

A happy birthday for Supply2.gov.uk

50,000 suppliers register in the first year of national lower-value contract portal

Thousands of businesses have taken the opportunity to access and potentially win lower-value government contracts in the year since the portal Supply2.gov.uk was launched.

More than 45,000 public sector contract opportunities – many of which have a value of less than £100,000 - have been advertised on the portal since its launch in June 2006. The site helps to reduce some of the barriers faced by small businesses accessing public sector contract opportunities. Around 50,000 suppliers have already registered with the service, with hundreds more joining every week.

The portal allows UK public sector organisations to publicise their lower-value contracts free of charge, and, for the first time, lets businesses view such contracts in a single location.

Margaret Hodge, Minister of State for Industry and the Regions at the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), has congratulated Supply2.gov.uk on its success and recognised its role as a resource for both government departments and business: "Supply2.gov.uk is an excellent example of good engagement between the public and private sectors, and increasing access to government businesses for all sizes of companies. I am pleased that this anniversary marks a year of success for the portal.

"Improving access to government business and ensuring that contracts are awarded fairly has been and remains a top priority for the DTI and the UK Government. Supply2.gov.uk is a useful resource and I am pleased that it has acted as a framework to allow smaller businesses to embrace these important opportunities."

Since its launch, Supply2.gov.uk has also entered into interoperability partnerships with a number of government departments and procurement authorities, including the Ministry of Defence, and Constructionline, the Department of Trade and Industry's national register of pre-qualified construction and construction-related contractors.

The portal is now recognised by both business and government as a useful and effective tool – it was recently cited by both HM Treasury and the European Commission as a best practice means of advertising lower-value contracts.

The portal was originally developed as a result of a report authored by the Better Regulation Task Force and the Small Business Council. The Small Business Service (SBS), with the support of the Office of Government Commerce (OGC), procured BiP Solutions Ltd as a service provider to build, maintain and develop Supply2.gov.uk.

Martin Bennett, SBS Contract Manager for Supply2.gov.uk, said: "Considering our portal started from scratch, Supply2.gov.uk has been quite a success. We received positive feedback during last year's roadshows, which has been borne out by the number of public sector buyers and business suppliers who have registered. The aim of next year is to build on that success."

Fiona Campbell, Brand Manager for Supply2.gov.uk, said: "It is fantastic to be involved in such an important development, helping businesses across the country source lower-value public sector contracts.

"Supply2.gov.uk has had a successful year and we aim to improve on that success, by constantly improving the service Supply2.gov.uk offers and increasing the visibility of opportunities to businesses."