

Hot Topic Table: Exploring the uncertain aspects and unproven benefits of supplier engagement

Procura+ Supplier and Market Development Interest Group

Summary of Discussions

Thank you to those of you who contributed to the Hot Topic Table which I facilitated at the Procura+ Seminar in October. It's fair to say that conducting robust market engagement that positively benefits procurement processes is a high priority for many organisations. However, it was clear from our discussions that it is not yet commonplace and is rarely being conducted in a co-ordinated way.

The approach which the Procura+ Supplier and Market Development Interest Group are currently developing seeks to map the potential market engagement activities which can be conducted, against a set of key criteria relating to the contract. This model would then provide operational procurement officers a proposed market engagement strategy. The criteria being consider were:

- **How complex is the product/service?**
- **How complex is the market?**
- **How mature is the market?**
- **What is the scope for innovation?**
- **What is the scope for delivering policy through procurement objectives? E.g. Social Value**
- **What is the value of the contract?**

As part of the discussions which took place a further criterion was added:

- **What is balance of knowledge between buyer and supplier?**

It was broadly agreed that this approach would be a positive step forward for most organisations. Further advice was offered by participants including:

- Each type of market engagement may need to be supported by a practical guidance document to help procurement officers to conduct the activities effectively
- Although the guidance would likely be useful; is the tool too prescriptive?
- Guidance might be required to help people score the criteria

This feedback will be considered carefully in the creation of any tool/guidance. Thank you all for your input and hopefully you will have time to have a look at the final product when it is publicised on the Procurement Forum.

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