



## **QUARTERLY CONNECT**

**NEWSLETTER 2** November 2022

“

**We're now in the Matchmaker 2.0 phase – we need to start making things happen**

”

**Dominic Doig**  
Managing Director  
Solomons Europe





# OVERVIEW



**Swimming**  
with the big fish  
SME MATCHMAKER SERVICE

Helping high-performing SMEs to secure high value,  
long-term framework contracts on major projects



**The take away message from the second Swimming with the Big Fish SME Matchmaker Service Quarterly Connect meeting was crystal clear: “We need to turn ‘love letters’ (Heads of Terms) into frameworks. We need to move to the next stage of commitment and mobilise the supply chain.”**

Speaking to more than 30 SMEs gathered at Solomons Europe’s Papcastle Depot office on Tuesday, November 1, Peter Hogg, Head of Supply Chain Management at Programme and Project Partners (PPP), also stressed the need for Key Delivery Partners (KDPs) to bring in expertise from SME supply chains to ensure the frameworks are delivered and achieve PPP’s Critical Success Factors.

Reinforcing the message, Dominic Doig, Managing Director at Solomons Europe, which is delivering the SWTBF SME Matchmaker Service for PPP, said:

“These Critical Success Factors aren’t a ‘nice thing to have’, they are critical. It’s about resilience.

“The job now is to convert the promises, made when the KDPs submitted their successful tenders, into real jobs, apprenticeships, investments and social impact activities that achieve real results. We’re now in the Matchmaker 2.0 phase – we need to start making things happen.”

Following the rallying cry, Ewan Peacock, Contract Executive at Solomons Europe, detailed progress made by the SME Matchmaker Service since the last Quarterly Connect meeting in July.

“SMEs have been winning work with KDP partners they’ve been matched with, not exclusively with PPP but also on other Sellafield frameworks and programmes, and elsewhere in the UK. We’re making strong progress but we need to ensure these relationships, and others, are realised with PPP.”

A Q&A followed an update from the four KDPs represented at

the meeting – Altrad Babcock, Balfour Beatty Kilpatrick, EJ Parker Technical Services and NG Bailey.

During the session, Dominic Doig stressed that opportunities remained for SMEs that did not secure frameworks. “They definitely haven’t missed out. Remaining SMEs have got the opportunity to form alliances and enter into agreements with the KDP Approved Supply Chain SMEs to support package delivery, as well as enter into ad hoc transactions. This is not a closed shop by any means.”

Delegates then broke out into a series of one-to-one ‘meet the buyer’ meetings with KDP representatives, a new development for Quarterly Connect meetings and an opportunity for both sides to discuss capabilities, capacity, delivery timescales and build a more informed picture. They also had the opportunity to table contractual questions to PPP in a surgery hosted by John Rossiter, Supply Chain Commercial Lead, PPP, and Executive Director, Solomons Europe.



# QUARTERLY CONNECT 2 PERSPECTIVES

## PROGRAMME AND PROJECT PARTNERS

Peter Hogg, Head of Supply Chain Management, Programme and Project Partners

"The meeting was very interesting and useful but there's not enough decision making and progress since the last one. We, at PPP level, need to move a bit faster on getting the contractual commitments for the call offs to the KDPs in place, which will then trigger and kick-start more of the Heads of Terms being converted into frameworks for the SMEs.

"My message to the SMEs is 'hang in there'. This is a massive change programme in how to do business in a different and more constructive way. There's learning for everyone – from Sellafield, PPP, the KDPs and the SMEs – to do it differently. Just hang in and we will get there."

John Rossiter Supply Chain Commercial Lead, PPP and Executive Director, Solomons Europe

"We got some tough questions in the surgery, but that's what we wanted. People had conversations they probably don't normally get to have, as well as the opportunity to ask difficult questions and raise their concerns. We couldn't answer them all, but we will take those unanswered away and get back as soon as possible. We're one team and we're here to help, so we want people to reach out, because we can help solve these issues. Progress hasn't been as fast as we'd like it to be. We always want results tomorrow, that's the nature of the world we live in, but things are moving in the right direction and there's recognition positive steps are being made.

