁹

The main aim of the helpdesk is to provide timely and accurate answers to stakeholders' enquiries, and to promote and disseminate information on GPP.

The OGP has a dedicated helpdesk committed to providing a user-friendly, high-quality service to its customers. The OGP will continue to respond to general queries from public bodies related to GPP (e.g., respond to feedback received via GPP Criteria Search).

⁶⁸ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/64b9a-sustainable-public-procurement/>.

⁶⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/helpdesk.htm>

9.1.3 SEAI Energy Link

The SEAI's Energy Link is a portal for people involved in public sector energy management in Ireland, who have an interest in energy and environmental issues, to share and exchange knowledge and experience.⁷⁰ This includes a communications portal for energy related GPP to share and exchange energy efficiency information, GPP knowledge, ideas, queries, and experience. It is open to public sector personnel and stakeholders interested in implementing energy related GPP in public tenders. It is especially targeted at procurement personnel and those preparing tenders for procuring energy related goods, equipment, services, and facilities.

9.2 Actions

ACTIONS	
GPP Training and Awareness	
A27	Civil service and public sector training providers to include GPP in their general procurement training and education courses.
A28	All public bodies to set out (e.g., within public sector Climate Action roadmaps) and fulfil annual staff training commitments in relation to GPP with a priority focus on key goods/services/works applicable to those organisations.
A29	OGP to continue to respond to general queries from public bodies related to GPP (e.g., respond to feedback received via GPP Criteria Search).
A30	OGP to publish a reference on its Sustainable Public Procurement website that includes links to international, European Union, and national guidance and other resources related to GPP.
A31	Examine options for coordinating GPP training at a large sectoral level, where appropriate (e.g., local authority sector).

10 Green Public Procurement Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring and evaluation of GPP is under consideration at EU level and has been referenced in the EU Green Deal. While at present there is no standardised reporting system in place at EU level, best practice examples from exemplar GPP regions show that any

⁷⁰ <https://energylink.seai.ie/>

monitoring system should include a record of the number and value of tenders and/or awarded contracts which included GPP criteria. Reporting in relation to GPP is necessary to demonstrate compliance with mandates in relation to GPP implementation.

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (D/PER) Circular 20/2019 states that:

- starting with the 2020 Annual Report (the report that will be published in 2021, covering the activities of 2020), each Department must report annually on its green public procurement.

10.1 EPA Reporting

The EPA, in co-operation with the DECC, and the OGP, has developed a reporting template *GPP Monitoring and Reporting Template for Government Departments* to facilitate the reporting on GPP. The reporting template includes the ten priority sectors listed in the EPA's 2021 GPP Guidance for the Public Sector document and sets out questions to capture qualitative information on GPP. Currently this monitoring and reporting requirement only applies to central Government Departments and contracts valued at €25,000 and above. To date, the EPA has published reports on GPP Monitoring and Reporting by Government Departments for the reference years 2020 and 2021.⁷¹ For 2021, the EPA reported that only 24% of the *total number* of such contracts included GPP criteria. It should be noted that the current national GPP criteria, developed by the EPA and which public bodies can include in their procurements, were adopted in September 2021. Therefore the next EPA reporting cycle, for the reference year 2022, will be the first to provide 'whole-year' data where the current national GPP criteria were available to Departments.

10.2 SEAI Monitoring and Reporting

Since 2010, public bodies have been required to report on their energy usage and actions taken to reduce consumption. There are two key obligations for public bodies:

- A requirement (under SI 426 of 2014) to report energy management and performance data directly to SEAI each year to track progress towards the targets.
- A requirement to publish an annual statement on energy performance. This statement must describe the actions public bodies are taking, or have taken, to improve its energy efficiency and an assessment of the energy savings arising from those actions.

⁷¹ <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/circular-economy/green-public-procurement/>

For the 2021 reporting cycle, for example, 348 public bodies and 3,669 schools were requested to report data to SEAI.

