

Some thoughts on prioritising supplier engagement with the Action Planning Tool.

Initial Engagement

How do you decide which of your suppliers you would like to invite to use the tool? We have seen a range of approaches, including:

- Sending the tool out **to all suppliers** irrespective of type, size or spend
- Prioritising the initial send out of the tool based on factors such as:
 - High risk commodity groups (e.g. Modern Slavery)
 - Priority commodity groups based on organisational strategy or a current focus or activity (a large capital programme is currently high profile)
 - Spend thresholds (every supplier over £5k)
 - Timebound factors (every supplier used in the past 18 months)
 - Suppliers invited to a development day to promote take-up of the tool

Because the tool is designed to be useful to all your suppliers any of the approaches are viable, however, we suggest you have a clear strategic narrative for the decision you make.

Follow-Up

The initial invitation to suppliers inviting them to access the tool should not be the only contact they have from you about it. While not wishing to bombard them, or overburden you, reminder e-mails are appropriate. Again, deciding how you prioritise which suppliers you pro-actively follow-up with should be considered. We have seen a range of responses we share below for guidance:

- **Contracted suppliers only**
You might only follow-up with your contracted suppliers. You are likely to have well-established routes for communicating with these suppliers and regular contract discussions where the Action Plans they produce can be helpful in shaping conversations.
- **High Impact suppliers**
Some Universities have significant numbers of suppliers and are keen to prioritise follow-up with high risk suppliers. Risk in this case can be determined by spend, by the risk of commodity they supply¹ or by opportunity to demonstrate a positive impact.
- **Local, SME or other target groups**
You may have some specific, high-profile agendas that mean targeted follow-up is more appropriate. A focus on supporting local suppliers is one example another might be SME's specifically. Follow-up to elicit responses from these groups might be particularly valuable in these cases.

Essentially, this is a tool for you to use in ways that make sense of your institutional context. There is no right or wrong way to promote use of the tool but we encourage you to consider a narrative that makes sense in relation to your institutional priorities.

ⁱ Certain commodities have been identified as being at higher risk of Modern Slavery practices, this might be because of the nature of their production (from mining or agriculture where use of migrant labour is more common) or because they are likely to come from countries in (or close to) conflict zones or with unstable governments.