



# Oifig um Sholáthar Rialtais Office of Government Procurement

## OGP Newsletter



### Welcome

I am delighted to welcome you to this summer newsletter from the Office of Government Procurement, the first since my appointment as Minister of State with special responsibility for Public Procurement and eGovernment. I very much look forward to working with all stakeholders over the course of this government to make progress across the many important areas of our remit.

In common with colleagues from across the public service, the OGP has remained open for business throughout the current health crisis. Their work during this time, has included helping the HSE and our frontline Health Workers with critical procurement activity. Getting this work done has literally saved lives. On behalf of the government and the people, I'd like to express my personal thanks for the outstanding work that this group did under the most trying of circumstances.

Delivering public services in times such as these can be stressful and I welcome the new arrangement from the OGP that provides staff across the public sector with access to Employee Assistance Services including mental health promotion and specialist trauma counselling.

The Programme for Government sets out an ambitious agenda for public procurement in the years ahead. Alongside continuing to achieve value for money for the taxpayer, providing for better social and environmental outcomes through procurement is a key objective for the Government. The Programme calls for a partnership approach, working with suppliers and the public service to promote innovation and achieve common goals.

As Minister with responsibility for eGovernment, I am pleased to see that this newsletter provides an update on the ongoing implementation of eInvoicing as a solution to reduce administration costs and the challenges associated with paper waste. The OGP is also launching a new client website, the Buyer Zone, which will bring this service onto the gov.ie platform, improve security, and address feedback from clients in relation to search functionality. This important project has been delivered in partnership between the OGP and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, for which I also have responsibility.

Over the coming months I look forward to meeting members of the public and private sectors as well as those with an interest in public procurement to discuss how we can work together to deliver the ambitious objectives in the Programme for Government including further work on green and social procurement.

### Minister of State Ossian Smyth TD

For regular updates on the Office's work, you can visit the website at [ogp.gov.ie](http://ogp.gov.ie) and also follow on **Twitter** [@procurement\\_ie](https://twitter.com/procurement_ie)

# Top Tips for conducting procurement while working remotely

For many organisations recent months have seen remote working become a central way of doing business and this is likely continue for the foreseeable future. This applies equally to the OGP where all of our staff are equipped to work remotely and have procurement solutions to support Contracting Authorities in delivering their procurement needs.

From our experience in working with clients who may also be working remotely we have found that flexibility is the key to progressing a competition. We remain committed to working flexibly with you to overcome challenges that occur as a result of remote collaboration.

We have identified several tips that may help you to progress your procurements in as effective and efficient manner as possible in a remote environment:

1

Remote evaluations can be more tiring than face to face meetings. Multiple short evaluations sessions may achieve a faster and better outcome than a single long session.

To maximise the effectiveness of the time you spend evaluating we recommend that:

- Any technology being used which you are not familiar with is tested prior to the meeting
- Evaluators have read and are familiar with the RFT/sRFT with particular emphasis on the scope, specifications, Selection Criteria and Award Criteria
- All bids are read in advance of the evaluation
- All clarifications have been asked prior to the evaluation

2

Factor the availability of key personnel (e.g. evaluators, contract managers, key decision makers etc) and any additional contract approval mechanisms required by your organisation into your planning to have a contract in place. Access to these resources can be complicated in a remote environment.

3

eSignature can be used in a remote environment for outcome letters or contract signature if your organisation has the required technology

4

Where the competition may require a site visit consider if these can be facilitated either in person or if there are virtual options available

5

Remember that bids are confidential. Consider how you will dispose of the bid confidentially if you are printing a hard copy in a remote environment

6

Confidentiality/Conflict of Interest declarations still need to be signed by all members of the evaluation panel. A scanned signature, using a mobile phone, can easily be added to the document and could suffice if access to a printer or scanner is a problem

# Employee Assistance Services

This framework agreement was developed by the Office of Government Procurement to provide access to Employee Assistance Services and is now available to public sector bodies.

