



SOCIAL VALUE: THE BIDDERS' PERSPECTIVE TAKE 2

THE RESULTS OF THE SECOND APMP UK
SOCIAL VALUE SURVEY

Presented by the APMP UK Social Value Group
February 2024

CEO's Foreword

Welcome to the second APMP UK Social Value survey results.

The Social Value Group is a dedicated team of volunteers created to support members gain a better understanding of social value and how to approach it, boost tender scores, guide tender questions, provide advice on how to embrace social value and encourage a dialogue on the topic.

A core part of the work the Social Value Group does is to track trends within the bidding industry. Not only does this enable us to benchmark views on social value and see how our industry has adopted social value, it also provides an opportunity to capture data that enables a conversation with the UK Government, providing a real-time view on bidders' experience of social value.

The second in the series, this latest survey provides an opportunity to determine whether experiences of social value have changed since the previous report 18 months ago. It is great to see an ever-increasing focus on social value, from organisations having dedicated social value resource, to procurement teams increasing the weighting social value has in the ITT. Despite this though, there appears to be a need to continue to drive greater clarity in social value questions and increased pre-tender engagement on the topic. A number of challenges, inconsistencies and potential subjectivity were highlighted in the survey findings which raise the question as to how standardisation might support both bidders and buyers.

Social value continues to be an important topic, particularly for those who bid into the public sector. I encourage all our members who operate in this space to read the report and welcome the conversation with the Cabinet Office on how we can collaborate to ensure social value is a success.

A special thanks to the Social Value Group for conducting and analysing the survey, including Sarah Hinchliffe, Carole Davey and Claire-Alix Zapata Garin as the leads on the initiatives, with contributions from Stéphanie Charman and Shona van Tunzelmann.

Mel Bunston
Chief Executive Officer, APMP UK





About the APMP UK Social Value Group

Founded in May 2021, the APMP UK Social Value Group is run by twelve enthusiastic social value champions from industries spanning construction, professional services, third sector, finance and technology.

We set out to help members:

- Understand social value and how best to approach it in bids
- Boost social value tender scores
- Advise employers and clients to embrace social value
- Guide customers to ask sensible social value questions
- Build social value into dialogue during capture

Through webinars, blogs and regular discussion groups, we spread the social value word and encourage social value conversations.

We also engage with procurers and social value influencers to shape the future of social value.

Our primary focus has been on public sector social value in the wake of the UK Government's Public Procurement Notice 06/20 "Taking account of social value in the award of central government contracts" published in September 2020. As our journey has progressed over the last 12 months, we have delved into associated topics including ESG (environment, sustainability and governance) and the private sector. This has expanded our horizons, so we can support more members.

Follow us here: <https://www.apmpuk.co.uk/social-value>

Social Value: The Bidder's Perspective Take 2

Introduction

In April 2022, we ran our first survey. Informal feedback from members had led us to feel that buyers and suppliers were struggling to build social value into procurements and contract delivery in a way that led to meaningful impact on the ground. We wanted a more structured way to understand what was working well and where buyers and suppliers needed to improve.

The results were well-received by the APMP UK Board, members and external parties, many of whom had not encountered our organisation before. The survey drove our activity programme for members and a series of recommendations to the policymakers and public sector social value champions.

The big question now is, has anything changed?

Eighteen months on, we see and hear reports of some improvements in knowledge and capability in both the buyer and supplier communities, yet social value still seems a long way off 'business as usual.'

With our follow-up survey, we wanted to:

- Reassess professional bidders' views on social value maturity amongst buyers and suppliers
- Assess the change in the last 18 months
- Gather up-to-date opinions so we can provide constructive feedback to policymakers and APMP UK members to support improvement initiatives

About the survey

Like all good bid professionals, we learnt lessons from our first survey and took action to improve our second. We took professional advice from Dr Maria Fotiadou of Linguistic Insights, on how to improve the structure of the survey.

The core structure of the survey stayed the same. Based on the lifecycle of a tender, we asked questions in four categories:

- Pre-tender: to understand experiences of buyer maturity and levels of engagement with stakeholders and industry before a tender is issued
- Tender questions: to see if published social value questions and requirements are relevant, proportionate and coherent
- Tender responses: to gauge the effort going into social value responses and see whether they are scoring well
- Post award: to find out whether buyers are monitoring and measuring social value tender commitments and whether they are fully bought into social value

We also wanted to find out about the overall impact social value is having on respondents' employers and/or clients' businesses.

The key changes we made were to:

- Make all multiple-choice questions mandatory so we have a complete data set
- Add optional free-format questions to gather qualitative data
- Improve question-wording and response options to get more comprehensive results
- Add more demographic and sector data to enable better filtering

The final survey had 51 questions (vs 35 in 2022) and ran from 11th December 2023 to 14th January 2024.

The survey was open to APMP UK members and non-members for five weeks. We acknowledged that the term social value is usually associated with the Public Sector where it has become commonplace when referring to economic, environmental and social benefits. ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) is a more common term in the Private Sector, and we welcomed opinions from bid professionals in that field too.

Survey design and report authoring by Carole Davey, Claire-Alix Zapata Garin and Sarah Hinchliffe with contributions from Stéphanie Charman and Shona van Tunzelmann.



Survey engagement compared to 2022

Improved completion rates

The survey's overall completion rate increased from 62% in 2022 to 100% in 2023, indicating a positive trend in participant engagement.

Stable survey visits

The number of survey visits remained consistent between the two years, with 21% in 2022 and 22% in 2023 resulting in completed responses.

Decrease in total responses

The total responses reduced from 156 in 2022 to 98 in 2023, but the increased completion rate indicates a more dedicated and engaged group of respondents.

Zero partial responses in 2023

Notably, there were no partial responses in 2023, highlighting a shift towards more comprehensive and thorough feedback from participants.

Key Findings

Pre-tender

- 76% of buyers have some or good knowledge of social value
- 14% see pre-tender engagement with suppliers
- 6% see internal pre-tender engagement happening
- 70% never, rarely or occasionally see social value in a Prior Information Notices (PIN)
- 88% want a standardised measurement framework

Tender questions

- 84% see social value in tenders frequently or always
- 86% reported weightings are typically between 5% and 15%
- Social Value Model Themes 2, 3 and 4 feature most often
- 10% agree that evaluation criteria are clearly defined
- 16% agree that questions are relevant and proportionate
- 18% agree that the method of monitoring social value during delivery is made clear in the tender
- Fewer than 50% of respondents are often required to provide quantitative data
- The National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) are the most common measurement framework

Tender responses

- 73% have some degree of confidence in responding to tenders
- 95% can create meaningful, innovative responses
- 71% typically score over 60%
- 38% say social value made a difference to winning or losing
- 35% feel their response effort levels were high or very high

Post-award

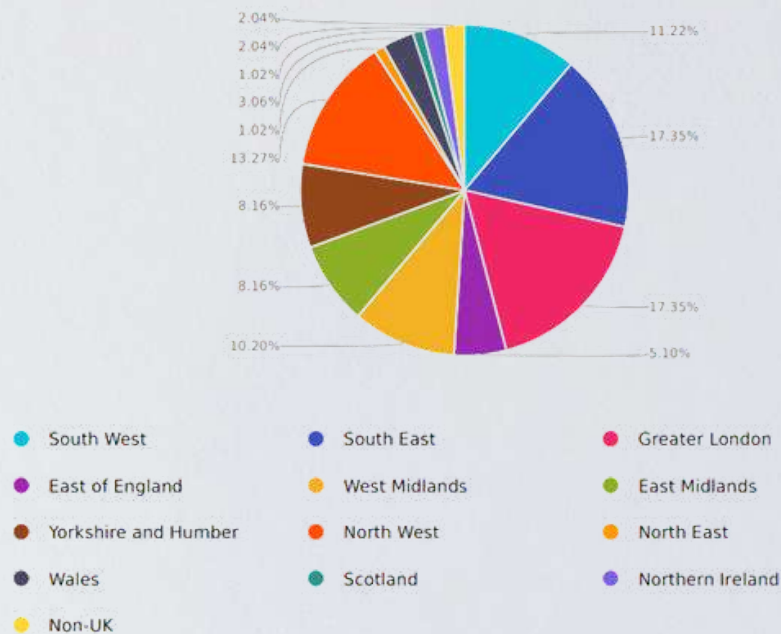
- 17% confirmed they received good feedback
- 12% are routinely held accountable for social value delivery
- Only 4% have seen contractual penalties for non-delivery
- 21% feel their clients really care about social value

Business impact

- 73% acknowledge feeling an impact on their business due to social value efforts
- 60% have C-suite buy-in to social value
- 62% have a dedicated social value lead
- 68% perceive social value as an increasing overhead
- 12% have some form of social value accreditation

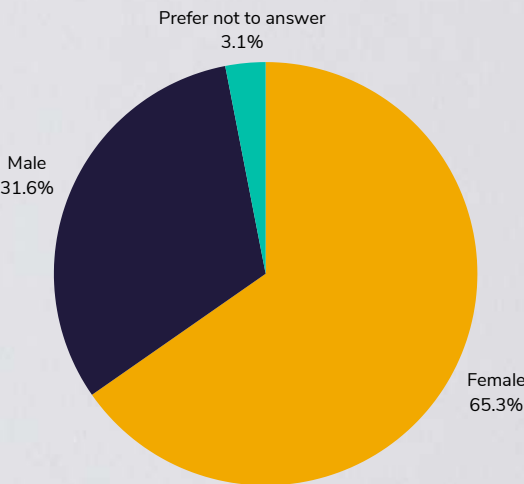
Demographics

Gathering demographic data in our survey serves multiple purposes. It allows us to understand diversity and enables us to analyse the representativeness of survey results across various groups. By examining factors such as region, gender, and age, we can identify potential over- or under-representations in the data. Additionally, the inclusion of demographic data enables us to segment, filter and compare responses, unveiling patterns and variations in opinions or experiences among different groups. Should any of our readers wish to explore a specific segment of data, please contact the APMP UK Social Value Group.



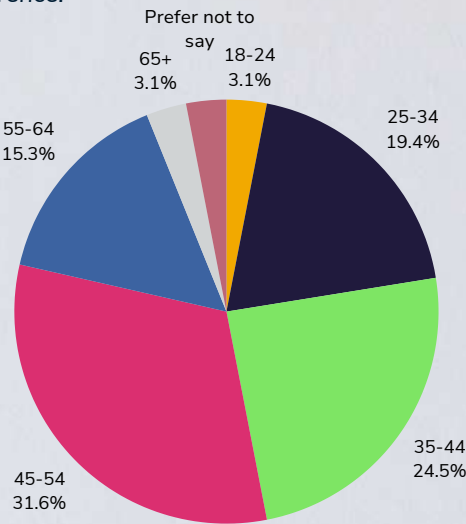
Question 1: Survey respondents' location.

The survey shows that respondents were concentrated in several regions, with Greater London and the South-East being the main hubs, each representing 17.35% of respondents. The North-West comes in closely behind at 13.27%, and the South-West contributes significantly with 11.22%.



Question 2: Survey respondents' gender.

In 2023, the data reveals a significant majority of female respondents, making up 65.31% of the total. Male respondents constitute 31.63%, and there are no reported responses indicating non-binary or other genders. A small proportion, 3.06%, opted not to disclose their gender preference.



Question 3: Survey respondents' age group.

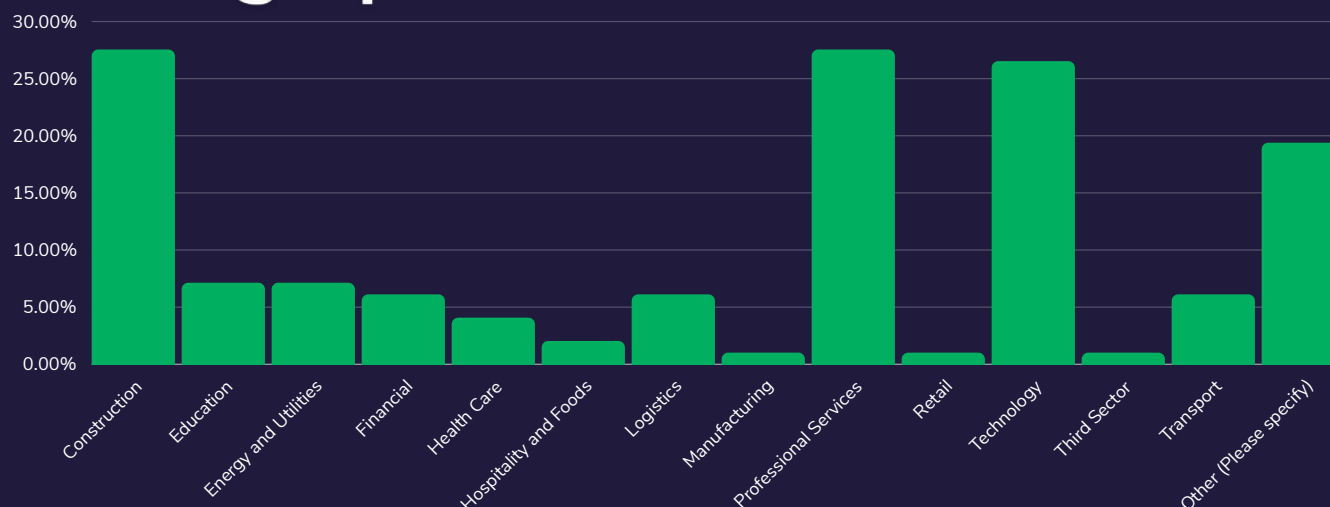
The 2023 survey data reflects a varied age distribution among respondents. The largest segment falls within the 35-54 age range accounting for 56.12%.

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Questions 4 and 5

We asked whether respondents were APMP members and which APMP chapter they belonged to. 88 of the 98 respondents (88.8%) were APMP members. 86 were from the UK, 1 from South Africa and 1 from India. This result was expected as the survey was most widely publicised through APMP UK channels. Interest from non-UK chapters was not a surprise as social value is relevant to any organisation seeking to supply to the UK market.

Demographics continued

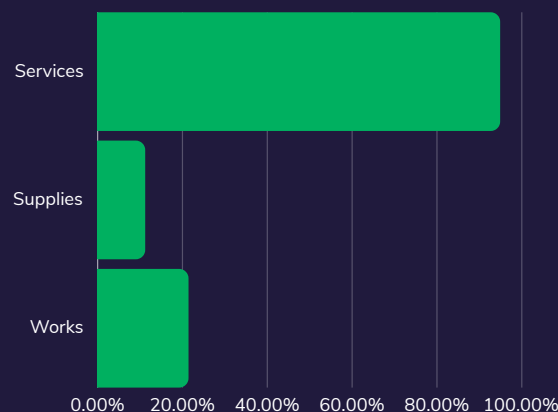


Question 6: Industries represented.

