



Meet the Buyer South

29 October 2024 – The Volunteer Hall, Galashiels

www.sdpscotland.co.uk

Updated: 28/11/24

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Draft 0.3

Supplier Development Programme

Meet the Buyer South 2024

506

People registered



247

Attended on the day



127

Unique Scottish SME businesses attended



20

Exhibitors in attendance on the day

Including Supplier Development Programme, Scottish Borders Council, East Lothian Council, Scottish Government, Balfour Beatty, Scotland Excel, Scottish Procurement Alliance, South of Scotland Enterprise, and many more...

93%

of supplier survey respondents **rated the event as 'Good' or 'Excellent'**

91%

of respondents felt the event **helped them make useful connections that could be beneficial in the future**

91%

of respondents are actively **planning to pursue opportunities with 1 or more exhibitors**



Suppliers said:

"I really enjoyed the event. It was great to meet and network with so many new businesses. There was a great buzz on the day, and everyone was so nice and helpful. Thank you."

Exhibitors said:

"Bustling, enthusiastic crowd of suppliers, many of which were new and quite innovative – well worth the trip to Galashiels!"

100%

of exhibitors responding to the survey **rated the event as 'Good' or 'Excellent'**

100%

of exhibitors responding to the survey **would participate in future Meet the Buyer events**

Overview

The Supplier Development Programme (SDP) has published an online report on Meet the Buyer South, which took place on 29 October 2024, at The Volunteer Hall in Galashiels.

Meet the Buyer South 2024 was run by SDP, alongside partners Scottish Borders Council. This free event gave suppliers in the South of Scotland access to buyers and decision makers from across the public and private sector, helping suppliers raise their profile, and prepare for upcoming contract opportunities.

Welcome Address

The Supplier development Programme was delighted to welcome Councillor Jane Cox to open the event, delivering the opening address on behalf of Scottish Borders Council.

As Scottish Borders Council were unable to attend the GO Awards Scotland 2024 with the Supplier Development Programme to collect the joint Highly Commended award, SDP were delighted to present the award to Councillor Jane Cox during the opening address. This accolade rightly recognised Scottish Borders Council's commitment to engaging with local SMEs and collaboration with SDP. This Meet the Buyer South event further exemplifies the Council's commitment.



Supplier Registration and Attendance

In total, 506 suppliers pre-registered for the event on the SDP website, which was over 37.1% on higher than last year's event. 247 suppliers were in attendance on the day, marking an increase of almost 47.9% on last year's event. This included 160 attendees, from 127 unique Scottish SME businesses.

Buyer Exhibitions

There were 19 exhibition stands, including a range of public sector buyers, business support organisations, and supply chain contractors, such as Scottish Government, Scottish Borders Council, East Lothian Council, Balfour Beatty, BAM, Business Gateway, Crown Commercial Services, Eildon Housing Association, Hub South East Scotland, Just Enterprise, Morrison Construction, Ogilvie Construction, RJ McLeod, Scotland Excel, Scottish Borders Housing Association, Scottish Procurement Alliance, South of Scotland Enterprise, and Waverly Housing Association.

Unfortunately, Midlothian Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council were unable to attend on the day.



Attendee Survey Feedback

An online survey was distributed to all attendees to Meet the Buyer South via email. The survey was live 29 October to 19 November 2024. 54 responses were received, and 47 of these came from businesses that listed themselves as an SME or a 'social enterprise, charity or supported business.'

The supplier survey highlighted that:

- Almost 93% of survey respondents rated the event as 'excellent' or 'good'.
- Almost 91% of respondents felt Meet the Buyer South 2024 helped them network and make useful connections that could benefit their business.
- Almost 91% of survey respondents said, following the event, they were planning to actively pursue opportunities with one or more of the organisations they met.
- Almost 83.5% of those survey respondents said they were encouraged to consider bidding for more contracts following the event.

Some comments from suppliers included:

- “The event was busy and appeared to be well attended. Navigating the event was straightforward and all the exhibitors I spoke with were fully engaged in and very helpful.”
- “I spoke to a number of exhibitors, mainly from the construction companies. It was a good opportunity to talk about my company and the products and services we offer, plus learn about the upcoming projects in 2025. I liked the informal setting and approach, and everyone was very receptive and helpful.”
- “I really enjoyed the event. It was great to meet and network with so many new businesses. There was a great buzz on the day, and everyone was so nice and helpful. Thank you.”
- “Busy and well attended event. Good format to have it over 3 hours instead of the full day event. I had good engagement and conversations with a number of buyers.”
- “It was a quite remarkable event full of energy. Well done.”
- “Found it very beneficial and productive. Some very good contacts. Much prefer these smaller venues rather than massive suites at Hampden.”
- “Good venue. Well attended event. Parking not ideal. Cash only catering not ideal. Great networking opportunity.”
- “I had a few conversations with different organisations and left my company details with some. My business is training; my only criticism is that most businesses were construction, which is the most common industry for significant contracts. It would have been nice to see some other sectors represented.”
- “Very busy event, had to wait to see several stands of interest. Only feedback is some of the stand attendees were not buyers or even involved with the buying team which meant conversation was limited.”