The framework agreement is arranged into two discrete areas including, *A Complete Employee Assistance Service* and *Counselling-only Services*. Both arrangements have been awarded to Irish SMEs, Spectrum.Life and Inspire Workplaces.

These employee assistance services are intended to assist public sector bodies and their employees to manage or resolve work-related and personal concerns in support of employee wellness and quality of life. This confidential support will help promote organisational effectiveness in the public sector.



The Complete Employee Assistance Service will provide public bodies with access to:

- Secure and confidential telephone helpline and advice service accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- Independent and confidential counselling, support, advice, and information by suitably qualified people.
- Active health & wellbeing promotion with dedicated online support system.
- Promotional brochures and literature relating to the employee assistance services.
- Support for HR managers
- a dedicated Mental Health Promotion Manager to tailor the service to each public sector bodies culture, practices and operating environment

The Counselling-only services provides public bodies with access to a counselling support programme which will provide public bodies with access to:

- Independent and confidential counselling, support, advice, and information, 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year, delivered by suitably qualified counsellors.
- Trauma counselling services.

These valuable support services are available to bodies across the whole of the public service including An Garda Síochána, the Defence Forces and the Irish Prison Service. Civil servants in central Government will continue to use the existing Civil Service Employee Assistance Service.

# Re-launch of OGP *Buyer Zone* client website

The OGP will this month launch a new Buyer Zone website for clients to find details of the full range of framework agreements and solutions available to the public service.

This new service has been designed with an improved search function in response to client feedback

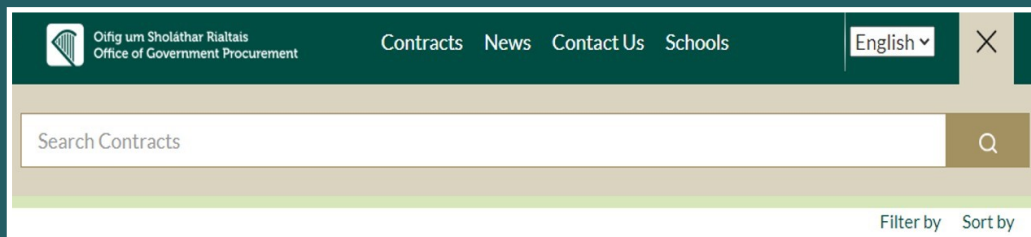
## How do you access the new Buyer Zone?

If you are already registered on the Buyer Zone, the only requirement to access the new site will be to reset your password at your first login attempt. All existing usernames will remain unchanged.

## What are the security features?

One of the new security features is a two-step authentication process to login. A secure link is sent to the registered email address of each user each time they login. This link is valid for one “click” only. It can be resent by the user to another email account (gmail/yahoo for example) if the user wishes to access the Buyer Zone on a different device. Once you access the Buyer Zone, your session remains live for as long as there is activity recorded on the site. If a user does not perform any action for a consecutive sixty-minute period, they will be logged out of the Buyer Zone.

## How do I perform a search to find active/live contracts?



The magnifying glass activates the search within the new Buyer Zone by keywords.

Another option to refine your search will be the **Current Arrangements** document (available on the landing page), this includes direct links to all contracts divided by OGP categories.

We recognise that it will take users some time to adapt to the new layout and to navigate it swiftly, but we are confident the search functionality has been optimised and that finding available contracts for goods and services will be easier for OGP clients.

The current project has focused on rebuilding the Buyer Zone on its new platform, improving security for commercially sensitive framework information, and enhancing search functionality.

Should you have any questions about finding information on the new Buyer Zone, please contact the OGP at [support@ogp.gov.ie](mailto:support@ogp.gov.ie) for assistance.



# eTenders

## eTenders Platform – Preparing for the next iteration

The OGP is currently preparing to go to the market for the next iteration of eTenders, the national procurement platform. eTenders is the national facility for all public sector Contracting Authorities to publish procurement opportunities (tenders) and contract award notices for goods, services and works. eTenders is also used by economic operators (suppliers) to view and access tender opportunities.

