



An Roinn Caiteachais  
Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe  
Department of Public  
Expenditure and Reform

# Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

## Incoming Minister of State's Brief on eGovernment and Public Procurement

## Contents

<b>Office of Government Chief Information Officer</b>	<b>3</b>
Overview	3
Key Responsibilities	4
Key Strategic Issues for Incoming Minister	5
Risks and Challenges	7
Covid-19	8
Senior Management in the Division	10
<b>Office of Government Procurement</b>	<b>12</b>
Overview of Division	12
Key Responsibilities of the OGP	13
Key Strategic Issues for the OGP	13
Risks and Challenges	17
Senior Management in the OGP	20

---

## Office of Government Chief Information Officer



**Chief Information Officer: Barry Lowry**

### Overview

Barry Lowry is the Government Chief Information Officer (CIO) and is head of the Division. He is also Head of Profession for ICT within the Civil Service.

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), established in 2013, has a broad remit which includes leading the implementation of the [Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019](#), the [Public Service Data Strategy 2019-2023](#), the [eGovernment Strategy 2017-2020](#), Action 1 of [Our Public Service 2020](#) (accelerate digital delivery of services), the [GovTech 2019](#) actions, and the [Public Service ICT Strategy](#). The latter seeks to deliver better outcomes and efficiency through innovation and excellence in ICT across the Public Service, and encompasses five pillars namely Build to Share, Digital First, Data as an Enabler, Improve Governance and Increase Capability.

The Build to Share initiative is a significant driver of OGCIO's agenda in terms of the provision of common ICT services to Public Service Bodies (PSBs). The Build to Share approach comes with significant benefits including economies of scale, standardisation, interoperability, productivity savings, reduction of risk, ensuring the right people with the right skills are in place to develop and manage government ICT and digital services and to advance digital transformation.

The OGCIO is also responsible for approval and oversight of digital and ICT-related expenditure across the public services and for technology policy for government, works with the Civil Service ICT Advisory Board, and participates on steering and programme boards for strategic initiatives, and; plays a leadership role in accelerating digital government service delivery and innovation including through the development and application of a range of ICT policies such as the recent [Cloud Computing Advice Note](#).

In addition, OGCIO has significant engagement with the EU and participates in a range of internal, national and international working groups, such as the EU CIO Network and the OECD Digital Leaders group.

## Key Responsibilities

- OGCIO is the provider of ICT services for the Department.
- Leading the Digital Transformation Agenda across the Civil and Public Service including the Digital Leaders group, adoption of the MyGovID, Digital Postbox and eircode building blocks, and digital transformation of back office services.
- Strategy development and implementation including:
  - Development of a replacement for the 2015 Public Service ICT Strategy which will take account of key elements from other relevant national strategies as well as new digital initiatives at EU level;
  - Implementation of the Public Service Data Strategy 2019-2023 and Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019;
  - Lead the implementation of the priority actions from Cruinniú GovTech 2019;
  - Approval of and oversight of ICT and digital related expenditure across the Civil and Public Service including Peer Review of large scale projects; and
  - Provide strategic advice on digital/ ICT to bodies across the Civil and Public Service such as supporting DCCAE with implementation of National Broadband Plan & National Cyber Security Strategy.
- Implementation of the Build to Share Suite of Services, which are common ICT services available to and used by a wide range of bodies across the Civil and Public Service:
  - Government Networks – carrier-grade, resilient, high capacity private voice, video and data network services across the Public Service nationwide;
  - Applications – a range of those corporate support applications which are common across government bodies such as eSubmissions, ePQ, eDocs, eFOI, eRisk, etc.;
  - Managed Desktop – the range of standard ICT services including PCs, hybrids, mobiles, office productivity suite, email, telephone and video conferencing and underpinning infrastructures such as internet access and cyber security services;
  - Government Cloud – a shared robust, resilient, private Government Cloud infrastructure platform;
  - Government Data Centre Project – will enable public service bodies locate their ICT infrastructure in a purpose-built government owned and run facility;
  - Implementing the [Civil Service ICT HR Professionalisation Strategy](#) – puts in place a career spine for ICT, supported by appropriate recruitment, retention and mobility measures, as well as a skills development framework, e.g. ICT Apprenticeships.
  - Gov.ie Government Portal – a consolidated view of digital government services, information and websites for citizens and customers, building on the single government identity; and
  - Digital Postbox – gives people a single, secure place to receive all Government communication digitally, and will be adopted by public bodies as their default communication channel to customers as individuals.
- National lead on the implementation of two EU Regulations:
  - the eID element of the eIDAS Regulation – electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market; and
  - the Single Digital Gateway Regulation (SDGR) to provide access to information, to procedures and to assistance and problem-solving services.

