

Procurement Newsletter

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The Schools Procurement Unit wishes to extend our very best wishes to all school communities for the forthcoming academic year. The SPU Team is looking forward to continuing to provide our advice and support service for all your school's procurement needs during 2017/18.

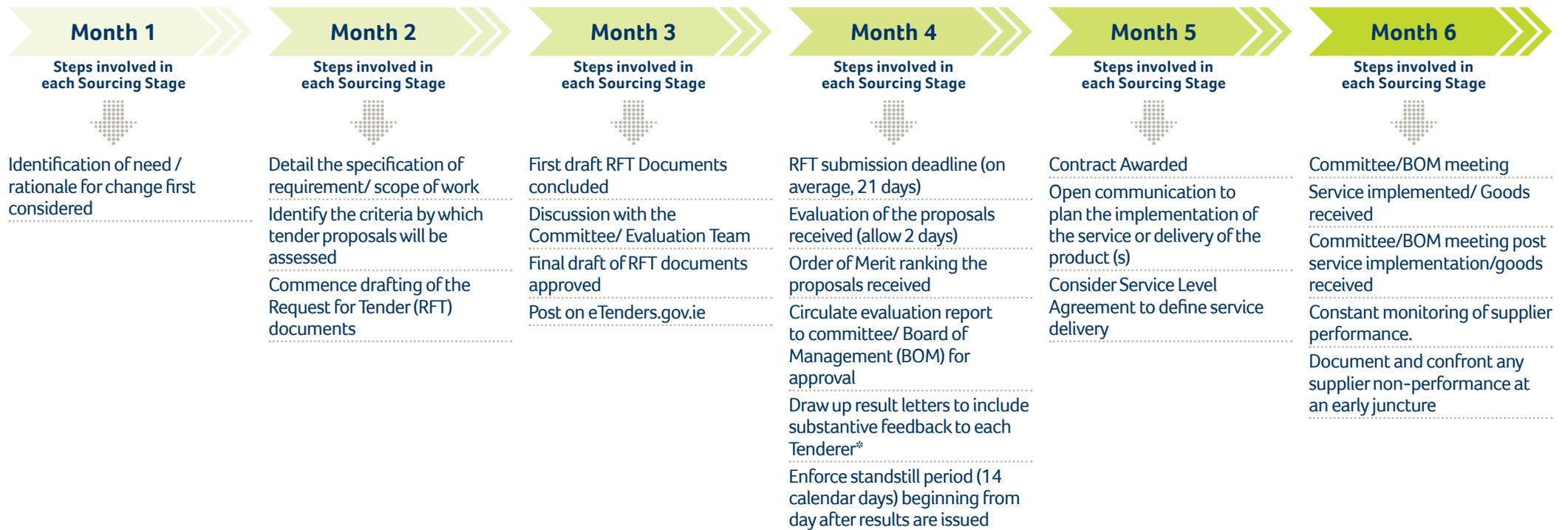


**Back to
School**

Procurement Project Steps and Timeframe

Not all procurement projects over €25k in value will take up to 6 months from planning to completion – below is merely a sample timeline. The greater the contract value, the greater the level of complexity is likely to be. And the greater the complexity, the longer the timeline will be. Proper planning is key to ensuring your procurement needs are delivered at the time they are required.

Sample Procurement Project Timeline for Contracts >€25k in Value



* Some matters which require serious consideration as part of the evaluation process, and when debriefing tenderers, are as follows:

- (i) The valid award of contracts is intertwined with providing adequate reasons for procurement decisions (i.e. the rationale for awarding marks). If adequate reasons are not provided then the entire process is open to legal challenge.
- (ii) The validity of the reasons provided will be undermined if the same reasons are provided to all the unsuccessful tenderers.
- (iii) Generic reasons are not acceptable as 'dutiful' under the law.
- (iv) A sufficiently precise bespoke statement (by criterion) of reasons must be provided to each unsuccessful tenderer.
- (v) Providing scores alone is not acceptable as providing reasons.

Procurement Health Check

One service that the SPU provides is the 'Procurement Health Check'. This involves members of the SPU team visiting your school to check through the top 20 items of spend in the last financial year, and providing advice on the appropriateness or otherwise of existing arrangements. If a potential risk is identified, the SPU will advise on a course of action to mitigate the risk in question. In many cases, some arrangements within schools are of long standing and need to be refreshed in order to help the school achieve better value. The 'Procurement Health-Check' examination shouldn't take much more than an hour of your time, and ultimately should provide you and your board with some comfort regarding reduced levels of risk exposure, once any identified issues are appropriately addressed.

