

Reference 2010/29
Date 25 January 2010

FREE COURSE TO HELP SMALLER FIRMS BID FOR GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

A free online public procurement course designed to help smaller firms bid for the £220 billion of public sector contracts awarded each year was today launched jointly by Small Business Minister Lord Davies and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury Liam Byrne.

The course, 'Winning the Contract', shows participants how to identify business opportunities to supply goods and services to the public sector, explains the public procurement process, and demonstrates how to submit tenders. It has helpful hints and tips to guide and inform businesses on the bidding process, and where to find public sector contract opportunities.

Trade, Investment and Small Business Minister Lord Davies said:

"Small and medium-sized businesses already sell their goods and services to the public sector, but many more could do so. Opening up public sector procurement to a wider range of suppliers provides new opportunities for small businesses as the UK economy heads towards growth."

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Liam Bryne, MP said:

"Small and medium-sized businesses are the engine-room of our economy. We want them to harness the spending power of government to grow their businesses and create jobs. This new free course will help those businesses to

compete effectively for government contracts, locking in the recovery and strengthening businesses throughout the country."

Winning the Contract is a nationally available online training course which all businesses, regardless of size and sector, can access free of charge. It is part of a series of joint initiatives by the Office of Government Commerce and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills aimed at making the procurement market clearer and simpler.

Notes to editors:

1. Businesses can register to access the 'Winning the Contract' course by clicking through to learndirect on the Business Link website at www.businesslink.gov.uk/procurement. The course, developed by Government and hosted by learndirect, takes a maximum of 3 to 4 hours and can be taken section by section as time allows.
2. The e-learning tool was originally launched in 2007 and previously cost £49.99. Following an evaluation early last year, the course has been radically refreshed and built upon to comprehensively cover all aspects of the procurement process. Government has removed the fee to ensure accessibility for all businesses.
3. The Glover Review was launched in the Budget 2008, to look at the barriers faced by SMEs when competing for public sector contracts. The report made 12 recommendations aimed at making the procurement process more transparent, simple and strategic. Government accepted all 12 recommendations and implementation work began immediately through the OGC/BIS Access for All programme. See Accelerating the SME Economic Engine http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/glover_review_index.htm.
4. The Access for All programme is part of a wider programme to harness the power of public procurement in support of growth through three specific agendas of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises; encouraging apprenticeships, training and youth employment; and reducing carbon emissions. For more information see the Policy Through Procurement action plan on the OGC website www.ogc.gov.uk.

5. There are an estimated 4.8 million small and medium enterprises in the UK (these make up 99.9 per cent of all businesses, contribute 60 per cent of private sector employment, and 50 per cent of turnover).

[Department for Business, Innovation & Skills](#)

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is building a dynamic and competitive UK economy by: creating the conditions for business success; promoting innovation, enterprise and science; and giving everyone the skills and opportunities to succeed. To achieve this it will foster world-class universities and promote an open global economy. BIS - Investing in our future.

[Department for Business, Innovation & Skills](#)
7th Floor, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET

Press enquiries +44 (0)20 7215 5981 | (Out of hours) +44 (0)20 7215 3234/3505 | Public enquiries +44 (0)20 7215 5000
Textphone +44 (0)20 7215 6740 (for those with hearing impairment) | Press Office fax +44 (0)20 7222 4382
www.bis.gov.uk