



GAPS - GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT RESEARCH PROJECT

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT PRACTICES AT UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY, IRELAND

Background

University of Galway, located in Ireland, is committed to sustainability across all its operations. With a significant procurement spend and influence, the university recognised the pivotal role sustainable procurement plays in achieving its sustainability goals. To formalise its commitment, the university developed [University of Galway Sustainability Strategy 2021-2025](#), outlining its objectives and targets towards sustainability aligned with Ireland's climate action plan. One crucial aspect of this strategy is sustainable procurement, aiming to integrate environmental, social, and economic considerations into its purchasing decisions. The university has a **procurement and contract office** (PCO) established as a support service unit which is responsible for purchasing goods and services on behalf of the university. This support unit covers the following main tasks:

- Aggregation of spend to determine the best approach in achieving value for money.
- Design and deliver procurement training solutions.
- Guide and support University of Galway staff in all matters relating to procurement, thereby enabling compliance.
- Provide a standardised approach to ensure consistency across all purchasing processes.
- Maintain a repository of university's tendering activity.
- Report to senior management within the Institution and external bodies.
- Build relationships with Education Procurement Service (EPS) and Office of Government Procurement (OGP).

In 2023, University of Galway decided to include green criteria for all contracts/frameworks that are handled by PCO.

Policy Development

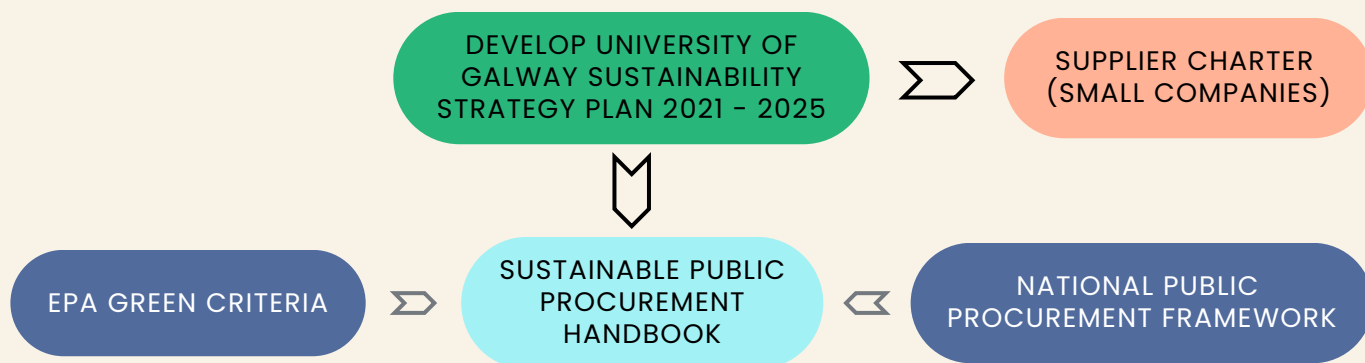
University of Galway operate under the [National public procurement framework \(NPPF\)](#), which sets out the overarching policy framework for public procurement in Ireland. University of Galway always complies with the government procurement policies, guidelines, and EU directives to achieve the maximum value for money spend in goods and services in terms of efficiency and sustainability.

Adhering to the 'University of Galway Strategic Plan 2020-2025' and the 'University of Galway Sustainability Strategy 2021-2025' to provide the guidance and the ambition towards a sustainability future, the procurement and contract office published [Sustainable Public Procurement Handbook](#) which can be used by the stakeholders that are in the procurement process. This handbook is the key document that is used by the university in procuring products and services by PCO. This handbook is inspired by the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) green criteria documents for GPP where PCO at University of Galway developed comprehensive criteria specifically associated with professional services carried out within the university.

The [Supplier Charter](#) is a key document published by the university to clearly communicate its expectations to suppliers. This charter includes how suppliers can align with the university's values of Openness, Respect, Excellence, and Sustainability.

Following flow chart shows the summary of the documents inspired to the policy development used by the University.





Summary of the documents inspired to the policy development used by the University.

Policy Implementation

The procurement and contract office has committed to incorporating green criteria into all purchasing decisions and has established comprehensive documentation to guide staff members in making environmentally responsible purchases. To support this, PCO trained their staff in sustainable procurement and continue to provide frequent training in this area.

Standard bidding document templates were also updated to accommodate green/sustainable criteria by PCO, which make it easier for the staff. There are five basic requirements for all PCO contracts as follows:

1. **Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) Criteria Consultation:** The relevant SPP criteria must be consulted before initiating any tender.
2. **Sustainability Marks Allocation:** At least 10% of the evaluation marks should be allocated to sustainability criteria.
3. **Life-Cycle Costing (LCC):** Consideration of LCC is mandatory for applicable contracts.
4. **Contract Clauses:** Contracts must include specific clauses for monitoring and reporting sustainability commitments.
5. **Market Engagement:** Necessary when there are uncertainties about the market's ability to meet sustainability criteria.

Once the PCO receives a tender document, staff at PCO will review the document and check whether the document is aligned with the SPP and procurement guidelines set by the university.

Results

Since May 2023, the university has implemented this policy in all of its procurements, and it is estimated that over 85% of the contracts and tenders have incorporated green procurement criteria. This is a significant achievement for the university's procurement office, and it is clear that this number will continue to rise in the coming years.

A [Carbon Foot Print Report](#) by Prof. Jamie Goggins and Thomas Adams, calculated the university's greenhouse gas emissions for scopes 1, 2, and 3 from 2017 to 2021, using 2017 as the baseline. The report clearly shows that emissions associated with purchasing products and services (under scope 3) have a significant impact on the university's overall GHG emissions. The university is actively identifying these hotspots and working to minimise their environmental impact through sustainable procurement.

Lessons Learned

- PCO identified one of the key enablers is to uplift the knowhow through continuous training provided to the procurement staff.
- It has been identified that voluntarily adhering to the policies (i.e. right thing to do in contrast to forcefully adhering to the policies) is also key in successful implementation of this policy, but this still needs to be improved within the university community.
- University of Galway Supplier Charter is one of the key supports provided by the university for the small-scale local companies by letting them know the requirements that the university expects in purchasing goods and services.
- PCO has experienced some resistance from staff to change this work practice, but PCO tries to make the whole process convenient by providing necessary guidance and support in any means.

 @GAPS_GPPtoolkit

 GAPS Green Public Procurement Toolkit

 universityofgalway.ie/structures/projects/gaps/

Funded by: 

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