

NCSE Corporate Procurement Plan 2019- 2022

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1. Introduction

The National Public Policy Procurement Framework requires that all non-commercial state bodies produce a Corporate Procurement Plan (CPP). A CPP guides procurement activity in an organisation for a set period, including procurement planning, identification of priorities and key actions, and monitoring and compliance of practice. The ultimate aim of a CPP is to achieve improved procurement outcomes: value for money; efficient, fair and equitable use of resources; better informed decision making.

Having a CPP is also an indicator of good governance. The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies requires all non-commercial state bodies to have a CPP. The Public Spending Code emphasises the need for procurement planning – a key benefit of a CPP. Goal five in the NCSE Statement of Strategy 2017 -2021 notes the importance of maintaining an effective organisation that complies with all legal and corporate requirements. The development of a CPP contributes to this goal through its function as a tool for informing decision making, identifying areas of good practice and where improvement is needed.

2. Aim and Objectives of the Corporate Procurement Plan

The aim of the NCSE CPP 2019-2022 is to achieve greater value for money through improved delivery of the procurement function in the organisation. A number of objectives follow this aim:

1. Ensure goods and services are procured in accordance with best practice as set out by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP).
2. Enhance staff awareness and capacity to undertake procurement activities in a compliant manner.
3. Improve monitoring, compliance and reporting of procurement activity in the NCSE.

3. NCSE Procurement Structure and Policy

Procurement in the NCSE is every staff member's business. The organisation operates a devolved procurement structure, meaning business units are responsible for their own procurement activities and ensuring they are compliant with procurement policy and practice guidelines. The procurement officer and other staff in the finance unit are responsible for supporting and guiding procurement activities, where requested, through the sourcing and provision of advice and information, for monitoring compliance across the organisation and reporting on procurement issues to the NCSE Council.

The organisation's procurement policy is influenced by the results of internal and external audits which have directly or indirectly examined the procurement function. The findings of recent audits have been taken into account in producing this Corporate Procurement Plan.

NCSE procurement policy is underpinned by the key strands of the National Public Policy Procurement Framework. These are:

- Legislation
- Government policy as set down in circulars
- General Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services
- Technical guidance, templates and advice issued by the Office of Government Procurement.

Together, these influence the day-to-day procurement guidance contained in the NCSE's Financial Policies and Procedures Manual.

4. Expenditure Analysis

The OGP recommends that the development of any CPP should be informed by an analysis of expenditure in an organisation over a selected preceding period. This analysis should identify

- how much was spent
- by what sections
- on what goods and services, and
- the main suppliers used.

The non-pay expenditure from the 2018 accounts was examined for this purpose. Specifically, the expenditure analysed only includes that related to goods and services of non-pay activity. This amounts to €3,054,550 or 23.5% of all expenditure. Other expenditure areas are excluded (e.g. wages, salaries, PRSI (including for therapists as part of the therapy demonstration project); staff costs in the education centres; travel and subsistence for staff and for CPD participants; and depreciation). These excluded areas amount to €9,923,905 or 76.5% of all expenditure.

4.1 Analysis by spend, section responsibility and area of activity

The table below presents information on the analysis of expenditure by amount, section responsible and the types of goods and services involved.

Table 1: Expenditure analysis by spend, section responsibility and area of activity

Section	Area of activity	Amount € (% of total spend analysed)
Operations	CPD provision for participants (inc. venue costs, trainer costs and course fees)	647,112 (21.2%)
Business Support	Rent and rates	561,265 (18.4%)
Business Support	IT	370,926 (12.1%)
Business Support	Printing, postage and stationery	365,490 (12%)
Business Support	Telephone	233,719 (7.7%)
Operations	Professional interventions (SLT, OT, behaviour improvement interventions, literacy and numeracy interventions)	199,158 (6.5%)
Finance, Business Support, Research	Consultancy fees	126,104 (4.1%)
Operations	Therapy demonstration project (exc. Salaries and T&S of assigned therapists)	88,836 (2.9%)
Research	Research	72,326 (2.4%)
Business Support	Repairs and maintenance	84,420 (2.8%)
Business Support	HR – Training and Development	68,795 (2.3%)
Business Support	Meeting expenses	60,194 (2%)
Business Support	Light and heat	54,617 (1.8%)
Finance	External audit and accountancy services	52,153 (1.7%)
Business support	Internal audit	37,828 (1.2%)

Source: 2018 accounts. See appendix 1 for further detail.

The remaining 1% of expenditure (amounting to €31,607) not itemised in the table relates to general expenses, recruitment fees and legal fees.

Consultancy fees related to communications services, IT, research, legal advice, financial and actuarial advice.

As can be noted from the table above, the vast majority of expenditure analysed is concentrated in two sections: operations; and business support.

- Operations accounts for €935,106 (30.6%) of analysed spend.
- Business Support accounts for €1.837m (60.3%) of analysed spend.

4.2 Analysis of suppliers

An analysis of suppliers used across the NCSE in 2018 was also undertaken where expenditure of over €5,000 was incurred. In total, there were 109 suppliers in this category. A number of these suppliers were as a result of existing arrangements in place arising from the transition of services (e.g. Cork Education Support Centre, Navan Education Centre, ALFA c/o Blackrock Education Centre) or of regular arrangements regarding accommodation (the Office of Public Works).

A breakdown of the 109 suppliers analysed where expenditure was in excess of €5,000 is outlined in the table below.

