

UK businesses say yes to Supply2.gov.uk route to success

Supply2.gov.uk is part of the Government's strategy for supporting economic growth – particularly among smaller companies – across the UK, and helps to reduce some of the barriers faced by small businesses seeking to access public sector contract opportunities.

Supply2.gov.uk allows businesses to view lower-value contracts (typically with a value of under £100,000) advertised by UK public sector organisations in a single location. Suppliers can view contracts in their chosen area free of charge, and the service is also free for the public sector to use.

Stephen Timms, Minister for Competitiveness at the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), has welcomed the news that the Supply2.gov.uk service is proving to be a valuable business tool to companies across the country.

The Minister said: "Ensuring all businesses have straightforward access to public sector procurement opportunities is very important.

"Supply2.gov.uk achieves this and benefits both suppliers and buyers. Companies get the chance to tender for solid contracts and government gets access to a diverse and creative range of suppliers."

The public sector can be a valuable and reliable customer, and has requirements for virtually every product and service imaginable. Since the Supply2.gov.uk portal was launched in June 2006, more than 60,000 contract notices have been published, of which around one-third have had a value of under £100,000 – making them particularly relevant to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

More than 4000 buyers from across the entire public sector, including local government, health bodies, education and housing authorities and emergency services, have already registered with the service, with many more joining every week. In June 2007, UK industry's largest customer – the Ministry of Defence – became an interoperability partner to Supply2.gov.uk, meaning that all of the Department's lower-value requirements will be advertised through the service.

In a recent survey conducted by BERR, more than two fifths of registered suppliers said that Supply2.gov.uk has saved their company time in searching and applying for public sector contracts, with more than half reporting that using Supply2.gov.uk has increased the number of public sector contracts they were likely to bid for. In addition, almost two thirds of suppliers said they recommend the service to others.

A number of suppliers have discovered the value of becoming a potential supplier to the public sector as a result of registering on Supply2.gov.uk.

The service has been a real success for Dr Alan Woods of Alan Woods Associates, based in Cambridge: "Supply2.gov.uk has vastly expanded the horizons of my independent research and management consultancy by providing access to diverse lower-value contracts across the UK, along with several opportunities to submit expressions of interest or full tenders. It has recently led directly to winning a £30,000 contract, about which I would not have otherwise heard, and this will contribute significantly to the security of my consultancy over the next year. The service also offers potential to develop further related commercial opportunities through important networking. For my business, Supply2.gov.uk has been a real success story."

Supply2.gov.uk is also a vital tool in enabling businesses to be more efficient, as Neil Bowker, Imaging Services Manager for Squirrel Storage, which has bases in Leeds and Birmingham, testified: "Supply2gov.uk has helped find tenders suited to our business. Many tender sites on the internet can be very difficult and long-winded to work with. Supply2.gov.uk sends an email every day with the up-to-date contracts linked to the information supplied – this prevents hours of scrolling through websites for tenders. The site is quick, easy and the information

supplied is excellent. I have recommended this site to business friends and will continue to use this site for tenders."

With more and more buyers and suppliers registering their details every week, the Supply2.gov.uk community is continually growing. As a useful business tool for identifying and potentially securing valuable public sector contracts, Supply2.gov.uk is a beneficial way to help businesses improve their prospects of supplying to government.