B1DREVIEW

A BIDREVIEW DATA REPORT

2026

Legal Services and the Irish Public Sector

The €300M renewal, the framework with empty seats, and what the buyer has already told the market.



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190

tender records analysed

45 / 25

seats anticipated / tenders received

€385.6M

advertised beyond the OGP framework

€300M

renewal signalled for 2026

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Executive summary

The State built a €240M framework, anticipated 45 members, and appointed every one of the 25 firms that tendered. Its €300M successor is already in consultation.

In January 2025 the State concluded its largest arrangement for buying legal services: PLI134F, the third-generation framework for public sector bodies, with a published ceiling of €240 million.[2] The OGP anticipated a maximum of 45 members.[1] It received 25 tenders.[2] All 25 were appointed - and 20 of the possible 45 places were never contested.

Fourteen months later the OGP went back to the market. The consultation for its successor, PLI143F, carries an estimated value of €300 million - 25% larger - with a Request for Tenders signalled for 2026.[3] It tells the market what the buyer is weighing: a significant proportion of marks for cost, a price-review mechanism, questions on AI, new grades and service lines, and a heavier ESG dimension.

The uncomfortable finding: the binding constraint on winning public legal work has been participation, not quality - and the GEN III initial term runs to early 2027.

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The state of public sector legal procurement

Thirteen years of policy in one direction

Competitive tendering for legal services is not new. Circular 05/13, issued in July 2013, told every public body that "in procuring legal services, public competitive tendering should be the norm", set out the panel and mini-competition machinery still in use, and directed bodies with in-house options - the CSSO, the Attorney General's Office - to use them first.[4] Legal services are Annex XIV "light-touch" services under the EU directives, but national policy has treated them as contestable for over a decade.

The money justifies the attention.



The state of public sector legal procurement... continued

The OGP's 2019 spend analysis examined €4.955 billion of a €6 billion addressable total; Professional Services, the category containing legal, was the second largest at €738 million - 15% of spend, up 13% - with SMEs holding 55% of it.[5] The National Public Procurement Strategy 2026-2030 sets the baseline: €29.5 billion awarded across 8,004 competitions in 2025; 10,147 suppliers responded and 2,262 won; 275 central arrangements live.[8] The responder-to-winner ratio is the national conversion problem in one line, and the 275 arrangements confirm the framework, not the one-off tender, is the route to public revenue.

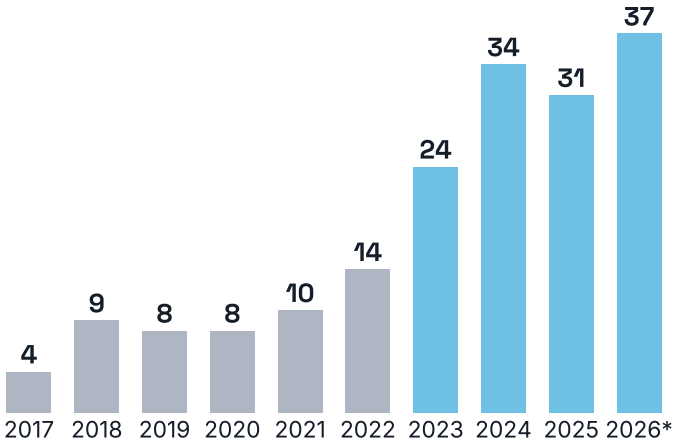
What this data captures

The analysis rests on published tender and award notices - the visible, competitive layer. Once a framework is established, its call-offs and mini-competition wins are not separately published, so absolute values here are conservative floors; advertised ceilings, conversely, overstate committed spend. The competitive findings - who bid, who was appointed, on what mechanics - derive from the competitions themselves and are robust.

The demand side

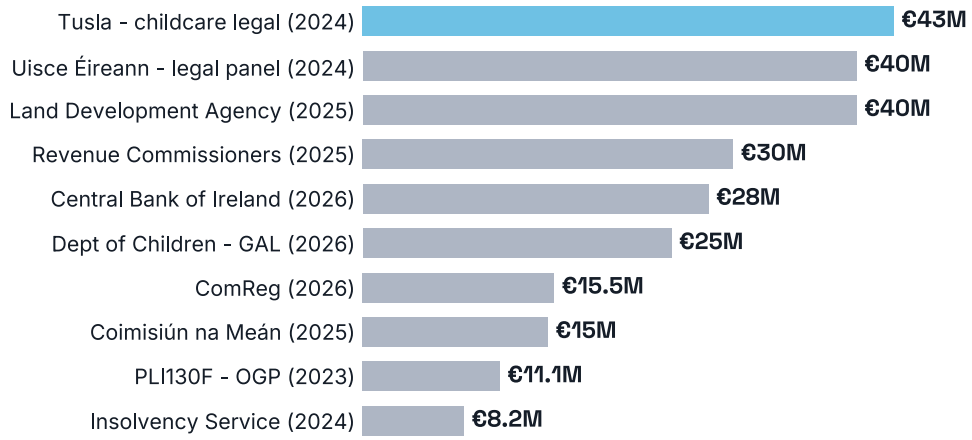
Notice volume has tripled since 2020, and more than 100 public bodies are buying.