The platform has approximately 160,000 users.

The eTenders Platform project to specify, procure and implement a SaaS (Software as a Service) solution is well underway. This is a significant endeavour and the implementation phase could prove a significant body of work, affecting all public bodies in terms of transitioning to a next iteration of a national eTendering platform.

The OGP has established a Project Steering Committee and a Design Authority Group, comprising representatives from across the public sector. In addition to market soundings, a stakeholder consultation survey and direct engagements with stakeholders, the eTenders Design Authority Group was established to carry out a formal role in helping to inform and shape the requirements for the next iteration of the eTenders Platform and comprises over 20 representatives from across Central Government and the Local Government, Health, Education and Commercial Semi-States sectors.

The extraordinary situation which unfolded in March this year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges for the Project. The Project had been in full flow at this time and in the midst of a detailed 'draft- review-revise' phase of activities with its many stakeholders across the public sector. The national response required a shift in priorities for many and reduced the capacity to progress the Project on all planned fronts. To allow for the impact on the timelines, there will be continuity of the current service while the procurement process is ongoing.

While these challenges have impacted on the Project's timelines, the project has gained momentum again. The OGP would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our many stakeholders, in particular members of the Design Authority for their continued efforts and commitment to contributing to this work despite what continues to be very challenging times for many. This collaboration and work is vital to helping achieve a successful outcome for all users of the platform.

For further information on eTenders Platform Project please contact:

[etendersproject@ogp.gov.ie](mailto:etendersproject@ogp.gov.ie)



HYUNDAI



# Fleet Maintenance for Public Sector Bodies

---

Goods and Services available by Direct Drawdown can be accessed quickly and easily using OGP frameworks with no further competition.

[All of Government Framework for Servicing, Maintenance and Repair of cars and light commercial vehicles for the Public Sector](#)

[ogp.gov.ie](http://ogp.gov.ie)



Oifig um Sholáthar Rialtais  
Office of Government Procurement



This Framework for the provision of Fleet Maintenance is fully compliant with procurement regulations. It reduces the time and costs associated with running your own procurement process by offering a facility that has already been competitively tendered for.

The Fleet Maintenance Framework covers Servicing and Maintenance for all makes and models of cars and light commercial vehicles up to 3.5 tonne GVW (gross Vehicle Weight) for the public sector.

The framework contract provides:

- A One-Stop-Shop service
- Fitting of windscreens and the fitting of anti-shatter film to window glass.
- Replacement of major units and the repair of all auxiliary equipment (i.e. Auxiliary lights/sirens and associated wiring and control units).
- Manufacture's OEM parts used.
- Management of supply of parts to minimise delays.
- All repairs completed to Manufacturers work instructions and standard labour times.

Please visit the [Buyer Zone](#) website to access full details and see the relevant user guides.

If you have any queries in relation to this contract or framework, please contact the OGP's Client Service Team at [support@ogp.gov.ie](mailto:support@ogp.gov.ie) or Tel: 076 100 8000

For a full list of suppliers in your area please see the list below.

## POLICY UPDATE—NEW PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

The Government has set out a number of commitments in the Programme for Government in relation to public procurement including tasking the OGP to update all procurement frameworks in line with green procurement practice over the next three years. Amongst the key priorities in the new Programme for Government – along with commitments to continue to support and train SMEs so that they can compete for public procurement contracts in Ireland and abroad - is the commitment to evaluating and managing the environmental, economic and social impacts of procurement strategies within the state. During the lifetime of this government a sustainable procurement policy will be developed and implemented to, amongst other things:-

- ensure strong value-for-money for the taxpayer;
- seek to minimise the environmental impact and optimise the community benefit of products and services procured;
- support innovation in supply markets to increase the availability and effectiveness of sustainable solutions;
- encourage suppliers to adopt practices that minimise their environmental impact and deliver community benefit; and
- work in partnership with suppliers to achieve common goals and continually improve performance over time.