## Key Strategic Issues for Incoming Minister

### Establishment of the Vote for OGCIO

2020 is a particularly significant year for the OGCIO, with the establishment of its new OGCIO Vote, which has an Estimate of €21.7 million (net) in 2020. The creation of this Vote, for which the Secretary General will also be Accounting Officer, will serve to drive the strategic ICT and digital transformation agenda across the Civil and Public Service while providing and developing pan-public service ICT infrastructure, service delivery models and cross government applications.

It is the success of the Build to Share initiative, and the growing demand for access to these services, which has led to the establishment of a vote for OCGIO. The Vote is funded by *vote transfers* from those departments and bodies availing of Build to Share services and is therefore cost neutral. The impact of the OGCIO vote will be seen on two fronts (i) enabling additional bodies to avail of the OGCIO's common ICT services, and (ii) providing scope for OGCIO to invest in a range of key strategic programmes such as those set out hereunder.

### Data and Digital Government Services

Given it was published in 2015, with a five year time span, it is now timely to update/ replace the [Public Service ICT Strategy](#). The current consensus is that five key pillars identified in 2015 will remain valid for the coming years, i.e. Build to Share, Digital First, Data as an Enabler, Governance and Increase Capability. In that regard any new strategy will also draw on new digital initiatives from the EU and both the [Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019](#) and the [Public Service Data Strategy 2019-2023](#), the successful implementation of which will deliver tangible benefits to the public, businesses and Public Service Bodies.

Improved data quality, and more and better reuse of data will put the right to privacy and data protection at the heart of how we design and deliver all our digital services by ensuring all personal data handled by the public service is collected, stored, processed and shared in the appropriate way. In addition this will cut down on duplication and waste by adopting the *Once Only Principle* so that individuals and businesses need supply the same information only once to Public Service Bodies; streamline and automate back office functions including between PSBs; enable pan-government solutions to provide individuals better access to their data and transparency over its use, in an efficient manner, and; support better policy development and more efficient and effective policy measurement and implementation.

### Digital Government

The benefits of the digital transformation of public services to both individuals and businesses are well established. These range from efficiency, transparency, trust, and accessibility through to funds being released for expenditure on improving existing and future services. There is much progress to note as regards digitisation across Government Departments and the wider Public Service agencies and offices, however, while there are areas of excellence, the rate of progress varies.

The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), compiled annually by the European Commission, measures Europe's digital performance and tracks the evolution of EU member states. The DESI tracks, amongst other aspects, Member State progress in "digital public services". While Ireland rated well overall among EU countries in the recently published 2020 review, it ranked 9th in digital public services, dropping one place since last year, which is disappointing even if still well above the EU average. Ireland continues to score very high in open data and kept its almost perfect score for digital public services for businesses. In short, Ireland is improving year on year, but at a slower rate than other countries.

Furthermore, the “International Civil Service Effectiveness Index” (InCiSE), which assesses the performance of central civil services around the world, placed Ireland 26th out of 38 countries in the area of digital services. It is clear that if we do not take collective action across the Public Service, Ireland’s reputation as a digital leader will be undermined.

There has been significant investment in enabling technologies and infrastructures to provide a path for accelerated uptake of digital government services. These range from the Revenue Online Service, Digital Postbox, Public Services Card, MyGovID, Eircode, National Broadband Plan, and so on. These infrastructures create a capability to facilitate a major change in the provision of public services using digital technologies across the board. Given the rapidly growing use of digital across society, digital transformation should be a high priority across all sectors of government, and digital transformation should be actively promoted and publicised.

To that end, under the chair of this Department’s Secretary General and the Secretary General of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, the Digital Leaders group was established in early 2019 and has representation from all Ministerial Departments, with individual Departments also leading similar groups in their particular sectors. The group has agreed a common set of objectives to enable the digital agenda and the advancement of digital transformation which are based on a number of core building blocks including MyGovID, the Digital Postbox, ROS Digital Certificate, Eircode, Government Cloud and Data Centres. It should be noted that recent discussions agreed the ambitious target of 90% of government services to be delivered digitally within three years; a figure already being achieved by digital leaders in the EU.

### **Enabling Citizen Access to Digital Government Services**

The widespread adoption of the MyGovID digital identity service for citizens is a key enabler of access to digital services for citizens and a key requirement of the EU’s eGovernment agenda. Working with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, OGCIO is championing the adoption of the MyGovID service in two key areas – promotion campaigns to drive up the numbers of verified MyGovID accounts, and also working with departments and agencies to increase the range of government digital services using MyGovID for access to the service by individuals. The impact of this approach can already be seen in the increase, over the past three years, to more than 640,000 verified MyGovID accounts in April 2020.

Furthermore, consideration is being given to the deployment of public consultation and communication during 2020 in order to increase the profile and understanding of the benefits of a “digital government”, and to nurture a two way conversation with the public to help shape digital policies and priorities, e.g. a Citizens’ Forum.

