



**SCOTLAND  
EXCEL**



# Outdoor Play and Sports Facilities Framework

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## Introduction

Scotland Excel manage a £2bn portfolio of over 70 collaborative contracts, including social care, construction, roads, transport, environmental services, facilities management, food and education, on behalf of its members, who comprise local authorities and other public bodies<sup>12</sup>. Frameworks are two stage procurement approaches that initially select suppliers of commonly procured goods, services or works who have signed up to pre-agreed terms and conditions. Frameworks ensure that members achieve best value from procurement through their combined spending power.

Scotland Excel's outdoor play equipment and artificial surfaces framework is a national collaborative framework for the design, supply, installation, maintenance and inspection of outdoor play equipment and artificial surfaces. It gives councils and other members a route to source a range of works, services and supply arrangements

for outdoor play equipment, surfaces, outdoor gym equipment, multi-use games areas (MUGAs), artificial surfaces and wheeled sports areas.

The first iteration of the framework was for 5 years from 2017 to 2022. The new (estimated at £60m) framework, now titled Outdoor Play and Sports Facilities, was awarded in December 2022 and comprises 11 Lots. It runs for 2 years with the option to extend for up to a further two twelve month periods.

## Procurement process Circular Economy ambitions

During the first framework support had been provided to help embed circular economy outcomes into the procurement strategy, tender wording for the method statements and evaluation.

Discussions between Scotland Excel and ProCirc partner, Zero Waste Scotland, focused on how the new framework could be improved, in particular

<sup>1</sup> [collaborative contracts](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://home.scotland-excel.org.uk/our-contracts/contract-register>



how to ensure that play equipment is not disposed of, if still in good working condition.

To develop an appropriate collaborative approach, the initial stage in 2021 was to undertake life cycle mapping to identify areas of focus. Those involved included ProCirc partners and others within

Scotland Excel, including Barry Phillips, framework developer for the [Domestic Furniture and Furnishings Framework](#) (another ProCirc pilot) on how best to influence local authorities to take up sustainability measures such as increased reuse.

### Life cycle impact mapping

Impacts of obtaining Raw Materials (service design/ resource planning)	Impacts of Manufacture/Logistics (service development and partnering)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change – emissions in sourcing raw materials</li> <li>• Climate change – emissions associated with transportation of raw materials</li> <li>• Emissions to air, land and water associated with sourcing of raw materials</li> <li>• Biodiversity – timber sourcing</li> <li>• Disruption to communities</li> <li>• Risks associated with global sourcing - working conditions/labour standards.</li> <li>• Opportunities for ethical sourcing – workforce/ supply chain</li> <li>• Human Trafficking / Modern Slavery</li> <li>• Fair Work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change – emissions in production</li> <li>• Climate change – emissions associated with transport &amp; delivery</li> <li>• Emissions to air, land and water associated with production</li> <li>• Packaging – including opportunity to eliminate / reduce – especially if plastic is used?</li> <li>• Involvement of SMEs and Third sector as sub-contractors</li> <li>• Equality / diversity / inclusion in production process</li> <li>• SMEs / social enterprises as part of supply chain if repair / reuse / re-manufacture is involved</li> <li>• Fair Work</li> <li>• Disruption to communities (during installation)</li> <li>• Potential involvement of communities in design</li> </ul>
Impacts during use of product / service delivery	Impacts at end-of-life / service completion/ transfer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health &amp; Safety – maintenance /potential use of app</li> <li>• Climate change - travel – vehicle emissions –potential to limit emissions.</li> <li>• Microplastics – loss to local environment / water course etc.</li> <li>• Opportunities for innovative solutions to reduce use of microplastics for infill</li> <li>• Waste from packaging or other materials used in installation / maintenance / repair if carried out by contractor</li> <li>• Fair Work</li> <li>• Security – of children for example</li> <li>• Community Benefits – training / environmental improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Waste’ material – associated with installation phase</li> <li>• ‘Waste’ material – at de-commissioning / end-of-life</li> <li>• Opportunities for reuse in situ / by Local Authority / by other public bodies</li> <li>• Opportunities to involve social enterprises / SMEs in repair / reuse / recycling / re-purposing / re-manufacturing etc.</li> <li>• Opportunities for Community Benefits – training leading to qualification in repair / reuse of material</li> <li>• Opportunity through contract management to require contractors to provide baseline data on percentage of reused / recycled / re-manufactured materials.</li> </ul>