The SEAI is re-developing the monitoring and reporting process, as well as enhancing the online system, to meet the requirement to track 2030 public sector targets as set out in the Climate Action Plan 2023. The system will be able to provide a platform for public bodies to track their energy performance and their carbon footprint, among other reporting requirements.

10.3 Procurement eForms

In public procurement, eForms refer to digital procurement notices already used by public buyers when advertising procurement competitions and their results. Implementation of a new set of eForms is currently underway. This is central to the digital transformation of public procurement nationally and across the EU. New eForms, to be implemented by 25 October⁷², must be used in all above EU threshold competitions subject to national Regulations and the Classical, Utilities, Concessions and Defence Directives. The OGP is responsible for developing national policy on the adoption of the new eForms and their technical implementation on the national tendering platform, eTenders. As with the standard notices currently in use, the new eForms include Prior Information Notices, Contract Notices, Contract Award Notices, Contract Modification Notices and Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency Notices.

In terms of content, there are some differences between the existing standard notices and the new eForms. The most important of which pertain to the introduction of new mandatory data entry fields related to:

- strategic public procurement, namely GPP, the procurement of innovation and the promotion of social objectives in public contracts.
- the use of accessibility criteria for people with disabilities.
- the procurement of clean vehicles.
- SME participation in public procurement.

Fields dedicated to GPP included in the new eForms require buyers to indicate the inclusion (or otherwise) of established GPP criteria in their tender documentation, and if their tender

⁷² COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 2022/2303 of 24 November 2022 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1780 establishing standard forms for the publication of notices in the field of public procurement.

includes a process to procure goods, services and works with the aim to reduce the environmental impact throughout their life cycle. Fields related to Clean Vehicles Directive, Zero Emission Vehicles and Clean Vehicles are also included.

10.4 Expanding Public Sector GPP Monitoring and Reporting

Procurement is significant across the entire public sector and not just at Government department level. Therefore, there is a need to establish a broader reporting mechanism across the public sector to track implementation of GPP in a uniform and coordinated manner.

The Climate Action Plan 2023 contains a commitment to annual monitoring and reporting on GPP being continued by Government departments and that reporting structures will be identified, and reporting guidelines developed for public bodies.

To deliver on this commitment the GPP Strategy and Action Plan requires all public bodies to report on GPP implementation. To this end, the DECC will consider the legislative basis to mandate the reporting of GPP by public bodies.

It is important that any reporting requirements consider the need to obtain the right information, at the right time, that data is coherent and consistent, and that the reporting is streamlined with other similar reporting requirements and structures where possible to ensure that the reporting burden on public bodies is minimised.

Considering its central role and responsibilities for public procurement policy and procedures, the OGP will lead and coordinate implementation of public sector reporting on its use of GPP, including establishing the appropriate mechanism for capturing GPP data and reporting on GPP implementation.

Separately a mechanism for capturing relevant qualitative data will be considered, in terms of why GPP was not implemented, in line with the Comply or Explain approach. In the scenario where no GPP has been implemented, the explanation will need to be signed off by the public bodies' Climate and Sustainability Champion (appointed as a requirement under the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate).

10.5 Actions

ACTIONS	
GPP Monitoring and Reporting	
A32	DECC to consider available options for setting out in legislation mandatory requirements for reporting of GPP by public bodies (in relation to the comply or explain principle).
A33	OGP to investigate potential of using data on GPP captured by procurement notices (eForms) published on eTenders and Tenders Electronic Daily to monitor GPP in different categories, across the public sector, with a view to reporting on such data from 2025.
A34	Develop guidance for GPP reporting via eForms by public bodies.
A35	<p>From 2024, all public bodies to report on GPP implementation (via contract award information and notices) in relation to individual contracts valued over the applicable EU procurement thresholds in accordance with guidance and Circular 05/23.</p> <p>From 2025, all public bodies to report on GPP implementation (via contract award information and notices) in relation to individual contracts valued over the applicable national procurement thresholds, in accordance with guidance and Circular 05/23.</p> <p>From 2025, all public bodies to report explanation for not implementing GPP for individual contracts valued over the applicable national/EU procurement threshold where national GPP criteria is available.</p>
A36	From the publication date of the GPP Strategy and Action Plan all Government departments to report in the Annual Report on GPP implementation in relation to individual contracts valued over the applicable national procurement thresholds, including explanation for not implementing GPP.
A37	In 2023 and 2024 the EPA to publish an annual report on GPP implementation by Government departments.
A38	Annually from 2025, the OGP to publish a report on GPP implementation by public bodies.

