



Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithe
ar son na hAeráide & Comhshaoil
Department of Communications,
Climate Action & Environment

GPP4Growth Action Plan



GPP4Growth
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



GPP4Growth Action Plan

Green Public Procurement





Executive Summary

This action plan has been developed as part of the Interreg Europe Project GPP4Growth ('the Project') as part of activity 5.1 Action Planning.

This Action Plan document will outline how some of the learning from the Project will be translated into Irish public procurement policy and be implemented in order to improve procurement policy in Ireland.

There are three key actions that will be applied in Ireland which have emanated from the lessons we have learned through participation in the Project, these are;

1. Development of a national training plan
2. Publication of a national circular from the Ministry of Public Expenditure and Reform on green public procurement
3. Revision of national guidance on green public procurement

In this document these actions will be explained in the context of their development and how they evolved from participation in the Interreg Europe project. In addition the plan will outline the implementation and monitoring arrangements for the coming phase of the Project.

Abbreviations

EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
OGP	Office of Government Procurement
DCCA	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment



This document has been prepared by the Waste Policy and Resource Efficiency Division of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Ireland

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SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production





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Policy context

Green Public Procurement in Ireland

The purchasing power of Ireland's government sector (12% of GDP) has significant potential to reduce emissions and protect our environment while saving money over the full lifecycle of goods and services. Government commitment to green purchasing sends a powerful signal to the market that the Government requires projects, products and services that make the most positive contribution to our environment and can save money over their full lifecycle. It promotes innovation in the marketplace for goods and services with a reduced environmental impact.

A wide range of International and national policy instruments reference Sustainable or Green Public Procurement as an important tool in effecting environmental change. These include: the [UN Sustainable Development Goals 2019](#) (SDG 12.7); [Europe 2020; Roadmap to a Resource Efficiency Europe; Energy 2020](#); the EU's 7th [Environment Action Programme](#); the [OECD's](#) public governance programme as well as the national [Climate Action Plan to Tackle Climate Breakdown](#).

Ireland's 2012 [National Action Plan 'Green Tenders'](#) set a target of 50% of procurement contracts which should incorporate green criteria; applying to both the number and the value of public procurement contracts concluded to ensure greatest reach. In 2014, [EPA produced guidance](#) for GPP covering the eight priority sectors as identified in the national Green Tenders strategy. The sectors were chosen on the basis of the quantum of expenditure; scope for environmental improvement; impact on suppliers likely; leadership to market potential; relevance and accessibility of criteria; market availability and economic efficiency (in line with EU policy and practice). The guidance set out the main environmental impacts associated with each of these product and service groups and the way in which the GPP criteria address them. Specifically, the priority sectors are:

- Transport (focusing on road transport vehicles and services)
- Energy (focusing on electricity, combined heat and power and lighting)
- Construction (focusing on materials and site management)
- Food and catering services
- Cleaning products and services
- Textiles and uniforms
- IT equipment (focusing on desktops, laptops and displays)
- Paper



In preparing this guidance, stakeholder organisations identified some concerns and barriers to the implementation of green public procurement including: the perception that GPP costs more; annual budget constraints; lack of support for GPP from senior management, risk of legal challenges, complexity of verification, and the effect of central procurement frameworks. These challenges are mostly still relevant and should be borne in mind when forming a programme with associated supports for enhanced activity on GPP.

However adoption of the plan across public administrations has been limited. The economic crisis ensured that Ireland's implementation of GPP has been piecemeal. While there are examples of good practice, especially in the area of energy efficiency, we cannot say that Ireland is systematically applying GPP to the benefit of our environment and economy. While some procurement actions include basic environmental criteria, monitoring these impacts is hampered through a lack of data and monitoring.

There is a need to foster a culture-change within procurement processes to prioritise solutions that have a reduced impact on the environment throughout their life-cycle, as compared to alternative products/solutions. Applying life-cycle costing can help to identify products and services with the optimal combination of whole-life costs, quality and environmental performance. In certain areas, GPP can imply higher upfront costs due to the need to invest in innovative materials and production and management processes.