Using the Life Cycle Impact Mapping Tool and the Scottish Government Sustainability Test<sup>3</sup> identified 4 key areas:

1. Designing for disassembly/ reuse/ repurposing - linking into the environment national outcomes as well as bio-diversity.
2. Eliminating or reducing the use of microplastics – asking bidders how they propose to contribute to the elimination or reduction of these while carrying out outdoor play area projects or artificial surfaces projects.
3. Avoiding waste and knowing how to handle any that is generated – how they are reducing waste/ contributing to the circular economy or circular procurement model and how they plan to reduce waste while carrying out projects under the framework.
4. Reducing emissions associated with transportation and/ or the use of packaging while carrying out projects or work orders under the framework.

## Collaboration

### Learning from peers and the market

Collaborating with the City of Aalborg (a ProCirc partner) was highly influential for incorporating sustainability measures in the tender, engagement on microplastics and reviewing the method statement to develop a robust scope with relevant targets.

Julie Bastholm, Project Manager, City of Aalborg had worked on a playground tender<sup>4</sup> and shared the document 'Preparing for a Circular Playground: procuring creative spaces to play and learn in City of Aalborg'<sup>5</sup>. An online knowledge exchange session was held on the process of extensive market engagement that Aalborg had undertaken.

Scotland Excel discussed the type of criteria they were proposing to use to address reducing carbon footprint, consumption of resources and actions that enhance the environment. Use of standards were discussed, including those for organic coatings and aggregates not containing dangerous chemicals.

A supplier survey and extensive early market engagement was undertaken with other stakeholders (Scottish Football Association, Sportex and Play Scotland) on approaches to

sustainability and opportunities to reuse equipment and recycle materials, like astroturf.

The survey of suppliers included the following questions:

1. What percentage of recycled material is used? (average of responses was 30%)
2. What percentage of your products are recyclable? (average of responses was 63%)
3. What percentage is from sustainably sourced materials? (average of responses was 57%)
4. Do you design/use material that is durable, repairable, re-usable or capable of being remanufactured? Provide methodology. A variety of responses were obtained, all detailing how their product components were durable and could be repaired.
5. Do you design your products so that it is easy to disassemble and repair component parts? (90% replied yes.)
6. Do you provide repair services relating to equipment/ surfaces supplied? (90% replied yes, both on-site and off-site repair services offered. All suppliers answered that they are able to take back, for reuse, refurbishment and/or remanufacturing, otherwise redundant equipment/surfaces from the contracting authority.)

Workshops were also held with the framework User Intelligence Group (UIG) and other stakeholders to showcase studies of approaches taken in other countries, such as Superuse, a Dutch innovative repurposed playground, 'Wikado', located in Rotterdam<sup>6</sup>, Geopark Stavanger Norway<sup>7</sup>, HACS in Barcelona<sup>8</sup> and Dudley Primary School, UK<sup>9</sup>.

The workshop also explored the reasons why local authorities and others may have chosen not to use the framework in the past. A discussion was held on sharing some of the cost burden of removal and reuse of old equipment and understanding the benefits of doing this from both an environmental & social perspective.