Between 2017 and 2020, legal services notices ran at four to nine a year. From 2023 the volume steps up: 24 notices in 2023, 34 in 2024, 31 in 2025 and 37 by mid-August 2026 - a run-rate that would make 2026 the busiest year on record.[6] This is Circular 05/13 reaching full effect: relationships once rolled over are now advertised.



*2026 to mid-August only

The demand side... continued

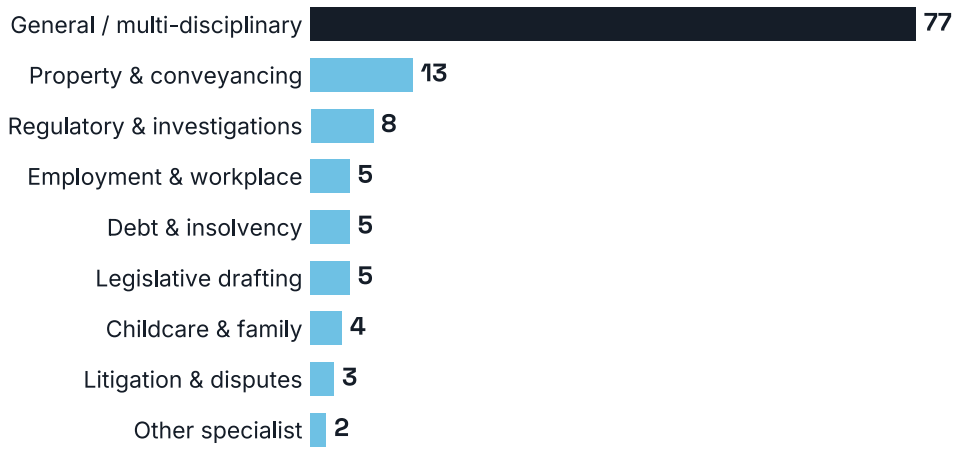


What buyers ask for. Nearly two thirds of the 122 notices (77) seek general or multi-disciplinary services - the framework-and-panel model.

The buyer base is wide. More than 100 contracting authorities have advertised legal requirements, from the OGP and the large regulators down to TG4, Léargas and agencies running €50,000 competitions. Where values were disclosed (85 of 122 competitive notices, 2023-2026) they total €385.6 million beyond the OGP framework, with a median of €500,000. The demand is one giant framework plus a long stream of mid-sized competitions most firms never see.

The specialist tail is led by property and conveyancing (13), regulatory and investigations (8), and clusters in employment, debt and insolvency, legislative drafting, and childcare.[6] For most firms the multi-disciplinary framework is the market; for firms with real specialist depth the specialist stream is thinner but far less contested.

The demand side... continued



The pipeline is live now. At press, the Pensions Authority was tendering a €1.95 million legal advisory framework (deadline 16 September 2026), TG4 was buying legal services at €450,000, and Bord na Móna's €2 million regulatory requirement was open.

Specialisation is written into the pipeline. The largest arrangements outside the OGP are nearly all specialist: Tusla's €43 million childcare requirement, the €25 million Guardian ad litem service, Revenue's €30 million and €12 million frameworks, the Central Bank's €28 million, ComReg's €15.5 million, the Insolvency Service's €8.2 million panel. A firm with demonstrable depth in a regulated vertical bids into ceilings five to twenty times the median competition.

The framework with empty seats

Every firm that tendered was appointed. Twenty possible places were never contested.

PLI134F - the GEN III framework for legal services to public sector bodies - is the centre of gravity of this market. Issued in June 2024, established 1 January 2025, it replaced Lots 69 and 70 of PLI108F and serves the State outside central government: agencies, regulators, local government, tribunals of inquiry.[1, 2] The RFT estimated €220 million of spend; the TED notice records a €240 million ceiling; the term is two years plus two possible 12-month extensions.[1, 2]

100%

of tenders resulted in appointment

0.8%

of Ireland's 3,139 solicitor firms tendered

€240M

framework ceiling on the TED award notice

7 of 25

seats held outside Dublin

The framework with empty seats... continued

The evidence, verbatim. RFT: "It is anticipated that a maximum of 45 Framework Members will be appointed to the Framework Agreement, in total."[1] TED notice 14539-2025, §6.1.4: "Number of tenders or requests to participate received: 25" - and 25 winners listed at §6.1.2.[2] Verify at ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/14539-2025



The arithmetic is closed: 25 tenders received, 25 distinct firms appointed, each with its own tender identifier.[2] No tender fell at the 60% threshold. Against the anticipated maximum of 45, 20 places were never contested: the market, not the buyer, left the capacity unused. The Law Society counts 3,139 solicitor firms in Ireland;[15] twenty-five - 0.8% - tendered for the largest legal arrangement in the State. **Who took the seats:** the 25 run from the top of the Irish market to regional practices in Swinford, Ennis, Tullamore, Limerick and Cork - seven seats outside Dublin - and the list is consolidating: LK Shields merged with ByrneWallace in late 2024.[14]

