



Meet the Buyer 2022: Live Virtual Event Outcomes

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The Supplier Development Programme has published an online report on the Meet the Buyer 2022: Live Virtual Event which took place on 15 June 2022. The Scottish Government and Scotland Excel were official partners of this event.

Meet the Buyer 2022 allowed suppliers to engage with virtual exhibitors from the public sector, private contractors, and business support providers. For the second year in a row, Meet the Buyer was scheduled in an alternative format, as a virtual event, to support efforts towards economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and allowed suppliers to connect with the public and private sectors from the comfort of their own screen.

The free virtual event affords suppliers unprecedented access to buyers and decision makers from across the Public and Private sector, with the opportunity to raise their profile as a business and prepare for upcoming contract opportunities.

Suppliers were encouraged to sign up to register interest in the overall event through a widespread promotional campaign in partnership with SDP's membership organisations and valued partners. Pre-event communications related to diversifying the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde & NHS Lanarkshire supply chain, Net Zero, Community Wealth Building and was promoted by Public Contracts Scotland to registered suppliers on PCS at SDP's request. SDP also promoted the event through a small paid social media campaign aimed at SME business owners through Facebook and Twitter.

Registration and Attendance

In total, 1,248 suppliers pre-registered interest on the SDP website for the Meet the Buyer 2022: Live Virtual Event plus 44 bookings for the Talking Tenders session with NHS Lanarkshire and 14 bookings for the Talking Tenders session with Scotland Excel for Repair, Maintenance and Refurbishment Framework.

There were 728 actual attendees on the day, including both exhibitors and individual suppliers. 510 suppliers logged in during the Meet the Buyer 2022 event, and of those 322 were from 278 unique Scottish SME and supported businesses.

On the Day Polls & Supplier Engagement

Several polls ran during the event's live sessions, asking if suppliers were more likely to bid for more public sector contracts after attending the session:

- 90% said they were more likely to bid for public sector contracts after attending the Talking Tenders with NHS Lanarkshire session – 243 attendees.
- 100% said they were more likely to bid for public sector contracts after attending the Working with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde session – 100 attendees.
- 100% said they were more likely to bid after attending the Doing Business with the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) session – with 56 attendees.
- 90% said they were more likely to bid after attending the RJ McLeod Supply Chain and Community Wealth Building Opportunities session – 193 attendees.

Through the virtual portal, there were also 457 exhibition live meetings and 95 exhibition live chats. 1,091 brochures were downloaded on the day and 435 networking connections were made in the Meeting Hub.

Formal Agenda

At Meet the Buyer 2022, there was a Welcome from Ivan McKee MSP, Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism & Enterprise and a Keynote Address by SDP Programme Manager, Gillian Cameron to open the online event.

There were three themed virtual stages. Each had a slightly different timetable, with in-built time for visiting the virtual exhibition hall. The stages were called the [Sustainable Procurement Stage](#), [Power Of Procurement Stage](#) and [Community Wealth Building \(Supply Chain\) Stage](#).

Many of the pre-recorded presentations were followed by a live Question and Answer session where suppliers were given the opportunity to ask any questions they had. Throughout the day, dedicated timeslots were incorporated to allow attendees to visit the virtual exhibition stands as well as networking in the Meeting Hub.

All presentation films including the Diversifying the NHS Supply Chain presentations from both NHS Lanarkshire & NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde as well as Scotland Excel, Ministry of Defence (MOD) and RJ McLeod can be viewed on the [SDP YouTube Channel](#).

Supplier Feedback Survey

An online survey was distributed to registered delegates for Meet the Buyer 2022. This survey was live between 15 June and 11 July 2022. Within this time, responses were received from 111 suppliers, 79 of which were from businesses based in Scotland and 68 of these were from Scottish SMEs, supported businesses and third sector organisations.

It was highlighted that 61% of respondents were an SME, supported business or third sector organisation in Scotland and therefore are eligible for further SDP training and support.

The post-event survey highlighted that 83% of Scottish SMEs responding to the survey said they were more likely to bid for public contracts after participating in the event.

77% of Scottish SMEs also said that this event had increased their awareness of opportunities for their businesses in the supply chain.

