

# Green/Sustainable Procurement: Aligning Procurement Strategy with Net Zero Goals and EU Legislation

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# Introduction to Green/Sustainable Procurement

## **What is Green/Sustainable Procurement?**

- Focuses on purchasing goods and services that minimise environmental impact.
  - Aligns with social, economic, and environmental sustainability.
  - Aims to reduce carbon footprints, enhance resource efficiency, and promote circular economy models.

## **Why it Matters?**

- The public sector can influence market behaviours and support Ireland's net zero goals by adopting sustainable procurement practices.

# EU Legislation and Net Zero Goals

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## **EU Green Deal and Public Procurement:**

Central to the EU's strategy to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

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**Directive 2014/24/EU:** Enables integration of environmental considerations into procurement.

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**Ireland's Climate Action Plan:** Commitment to reaching net zero emissions by 2050; procurement plays a pivotal role in achieving this.

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**Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Public procurement aligns with SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**

**1** NO  
POVERTY



**2** ZERO  
HUNGER



**3** GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



**4** QUALITY  
EDUCATION



**5** GENDER  
EQUALITY



**6** CLEAN WATER  
AND SANITATION



**7** AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY



**8** DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH



**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



**10** REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES



**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES  
AND COMMUNITIES



**12** RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION  
AND PRODUCTION



**13** CLIMATE  
ACTION



**14** LIFE  
BELOW WATER



**15** LIFE  
ON LAND



**16** PEACE, JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS



**17** PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



# Socially Responsible Public Procurement (SRPP)

Socially responsible public procurement (SRPP) aims to address the impact on society of the goods, services and works purchased by the public sector. It recognises that public buyers are not just interested in purchasing at the lowest price or best value for money, but also in ensuring that procurement achieves social benefits and prevents or mitigates adverse social impacts during the performance of the contract.

# Socially Responsible Public Procurement (SRPP)

SRPP is about achieving positive social outcomes in public procurement contracts (European Commission 2021a). SRPP can be used to, for example:

- Promote fair employment opportunities and social inclusion
- Provide opportunities for development of the social economy and social enterprises
- Ensure compliance with social and labour rights
- Ensure accessibility
- Address ethical trade issues
- Deliver high quality social, health, educational, and cultural services



Making Socially  
Responsible Public  
Procurement Work:

# 71 Good Practice Cases

#WeBuySocialEU  
May 2020

# Case Studies Themes

- Cleaning and facility management services
- Construction
- Food/ catering services
- Furniture
- Gardening services
- Healthcare
- Social services
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Textiles
- Other





# Social and environmental criteria in the Irish Prison Service's mattress recycling initiative

- **The Irish Prison Service (IPS)** is responsible for the safe and secure custody, dignity of care, and rehabilitation of persons committed to prison. The IPS operates as an Office of the Department of Justice and its estate currently includes 12 operational prisons across the country.
- Every year, approximately **1,200 mattresses** must be removed from Irish prisons. Sending these mattresses to landfill has a significant environmental impact as synthetic foam, fibres and hazardous flame-retardant chemicals can leach into drinking water. **It takes 80- 120 years** for a normal mattress to break down in a landfill.
- In 2021, the IPS sought to divert such waste and conducted a **low-value tender process** for the removal and recycling or repurposing of discarded mattresses. The tender also required the contractor to employ former offenders, as being employed greatly reduces the likelihood of returning to prison.

# Procurement Objectives

- The contract sought to **reduce the environmental impact** of the mattresses going to buried landfill and be cost effective while also having a **social impact** by supporting meaningful employment for people who had been through the criminal justice system.
- The estimated value of the contract was **€15,000**. According to Ireland's Office of Government Procurement, "contracts for goods and services with an estimated value between €5,000 and €25,000 (exclusive of VAT) can be awarded on the basis of responses to written specifications (e.g. sent by email) to at least three suppliers or service providers" (Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services, 2019).

# Criteria Used

## Subject matter of contract:

- The Irish Prison Service tendered for the removal and recycling of mattresses from each of its 12 establishments. The contract(s) were awarded on the basis of the following criteria: **1. Cost – 60%** **2. Environmental compliance, quality control & standards – 20%** **3. Employment of former offenders – 20%**

## Technical specifications:

- According to EU GPP Criteria for Furniture, the contracting authority should provide an assessment of the condition of the furniture to be collected. The following technical specifications should be adhered to for the end-of-life services of existing furniture stock: Tenderers should collect furniture directly from a site specified by the contracting authority and provide a re-use and recycling service for furniture that has reached the end of its service life.
- Furniture items/parts that are considered not suitable for reuse, and according to the knowledge of the Contracting Authority about appropriate recycling facilities in the region, should be disassembled into different material streams. At a minimum, plastics, metals, textiles and wood should be separated before being sent to different recycling facilities. Any remaining materials shall be sent to recovery facilities, wherever these are available at the regional level.

