



Open Supplier Meeting Outcomes – Civil Engineering Framework (Scotland)

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27 January & 14 July 2022

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The Scottish Government, in partnership with the Supplier Development Programme (SDP), has delivered two Open Supplier Meetings with representatives of the Scottish Procurement and Property Directorate, Contracting Authorities and Industry in relation to its Civil Engineering Framework. Both events were online, webinar-based events with the first event held on 27 January 2022 and a follow-up event took place on 14 July 2022.

The first event was organised to hear the initial thoughts and views from contractors of all sizes including Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, and SMEs interested in bidding for the future contract opportunity or being part of the supply chain for the National Civil Engineering Framework – for Works & Associated Services, including Roads & Roads Maintenance.

The second Open Supplier Meeting was an aligned training session and introduced the actual tender opportunity, the key points and conditions of the contract as well as a live tutorial on how to access the tender through Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) and Public Contracts Scotland Tender (PCS-T). Following the live tutorial at this session, SDP's expert trainer also provided businesses with top tips on how to make their tenders successful as well as hosting a Q&A session so businesses could ask questions related to tendering on the PCS and PCS-T portals.

The first Open Supplier Meeting, delivered in January 2022, helped to facilitate a connection between The Scottish Government and suppliers interested in the upcoming Civil Engineering Framework. The follow-up event in July 2022 focused on the key information and step-by-step tender training for all businesses that wished to bid for the contract.

The Supplier Development Programme offered event management and project management services to the Scottish Government in advance of the events, to maximise supplier attendance and engagement.

The Supplier Development Programme promoted both webinars widely in advance. The businesses that attended the aligned training session in July heard about it through various means including Public Contracts Scotland (37%), SDP's marketing and communications channels (33%), Scottish Government (7%) with the rest learning of the event either through word of mouth or through other marketing and social media platforms.

Supplier Registrations and Attendance

There were 214 attendees from 145 unique businesses that registered on the SDP website prior to both events – 123 registered from 88 unique businesses for the first event in January with 66 registrations from 53 unique businesses coming from Scottish SME/supported businesses. For the tender training event in July, there were 91 registrations from 57 unique businesses taken, including 28 registrations from 19 unique Scottish SME/supported businesses. Of the total registrations across both events, 94 were from 72 unique Scottish SMEs, supported businesses and third sector organisations.

On the day of the first supplier engagement event in January, 76 individuals from 53 unique businesses attended and of those, 39 were attendees from 35 unique Scottish SME/supported businesses. At the follow-up training session in July, 53 individuals attended from 38 unique businesses and included within this number, there were 12 attendees from 10 unique Scottish SME/supported businesses.

In total, across both Open Supplier Meetings, 129 attendees representing 91 unique businesses participated. Included within this total were 51 attendees from 45 unique Scottish SMEs, supported businesses and third sector organisations, highlighting that nearly half of

total attendance (49%) at the Open Supplier Meetings for the National Civil Engineering Framework were from Scottish SMEs and supported businesses.

Scottish SME businesses that attended the Open Supplier Meetings were based in various local authorities across the country, with businesses located in 15 different local authorities attending the events. The majority of those businesses were based in the Highlands (11%), Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire (9% respectively), Aberdeenshire, Fife and South Lanarkshire (7% respectively).

For the aligned training session held as a follow-up event to the Open Supplier Meeting held on 27 January 2022, SDP also collated statistics on which businesses had engaged with both events. Of those 38 unique businesses that attended the aligned training session in July, 14 had participated in the previous supplier engagement event in January (37%). In terms of Scottish SME engagement, 10 unique businesses attended the aligned training session in July and one of those businesses had participated in the previous event held in January.

Supplier Engagement and Feedback

SDP also conducted two online surveys, one for each event after they had concluded, with a total of 34 responses being received.

Responses to the surveys conducted by SDP showed that businesses rated both events as 'excellent' or 'good' for the following:

- Webinar process across both events – 85%
- Course content across both events – 91%
- 94% also said they would recommend this type of SDP event to other businesses.

Out of the 34 responses received across both surveys, 11 were Scottish SMEs based in various local authorities including Aberdeen City, East Lothian, Fife, Glasgow, and South Lanarkshire.

Survey responses from Scottish SMEs across both events showed that nearly all of those respondents (91%) felt much more confident that their tender will be stronger than it would have been without attending these events. More than two thirds (64%) of those SMEs also felt more positive about potentially working with the Scottish Government by bidding for this framework after participating in the events.