The OGP will be working with our colleagues across Government, including our sectoral partners in Health, Defence, Education and Local Government in considering how best to meet these commitments.

The OGP has been pro-active in this area over the last couple of years and members of the Policy Unit have promoted the use to strategic procurement at a number of procurement related events across the country and it is clear that it is becoming a topic of increasing prominence throughout the public sector. The Policy Unit has also facilitated meetings with a number of public bodies to discuss how they can integrate strategic procurement into their procurement practices. There have also been a number of engagements with the Oireachtas regarding private members Bills in this area.

To further support the incorporation of social considerations into public procurement, following extensive discussions between the Minister for Public, Expenditure and Reform and Communications, Climate Action and Environment the OGP published in October, Circular 20/2019: Promoting the use of Environmental and Social Considerations in Public Procurement. The circular highlights the possibilities for Departments to deliver wider social and environmental aims through public procurement including in relation to employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged groups, disability access, promoting social inclusion and social enterprises.



# POLICY UPDATE—INTERNATIONAL PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT

At EU level, the OGP’s Policy team has been heavily involved, alongside colleagues in Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, in negotiating the International Procurement Instrument (IPI) at the European Trade Council.

Within the EU, companies from other countries can bid for public tenders on an equal footing with EU companies. However, despite this openness, many of the EU’s major trading partners apply restrictive protective practices in their markets that discriminate against EU businesses.

The IPI is an attempt to ensure reciprocity and tackle protectionism and ensure access for EU companies to procurement markets in these countries. Members of the Policy Unit have attended several meetings in Brussels where delegates from Member States have engaged in robust discussions on a number of issues relating to the instrument. The OGP is keen to ensure that any measure that is adopted is targeted, proportional and workable, and does not inadvertently lead to reduced competition in the market place and continue engaging in meetings with Brussels via VC.

The new German presidency of the Council of the European Union, which commenced on 1st July entitled ‘Together for Europe’s Recovery’, see the implementation of the IPI as a key priority. You can find further information on the IPI at this [link](#).



## Green - Digital - Resilient:

### Suppliers now have the option to submit invoices electronically in public procurement

Since April 2020, suppliers are legally entitled to submit their invoices electronically (eInvoices) and require them to be processed for payment in relation to public procurement contracts. No paper, no scanned copy required. The European Directive on eInvoicing in public procurement 2014/55/EU came into full effect on 18 April, 2020. Now ALL public bodies are legally obliged to be able to receive and process eInvoices in accordance with the Directive and Standard for eInvoicing. As suppliers look to make the greater use of digital to drive efficiencies, lessen their impact on the environment and strengthen the resilience of their operations in a distributed working landscape, eInvoicing is now a real and widespread option in public procurement.

Public bodies who have yet to make the necessary provisions to be able to accept supplier invoices electronically, can reach compliance with the Directive by accessing solutions through the OGP's Framework for the Provision of eInvoicing and Peppol networking services.

As Ireland and Europe move towards the gradual reopening of society and the economy, the focus is now on recovery. Identifying opportunities to leverage the new ways of working that have emerged in recent months will play a vital part in helping to find efficiencies and maintain the viability of businesses and public services.

With new strategic programmes for delivery now set out at both national and European levels, the recurring themes are clear:

The recovery must be Green. The recovery must be Digital. The recovery must build Resilience

The national approach to eInvoicing can help in this recovery by empowering businesses to make a greater use of digital, reducing the impact of paper-based processing on the environment and helping businesses and organisations to create administrative efficiencies in a remote, distributed working model.

Ireland has adopted a common, national approach, to eInvoicing in public procurement. All public bodies are expected to be able to receive and process European standard eInvoices via the Peppol eDelivery network. This common approach helps suppliers make a simple, flexible and cost effective choice to 'connect once and connect to all' via the Peppol network when activate eInvoicing and reap the benefits.

