

## SME Steering Group - North

**Meeting 9: 11am 18 August, NDA Offices, Hinton House, Birchwood**

### MINUTES

#### Attendees

<b>SMEs:</b> <b>Chair:</b> Mark Beirne (MB) Taylor-Jane Fox (TF) Graham Engineering Chris Cheater (CC) Abbott Risk Consulting Martin Booth (MB) Witt Group	<b>Tier 2s:</b> Gill Jakeman (GJ) Atos Nigel Routledge (NR) Jacobs Paul Read (PR) James Fisher
<b>SLCs:</b> Chris Stanger (CS) LLWR	<b>NDA:</b> Sam Dancy(SD)
<b>Apologies:</b> Jon Myers (JMy), John Morris (JM) NSG, Mark Taylor (MT) ITS, Ron Gorham (RG) NDA, Pippa Kelly (KP) NDA, Jonathan Evans (JE) LLWR	

#### 1) Introductions

All were welcomed to the meeting. The main focus of the meeting was to progress the SME collaboration guide. The driver for the guide was that collaboration across the NDA Estate was encouraged. Standards such as BS11000 and supplier relationship models such as SC21 provided frameworks collaboration. The deadline for the final draft of the guide was 6<sup>th</sup> October 2014 for the guide to be ready for the NDA Estate Supply Chain Event.

#### 2) SME Collaboration Guide contents

At the previous meeting the outline of the guide was developed with the main topics.

- TF suggested that the guide could usefully incorporate questions for SMEs to ask themselves to help them decide if collaboration was right for their business.
- CC highlighted that SMEs should perhaps consider approaching collaboration in terms of a business case and what benefits could be derived from it.
- There was a general discussion on:
  - the essential ingredients for collaboration – leadership/culture,
  - considerations of work split between the parties (what can you get from collaboration/what can you get from going it alone) – needs to be appropriate on both sides
  - reasons to collaborate – scope requirement cannot be fulfilled on own, not enough people to do the job, working together to solve a problem at clients request etc
  - the need for a strategy to collaborate
  - considerations on the cost of collaboration
- **Case Studies:** it was agreed that case studies would be very useful and should have a standard format:
  - 1 Company names in the collaboration
  - 2 Project name
  - 3 Type of collaboration
  - 4 Description of project
  - 5 Why was the collaboration formed?
  - 6 What were the challenges and how were they overcome?
  - 7 What were the benefits?

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- 8 What if anything changed over time in the collaboration, and if they have changed – why?
- 9 Lessons Learned - reasons for success of the collaboration or if something went wrong, what and what LFE was gained?

**Action: Case Studies to be sent to MB for collation – they could be examples from outside of the NDA Estate**

- The different types of collaboration were discussed and it was agreed that these should be included in the guide. It was important for SMEs to question how they could work with larger organisations.
- It was possible to have a collaborations involving incorporated and unincorporated Joint Ventures, simple collaboration agreements and consortiums, as well as collaboration organisations who worked together on a prime/sub-contract basis for repeat tenders/work and partnerships. Non incorporated Joint Ventures could still have their own bank accounts, nominal split of work and risk/reward sharing.

**Action: PR to see if the definitions/options paper from a JV partner could be released for use in the guide**

**Timescale:** first draft needs to be ready for a walk through by mid-September

**Action: TF to set up doodle for mid-September meeting**

- SD would ask RG to approach Baroness Verma’s office for a Forward to the guide.
- SD anticipated that the guide would be announced at the Event on 6<sup>th</sup> November either in John Clarke or the Baroness’s key note speech.
- Volunteers for writing sections of the guide were as follows:

	Section	Volunteer
1	What is collaborative working and what it means within nuclear decommissioning	Mark Beirne
2	Why Collaborate?	Taylor-Jane Fox and Nigel Routledge
3	How can SMEs collaborate?	Paul Read and John Morris
4	Essential Ingredients. What is needed for successful collaborative working	Jon Myers and Chris Cheater
5	Challenges and Barriers	Martin Booth
6	Case Studies	Contributions sought – Paul Read and John Morris to provide theirs
7	References and supporting information	Sam Dancy

### 3) NDA Estate Supply Chain Event

- There would be an SME Steering Group stand at the 6<sup>th</sup> November event and volunteers would be sought to man the stand through the day.

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- The group thought that that this would provide an opportunity to collect business cards from SMEs interested in engaging with the regional groups. There could also be a 'post-it' board for SMEs to raise concerns.

#### 4 Feedback from Northern SME day

It was agreed that some communication and feedback needed to be given to the SMEs who attended the Northern SME day. There were some questions on the Steering Group and information should be fed back on this and where to find information. TF had a useful presentation that could be shared.

**Action: TF to send MB presentation and MB to draft an update email to go to Northern SME day attendees**

#### 5 Issues

- The group highlighted that there were still issues to be resolved around the NDA Estate which could be raised at the National SME Steering Group meeting:
  - IP – although the NDA policy had been published there were still issues when you got down to the detail of the IP.
  - Nuclear Indemnity – it was questioned whether NDA had changed policy as it seemed to have been withdrawn on a recent Sellafield tender. SD highlighted that there planned changes in the regulations but NDA policy had not changed.

**Action: SD to investigate Nuclear Indemnity issues further**

- Tender exercises continued to be pushed back – there needed to be better communication as programmes going back for long periods impacted on suppliers ability to plan work
- Retentions are coming in more tenders/contracts – they seem to have been re-introduced over the last 3-4 years, and had cashflow impacts. It was particularly a problem with specialist products. It seemed to be more a culture of penalising suppliers, rather than working in partnership.
- There were issues with the speed of responses to Early Warnings by some SLCs and also a lack of realism on timescales – sometimes nothing gets done if staff are on holiday and it holds projects up.
- Requirements for CVs in tenders can be excessive – recent example of a requirement for several lots, but each lot needed a tailored CV – it was questioned whether this added value as it took significant time for suppliers to complete this.
- It was questioned whether the 'standard' PQQ was being used as there was not much evidence of it or PQQs being issued
- Contract award can take up to two years.
- Security – length of time it takes to get passes even if staff have them for other sites
- On a positive – it was noticeable that Sellafield were trying to make sure that those on frameworks do not get unfair advantage – one Tier 2 had had a 'conflict of interest' audit by Sellafield for a tender exercise as one part of the organisation was supporting Sellafield.