The framework with empty seats... continued

Framework member	Location	Framework member	Location
A&L Goodbody LLP	Dublin	J.D. Scanlon & Co LLP	Tullamore
Addleshaw Goddard (Ireland) LLP	Dublin	KPMG Law	Dublin
Baily Homan Smyth McVeigh	Dublin	Mason Hayes & Curran LLP	Dublin
Beauchamps LLP	Dublin	McCann FitzGerald LLP	Dublin
ByrneWallace LLP	Dublin	MHP Sellors LLP	Ennis
Comyn Kelleher Tobin LLP	Cork	O'Connor Solicitors	Dublin
DAC Beachcroft Dublin	Dublin	O'Flynn Exhams LLP	Cork
Dillon Eustace	Dublin	P. O'Connor & Son	Swinford
Eversheds Sutherland	Dublin	Philip Lee LLP	Dublin
Fieldfisher Ireland LLP	Dublin	RDJ LLP	Cork
Gleeson McGrath Baldwin LLP	Dublin	St. John Solicitors	Dublin
Hayes Solicitors	Dublin	William Fry	Dublin
Holmes O'Malley Sexton LLP	Limerick		

Table 1: The 25 firms appointed to PLI134F, per TED contract award notice 14539-2025 (published 10 January 2025). Locations as recorded in the notice.

How the framework was actually scored

1,000 marks. Half of them were the rate card.



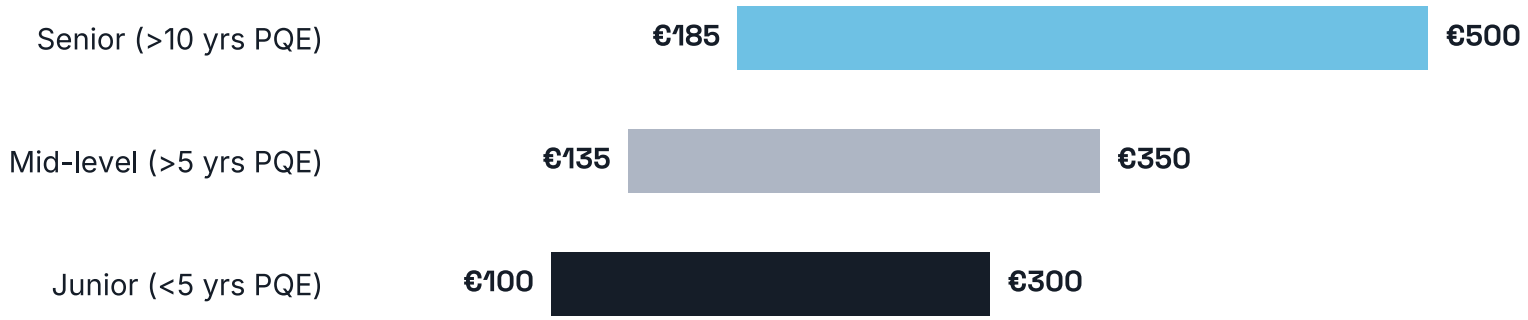
The GEN III model is the template the renewal will be built from, and the consultation confirms cost stays at its centre.[3]

Criterion A - expertise - 450 marks, 60% minimum threshold. One undivided criterion: demonstrate evidenced expertise across five practice areas - employment and pensions; corporate, commercial and finance; data and ICT; regulatory; property and conveyancing. Expertise means "direct participation in the delivery of such services"; biographical summaries were not required. Score under 60% and the tender is eliminated, cost unopened.[1]

Criterion B - environmental and social - 50 marks. Two pages on sustainability, inclusion and the pro bono commitment (up to 20 hours a year, reported to the OGP). Five per cent of the competition - and in a field where every serious firm clears the threshold, a plausible gap between cascade positions.

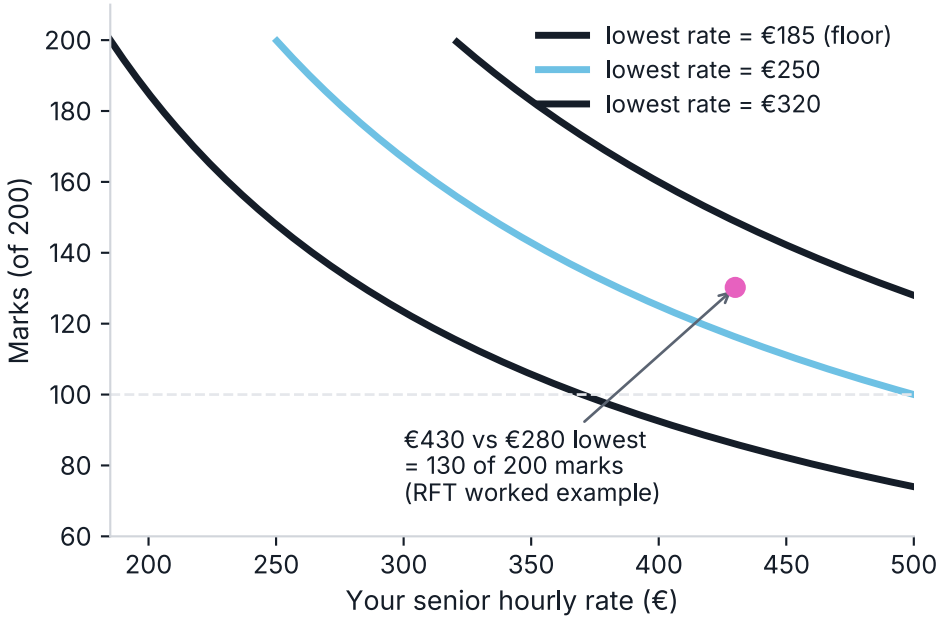
Cost - 500 marks, split across Senior (200), Mid-Level (200) and Junior (100) hourly rates, each inside a published envelope:

How the framework was actually scored... continued



Each grade is scored against the lowest rate tendered: (lowest ÷ yours) × marks. It rewards being cheap **relative to whoever priced most aggressively**. In the RFT's worked example a firm quoting €430 scores 130 of 200 against a €280 rival; at €155 junior it takes the full 100.[1] Grade-by-grade strategy decided half the marks.

How the framework was actually scored... continued



If the lowest rate lands near the €185 floor, a firm at €400 collects under half the senior marks; if the market prices nearer €320, the same rate holds over 160. Half the competition rides on an estimate of where rivals will land - a modelling exercise, not an instinct. The compliance envelope was tight: 12 pages for Criterion A, two for B, Calibri 11, no appendices, brochures or charts - anything outside the limits "will NOT be considered". And the tie-break for the last place goes to the higher Criterion A score: quality, not price.[1]

Three generations, one direction of travel

GEN II (PLI108F) was lot-based, scored 600 quality marks to 400 cost, ran three quality criteria each with its own 60% threshold, and priced by job title.[7] GEN III consolidated the lots, cut the quality criteria to two, moved grades to PQE bands and lifted cost to half the marks.[1] The GEN IV consultation signals the next step on the same path.[3]

How the framework was actually scored... continued

	GEN II (PLI108F)	GEN III (PLI134F, 2024)	GEN IV (PLI143F, signalled)
Structure	Lot-based; separate response per lot (incl. Lot 69 Regulatory Bodies, Lot 70 PSBs)	Single national framework, one lot	Under consultation; wider scope probed: debt management, court representation, ADR, documentary counsel, barrister access
Quality : cost split	600 : 400	500 : 500	"A significant proportion of marks... allocated to cost" (PMC Q8.2)
Quality criteria	Expertise 300 + Client Relationship Lead 200 + CPD 100 - each with a 60% MQT	Expertise 450 (60% MQT) + Environmental & social 50	ESG probed for both selection and award criteria; pro bono to continue
Cost grades	Partner 100, Associate 150, Solicitor 150 - by job title	Senior 200, Mid-Level 200, Junior 100 - by PQE band	Trainee and paralegal/legal executive grades probed
Pricing over the term	Envelope model; rates fixed	Envelope model; rates fixed with set review percentage	A "more suitable review clause" under consultation

Table 2: The evolution of the State's legal services framework across three generations. Sources: PLI108F TRD Parts B and C; PLI134F RFT sections 3.3.2-3.3.4; PLI143F PMC, March 2026.

The direction is consistent: fewer, bigger competitions; a rising cost weighting (40%, then 50%, now "significant"); criteria consolidating into evidence plus ESG. Every move rewards firms that model the framework as a commercial exercise.

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Entry is not revenue

Appointment is the qualifying round. The €212M is won afterwards.

Channel	Value band	Who can be awarded the work	Estimated share of spend
Mini-competition	Above €200,000	All 25 framework members may compete	€212,000,000
Direct Award Band B (or mini-competition)	€100,000 - €200,000	Top 10 ranked firms, by cascade	€5,500,000
Direct Award Band A	€50,000 - €100,000	Top 10 ranked firms, by cascade	€2,500,000

Table 3: GEN III drawdown channels and the RFT's estimated allocation of the €220M spend. Source: PLI134F RFT, sections 1.9 and 2.3.

The 100% appointment rate invites a lazy conclusion - that rank did not matter. The drawdown architecture says otherwise.

The cascade ranks all appointed firms by total score, and only the first ten in each band can receive direct awards.

€212M

of the €220M estimate flows through mini-competitions

Top 10

ranked firms get direct-award access

€8M

of direct-award work reserved for the top of the table

25

members compete for the rest

Entry is not revenue... continued

Among 25 equal-looking seats there is a hidden hierarchy: ranks 1-10 can be handed €50,000-€200,000 engagements without competition; ranks 11-25 cannot - €8 million of frictionless work on the RFT's estimates.[1]

The larger discipline runs the other way. €212 million of the €220 million - 96% - flows through mini-competitions open to all 25, where rate cards act as ceilings and the contest is fought engagement by engagement. A firm that treats its seat as the finish line will watch the drawdowns go elsewhere, invisibly, for four years.