We asked respondents to select all that apply. The results show that social value is prevalent across a wide range of sectors.

In 2023, the data indicates a substantial shift in participant representation, particularly notable in the Construction sector, which saw a significant increase from 17.01% to 27.55%. Meanwhile, the Professional Services and Technology (IT & Digital) sectors remain key industries for respondents, with Professional Services experiencing a slight decrease from 29.93% to 27.55%, and Technology (IT & Digital) showing a minor decline from 27.89% to 26.53%.

Respondents selecting the 'Other' category included Investment Management, Defence, Fire Compliance and Safety, Civil Engineering, Consultancy, Nuclear, Enforcement, Facilities Management and Waste Management.



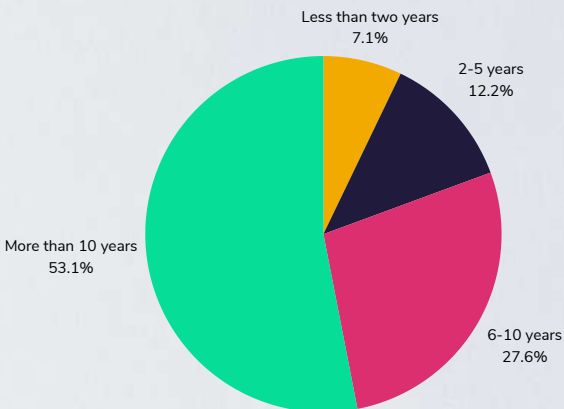
Question 7: What respondents' organisations sell.

We asked respondents to select all that apply. The majority of respondents, comprising 95.21% in 2022 and 94.90% in 2023, highlight their organisations' primary focus on providing services. The absence of significant year-on-year changes underscores a consistent dedication to service-oriented offerings in organisations that employ bid professionals.

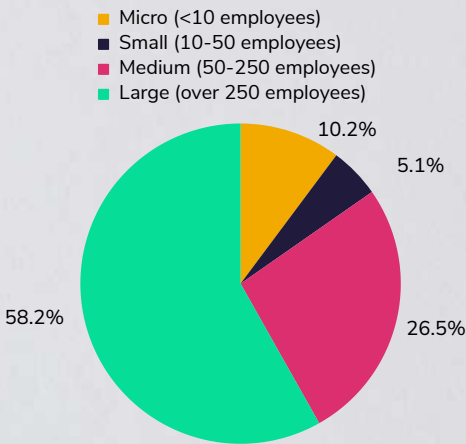
Demographics continued



Question 8: Where respondents' organisations sell.
We asked respondents to select all that apply. In 2022, the Public Sector options were consolidated, making up 91.22% of responses. This year's survey introduced a distinction within the Public Sector category, revealing that Local Authority constituted 78.57%, while the Government and Arm's Length Bodies option represented 80.61%. Conversely, the Private Sector slightly decreased from 85.14% in 2022 to 80.61% in 2023. Notably, the Third Sector also experienced a decline, shifting from 36.49% in 2022 to 26.53% in 2023.



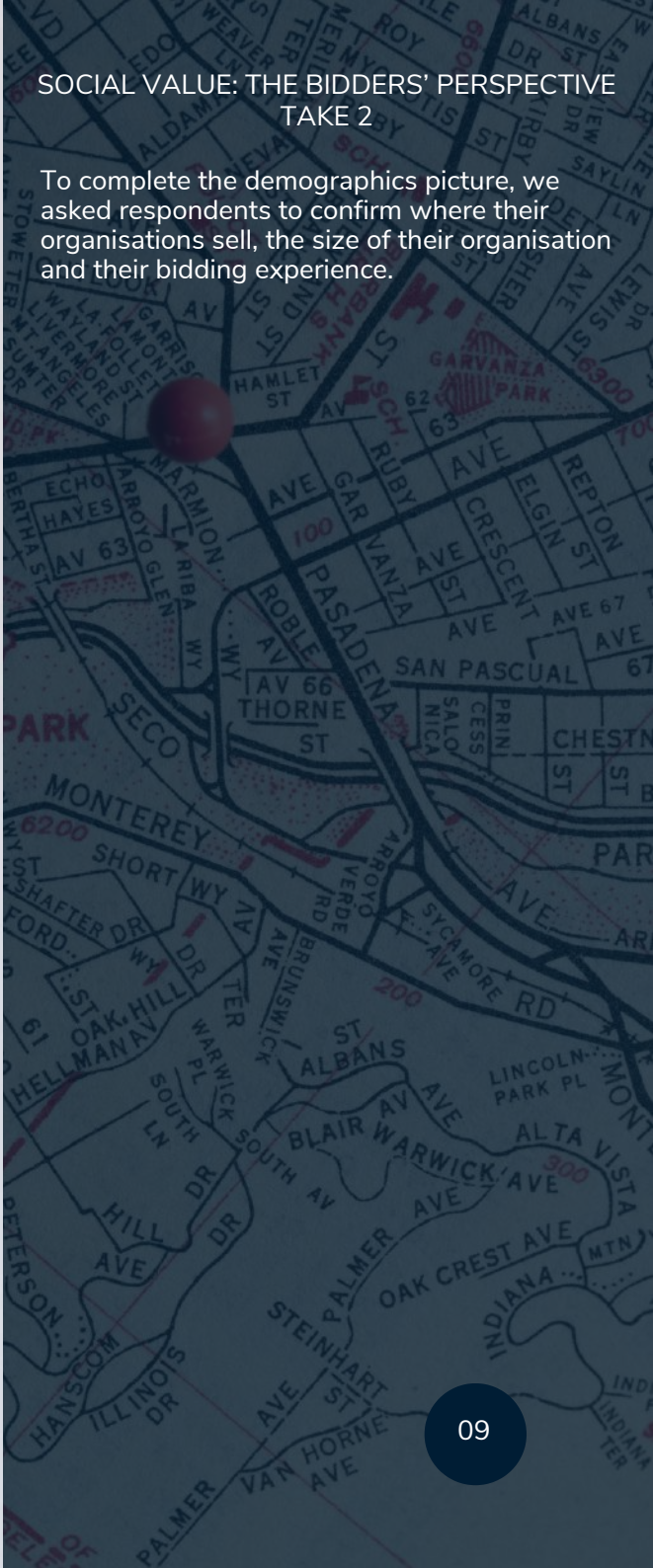
Question 10: Respondents' experience of bidding.
In 2023, the survey highlights a prevailing trend among respondents, with the majority possessing extensive bidding experience of more than 10 years constituting 53.06% of respondents. Additionally, a significant portion of survey participants, totaling 27.55%, falls within the 6-10 years of bidding experience category.



Question 9: Survey respondents' organisation size.
In 2023, the majority of respondents, over two-thirds, were employed in medium to large organisations. Large corporations dominated the landscape, accounting for 58.16%, while a noteworthy proportion represented medium-sized enterprises at 26.53%. Conversely, micro and small-sized organisations collectively made up a smaller share, with micro-organisations comprising 10.20% and small organisations at 5.10%. This indicated a relative underrepresentation of respondents from these smaller entities compared to their counterparts in medium and large organisations within the survey.

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To complete the demographics picture, we asked respondents to confirm where their organisations sell, the size of their organisation and their bidding experience.

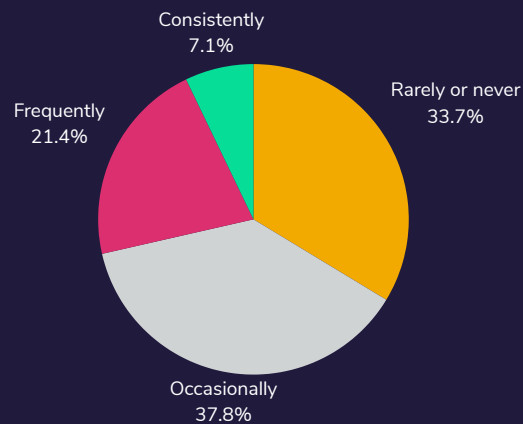


Pre-Tender

This section of the survey explored respondents' experiences of buyer maturity and levels of engagement with stakeholders and industry before a tender is issued.

The results showed minimal progress since 2022, which is disappointing. Buyer knowledge has increased, but early engagement is still lacking.

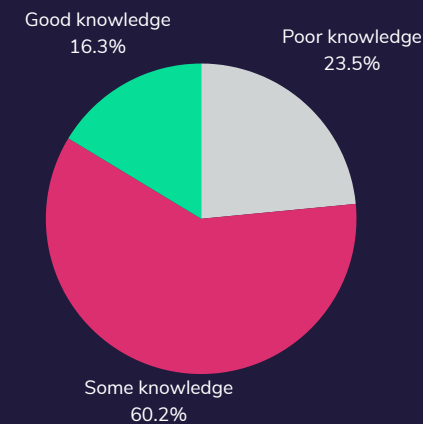
We asked whether a standardised framework would help, and a resounding majority agreed although there were some strong feelings against this suggestion in the comments. We pick up on this point again in the "To conclude" section later.



Question 11: In the past year, how frequently have you observed social value requirements explicitly outlined at the Prior Information Notice stage?

The most frequent response indicates that social value requirements are observed occasionally, as selected by 37.76% of respondents. A notable proportion of participants (33.67%) reports that social value requirements are observed rarely or never at the PIN stage.

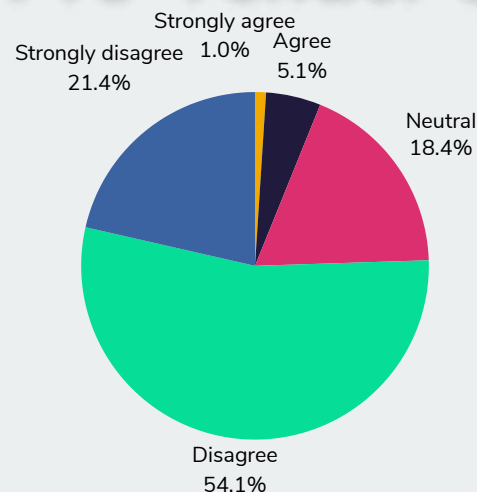
This suggests that explicit consideration of social value is not consistently integrated into the early stages of procurement, particularly at the PIN stage. This highlights a potential area for improvement or the need for increased emphasis on social value during the pre-tender process.



Question 12: Please rate your perception of your clients' knowledge of social value and its relevance to the subject matter of the contract.

In 2023, a considerable proportion of respondents (60.20%) perceived their clients to have some knowledge of social value. Notably, none of the respondents indicated that their clients had no knowledge or excellent knowledge, suggesting a lack of extremes in understanding. Note: there were options for No Knowledge (0% respondents) and Excellent Knowledge (0% respondents).

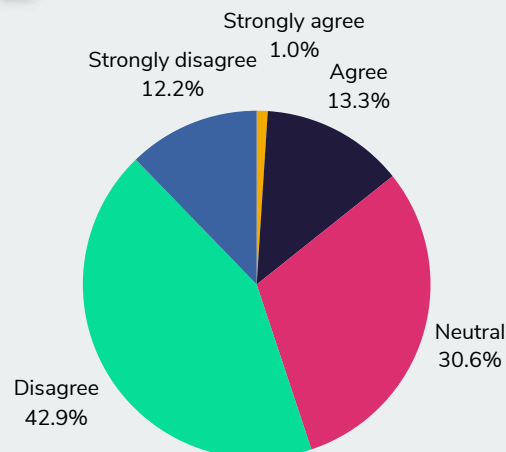
Pre-Tender continued



Question 13: Before the tender process begins, clients actively engage all internal stakeholders to agree on a relevant and proportionate social value expectation for the contract.

In 2023, a substantial majority of respondents (75.51%) disagreed with the notion that clients actively involve internal stakeholders in determining social value expectations before commencing the tender process. This disagreement was articulated by 54.08% of respondents, along with an additional 21.43% strongly disagreeing. Analysing this trend, there was a notable decrease in the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed, dropping from 24.62% in 2022 to 6.12% in 2023. Conversely, disagreement remained consistent from 2022 to 2023.

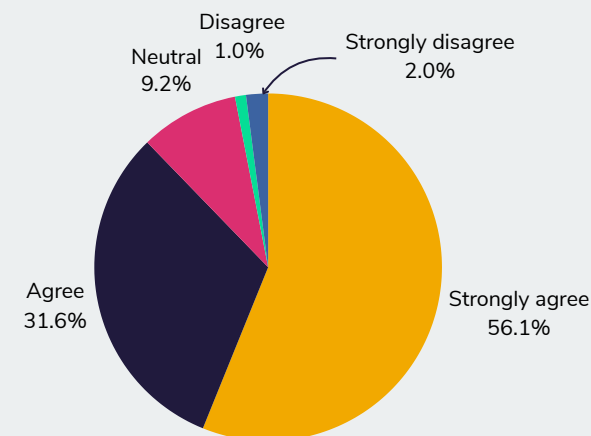
Overall, these results suggest a prevailing sentiment that internal stakeholders are not routinely engaged in shaping social value expectations within tender contexts.



Question 14: Before the tender process begins, clients actively engage and collaborate with suppliers.

In 2023, a substantial majority of respondents (55.10%), consisting of 42.86% who disagreed and 12.24% who strongly disagreed, held the view that clients did not actively engage and collaborate with suppliers before the tender process.

In contrast, a combined 14.29% of respondents (1.02% strongly agreed and 13.27% agreed) expressed agreement with the statement, suggesting a smaller segment that perceived clients to be actively engaging and collaborating with suppliers.



Question 15: There should be a standardised framework for measuring Social Value that all bidders can use, making it easier for purchasers to compare and for bidders to evidence the potential value of their bid.

In 2023, there was a clear consensus among respondents, with a strong majority strongly agreeing (56.12%) and agreeing (31.63%) with the statement advocating for a standardised framework for measuring social value.

Pre-tender continued

Question 16: We also provided a free-format question where respondents could give additional information and insights relating to the Pre-Tender section. Below we provide a summary of the key points. The full text is in Appendix 1.

Responses to this question unveil key aspects, illustrating a landscape marked by challenges and opportunities in the realm of social value considerations. Firstly, there is a prevalent theme of limited engagement, as respondents express hesitancy in interacting with suppliers before tenders, irrespective of whether they operate in the public or private sectors. Secondly, there is a resonant call for enhanced collaboration between Government/contracting authorities and suppliers, emphasising the importance of thoughtful and relevant social value questions to guide these interactions.

Furthermore, challenges faced by SMEs come to the forefront, with respondents noting the struggle stemming from minimal guidance in providing high-scoring social value responses. The debate around standardisation also takes centre stage, with a notable opposition to rigid frameworks. Survey respondents advocate for flexibility, asserting the need to propose unique social value propositions that align with diverse business contexts.