Finally, all suppliers that are Scottish SMEs and provided feedback rated the quality of information that was provided at the SDP events as either 'Excellent' or 'Good'.

Supplier Feedback – 27 January 2022

A bespoke survey was created for this event to garner feedback on supplier's tendering experience, supplier's confidence when tendering, barriers and benefits to public sector tendering as well as their experiences at the virtual event.

Overall Response

Responses were received from 21 businesses after the first event in January. The majority of those that responded to the survey were businesses with a predominantly 'UK-wide' geographic focus for their business (52%), 33% of respondents had a 'Scotland-wide' focus,

and 14% had a 'Regional' focus for their business with only one business (5%) having a predominantly 'Local' geographic focus.

SDP asked which parts of the first Open Supplier Meeting suppliers particularly enjoyed and found useful. The top three responses included:

- 91% - Background on the Framework and Tender delivered by the Scottish Government Collaborative Construction Team
- 81% - Client's Perspective presentation from Transport Scotland
- 76% - Industry View presentation delivered by Robertson Construction

Scottish SMEs: Supplier Experience and Confidence

Out of the 21 responses received after the event in January, eight were from Scottish SMEs. SDP focused on the feedback given by those businesses after the first event to gauge the experience and confidence of those businesses that attended the event in relation to bidding for public sector contracts.

All those Scottish SMEs that provided feedback after the first event did have previous experience of tendering with the Scottish public sector. Five out of eight SMEs had significant experience with over 20 years of tendering with the public sector, two businesses had 6-10 years of experience and the remaining SME had less than two years of experience. Responses from SMEs demonstrated that regardless of tendering experience, this event has had a positive impact on their confidence when tendering in the future.

For example, among Scottish SME businesses with significant experience (over 20 years) in tendering:

- 80% said they were now more confident that their tender would be stronger than it would have been without this event.
- 60% felt more positive about potentially bidding for the framework after attending.

For those Scottish SME businesses with two years of experience or more in tendering for public sector contracts:

- 86% agreed that their tender will now be stronger than it would have been without this event.
- 43% felt more positive about potentially bidding for this framework after attending this event.

The sole SME with less than two years of experience agreed that its tender would be stronger and felt more positive about potentially bidding for this contract opportunity.

The responses to the questions in this bespoke survey provide an insight into how those businesses that may have experience – and in some cases significant experience – when tendering for public sector contracts now feel stronger and more confident about their bidding capability, particularly for this framework opportunity, having received help and support from the Scottish Government and the Supplier Development Programme after participating in this event.

100% of businesses of all sizes, which said that said they have less than two years of experience in bidding, agree that that their tender will be stronger after attending this event and that they feel more positive about potentially bidding for this framework.

Contracting with the Scottish Public Sector

With all Scottish SMEs having some degree of experience of tendering with the Scottish public sector, many were able to mention the ways that contracting with the public sector has benefitted their businesses:

- Over half (57%) said the 'Security of public contracts (e.g. financial security)' was the major benefit for small to medium sized enterprises.
- 'Favourable payment terms (e.g. SMEs paid within 30 days)' and 'Access to interesting and/or unique opportunities' are the other main ways.

When businesses of all sizes are included, the figures are even better:

- The majority of respondents (65%) said that the 'Security of public contracts (e.g. financial security)' was the main benefit when contracting with the Scottish public sector.
- Other benefits included 'Access to interesting and/or unique opportunities' (45% of responses) and 'Transparent procurement processes' (35% of responses).

One primary contractor with a Scotland-wide focus shared a specific benefit that contracting with the public sector has brought and commented: "Meaningfully and transparently contributing to progress and better services across Scotland, benefiting local businesses and people. As a Scottish business and significant employer, it's really important to our people to have that local connection and presence."

Supplier Feedback – 14 July 2022

After the follow-up event, which was an aligned tender training session, SDP disseminated a training event survey to those businesses that attended. In total, 13 responses were received for this survey which focused on the core aspects of the training session and supplier's confidence when accessing and bidding for the aligned contract opportunity.

SDP asked which parts of the follow-up aligned training session suppliers particularly enjoyed and found useful. Most of those suppliers (67%) said that the section on Tender Training on PCS/PCS-T portals from SDP's expert trainer was the part they enjoyed and found particularly useful.

Out of those responses, three were from Scottish SME businesses. Responses from those Scottish SMEs showed that all of those respondents now felt much more confident that their tender will be stronger than it would have been without attending the aligned tender training from SDP.