“The language of tendering is completely different to the language of legal services - that is why we have always used a tender expert. Qualification is where firms trip up, and it is the most nerve-wracking stage. Get that right, and once you are on a framework, the work usually follows: we have been retained very successfully.”

Graham Farrell, Managing Partner, Nolan Farrell & Goff LLP

The supply side

The firms that need public work most are the least visible in the tender record.

Start with the shape of the profession. The Law Society counts 3,139 firms: 1,457 consist of a single solicitor, 2,843 (91%) have five or fewer, and just 49 have more than twenty.[15] The framework's single-lot, twelve-page, three-rate design is within a small firm's drafting capacity - Swinford, Ennis and Tullamore prove it - but most Irish firms have no bid function, and the partner who would write the tender is the fee-earner.

The top of the market does not need the work enough to chase it. The Evelyn Partners survey (111 firms) found every top-20 firm grew revenue and almost all grew profit; their problem is talent - the top challenge for 69%, with nine in ten paying rises of up to 15%.[13] A €500-capped senior rate competes with better-paying private work - and several tendered anyway, which says what a four-year State relationship is worth.

3,139
solicitor firms in Ireland

1,457
are single-solicitor practices

91%
have five solicitors or fewer

49
firms have more than twenty

The supply side... continued



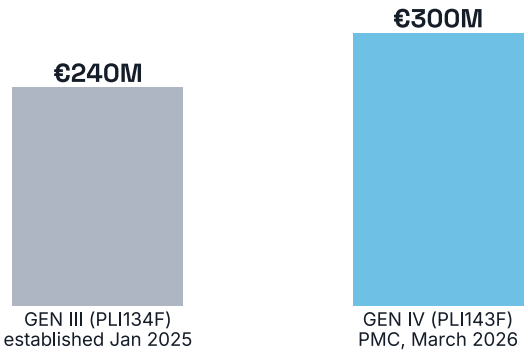
The rest of the market needs the work and is not bidding for it. Only 50% of firms outside the top 20 converted revenue growth into profit; nearly one in five saw profit fall; fee pressure is their defining challenge and only 27% expect a better year.[13] Sigmar's 2026 guide prices the squeeze: NQ solicitors at €60-75k, five years' PQE at €90-115k, salaried partners at €125-170k, with 3-8% retention rises.[16] Every number is a cost recovered through fees - and a reason a State-paid book of framework work changes the arithmetic of keeping a good mid-level solicitor outside Dublin.

The geography makes the stakes concrete. Of 581 training contracts in 2025, 479 (82%) were in Dublin; Cork took 36, Limerick 11; Laois, Kilkenny and Longford recorded none. The LSRA warns of rural shortages, with 65% of solo practitioners over 50; 27% of solicitors now work in-house.[11, 12] A regional practice needs an income argument against Dublin pay - and GEN III's regional members show the evaluator does not score an Eircode. The firms with the strongest reason to hold public work are the least present in the tender record: a participation gap, and participation is a decision.

The renewal: what PLI143F has already told you

A market consultation is the closest thing procurement offers to reading the buyer's mind.

On 18 March 2026, following a Prior Information Notice, the OGP published the Preliminary Market Consultation for PLI143F, Provision of Legal Services to the Irish Public Sector, with responses due in April and a competition signalled for 2026. The eTenders record attaches an estimated value of €300 million over a term of up to four years.[3, 6] The questions reveal the drafting decisions under consideration:



The renewal: what PLI143F has already told you... continued

Signal	What the consultation says	What it means for bidders
Cost weighting	Q8.2: the arrangement "will include a significant proportion of marks being allocated to cost"	The 50% cost weighting is not softening
Price review	GEN III held rates for the term; "a more suitable review clause" is under consideration (Q4.5)	Entry pricing can be less defensive
Artificial intelligence	Do firms use AI, how is oversight ensured, and are AI savings passed on and disclosed? (Q2.3, Q4.7)	AI governance and pricing transparency will surface in the RFT
New grades	Trainee and Paralegal/Legal Executive added to the resourcing question (Q8.3)	A longer rate card; leveraged teams become priceable
New service lines	Debt management, court representation, ADR, documentary counsel, direct barrister access (Q8.5, Q8.7)	Wider scope than GEN III
ESG and pro bono	Environmental criteria for selection and award; pro bono to continue; ESG scorecards and KPIs probed (Q6.3, Q6.7)	Criterion B grows, not shrinks

Table 4: The PLI143F Preliminary Market Consultation, March 2026 - questions and implications.[3]

Set against the calendar, the timeline writes itself: GEN III's initial term runs to the start of 2027; a consultation in spring 2026 and an RFT in 2026 point to a new framework at expiry.