### **GovTech – Implementing the Priority Actions emerging from Cruinniú GovTech 2019**

With the objective of supporting the creation of new jobs in the economy, an event was held to consider the potential of a GovTech sector for Ireland. [Cruinniú GovTech 2019](#) brought together a wide range of stakeholders from across industry, academia, representative bodies and Government Departments. The objective of this event was to provide recommendations on the actions that would need to be prioritised to enable Ireland to be the best place in Europe to transact digitally with Government; and the best place in Europe to be part of a Tech Start-Up.

Eight priority recommendations emerged which include the re-use of Government assets such as data and eIDs, a review of talent development and funding models, the establishment of a GovTech Procurement Framework and a focus on inclusiveness.

### **Public Protection and Disaster Relief Radio Network**

The OGCI's Government Networks service offers cost-effective, resilient, carrier-grade high speed network services for voice, video and data to all public service bodies. One of the services in its portfolio is the State's Public Protection and Disaster Relief Radio Network. This network supports operational services for An Garda Síochána, the National Ambulance Service, the Prison Service and Local Authority fire services and has more than 19,000 users across the entire country using the service for mission critical communications.

OGCIO is currently working with the Office of Government Procurement to establish a replacement framework, for a seven year period, for the delivery of a nation-wide, narrowband, secure, managed digital radio service for voice and data purposes. It is a complex procurement and the development of the tender documentation has proven to be a lengthy process to date. However, this will ensure that sufficient time is allowed to refine both the technical and contractual requirements so that the outcomes of the procurement provide a fit for purpose service which is critical to the State. The tender documentation is expected to issue in Q1 2020.

## **Risks and Challenges**

### **Digital Transformation across the Public Service**

- While one of the impacts of Covid-19 has been an increase in digital government activity, the otherwise slow pace of widespread digital transformation across the Civil and Public Service is a cause of concern. The establishment of the Digital Leaders group and the recent decision to set a target of 90% of government services to be delivered digitally should help to address the pace of change. However, continued leadership at the most senior levels will be required to embed digital transformation in the culture of the Civil and Public Service.
- In addition, in the context of the impact of digital government services on current face-to-face channels and the report of the cross-departmental group, consideration will need to be given to actively developing options for the rationalisation of offline touch points to ensure that "person to person" service delivery can actually be improved, while introducing more convenient points of service and more flexible opening hours. This will protect the State from having to resolve the challenges relating to the sustainability of service provision via traditional means in a piecemeal manner.

### **Enabling Access to Digital Services by Citizens**

- While the strong legal advice of the Attorney General's Office is that the Public Services Card project is appropriately underpinned by legislation, the Data Protection Commission findings in relation to the use of the Public Services Card risks delaying progress with the increased adoption of the MyGovID service by Departments and Public Service Bodies as the way by which citizens and individuals access government digital services (citizen take-up is still undergoing exponential growth and support for the direction of travel is strong). OGCIO continues its engagement with PSBs to maintain momentum in terms of the adoption of MyGovID to access digital government services, and with the development of plans for public consultation and communication.

### **The Build to Share Programme: Government Data Centre**

- The implications of the decision to apply for standard rather than Part 9 planning permission for the proposed Government Data Centre has caused delays to the timeline for completion of the new complex. The risks associated with delays to this project and the importance of PSBs having access to a purpose-built data centre outside of the city,



at the earliest opportunity, were highlighted last year with the significant impact on systems resulting from a power outage in one of the government's city centre data centres.

### **The Build to Share Programme: Rollout of Common ICT Services**

- The success of the Build to Share suite of initiatives brings a supply vs demand challenge for OGCIO. While the Vote provides the financial framework to enable OGCIO expand its supply capacity in line with demand, there is a challenge in relation to availability of accommodation and the recruitment of additional internal staff. The request for additional accommodation was made in early-2019 but, as yet, there is no indication as to when additional accommodation will come on stream.

### **ICT/ Digital Skills across Public Service**

- To effectively operate in an increasingly digital service, it is essential that all civil and public servants have an appropriate minimum level core digital skills. The Civil Service OneLearning Centre offers a range of programmes aimed at addressing this challenge. In addition, with the digitalisation of back office services, consideration will need to be given to reskilling staff to equip them work in new areas of expertise e.g. Artificial Intelligence.
- Implementation of the ICT HR Professionalisation for the Civil Service is a core building block in the drive for digital government services. This strategy sets out the first steps of a programme of strategic change for the management of our ICT resource, and covers all aspects of the challenge, from recruitment and retention to development, mobility and management. Given the general shortage of ICT skills across all sectors of the economy, addressing the recruitment and retention challenges in particular, are key as we can no longer rely on the private sector to be in a position to supplement our internal resources as they too are struggling with a shortage of skills.

### **Public Protection and Disaster Relief Radio Network Procurement**

- The complex nature of the procurement, the high value of the seven year contract proposed and the extension of the existing contract could increase the potential for a challenge to the eventual outcome of the procurement process. The procurement documentation has been developed to address potential areas of challenge, insofar as this is possible at this stage.

