

COVID-19 Supply Partner Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides answers to some Frequently Asked Questions about the UK government and DFID's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the support available for supply partners. It should be read in conjunction with the policy guidance published on gov.uk and will help us work with you to maintain essential UK aid for poor and vulnerable people throughout the world.

We will update this document regularly as the situation and our response evolves.

If the answer to your question is not here, please e-mail us at PCDSuppliercovid19@dfid.gov.uk

Q. Are there options to be flexible on the contract or grant in relation to agreed deliverables and work plans?

A. Yes. Where programme planning is affected by COVID-19, and the impact is likely to result in changes being required to the original agreement, the supply partner should contact the DFID Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for the programme, suggesting mitigations and workarounds wherever possible. DFID will take a flexible and reasonable approach to adjusting workplans to ensure the continuation of delivery where appropriate and will review any requests on a case by case basis. Supply partners are obliged under DFID contracts to ensure effective contingency planning and management of Duty of Care, and proactive engagement with DFID SROs, so we can support partners as far as possible.

Q. Will similar flexibility be extended to grant partners?

A. Yes. DFID will take a flexible and reasonable approach to adjusting workplans to ensure the continuation of delivery where appropriate and will review any requests on a case by case basis. Partners should contact the DFID Senior Responsible Owner for your programme in the first instance. While there may be nuances in how guidance and processes are applied, we are adopting similar approaches in both grants and contracts.

Q. What supplier relief is available to DFID suppliers and partners?

A. In line with the UK government position, DFID is offering support to suppliers and partners where this is appropriate. More information can be found on gov.uk here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/procurement-policy-notes>.

DFID will apply the Cabinet Office guidance, which allows for relief on services and goods provided in the UK, to DFID aid programmes. In considering requests for relief we will want to be sure that:

- Other sources of support have first been accessed or are not appropriate. Non-UK partners will be eligible, but expected to apply to their own governments first;
- Relief is cascaded promptly down supply chains to downstream partners;
- Open book accounting whilst supplier relief is provided.

Q. Are there other forms of relief available, aside from financial options?

A. In line with the UK government position, DFID is considering options such as revising milestones and delivery dates in its agreements with supply partners. DFID will work with supply partners on a case by case basis to ensure the most pragmatic approach is considered to support both our partners and our programmes.

Q. How will suppliers request relief?

A. Applications for Supplier relief can be requested by completing the Supplier Relief Request Form, all instructions have been included on the form. Supply partners should send completed request forms and supporting documentation as an attachment to the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) and copy to the COVID-19 mailbox: PCDSuppliercovid19@dfid.gov.uk, with the subject line: [Supplier Name] COVID-19 Relief Request.

After reviewing the form, DFID will make decisions on a case by case basis to determine whether a supply partner is within the scope of being "at risk" under the UK government guidelines:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/procurement-policy-notes>. We may request further information before making a decision.

Q. Are there any specific requirements that suppliers must meet to qualify for payment?

A. Yes, specific requirements are set out on gov.uk, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/procurement-policy-notes> and in the Supplier Relief request form. These include, but are not limited to, suppliers in receipt of relief needing to operate an open book policy to ensure continued financial transparency and continued funding to sub-contractors to support the full supply chain. DFID will aim to deal with any requests for relief as a priority.

Q. Will supplier/partner staff who are working only on COVID-19 get “key worker” status in order for their children to be able to attend school?

A. Suppliers and partners must follow the central government guidance on key worker status. DFID will not be issuing a separate policy.

Q. Will DFID allow the reliance on ‘force-majeure’ provision?

A. If suppliers believe they have cause to rely on any ‘force majeure’ clauses within individual agreements, they must inform DFID immediately by emailing PCDSuppliercovid19@dfid.gov.uk, explaining why they believe the clause is applicable. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis, based on the facts and circumstances of each case and the relevant contractual provisions. Guidance on this is set out on gov.uk which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/procurement-policy-notes>.

Q. Will DFID be issuing a formal commission to suppliers/grant partners and will subsequent guidance follow?

A. DFID has issued a formal fortnightly commission to key suppliers to help understand any changes in their operations as a result of COVID-19, such as:

- Any reduction in staff or operations
- Country withdrawal plans
- Contingency plans
- How DFID can further support organisation

We may issue further commissions in due course to ensure we remain fully sighted on all issues and are best placed to consider what additional steps or guidance may be required. Additional supplier guidance can also be found on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and this will be updated regularly.

Q. Will DFID be engaging directly with key suppliers/partners to discuss emerging issues?

A. DFID has spoken to many of our major suppliers and partners to discuss contingency planning and their concerns, and we will continue to undertake engagement with supply partners to understand how their work is being affected. DFID’s Director General for Corporate Performance is meeting regularly with representative bodies within the sector to discuss the most effective ways DFID can support the DFID supply base and partners at this crucial time. This dialogue is ongoing. If you have specific questions and concerns, please raise these with DFID directly by emailing PCDSuppliercovid19@dfid.gov.uk. This will allow us to take your concerns into account and keep our guidance relevant and up to date.