The renewal: what PLI143F has already told you... continued

If GEN IV is on the partnership agenda, the useful preparation is measurable: how would your current evidence score against the GEN III criteria?

Run the read at bidreview.ai ⟶

The evidence, ESG programme and pricing model that will decide a firm's place on a €300 million, four-year arrangement are being assembled - or not - now.

The incumbency question

The 25 GEN III members arrive as incumbents, and the advantage is real but specific. Nothing in the model awards marks for prior membership, and responses are scored on what is submitted alone.[1] What incumbency confers is evidence: two years of drawdowns is a portfolio of named engagements with the exact client population - the currency the expertise criterion trades in. Because the advantage is mediated by what is written down, a documented challenger can match it on paper, while an incumbent that assumes the evaluator knows its work, and under-evidences, hands it back.

2024 set an unusual baseline: tenders never approached the cap, so nobody displaced anyone.

The renewal: what PLI143F has already told you... continued

A €300 million headline, wider scope and the OGP's stated aim of facilitating SME participation under Circular 05/2023[3] point to a deeper field - and where bidders outnumber places, incumbents defend and challengers displace for the first time. Either way the cascade guarantees a contest: an incumbent slipping from rank 8 to 12 loses its direct-award channel entirely.

Beyond the OGP: the rest of the renewal calendar

The renewal: what PLI143F has already told you... continued

Renewal window by*	Buyer	Arrangement	Ceiling
Early 2027 (initial term); Jan 2029 (max)	Office of Government Procurement	PLI134F GEN III legal services framework - successor already in consultation	€240.0M
2027	Office of Government Procurement	PLI130F legal services framework (established 2023)	€11.1M
2027	ComReg	Legal services framework (established 2023)	€8.5M
2028	Insolvency Service of Ireland	Legal services framework (established 2024)	€8.2M
2028	IDA Ireland	Legal services (established 2024)	€5.5M
2029	Revenue Commissioners	Legal services framework (established 2025)	€30.0M
2029	Revenue Commissioners	Second legal services framework (established 2025)	€12.0M
2029	CCPC	Legal services framework (established 2025)	€4.2M
2029	Housing Agency	Legal services framework (established 2025)	€4.0M

Table 5: The renewal calendar for established legal services arrangements on eTenders. *Assumes the standard four-year maximum framework term from establishment; actual terms may be shorter, bringing renewals forward. The 2026 arrangements (Central Bank €28M, ComReg €15.5M, the €25M Guardian ad litem service) open from 2030. Source: eTenders published records (ref 6).

The policy horizon: 2026-2030

The National Public Procurement Strategy 2026-2030 makes its first pillar widening the enterprise base, with KPIs on SMEs competing and winning.[8] For the more than 3,000 firms outside the tender record,[15] the mechanical barriers are being lowered. What no strategy lowers is the evidence threshold inside the competition: a 60% minimum still eliminates a thin submission however easy it was to lodge.

Structured evaluation is tightening the reading. GEN III's bands already encode it: the difference between a 60-79% "satisfactory" response and an 80-89% "very good" one is the difference between "reasonable assurance" and "convincing assurance" - a function of verifiable specifics, not adjectives.[1]

AI enters from both directions. The consultation asks how law firms use AI; the Strategy scopes an AI arrangement for public bodies themselves.[3, 8] Mass-produced generic content is becoming easier to detect and harder to score, while AI applied upstream - analysing competitions, extracting weightings, assembling real evidence - compounds an advantage. The sector-specific answers follow.

Artificial intelligence and the legal tender

Four questions every BidReview sector report answers. Here are the legal answers.

What AI-assisted drafting looks like

Across sectors, the signature of AI drafting is completeness without evidence. A competent AI-drafted proposal is now the floor of the market, not the edge. Legal is the sector where the buyer pre-empted that floor: GEN III defines expertise as "direct participation in the delivery of such services", excludes biographical summaries and caps the response at twelve pages.[1] A fluent, structurally complete draft has nowhere to hide. The sector's own failure mode - proof points carried by hyperlinks, unscored team members, incumbent history in place of proposals - is not cured by better prose.

Clarification and feedback patterns

No legal clarification register was coded for this report, so no sector figure is asserted. The cross-sector baseline is the expectation for GEN IV: recent Irish competitions have run at two to eight times the traditional ten to twelve queries, with generation artefacts, duplicates and deadline extensions. A €300 million headline will draw a deeper field than 2024's twenty-five, and the clarification window will show it first.

Buyer-side AI, formal and informal

There is no evidence of AI in the evaluation of any legal competition analysed here.

Artificial intelligence and the legal tender... continued

What legal has that other sectors do not is a buyer already asking in writing: PLI143F asks whether tenderers use AI, how oversight is ensured, and whether AI savings are passed on and disclosed.[3] The Guidelines for the Responsible Use of AI in the Public Service (September 2025) govern AI as a public servant's tool and do not address tender evaluation.[19] When those questions become RFT wording, the sound model is to ask and not to score: disclosure for accountability, marks for evidence.