## **Covid-19**

OGCIO played a key role in the maintenance of business during and actions resulting from Covid-19. This included:

- Supporting D/PER and its other customer departments/ public service bodies through the transition to majority home working;
- Supporting the underlying telecommunications infrastructure and the major increase in capacity requirements through Government Networks;
- Supporting the Government's main online communications channel ([gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie)), including key content creation, geo-spatial dashboards through OSI and the "Offers of Help" capability; and
- Significant contribution into the development of the HSE Contact Tracing App.



As Ireland moves into managing the future phases of the virus, and beyond, there will be a number of technology/ digital related issues:

- The success of Home Working will raise the issue of whether a more permanent approach can have longer-term benefits in terms of transport, environment, work-life balance, productivity and savings (through reduced accommodation requirements);
- Greater value will be placed on the benefits of Digital Government, including the gov.ie portal and the MyGovID identifier (MyGovID verified accounts increased nearly 20% in the first 2 weeks of self-isolation and significantly increased take-up has continued);
- Building on the experience of large-scale remote working in a digital manner, there is a real opportunity to significantly up the pace of digital transformation efforts around back-office and internal processes across the Civil and Public Service. In parallel a programme to retrain those staff impacted by digitalisation/ automation in newer areas of work should also be accelerated in combination with a programme to raise core digital and data literacy skills across the Civil and Public Service;
- The positive experience of organisations availing of the OGCIO's shared model for ICT services, when compared to some of those operating independently, reaffirms the importance of moving organisations to the OGCIO model. Indeed the pace of discussions with some potential new client bodies is already increasing. This further emphasises the urgency in addressing the OGCIO's accommodation needs, in the short term, albeit learnings from current remote working experience may refine the initial ask;
- The introduction of an enhanced Digital Government model, including interfaces with the private sector (credential sharing by consent), increased cross-border EU dimension, introduction of e-Signatures, e.g. for conveyancing purposes;
- The potential for the Digital/ Technology sector to help drive recovery through GovTech and increased employment. To that end, we are exploring the potential of how people affected by "lost" jobs might be re-trained into tech sector roles if they have suitable aptitude;
- The levels of demand for, and the need to rapidly scale capacity of a number government services over recent weeks, has seen an increase in the use of public cloud services by government agencies. As such, recent events allied with the [OGCIO Cloud Computing Advice Note, October 2019](#), serve to highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of the various cloud models and increasing confidence in the value of public cloud. These should also have a positive impact on public cloud adoption rates generally by the Public Service; and
- Covid-19 related digital/ ICT initiatives, including those to enable digital home working, highlighted the critical need for government to have its own professional cadre of skilled ICT/digital resources, at all levels of proficiency, and across the range of digital/ ICT disciplines. App and web development, cloud technologies and cyber security skills in particular, were essential to the Contract Tracing App, standing up of high volume call centres for HSE and DEASP, and to effectively manage risk to corporate systems while enabling appropriate use of more consumer-focused cloud-based services as seen recently in the demand for access to cloud-based video-chat and conference services. Recent weeks have shown the importance of the Public Service acquiring its own skills and expertise in newer areas such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

## Senior Management in the Division

### **Mary O'Donohue**



Responsibility at Director level for supporting the Government CIO with the digital transformation agenda and implementation of the various strategies which shape the OGCI0's work programme including the Public Service ICT Strategy, and in particular the Improve Governance and Increase Capability streams; for directing and managing services delivered from the Office; supporting digital service delivery and innovation initiatives across the Public Service through the development and application of a range of ICT policies and oversight arrangements; for representing the CIO Office on relevant programme boards for strategic initiatives and shared service deliveries, and in engagements with EU and other international organisations.

### **Gary Masterson**



Responsibility at Principal level for supporting the Government CIO with the digital transformation agenda and the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy, and in particular the Build to Share (Infrastructure) stream; for delivery of common ICT services across government which currently includes the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the Department of Finance, National Shared Service Office, Department of Rural and Community Development and the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General; development of the private government cloud service and for the design, delivery and day to day management of all ICT infrastructure and services and ensuring these are aligned with current ICT strategy and policy.

**Owen Harrison**



Responsibility at Principal level for supporting the Government CIO with the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy, and in particular the implementation of the Build to Share (Applications), Digital First, and Data as an Enabler streams, including adoption of MyGovID as part of the implementation of digital services; for directing and managing the planning, design and development of business and data systems and applications for the Department, and the Department of Finance, and the implementation of the Public Service Data Strategy which seeks to optimise the use of data throughout its lifecycle, and ensure it is appropriately protected.

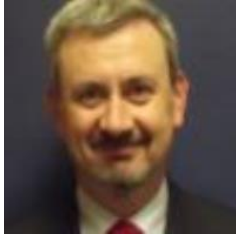
**Jim Leahy**



Responsibility at Principal level for supporting the Government CIO with the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy and in particular the Build to Share Government Networks service; for directing and managing the planning, design and development of policies, strategies, infrastructures and procurements in relation to technologies and telecommunications for the public service.