### REACH OUT

There are all sorts of technical and commercial issues people face with getting these frameworks in place.

Don't suffer in silence. To get in touch with John, email [john.rossiter@sl-ppp.co.uk](mailto:john.rossiter@sl-ppp.co.uk)




“

We're one team and we're here to help, so we want people to reach out, because we can help solve these issues

”







Meeting face-to-face has been really important, but it has to be done with purpose and we've got to be offering enough to get a useful outcome for the SMEs

## KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

Paul Brennan, Project Director  
– Nuclear and Defence  
Sector, Altrad Babcock

"We'll look to do more regular forums with smaller bubbles of SMEs, perhaps in niche areas. I think that's going to be the best outcome.

Collaboration with the supply chain is really important to us.

**From the KDPs as a group, the SMEs need to know that we can't do it without them and none of us has sufficient skills to do all the things that they do. It's a matter of working with us to develop the right scope for the right people and then to work together via framework contracts or POs that are specific to the task."**

Stuart Logan KDP Supply Chain  
Manager, Balfour Beatty Kilpatrick

"It was a good engagement session. We've given the SMEs a good indication of what the pipeline is. That maybe puts them back a bit, but it's about being realistic, open and honest. PPP is a big change, but a change for the better and it will make things a lot easier moving forward.

The face-to-face meetings with the SMEs were really good. We obviously receive names on a piece of paper and what their discipline is, but being able to speak to them directly you get a greater knowledge of the business and what they have to offer the KDPs – not just within PPP, but also outside the scope of what's going on at Sellafield."

Tom Hill, Pre-Contract Manager  
Power Sector (Engineering) and  
PPP Framework Lead, NG Bailey

"It was a good event for us to update SMEs on where the projects are. Some of them will be a bit disappointed with the time it has taken, but hopefully we've managed to put their mind at rest that the work is there and it's just a matter of time until we're able to engage with them a bit further. The face-to-face meetings were good. They gave the individual SMEs the opportunity to get their points across, explain what they do and it gave us a chance to talk about where they may be able to assist us elsewhere within the business. From our perspective things are moving forward, but obviously that can be difficult for the SMEs to see. Hopefully, we'll get to a point where this translates into packages for them quite quickly."

Steve Berry Senior Contracts  
Manager, EJ Parker  
Technical Services

"The session today was really good and it was great to do face-to-face meetings.

**We spoke to more SMEs this time and got a better understanding of what they want to do. I've met a lot of companies I haven't previously met who are now on our radar and I am going to contact them all to discuss future opportunities as they arise. We now need to get out and visit companies to find out what their capacity and turnover is, and a greater understanding of what people can do on projects for us."**

**QUARTERLY  
CONNECT 2  
PERSPECTIVES**



# SMEs

Paul Denning, Sales Director,  
Cairnhill Structures Ltd

“We’re desperately keen to be part of PPP and slightly frustrated by the fact it seems to be taking longer than I suppose even they (PPP) expected to get to the point where there’s tangible work in front of us. Clearly the potential rewards at the end of all this are there, and significant. We have got to hang in there at the moment. Thankfully, we have a forum where we can hear things because, as an SME that’s tiers down the supply chain, you automatically assume the worst when you don’t hear anything. However, at least you have got someone saying, ‘keep the faith, there are opportunities around the corner, but around the corner might be next year or the middle of next year’. You can take some heart that it’s worth being in the race.”

Ben Slater, Managing  
Director, Mission CX

“It’s been really useful and good to get an update on where the KDPs and the framework partners are at in terms of engagement with us SMEs on the Matchmaker programme. It has certainly been good to be back to face-to-face rather than on a screen. Winning work on PPP, in comparison to the other big nation programmes we work on, does seem to be quite an onerous process. It’s time consuming and a resource intensive process for SMEs to go through. We haven’t seen the conversion of Heads of Terms to framework contracts yet. My challenge to the KDPs is that we’re at the point where the conversion needs to take place. As SMEs we want to be awarded work, we want to be issued contracts and POs to grow our businesses. There are a lot of us busy working in other areas of the country and I’d say we’ve got a 12-month period where, if this doesn’t happen, we might miss the opportunity to engage with them.”