The European Commission is ramping up their efforts to monitor the level of compliance with the eInvoicing Directive in member states and to drive forward the wider digital innovation it engenders. A key focus of their activities will now be on the onboarding of SMEs and the Private sector to increase the volume of invoices being sent electronically. eInvoicing Ireland is working with our sector partners in Central Government, Health, Education and Local Government to align our efforts in Ireland with those of our colleagues in Europe.

# eInvoicing

It is important that all public bodies understand their obligations arising from the eInvoicing Directive and national legislation and make the necessary provisions. eInvoicing Ireland continues to offer support to public bodies trying to implement eInvoicing to reach compliance with the Directive and is monitoring levels of compliance across the respective sectors. Recent updates to our materials include:

The eInvoicing Implementation Pyramid which provides more information on the various steps of eInvoicing implementation for all public sector bodies.

Declan McCormack, eInvoicing Ireland programme manager, explores the role digital has played in facilitating our new work environments in the June edition of Eolas magazine.

The European Commission's Digital eInvoicing unit has opened an online community forum for interested parties to share and discuss experiences and views on onboarding activities and eInvoicing initiatives for SMEs and the Private Sector.



As the drive for greater uptake by SMEs and private sector in general gains momentum, the next steps towards fully digitalising the procurement life cycle are also underway. The European Commission's CEF Digital team will host a webinar on eInvoicing/eProcurement automation, planned for the autumn. The eInvoicing Ireland team will share details as they become available via our website and social media channels. While the good news is that public bodies are now open for eInvoicing, in truth the broader digital journey has only just begun.

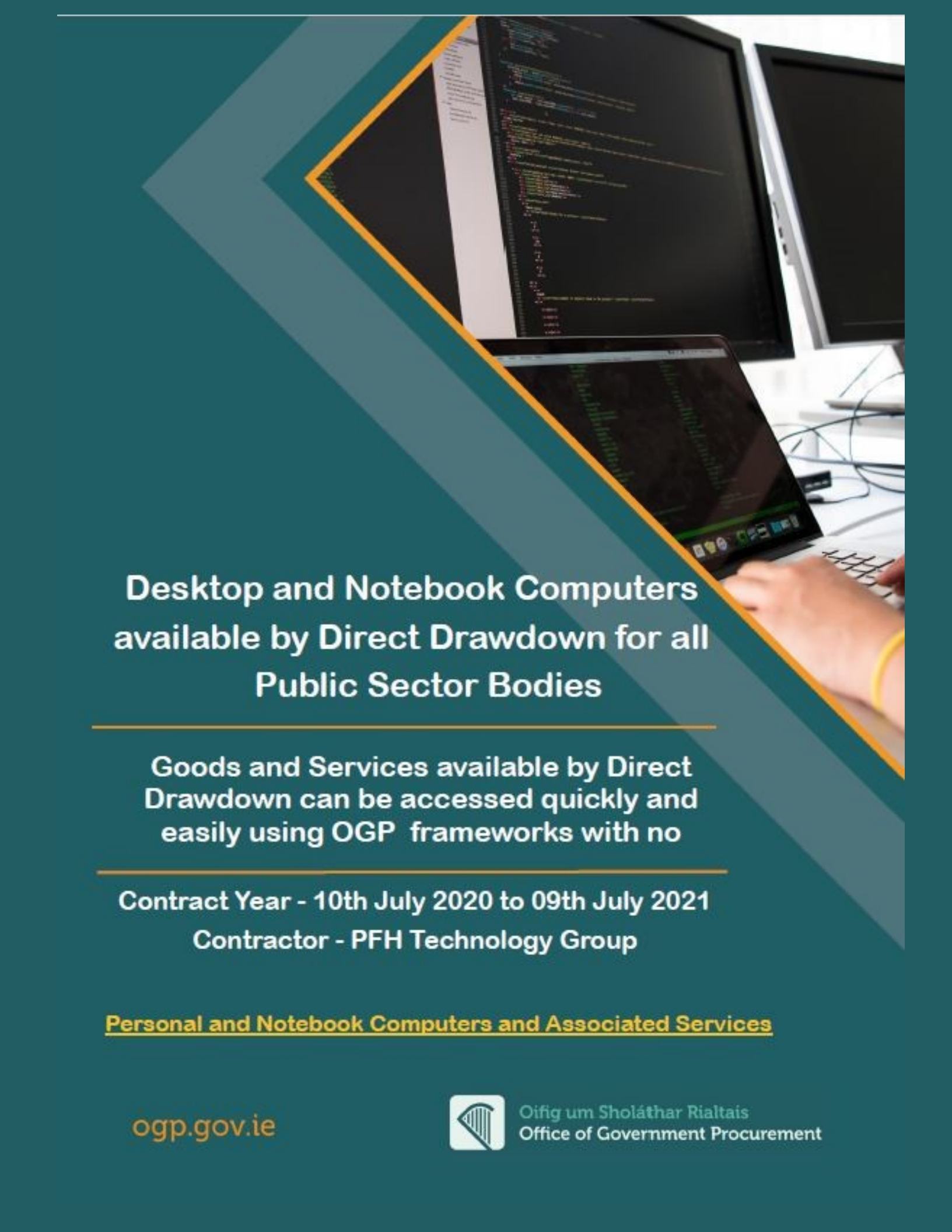
To find out more about the national approach to eInvoicing in public procurement, the Peppol eDelivery network and the OGP's eInvoicing Framework, please visit: [www.ogp.gov.ie/](http://www.ogp.gov.ie/)

