

online to  
procurement efficiency



Millstream

### Dedicated Portals from Millstream

We are all aware of today's key issues:

- How do we engage with our local suppliers?
- Where can we make savings?
- How do we comply with EU legislation?

**myTenders Pro** from Millstream, is a proven eProcurement solution for the publication and management of high and low value tender notices and facilitates:

- Reducing your advertising spend
  - publish online and save big press costs
- Simplifying your administration process
  - reduce the time spent on tender administration
- Collaboration with consortium members
  - share knowledge and aggregate buy
- Engagement with your local suppliers
  - simple site registration and clear functions
- Requests for additional documents
  - sent automatically via email to your suppliers
- Compliance with EU regulations
  - clear and concise forms in a wizard format



## IRELAND Case Study

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Like other European governments Ireland now handles its procurement electronically, in order to save money and time and to comply with the latest European legislation. These days, over 95% of the notices we are required to advertise publicly are transmitted electronically, the second highest level in the EU.

The legal pressure to modernise procurement procedures has intensified over the past 15 years. But there were plenty of practical incentives as well. Running a paper-based system is cumbersome and time-intensive, while advertising all open tenders in the press can be hugely expensive. To resolve this, the Irish Department of Finance has adopted **eTenders**, an innovative e-procurement web portal provided by Millstream. A similar system is widely used by public bodies in the UK and Norway, from central and local government to housing associations, health authorities and police forces.

But we didn't go into e-procurement from a standing start. The Irish government was one of the first EU member states to adopt a pioneering e-procurement strategy and in 2001 created its first **eTenders** website. The aim was to save advertising costs by posting contracts online and to open up the market to less expensive contracts and smaller suppliers.

During these early days, served as a display portal for notices with basic notice creation facilities. But since Millstream took over it has become a one-stop-shop for public sector purchasers and their suppliers, offering a wide range of information and research capabilities.

EU legislation now requires that contracting authorities abide by a range of transparent, non-discriminatory and proportional principals when purchasing goods and services. They must also advertise all contracts above a certain value in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

Given that the number of notices published in the OJEU rose by 600 per cent between 1991 and 2004, it was obvious to us that our system needed an overhaul. There was also a requirement, identified in the e-procurement strategy, to provide a full tender management facility for the entire Irish public sector.

Although we are still compiling statistics, we estimate most tendering authorities can save around two thirds of their advertising costs by using the site. Some have even dispensed with newspaper advertising altogether, as using the website satisfies all advertising requirements.

We know of one authority that has even managed to halve its costs per tender from over £1,000 to below £500. This particular authority issues about 40 notices a year, so this is a substantial saving.

The site also receives over 100,000 visitors a month - more than double the number that the old one received. The number of suppliers registered on it has also doubled, from around 15,000 to over 30,000.

**eTenders** displays all the opportunities input by awarding authorities as well as capturing any additional notices advertised in the OJEU and the national press. This offers suppliers - particularly smaller companies - much greater access to the marketplace, as lower value tenders are as easy to access as larger ones. This, in turn, helps stimulate local economies.

**eTenders** also acts as a research facility, allowing buyers to see if others have tendered for similar contracts or products, and enabling everyone to see who has requested which tender documents.



[www.eTenders.gov.ie](http://www.eTenders.gov.ie)

## IRELAND Case Study



**The Irish government's tendering process has been transformed since it started using Millstream's e-procurement portal. Liz Nolan, Assistant Principal on Ireland's e-procurement initiative, explains how.**

**The portal helps public authorities by cutting costs and eliminating paperwork. Some of the authorities, which include local councils, schools and hospitals, have even managed to halve their tendering costs.**

As well as developing the site, Millstream runs the helpdesk, so it manages the whole process. All we have to do is decide on the content and sign off on new releases. As well as saving time and money, that also makes the whole process much more transparent. There is complete and free access, and any member of the public can look at tenders.

The site offers an easy introduction to electronic procurement for companies new to the field. Access is easy, as they don't need expensive tools or expertise, just access to a PC with any web browser.

Suppliers can download all the tender documents and post questions about them online. All this information is made public, which creates a much more two-way communication process between all the parties involved. Users can also get guidance on how to comply with the rules and regulations.

Tender notices are made publicly available every day, including those that relate to prior information, contracts and contracts awards. Suppliers can submit tenders securely online, and registered users can obtain free email alerts for tender notices of interest to them. There are facilities to track and record all tender notices and documentation downloaded.

Cost savings include telephone calls, paper and postage. One authority has saved £3,000 on stationery and another £7,000 in staff time. Using the site can also save time for buyers, as it has e-Sender status with the EU Publications Office.

There are a number of other benefits, such as the ability to generate statistical returns for the Irish Department of Finance and the EU; access to supplier profiles for smaller contracts; and a reminder facility to publish contract award notices, to help improve submission rates. Each organisation is given a library facility, so that it can hold standard documents such as terms and conditions, sample tenders and logos.

To sum up, we have found the site extremely useful, as well as being intuitive and easy to use. The content is well organised, and it has different sections for different groups of users such as buyers and suppliers. That's an improvement over our original site, which could be quite difficult to navigate.

We were pleasantly surprised by the speed of the transition, too. We had resigned ourselves to a long drawn out and cumbersome implementation process, but remarkably it only took two months and went really smoothly.