# Results

- The tender was published through the usual procurement mechanisms and promoted on social media. It was shared by the Department of Justice, the Office of Government Procurement, and the Department of Rural and Community Development which has responsibility for the National Social Enterprise Policy. It was also promoted by the Community Resources Network Ireland. Advertising the tender on social media helped to reach a greater number of businesses and social enterprises. The tender closed on 25 June 2021.
- Following the RFQ process, three bids were received. Two social enterprises were chosen for the contract which was split on a regional basis: Eco Mattress Recycling, based in Dublin and Bounce Back Recycling, based in Galway.



# Environmental Impact

- The environmental impact was immediately realised, as 100% of an estimated 1,200 mattresses were diverted from landfills in the year of the contract. The social enterprises were able to recycle up to 80% of the used mattress components. Many of the materials were able to be resold, thus contributing to a circular economy.
- The most common disposal route for end-of-life mattresses appears to be a landfill and mattresses account for a large proportion of the total waste sent to landfill. This represents a significant quantity of material that is not recovered.

# Social Impact

- This single, low-value contract has directly supported the continued employment of **four full-time positions** (two in each social enterprise) for people who have been through the prison system. While this has many positive benefits for each of the four employees, it also has a knock-on benefit to their children, family, and the wider community.
- Furthermore, the social enterprises were unfamiliar with reusing mattress materials and were able to develop the required knowledge and skills through this contract. In addition, employing former convicts not only decreases their likelihood of returning to prison, it has a further added value of reducing the cost of detaining them in prison, while increasing money going into the exchequer through the payment of their taxes.



# Lessons Learned

- A major lesson learned through this process is that while the inclusion of added value social clauses is a change to usual procurement practices and therefore initially additional work for the procurement team, it can **be easily done** especially when inserted into below-threshold contracts.
- Suppliers **do not seem fazed** by social clauses. Their inclusion in this contract did not pose any difficulty to them.
- It is possible to achieve multiple goals through public purchasing power e.g. **environmental, economic, and social**.
- Leveraging cross-departmental input and proactively involving the proper stakeholders **stimulates buy-in** and when a notable impact is generated, further implementation is inspired.
- Proposals in support of social procurement are now included **as a matter of course** in Care and Rehabilitation tenderers.



Research Report 2020

**Social Clauses  
in Public  
Procurement  
The Irish  
Experience**

Dr Deirdre Halloran  
CAN  
and the  
Community Benefit Forum



# Social Clauses Public Procurement in Ireland

- Focuses on work of Community Benefit Forum
- Grangegorman Development Agency, Dublin City Council, New Children's Hospital, National Development Finance Agency
- Objectives:
  - identifying the drivers,
  - barriers and
  - learnings of social clauses implementation by each of the stakeholders





# Barriers: Internal

RISK ADVERSE

NEED FOR  
TRAINING

LACK OF  
RESOURCES

LOW PRIORITY  
TO SOCIAL  
ASPECTS

# Barriers: External

NEED CLEAR  
POLICY  
FRAMEWORK

CONNECTED TO  
OUTSIDE  
AGENCIES

FULL EMPLOYMENT

VALUE FOR MONEY

LEGAL LIMITATIONS  
OF THE SOCIAL  
CLAUSES

SUBCONTRACTORS

# Outcomes

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**Political will:** National legislative commitment, Policy guidelines – Nationally and Individual Public Bodies

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**Internal Facilitators:** Multi faceted position, both with Contracting Authority and Economic Operator

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**Need for Training:** For all procurement stakeholders, legal framework, needs of the community, procurement processes

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**Value for Money vs Social Value:** Clear guidelines, Reframing what is value

# Dublin City

- Largest Local Authority in Ireland with 600,000 residents in the city area and 1.5m in the greater Dublin Region
- Highly educated and diverse population with 54% having a third level qualification
- 33% of all enterprises nationally are in the Dublin region
- Unemployment rate of 4.8%
- €1.8bn in spend with 70% being spent within Dublin



# Policy

# SoCircular Summit



# Outcomes Report





Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# Trading for Impact

## National Social Enterprise Policy 2024 – 2027



# Community Wealth Building

CWB is a strategic approach to local economic development which is about using the resources we have as a council to increase the flow of wealth to those who need it most in our society. This is about delivering public value across a range of economic, social and environmental outcomes.