Transparency and monitoring also emerge as critical components, with recommendations for early communication of social value expectations. Respondents urge buyers to comprehend and actively monitor assigned social value benefits. Additionally, concerns are raised about the integration of social value components in bids, pointing to a current lack of structure and seamless incorporation in this crucial stage of procurement.

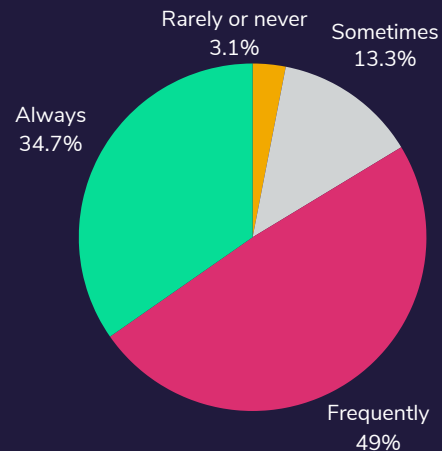
Lastly, the responses highlight a notable confusion among buyers between ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) and Net Zero considerations and the broader concept of social value. This confusion underscores a need for clarity and differentiation in understanding these distinct but interconnected concepts.

In summary, the insights gathered from these responses underscore challenges in engagement, collaboration, and standardisation within the realm of social value. The overarching call is for clearer guidance, increased understanding, and structured processes at the pre-tender stage to facilitate more effective incorporation of social value considerations in procurement practices.

Tender Questions

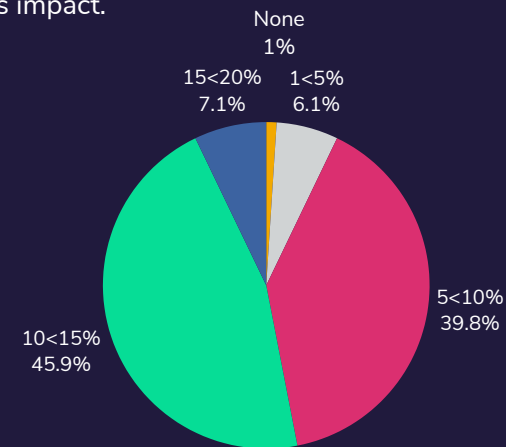
In this section, our aim was to investigate the consistency of social value inclusion across tenders and to understand the typical weightings that respondents encounter.

The results showed an increase in the prevalence and importance of social value in tenders with a mix of economic, environmental and social themes appearing. Relevant and proportionate questions with clear evaluation criteria are still elusive, as are clear indicators of how social value will be monitored during contract delivery. Evaluation appears to be both qualitative and quantitative and the National TOMs is still the dominant measurement model although comments suggest a growing question over the value of input-related metrics versus impact.



Question 17: How frequently in the last year have your bids included social value as an evaluation criterion?

The majority of respondents (83.67%), reported that social value was frequently or always included as an evaluation criterion in their bids. This indicates a growing recognition and prominence of the importance of social value considerations within the procurement landscape. This trend aligns with a broader shift towards prioritising social impact in procurement decisions.



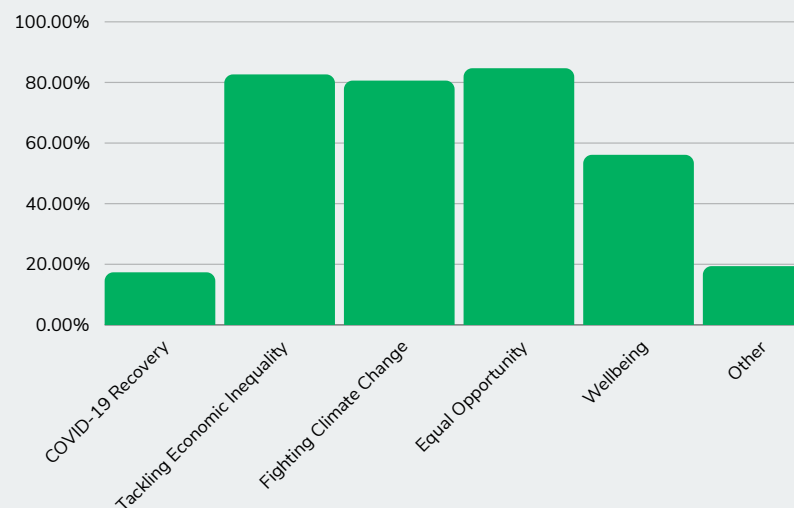
Question 18: What percentage weighting are you seeing attributed to social value Tender Questions?

In 2023, there was a noticeable shift towards higher weightings for social value tender questions compared to 2022. The 10-15% category increased from 34.68% to 45.92%, indicating a growing recognition of social value in tender evaluations. Simultaneously, the 5-10% category remained prevalent, with a slight decrease from 40.32% to 39.80% in 2023. Additionally, respondents assigning 20% or more decreased to zero, signalling a notable move away from exceptionally high weightings. Overall, the data reflected an increasing acknowledgement of social value questions, particularly with a shift towards higher weightings in the 10-15% range.

The next two Questions in this section explore the different themes and models that respondents are finding in tenders.

In framing the question for Question 18, we relied on the UK Government Social Value Model themes, considering that, aside from COVID-19 Recovery, most models adopt similar broad categories.

Tender Questions continued



Question 19: Which themes are you consistently asked to address?

We asked respondents to select all that apply. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that addressing economic inequality (82.65%), combating climate change (80.61%), and promoting equal opportunity (84.69%) were themes consistently addressed in tenders. Wellbeing was a close contender, garnering 56.12% of responses. COVID-19 Recovery is a minority concern at 17.35%. Themes categorised as 'other' also constitute a minority concern, with a response rate of 19.39%.

Question 20: Which measurement models have you seen used in tenders?

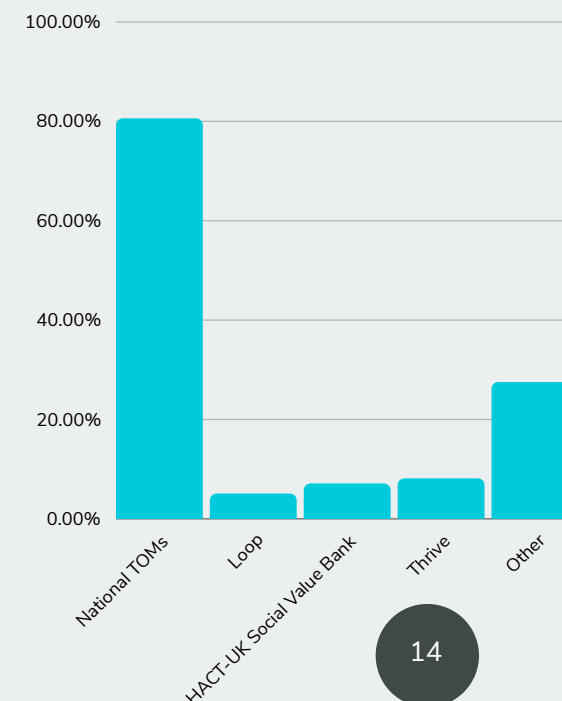
We asked respondents to select all that apply.

The National TOMs model remains widely prevalent, sustaining a high percentage of application in tenders, recording Questions of 80.95% in 2022 and 80.61% in 2023.

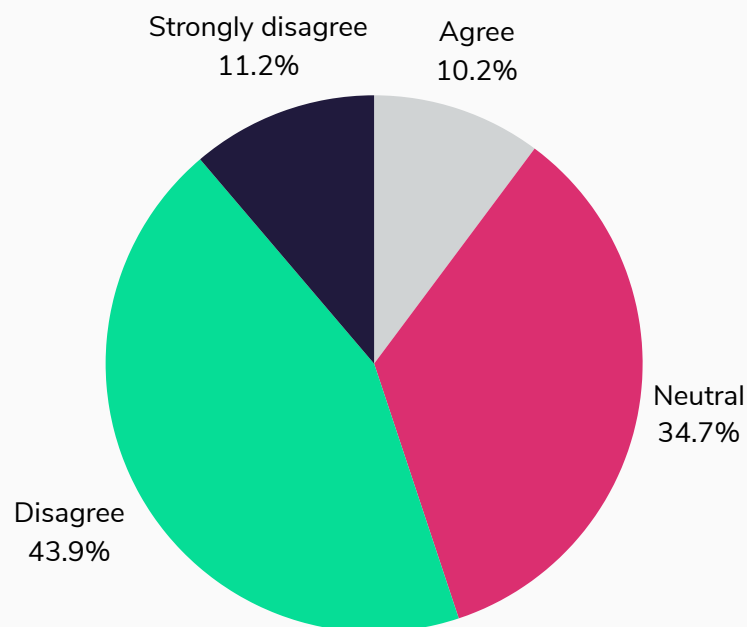
In terms of emerging models, there is a slight increase in the visibility of models such as Loop, which rises from 3.81% in 2022 to 5.10% in 2023, and Thrive, increasing from 5.71% in 2022 to 8.16% in 2023. However, there is a notable decrease in the observed usage of HACT-UK (Social Value Bank), with a drop from 20% in 2022 to 7.14% in 2023.

Conversely, the 'Other' category demonstrates consistent representation, accounting for 26.67% in 2022 and experiencing a slight increase to 27.55% in 2023. This suggests an ongoing diversity in the models encountered in tenders.

The other measurement models, as specified in free text, indicate a diverse range of models and criteria used by respondents. These include various client-specific frameworks, government-led models like the Social Value Model, and industry-specific schemes such as the Considerate Constructor Scheme. Some respondents mention a lack of specific models, the use of internal scoring criteria, or variations depending on the client's requirements. The responses reflect a wide array of approaches to social value measurement and evaluation in different contexts.

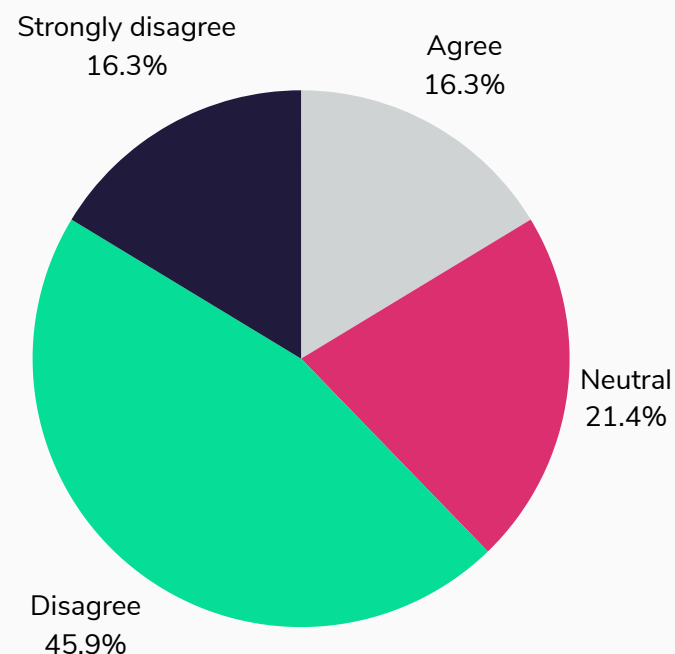


Tender Questions continued



Question 21: The evaluation criteria for social value tender questions are meaningful and clearly defined (e.g., outputs, outcomes, and example impact).

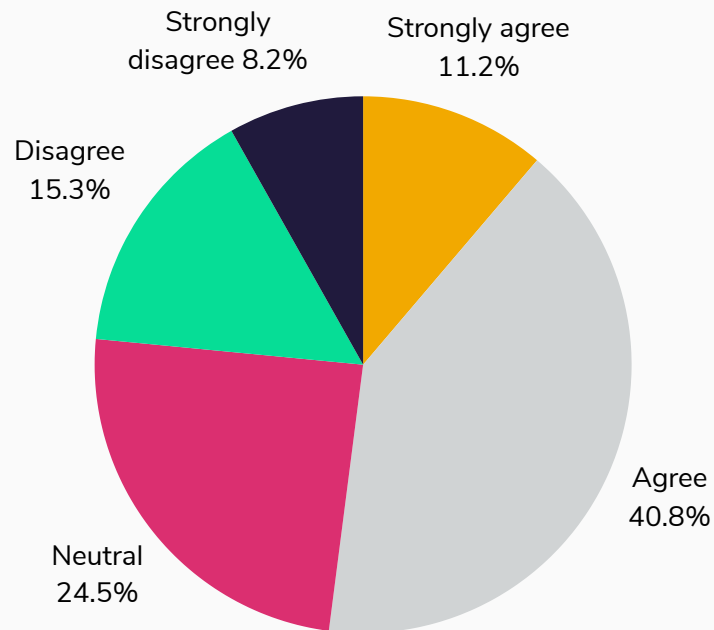
A significant proportion of respondents (89.10%), who strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, underscores a prevailing perception of ambiguity or inadequacy in the existing criteria. This suggests a common sentiment among bid professionals that the standards for evaluating social value questions lack clarity, making it difficult for them to comprehensively understand and address these criteria in their bids. The substantial percentage of disagreement underscores a potential area for improvement in defining and communicating social value evaluation criteria, emphasising the importance of establishing clear and well-defined metrics for a more effective and transparent procurement process.



Question 22: The social value tender questions are relevant and proportionate to the contract.

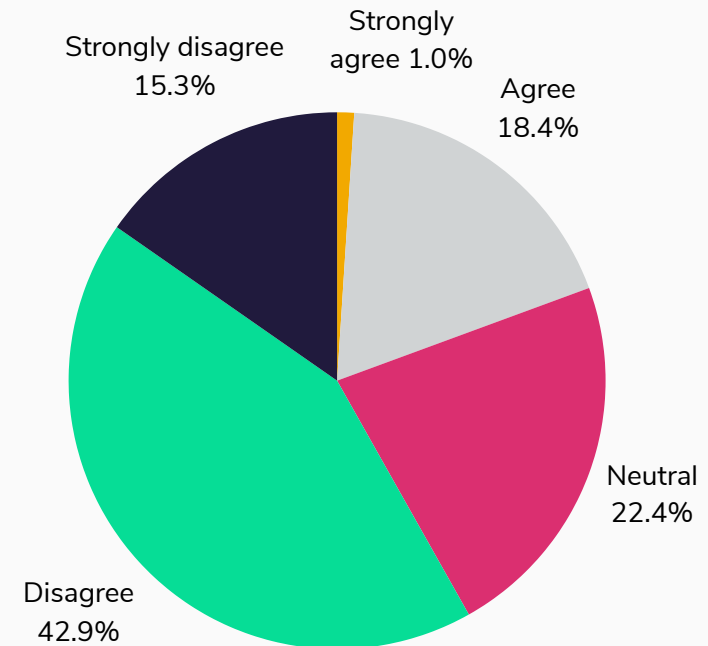
The majority of respondents (62.25%), encompassing those who disagree and strongly disagree with the statement regarding the relevance and proportionality of social value tender questions to the contract, highlights a prevailing concern among professionals. This indicates a perceived misalignment between the current formulation of social value questions and their appropriateness for the specific requirements and nature of contracts. This trend mirrors findings from last year's survey.