11 EU and International Partnerships

11.1 EU GPP Advisory Group

The EU GPP Advisory Group⁷³ is an expert group composed of representative of the EU Member States and several key stakeholders. The role of the Group is to provide advice to the European Commission on the development and implementation of GPP policies. The DECC participates at GPP Advisory Group meetings.

11.2 The Circular and Fair ICT Pact

The Circular and Fair ICT Pact (CFIT) is an international procurement-led partnership with a remit to accelerate circularity, fairness, and sustainability in the ICT sector.⁷⁴ CFIT aims to stimulate the use of common, easy-to-use procurement criteria, provide guidance, and facilitate knowledge sharing. It is intended to leverage collective procurement power, in close dialogue with the ICT supply side, to affect the change and innovation we need. CFIT is an action under the UN One Planet Network Sustainable Public Procurement programme.

The CFIT Pact is open to join for every organisation procuring ICT. It supports both frontrunners in the field who want to make more impact together and other procurers who simply want to know how to make their own procurement more circular and fair.

Governments with circular and fair ambitions around ICT (or other public organisations) can also join the pact as a coordinating organisation supporting a buyer group. Following a government decision, Ireland will be applying to join the Pact.

11.3 Actions

ACTIONS	
EU and International Partnership	
A39	Ireland to progress signing of the Circular and Fair ICT Pact.
A40	DECC to continue its participation on the EU GPP Advisory Group.
A41	DECC, OGP and EPA to engage on EU and International activities, networks and partnerships that help progress circular and GPP initiatives.

⁷⁴ <https://circularandfairictpact.com/>

12 Market Engagement, Networks and Knowledge Sharing

Market engagement can help create the market conditions needed to deliver sustainable and innovative solutions. Desired environmental and social outcomes should be included in market consultation.

To help facilitate market engagement and development of the supply of sustainable goods and services, options will be examined to establish fora and networks that facilitate open engagement on opportunities and barriers for advancing GPP objectives.

A good example of this type of initiative is an IBEC survey of companies from the manufacturing, service and distribution sectors, conducted in association with the EPA, which found that while only approximately half understood what was meant by the circular economy, nearly half acknowledged that moving to a circular economy presents a business opportunity in the long-term.⁷⁵ Critical to this transition are targeted training, reinforced by closer cooperation within supply chains.

Actions will be focused that enable an environment where green goods and services can be developed.

12.1 Actions

ACTIONS	
Market Engagement, Networks and Knowledge Sharing	
A42	Consider mechanisms that recognise best practice in GPP implementation (e.g., annual awards).
A43	EPA to host GPP best practice show case events.
A44	OGP to continue to engage with the SME Advisory Group regarding the views of SMEs on the use of GPP.
A45	DECC to include GPP awareness activities (including promotion of GPP Criteria Search) as part of wider Circular Economy Awareness communications campaigns.

⁷⁵ <https://www.ibec.ie/connect-and-learn/media/2019/08/14/new-ibec-survey-shows-just-half-of-businesses-understand-the-circular-economy>

A46	Explore options for engagement with private sector procurers and suppliers, initially focused on key priority sectors, to progress parallel efforts to support markets for green goods and services.
A47	EPA to carry out market research to identify new categories of supplies and services where GPP criteria can be developed.

13 Research and Innovation

Ireland will continue to utilise all relevant EU and national research and innovation mechanisms to support GPP activities and inform related policy, including, through programmes led at EU level such as Horizon Europe and at national level led by Science Foundation Ireland.

