

# Office of the Ombudsman

# Procurement Policy

May 2021

## Background

Procurement is a key element of the Government's Public Service Reform Agenda and is a very significant portion of overall spending. In this context, it is essential that the Public Service operates in a co-ordinated and efficient way and delivers sustainable savings to the taxpayer.

The OGP and its sector partners continues to put framework agreements and contracts in place through which public sector bodies including the Office of the Ombudsman can buy goods and services.

This document covers all areas of non-pay expenditure under the Ombudsman Vote including the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Information Commissioner, the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information, the Secretariat to the Standards in Public Office Commission and the Office of the Commission for Public Service Appointments. It should be noted that the Office procurement procedures also apply to Referendum Commission expenditure.

## Procurement Policy

Procurement in the Office of the Ombudsman is carried out in accordance with national guidelines. These guidelines promote best practice and consistency of application of the public procurement rules in relation to the purchase of goods and services.

<https://ogp.gov.ie/public-procurement-guidelines-for-goods-and-services/>

- The procurement policy for the purchase of goods and services in the Office has the following thresholds (excluding VAT):
  - €1,000 to €4,999 - should ideally be awarded on the basis of responses to specifications sent by letter, email, telephone or web to at least three suppliers.
  - €5,000 to €24,999 - should ideally be awarded on the basis of responses to specifications sent by letter or email to between 5 and 8 suppliers.

- €25,000 - €139,000 - a formal tendering process on eTenders in accordance with the Public Procurement Guidelines should be used for the purchase of goods or services over that amount.
- €139,000 and above – Competition must be advertised on OJEU through the eTenders website.

*Frameworks* - The OGP and its partners in Health, Defence, Local Government and Education continue to put framework agreements and contracts in place which the Office utilise to as great an extent as possible. Where such arrangements are not available, the Office strives to ensure that its own tender processes comply with public procurement guidelines. The OGP now has in excess of 120 active framework agreements.

*eTenders* - [www.eTenders.gov.ie](http://www.eTenders.gov.ie) has been developed as part of the Irish Government's Strategy for the Implementation of eProcurement in the Irish Public Sector. The site is designed to be a central facility for all public sector contracting authorities to advertise procurement opportunities and award notices. The Office of the Ombudsman advertises procurement processes on etenders in accordance with the thresholds set out above.

## **Payments**

Arising from a Government decision in 2009, our Office should pay its suppliers within 15 days of receipt of a valid invoice (i.e. the payment must arrive in the supplier's bank by the 15th day). The 15 day payment deadline period will commence on the day upon which the Office receives a valid invoice to the appropriate address.

Any payments made after 30 days of receipt of the invoice will incur Late Payment Interest in accordance with the relevant legislation.