What breaks the generic ceiling in legal

The material that always did: named engagements with named public bodies, the role played, dated outcomes, across all five practice areas. Legal adds one twist. Half the marks are scored against the lowest hourly rate,[1] and the consultation asks whether AI efficiency is passed through[3] - so a firm's own AI adoption in document review[16] can become a cost advantage, if it is priced in. The stakes are European: the Court of Auditors found single-bid procedures rose from 23.5% to 41.8% across the EU between 2011 and 2021, with administrative burden the cited cause.[18] AI attacks that burden. The firms absent in 2024 because a tender was too costly to write will not have that reason in 2026.

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What an evaluator-grade reading catches

Every exposure in this report is visible in a draft before it is submitted.

Exposure	What it looks like	What it costs
Compliance breaches that void content	A thirteenth page, a table lodged as an appendix, a font below 11 point	Material "will NOT be considered" - the cheapest marks in the competition to lose
Reputation offered where evidence is required	Rankings, directory tiers and practice-group descriptions in place of engagements	Answers a question the buyer did not ask; the scoreable unit is matter, client, role, outcome
Claims any competitor could make	"Extensive public sector experience", "a partner-led service"	Differentiates nothing; the 80%+ bands require convincing assurance built from specifics
Pricing by instinct	A single blended rate set by feel	Half the marks are scored grade by grade against the lowest rate - the formula can be rehearsed
The threshold treated as a formality	A response a friendly reader calls "solid"	At 55% it does not lose marks - it loses the tender, rate card unopened

The difference between discovering a weakness in a regret letter and discovering it a week before deadline is the difference between a lesson and a fix. Read the way the GEN III model reads, the recurring exposures are specific:

What an evaluator-grade reading catches... continued

A live example: the incumbent with everything except the paperwork

A recent BidReview evaluation of an Irish firm's draft response to a public legal services competition - fully anonymised - shows how these combine. The firm was the incumbent, with a long-standing relationship, embedded team members and a strong delivery record: close to the reference case for an incumbent legal bid.

The material findings were not about substance. **A mandatory signed declaration appeared as a heading with no completed form behind it** - grounds for exclusion, and the kind of omission that survives every internal review because everyone assumes someone else owns it. **Extra team members were introduced beyond the number the rules said would be evaluated. Hyperlinks carried several proof points** - material no evaluator opens. And the response demonstrated what the firm had already done rather than proposing anything for the coming term - the incumbent-complacency pattern, and the gap between the satisfactory band and the top one. Trimming sections back inside their page budgets was also flagged; that is routine drafting-stage tidy-up.

Predicted score as written: mid-70s - solid, and losable. Every finding was fixable in days and invisible to the authors, for the oldest reason in bid writing: authors read as advocates, evaluators do not. This is the work BidReview does - an independent, evaluator-grade audit against the buyer's own criteria, returned while there is time to act. The firm writes the bid; BidReview scores it before the only scoring that counts.

“Public contracting authorities know exactly what they need from their legal service providers, and they hold tender submissions to those standards. Having a bid reviewed before submission by people who understand what the buyer expects has been of huge benefit to us.”

Deirdre Farrell, Partner, Amory Solicitors LLP



A bid strategy for the PLI143F window

Now, the next 90 days, and RFT stage.

Now

1. Decide, formally, whether the firm is competing for GEN IV. Twenty-five firms decided in 2024; the rest decided by default. This needs partner-level ownership.

2. Map your evidence against the five GEN III practice areas. For each, list the engagements you could evidence in two pages: matter, client context, role, outcome.

3. Read the PMC as a specification. AI governance, price review, new grades, new service lines, ESG criteria - build a position on each before the RFT makes it compulsory.

Next 90 days

1. Build the pricing model before the pricing moment. Reconstruct the GEN III formula, load your rates, model the scenarios - including a price-review clause.

2. Put the ESG and pro bono programme in evidenced form. Criterion B was 50 marks of quantifiable commitments; the consultation signals more.

3. Enter the wider pipeline. The Pensions Authority, TG4 and Bord na Móna competitions are where first references and evaluator feedback are won at low stakes.

At RFT stage

1. Treat the response document's rules as scoring instruments. Page limits, font rules, the appendix prohibition, the threshold - build the compliance check into drafting, not the final afternoon.

2. Have the draft read by someone whose only loyalty is the marking scheme. Partners read as advocates; the evaluation board will not. An independent audit before submission is the cheapest correction available.

The bottom line

Demand is advertised and growing. Participation is a decision.

Demand is advertised, quantified and growing - a €300 million renewal in motion, €385 million beyond it, notices at record levels - while participation stays confined to a few dozen firms, mostly those that need the work least. GEN III proved the door was open: every tenderer was appointed, regional firms took seats, 20 places went unclaimed.

GEN IV may not be so forgiving. A larger ceiling and wider scope draw a deeper field - and then the mechanics decide: the 60% threshold, the twelve-page evidence discipline, the grade-by-grade formula, the cascade positions worth €8 million.