Table 2: Analysis of supplier expenditure by section and number

Section	No. of suppliers	Example of suppliers
Operations	49	Venue for CPD e.g. education centres, hotels; educational resources companies; demonstration project-related companies (therapist training).
Business support	47	Utilities (e.g. Eir, An Post), Accommodation (e.g. OPW), Codex (office supplies), security, IT (e.g. laptops).
Finance	7	Accountancy companies (e.g. Mazars), printing and publishing related activity (e.g. Publication design).
Research	6	Research companies/institutions (e.g. RSM Ireland), research conference suppliers (e.g. Croke Park Conference Centre).

As with the previous analysis, the majority of suppliers to the NCSE in 2018 where payments exceeded €5,000 were engaged by the operations and business support sections.

5. Actions for Corporate Procurement Plan 2019-2022

Based on the preceding analysis of expenditure in the NCSE, the review of the National Public Policy Procurement Framework, and the recommendations in internal and external audit reports, a number of actions are outlined below. These actions relate to the objectives outlined in section 2 and have timelines attached to them. Many actions outlined below are already underway. Timelines here relate to the date of the plan and future implementation.

The development and implementation of a CPP is the responsibility of the NCSE Procurement Officer. The Procurement Officer reports to the Head of Finance.

Table 3: Corporate Procurement Plan 2019-2022 Actions

Objective	Actions	Timelines
Ensure goods and services are procured in accordance with best practice as set out by the OGP.	Update the procurement section of the NCSE FPPM to ensure that it reflects the latest guidance from the OGP.	Q4 2019 and ongoing
	Continue to ensure all sections are informed of the latest OGP publications and guidance.	Q4 2019 and ongoing
	Encourage greater use of OGP templates for procurement and contract management.	Q4 2019 and ongoing
	Review the CPP on an annual basis to ensure that it is fit for purpose.	Q3 2020, 2021, 2022.
	Continue to encourage greater use of OGP Framework Agreements, where appropriate for NCSE needs.	Q4 2019 and ongoing
Enhance staff awareness and capacity to undertake procurement activities in a compliant manner	Develop and deliver information sessions on procurement designed to support staff in complying with FPPM guidance	Q4 2019
	Engage with HR to commission procurement training to be delivered to purchasing staff across the organisation.	Q4 2019 – Q1 2020.
	Continue to update staff on publications (guidance, templates, information notes) issued by OGP and other relevant bodies, seeking clarification where necessary from publishers	Ongoing
	Continue to provide ongoing support to staff where required on procurement activities.	Ongoing
Improve monitoring, compliance and reporting of procurement activity in the NCSE	Engage with finance unit to ensure that payments are processed in line with FPPM requirements.	Q4 2019
	Maintain and publish (quarterly) the Procurement and Contracts Register for all procurement over €25,000	Q4 and ongoing
	Develop and implement compliance monitoring mechanisms (e.g. random spot check of procurement activity at any threshold, reviewing e-tenders website for timely publication of material) and report quarterly on outcomes to Council.	Q4 2019 and ongoing
	Undertake quarterly expenditure reviews and report to Council on activity.	Q3 2019 and ongoing.
	Undertake a quarterly random spot-check of all purchase orders over €25,000 and associated procurement documentation for compliance.	Q4 2019

6. Conclusion

The aim of this Corporate Procurement Plan, which informs procurement activity in the NCSE to the end of 2022, is to deliver greater value for money and improve compliance with procurement law, policy and practice. It outlines a set of objectives and related actions to contribute to this aim.

The implementation of the actions in this plan will be the central role of the Procurement Officer, supported by colleagues in the finance unit. The implementation of good procurement practice is the role of everyone in the organisation. The actions outlined here will, when implemented, lead to improved practice across the organisation. This in turn will ultimately result in greater compliance and a more confident and knowledgeable staff comfortable in their purchasing roles.

Appendix: Extract from Accounts 2018

EXPENDITURE	2018
	€
Printing, postage and stationery	365,490
Rent and rates	561,265
Telephone	233,719
Light and heat	54,617
Repairs and maintenance	84,420
Training and development	68,795
Training participants (CPD) ¹	647,112
Travel and subsistence expenses ²	1,385,541
Travel and subsistence participants ³	407,482
Meeting expenses ⁴	60,194
General expenses	8,233
Recruitment fees	5,146
Research expenditure	72,326
IT expenses	370,926
Consultancy fees ⁵	126,104
Outsourced services ⁶	468,345
Professional services & intervention ⁷	199,158
Internal audit fee	37,828
External audit fee	28,918
Accountancy fees	23,235
Legal fees	18,228
In School Therapy Project contract	694,847
Debtors historic write off	722
Wages & salaries (Note 5)	6,368,102
Employers PRSI	544,975
Loss on disposal of assets	-
Depreciation	<u>142,727</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>12,978,455</u>

¹ This reflects the training costs associated with providing CPD for participants such as venue costs, lecturer costs and course fees.

² Travel and subsistence expenses increased in 2018 due to additional staff and extensive travel costs, based on the peripatetic nature of work involved. Foreign travel and subsistence expenses in the year amounted to €4,410 (2017: €1,460). All other travel and subsistence expenses were domestic.

³ This reflects the travel and subsistence costs incurred by participants attending CPD courses.

⁴ The NCSE did not incur any entertainment expenditure in the year (2017: nil).

⁵ Consultancy fees were incurred in relation to communication services, IT, research, legal advice, financial and actuarial advice.

⁶ This reflects the administration costs associated with the provision of services and salaries through the Education Centres.

⁷ This reflects costs incurred by the provision of services such as occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, literacy and numeracy interventions, behaviour improvement interventions and professional assessments.