As a partner in the Interreg Europe project GPP4Growth we have learned that implementation of GPP requires a culture change across public bodies to embed environmental and particularly climate considerations into their planning and purchasing decisions. In line with the 'best in class' leaders of GPP across Europe, this change is best driven by our procurement and sustainability experts, building on the experiences of our project partners.

During the first phase of the project it became clear that a clear signal from senior Government officials was essential to drive increased uptake in green public procurement.

As a result in the Government Decision of in January 2019, the Office of Government Procurement and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) were charged with bringing forward renewed proposals on the implementation of GPP as part of national procurement policy and practice. The inclusion of this element within the decision provided a new focus and energy behind the State's efforts to deliver on its environmental objectives including climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals and set a clear signal of the importance attaching to green public procurement as a key policy lever.



Application of the Action plan to the Policy Instrument

The policy instrument to be addressed by DCCAE during the GPP4Growth project was the Border, Midlands and Western Regional Operational Programme (BMW-ROP) 2014-2020.

The 4th and 5th priorities of BMW ROP are aimed at supporting sustainable and green development and resource efficient economy in the region. The relevant investment priorities are:

- 4c: Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings and in the housing sector

This action supports the funding of energy efficiency upgrades of social housing stock within the region and a national scheme which supports energy efficiency improvements in the homes of persons in receipt of state welfare payments. This priority area is ahead of target in terms of its deliverables and the funding arrangements were already fully mature.

- 6e: Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites, reduce air pollution and promote noise reduction.

In the initial application form, improvements in the management of BMW ROP were envisaged through the more systematic use of GPP in tenders and contracts supported by the ROP, especially in relation to sustainable construction and renovation works of the urban environment, transport, housing and public buildings.

A number of infrastructural projects were announced in 2016 as having been awarded funding under this priority area. As such by the commencement of the project in 2017, the funding available under the project had largely been allocated and the procurement processes for most of the projects were already underway. As a result the governance terms of the projects and their tender processes were outside the scope of influence of the DCCAE.

It should be noted that the projects delivered under Priority 4c are classified as green procurement projects. Similarly the construction projects funded under Priority 6e will also qualify as green procurement due to the high environmental standard of building regulations in Ireland.



Strengthening focus on green procurement at National level

As DCCAE had limited ability to influence the development of new projects under the ROP and the fact that the projects funded would largely be classified as green procurement initiatives, DCCAE decided to focus on influencing future national public procurement policy and practice as this would have a greater impact on all local, regional and national public procurement in future.

This will also impact upon the level of green procurement included in tenders for future local spending under EU funded programmes such as the regional action plans.

The work completed as part of the GPP4Growth project during Phase 1 which included stakeholder events, dissemination of project learnings in the format of reports and briefs and the regular participation in 3rd party events helped to significantly raise the profile of GPP in Ireland at a senior Government Level. As a result we were able to encourage the inclusion of GPP in the [All of Government Climate Action Plan](#), [the Green Government Initiative](#) and the [Future Jobs Initiative](#)

Figure 1: Action 148 from All of Government Climate Action Plan

Action 148: Mandate the inclusion of green criteria in all procurements using public funds, introducing requirements on a phased basis and provide support to procurers as required			
Steps Necessary for Delivery	Timeline by Quarter	Lead	Other Key Stakeholders
OGP to issue circular	Q3 2019	OGP	DCCAE, DPER
Upskill programme for procurers and specifiers	Q3 2019	EPA	SEAI, DCCAE, OGP
Prioritise target areas	Q4 2019	DCCAE	OGP
Government Departments to measure and report on GPP on an annual basis	Q4 2020	EPA	SEAI, DCCAE, OGP



Details of the Actions

Action 1 – Development of a National Circular on Green Procurement

As outlined in the introduction, Ireland's National Action Plan on Green Tenders 2012 faced a number of challenges in gaining traction. It became clear through GPP4Growth stakeholder engagement events that there was a lack of awareness and confidence amongst procurement practitioners and this required improved support and leadership from senior levels of government and management.