CWB aims to widen opportunities for people by increasing the flow, circulation and ownership of wealth in a place's economy and in doing so, improve people's lives. 'Wealth' could translate to greater educational opportunities, greater access to cultural experiences, increased employment opportunities and development opportunities within employment to enable greater advancement as well as higher income.

It could translate to wider access for contract opportunities for small businesses, social enterprises, whether as a stand-alone provider or in collaboration with a mainstream contractor.





# Community Wealth Building Principles

Plural Ownership of the Economy

Making Financial Power Work for Local Places

Fair Employment & Just Labour Markets

Progressive procurement of Goods & Services

Socially productive use of land and property

*Source: [cles.org.uk](http://cles.org.uk)*

# Next Steps for DCC

- Develop their commitment to Community Wealth Building across the entire Local Authority
- Create a space for dialogue and support directly from procurement agencies and anchor institutions
- Establish progressive social procurement guidelines to drive social and economic development
- Work in collaboration with anchor institutions, stakeholders and communities to realise the potential





## Dublin City Council - Dublin City Council are issuing this PIN as a Request for Information from economic operators who are Social Enterprises and/or a Sheltered Workshop

### General information

**Detailed description:**

Dublin City Council are issuing this PIN as a Request for Information from economic operators who are Social Enterprises and/or fall under the definition of sheltered workshops as defined by Article 20 of the 2014/24/EU Public Procurement Directives for the delivery of goods and services only.

Dublin City Council is seeking information about your company and the category of goods and services you provide.

**Article 20****Reserved contracts**

1. Member States may reserve the right to participate in public procurement procedures to sheltered workshops and economic operators whose main aim is the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged persons or may

provide for such contracts to be performed in the context of sheltered employment programmes, provided that at least 30 % of the employees of those workshops, economic operators or programmes are disabled or disadvantaged workers.

2. The call for competition shall make reference to this Article.

**Contracting authority:**

Dublin City Council  
Civic Offices, Wood Quay  
Dublin  
Dublin 8  
Ireland

[View profile](#)

**Contact:**

Alan Nangle

# PIN Market Soundings Social Enterprise

- There is a possibility, under Art. 20 and Art. 77 of the European Public Procurement Directive (2014/24/EU), to limit the right to participate in public procurement procedures to
  - (a) sheltered workshops and economic operators whose main aim is the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged persons or may provide for such contracts to be performed in the context of sheltered employment programmes. This possibility is subject to the condition that at least 30 % of the employees of those workshops, economic operators or programmes are disabled or disadvantaged workers .
  - (b) organisations in the field of certain health, social and cultural services pursuing a public service mission, where their profits are reinvested, where the structures of management or ownership are based on employee ownership or participatory principles.

# Solutions



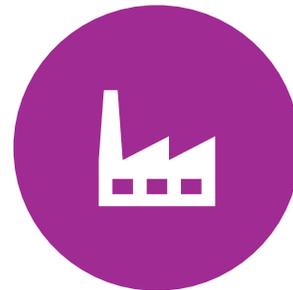
Learn by discussion & dialogue



Smaller lots allow for more SMEs and Social Enterprises



Below threshold/ discretionary spends are a good start



Meet the Buyer – Supply Side Interventions

An initiative of the  
European Union



# WeBuySocialEU

BETTER ACCESS TO  
SOCIALY RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT



