

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Sráid Maoilbhríde,
Baile Átha Cliath 1
D01 RC96



Department of Education and Skills
Marlborough Street
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D01 RC96

Issued: October 2015

Circular Number: 0056/2015

To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and The Chief Executive Officers of Education and Training Boards

Use of Central Procurement Arrangements put in place by the Office of Government Procurement

This circular clarifies the arrangements concerning the use of central procurement arrangements put in place by the Office of Government Procurement. It should be read in conjunction with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circular 16/2013 which, together with the Department of Education and Skills circular 60/2013, issued to all schools on the subject of Public Sector procurement. The circulars DES 60/2013 and D/PER 16/2013 are available at, http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0060_2013.pdf.

Undertaking Procurement

School management have the choice to undertake procurement individually. It is not mandatory for schools to use central procurement arrangements. Schools are, however, reminded of the importance of achieving value for money in the use of public monies and that central procurement arrangements are targeted at securing best value for money. It is Government policy that public bodies, where possible, should make use of all such central arrangements (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circular 16/2013 refers).

Where a public body chooses not to use a central procurement arrangement, it should ensure that there is an appropriate focus on good practice in purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines, policy and legal obligations in order to achieve and be able to demonstrate better value for money (VFM) in such activity. In determining VFM, the full cost of undertaking a procurement, as well as the cost of the goods and services, involved should be included.

Advice on good procurement practice may be found on www.procurement.ie.

Support and Procurement Services

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP), which was established by Government to lead on centralised procurement, provides advice, support and central procurement arrangements. Their mandate is to provide a central sourcing service to all public bodies, including schools. Details of available frameworks and contracts can be found at www.procurement.ie or by emailing support@ogp.gov.ie.

The School Procurement Unit (SPU) has been established within the education sector as a procurement support resource for schools. It provides advice on how to access and best use central

frameworks and contracts. Their mission is to ensure that procurement requirements for schools are considered when central procurement is being undertaken and that schools can benefit from lower cost goods and services contracts.

Schools within the ETB sector are supported by their relevant Education and Training Board as well as the Public Service Reform Unit within Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI).

Information on procurement in the education sector is available from the SPU, ETBI or on <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Procurement/>. A new service will be available by 2016 to enable school management to subscribe to an education procurement newsletter to inform schools of procurement activities and opportunities. Procurement support services are established to assist schools in acquiring the goods and services they need at less cost.

Benefits for schools

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circular 16/2013 outlines some of the benefits of central procurement arrangements including cash savings; administrative savings from reduced duplication of tendering; greater purchasing expertise; improved consistency; enhanced service levels and legal certainty.

Opportunities

The OGP regularly publish information on new central frameworks and contracts on its website, www.procurement.ie. The education website will also carry some relevant information on opportunities.

Contact details

OGP	support@ogp.gov.ie	076 100 8000
SPU	procurementssupport@jmb.ie	01 2035899
ETBI	procurement@etbi.ie	045 901070

Useful links

- <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Procurement/>
- www.procurement.ie