---

## Office of Government Procurement



**Chief Procurement Officer: Paul Quinn**

### Overview of Division

Public procurement represents a significant proportion of Government spending. Within the Public Service, it totals an estimated €15 billion per annum, of which approximately €6.5 billion is on capital works and €8.5 billion is on goods and services. Most of the expenditure happens outside of central government, particularly in the large sectors of Health, Local Government and Education. Public procurement is governed by public procurement law (regulations transposed from EU Directives) and Government policy (implemented typically through Circulars). The EU Directives are aligned to broader World Trade Organisation rules. There are an estimated 8,000 public bodies who are encompassed by public procurement regulations. The legal regime codifies the principles of non-discrimination, transparency, proportionality and equal treatment. It also provides legal remedies through the Irish and EU Courts to effected parties who believe these obligations have been breached.

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) is shaping the future of public procurement by leading on the reform of public procurement across the Public Service. The organisation has two main functions (a) as the national authority on public procurement managing the legislative and policy framework, providing the national tendering platform and providing support services to public bodies, and (b) providing procurement arrangements to public bodies from which they can buy goods and services. The OGP enables better, sustainable, and transparent public procurement through guidance, systems, solutions, advisory services and training. Responsibility for ensuring procurement compliance remains the responsibility of the accounting officers of individual public bodies.

The OGP advises the Minister, on public procurement policy for goods, services and works across the entire public sector. The OGP maintains and develops the National Procurement Policy Framework which supports better procurement practice, including strategic, green and socially responsible procurement. The OGP also has responsibility for developing the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) to deliver construction procurement reform. All public works projects that are delivered under the Exchequer-funded element of the Government's capital plan must be procured in accordance with the provisions laid down in the CWMF. The CWMF is mandated by circular and was developed to provide an integrated set of contractual provisions, guidance material, technical templates and procedures which cover all aspects of the delivery process of a public works project from inception to final project delivery and review to assist contracting authorities in meeting their ongoing procurement requirements. The CWMF is currently being reviewed.

The OGP provides a range of flexible, high quality procurement solutions, such as framework agreements and contracts, to support its public service clients in delivering services to the

public. In its work, the OGP strives to promote SME participation in public procurement including through the design of competitions and a programme of outreach activities.

The OGP works with partner sourcing organisations in Health, Education, Local Government and Defence to deliver the reform programme, which is overseen by an Interim Procurement Reform Board appointed by the Minister. The OGP provides customer support through its helpdesk and supports a number of national procurement systems, including eTenders, eInvoicing and procurement data analytics.

## Key Responsibilities of the OGP

- Advise the Minister, Minister of State and D/PER on public procurement.
- Lead the procurement reform programme to deliver Government's objectives.
- Develop strategic procurement (including innovative, green, SME and social considerations).
- Establish and maintain a broad suite of national procurement solutions to support the needs of the Public Service.
- Provide comprehensive procurement policy, advice and guidance for the public sector.
- Proactive Stakeholder Engagement ((including Dáil and Seanad, Cabinet and Oireachtas Committees, whole of Government Senior Official Groups, OGP Governance Structures, Government Departments / Sectors / public bodies, GCCC, SME Advisory Group, and EU and International fora).
- Implement digital solutions and accelerating the digital delivery of public procurement services in an accessible, consistent and intuitive manner.
- Continue to develop measures to support SMEs in accessing public procurement.
- Deliver commercial skills training to public bodies.
- Provide quality customer service to stakeholders.

## Key Strategic Issues for the OGP

### Procurement Reform Programme

The OGP is responsible for delivering the procurement reform programme which is intended to transform the way that public bodies buy the goods and services they need to support their work delivering services to the Irish people. To date, the OGP has:

- put in place central arrangements (currently in the order of 130 framework agreements), covering a wide range of commonly procured goods and services;
- updated and expanded the National Public Procurement Policy Framework to offer straightforward advice and guidance to public bodies;

- commenced a process to deliver further significant changes to procurement policy for public works projects;
- established a dedicated helpdesk in the OGP to offer guidance and support to public bodies, businesses, and grant recipients;
- enabling compliance with relevant EU Procurement and eInvoicing Directives; and
- undertaken a programme of data collection and analysis allowing a far more comprehensive view of the scale and nature of public spending in Ireland.

The reform programme is overseen by an Interim Reform Board appointed by the Minister and bringing together representatives from across the Public Service, as well as external expert appointees. It is chaired by Mr. Maurice Quinn, Secretary General at the Department of Defence. A Procurement Executive brings together representatives from the OGP and sector sourcing organisations (called Central Purchasing Bodies under EU law) in Health, Education, Local Government, and Defence. It is chaired by Mr. Paul Quinn, the Chief Procurement Officer.

