

Free national trial connects business with buyers

More than 19,700 businesses have taken advantage of a free three month trial linking firms with thousands of public sector contract opportunities.

Small and medium-sized businesses have been gaining access to more than 3000 new contracts available each month from nearly 5500 public sector buyers through a free trial of the **www.supply2.gov.uk** portal.

The trial, which was launched in May and closed on 31 July 2008, has proved especially popular with small businesses; 86% of new registrants have fewer than 20 employees and 73% have a turnover of less than £1 million.

The scheme is part of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform's Enterprise Strategy, released in March 2008 alongside the Budget, which outlines new measures to increase the amount of government business that is won by small firms.

90,000 contracts have been advertised on the **Supply2.gov.uk** service since it was launched in 2006. The portal, which is hosted by BiP Solutions, is specifically aimed at helping smaller firms benefit from tenders typically valued at £100,000 or less.

To date, 71% of buyers are from local government illustrating how the service can connect businesses to contracts in the public sector – including sub-contracting opportunities linked to the London 2012 Olympic Games.

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."

Registration for public sector buyers is free, and buyers with an existing procurement website can link their service directly to **www.supply2.gov.uk**

For further information on **Supply2.gov.uk**, email **interoperability@supply2.gov.uk**