If you would like the SPU to visit your school to provide

this important support service, please contact the SPU on 01 203 5899 / procurementssupport@jmb.ie and an appointment at a time convenient to you will be agreed. We will send you a 'health-check' template which will need to be completed by you in advance of the SPU team member calling out to perform the 'Procurement Health-Check' examination itself.

It is important to mention that a school is best advised to only embark on a procurement activity in the absence of a suitable alternative arrangement provided by the Office of Government Procurement, and particularly so for areas of high expenditure. Using central arrangements, while not mandatory, brings comfort in several areas – reduces exposure to risk of litigation and exploitation, reduces administrative effort and cost, delivers best value outcomes from large-scale bundling arrangements.



Guidance for Schools on Good Procurement Practices

Procurement Guide for Schools

Every school in the country should have received a printed copy of the SPU's 'Guidance for Schools on Good Procurement Practices'. The guide is intended as a reference for best practice, which may be consulted by school personnel for guidance on all aspects of procurement which impacts upon the operation of their school. The guide takes a practical step by step approach to advising on appropriate procurement processes for schools.

If you have not received your copy or would like additional copies please email procurementssupport@jmb.ie, providing your full postal address. A copy of the guide is also available as *Gaeilge*. 'Soft' copies of both versions are available for download at <https://www.jmb.ie/procurement-guide>

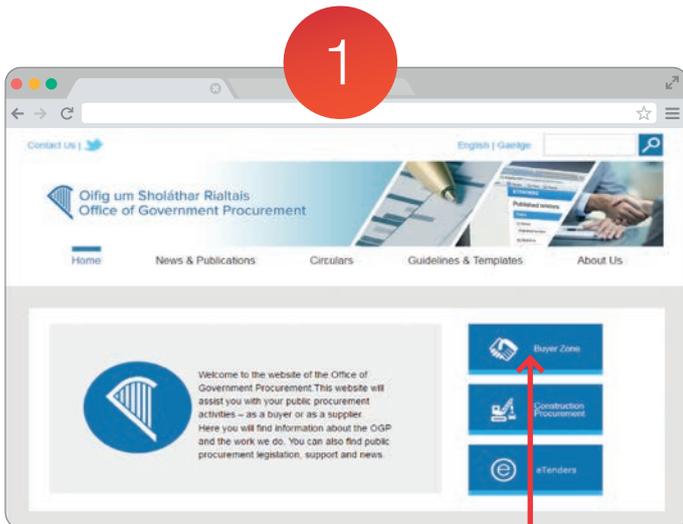
Dedicated page for SCHOOLS on www.procurement.ie

The dedicated information page for schools is now live on www.procurement.ie. To access the page, school personnel must be a registered user with the website, and navigate to the 'Buyer Zone' -

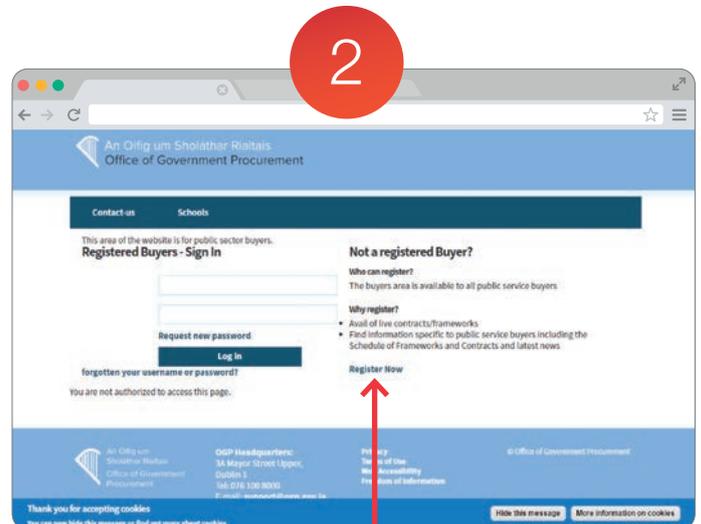
<https://bz.procurement.ie/useful-links>



