



INTERNATIONAL PROCUREMENT SEMINARS GUIDANCE BASED ON 'LESSONS LEARNED'

1. THE HOST ENTITIES (COUNTRIES)

- i) The host entity(ies) are the "owners" of the seminar (with the UN acting as facilitator) and should take note of all the information in this document before planning begins.
- ii) It's important that one person takes the lead as "project manager" on behalf of all the host entity(ies). This eases potential confusion and makes decision-making more efficient.
- iii) The development of the seminar programme is the responsibility of the host entity(ies) – see Section 4 for more information on this.
- iv) The host entity(ies) should provide vendors with as much information as possible on the procurement activities of the various UN agencies prior to registration for the seminar, so that they can make an informed decision on who they would like to meet with at the seminar. A wide range of information can be found here:
<https://www.ungm.org/Shared/KnowledgeCenter/Pages/VBS>
- v) The host countries should have a good means for communicating during the actual event e.g. if one finds out that an agency is available to take extra meetings they should have a way to get this message through to their counter-parts.
- vi) Set-up for an IPS should take place the day before it is due to commence, therefore, it should not be scheduled to start on a Monday.
- vii) The host entity(ies) should prepare a list of participants to be shared at the event along with the programme.
- viii) IPS participants should be asked to complete a satisfaction survey directly after the IPS has taken place and key results should be shared with the UN.

2. THE UN AGENCIES

- i) UN agencies should ideally respond to IPS invitations within max. 2 weeks.
- ii) UN agencies should endeavour to provide clear reasons for declining a meeting with a seemingly relevant vendor.
- iii) Agency representatives should ensure that their presentations are brief and avoid repeating information, such as, general UN procurement principles & procedures, as this will be covered in the opening "Doing Business with the UN" presentation. The overall focus should be on making the presentation as relevant as possible for vendors (where possible, include information on upcoming tenders etc.)
- iv) Agency representatives are also encouraged to make use of videos in their presentations to help reduce PowerPoint fatigue. By using tools such as Amazon Polly, presentations with automatic narration are also an option.
- v) Consider how information gathered at the IPS can be better shared with colleagues – this is a major challenge for agencies with a highly de-centralised procurement function.

3. THE COMPANIES

- i) The seminar content is typically most meaningful for companies new to the UN.
- ii) Existing vendors are mainly interested in the 1:1 consultations with the agencies.



- iii) Companies value greatly the opportunity to network with other companies and potentially establish collaborations – the host entity(ies) should ensure there are hospitality arrangements in place to foster this.

4. THE PROGRAMME – PRESENTATIONS, PANELS & 1:1 MEETINGS

- i) The development of the programme is the responsibility of the host entity(ies), but guidance on this should be sought from the UN.
- ii) The host entity(ies) should identify a good and well-prepared moderator for the plenary sessions in order to guide the conversations and to ensure audience interaction.
- iii) The “project manager” representing the host entity(ies) should liaise with the UN agencies well in advance on the desired content and length of presentations. Presentations should be brief (10-15 mins max) and avoid repeating information, such as, general UN procurement principles & procedures, as this will be covered in the opening “Doing Business with the UN” presentation. The overall focus should be on making the presentation as relevant as possible for vendors (where possible, include information on upcoming tenders etc.)
- iv) The seminar moderator should use cards (saying e.g. “5 minutes left”) to communicate to the presenters that they have limited time left, as opposed to interrupting them.
- v) The host entity(ies) should engage directly with the agencies on identifying discussion panellists as early as possible, and expectations regarding content/format should be clearly communicated with all panellists well in advance of the seminar. Ideally, have a call or face-to-face meeting with the panellists and moderator in advance.
- vi) To encourage good interaction with the audience during panel debates, the host entity(ies) should identify an App (e.g. Slido) to facilitate this.
- vii) The programme should include presentations from a few host country suppliers who have been successful in doing business with the UN, so that they can share their experiences. These presentations should focus primarily on experience in working with the UN rather than promotion of goods/services.
- viii) The host entity(ies) may wish to include a “Ask Anything” session in the programme where vendors can ask a panel of UN representatives some general questions. This could be of particular benefit to vendors who do not have any 1:1 meetings.
- ix) Parallel sessions, e.g. the UN Annual Statistical Report, should be timed to commence when there is a break in the plenary programme and when there is highest likelihood for visitation.
- x) The UNGM does not yet have functionality for scheduling 1:1 meetings, therefore, the host entity(ies) should identify well in advance an effective solution for managing this quite complex task.
- xi) At the seminar, the host entity(ies) should ensure that procurement officers have a schedule of their 1:1 meetings available in their respective meeting rooms. This should include a reminder of the goods/services being offered by the vendors in the schedule.
- xii) Breaks for the procurement officers should be built into the 1:1 schedules.
- xiii) In the event that a last-minute request for a 1:1 meeting is received, and assuming the request is from a vendor of high relevance to the UN, the host entity(ies) should liaise directly with the agencies concerned to determine whether or not they can accept the meeting.



- xiv) Each host entity should have a manned "country desk" in or close to the 1:1 meeting room area.
- xv) The hosts should assign time-keepers to the 1:1 meeting rooms to ensure that the meeting schedule is followed.
- xvi) It's a good idea to also have a UN helpdesk manned by a UNGM representative, and a UN representative who can address general queries related to UN business; in particular for vendors who were not successful in being selected for a 1:1 meeting.

5. THE PLANNING

Careful consideration should be given to timing and setting of deadlines. Ideal timelines are as follows:

Amount of time before IPS starts	Activities
6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● initial planning meetings and UNGM webinar to introduce host entity(ies) to the Trade Promotion Portal (TPP) and event management tool ● host entity(ies) draw up a schedule of activities based on this table
5-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● host entity(ies) to initiate outreach/"save the date" activities with companies in their respective countries – the aim should be to encourage as many companies as possible who are not already doing business with the UN ● host entity(ies) are encouraged to identify some suppliers in their country(ies) who have been successful in doing business with the UN, so that they can showcase their experience at the seminar ● host entity(ies) begin drafting the IPS programme ● host entity(ies) should identify an effective solution for managing the scheduling of 1:1 meetings
4-5 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● all host entity(ies) must be registered in the TPP ● the "lead" host entity creates the IPS event on the platform ● the PN Secretariat accepts the event in the system ● the host entity(ies) then invite the UN agencies through the system and set the deadline for responses (e.g. 2 weeks to respond). It is recommended that the host entity(ies) also send a more formal type of invitation to each agency by email.
3-4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● companies not registered have to complete the registration process on UNGM ● the host entity(ies) send invitations to the companies and set the deadline for responses, requesting 1:1 meetings and any fee payment (e.g. 2 months before start date of IPS). It should be highlighted to the companies that there is no guarantee that 1:1 meeting requests will be accepted – the UN agencies typically only accept meetings with vendors truly seen as relevant to their business.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The invitation should also include brief information on the main categories of procurement of the invited UN agencies, so that companies can make an informed decision regarding participation and who they would like to meet with at the seminar. A wide range of information can be found here: https://www.ungm.org/Shared/KnowledgeCenter/Pages/VBS
2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN agencies are asked to review the requests for 1:1 meetings and provide responses by a specified deadline (agencies should have a minimum of 3 weeks to undertake this task) the host entity(ies) should start engaging with the UN agencies on panel/workshop content and expectations regarding presentations
3 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the host entity(ies) create the 1:1 meeting matrix and ask the UN agencies to assign procurement officers (providing names & contact details for all)
2 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the hosts finalise the programme and share it with all concerned the hosts finalise the 1:1 meeting matrix and assign procurement officers to meetings rooms/points the hosts share the meeting schedules with the procurement officers and/or agency focal points (copies should also be prepared for the 1:1 meeting rooms) the hosts should prepare any signage needed for the venue, 1:1 meeting rooms, country desks, etc.

6. THE UNGM

- i) Each host entity should create an account as an Institutional Organisation on the Trade promotion portal.
 - o Only one account per government institutional organisation is required and several contacts can join the same account.
 - o Each country has access to the list of companies registered for their respective country.
- ii) In the case of Only one host entity should create the business seminar in the UNGM event management tool on behalf of the consortium.
 - o Contact information of all the organisers should be provided in the business seminar details.
 - o A webinar is organized by the UNGM Secretariat in collaboration with the HLCM-PN Secretariat to help the host entities get familiar with the system and process



- iii) A system of deadlines has been introduced to structure and harmonise the planning of the IPS and thereby ensuring the timely coordination of planning activities for all host entity(ies):
 - o Deadline for UN agencies to accept the business seminar invitation □ ensures that agencies have responded to the invitation before inviting vendors.
 - o Deadline for host entity(ies) to invite vendors to attend the business seminar □ ensures that all vendors are invited at the same time.
 - o Deadline for vendors to respond to the business seminar invitation □ ensures that vendors benefit from the same timeframe to respond to the business seminar invitation.
 - o Deadline for vendors to request 1:1 meetings with UN agencies.
 - o Deadline for UN agencies to respond to 1:1 meeting requests □ ensures greater fairness in the review process by avoiding meeting acceptance on first come first served basis.
 - o The host entity and UNGM Secretariat jointly define the deadlines according to a retroplanning. It is therefore crucial that the host entity(ies) get familiar with the planning timeframe mentioned under the section 5. Planning to determine appropriate deadlines. These deadlines can be adjusted at any stage of the planning phases. Requests to modify deadlines should be requested to the UNGM Secretariat at diane@unops.org.
- iv) In order to inform their national companies about the upcoming seminar, the host entity(ies) can use the contact details of companies already registered on UNGM.
 - o Host entity(ies) should both reach out to companies registered on UNGM but also to companies from their own databases.
 - o Host entity(ies) should not directly invite all companies registered in the database prior to this first reach out exercise.
- v) Companies interested in participating in the event should respond to the outreach initiated by the host entity(ies). After identifying a reasonable number of interested companies, host entity(ies) should invite these vendors to register on UNGM if they have not registered yet. Once the registration has been completed, host entity(ies) should officially invite this shortlist of companies using the vendor invitation functionality available under the event management portal.
- vi) The host entity(ies) should ensure that vendors do not only create an account on UNGM but also complete the registration process in order to provide a better overview of the vendors' activity for UN agencies when requesting 1:1 meetings.
- vii) Host entity(ies) should expect that some companies experience issues with navigating their UNGM account in order to accept the invitation to the business seminar and to request one-on-one meetings with UN agencies.
 - o Host entity(ies) should share step-by-step guidelines and instructions provided by the UNGM team when sending the invitation to the companies.
 - o The information provided by vendors when confirming attendance to the event – namely the company description – cannot be edited after having been submitted. It is therefore crucial to inform vendors to provide a concise and precise description of their company, which should be less than 200 characters.



- viii) Host entity(ies) should make use of the email function available in the event management tool to follow up with companies regarding their participation in the business seminar and their requests for one-on-one meetings.
- ix) Vendors tend to request 1:1 meetings with all attending UN agencies instead of targeting the most relevant agencies for their activities (leading to a high number of meeting requests declined by UN agencies).
 - o The dissemination by the host entity(ies) of detailed information about each UN agency's mandates and procurement profiles to the vendors is helpful for companies to better target UN agency of interest.
- x) In case a participant cancels his/her participation to the business seminar, the host entity(ies) can remove the company from the list of participants on UNGM.
- xi) The 1:1 meeting matrix is 'manually' created by the host entity(ies) according to the final list of participants extracted from UNGM.
 - o Host entity(ies) can identify an effective solution for creating 1:1 meeting matrix if they wish to use a specific system
 - o The usage of such a solution should be discussed with the UNGM Secretariat early in the process to clarify any potential concerns over data protection etc.
- xii) Late registrations to the event and requests for 1:1 meetings should be avoided as much as possible to prevent last minute changes to the meeting schedule.
 - o Late registrations and 1:1 meetings would have to be considered and reviewed outside of the UNGM system
 - o A 2nd review of 1:1 meetings can be undertaken by UN agencies upon request by the host entity(ies). However, this process generates additional work for all parties involved and causes significant delay in the last stages of the organization process.
- xiii) After the seminar has taken place, host entity(ies) should mark the participants' attendance at the seminar.
 - o This will help the host entity(ies) in assessing the impact of the seminar in terms of the companies' involvement with UN procurement activities over time.
- xiv) After the seminar has taken place, UN procurement officers are encouraged to record on UNGM the notes which have been taken during the one-on-one meetings with companies. These can be shared either at the agency or inter-agency level.
- xv) The utilisation of the UNGM event management tool requires training as well as frequent assistance for all parties involved in the planning of the business seminar (host entity(ies), vendors and UN agencies).

System enhancement:

- Process of inviting vendors via UNGM should be improved:
 - o Display all results without loading results batch by batch



- Add option to select all
- Enhance the vendor email function to be able to contact participating contacts rather than the contacts provided in the account
- Status 'not able to attend' for 1:1 meetings needs to be modified as it is a source of confusion of vendors.