EPA Research 2030 is a ten-year high-level framework for the EPA’s research programming for the period 2021 to 2030. Its thematic structure comprises four interconnected hubs that includes, for example, addressing climate change evidence needs and facilitating a green and circular economy. Current EPA research projects relevant to GPP and that are due for completion in 2024 include the following:

- Identification of Effective State-of-the-Art GPP Policy and Practice for the Irish Public Sector (a project that is reviewing the state-of-the-art GPP and practice and builds the existing data, knowledge and resources into a pilot toolkit).
- Opportunities for GPP to improve implementation of circular practice (a project focusing on construction projects and aims to examine and identify opportunities for GPP in Ireland, quantify the associated costs and benefits, and disseminate findings to relevant public bodies and key stakeholders).

13.1 Actions

ACTIONS	
Research and Innovation	
A48	Identify opportunities to support national and EU research topics relating to GPP and the circular economy.
A49	EPA to develop baseline data on GPP impacts and establishment of ongoing analysis and reporting on impacts of GPP implementation in Ireland (e.g., emissions savings, energy savings, waste prevented, reduced material consumption, material reuse, reduced water

	consumption, air quality impacts). Initial focus on large scale activities (e.g., construction) or specified priority sectors.
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14 Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan Implementation – Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The GPP Strategy and Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed annually by the DECC to assess the progress of the implementation of the GPP Strategy and Action Plan. The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications will report annually on the implementation of the GPP Strategy and Action Plan. To facilitate coordination of the different actions A GPP Action Plan Task Force will be established.

The Strategic Procurement Advisory Group is an advisory forum at which representatives of the OGP (Policy and Sourcing) and its partner CPBs and public procurement practitioners from across government meet with policymakers from a range of Government departments. The Group shares information, knowledge and understanding and collaborates on promoting the incorporation of social, innovative, and sustainable considerations in public procurement. The group is chaired by the Head of OGP Policy.

The environmental subgroup of the Strategic Procurement Advisory Group (eSPAG) was formed in 2021 to allow more detailed, technical, discussion of issues relating to GPP and broader sustainability and climate considerations in public procurement. This subgroup, which is co-chaired by the DECC and the OGP, has the overall objective of advancing strategic sustainable and environmental policy objectives through public procurement. Once the GPP Action Plan Task Force has been established the eSPAG will be discontinued. The GPP Action Plan Task Force will continue to facilitate discussion of GPP related issues and make recommendations for future updates of GPP policy.

14.1 Actions

ACTIONS	
GPP Strategy and Action Plan Implementation - Monitoring, Evaluation and Review	
A50	Establish a Task Force to monitor the implementation of the GPP Strategy and Action Plan and to report on progress.

Appendix I – Actions on Green Public Procurement

No.	Action	Lead Delivery Body	Other Stakeholders	Timeline
Public Procurement Guidelines, Central Purchasing Arrangements, Corporate Procurement Plans				
A1	The next iteration of the OGP's Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services take account of this GPP Strategy and Action Plan and the latest EPA GPP Guidance for the Public Sector.			
A2	With immediate effect, all future Central Purchasing Arrangements published shall include contract specific GPP criteria, where possible, including minimum environmental/sustainability criteria (refer to Appendix III, for example).			
A3	OGP and partner central purchasing bodies to provide up to date online information on central purchasing arrangements that have included GPP criteria.			
A4	By end of 2024, OGP to amend Goods and Services template RFTs and template contracts to increase awareness, where relevant, of the option to include GPP selection and award criteria and technical specifications, and associated contract performance clauses.			
A5	All public bodies in updating their corporate policies and strategies, and Corporate Procurement Plans are to set out how they will adhere to GPP Strategy and Action Plan obligations related to their organisation.			