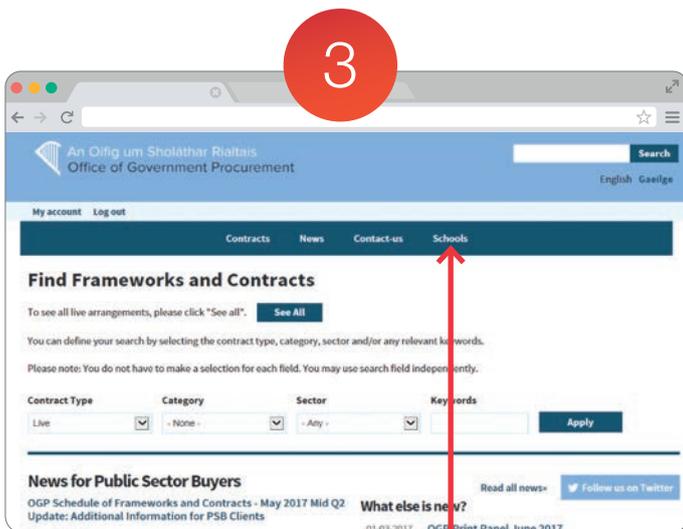
Further enhancements to improve the user experience are being currently considered.



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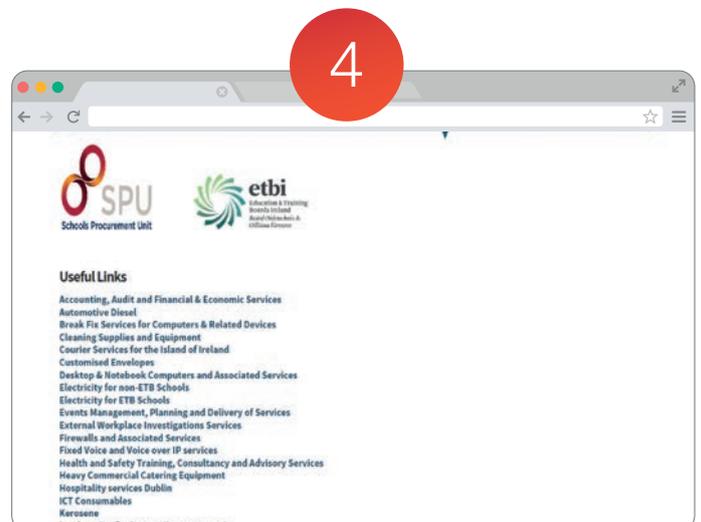


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School's Tab giving access to list of contract and frameworks of most relevance to schools to use



List of contracts and frameworks available to schools

COMING SOON

The latest OGP Schedule of Frameworks and Contracts (July 2017 - Q3 Update) has recently been published and is available at <http://ogp.gov.ie/ogp-schedule-of-frameworks-and-contracts-february-2017-mid-quarter-update/> This schedule allows schools to see the range of contracts and frameworks, many of which will be available to schools touse, coming 'on-stream' within the next six months.

PC's and Laptops for Schools

This project will provide direct access arrangements to schools for a standard spec and a higher spec for School PCs and Laptops (by direct access we mean that the procurement process has been completed on your behalf and your school can order these devices directly from the appointed supplier). It is anticipated that schools will be able to directly source their PC and Laptop requirements under these new arrangements before the end of September, before the payment of the latest tranche of ICT grants by the Department.

School Payments Pilot Project

Currently underway is a competitive public procurement process with the objective of delivering a comprehensive range of agile, user-friendly payment solutions which makes the sending (by parents) of payments for school based activities, and the receiving of those payments in the schools, more flexible for both parents and the school. This development would go some way towards reducing the number of cash payments into the schools themselves, yet would not remove the cash payment option for those parents who prefer that method of payment. The projected availability of these solutions for schools is Q42017 / Q12018.

Latest Testimonials

We were very happy with the advice and support we received from the SPU throughout our recent tender for a contract cleaning service for our school. The SPU supported us in every aspect of the tendering process. Any queries we had were answered very promptly and a member of the team was always at the end of the phone if we needed them.

- St Mary's College, Naas

On first and all subsequent contacts with the relevant person in your office I found them always available and readily willing to give of their time in support of guiding me through what is a complicated process to a beginner. Required tender documentation, for 3 separate tenders, was either produced or checked by your representative along with detailed explanations to all queries. This was carried out in a most efficient manner which enabled me to meet all the critical timelines which in essence resulted from late tendering if we were to meet the new school term.

- Clonkeen College, Meadow Vale, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

For your general enquires, specific feedback or suggestions on how we can improve our service to your school or to the schools sector generally, please see our contact details below.

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