Throughout the project we have been very interested in the approach taken by Malta in increasing levels of GPP. In the research conducted as part of the project¹²³ it was clear that Malta had taken a very strategic approach to embedding GPP in procurement practice with significant senior government buy-in.

During visits to Bulgaria and Latvia we took the opportunity to gather more insights from the Maltese experience from Stefan and Christian both in the discussions during workshop events and in conversations on the margins. As a result of this we realised that sending a signal to procurers through a clear central government message would help to address some of the barriers identified.

Our partners from Malta explained how their Green Public Procurement National Action Plans are supported through Circulars issued by the Department of Contracts. While there are differences in terms of the procurement systems between Malta and Ireland we felt that the approach of using a Circular to support policy could be applied in the Irish context.

As such this action will focus on the development of a Circular which will be issued from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to all Government Departments and public bodies to ensure that all Government Departments and public bodies consider the inclusion of GPP in all tenders.

¹ A1.2: Identifying successful green public procurement cases

² A1.3: Comparative analysis report on existing national and regional GPP policies

³ A3.1: Workshop Presentation on different GPP approaches in gpp4growth partner countries -Malta



Action 1: Implementation and Monitoring Plan

Item	Timeframe	KPI's
DCCAE to work with OGP to develop a National circular	By Q3 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting held to facilitate development• Drafts of Circular be developed• DCCAE and OGP to agree on final text of Circular
Circular to issue	By Q3 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OGP to clear Circular with DPER• Circular to issue• Press Release to be issued• Circular to be circulated to all relevant bodies and published online
DCCAE to provide assistance and guidance documents	Q2 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Queries dealt with• Provision of Guidance documents and templates
Monitor implementation of the circular	Q3 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green public procurement has increased as measured in relation to requirements set out in the Circular.

The success of this action is dependant upon the collaboration between the OGP and DCCAE. While both organisations are tasked with the development of the Circular the OGP are ultimately responsible for the publication of the final version of the circular. However following publication both OGP and DCCAE will be responsible for providing support with DCCAE tasked with providing any guidance documents required.

This action has also been included in National Climate Action Plan as part of Action 148 as outlined above and also within action 5.2(v) of the Future Jobs initiative.

Action 1 - Associated Costs and provision of funding

There are no costs associated with this action as all the work will be carried out internally within both organisations who will cover any related staffing costs.



Action 2 –Development of Pilot National Training Module

Training for procurement personnel has been identified as a key enabler for an increase in the application of GPP in public contracts in Ireland. This emerged in both research conducted ⁴⁵and our stakeholder workshops⁶⁷ held as part of the GPP4Growth project. Lack of suitable training was identified as a key barrier during our second stakeholder meeting in Portlaoise in October 2017.

Procurement practitioners identified that they require more detailed and nuanced training on the application of green criteria. The development of a training plan will ensure that they are confident and capable of including criteria in future tender procedures. This has been a key focus of our work on GPP and we have used stakeholder workshops and our communications to share knowledge and best practice. We are working to establish the best format and delivery mode for training that can be rolled out across the country.

During the Experience Visit to Wexford, Ireland in October 2018 we carried out a workshop to facilitate the transfer of knowledge At the workshop ⁸, Andalucía shared their experience of developing and delivering a pilot training programme for civil servants within their region through the national training body.



⁴ A3.4: Existing experiences visits on GPP processes and results

⁵ A3.4: Presentation by Andalucia during Existing experiences visits in Ireland

⁶ A2.1: GPP4Growth Stakeholder meeting 2 report, Portlaoise October 2017

⁷ A2.1 GPP4Growth Stakeholder meeting 5, report Tullamore May 2019

⁸ A3.4: Existing experiences visits on GPP processes and results – Final Report



At our request, our Andalusian colleagues provided English copies of the materials and have agreed that we can include any of the material when we are developing our own training programme.

It was decided that a training course would be developed between the EPA, SEAI, OGP and DCCAE and this would be specifically targeted at key procurement personnel in the public sector at local, regional and national level.

The delivery of the requirements under the National Circular on Procurement in Action 1 is dependant upon the prevalence of skilled and confident procurers in the public sector.