The post-event survey highlighted that:

- **67% of Scottish SMEs said they were more likely to bid for the contract having attended the event.**
- **100% of Scottish SMEs felt more positive about potentially working with The Scottish Government.**
- **100% would recommend this type of SDP event to other businesses.**

Finally, all Scottish SME suppliers that provided feedback after the session rated SDP's expert trainer as 'Excellent' or 'Good'.

Qualitative Supplier Feedback

Some final comments from both surveys demonstrates the positive impact that each event had on attendees' experience and confidence with bidding for public sector contracts included:

- “As a sales manager I have gained some very good and relevant information from this process, sometimes the ability to discuss specific projects and ensure that the correct people are contacted can be an advantage to both my organisation and the customer.” - SME based in Glasgow City that attended the first supplier engagement event in January
- “Excellent and informative presentation. Looking forward to the next supplier engagement event post contract notice.” - Tier 1 Contractor that attended in January
- “Thanks again! A really well-run and informative session.” - Tier 1 Contractor based in North Lanarkshire that attended in January
- “Really useful and well-delivered. Great to see a range of presenters, particularly including supported businesses.” - Tier 1 Contractor based in North Lanarkshire that attended in January
- “I feel more informed about tendering for this specific tender opportunity now that I’ve undertaken this training” - SME located in Dundee City that attended in July
- “I now feel confident about tendering for this specific opportunity” – SME based in Falkirk that attended in July
- “It was useful to get more info on the pipeline and practical advice about how the portal works. The latter is quite rare in my experience. Clients normally just let the contractor get on with it but there is a lot that can go wrong with these portals (speaking from experience!) so very useful.” - Tier 1 Contractor from Falkirk that attended in July

Promotion from the Supplier Development Programme

Newsletter/Mailings

SDP included a link to the Open Supplier Meetings in its January and July newsletters on 12 January 2022 and 11 July 2022 respectively. The links received 63 clicks combined – 28 in the January newsletter and 35 from the July newsletter. SDP also sent out a ‘Last Chance to Register’ mailing on 25 January for the first Open Supplier Meeting event. In this mailing the event page received 40 clicks and a blog written about the framework and event received 12 clicks.

Social Media

The Supplier Development Programme has a robust social media presence on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and utilises this to promote contract opportunities and engagement event on a regular basis to Scottish businesses. In advance of both of the Scottish Government’s Open Supplier Meetings in relation to the Civil Engineering Framework, SDP promoted the event to its supply base across all its social media channels.

Collectively, across both events, the posts earned **7,599 impressions** (the total number of times a user saw a post) and **253 engagements** (the total number of times a user interacted with a post).

SDP Social Media Analytics – 27 January 2022

Date of SDP post	Twitter	Facebook	LinkedIn
22/12/2021	483 Impressions & 9 Engagements	87 Impressions & 2 Engagements	176 Impressions & 9 Engagements
31/12/2021	395 Impressions & 11 Engagements	70 Impressions & 5 Engagements	161 Impressions & 10 Engagements
05/01/2022	275 Impressions & 8 Engagements	67 Impressions & 2 Engagements	245 Impressions & 13 Engagements
19/01/2022	378 Impressions & 6 Engagements	123 Impressions & 4 Engagements	388 Impressions & 25 Engagements
25/01/2022	157 Impressions & 7 Engagements	140 Impressions & 22 Engagements	130 Impressions & 9 Engagements
27/01/2022	1,776 Impressions & 27 Engagements	81 Impressions & 2 Engagements	203 Impressions & 11 Engagements
Totals	3,464 Impressions & 68 Engagements	568 Impressions & 37 Engagements	1,303 Impressions & 77 Engagements

SDP Social Media Analytics – 14 July 2022

Date of SDP post	Twitter	Facebook	LinkedIn
29/06/2022	218 Impressions & 7 Engagements	56 Impressions & 1 Engagement	294 Impressions & 17 Engagements
05/07/2022	284 Impressions & 7 Engagements	112 Impressions & 2 Engagements	301 Impressions & 15 Engagements
07/07/2022	77 Impressions & 2 Engagements	187 Impressions & 4 Engagements	110 Impressions & 2 Engagements
13/07/2022	127 Impressions & 2 Engagements	116 Impressions & 5 Engagements	160 Impressions & 1 Engagement
14/07/2022	222 Impressions & 6 Engagements		
Totals	928 Impressions & 24 Engagements	471 Impressions & 12 Engagements	865 Impressions & 35 Engagements

Contact

More information about Scottish Government Procurement can be found by visiting www.gov.scot/procurement and on social media via [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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