The firms that take the next seats will share three habits: they decided early, assembled evidence deliberately, and had their submission read the way an evaluator reads it - before the evaluator did.



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About the author



Tony Corrigan has been building applied AI systems for nearly three decades. After IBM he founded the KOMINO consultancy in 2003, working on hundreds of public and private procurement engagements. The pattern he kept seeing - capable companies losing tenders they were qualified to win - became TenderScout (later Orbidal), founded in 2014: 3,000+ competitions supported, 500+ Irish SMEs trained, eir Spider Awards winner. Its lesson - that helping people write bids is not the same as telling them whether a bid is good enough to win - became BidReview.ai, founded in 2023 and launched as a self-serve AI platform in April 2026.

Within thirty days of launch BidReview was named IT Project of the Year (SME) at the 2026 Tech Excellence Awards and won the Newstalk Changemaker Business Awards 2026. Tony holds the CF APMP qualification, mentors on the InterTradeIreland panel, and sits as an evaluator on live public sector tender panels.

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About the analysis and sources

This analysis examined 190 legal services tender records published on eTenders between 2017 and mid-August 2026, issued by more than 100 contracting authorities with disclosed values of €385.6 million beyond the OGP framework; the complete PLI134F GEN III suite (RFT, response documents, TED award notice 14539-2025); the PLI143F Preliminary Market Consultation; and the PLI108F predecessor documents. Context draws on Circular 05/13, the OGP spend analysis, the National Public Procurement Strategy 2026-2030, the OECD case study, the Law Society, the LSRA, Irish Legal News, Evelyn Partners and Sigmar Recruitment.

The core dataset captures the openly competed layer of the market; absolute values are conservative, while advertised ceilings overstate committed spend. Firms named appear solely on the basis of published contract award notices. This report is independent analysis by BidReview and is not affiliated with, or endorsed by, the Office of Government Procurement or any contracting authority named.

1. OGP, PLI134F Request for Tenders (June 2024): anticipated maximum of 45 members (Part 1, Type of Procedure; Cascade Ranking); €220M estimated spend; award criteria s.3.3.2-3.3.5; drawdown bands Part 1 and s.2.3.

2. TED contract award notice 14539-2025, OJ S 7/2025, 10 January 2025: €240M maximum value; 25 tenders received (s.6.1.4); 25 winners (s.6.1.2). ted.europa.eu/en/notice/-/detail/14539-2025

3. OGP, PLI143F Preliminary Market Consultation, 18 March 2026: Q8.2 cost; Q4.5 price review; Q2.3, Q4.7 AI; Q8.3 grades; Q8.5, Q8.7 service lines; Q6.3, Q6.7 ESG; term up to four years.

4. DPER Circular 05/13, Procurement of Legal Services and Managing Legal Costs, 10 July 2013.

5. OGP, Public Service Spend and Tendering Analysis 2019: €4.955bn analysed; Professional Services €738M, 15%, +13%; SME share 55%.

6. eTenders records, legal services extract 2017-August 2026: 190 records; 122 competitive notices 2023-2026; PLI143F PMC record, €300M.

7. OGP, PLI108F Tender Response Documents Parts B and C: criteria A-C and marks; Criterion D cost grades.

8. National Public Procurement Strategy 2026-2030: 2025 baseline €29.5bn, 8,004 competitions, 10,147 responders, 2,262 winners, 275 central arrangements.

9. OECD, Procurement for Better Value: A Case Study of Ireland.

10. As ref 8.

11. LSRA, Pathways to the Professions 2025 (July 2026): 12,430 practising solicitors; 16,089 practitioners; 581 trainees.

12. Irish Legal News, "Rural legal services at risk as trainee contracts cluster in Dublin", 14 August 2026, reporting the Law Society Snapshot.

About the analysis and sources... continued

13. Evelyn Partners annual Ireland law firm survey, 111 firms, Red C Research, 15th edition.

14. Legal trade press reports of consolidation, including the LK Shields - ByrneWallace merger (late 2024).

15. Law Society of Ireland, Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24, Facts about the Profession: 3,139 firms by size band; 908 sole practitioners, 3,058 partners, 6,915 assistants.

16. Sigmar Recruitment, Salary Guide 2026, Legal & Compliance.

17. Eleanor Gavin, "Overview of the Legal Market in Ireland: Q4 2024", LinkedIn, 3 October 2024.

18. European Court of Auditors, Special Report 28/2023, Public procurement in the EU: single-bid procedures 23.5% (2011) to 41.8% (2021); direct awards 15.8%; average procedure 62.5 to 96.4 days.

19. DPEIPSRD, Guidelines for the Responsible Use of AI in the Public Service, September 2025.

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What clients say

"BidReview have a great understanding and appreciation of what public contracting authorities need from legal service providers, and are familiar with the requirements and the standards they expect. Their input to our tender bids has been of immense benefit to us."

Deirdre Farrell, Partner, Amory Solicitors LLP

The PLI143F Request for Tenders is signalled for 2026. BidReview audits draft submissions against the buyer's own published criteria while there is still time to fix them.

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