Exhibitor Survey Feedback

An online survey was distributed to all exhibitors that attended Meet the Buyer South via email. The survey was live from 29 October to 28 November 2024 and received a total of 7 responses.

The exhibitor survey highlighted that:

- 100% of respondents rated the event as 'excellent' or 'good'.
- 100% of respondents felt this event provided an opportunity to engage with new suppliers.
- 100% of respondents felt Meet the Buyer South 2024 helped make their supply chain more open and transparent.
- 100% of respondents felt this event helped make public contracts more accessible to SMEs.
- 100% of respondents said they would participate in future Meet the Buyer events.

Some comments from exhibitors included:

- "A well-attended and well organised event. SDP staff were incredibly helpful."
- "The team at SDP were fantastic and facilitated the booking of our stand. The event was busy, and we established a number of leads for our work in the South and East region."
- "Bustling, enthusiastic crowd of suppliers, many of which were new and quite innovative – well worth the trip to Galashiels!"
- "I was overwhelmed by how busy the stand was. There was a great range of different people and companies coming to speak to us."
- "Extremely busy as usual! I felt that, as it had also been extended to East and Midlothian, it brought in a wider range of suppliers which increased their potential suitability to what we do. It was good to have our main contractors situated beside our desk so we could refer people on to them."













All feedback has been addressed and will be taken on board for future events.

Promotion through the Supplier Development Programme

Social Media

Prior to the event, SDP published 12 posts, across Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter (X), promoting Meet the Buyer South. The campaign ran from 18 September to 29 October 2024. Collectively, the posts earned 2,100 impressions (the number of times users saw a post) and 176 engagements (the number of times users interacted with posts). In total, there were 109 clicks on the links embedded in these posts. The engagement rate (the rate of interaction per impression) was 8.4%.

Highest performing posts include:

 Supplier Devel... Wed 9/18/2024 3:50 pm... #MeetTheBuyerSouth2024 is back and bigger than ever, bringing together local...  Total Engagements 60 Reactions 12 Comments 0 Shares 3 Post Clicks (All) 45	 Supplier Devel... Wed 10/23/2024 4:16 pm... #MeetTheBuyerSouth2024 is just around the corner! Check out our list of confirmed...  Total Engagements 41 Reactions 10 Comments 0 Shares 3 Post Clicks (All) 28	 Supplier Devel... Mon 10/28/2024 2:48 pm... Last chance to register for #MeetTheBuyerSouth2024! Join us, Scottish Borders...  Total Engagements 37 Reactions 12 Comments 0 Shares 1 Post Clicks (All) 24	 Supplier Devel... Thu 10/10/2024 3:17 pm... Do you want to grow your business in 2024? Book your FREE place at...  Total Engagements 19 Reactions 6 Comments 1 Shares 2 Post Clicks (All) 10	 SDP Scotland Wed 9/18/2024 11:56 am... #MeetTheBuyerSouth2024 is back and bigger than ever, bringing together local...  Total Engagements 6 Reactions 2 Comments 0 Shares 0 Post Link Clicks 2 Other Post Clicks 2	 SDP Scotland Mon 10/28/2024 8:41 pm... Last chance to register for #MeetTheBuyerSouth2024! Join us, Scottish Borders...  Total Engagements 4 Reactions 3 Comments 0 Shares 1 Post Link Clicks — Other Post Clicks 0
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Newsletters/Mailings

The Meet the Buyer South event was announced in SDP's July 2024, monthly newsletter, and featured in all subsequent newsletters before the event, on 29 October.

- July 2024: 135 clicks
- August 2024: 99 clicks
- September 2024: 171 clicks
- October 2024: 952 clicks

4 mailings were also sent to segmented groups of relevant suppliers registered with SDP, as part of the Meet the Buyer South email campaign. In total, these mailings received 221 clicks.

Promotion through our Partners

Scottish Borders Council placed an article in the Border Telegraph Newspaper on 8th October 2024. In addition to this, Scottish Borders Council published a PIN notice on both [Public Contracts Scotland](#) and the [Find a Tender Service](#) on 2nd October 2024. Furthermore, the Council shared several social media posts promoting the event.

In partnership with SDP, the Scottish Government also supported promotion with a [blog post](#) and published a number of social media posts.

East Lothian Council also published a Published a PIN notice on [Public Contracts Scotland](#) and supported the event through social media posts.

Contact

More information on the Supplier Development Programme can be found at www.sdpScotland.co.uk.

You can also follow the Supplier Development Programme on social media via [Twitter \(X\)](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#) to stay up to date.