Scottish SME supplier responses rated the Meet the Buyer 2022: Live Virtual Event as “excellent” or “good” for the following:

- Overall event experience – 87%
- Usability of the virtual portal – 96%

Additionally, 89% of these respondents thought the Meet the Buyer 2022: Live Virtual Event demonstrated that public sector procurement is open and transparent, despite challenges in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some comments from Scottish suppliers included:

- “Being my first time attending any event of this nature I was unsure what to expect. Spent the whole day on the event. I found it extremely informative, and I was completely immersed in the event. Thought it was absolutely fantastic. I was so shocked that the whole day went past so quick, I felt 100% engaged and left the event 'with a second wind' so to speak. Well done to all involved!” (Sole trader from Angus)
- “Really enjoyed the event. Site was easy to navigate and could easily find the additional information/ brochures for each supplier. This was my first buyer event and look forward to future events. I will definitely attend again.” (Micro-sized business based in Argyll & Bute)
- “The event was well managed, presentations were great and all the panel members I spoke with were very approachable and helpful.” (Sole trader from South Lanarkshire)
- “The event is very good for forming new connections and accessing new potential opportunities.” (Small business located in North Ayrshire)

Exhibitor Feedback Survey

An online survey was distributed to registered exhibitors after Meet the Buyer 2022. This survey was live between 15 June and 11 July 2022. Within this time, responses were received from 48 respondents.

The post-event survey highlighted that 90% of the exhibitors that responded to the survey and the overall experience was “excellent” or “good” and 98% said they would likely participate in a future Meet the Buyer event organised by SDP.

In total, 96% of exhibitors said they would recommend this event to other public sector buyers, private contractors with supply chains and business support organisations.

Exhibitor respondents indicated that the virtual event helped to achieve several goals, including:

- 88% said Meet the Buyer 2022 drove early engagement with SDP member organisations to support an increase of public sector contracts being accessible to Scottish SMEs;
- 95% said Meet the Buyer 2022 raised the profile of the Supplier Development Programme to be recognised and established as the foremost tender training programme to support SMEs and third sector in Scotland;
- 93% said Meet the Buyer 2022 extended SDP engagement with public sector buyers to ensure SMEs benefit from local contracts; and
- Finally, 98% said Meet the Buyer 2022 had demonstrated that public sector procurement is open and transparent, despite the challenges during COVID-19 pandemic.

Some comments from exhibiting buyers included:

- “We had a much higher level of engagement than in previous events, so whatever the SDP has been doing in the sustainability space is working!”
- “It was good to meet new suppliers and find out what new, especially, innovative businesses are out there.”
- “Great opportunity for SMEs to meet with public sector buyers especially those with niche products/services and subcontracting opportunities can be gained from speaking to Tier 1 contractors.”
- “This event is a great way for SMEs to gather a lot of information from buyers to improve their chances of winning contracts in the future.”
- “I spoke to mainly smaller companies on the day and that is the aim of Community Wealth Building.”

All feedback from suppliers and buyers is valuable and will be applied to future virtual events organised by the Supplier Development Programme. Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate.

Overall Analytics – Social Media

From 9 May to the close of play 15 June 2022, 136 social media posts were sent from the SDP social media channels, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, to promote the Meet the Buyer 2022 virtual event. Collectively, the posts earned 44,083 impressions (the number of times users saw a post) and 1,010 engagements (the total number of times a user interacted with a post), and 5,836 video views.

Twitter

A limited paid ad campaign was undertaken by SDP on Twitter from 23 May to 14 June. In total, 85,897 users were reached with 5,466 link clicks to the SDP website for more information and free registration. The campaign also received 298 video views.

Newsletter/Mailings

On 7 March 2022, SDP announced the Meet the Buyer event in its monthly newsletter which received 13 clicks. The same link was included in the April newsletter and received 16 clicks. The May newsletter included several links to the Meet the Buyer landing page. The link to the Meet the Buyer landing page received 176 clicks, the how to prepare for Meet the Buyer page received 16 clicks, and the Meet the Buyer agenda page received 38 clicks.

On 13 June, there was a dedicated Meet the Buyer mailing that was sent out. In this mailing, the Meet the Buyer landing page received 157 clicks, the agenda page received 110 clicks, the events pages received 57 clicks, and the link to the supplier walk-through video received 46 clicks.

Contact

More information on the Supplier Development Programme can be found at www.sdpscotland.co.uk and on social media via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).