eInvoicing or contact: [einvoicing@ogp.gov.ie](mailto:einvoicing@ogp.gov.ie)

## Accessing the Framework

For anyone looking to access the OGP eInvoicing Framework, please log onto [www.ogp.gov.ie](http://www.ogp.gov.ie) and the Buyer zone and select/ search as follows: Category: Managed Services

Keyword: 'PEPPOL' or 'eInvoicing systems'



## **Desktop and Notebook Computers available by Direct Drawdown for all Public Sector Bodies**

---

**Goods and Services available by Direct  
Drawdown can be accessed quickly and  
easily using OGP frameworks with no**

---

**Contract Year - 10th July 2020 to 09th July 2021  
Contractor - PFH Technology Group**

**Personal and Notebook Computers and Associated Services**

[ogp.gov.ie](http://ogp.gov.ie)



**Oifig um Sholáthar Rialtais  
Office of Government Procurement**





**This Direct Drawdown arrangement is expected to cater for 25% of all public sector Desktop and Notebook needs from 2019 to 2023, which equates to more than 10,000 devices annually.**

Direct drawdown of personal computers is available for public bodies with small to medium requirements. Details in relation to what lot to use are available [online](#). Larger requirements can be met by mini-competition under the same framework agreement.

The advantages include:

- No need to run a competition which means reduced effort and reduced time.
- Stock of standard devices available for delivery within 10 days.
- Standard manufacturer's warranty of 3 years (can be extended to 5 years).
- Online web portal to configure and order devices and services.
- Supplier phone and email support to assist users as necessary.

Following devices available for delivery within 10 days:

Following devices available for delivery within 10 days:

- Standard Desktop Computer
- Mini Desktop Computer (VESA mountable)
- Standard 15.6" Notebook
- Lightweight 14" Notebook
- Ultraportable 13" Notebook

Upgrades and accessories such as:

- Upgrades to CPU, RAM, Storage and other elements
- Accessories, including monitors, keyboards, adapters, etc.

A range of associated services are also available, including:

- Basic and advanced installation
- Image creation, deployment and maintenance
- Hard drive destruction
- 24x7 and International support

Please visit the [OGP website](#) to access full details, see the relevant user guides and find the contact details for the suppliers (OGP Buyer Zone user id and password required).