A6	All public bodies with an annual public procurement spend (on average over the previous three years) above €200m to secure ISO 20400:2017 accreditation by the end of 2025.			
Circular Economy Strategy, Public Sector Climate Action, Local Authority Sector, Commercial Semi-State Sector				
A7	DECC to develop guidance on the application of GPP criteria relating to the circular economy and the Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy.			
A8	The GPP Strategy and Action Plan and associated targets to be reflected in the annual review of the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate, where appropriate.			
A9	Examine options for coordinating action to help progress GPP implementation in the local authority sector.			
A10	Monitor progress of GPP implementation by the Commercial Semi-State sector.			
Government Circular 20/2019, National GPP Guidance Criteria, GPP Criteria Search				
A11	The OGP to replace Circular 20/2019 to include updated instructions to Government departments and the public sector regarding new GPP obligations as set out in the GPP Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027.			
A12	The EPA's GPP guidance and criteria to be developed and updated on a regular basis, in consultation with key stakeholders and having regard to new policy, legislation and EU GPP guidance, and the practical experience of public bodies applying the current guidance. Further guidance to be			

	developed on the principles of proportionality and equal treatment in the application of GPP criteria.			
A13	New national GPP criteria to be developed by the EPA, including, for example, public works projects (including retrofitting), furniture, paints, varnishes and road markings.			
A14	All public bodies to actively promote the use of GPP Criteria Search within their organisations and include this commitment in their Corporate Procurement Plans.			
A15	OGP to update, maintain and develop GPP Criteria Search when new or updated national GPP criteria become available. This includes continuing to respond to Feedback sent through the website.			
The GPP Mandate from the publication date of the GPP Strategy and Action Plan				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sector bodies where the individual procurement spend using public funds is above EU procurement thresholds • Government departments where the individual procurement spend is above applicable national procurement thresholds 				
A16	From the publication date of the GPP Strategy and Action Plan, all public bodies to include GPP criteria in all tender documents, where possible, in accordance with the GPP Implementation Mandate set out in the GPP Strategy and Action Plan (Figure 1).			
The GPP Mandate from 2025				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sector bodies where the individual procurement spend using public funds is above applicable national procurement thresholds 				

A17	From 2025, all public bodies to include GPP criteria in all tender documents, where possible, in accordance with the GPP Implementation Mandate set out in the GPP Strategy and Action Plan (Figure 1).			
The GPP Mandate - Minimum Sustainability/Environmental Criteria				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All public sector bodies to use Minimum Sustainability/Environmental Criteria where the individual procurement spend using public funds is above applicable national procurement thresholds 				
A18	From the publication date of the GPP Strategy and Action Plan, all public bodies to include 'Minimum Sustainability/Environmental Criteria' (see Appendix III for suggested criteria) in tender documents, where possible and proportionate, and where there are no national / EU / other GPP criteria.			
Sectoral Focus - The Built Environment				
A19	By the end of 2024, Capital Works Management Framework to include reference to available guidance, as appropriate, for public bodies on inclusion of low carbon construction related components and sustainable building processes, and reference to GPP criteria related to construction, including EPA GPP guidance, where appropriate.			
A20	Public bodies must include specifications for low carbon construction related components and sustainable building processes, and reference to GPP criteria related to construction, including EPA GPP guidance, where appropriate in the Preliminary Project Brief.			

A21	Life Cycle Costing to be used by all public bodies for all works contracts valued over €10m.			
A22	For the procurement of low carbon cement material, public bodies and beneficiaries of grant (Exchequer) to implement construction related technical guidelines, once established by the Cement and Construction Sector Decarbonisation Working Group.			
A23	EPA to establish updated national GPP Guidance on Buildings following publication of new EU GPP Criteria for Buildings.			
Food Procurement and Food Waste Prevention				
A24	Update Central Purchasing Arrangements to include specific GPP criteria related to organic food procurement and food waste prevention.			
Social Enterprise and Community Based Organisations				
A25	Support social enterprises and community-based initiatives that promote GPP and circular procurement by bespoke training through relevant public sector training bodies.			
A26	Government Departments to capture data in their annual reports regarding tenders awarded to social enterprises, voluntary and community organisations where GPP criteria have been applied.			
GPP Training and Awareness				
A27	Civil service and public sector training providers to include GPP in their general			