Q. Will DFID continue with live tenders and publishing new opportunities as normal?

A. At the moment, DFID will continue with the current tender programme. This may change in the future. Any delay or impact to current tenders will be communicated via the supplier portal and all questions relating to on-going tenders should be raised via the portal.

Q. What will happen if a new/recent contract award is impacted by COVID-19?

A. If you are unable to fulfil any new contractual obligations as a result of COVID-19, you must notify DFID immediately. All instances will be handled on a case by case basis, based on the specific circumstances. If DFID is no longer able to award a new contract as a result of COVID-19, suppliers will be notified immediately via the supplier portal. DFID will not bear any costs in respect of any tender should no contract be awarded.

Q. How quickly will DFID turn around contract amendments that are required as a result of COVID-19 impact?

A. DFID will seek to update any contract amendments, as quickly as possible.

Q. My organisation can support DFID beyond the scope of the contracts/grants I have. What is the process to tell you about this?

A. We recognise that many of our supply partners are willing to support DFID's response to COVID-19. Thanks for your continued support. Please contact PCDSupplierCOVID19@dfid.gov.uk with any relevant information you wish to tell us.

Q. Will DFID consider financial 'front loading' of payments for our work on priority DFID contracts for six months, calculated and based on our forecasts and workplans that are regularly reviewed by DFID?

A. Relief measures are currently in place until 30 June 2020. Any requests for advance payment will be carefully considered by DFID within the fiscal guidelines set out by HM Treasury and Cabinet Office. Guidance on this is outlined on gov.uk which you can find here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/procurement-policy-notes>.

Q. Will suppliers be asked to pivot funds to support COVID-19? If so, what would the process be for this?

A. No decisions have been made on this yet. If no current programme with appropriate scope exists to fulfil an identified need and DFID decides that new programming is required to support the COVID-19 response, DFID will utilise all available mechanisms (in line with the Public Contract Regulations 2015) such as direct award, single source and call-down from existing Framework Agreements to support any new priority programming activity.

Q. Will the programme I run be terminated?

A. We are reviewing our portfolio to identify where changes may be required in the short to medium term to support the departments response to COVID 19. We cannot rule out impacts on existing programmes. The weekly survey PCD has commissioned will help us identify where there is scope to pivot programmes to do more.

Q. Will frameworks be used more frequently during the COVID phase?

A. We will use various routes to address requirements for new programmes that arise as part of our response to COVID-19, which may include the use of framework agreements.

Q. Will DFID issue blanket extensions?

A. No, individual contracts will be reviewed on a case by case basis to determine if an extension is required.

Q. What is the Rapid Response Facility (RRF) and how can my organisation participate?

A. The RRF is call for proposals for Civil Society Organisations to support DFID response to the COVID-19 outbreak. It is not open to private sector organisations.

Q. The needs for the management of local sexual exploitation and abuse or sexual harrassment (SEAH) issues are likely to be heightened due to the impact of COVID-19. Is DFID offering any specific assistance or advice to Suppliers?

A. All suppliers will be acutely aware that engagement with beneficiaries and other local stakeholders remains critical in the delivery of DFID funded work and this must not be neglected despite any local or broader challenges at this time. Collaboration through supply chain partners providing aid on the ground is especially important to identify, assess and collectively manage SEAH risks. We actively encourage partners to review this risk in light of Covid-19 and will consider all requests for additional funding for mitigation measures on a case by case basis. Please contact the SRO for your programme in the first instance.

Suppliers are reminded of DFID's Contractual Terms and Conditions, specifically 'Clause 50 – Safeguarding,' along with the Supply Partner Code of Conduct 'Safeguarding, Social Responsibility and Human Rights,' which sets out the procedures and reasonable measures that need to be in place to prevent and respond to

sexual exploitation, abuse or sexual harassment involving members of supplier personnel, or downstream partners engaged to perform programme activities.

Contracted Suppliers that specifically work with children or vulnerable adults or young people must maintain an up-to-date child protection policy and/or a vulnerable adult's policy.

As stipulated in the Contract Terms and Conditions, the supplier must also have in place widely accessible reporting procedures to ensure allegations can be reported safely and appropriately, and to allow the provision of care to victims. These should be reviewed in light of the current Covid-19 situation, to ensure that reports can still be made and handled appropriately during this challenging time. The DFID reportingconcerns@dfid.gov.uk mailbox should be widely cascaded.

If you have specific concerns about meeting your contractual safeguarding requirements at this time, please raise these with DFID directly by emailing PCDSupplierCovid19@dfid.gov.uk to enable us to assess your concerns.