### Method statement

The tender included a sustainability method statement requirement that was informed by the peer and market engagement:

<sup>3</sup> Sustainable Procurement Tools:

<https://sustainableprocurementtools.scot/>

<sup>4</sup> Circular kinder garden in Stisborg Aalborg

<http://circularpp.eu/future-playground-why-and-how/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://circularpp.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CircularPlayground.pdf>

and <https://www.nordic-ecolabel.org/product-groups/group/?productGroupCode=073>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.kinderparadijs.net/speeluinwikado>

<sup>7</sup> <https://helenhard.no/work/geopark/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.hags.com/en-us/case-studies/play-for-all-at-el-prat-de-lobregat-barcelona>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.hideouthouse.com/portfolio-item/recycled-plastic-play-equipment/>



*‘Scotland Excel support the Scottish Government’s purpose of sustainable economic growth with opportunities for all to flourish; the Government’s Economic Strategy which includes transition to a more resource efficient and low carbon economy; and meet legislative targets under The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. Furthermore, the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 includes a sustainable procurement duty on public sector bodies requiring them to conduct their procurement in a way that will secure economic, social and environmental wellbeing.*

*As such, please detail how you will work with the Council to minimise the environment impact of the framework. The response must be specific to the involvement under this framework if successful, and should;*

- *Outline activities you will undertake to comply with relevant legislation and regulations including the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012, the Scottish Government’s Zero Waste Plan and a net-zero society.*
- *Outline activities you will undertake to minimise the environmental impact of call offs under the framework, including in your end-to-end supply chain*
- *Confirm innovations that could be delivered to promote reduce, re-use and recycling initiatives.*
- *Confirm how you will administer and record environmental improvements and sustainability measures.*

*If successful on the framework, suppliers will be required to report all delivered benefits to Scotland Excel bi-annually.’*

The framework award criteria comprised 20% Price and 80% Quality, with responses to the above method statement reflected in part of the Quality scoring.

### **Knowing what a good response should look like**

Zero Waste Scotland through Sustainable Procurement Limited (SPL) supported the development of the method statement requirement which reflected the results of the previous engagement and also an understanding of what a good response should look like. For example, relevant evidence provided by bidders of:

- The use of products, equipment and materials and delivery of services that support sustainable development and the transition to a circular economy, including through innovative solutions, while meeting all relevant safety, performance standards

and warranties. This should aim to extend their useful life, use sustainable and low embedded carbon materials, minimise virgin material use and waste, in accordance with the waste hierarchy. This includes, but is not necessarily restricted to, design so as to enable relevant repair, refurbishment and reuse, the availability of spare parts, recyclable materials and detail of how you will provide verification of ongoing compliance with this requirement.

- The management of waste generated during framework delivery, which applies the waste hierarchy and meets all relevant regulatory requirements.
- The use of products, materials, equipment and delivery of services that prevents pollution to air, land and water. This includes preventing microplastics pollution, through the use of products and materials that avoid, as much as is possible, the use of microplastics and the management of products, materials and waste in service delivery.
- Packaging which is the minimum amount necessary so as not to damage products and equipment, which complies with the Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations and which is reusable, recyclable and avoids where possible the use of single use plastics. Return transit packaging is used throughout the supply chain wherever feasible, sustainable materials, recycled content is specified and used to the maximum degree that is feasible in plastic and cardboard packaging materials and detail how you would report levels and method of verification including % recycled content.
- Reporting progress against the above objectives, relevant KPIs and evidence of continually improving in conjunction with supply chain partners to support sustainability legislation such as The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020. For addressing the reduction of waste, Scotland Excel would look to include and monitor amounts within the Management Information template by asking suppliers to include this information as and when they report information on a quarterly basis.





The focus on circular and related outcomes as set out within the method statement was combined with specific requirements within the specifications for the Lots (varied according to the Lot scope):