The provision of training to procurers will enable public procurers to apply GPP criteria within more of their tender procedures. This addresses one of the key barriers identified as part of the project activities and we expect this to lead to increased green tenders.

Action 2: Implementation and Monitoring Plan

Item	Timeframe	KPI's
Develop Course Curriculum in line with EU GPP training toolkit and other important source materials including materials from Andalusia	Dec 2019	Curriculum set out
Select training locations and dates	Feb 2020	6 locations and dates identified across the country and included in tender documents
Identify training providers	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tender documents developed• Tender processes completed• Suitable providers identified
Advertise training	April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details circulated to mailing lists• Set up on event management platform
Deliver Training	May – December 2020	Number of attendees per event recorded at each of the 6 training events
Collect feedback	Dec 2020-Jan 2021	Feedback forms completed by at least 50% of attendees
Review of training plan	Feb 2021	Review completed within 6 weeks of date of last training session
Next training plan	March 2021	Set out training plan for 2021 and forward



This action has been included in Action 148 of the National Climate Action Plan and some training activities have already commenced. The success of this element of the plan is dependant on the cooperation of the key stakeholders mentioned above EPA, SEAI, OGP and the DCCAE.

The EPA and SEAI will lead in the development of the training materials and the tendering for the provision of the training days. The OGP and DCCAE will facilitate these events through communication with procurers to ensure high levels of participation.

Work on this has started and will ensure training commences at before May 2020.

Action 2 - Associated Costs and provision of funding

It is difficult to determine costs in advance of a tender procedure but based on experience to date we would expect costs per event to range between €5000 - €8000 including venue hire, travel expenses and materials for attendees based on an average of 20 attendees per event. This will be reviewed during the tender process.

The funding for this will be provided by the Department of Communications Climate Action and Environment from the National Environment Fund and Vote funds.

Action 3 – Updating National Green Procurement Guidance

Actions 1 and 2 have been developed to address key barriers in the implementation of GPP. However these Actions need to be supported by clear and accurate green procurement guidance to address the issue of ‘fear’ on the part of procurers that was identified in Phase one of the project in the documents previously referred to within the text.

In order to support an increase in the number and value of green procurement, procurers have expressed the need for updated guidance in Ireland which brings together clear relevant information and ideally contains examples of successful procurements.

Additionally an updated national guidance document will support the monitoring and reporting of green procurement performance which is expected to be mandated under the Circular.

We noted the importance of up to date and clear guidance while sharing experiences in Ireland and in Antwerp. In particular while speaking to our Spanish and Latvian colleagues we noted that in order to support training it is important to have good supporting guidance documents.



As such the review of the national green procurement guidance documents have been identified as a policy priority and has also been included in Action 148 of the National Climate Action Plan.

Through discussions with our key stakeholders we have also determined that the guidance should becoming a living document similar to the EU GPP criteria system with the GPP criteria being updated on a basis of a needs assessment.

We would seek to review and update guidance in line with EU GPP criteria, taking into consideration feedback from stakeholder consultation and other best practice including examples of criteria developed by our project partners.

Action 3: Implementation and Monitoring Plan

Item	Timeframe	KPI's
Review of Green Procurement Guidance Document (2014)	End of Q1 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidance reviewed• Notice to stakeholders re updating• Feedback received from stakeholders identified in GPP4Growth project.• Identification of key areas to be updated
Tender for Updating of Guidance	Q2 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tender developed based on feedback from review• Tender process completed
Guidance Updated	Q4 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated criteria documents available for 8 categories• Documents publicly available online

This action will be delivered through the co-operation of DCCAIE, EPA, SEAI and OGP.

The Department will co-ordinate the review of the previous guidance and gathering of feedback. The EPA and SEAI will each take ownership of the updating of specific categories including the tender process and completion of criteria documents.

The DCCAIE and OGP will ensure communication of the updated materials to all relevant stakeholders and the online publication of the criteria documents.