There was a commitment in the previous Programme for Government to refine the new procurement structures in place, such as the OGP, as they bed down and make adjustments according to best international practice and in conjunction with Irish businesses. To meet this commitment, a series of consultations have taken place with Government Ministers, opposition spokespersons, Members of the Oireachtas, Central Purchasing Bodies, the SME Advisory Group and the reform programme's governance forums. This stakeholder consultation process was to review the implementation of the reform programme to date, assess what's working well and what can be improved and to seek suggestions for enhancement. A submission is being prepared with recommendations on the path forward taking account of the consultation process as the OGP enters the next phase of delivery.

### **Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs)**

The Minister of State chairs a Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Advisory Group (AG) which is facilitated by the OGP and which ensures the voice of business is heard by Government. The OGP recently published the *2017 Public Service Spend and Tendering Analysis Report* which found that of an analysed spend of €4.912 billion, 94% is spent in Ireland and 54% is spent with SMEs.

Specific measures to support SME participation include: undertaking market analysis; setting proportionate eligibility requirements, e.g. turnover and insurance; breaking tendering competitions into lots, e.g. by sector, region, value, etc.; proactive engagement in a range of events such as Taking care of Business; encouraging businesses to register on eTenders; provision of a range of communications materials; and specific supports provided by InterTradeIreland (ITI) and Enterprise Ireland.

The OGP continues to seek ways to engage SMEs and explore further ways to ensure that SMEs have access, across all regions, to government contracts.

### **Strategic Procurement (including innovative, green, SME and social considerations)**

The OGP supports the inclusion of wider policy considerations in public contracts but this must be done in a structured and coordinated manner. To progress this objective, the OGP has published:

- An Information Note on Incorporating Social Considerations into Public Procurement. The purpose of this Note is to help policy makers and practitioners understand how procurement can be used to facilitate the advancement of wider social and environmental policy objectives. It should be noted that the OGP cannot decide for other contracting authorities or at a whole-of-Government level what social considerations should be included in the frameworks and contracts that it puts in place on their behalf. However, it can help facilitate the process of incorporating those objectives, once agreed, into planned procurement projects;
- DPER Circular 20/2019 on “Promoting the use of Environmental and Social Considerations in Public Procurement” following extensive engagement at Ministerial level (Public Expenditure and Reform and Community, Climate Action and the Environment). This Circular encourages the consideration of wider Government policy in public procurement processes. However, it recognises that it is not feasible to instruct the use of green criteria in all procurements at this stage as more work needs to be done on developing appropriate criteria. Account has to be taken of the impact on existing Exchequer allocations, cost consequences, affordability, service delivery, market capacity and the potential impact on SMEs; and
- Established a cross Departmental Social Considerations Advisory Group to bring together relevant officials from policy Departments with procurement practitioners to help facilitate this process.

The OGP are also incorporating green considerations into its framework agreements, for example, by excluding single use plastics from its water cooler framework, by increasing the requirement for energy performance in its white goods framework and by planning for an electric vehicles option in the forthcoming framework for vans and minibuses.

### **Supporting the National Development Plan**

The OGP Construction Policy Unit launched a review of procurement policy for public works projects in 2019. The review encompasses a significant body of work in a sector that generates considerable media attention. It will deliver significant changes to the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) over the coming years and will involve extensive engagement both with industry stakeholders and with the public bodies charged with the delivery of capital projects.

The CWMF represents the tools that a public body must use to procure and manage the external resources necessary to deliver public works projects that are delivered under the Exchequer-funded element of the NDP. Approximately 80% of the €116 billion expenditure earmarked under Project Ireland 2040 up to 2027 will be delivered through the CWMF.

There are two distinct engagements on public works projects:

- Consultant technical professionals who advise public bodies on all aspects of project delivery including design; and
- Building and civil engineering contractors and their respective supply chains.

A 2014 report into the performance of the public works contracts highlighted poor project definition as a significant cause of cost overruns and delays on public works projects. The focus in the review will be on improving risk management and the standard of information



produced throughout the different project delivery stages to address deficiencies in project definition.

Objectives and principles have been developed with the Government Contracts Committee for Construction (GCCC) to guide the review. Approved reforms will be implemented through the progressive refinement and enhancement of the CWMF.

The OGP chairs and provides the secretariat to the GCCC which is a forum to discuss public sector construction related issues and to provide expert advice and technical input into the development of public sector national construction procurement policy.

The OGP is also a member of the Construction Sector Group Working Group which ensures regular and open dialogue between Government and industry on how best to achieve and maintain a sustainable and innovative construction sector positioned to successfully deliver on the commitments in Project Ireland 2040. It is made up of representatives of key industry bodies, as well as senior representatives of relevant Government Departments and agencies with responsibilities for policy and for the delivery of infrastructure.