Tender Questions continued



Question 23: I am often required to provide the 'quantitative value' of social value delivered.

The responses concerning the frequency of being asked to provide the 'quantitative value' of social value delivered reveal distinct trends. In 2023, a majority of respondents (52.04%), acknowledge this ask from buyers, with 11.22% strongly agreeing and 40.82% agreeing. On the other hand, 23.47% (15.31% disagree and 8.16% strongly disagree) show reluctance or opposition to this statement. These insights indicate a mixed landscape regarding the expectation to provide quantitative value.



Question 24: The method for monitoring social value during delivery is made clear at the tender stage.

The majority of respondents (57.14%), encompassing those who disagreed and strongly disagreed, articulated apprehensions about the clarity of the method for monitoring social value during delivery at the tender stage. This points to a significant perception among bid professionals that the procedures for monitoring social value commitments after the tender stage lack clarity.

Tender Questions continued

Question 25: We also provided a free-format question where respondents could give additional information and insights relating to the Tender Questions section. Below we provide a summary of the key points. The full text is in Appendix 2.

Survey participants have raised notable concerns about the evaluation of social value in tenders. A significant issue highlighted is the lack of clarity and subjectivity in the scoring criteria for social value questions, leading to ambiguity and subjective assessments. Government bids are noted to prioritise social value, whereas other sectors tend to focus more on environmental aspects, resulting in a disparity in expectations during the tendering process.

Inconsistency and challenges related to relevance are identified, with a suggestion that buyers require better training to formulate appropriate and relevant questions. Additionally, the criteria for demonstrating social value are sometimes deemed irrelevant or unattainable. Social value is occasionally perceived as a mere tick-box exercise by buyers, and unclear evaluation processes may not accurately reflect a genuine commitment.

Challenges extend across different sectors, with variations in social value requirements between public and private sectors posing difficulties. The application of a single framework for all sectors is seen as problematic. Existing frameworks for measuring social value face criticism for being input-based, and restrictive word limits on responses hinder the ability to provide detailed information.

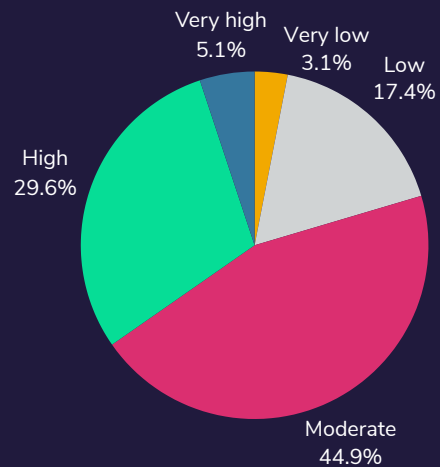
Respondents mentioned the need for standardisation in the form of Social Value Self-Assessment Questionnaires (SAQs) with sector-specific scoring systems. There is a consensus on the need for improved training for both buyers and vendors to enhance understanding and effectiveness in the tender process.

In summary, the concerns expressed by survey participants revolve around the need for clearer guidelines, standardisation, and enhanced training to ensure a fair and effective social value evaluation process in tender submissions.

Tender Responses

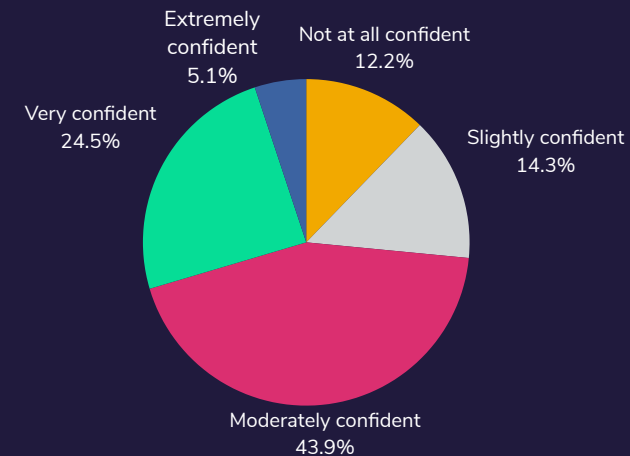
This section of the survey explored the effort and confidence levels related to creating social value responses and the quality of responses.

It appears that average effort levels remain broadly proportionate with the weighting. Although confidence levels in creating a response are lower than other parts of the survey might suggest and the ability to create meaningful and innovative responses varies, there is an increase in achieving scores of over 60%.



Question 26: How much effort is invested in addressing social value questions?

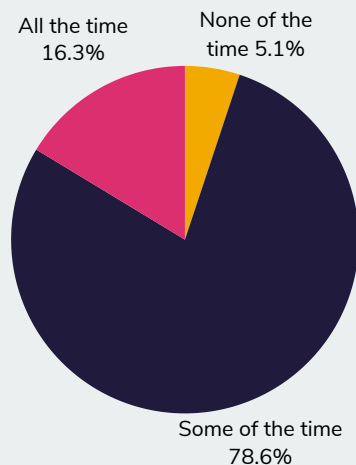
Over a third of respondents (34.69%) scored high or very high to the effort being applied to addressing social value questions in bids. It can be interpreted that those who responded as moderate (44.90%), confirm that their effort aligns to the weighting proportion of the bid. Surprisingly, one in five respondents (20.41%) of respondents invest low or very low resources into social value questions.



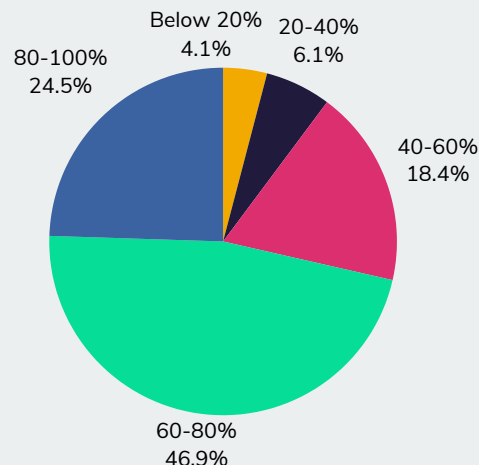
Question 27: To what extent do you feel confident in comprehending and competently responding to social value questions?

Fewer than one-third (29.59%) of respondents have strong levels of confidence in comprehending and competently responding to social value tender questions. With 43.88% of respondents feeling moderately confident, the most concerning result is that only 26.53% scored slightly confident or not at all confident. When compared to the 2022 survey, there has been no positive improvement to the confidence of respondents.

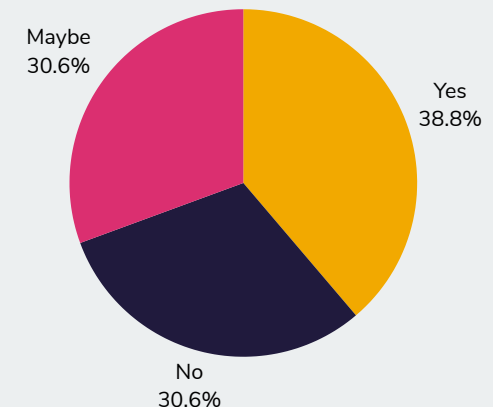
Tender Responses continued



Question 28: Are you able to offer meaningful and innovative responses to the social value questions posed?
Only 16.33% of respondents are consistently able to offer meaningful and innovative responses to the social value questions posed. The majority of respondents (78.57%) only feel able to do so some of the time. Whilst 5.10% feel unable to offer meaningful and innovative responses at any time, this has seen a positive improvement of 5.82% since the 2022 survey.



Question 29: On average, how well do your social value responses score?
Just 24.49% of respondents score 80% or more for their social value responses and the most popular scoring bracket came out at 60-80% (46.94%). A significant percentage (18.37%) are receiving scores of 40-60% and the more concerning outcome is that 10.20% of respondents score 40% or lower. On a positive note, we have seen a 13.90% improvement in scores of 60% or above from the 2022 survey.



Question 30: In the past year, has social value made the difference in winning or losing a bid you have responded to?
When it comes to winning or losing a bid, the yes response came out slightly ahead at 38.78%. The remaining respondents were equally divided on the impact of the social value element with 30.61% confirming no and 30.61% of respondents expressing uncertainty as to whether it played a deciding role in the award outcome.

Tender Responses continued

Question 31: We also provided a free-format question where respondents could give additional information and insights relating to the Tender Responses section. Below we provide a summary of the key points. The full text is in Appendix 3.

Respondents expressed concern about their ability to be innovative in their commitments. Innovation seemed more challenging for those in service-based businesses and national companies trying to formulate local commitments. Supplier creativity may be improved by more relevant and proportionate questions and a better understanding of buyers' requirements. Vague and general questions were cited as unhelpful, as were questions clearly copied and pasted from other tenders without tailoring to the specific procurement.

Concerns were raised over how much social value is expected by buyers – are there/should there be guidelines relating to the relationship between social value and contract value? An emphasis on quantitative value can make the opportunity unaffordable in some cases, and there was one suggestion that social value can sometimes be perceived as a bribe – whoever offers the most gets the highest score. There was also concern over whether buyers (and consultants supporting social value procurement) understand the value of what is being offered when it is being measured using a standard framework – valid offerings with high impact may carry a low input value and be assessed to be worth less.

There was a recognition of the need for more internal education across organisations, so the social value burden does not fall purely onto the bid teams – there needs to be cooperation across businesses to formulate viable commitments. Some organisations are increasing their social value resources with experts and dedicated social value staff.

The subject of space constraints was raised with a request for a 2,000-word count.

Rather than social value, private sector bids contain sustainable investing questions, which are more of a 'tick-box' exercise.

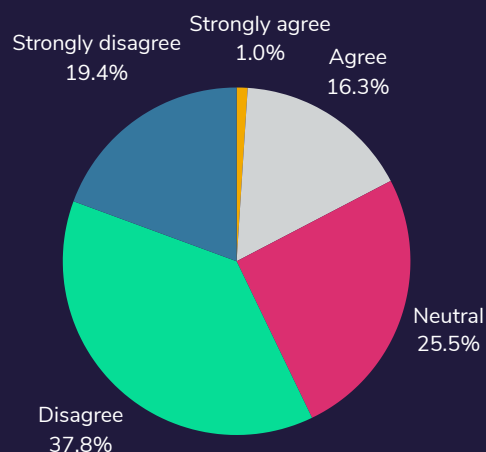
In summary, suppliers are rising to the challenge, increasing knowledge and resources, and experiencing some success as a result. They would be helped by improved engagement, question-setting and evaluation guidance.



Post Tender

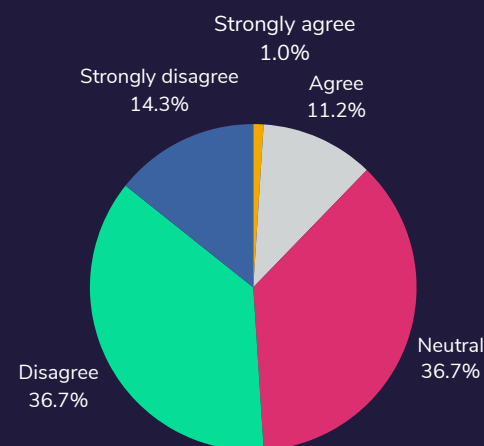
The purpose of including social value in tenders is to make a genuine impact on society – this will only happen if social value is delivered as part of contract fulfilment. We wanted to find out if respondents were being given feedback to improve and being monitored and measured on their social value tender commitments. In both cases, the results were disappointing with limited feedback and limited accountability. Where there was contractual liability, financial penalties were applied for non-delivery.

The results showed that there was little evidence of buyers really caring about social value.



Question 32: After tender evaluation, you receive meaningful feedback on your social value responses.

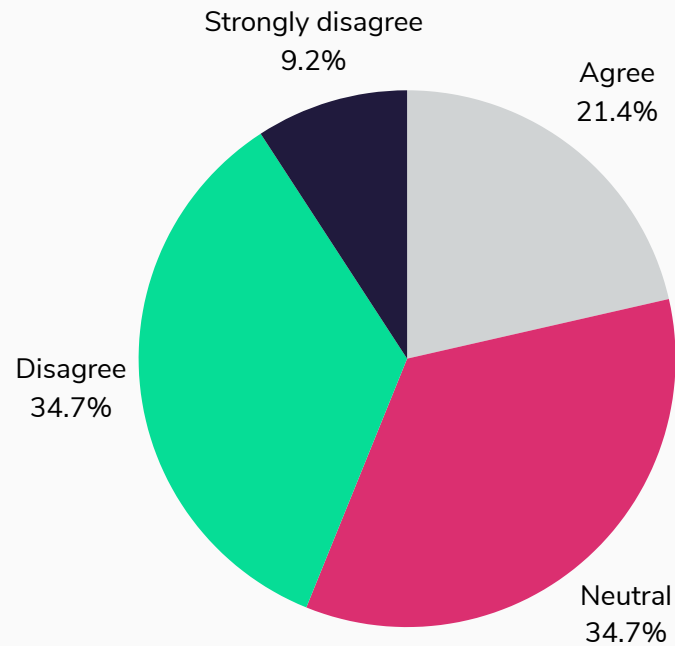
Just 17.35% of respondents confirmed they agree or strongly agree they receive meaningful feedback on their social value responses. A quarter of respondents (25.51%) were non-committal about this and, of concern, 57.15% of respondents confirmed they do not receive meaningful feedback. The results are unchanged from views expressed in 2022.



Question 33: Our clients always hold us to account for delivering promised social value as per our submitted tenders.

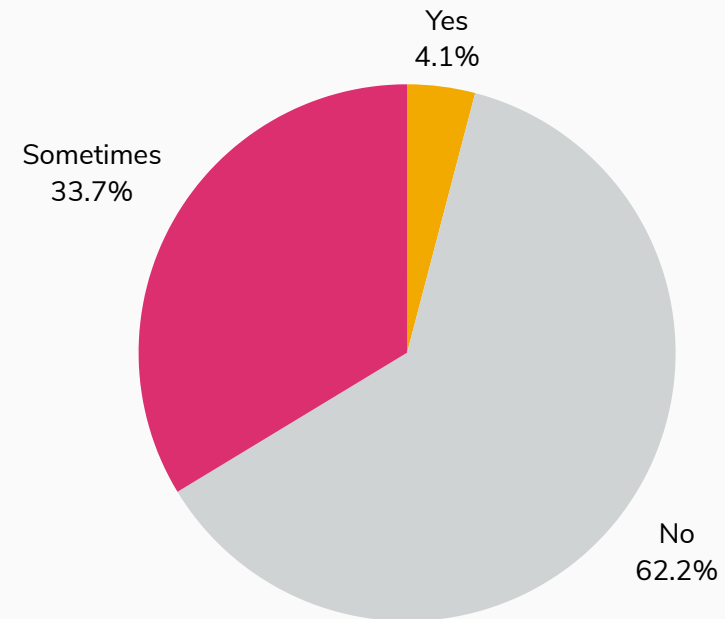
Fundamentally, only 12.24% of respondents are held to account for delivering promised social value per their tenders. Over half of respondents (51.02%) confirm they are not held to account, and 36.73% are non-committal on this point. In the worst-case scenario, does this suggest that the influence of social value is realising only 12.24% of its full potential?

Post Tender continued



Question 34: We believe our clients really care about delivering social value

When it comes to perceptions about whether clients care about delivering social value, the results were divided, with only 21.43% expressing real and positive care. The remainder of respondents were equally split between neutral (34.69%) and disagree or strongly disagree (43.87%) suggesting that the altruistic motives behind social value are being lost in the execution of the tendering process.



Question 35: Do your contracts have penalties for non-delivery of social value commitments?

Only 4.08% of contracts have penalties for non-delivery of social value commitments and 62.24% say they observe no penalties. Comments support this outcome.

Question 36:

Where respondents selected 'Yes' or 'Sometimes,' we set a supplementary question asking them to provide additional details regarding any consequences or penalties they have faced due to a failure to deliver. 17 respondents (17%) confirmed they had seen financial penalties and/or termination for breach of contract as consequences.

Post Tender continued

Question 37: We also provided a free-format question where respondents could give additional information and insights relating to the Post Tender section. Below we provide a summary of the key points. The full text is in Appendix 4.

The comments suggested an appetite amongst suppliers to be held to account and a disappointment when buyers lose interest (possibly because they saw it as a tick-box procurement exercise) or lack the resources to follow through. Suppliers see social value as a collaborative matter and need buyers to contribute to organising social value activities. A lack of post-award engagement can impact a supplier's ability to deliver. It was suggested that training would help buyers to understand how to monitor social value. Only one respondent reported seeing an increase in monthly monitoring of social value KPIs.

Respondents commented on the difficulty in getting feedback. This may correlate with instances of unclear scoring and evaluation guidance. Concerns were raised about potential bias favouring companies with greater resources. There was also disappointment at being unable to cite successful social value in a published case study.

The comments pointed to a high degree of variability among buyers and a generally lower level of maturity outside the construction sector. There was a perception that central government takes social value more seriously than other parts of the public sector; others view it as optional.

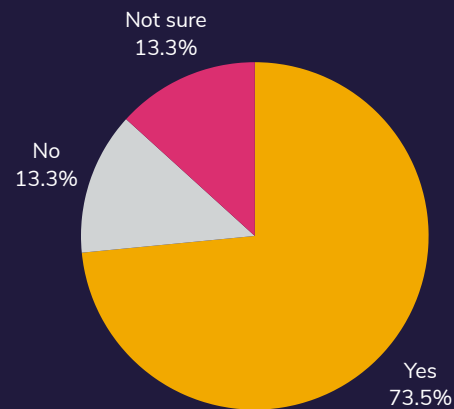
Overall, this is an area for significant improvement on the buyer side.

Business Impact

We wanted to understand the overall impact social value is having on respondents' employers and/or clients' businesses.

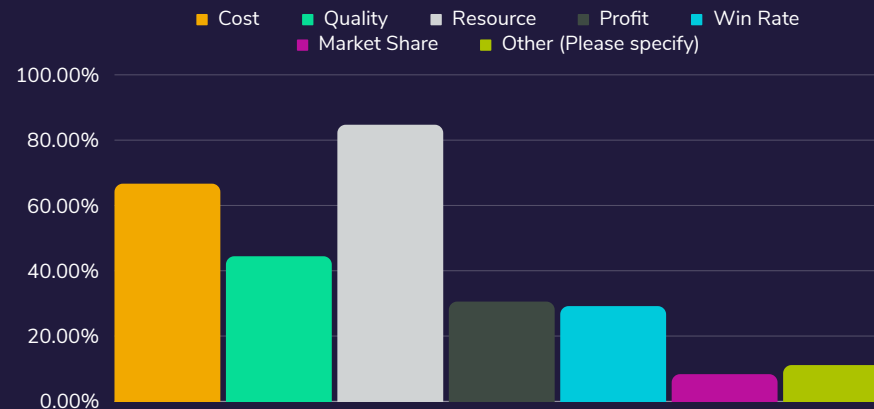
The survey showed that the majority of businesses have felt the impact of social value in a variety of positive and negative ways. Many have C-Suite buy-in, and the larger companies have dedicated social value resources. This is leading to increased knowledge and confidence.

Pure social value accreditation is not widely prevalent, but there is an increasing number of B-Corp-certified companies, and a variety of other related accreditations are cited.



Question 38: Has the presence of social value requirements had an impact on your organisation?

In terms of organisational impact, 73.47% of respondents confirmed that the presence of social value requirements had an impact on their organisation. To ascertain whether this is a positive or negative impact, Question 39 probed this further.



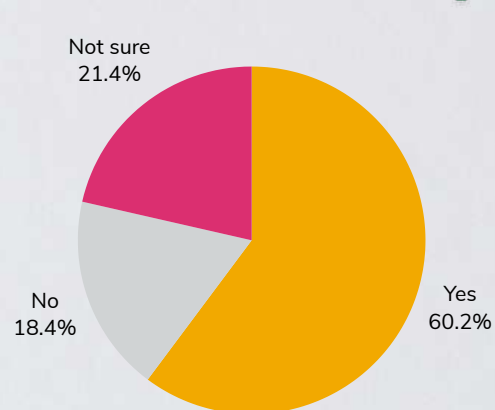
Question 39: Please specify the particular ways in which the presence of social value requirements has impacted your organisation.

We asked respondents to select all that apply.

Organisational impact of social value requirements has manifested itself significantly on matters of resource (84.72%), cost (66.67%), quality (44.44%), profit (30.56%), and win rate (29.17%). These numbers are broadly unchanged from the 2022 survey results.

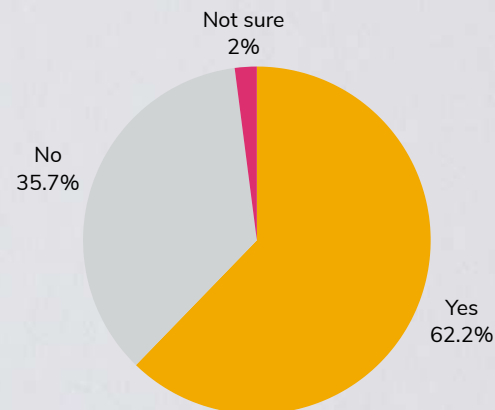
Respondents who selected 'other' cited positive and negative impacts. Positive impacts included introducing new social value strategies and initiatives, employee wellbeing and engagement, and general awareness of social value. Negative impacts included extra bid time and resources.

Business Impact continued



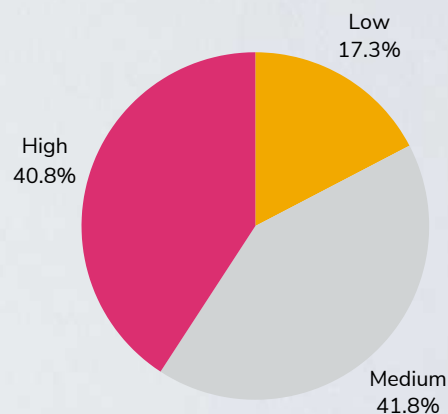
Question 40: Does your organisation have C-Suite level buy-in for social value?

Respondents confirmed generally positive C-Suite buy-in at 60.20% whilst 18.37% say they have no C-suite buy-in. One in five (21.43%) of respondents are unsure, which means by implication, that these associated bid teams are not having any C-suite engagement on this matter.



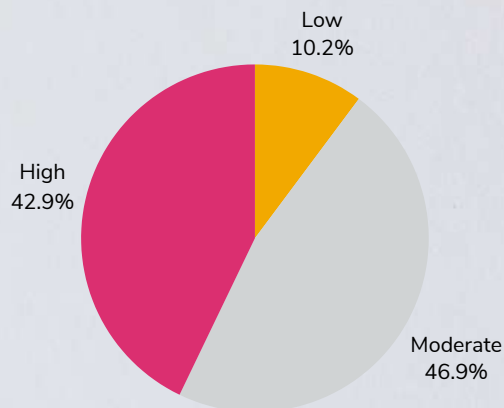
Question 41: Does your organisation have a dedicated person who leads social value efforts?

We observed an increase of 16.01% to 62.24% in organisations having a dedicated person who leads the social value/ESG effort. This means, however, that over one-third (35.71%) of organisations do not have a dedicated social value champion.



Question 42: How would you rate your organisation's level of social value knowledge?

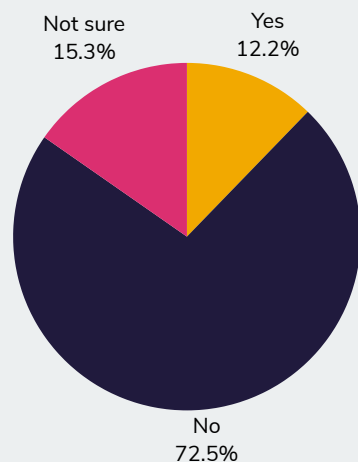
Respondents have confirmed 82.66% of a high or medium level of social value knowledge. This has improved by 10.01% since the 2022 survey.



Question 43: How would you assess your individual confidence in understanding, discussing and communicating social value?

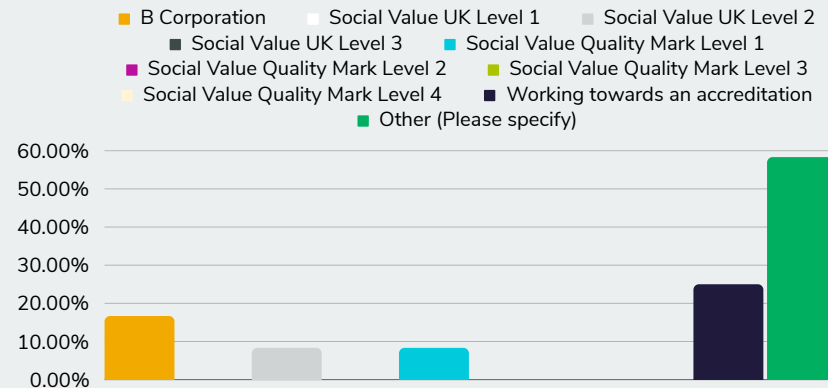
Individual confidence in understanding, discussing, and communicating social value saw 42.86% high response rate and 46.94% response rate and one in ten individuals (10.20%) possessing low confidence. The survey has seen a 10% increase in high personal understanding of social value since the 2022 survey.

Business Impact continued



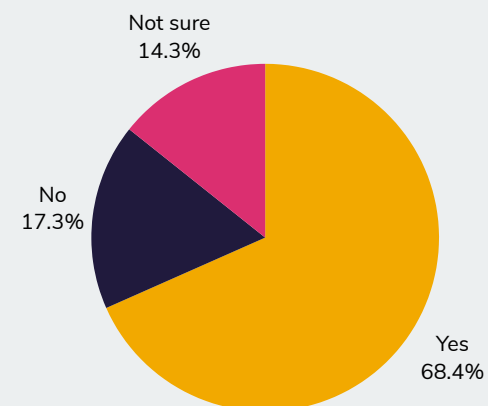
Question 44: Does your organisation have any form of social value accreditation?

72.45% of respondents confirmed they have no social value accreditation and 15.31% are not sure. With only 12.24% confirmed as yes, this may mean that social value accreditation is not an agenda item for private sector businesses, yet we learnt from the responses to Question 45 that 25% are working towards an accreditation.



Question 45: Please select from the following accreditations.

We asked respondents to select *all that apply*. An optional question, respondents confirmed that 25.00% are working towards an accreditation. In support of the 58.33% who confirmed 'other' they noted Constructionline Social Value certification, Disability Confident, EcoVadis and other environmental accreditations.



Question 46: Is social value becoming an increased overhead for your organisation?

The majority of respondents (68.37%) reported they were experiencing an increase in company overhead, with 17.35% reporting they had not. Although this year we introduced a 'not sure' option, the results were broadly aligned with 2022 and indicate that social value is impacting businesses of all sizes.

Business Impact continued

Question 47: We also provided a free-format question where respondents could give additional information and insights relating to the Business Impact section. Below we provide a summary of the key points. The full text is in Appendix 5.

The comments revealed further evidence of businesses being committed to developing social value for the good of their companies, with executive commitment, and not purely as a bidding requirement. Examples included introducing paid volunteer days and charity donations. There was an acknowledgement that social value can help to differentiate from the competition. We noted a desire for corporate initiatives to be considered by evaluators.

However, there was also renewed recognition of the cost of social value to a business and the need to maintain profit levels. Social value was cited as expensive by some respondents, especially for small businesses, requiring investment in resources – costs need to be recovered.

The subject of a standardised model was raised again to ensure consistency and fairness in evaluating and measuring social value. The idea of an international standard was raised.

Private companies have been working with ESG for decades, but social value is gaining traction and represents a new challenge for these businesses. There was a suggestion that regulators need to have social value on their agenda.

In summary, this section reinforced the fact that some suppliers are embedding social value into their companies even if it is financially difficult, others are waiting for increased demand from their client base or evidence of return on investment.



General Comments

Question 48: The next question was a free-format question where respondents could add anything else they wanted to mention. Below we provide a summary of the key points. The full text is in Appendix 6.

The final 24 comments were varied, and generally repeated points already made.

Positive highlights included:

- Strong commitments and high scores are being achieved
- Acknowledgement of the importance of data collection and reporting
- Role models such as Bristol City Council – a leading light in relevant, proportional and effective social value
- The value of research to inform social value commitments

Areas for improvement included:

- Lack of understanding, pointing to the need for continued education for buyers and suppliers
- More contract-specific engagement and general engagement from industry to Government to help create a fair and appropriate social value system
- Better question-setting to help set suppliers up for success
- Standardised measurement frameworks
- Gathering data in a timely and consistent fashion

Areas of concern included:

- The rise of a commercialised 'social impact industry.'
- Social value becoming a box-ticking exercise.

Ideas included:

- A 'sentiment survey' of business leaders – are social value requirements changing their views of how they do business or are they just ticking boxes to win contracts?
- Sharing examples of good, tailored questions with APMP members to help guide pre-tender conversations

Questions 49-51: comments on the structure of the survey, follow-up permissions, and personal data were requested but are not included in this report.



To conclude...

Our survey told us...

There is no doubt that social value is taking hold – over the last 18 months, more and more people have ‘woken up and smelt the coffee’ – they realise it is here and here to stay. Knowledge and confidence are improving amongst buyers and suppliers – great news. And we are heartened to see that social value is having a positive impact on some organisations’ win rates.

However, the pace of change is slow. There are examples of well-designed procurements and impactful follow-through, but there are many more instances where social value feels ‘bolted-on’ rather than ‘designed in.’

Pre-tender market engagement needs to increase, and we need more context and consistency in setting relevant and proportionate questions and evaluation criteria. Given a good social value ‘ask’, suppliers are capable of creating meaningful and innovative commitments and scoring well.

Having won a contract, without a doubt, delivery accountability needs to improve from all sides.

A word on standardisation

We can see from the survey that the majority of respondents favoured a standard framework or model that everyone can use to measure social value. This may be for qualitative evaluation or to set delivery key performance indicators (KPIs).

The comments kept looping back to this subject. Some in favour, some pushing back strongly on the idea, preferring an open-minded and flexible approach.

We plan to explore this further as it leaves us wondering whether the interest in standardisation is born out of frustration with multiple models or a growing concern that social value is becoming commercialised. Either way, a proliferation of models and frameworks, many of which cost money, only increases the burden on suppliers. The suggestion of an international standard, certifiable perhaps, could start with a British Standard.

Where next?

Our advice to members

Through our member engagement and education activities, we will continue to support and reinforce the importance of:

- Top-down commitment to social value, company-wide education and relevant policies and working practices to underpin contract-specific commitments
- Early social value conversations with clients during the pre-tender phase and researching their social value strategies
- Clarification questions to expand understanding and iron out any ambiguity
- Designing and delivering contract-specific commitments with associated metrics
- Tender responses that fully, clearly and concisely explain your commitments in terms of what, how, how much, when, who and where
- Taking accountability for setting up Social Value Delivery Plans with transparent reporting and continuous improvement

Our requests to buyers

For social value to be a success, suppliers need buyers' help throughout the procurement and contract delivery lifecycle. Our top requests are:

- More internal and external pre-tender engagement, so social value is firmly designed into the requirements
- Context for social value questions – you know what is important to you and why, so please share it
- Relevant and proportionate questions with clear evaluation criteria including whether evaluation is quantitative and/or qualitative
- Sensible answers to clarification questions
- Realistic response lengths for the questions asked
- Helpful feedback after contract award
- Sufficient resources to support supplier commitments
- Contractually binding Social Value Delivery Plans – without these, nothing will change

We will share this document as widely as we can with APMP UK members, buyers and social value influencers. Together, we can make a difference.



Appendices
1-6 contain the free-
format comments
from each section of
the survey.

Appendix 1: Pre-Tender

"Pre-tender engagement, in general, is sparse; many procurement professionals are unsure or nervous about talking to suppliers in both the public and private sectors."

"There needs to be more engagement between Government and Public Sector Contracting Authorities and Suppliers. Little thought goes into the type of SV questions and the connection to the tender/opportunity."

"SV questions should be better researched by the client and based on relevant demographic and social insights and data from the area in which the project or programme is to be performed. This would allow more targeted and meaningful commitments from bidders. KPIs and estimates on what could realistically be achieved would be factored in and not notional/guesswork."

"The UK Charity sector should be much more engaged."

"Social value rarely feels well thought through."

"We are experiencing many requirements that suppliers don't understand the cost implications of (for example, Real Living Wage). Not all start-ups/small businesses can afford to pay it and meet the customer's price point. It has not yet been raised in early engagement. We've also been asked for mandatory SME engagement in the contract workforce (the solution requirement would not result in contractor engagement for any supplier)."

"There should be a requirement for the buyer to consider their strategic priorities in relation to the social value model and state preferences for MACs."

"The issue with a standardised framework is that it leads to only large companies exceeding. The SV Model is successful as it should be an open playing field."

"SV is often seen as an 'add on' within defence."

"Making a 'one-size fits all' framework usually disadvantages suppliers in the professional services sector, so I would prefer a range of standard frameworks."

Appendix 1: Pre-Tender

"As an SME we struggle to identify activities to incorporate into social value responses that the client would score highly. The guidance is minimal, it always feels like I am shooting in the dark."

"At the pre-tender stage, it would be helpful if there was prior notice of social value expectation from the stakeholders and clients alike; this would make it clearer and more transparent of the requirements we as consultants are trying to achieve."

"It would be useful for clients to understand the value they are assigning to the Social Value Benefits that may be derived from the engagement, etc, that we deliver and how this will be measured/reported."

"Many of the bids I manage include a social value component, but they are usually quite randomly structured and assessed and often appear to be bolted on as an afterthought with little integration to the RFI / ITT / RFP overall."

"The people running the tender exercises, e.g. Clerks for Parish councils and Procurement Officers for the larger councils, are rarely the ones who want to include social value. This usually seems to be dictated to them. I think if they were more aligned with the ethos of social value and the reasons it should be included, we could have more of a collaborative discussion at this point about 1) making it relevant and specific to the community's needs and 2) aligning budgets more appropriately to the scoring criteria for the tender."

"Social value information is often posted on the client's website, particularly for public sector clients."

"Enough information as possible on how to create a lasting social value impact and the needs within the local community."

"Clients like the idea of delivering social value but rarely have time to properly monitor it or put it into practice. This results in a lot of effort at the tender stage to get the marks for the question, but in real life, the clients do not follow through with actual implementation and monitoring."

"We use the Social Value Portal and TOMS to record and verify social value."

"I've never come across a client including social value considerations at the pre-tender stage. It would be good to see clients considering how they can really maximise the benefits from the beginning of the process."

Appendix 1: Pre-Tender

"I would like to strongly state my opposition to a standardised framework for measuring social value. Although this may be useful in some industries, it certainly will not in others, and if there is a standardised framework, some organisations are likely to use it as a catch-all, similar to the TOMS framework. As such, I'd encourage all organisations to be open-minded with regard to social value and allow bidders to propose their own social value proposition without having to work within the constraints of a restrictive catchall framework that's often not appropriate. For example, apprenticeships make sense in construction but are not at all practicable in healthcare. Additionally, locally based organisations can more easily deliver social value in specific localities as opposed to national organisations, which may have to deliver social value on a national scale, again pointing to the need for procuring organisations to seek flexibility in social value propositions."

"Many customers or prospects get mixed up between ESG/ Net Zero and social value."

"A good number still do not understand social value."

"In my experience, engagement at the pre-tender stage is typically non-existent, and on the odd, rare occasion, it is kept vague until the tender is issued."

"Different tenders for services have different requirements - consultants need to be engaged at an early stage."

"I've been trying to do research for expected ITTs. It has been extremely difficult to find anything relevant online. A) examples of SV offers from similar organisations B) the customer's SV strategy or documentation."

"There needs to be a standard for each local government, which has geographically-led 'needs and wants,' and central Government, noting the SVM is better than nothing!"

"There is an onus on bid teams to include SV as an agenda item at pre-briefing meetings and get better at trying to pin down the buyer."

"More education around social value and case study examples within the RFP to motivate responders to provide appropriate responses."

"Buyers appear to be going for the first framework they find that relates to SV and apply that to the bid, regardless of scope. It is impossible for us to apply SV commitment when requirements are so heavily skewed to long-term, multi-million-pound construction contracts. One size does NOT fit all!"

Appendix 2: Tender Questions

"The scoring for these questions is often vague and subjective; or the complete opposite and entirely focused on quantitative deliverables which are not considered in the context of the community."

"Currently Government bids are leading the way in social value. All other bids are more focused on the environment as opposed to the social element."

"There is generally a lack of appropriateness with the services being procured. I feel that procuring agencies need more training in how to set questions and allow companies of all sizes to demonstrate their additionality in their response. Only recently have I seen a question that recognises existing performance; this means that the worst performers often do better, whereas top existing performers find it harder to demonstrate new activities."

"Very often the criteria for demonstrating social value in the contract are irrelevant or impossible to achieve."

"In the investment management world (financial services), social value is usually included within 'Impact Investing' or similar, all of which are highly regulated by financial regulators such as the PRA or FCA. This can mean that the measurement criteria overall are clear and very specific, but it also means that social value as intended in the UK Act is buried within lots of other goals."

"We offer the method for monitoring (rather than the client), so far this has been acceptable. I was surprised on the recent call with CCS that Covid-19 was being retained as a theme; I've not responded to a bid that's used this theme."

"Should relate back to buyer priorities."

"I've had to stay neutral on this based on the wide variety of organisations that we deal with - for example, public sector organisations (and those that supply heavily into public sector) have very specific and heavily weighted social value questions, whereas for many private sector questions, this is usually minimal - either focusing broadly on D&I or asking about carbon reduction plans (as we work predominantly in Energy and Utilities)."

"They seem like they have been copied from tenders for infrastructure contracts and not professional services."

Appendix 2: Tender Questions

"The buyers don't seem to have taken the fact that our industry is regulated into account when setting the questions."

"Having a single framework applicable to all could be challenging."

"Most often seen as a tick box exercise by some clients."

"Clients are expecting us to 'do' everything around social value, but if we are not in the same area or sector, it is often very difficult for us to determine what is good social value for them. What delivers the most benefit to them?"

"Without naming specific departments, some of the worst/least suitable questions arise on CCS framework mini-competitions. In the last 18 months, I have seen "Do you agree to support [dept]'s social value policy? (y/n)" with 10% of marks attached to it (who says "no" to that!) and a requirement to support employment of ex-offenders against a requirement where this would be illegal under the scope of services being provided."

"There seems to be broad acceptance that these sections need to be included but firmly tick-box with no link back to the services being procured and - one imagines - no actual expectation that the SV promised is delivered later, as there is no apparent benefit to the department arising out of the SV being committed to."

"This is tricky to answer because the approach is quite patchy and varies greatly from council to council. The councils that use the National TOMs are the most transparent and, therefore, easy to respond to (I've not used the other measurement models listed). Other councils are passionate about social value but are quite clearly still getting to grips with what to do with it, and therefore it can be difficult to respond to them as I don't think they even know what they are asking for sometimes. And then there are the councils who have clearly just put social value in because they have to or think they have to, and therefore it becomes a tick-box exercise. There is also an added layer of difficulty for us because the business I work for falls into construction, however, these are relatively small-scale construction projects (Playgrounds / Outdoor Gyms) - but because it falls into the category of 'construction' the social value targets we are sometimes given can be completely out of scope for the budgets that we typically encounter (think £100k playground VS multi-million-pound road improvements)."

"Often social value questions seem to be targeted for Works and construction contracts. When working on short-term services contracts, factors such as being able to hire in a local region are irrelevant."

Appendix 2: Tender Questions

"Many of the bids I manage include a social value component but they are usually quite randomly structured and assessed and often appear to be bolted on as an afterthought with little integration to the RFI / ITT / RFP overall."

"The tender questions often allude to the relevant social value policies and principles but leave it to the supplier to identify links to the specific tender requirements and to expand on how they could be implemented or incorporated as part of the proposed solution."

"As a bidder, we make it clear how it will be monitored - this does not come from the client side. The question is not clear: who is providing the method for monitoring at the tender stage?"

"Often they are not questions at all. Just copied and pasted text from the SV Model."

"My experience is that they are broad questions, only asked for gov/public sector contracts, don't have any clear scoring criteria, and always are 10% of the evaluation criteria (as per gov instruction), never more."

"There is huge variation between how SV is applied between clients."

"Clients like the idea of delivering social value but rarely have time to properly monitor it or put it into practice. This results in a lot of effort at the tender stage to get the marks for the question, but in real life, the clients do not follow through with actual implementation and monitoring."

"Customers really do not seem to understand how to evaluate answers or measure achievement."

"I would again like to state my opposition to catchall standardised frameworks, such as TOMS."

"Although clients often have a good idea of how they would like social value quantifying, it is rarely standardised meaning in depth calculations for each bid."

"Clients are including social value questions in their bids without giving any thought to what would be considered a reasonable level of commitment for bidders based on the duration and value of the contract being procured. It is clear that they are including SV questions because they feel that they should or want to pass on the responsibility for their own commitments to their supply chain but without any clear direction, guidance or accountability."

Appendix 2: Tender Questions

"Sometimes very detailed tender questions, disproportionate to the size of the business opportunity."

"The method is only made clear if we develop it in our response."

"We have also seen tenders in 2023 where the client has stated that social value commitment and delivery will be mandatory on a particular framework regardless of whether those appointed suppliers get any work from the framework, expecting the framework contractors to deliver ridiculous amounts of social value annually at their own cost despite not having received any work through the framework."

"Social value requirements are typically not appropriate to contract value, are unclear and can vary considerably in the measurement tool being used, if at all. This has been the case for many years and has not improved. Additionally, feedback post tender is largely non-existent."

"There is an assumption that the tenderer understands the requirements and inputs. There needs to be better training on this for SMEs."

"Re. 23 [quantitative evaluation] if using the TOMS framework."

"Often, I see 500-word limits for a social value question with 6 sub-components and then receive feedback that the response was not detailed. This gives the perception that the buyer doesn't truly value a decent social value response."

"Some clients have moved from including one social value question at the required weighting to several. A recent tender evaluated 6 MAC questions, each requiring a quantitative proposal, evidence, timed action plan. This is disproportionate effort."

"Frameworks for measuring social value are generally input rather than impact-based. Consequently, it feels as if a lot of the procurement role is to collate numbers, but of dubious quality."

"Word limits on SV responses are crippling sometimes."

"It takes longer to do the SV response than the ITT responses in some cases, due to the level of research that is required."

Appendix 2: Tender Questions

"It takes longer to do the SV response than the ITT responses in some cases, due to the level of research that is required."

"If you are in sectors where contracts are high volume and lower value, SV is really hard to do. That's in contrast to say construction and civil engineering - high-value contracts which create employment and training opportunities etc."

"So, there needs to be a recognised SV SAQ with a scoring system for certain types/values of sectors/procurements which simply give 'credits' for pre-planned ESG commitments, activities and policies. This would simplify a lot of returns. These could have branching options aligned to the buyer's key themes."

"This would cut out the example where your business already offers, say, 100 apprenticeships a year, but they may not be in the same locality as the buyer! These challenges often apply to local government tenders, which are more inconsistent/not thought out/cut and paste."

"Re SVM Covid-19 theme - needs renaming to Supporting UK Economic Growth /eliminating overlap with other themes."

"I've rarely seen these insights provided into how exactly these would be monitored."

Appendix 3: Tender Response

"We often find tender questions that have clearly been copied and pasted from much larger tenders. As a result, the social value requirements (often predetermined options) are wildly disproportionate to the scale and scope of the tender."

"In many contracts that are based purely on services, social value additionality is often hard. It appears that lessons learned from other schemes, e.g. Defence sector offset agreements, have not been included in the development of how social value is procured. This creates an environment whereby social value could be perceived as a 'bribe' where larger companies can offer more intent."

"It's very difficult to understand where the focus on social value should be. Whether on local benefits or national for instance. Therefore, we are trying to address both but inefficiently."

"Our bids include a lot of sustainable investing questions, but in the evaluation, this is rarely given as feedback. It seems that for many private sector pension scheme trustees, this is a 'tick box' topic rather than a real differentiator. In the public sector, social value is very much linked to a pension scheme's 'owner', e.g. a local authority."

"There are a few frustrations, but I have found that the open-access information designed to support procurement professionals in the application of the social value Model has been really helpful."

"Preference for a 2,000-word count."

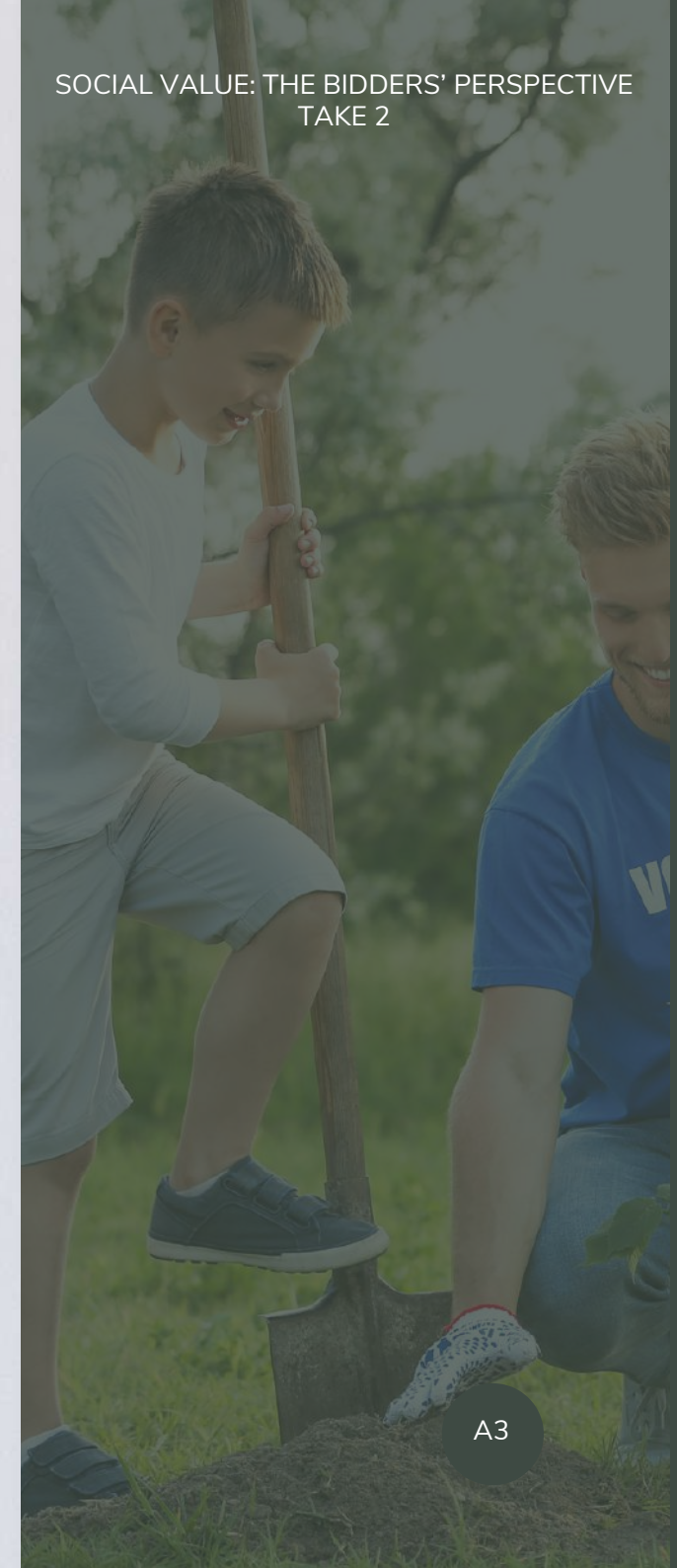
"I focus on SV, so I feel confident. Otherwise, internally, who 'dabble' often don't."

"There is a tension in SV being meaningful and innovative. It should always be meaningful, but only on very large contracts can it be truly innovative."

"We need to increase awareness of the importance of the social value questions among our internal stakeholders."

"We have a dedicated social value expert within the Bids Team who is responsible for collating all responses in relation to social value."

"We can talk about what was previously delivered, or what we do as a company; we have limited ability to forecast what we will deliver as there are no administrative means within the business."



Appendix 3: Tender Response

"In my organisation, bids are being used to drive ownership and social value formalisation. An agreed framework or measurement model would help to drive this internally as well."

"Within the question responses, it is important to demonstrate understanding of the social value commitments of the client and to reflect how those commitments will be supported during the delivery of the proposed solution. The client expects the supplier to propose what they can offer in parallel to solution delivery to show active participation in the social value commitments."

"It is difficult to ascertain, especially if using TOMs, what £ value should be given to SV activities in total. Should it be at least 5-10% of contract value or something different? What is the standard rate? It is clear that you could win a bid if you are willing to state that the activities are worth 50% of the contract value to the client (especially a Local Authority) as this is helping their community and potentially this is saving them money i.e. if you engage a number of local residents on your construction site then the LA doesn't have to spend money getting them into work."

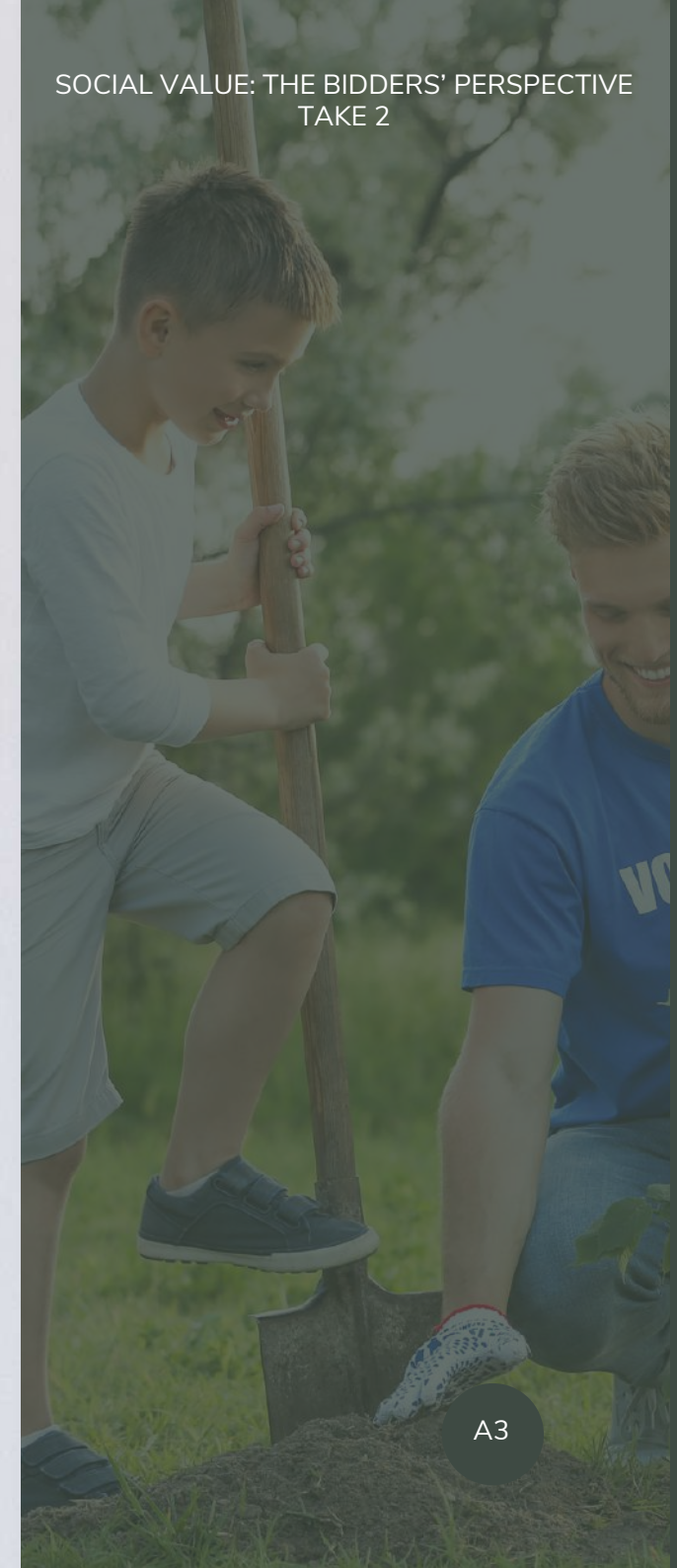
"Additionally, the cost of SV activities for a company is harder to absorb if the company is smaller, so the more you offer, the greater the impact to the bottom line."

"In one bid, the social value question was managed by the Social Value Portal. They didn't understand how valuable our offering was and scored us zero, ignoring our explanation and offers of alternatives."

"I often see the same question, with the same weighting, despite the projects being wildly different in value, location, opportunities and complexity (in the public sector)."

"I think SV can often be used subjectively by the procurement team to add additional points to their preferred supplier. We don't see enough consistency in scoring to believe otherwise."

"The clients we work with tend not to prioritise social value, so it is often either not on their radar, or only contributing to a small portion of their scoring criteria. This could be due to the sector in which they tend to belong (private sector, manufacturing). Larger, global companies or companies based in the US are the clients who tend to place more importance on social value, as it is usually relevant to their wider company strategy. Companies that market towards end consumers are also more likely to place more emphasis on social value. Small, private companies rarely ask us anything related to social value, aside from perhaps questions around COVID safety (which is becoming less common now)."



Appendix 3: Tender Response

"Clients like the idea of delivering social value but rarely have time to properly monitor it or put it into practice. This results in a lot of effort at the tender stage to get the marks for the question, but in real life, the clients do not follow through with actual implementation and monitoring."

"Social value delivery tends to be driven by the bid team and receives little support from within the rest of the business. It would be interesting to see support from APMP on how to effectively implement a social value programme within a business and secure buy-in at the board/executive level."

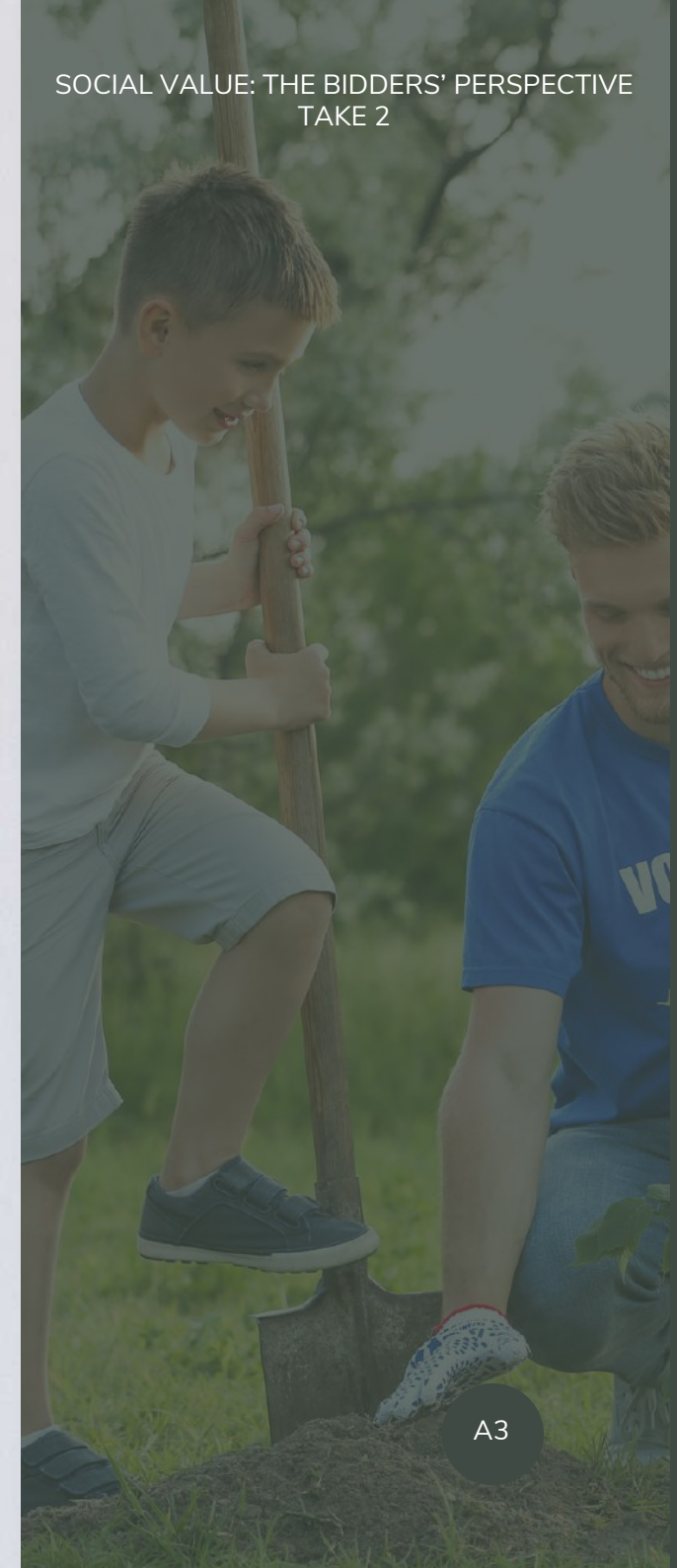
"Need more consistency on the SV questions and scoring mechanisms."

"Questions are generally far too vague, making it obvious that the client hasn't actually thought about what they should be achieving from social value or whether it is commensurate with the contract. There's no collaborative approach to delivering social value together with the client, other stakeholders etc., so that it can be scaled appropriately to deliver the best value for the community in which the project is being delivered."