	procurement training and education courses.			
A28	All public bodies to set out (e.g., within public sector Climate Action roadmaps) and fulfil annual staff training commitments in relation to GPP with a priority focus on key goods/services/works applicable to those organisations.			
A29	OGP to continue to respond to general queries from public bodies related to GPP (e.g., respond to feedback received via GPP Criteria Search).			
A30	OGP to publish a reference on its Sustainable Public Procurement website that includes links to international, European Union, and national guidance and other resources related to GPP.			
A31	Examine options for coordinating GPP training at a large sectoral level, where appropriate (e.g., local authority sector).			
GPP Monitoring and Reporting				
A32	DECC to consider available options for setting out in legislation mandatory requirements for reporting of GPP by public bodies (in relation to the comply or explain principle).			
A33	OGP to investigate potential of using data on GPP captured by procurement notices (eForms) published on eTenders and Tenders Electronic Daily to monitor GPP in different categories, across the public sector, with a view to reporting on such data from 2025.			
A34	Develop guidance for GPP reporting via eForms by public bodies.			

A35	<p>From 2024, all public bodies to report on GPP implementation (via contract award information and notices) in relation to individual contracts valued over the applicable EU procurement thresholds in accordance with guidance and Circular 05/23.</p> <p>From 2025, all public bodies to report on GPP implementation (via contract award information and notices) in relation to individual contracts valued over the applicable national procurement thresholds, in accordance with guidance and Circular 05/23.</p> <p>From 2025, all public bodies to report explanation for not implementing GPP for individual contracts valued over the applicable national/EU procurement threshold where national GPP criteria is available.</p>			
A36	<p>From the publication date of the GPP Strategy and Action Plan all Government departments to report in the Annual Report on GPP implementation in relation to individual contracts valued over the applicable national procurement thresholds, including explanation for not implementing GPP.</p>			
A37	<p>In 2023 and 2024 the EPA to publish an annual report on GPP implementation by Government departments.</p>			
A38	<p>Annually from 2025 the OGP to publish a report on GPP implementation by public bodies.</p>			
EU and International Partnership				

A39	Ireland to progress signing of the Circular and Fair ICT Pact.			
A40	DECC to continue its participation on the EU GPP Advisory Group.			
A41	DECC, OGP and EPA to engage on EU and International activities, networks and partnerships that help progress circular and GPP initiatives.			
Market Engagement, Networks and Knowledge Sharing				
A42	Consider mechanisms that recognise best practice in GPP implementation (e.g., annual awards).			
A43	EPA to host GPP best practice show case events.			
A44	OGP to continue to engage with the SME Advisory Group regarding the views of SMEs on the use of GPP.			
A45	DECC to include GPP awareness activities (including promotion of GPP Criteria Search) as part of wider Circular Economy Awareness communications campaigns.			
A46	Explore options for engagement with private sector procurers and suppliers, initially focused on key priority sectors, to progress parallel efforts to support markets for green goods and services.			
A47	EPA to carry out market research to identify new categories of supplies and services where GPP criteria can be developed.			
Research and Innovation				
A48	Identify opportunities to support national and EU research topics relating to GPP and the circular economy.			

A49	EPA to develop baseline data on GPP impacts and establishment of ongoing analysis and reporting on impacts of GPP implementation in Ireland (e.g., emissions savings, energy savings, waste prevented, reduced material consumption, material reuse, reduced water consumption, air quality impacts). Initial focus on large scale activities (e.g., construction) or specified priority sectors.			
GPP Strategy and Action Plan Implementation – Monitoring, Evaluation and Review				
A50	Establish a Task Force to monitor the implementation of the GPP Strategy and Action Plan and to report on progress.			

