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LAST CHANCE FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES TO REGISTER FOR FREE TRIAL

Small and medium sized businesses have until the end of this month (July) to register for a three month trial which provides free access to thousands of public sector contract opportunities.

More than 87,500 contracts have been advertised on www.supply2.gov.uk since it launched two years ago, specifically aimed at smaller sized firms that benefit from tenders valued at £100,000 or less.

Business Minister Shriti Vadera said:

“Many smaller businesses are more innovative, have lower costs and present better value for taxpayers than larger firms. We need to ensure they have better access to Government procurement to give them the opportunity to grow.”

Businesses which register for the online trial at www.supply2.gov.uk will receive free access to contracts across the UK and Northern Ireland.

The free trial has so far been popular with small businesses. 86% of new registrants have less than 20 employees and 73% have a turnover of less than £1million.

The trial is part of the Department for Business' Enterprise Strategy, released in March alongside the Budget, which outlines new measures to increase the amount of government business that is won by small firms. It also included:

- An independent review - currently underway - to identify where the Government can improve accessibility for SMEs to public sector contracts
- A change to the small print for government procurement that will allow companies, particularly small firms, to use invoice financing when competing for public contracts.

More than 3,000 new contracts are available on www.supply2.gov.uk each month from nearly 5,500 public sector buyers, including sub-contracting opportunities linked to the London 2012 Games. 71% of buyers are from local government.

Notes to editors

1. Since it launched in June 2006, www.supply2.gov.uk has published more than 87,000 contract notices from over 5,400 public sector buyers including local government, health, education and housing authorities, emergency services and the Olympic Delivery Authority.
2. Supply2.gov.uk is owned by the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. It is managed by procurement solutions service provider BiP Solutions Ltd. For

the first time, businesses are able to view lower-value contracts in a single location, reducing the time taken to source opportunities. Contract information in a business's chosen location is available free of charge.

3. The free trial for small and medium sized businesses runs between May and July 2008 and applies to new registrations only for a three month period from the date registered.
4. For more information about the Department for Business' Enterprise Strategy visit www.berr.gov.uk/bbf/enterprise-smes/enterprise-framework/index.html
5. The Enterprise Strategy featured a range of measures to boost small firms competing for public procurement. An independent review, headed by Anne Glover, will look at ways to reduce barriers that small businesses face when competing for public sector contracts and the practicality of setting a goal for them to win 30 per cent of public sector business within five years.
6. The Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform helps UK business succeed in an increasingly competitive world. It promotes business growth and a strong enterprise economy, leads the better regulation agenda and champions free and fair markets. It is the shareholder in a number of Government-owned assets and it works to secure, clean and competitively priced energy supplies.
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