Nick Robinson, Managing  
Director, Lifftech Engineering Ltd

“It’s been interesting and very beneficial. We’re all of the same mind that we need updates. I can understand where the ‘big fish’ are, but it is worthwhile coming to meet them and catch up with a few people I haven’t seen for a while. We’ve been matched with Balfour Beatty Kilpatrick, so it’s been good to speak to Stuart (Logan) and get that reassurance that things are in the pipeline. Obviously, the cogs are turning.”

QUARTERLY  
CONNECT 2  
PERSPECTIVES



“  
**My challenge to the KDPs  
is that we’re at the point  
where the conversion  
needs to take place**  
”



## MOVING FORWARD



The first Quarterly Connect meeting marked the start of our quest, not only to secure matches between SMEs and KDPs, but to deliver the pledges made into reality.

This second meeting was a chance to keep the momentum going and the energy high for those SMEs and KDPs involved in KDP3 Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC), KDP4 Electrical and Instrumentation and KDP5 Mechanical Pipework to spend time one-to-one and develop the long-term relationships we all want. While matches secured so far have yet to materialise into framework agreements, some of these relationships have already resulted in work. This is extremely encouraging and a tantalising taste of what we can achieve with PPP.

To achieve this, the Swimming with the Big Fish SME Matchmaker Service will:

- Follow the same discipline focused ‘meet the buyer’ format for future Quarterly Connect meetings, where SMEs will have the opportunity for face-to-face meetings with the KDP buyers relevant to their capability and expertise – and always with an eye on progressing a match with potential for success
- Continue to work closely with PPP and KDP to ensure any barriers to converting Heads of Terms into frameworks are discussed openly and resolved, where possible
- Continue to seek brokering opportunities for SMEs, who did not secure a framework agreement initially, in order to give them the greatest chance of securing work through the framework lifecycle

Progress is being made. While we all appreciate that PPP’s approach represents a huge change, it will be a change that will open the door to long-term work that delivers against PPP’s Critical Success Factors and results in the positive economic and social impacts we all want to see.

Now is the time to push for action and navigate barriers. Let’s keep the positivity going. It’s getting close!



# KEEP IN TOUCH

Our second Quarterly Connect meeting was our first attempt at combining a traditional progress update with face-to-face meetings and a PPP surgery.

**How did we do?**

**What could we have done better?**

**What would you like to see from future Quarterly Connect meetings?**

We're all about collaboration and ensuring that SMEs get the most from the time and effort they invest in coming along.

Please leave your constructive feedback with Hazel Duhy at [hazel.duhy@solomonseurope.co.uk](mailto:hazel.duhy@solomonseurope.co.uk) or on 016973 44905.



Helping high-performing SMEs to secure high value,  
long-term framework contracts on major projects





# Swimming

with the big fish

**SME MATCHMAKER SERVICE**

**Solomons Europe is regularly publishing news and views on the SWTBF SME Matchmaker Service on its website and social media channels.**

**Visit the website and follow them on the handles below to keep up to date.**

**Website: [www.solomonseurope.co.uk/blog](http://www.solomonseurope.co.uk/blog)**

**LinkedIn: [@solomons-europe](https://www.linkedin.com/company/solomons-europe)**

**Twitter: [@SolomonsEurope](https://twitter.com/SolomonsEurope)**

**Facebook: [facebook.com/solomonseurope](https://facebook.com/solomonseurope)**



PROGRAMME +  
PROJECT PARTNERS



**Jacobs**

**MORGAN  
SINDALL**  
INFRASTRUCTURE

**DOOSAN**



**solomons | europe**