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BuySocial.ie

# Awarding Public Contracts Skilfully and Lawfully within the Irish Procurement Rules



**together: academy**

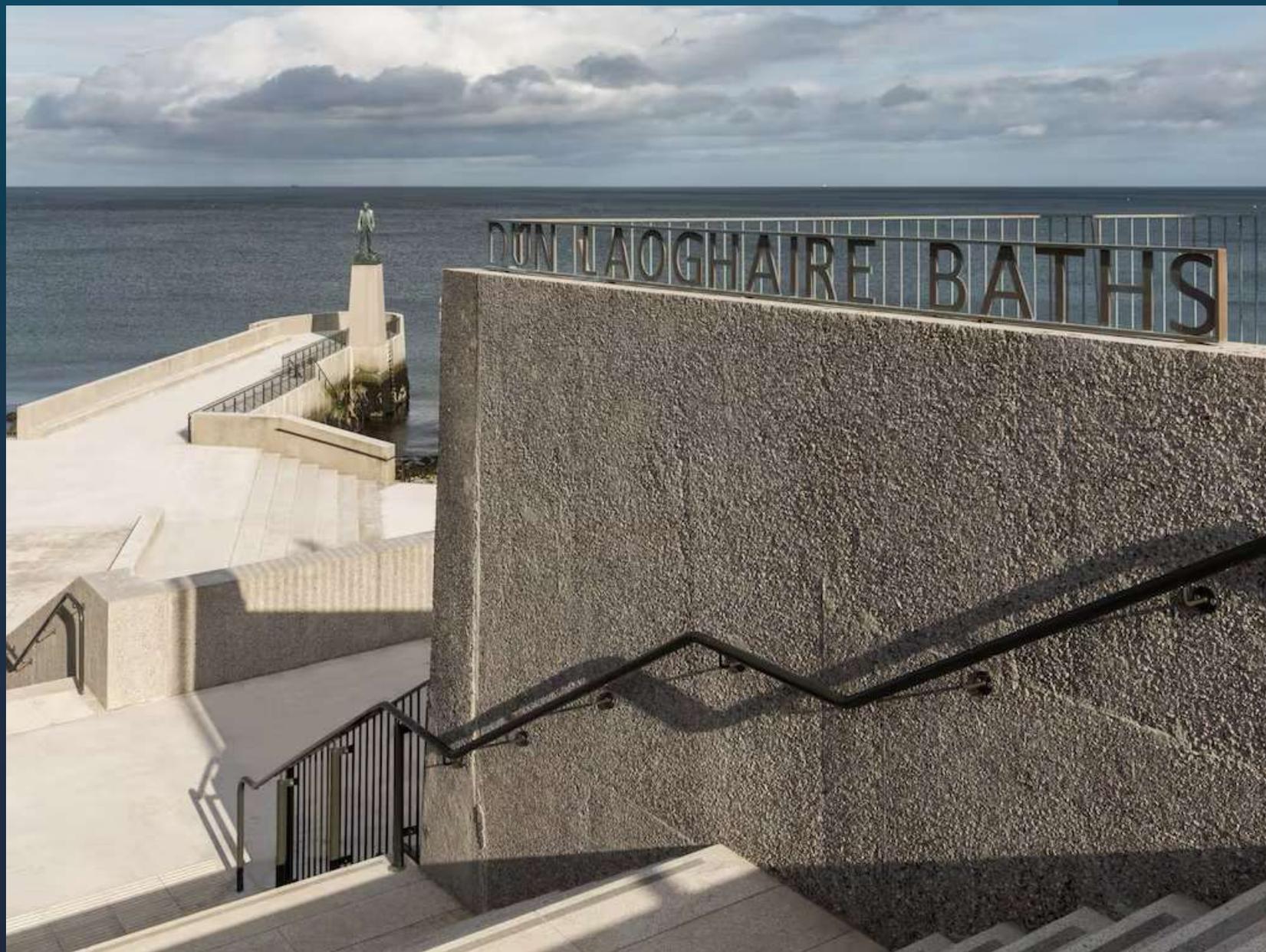


## Cafe of the Year: Together Academy Cafe



Together Academy Cafe. Picture: Steve Humphreys

If all you want is some tasty food, you'll find that







# Thank You

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# References

- PACE The MugShot <https://paceorganisation.ie/the-mug-shot/>
- Dublin City Council Community Wealth Building <https://councilmeetings.dublincity.ie/mgConvert2PDF.aspx>
- Rediscovery Centre <https://www.rediscoverycentre.ie>
- Happy Out Together Academy <https://happyout.ie/pages/dun-laoghaire-baths>
- OGP Socially Responsible Public Procurement (SRPP) <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/37b14-socially-responsible-public-procurement/>

# References

- Social and environmental criteria in the Irish Prison Service's mattress recycling initiative [https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/green-public-procurement/good-practice-library/social-and-environmental-criteria-irish-prison-services-mattress-recycling-initiative\\_en?prefLang=mt](https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/green-public-procurement/good-practice-library/social-and-environmental-criteria-irish-prison-services-mattress-recycling-initiative_en?prefLang=mt)
- Making Socially Responsible Public Procurement Work: 71 Good Practice Cases <https://public-buyers-community.ec.europa.eu/resources/making-socially-responsible-public-procurement-work-71-good-practice-cases>