

Improving every journey



**Delivery plan
Supported Businesses and
Small and Medium Enterprises**

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Executive Summary

CFL is committed to delivering inclusive, sustainable economic outcomes across Scotland's island communities. As part of our obligations under CHFS3 and in alignment with Scottish Government priorities, we have developed a structured plan to enhance the involvement of Supported Businesses and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in our procurement activity.

This plan outlines our strategic approach, engagement mechanisms, and performance monitoring framework to ensure that local and regional businesses—particularly those operating within island economies—are supported to access and benefit from CFL contract opportunities. Through targeted outreach, transparent procurement practices, and robust governance, we aim to strengthen our supply chain, improve service quality, and contribute to the long-term resilience of the communities we serve.

1. Introduction

As the operator of lifeline ferry services across Scotland's west coast, Caledonian MacBrayne plays a pivotal role in supporting the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of island communities. Our operations are not only essential for connectivity—they are a catalyst for inclusive growth, local resilience, and sustainable development.

In line with our obligations under the CHFS3 contract and the Scottish Government's priorities on sustainable procurement, CFL is committed to ensuring that our procurement practices actively support the involvement of Supported Businesses and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). These organisations are integral to the vibrancy of local economies, particularly in remote and island areas, and their participation in our supply chain contributes directly to service quality, innovation, and community value.

This section outlines our strategic approach to engaging Supported Businesses and SMEs, detailing the mechanisms we will use to improve access to contract opportunities, the partnerships we will foster, and the governance structures we will implement to monitor progress. It reflects our broader commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement—ensuring that our procurement activity delivers meaningful benefits for the communities we serve.

2. Strategic Approach to Engagement

Caledonian MacBrayne adopts a structured and proactive approach to engaging Supported Businesses and SMEs, aligned with Scottish Government priorities on sustainable procurement and inclusive economic development. Our plans include:

- A framework for engaging with Supported Businesses and SMEs, including where such involvement may provide opportunities to improve the efficiency, economy and quality of services.
- Specific targets for engagement, supported by a monitoring regime to ensure delivery against objectives.
- A focus on local and regional businesses, with particular emphasis on supporting island economies.



Improving Supplier Access

To ensure equitable access to contract opportunities, we:

- Publish contract notices on Public Contracts Scotland.
- Enable SMEs, third sector organisations and Supported Businesses to compete for work, either as contractors or sub-contractors.
- Reserve contracts exclusively for Supported Businesses where appropriate and in line with Regulation 21 of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Regulations 2016.

We currently engage with Royal British Legion Industries T/A Scotland's Bravest Manufacturing Company and CCL (North) Ltd under these provisions.

Where feasible, we structure procurements into smaller, accessible lots to encourage SME participation.

Targeted Supplier Engagement Programme

To support this approach, we created a targeted supplier engagement programme comprising:

- Supplier Forums: Annual forums hosted across key locations to identify and support potential suppliers from the SME and Supported Business sectors.
- Supplier Development Programme (SDP) Partnerships: CFL will work closely with SDP Scotland to promote contract opportunities and offer guidance on the bidding process.
- Proactive Identification and Outreach: CFL will maintain a database of Scottish and UK-wide Supported Businesses, including those listed on the Scottish Government's Supported Business Framework and through Social Enterprise Scotland. Businesses will be proactively contacted with early notice of upcoming opportunities aligned to their capabilities.

Monitoring & Reporting Regime

We have a robust governance framework that ensures accountability and transparency in supplier engagement:

- Quarterly Reporting: Internal tracking of spend, supplier engagement activity, and contract outcomes.
- Annual Review: A publicly available progress report highlighting successes, challenges, and areas for improvement.

3. Procurement Contracts Awarded (April 2024 – March 2025)

During the financial year 2024/2025, we awarded a total of 170 contracts with a combined value of £18,219,206. A breakdown of these awards is provided in Table 1 below:



Table 1 – Procurement Exercises 2024/25

	Total Number of Contracts Awarded	Total Value of Contracts Awarded
Small/Medium Enterprise (SME)	117	£6,077,116
Large Enterprise	53	£12,142,089

Over this period, CFL undertook 53 regulated procurement exercises, of which 23 were awarded to SMEs.