Action 3- Associated Costs and provision of funding

It is difficult to determine costs before a tender procedure has commenced but given our experience of the project to date we would expect that for the preparation and delivery of the updated criteria it is possible that the costs per document would range from €2,000 - €5,000. This will be reviewed during the tender process.

The funding for this will be provided by the Department of Communications Climate Action and Environment from the National Environment Fund and Vote funds.



Support for the Action Plan

I Mary Frances Rochford

On behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency am pleased to confirm our support and endorsement of the Action Plan set out by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

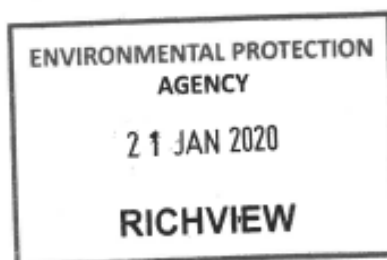
The EPA considers the concept of Green Public Procurement to be an extremely important tool in effecting environmental change and protection in Ireland's public services and recognises the part Green Public Procurement can play in the EPA's vision to protect and improve the environment as a valuable asset for the people of Ireland.

The EPA looks forward to playing its part in supporting the GPP4Growth Action Plan and in parallel, supporting Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2019, by working with DCCAE, SEAI and OGP to update the GPP guidance document and provide training for public service specifiers and procurers.

Date: 21/01/2020

Signature: *Mary Frances Rochford*

**Programme Manager,
Office of Environmental Sustainability,
Environmental Protection Agency**



Stamp of the organisation (if available):



21st February 2020

Re: Letter of support for GPP4Growth plan

To who it may concern

On behalf of the Sustainable Authority of Ireland I am pleased to confirm our support and endorsement of the GPP4Growth Action Plan set out by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in December 2019.

SEAI will have a role in providing training and good practice promotion of energy related green public procurement.

Yours sincerely

Alan Ryan

Public Sector Programme Manager

Business and Public sector department

SEAI



Oifig um Sholáthar Rialtais
Office of Government Procurement

Dr Irene Cadogan
Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment
Newtown Road
Wexford
Y35 AP90

15 January 2020

Re: GPP4Growth Action Plan

Dear Irene,

I refer to the GPP4Growth Action Plan and our previous positive engagement and collaboration on promoting social and environmental considerations in public procurement.

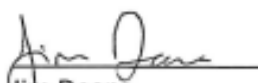
In particular, we were pleased to agree with your Department the Circular on Promoting the use of Environmental and Social Considerations in Public Procurement which highlights the Government's priority in promoting green public procurement (GPP) in the context of the wider commitments under the Climate Action Plan.

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) are pleased to confirm its ongoing support and endorsement of the INTERREG Europe Project, GPP4 Growth, as set out by Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment (DCCAE) in the GPP4 Growth Action Plan.

The OGP, an office of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, is responsible for developing and setting out the overarching policy framework for public procurement, as well as the procurement procedures, to be followed by Irish public bodies. The OGP is advocating for, and facilitating, strategic procurement planning to promote the wider benefits of public procurement, including incorporating GPP into public procurement procedures. The OGP has participated in and supported DCCAE, the policy lead in this area, throughout the GPP4Growth Project and are pleased to offer our continued support to DCCAE.

We wish you well in your endeavours in this regard.

Yours sincerely,


Jim Deane,
Head of Policy.





Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithe
ar son na hAeráide & Comhshaoil
Department of Communications,
Climate Action & Environment

06/02/2020

On behalf of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment I am pleased to confirm our support and endorsement of the Action Plan developed as part of the GPP4Growth Interreg Europe Project.

As a result of the Government Decision in January 2019, the Office of Government Procurement and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) have been working together on the implementation of Green Public Procurement as part of national procurement policy and practice. The decision provided a new focus and energy to the States efforts to deliver on its environmental objectives including Climate Action and the Sustainable Development Goals. It also set a clear signal of the importance attached to the use of green public procurement as a key policy lever.

This Action Plan has been developed taking into consideration the lessons learned during the project and is designed to enhance Irish public procurement policy.

Kevin O' Donoghue,
Principal Officer
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Stamp of the organisation:

