



Sustainable Public Procurement Case Study

1. Name and brief description of Contracting Authority

The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD).

DRCD's mission is to promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland.

DRCD's Strategic Goals are to:

- 1) Advance the economic and social development of rural areas, including the offshore islands;
- 2) Contribute to and support national regional development Objectives;
- 3) Support empowered, inclusive and resilient communities and a thriving volunteer culture;
- 4) Enable the community, voluntary, charity, philanthropic and social economy sectors to contribute fully to civil society; and
- 5) Foster and maintain a high performance culture and organisation to achieve our mission in the interests of all communities.

2. Introduction/procurement objective

The National Social Enterprise Policy 2019 included a measure that commits to improve data collection relating to the extent of social enterprise in Ireland and the areas in which social enterprises operate.

Nature of procurement

The Request for Tender (RFT) required applicants to propose a two stage process to DRCD:

Stage 1 – To design a comprehensive data collection process/methodology, in collaboration with social enterprise stakeholders, to establish the size and scope of the social enterprise population in Ireland. Specifically, the methodology should capture the following essential elements:

- Number of social enterprises in Ireland
- Regional spread
- Primary sector of activity
- Nature and levels of Staffing
- Approximate traded income levels

Upon satisfactory completion of Stage 1, the project would proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – To conduct the first National Social Enterprise baseline data collection exercise in collaboration with social enterprise networks, and to present a comprehensive report about the scale, scope and nature of the social enterprise population in Ireland.

The procurement objective was to commission a Data Collection Exercise and report to gauge key baseline data on the social enterprise sector in Ireland.

3. Approach taken

As this service required buy-in from social enterprises, it was crucial that the service provider ensured a partnership approach with relevant stakeholders at all stages of the exercise. On-the-ground familiarity (including at local level) and experience with social enterprise was critical. It was required that responses clearly demonstrate how the tenderers intended to achieve buy in and engagement with social enterprises for this exercise.

We made the decision to include a social considerations clause that made it advantageous for organisations that are active in, and knowledgeable of, the social enterprise sector to be included in the responses.

4. Stage of procurement phase and criteria

This tender awarded additional marks for tenderers that include the significant involvement of social enterprises or social enterprise networks.

The Request for Tender was published on eTenders, as required for procurement of projects of this size (estimated value €100,000). The Office of Government Procurement provided guidance in developing the RFT.

Out of the 100 marks available for each response, 10 marks were for “Partnership and collaboration with social enterprise stakeholders”

5. Results

There were four responses to the tender. Three of these included partnerships between traditional research type organisations and social enterprise networks/support organisations.

The contract was awarded to a consortium of Amarách Research, Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland (SERI) and the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN).

6. Lessons learned

The inclusion of a social clause added greatly to the delivery of the Data Collection Exercise.

Because the stakeholder partners understood the social enterprise ecosystem, it meant the research partner was not starting from basics. There was knowledge within the team regarding the key stakeholders within the sector, and the best way to engage them to further the project.

There was a very good response to the survey, with 800 completed responses, an approx. 20% response rate across the sector, demonstrating the high regard for the project. This must be due in part to the inclusion of partner social enterprise stakeholders, but it must also be mentioned there was a lot of support from key stakeholders generally.

7. Contact details of procurement officers/relevant points of contact

For further details of this procurement please contact John Ryan in the Social Enterprise Unit of DRCD: john.ryan@drcd.gov.ie