"It would be so helpful to understand the client's requirements better, so we could think of something innovative. It's really hard for an organisation such as ours to commit to anything local as we are not big enough. I want to do better, but I am genuinely stumped as to how to improve it. I've offered myself as a champion in the area and want to improve."

"Good question = chance of a good answer. If questions are poor, not relevant or not proportionate, you can't form a good response."

"There ought to be a recognised PQQ scoring system for certain types of sectors/procurements (for example those that do not create employment opportunities) which simply give 'credits' for pre-planned ESG activities which are delivering on key themes aligned to the buyer (for example you may offer 100 apprenticeships a year, but they may not be in the same locality as the buyer, so you are stuck)!"



Appendix 4: Post Tender

"Social value discussion usually stops once a tender is awarded. On many occasions, we have had to raise the issue as the supplier because the buyer has not addressed these points in the implementation planning or later monitoring."

"Government take it seriously; others seem to be a nice to have but this is the future of bidding."

"Social value feedback often indicates that winning contractors have offered activities that are not linked with the delivery of the contract. This could bias procurement activities in favour of companies who are able to 'offset' other initiatives or who have the assets to 'buy' social value contributions (in essence, a bribe) compared to companies with more limited resources."

"We hardly ever get any feedback on anything let alone on social value."

"Great experience with one Central Govt department on Modern Slavery. Disappointing that we were then refused a case study/reference after a significant amount of time invested, free of charge, to support ongoing requirements not referenced in the tender/committed in the proposal."

"Need better clarification on scoring and how to improve."

"Our company is invested in delivering social value and we drive this through working collaboratively with our customers whether this is a requirement of the bid or not."

"Social value is rarely included in contracts or actively followed up on."

"When trying to provide evidence of successful social value delivery, it's come to light that our clients rarely follow up on the social value we have offered."

"On a few of our contracts, it's hard to get the client to engage with us. One client has stood us up 3 times on Teams. Others just don't respond, making delivery impossible."

"The way social value should be monitored is not clearly defined. Especially during contract award and setting defined KPIs. Some clients rarely know enough about social value and how best to set these KPIs."

Appendix 4: Post Tender

“Not enough training is undertaken or given to procurement teams.”

“Clients like the idea of delivering social value but rarely have time to properly monitor it or put it into practice. This results in a lot of effort at the tender stage to get the marks for the question, but in real life, the clients do not follow through with actual implementation and monitoring.”

“There has been a noticeable increase in clients holding suppliers to account, especially in terms of monthly monitoring. It's been great to work with clients who have teams set up internally to ensure social value compliance and allow an agile approach to delivering what is most needed at any given time across a longer contract term. This has been most noticeable for local authority and housing association clients.”

“Needs to be tighter grip on holding suppliers to account, as well as ensuring customers fulfil their part in delivering social value initiatives.”

“We struggle to obtain meaningful feedback that is vital to help us understand what our clients want and what we need to do to improve our offer.”

“It is often felt to be a tender tick-box exercise.”

“Currently it's very under-developed in non-construction sectors.”

“Also seeing SV questionnaires requiring completion where we never committed to delivering social value at tender stage.”

Appendix 5: Business Impact

"As a business, we are committed to providing social value in our community; however, this is independent of the social value delivered through our bids. We have introduced paid volunteering days for staff and corporate sponsorships of select charities."

"Businesses still need to make a profit. It is hard sometimes to quantify ROI."

"Awareness about SV is changing in my company (IT industry, software). I am the SV advocate in the UK and I've been making noise about it for months. I'm starting to see changes and the SV effort is due to increase in 2024. I answered the questions above as accurately as the current situation in my company allows."

"As a multinational company, delivering social value in the UK is a different approach to running a global operation. It would be helpful if the social value could be expanded into other countries to allow larger organisations to elevate their inclusion at the corporate level. For example, through an international standard."

"The variation in how clients request and then judge social value activities and impacts also needs to be better regulated to ensure consistency and fairness. Currently, this is a major concern for us."

"Increasing recognition of social value as a key differentiator."

"We really want to incorporate it in our work, but as the goalposts keep shifting, it makes it hard to develop a good strategy for social value. I particularly find it difficult that the method for evaluating social value vary. We should have one for everyone and everything which is the same for all bidders and buyers. Whether is TOMS or something else doesn't matter as long as it is the same."

"ESG/responsible investment has been huge in financial service for decades, but social value (usually embedded within the 'S' of ESG) is gaining traction for some clients. Where we sell to trustees of private sector pension schemes, they usually like to have their own views (i.e. focusing on financial results) rather than sharing the priorities of their company sponsor (e.g. a construction firm that may have major SV commitments). Still some work to do there."

"Costs are increasing, and there's no one recognised accreditation, some like B-Corp, some look for RBA, Eco Vadis, etc. They're all very expensive for small businesses, and the public sector doesn't wish to see costs increase - it doesn't add up."

"It is improving ESG compliance but requires extensive resources."



Appendix 5: Business Impact

"I have recently seen social value split into two key areas: Social value and Community Wealth Building. Defining the two and understanding how to measure and monitor is unclear."

"We seem to be caught in a circle of waiting until there is a business case for doing more while needing to do more to catch up with our competitors. As a regulated business, I think our regulator needs to have the issue of social value higher on its agenda. It would be helpful if there were some way for businesses to get 'credit' for national, large-scale initiatives that can't be replicated locally."

"Social value sits at the heart of our organisation and is driven by our CEO - it's not something that is just a box-ticking exercise to help us to win bids."

"Social value is definitely gaining high visibility at a business level and being taken into account in the way we operate and the way we engage with our clients."

"We have an ESG committee and self-assess based on a framework from the ESG_VC. Personally, find both this framework and the social value guidance provided by the government tricky to understand how we can apply it to our business, and without practical steps to implementation. Within our company, investing in ESG areas is not a priority and likely won't be until our customers demand we have certain controls in place."

"Our organisation is not yet accredited but is working towards B Corporation."

"I have recently moved companies within the last 6 months, and for both organisations, I have, by necessity, become the social value lead for the company. As part of this, I have needed to put together business cases for the C-suite to secure buy-in, budget and employee resources to be able to effectively bid on anything with a social value requirement."

"To truly understand and deliver effective social value requires extensive resources which most organisations find difficult to implement. This is very true for the construction industry, which is a very competitive, price-driven market with ridiculously high social value demands that, on many contracts, are just not possible financially despite the desire to support them."

"Large corporates deliver huge amounts of social value under the guise of pre-planned ESG strategy and activities. But if we are talking about contract-specific stuff, then it's hard to break into the ESG agenda and influence it for a tender."



Appendix 5: Business Impact

"Our social value offerings for tenders is always local, quantified and supported with case studies or testimonials. As a result, we typically score very well on social value and get little to no improvements from feedback."

"Many UK vendors still don't understand what social value means. I'm not sure all Public Sector buyers do fully understand it either."

"Social value is progressing despite some of the significant challenges, and we should continue to engage with Government to improve their capability and skills in making the system fair and appropriate."

"Good practice is meticulous collection of data, down to the finest detail, with follow-up on outcomes. Reporting and putting in dedicated resource is vital."

"There are lots of really good things that we do as a company to show our social value, but because of the difficult questions being asked in bids, we are not able to use what we do to demonstrate our impact. For instance, our social value is very much focused on our local community but often we find questions to demonstrate it that do not fulfil what we already do."

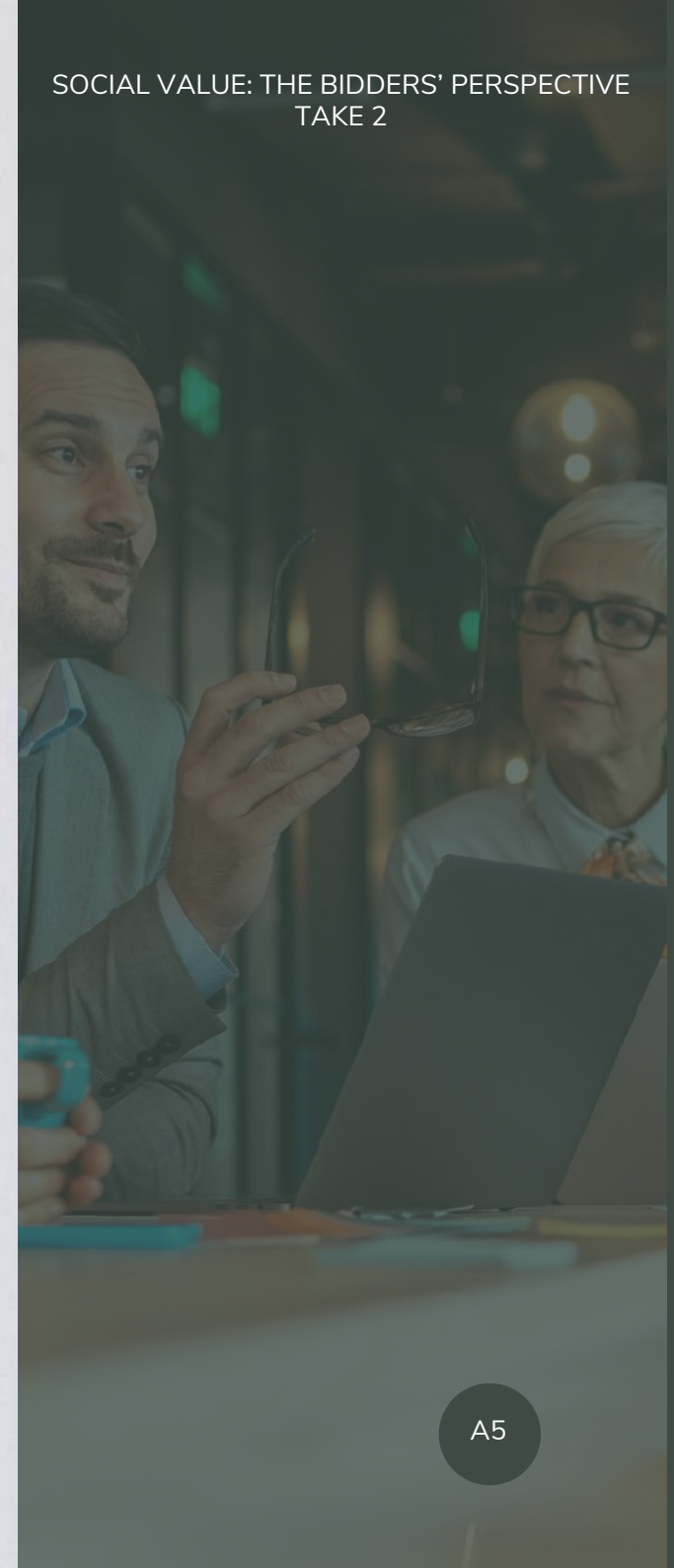
"I'd really like to see more alignment with international frameworks so that it is easier for multinational firms to compete in the UK, while still aligning with the UK SV Act's intentions. Measurement frameworks would be a good example."

"I would like to see analysis of what impact the Social Impact inputs are actually having on target populations. At times it feels like we are creating a "Social Impact industry" with the rise of consultants, accreditation programmes and staff engaged to demonstrate that companies are doing social value. All of this comes at a cost. But how many lives are being improved and to what extent? I'd also like to see a "sentiment survey" of business leaders - are social value requirements changing their views of how they do business or are they just "ticking boxes" to win contracts?"

"As a company, social value comes naturally and is embedded in our ethos. It is taking time, money and effort to 'prove' the value we are providing, and it is unclear how this is directly quantified. A more standardised approach and method for evaluation would be valuable to businesses like us to measure our social value impact."

"We are holding a senior procurement round table in the Private sector this month to talk about delivering sustainability, how to leverage the supply chain to support this and to allow organisations to share best practice. Happy to share outputs."

"We do social value things as per National TOMs but it's getting people to log it and tell others so we can monitor and have the information to prove we do it."



Appendix 6: General Comments

"Bristol CC were the first council that I encountered social value on two years ago and they have always been a leading light in social value. For me, all other councils should look to them for an example of how to include relevant, proportional and effective social value."

"Within the tender documentation, the client often provides information about their social value commitments and policies. When tendering to specific departments of local government it can be useful to understand the wider context by looking at the overall local government commitments and policies around social value to see how they fit together."

"Even where social value is not required within tender requirements stated by the client, our central bid team (who handle global accounts and bids, as opposed to local division who handle local/single-country-based accounts and bids) do try to instil social value into our responses based on information learned through APMP's social value group and documentation. We know this is becoming more prominent and want to be ahead of the curve. Our senior stakeholders, while not currently very invested in social value, are beginning to recognise its value, but we have more work to do to secure their buy-in so that it can make more of a tangible difference and become incorporated into our company-wide strategy and market approach."

"Increased standardisation of social value requirements and delivery expectations would ensure it becomes part of every company's BAU."

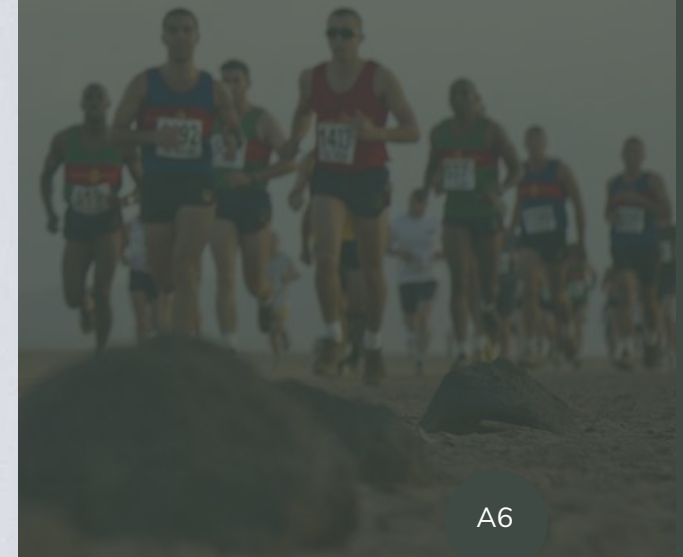
"Customers and suppliers need more consistency across the piece. My experience is too many consultancies are cashing in on the SV opportunity. Customer procurement departments also often just want to tick the SV box. Much more work to be done in this space to educate, streamline and get smarter."

"My personal opinion is that there are too many evaluation methods making it difficult to achieve consistency; one clear industry standard approach would help massively to improve SV delivery for all those involved and across all stages."

"Clients need to have early engagement with services, as consultants are on the whole unable to demonstrate or deliver the social value requirements, as it's mainly driven by the contractors."

"I would welcome APMP training or guidance for SV. It's a weak point of mine personally, and I would love to be confident enough to not only complete responses better but promote it internally."

"Share examples of good, tailored questions back with APMP members (for pre-engagement conversations), cabinet office and local authorities."





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