The first phase of the review of the CWMF will address the manner in which construction technical professionals (the architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, etc. who typically plan, design and oversee construction projects on behalf of public bodies) are engaged. By clarifying the terms of their engagement and the quality of their outputs significant improvements will be delivered in the construction phase. The engagement of contractors will form the second phase of the review.

In addition to reforming the manner in which we engage professionals and contractors there are a range of issues that are impacting successful outcomes that will also be addressed and implemented.

The work programme for 2020 includes: Risk Management (range of measures to be applied, for example, training, risk premiums, guidance); managing price inflation pressures; the impact of price on the award of contracts; liability, indemnity and insurance; performance evaluation; encouraging collaborative behavior; adoption of BIM on public works projects; and alternative contracting and procurement strategies.

### **Professionalisation of Procurement**

The OGP has developed the National Public Procurement Policy Framework underpinning the Government's goal of increasing the professionalisation of public procurement. The publication of Public Procurement Guidelines and information notes on Covid-19, Brexit, Corporate Procurement Plans, the role of the Procurement Officer, Concessions Contracts, Social Considerations, GDPR and ESPD promotes and facilitates a consistent, standardized approach to public procurement and provides the information and understanding of the process for contracting authorities and industry.

The OGP has established a Commercial Skills Academy to provide necessary commercial skills training for Public Service managers who are responsible for managing capital projects under the NDP, to enhance awareness and understanding of commercial skills and best practice approaches to apply throughout the entire project lifecycle. An initial course has been run and has garnered considerable positive feedback. The curriculum has been further refined and further courses are planned throughout the year.

The OGP also engages consistently in a range of stakeholder engagement events, aimed at fostering awareness and encouraging engagement with the public procurement system.

The OGP participates in seminars and conferences intended to disseminate information on public works procurement. The OGP facilitates training on eTenders, the Irish Government's electronic tendering platform for government buyers.

Internally, the OGP's EMPOWER people strategy supports continuing professional development across all of its own business functions and staff have pursued a range of training in public procurement, procurement law, and public management.

### **Digital Transformation**

Digital Transformation has been identified as a major strand of the OGP's new draft Statement of Strategy as the organisation seeks to accelerate the digital delivery of our services in an accessible, consistent and intuitive way. We are seeking to streamline and improve public processes and the support structures necessary to enable transparent and efficient procurement including through the development of a new eProcurement strategy.

### **eTenders**

The OGP is currently preparing to go to the market for the next iteration of eTenders, the national procurement platform. eTenders is a 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. An eTenders Platform project to specify, procure and implement a SaaS (Software as a Service) solution is underway. This is a significant endeavour and the OGP has established a Project Steering Committee and Design Authority Group, comprising representatives from across the public sector. In consultation with the Design Authority group, the OGP are currently working to develop the specifications for the next iteration of the eTenders platform.

## **Risks and Challenges**

### **Cooperation and Collaboration across Government**

The establishment of the OGP and the centralised approach has led to more coordinated approach and improvements in the public procurement regime and the development of new operating structures. Whole-of-government collaboration requires public servants to work together across their organisations to develop better co-ordinated public services and policy to enable the delivery of Government objectives. However, while progress has been achieved, more work needs to be done in this area due the fragmented nature of public administration, particularly in the health and education sectors. Considerable focus, therefore, remains on working across the larger government sectors to ensure buy-in and engagement. The Minister has established the interim Procurement Reform Board to oversee this work. The role of the Interim Procurement Reform Board is to oversee the implementation of the public procurement reform programme, in particular, the programme's structures, practices and policies on centralised procurement, and advise, where appropriate, on how to address any gaps.

### **Refinement of Reform Programme**

A key challenge will be to adapt the programme, maintain the momentum and build on the progress to date. The OGP is providing the leadership in this regard by providing evidence-based, efficient, effective and responsive procurement advice, support, guidance, systems and solutions and promoting open, accountable and transparent procurement. Following an extensive consultation process, the OGP is developing a new statement of strategy, strategic objectives and metrics to monitor progress, conducting an organisational review, progressing the appropriate incorporation of wider policy considerations such as green criteria, implementing a medium term strategy to improve how we procure public works, embracing a

whole-of-government approach, digitisation and better use of data and professionalising public buyers including through the Commercial Skills Academy.

### **Brexit**

The OGP continues to liaise closely with the structures established by Government around Brexit, including the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. It is also monitoring developments at EU level. The OGP has addressed Brexit issues through its governance structures and also at stakeholder forums such as the SME Advisory Group. The CPO has written to Government Departments to remind them of the importance of contingency planning. OGP published a revised Brexit Information Note in October (the fourth edition) and will update it accordingly as matters develop. OGP inputs into the Cross-Government Brexit Contingency planning senior official group. It has assessed the Framework Agreements it has put in place and engaged with key suppliers. The key risks have been identified as potential increased costs, interruption to supply and a changed regulatory environment. Many of the issues that will emerge in procurement will in fact be caused by trade issues such as tariffs, logistics and customs issues, regulatory divergence, etc.