Appendix II – Sectoral/Product Targets

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
T1	By 20XX, a minimum of X% of construction materials procured by public bodies under new contract arrangements comprise reused or recycled materials.
FOOD PROCUREMENT AND FOOD WASTE	
T2	From 1 st January 2024, a minimum of 10% of food procured by public sector bodies under new contract arrangements is to be certified organic.
T3	From 2025, 100% of new contract arrangements related to canteen or food services to include measures that are targeted at addressing food waste, with a specific focus on food waste prevention and food waste segregation.
T4	From 2024, 100% of new contract arrangements related to canteen or food services (including food services for public sector organised conferences) to cease using disposable/single use cups, plates and cutlery from any public sector canteen, closed facility, and public sector organised conferences, excluding clinical (i.e., non-canteen healthcare) environments.
ICT EQUIPMENT	
T5	By 20XX, a minimum of X% of ICT products procured by public sector bodies under new contract arrangements are remanufactured or refurbished ICT products, where there is market availability of remanufactured or refurbished ICT products.
TEXTILES	
T6	By 2027, polyester fibre products procured by public sector bodies under new contract arrangements must be manufactured using a minimum recycled content of 20%, where possible and proportionate.
PAPER PRODUCTS AND PRINTING	
T7	From January 2024, where office paper for printing and photocopying must be procured, 100% of the paper must be recycled paper.
ENERGY RELATED PRODUCTS, HEATING EQUIPMENT, INDOOR AND OUTDOOR LIGHTING	
T8	From January 2025, 100% of all tenders for the public procurement of energy related products, heating equipment, or indoor and outdoor lighting to include a requirement for tenderers to specify recommendations and options for the product, when the product or components of the product comes to the end of life, that consider environmental sustainability, including options for repair, reuse and recycling.

T9	From January 2024, 100% of all tenders for the public procurement of heating systems to not install heating systems that use fossil fuels, in (1) new buildings, and (2) “major renovation” retrofit projects (as defined in the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)) subject to exceptions as specified in the Public Sector Climate Action Plan Mandate 2023
INDOOR CLEANING SERVICES	
T10	From January 2025, 100% of all tenders for the public procurement of indoor cleaning services to include a requirement for tenderers to specify the training that will be put in place to ensure that all staff involved in delivery of the contract have the knowledge and skills to apply cleaning methods which will reduce the environmental impact of the services
ROAD TRANSPORT VEHICLES	
T11	100% of all tenders for the public procurement of vehicles to procure zero emissions vehicles only, subject to exceptions as specified in the Public Sector Climate Action Plan Mandate 2023.

Appendix III – Minimum Environmental Criteria for Public Procurement of Goods and Services

In relation to all goods and services contracts valued over the relevant national procurement threshold, and with effect from the GPP Strategy and Action Plan publication date, where no suitable national, EU, or other GPP criteria are available for goods or services being procured, public bodies must include minimum GPP criteria as distinct criterion in the published tender documentation. Depending on the goods or service being procured, this may be a technical specification, a selection criterion, and/or an award criterion.

Where the environmental aspect is included as an award criterion, maximum marks awarded should be proportionate, and take into consideration the potential environmental impact of the goods or services being procured. Marks within the range of 5% to 10% are recommended.

Public bodies should consider the following menu of options in setting green criteria which need to be proportionate in terms of the nature of the tender:

- Provide evidence of two recent and comparable contracts that were delivered with supporting environmental measures (e.g., staff sustainability and awareness training, environmental management system implementation)
- A detailed description of the environmental impacts of the goods or services being procured over their life cycle, including GHG emission reductions, compared to alternative goods and services, where appropriate
- A quantification of the estimated carbon footprint of the goods being procured and proposed mitigation steps to provide goods with the lowest carbon footprint
- The practical steps that the tenderer will take to deliver the contract in an environmentally sustainable manner, including sustainability awareness training for personnel involved in contract fulfilment
- Set out proposals for the monitoring, measurement and reporting during contract delivery of environmental and circular economy impacts of the goods or services supplied, including GHG emission reductions, energy efficiency and/or sustainable resource use

Some or all of these criteria should be included as appropriate, provided they are relevant to the contract. The tenderer must provide a means of verifying any environmental claims in its bid.