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KEYSTONE COLUMN 92 – GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN IRELAND

 October 12, 2017   Ross McCarthy (http://keystonepg.ie/author/rossmckeystone/)   The Keystone Column
(http://keystonepg.ie/category/the-keystone-column/) Suppliers (http://keystonepg.ie/tag/suppliers/), Green Public Procurement
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Keystone Procurement had the opportunity to attend Green Public Procurement for Growth (GPP4) this week. It is an inter-reg programme being run by the Department of Communications, Climate Change and the Environment to increase the prominence of green procurement in Ireland. It was a very worthwhile event and was extremely well organised and run by the Department. Attendees included public bodies for the most part along with some representatives of employer bodies / industry groups and the environmental NGO sector. The project is scheduled to run for several years and commenced stakeholder engagement with

the environmental NGO sector. The project is scheduled to run for several years and commenced stakeholder engagement with interested parties in June 2017.

What is green public procurement (GPP)

Many public authorities in Europe have taken the approach of establishing a GPP policy, or including commitments to GPP implementation within other policies. GPP requires effective co-operation between staff in public bodies and high-level support is generally considered to be an important factor for the success of GPP.

To be effective a GPP policy should:

- Include clear targets, priorities and timeframes;
- Indicate the scope of the purchasing activities covered (i.e. does it cover the whole authority, or just certain departments? Which product and service groups does it cover?);
- Indicate who is responsible for implementing the policy; and
- Include a mechanism for appropriately monitoring performance.

GPP policy should be aligned with (any) existing policies and strategies relating to procurement and the sustainable operation of the organisation. The input of internal users, suppliers and management is normally needed to ensure the policy can be implemented. Once a policy is in place, an operational implementation plan is typically established, outlining specific tasks, responsibilities and a time plan for the public body in question. The policy and implementation plan is then communicated widely to staff and to suppliers who have a role to play in delivering the policy.

What do suppliers need to know about green public procurement?

Public bodies will seek to identify the products, services and works they need to prioritise. The main factors used to identify them include:

- Environmental impact – products (e.g. fleet vehicles) or services (e.g. cleaning services) which have a high impact on the environment over their life-cycle;
- Budgetary importance – areas of significant spend within the authority; and
- Potential to influence the market – areas where there is potential to influence the market (e.g. due to the size or visibility of the contract, or the importance for suppliers of having public sector clients).

Additional considerations that bodies are asked to take onboard include political priorities (e.g. urban air quality & diesel cars), the market availability of preferable alternatives (e.g. switching to products with eco-certs and labels), cost considerations (based on life cycle costs), availability of green specification criteria that can be inserted into a tender without significant work and visibility to the public, markets and staff.

How do I know a public body may be implementing green public procurement?

It's on the way across the public sector and eventually it will impact most suppliers in some way. An early indicator however is that clear targets measuring the sustainability of something are in place and part of the reporting requirements.
The kinds of targets that are often put in place within a public body include measures like:

- Overall procurement targets – e.g. 80% of procurement (by value and by number of tenders) should include GPP criteria by 2018. These targets can differ for national, regional, local levels;
- Product/service specific targets – e.g. by 2017, 60% of meals served in school canteens should be organic, or by 2018, all cleaning services should use products meeting the EU Ecolabel criteria;
- Operational targets – e.g. all procurement staff will receive GPP training by 2017, or GPP guidance will be available to all staff on the authority intranet; and
- When considering procurement targets, it is important to have a clear, operational definition of what counts as green procurement. For many of the targets set at the national level by Member States, tenders are considered green if they include the national or EU GPP criteria.

How do I know my industry is impacted or may be impacted?

Any business that is operating in the following sectors, will be directly impacted imminently (if they are not already impacted) by green public procurement criteria. These sectors include:

- Cleaning products and services;

- Cleaning products and services;
- Copying and graphic paper;
- Combined heat and power (CHP);
- Office Buildings;
- Electrical and electronic equipment in the health care sector;
- Electricity;
- Food and catering services;
- Furniture;
- Gardening products and services;
- Imaging equipment;
- Indoor lighting;
- Office IT equipment;
- Road Design, Construction and Maintenance;

- Sanitary tapware;
- Street lighting and traffic signals;
- Textiles;
- Toilets and urinals;
- Transport;
- Wall panels;
- Waste water infrastructure; and
- Water-based heaters.

Strict scientific criteria are used to select these sectors and it is based on extensive consultation and a lifecycle cost appraisal approach. The EU GPP criteria include two 'levels' for each sector covered:

- Core criteria that are designed to allow easy application of GPP, focus on the key area(s) of environmental performance of a product or service, and aim to keep administrative costs for companies to a minimum; and
- Comprehensive criteria which take into account more aspects or higher levels of environmental performance, and are for use by authorities that want to go further in supporting environmental and innovation goals. It is worth noting that public bodies cannot set the bar so high it creates competition issues or be deemed to constitute state aid of some form.

This is an emerging area in procurement. We will continue to write about it on a frequent basis. We recommend businesses investigate environmental certification options from ISO14001 to Ecomerit (http://www.ecocert.ie) which is a more affordable option with many of the same benefits.

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Finding Public tenders

Over 100 tenders issue every week, we have been tracking these tenders for nearly two years now and know that almost all industries and sectors have opportunities. Opportunities present in almost every conceivable category of good or service.

Keystone recommends:

www.etenders.ie (http://www.etenders.gov.ie)– register to obtain the latest tenders from State bodies

www.supplygov.ie (http://www.supplygov.ie/)– the latest lower value tenders for trades / supplies from local authorities

www.tenderscout.com (http://www.tenderscout.com/)– a tender engine highlighting opportunities in Ireland and overseas

Image: the image used here is of sunrise over factories in the industrialised Ruhr region in Germany.

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Some thoughts on #diversity in #procurement and the use of anonymised CVs as a potential emerging trend. keystonepg.ie/diversity-publ…

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Our own @rosspmccarthy was amongst the @isme_ie leaders voicing concern

Feb 2, 2018

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InterTradeIreland, the Trade and Business Development Body, wishes to appoint a website development company to create a new corporate website for the Body. Closing date for tenders 5th Jan 2018.

Visit: ow.ly/oglE30he1nt

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Good article on procurement from a legal perspective - very much in line with our view of things: lexology.com/library/detail…

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