

Press release: New opportunities for London businesses to deliver UK aid

The Department for International Development encouraged businesses from across London and the South East to make the most of new opportunities to deliver UK aid, at the latest of its supplier engagement events yesterday (Thursday 22 March).

Addressing 100 representatives from over 85 organisations, the Minister of State for International Development Lord Bates demystified the application process and urged businesses to use their local expertise and skills to help the worlds' poorest people.

By working with DFID, local companies across London can play their part in supporting Global Britain and in turn, grow their own business, create jobs and help to boost the local economy.

Yesterday was the third and largest of DFID's regional events, which have been set up as a direct result of a review undertaken into DFID's work with suppliers. Delivering on recommendations made, the department is proactively cutting red tape to boost competition and open up DFID's market to new businesses, including small enterprises in the UK and the world's poorest countries.

Minister of State for International Development, Lord Bates said:

Today, I have met with business representatives from across London and the South East who want to help deliver UK aid and achieve the best results that UK taxpayers and the world's poorest deserve.

If we are to successfully tackle the unprecedented humanitarian and development challenges of today, we need to use the very best of British expertise. By making it easier for new and smaller businesses to work with us, and by ensuring the bidding process is more competitive, we can increase our positive impact on the world's poorest, while boosting the local and UK economy at the same time.

Aleeza Mitha, Strategic Partnerships Manager at London-based the Aga Khan Foundation, said:

The Aga Khan Foundation has been working with communities to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable populations across Africa, Asia and the Middle East for decades.

I came to DFID's supplier event because I wanted to understand more about the procurement process. The event certainly delivered; it

was a great opportunity to meet the procurement team face-to-face and to have many key questions answered.

The Aga Khan Foundation and DFID share core values. We are both working to empower the world's most disadvantaged, especially women, and working together, we can achieve this goal.

Catherine Stevens, Head of International, Quality, Excellence and Development at London-based company Schole, said:

We run local curriculum schools in east Africa, and we develop these schools so that they reach a good or outstanding level. We are keen to expand what we do so that having access to a quality education is made available to all.

I was particular interested in coming to the event to find out how we could draw on support from DFID so that we can develop our aspirations to serve more lower income people. It has been welcoming to hear that SME's like ours are a priority area and that DFID is actively encouraging us to consider ourselves a priority. I am looking forward to connecting with the procurement team and taking this forward.