- **Timber:** performance of the contract must be independently verifiable to meet UK Government Timber Procurement Policy and come from a legal and a sustainable source, which can include a Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT)-licensed or equivalent source.
- **Grass matting:** Made from recycled materials to BS EN 1177, Manufactured from 80% recycled rubber.
- **Seat:** Option required for a 1.8m long seat with 3-legged steel frame finished in an acrylic coating and with recycled plastic polyboard slats.
- **Rubber Chipping:** 20mm recycled rubber chippings manufactured to BS EN1177.
- **Packaging:** all products and/ or equipment must be packaged to be as convenient as possible and in a manner that is justifiable for the product. All unnecessary packaging and PVC-containing packaging must be avoided and the Supplier is obliged to remove all packaging after installation of any purchased products and/ or equipment.
- **Spare Part Lead Times:** the availability of spare parts for all equipment including how long parts will continue to be available for discontinued equipment. Lead times for spare parts should be no longer than 14 days.
- **Topsoil:** excavation of existing topsoil and store for reuse on site or remove any spoil as required.
- **Lot 3:** design concepts/ proposals should consider social and economic sustainability as well as environmental sustainability in line with the Climate Change Act 2019 commitment to Scotland producing net zero emissions of all greenhouse gases by 2045. This includes:
  - consideration to the transition to the circular economy by promoting reduce, repair, reuse and recycle initiatives.
  - incorporation of output from community consultation (where applicable).
  - be considerate of the local area, wildlife and environment.
  - create accessible and inclusive play spaces, and
  - maximise play value.
- **Removal from site:** supplier responsible for removal of all equipment and spoil from

site, and recycling materials, wherever possible, or disposing of appropriately.

The specifications also sought community benefits that supported places to interact, child social and physical development, engagement in extra-curricular activities and innovative businesses.

## Results

The framework is now live and available to Scotland Excel members. Community benefits are spent in a localised way; this is a good way of avoiding waste by making sure councils have an influence over what will happen. Suppliers can also come up with their own ideas as well to support innovation.

### Initial estimation of environmental outcomes

If the requirements regarding recycled content/ reuse and recycling of equipment are turned into practical implementation during the lifetime of the framework it is estimated that waste and carbon savings may be:

- Between 25 and 50 tonnes of waste.
- Between 2,112 kg and 11,266 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e.

This is based on:

- £60m expenditure under the framework, with between £10m and £20m spent on equipment and materials. £10m may equate to 25 tonnes of materials of which one third each is assumed to be steel, plastics and timber.
- 10% of this may comprise recycled content or reused/ recycled.

**NB.** The above outcomes are very indicative estimates based on the assumptions shown. It is also recognised that these cannot be accurately determined, and outcomes will depend on the extent and nature of services procured under the framework, commitments made by suppliers, the development of market capability to support circular outcomes during the lifetime of the framework, assumed costs and weight of equipment and materials as well as reporting of outcomes through contract management in due course.

Given delays in award of the framework, due in part to the Covid-19 pandemic, circular outcomes will become clear from future quarterly reporting. For example, waste reduction and packaging reduction emissions target, reuse of otherwise redundant materials and equipment, which will contribute to virgin materials reduction. Other measures will be quantified through collaborating with suppliers, and an ongoing focus on education with local authorities to do things differently to generate the most positive outcomes.



## Lessons learned

Scotland Excel's experience of this framework includes:

- **Local authority challenges:** pushing the sustainability agenda within multiple local authorities (the Framework members) can meet constraints like cost, education, trust, and the pattern in which councils buy - rather than total freedom to explore innovative approaches.
- It can sometimes be challenging, e.g. requires more time, to get a proportionate, relevant and fair balance to what you are trying to introduce and what the market can deliver. Local authorities can lack confidence to take a new approach. Representatives on User Intelligence Groups (UIGs) adhere to their wider local authority strategy and may view taking a more innovative approach as risky.
- **Solution:** education is key to mitigating these perceived risks. Capability building needs to be for a wider audience than procurement professionals / buyers alone and a clear business case made, e.g. delivering on the wider strategy goals that currently act as a barrier to change.
- Ideally, the framework developer should be involved from the start so that more can be done to share the outcomes with local authorities, to do more engagement with local authorities to further educate and upskill the 'right' people (e.g. technical panel members), on being able to identify and evaluate best practice when assessing contractor responses on sustainable outcomes.

*“Collaboration with ProCirc (Aalborg Partner and the consultant, Sustainable Procurement Limited) has been great, in terms of having a sounding board to share knowledge. I feel like I have gained a lot through ProCirc in terms of education and self-improvement though the support”*  
(Scott Nixon, former framework developer, Scotland Excel).