Key Challenges

• **Early Uncertainty and Problem Definition** – ‘More than a health crisis?’
  • Early efforts were correctly focussed on increasing capacity and equipping the health system
  • Ireland has considerable logistical challenges and exposure to global supply chains – island-nation with a high reliance on UK land-bridge and relatively small indigenous manufacturing base
  • Country shut-downs and substantial risks to freight movements due to loss of people traffic created significant broad supply chain risk for essential goods

• **Planning challenge** - difficult for public bodies to plan response and associated procurement needs given the evolving nature of situation and public health advice

• **Reliance on far-shore manufacturing** for key medical equipment and deterioration in market dynamics created significant risks in securing supplies

• **Volume explosion**

• **Skills** - Public procurement rarely involves direct sourcing skills, particularly far-shore sourcing. Usual ‘in-country’ agents unable to supply at volumes demanded.
Strategies and Responses

• Government CPO part of **Senior Officials Group** advising Government

• Cross-Government **supply chain group** to monitor situation and advise Government on risks, issues and actions

• CPBs coordinated **demand aggregation** - Office of Government Procurement for non-health essential services (Fire Services, Prisons, Uniformed Services, etc.) and Health Service CPB aggregated demand for health system

• Industry and diplomatic **channels leveraged** to support far-shoring sourcing

• CPBs mobilised **additional resources** to support health system in establishing additional capacity

• **North-South cooperation** with Northern Ireland’s Department of Finance

• ‘**Offers of Support**’ website established to capture commercial offers and donations

• Calls for increased **indigenous supply** met with limited success
Key Reflections

- **Centralised Procurement Structures** (CPB’s) have assisted a speedy, coordinated and effective response Irish Government response to the crisis
  - Moving at pace through established structures for collaboration and coordination
  - Navigating Government, Diplomatic and Industry Structures
  - Leveraging category specialism and deep understanding of supply market and intelligence network
  - Influencing and advising into the centre of Government’s decision making structures

- **Greater understanding** by Government of global supply chain risks
- **Brexit** preparations have helped Government prepare
- Existing flexibility within the EU Procurement Directives have supported necessary emergency actions
- **International joint procurement** has yielded little product for Ireland but may be critical in future de-risking
Future Challenges

• Increasing challenges and competing demands
  • Global supply chain risks and industrial policy
  • Brexit risks
  • Social Considerations and Environmental Sustainability
  • Likely budget challenges
  • Potential increased level of supplier insolvencies

• Impact upon public procurement practitioners
  • Recruitment, induction and training in a sustained remote working environment
  • New ways of working – more digital, more risk?
Delivering Sustainable Procurement Solutions

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