OGP are engaging with CSSO on appropriate Brexit-related considerations that may need to be included in tender documentation, including if existing provisions are sufficient. Consideration is also being given to GDPR and the UK's potential third country status.

### **Covid-19**

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) is supporting the national response to Covid-19 through the dedicated governance structure established by Government to ensure a public health-led, whole-of-society approach, including the Special Cabinet Committee and the senior officials group. We are working closely with the HSE and the wider Government sector to assist them in identifying the most pressing needs including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) of the health sector and other essential services and trying to find suppliers to meet this demand in an ever challenging global market.

The OGP is cognisant of the importance of assisting businesses to operate where possible and recognises that contracting authorities need support and assistance. As a result, OGP has published Covid-19 information notes to support contracting authorities in managing procurements where urgency is required. Further guidance has been published on the impact of Covid-19 on construction procurement including contractual matters associated with the Covid19 response measures, guidance on pre-start preparation, and on re-starting public works contracts with further guidance on tendering to follow shortly.

On behalf of Government, and working with the OGCI, the OGP's Systems and Data team has developed a website ([gov.ie/covid-supplies](http://gov.ie/covid-supplies)) to capture the many offers of support being made by business to assist Ireland's response to COVID-19. The website provides a single, consistent database of offers of support and went live on 27 March. It should be noted that this database is provided solely for this emergency period and does not replace normal procurement procedures and the existing contractual supply arrangements already in place.

The OGP with the assistance of the OGCI has enabled its staff to work remotely. Many OGP staff volunteered for redeployment, with several staff members redeploying to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (D/EASP) to assist in their efforts to react to the economic fall-out from the Covid crisis.

### **Construction Inflation**

Up to the onset of Covid-19, construction inflation posed a significant risk to the ambition set out in the National Development Plan for project delivery posed by construction inflation.

Whilst it is still too early to tell whether the economic shock imposed in response to the rapid spread of the virus, it is likely that there will be a slowdown in certain sectors of the construction sector which should temper inflation and may see tender price indices decline in the short term. Regardless of this, the provisions in the contracts that govern the impact of price variation in both public works and works-related services contract are in need of review to determine whether they continue to represent the optimum means of addressing the risk of inflation when it arises once again. In what will hopefully be a short lived recession, inflation will prove extremely challenging in the sector due to capacity constraints and productivity challenges that existed prior to Covid-19. A hard Brexit may also impose additional costs on materials as well as the potential for significant shortages in the short term due to logistical issues associated with customs clearance.

A contract has been awarded to undertake a review of the price variation provisions in the public works contracts and the conditions of engagement for consultants. The review is due to conclude in July.

### **Strategic Procurement**

Strategic public procurement has a role to play in responding to societal, environmental and economic challenges. However, mainstreaming innovative, green, SME and social criteria in public procurement will present a significant challenge for the OGP as significant work needs to be done on developing appropriate criteria. Policy Departments such as Community, Climate Action and Environment will need to develop clear, quantifiable, verifiable and measurable criteria to enable such criteria be used appropriately in public tenders. Account has to be taken of the impact on existing Exchequer allocations, cost consequences, affordability, service delivery, market capacity and the potential impact on SMEs.

## Senior Management in the OGP

**Brendan Whelan**



Responsibility at Principal level for the Commercial Skills Academy.

**David O'Brien**



Responsibility for Construction Procurement policy.

**David O'Sullivan**



Responsibility at Director level for the Office of Government Procurement's Sourcing function

**Andrew Bogie**



Responsibility for sourcing in Utilities; Marketing, Print and Stationery and Fleet and Plant.

**Anne Lannon**



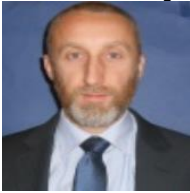
Responsibility for sourcing in the Professional Services portfolio.

**Dermot Callaghan**



Responsibility for sourcing in the Facilities Management portfolio.

**Donal D'Arcy**



Responsibility for the Sourcing Operations and Quality Management function.

**John Cummings**



Responsibility for the Office of Government Procurement's Spot Buying function.

**Mary Fennelly**



Responsibility for sourcing in the Office of Government Procurement's ICT portfolio.

**Roisin Killeen**



Responsibility for sourcing in the Travel, Human Resources, and Managed Services portfolio.

**Declan McCormack**



Responsibility for the eInvoicing Ireland Programme and the eTenders Platform Project.

**Jim Deane**



Responsibility for National Public Procurement policy.

**Kathryn Whyte**



Responsibility for Human Resources and Learning and Development.

**Mags O'Callaghan**



Responsibility for the Customer Service and Tender Operations function.

**Maureen McNally**



Responsibility for the Office of Government Procurement's Systems and Data function.

**Dermot Sellars**



Responsibility for the Office of Government Procurement's Corporate Office function.