

14th February 2011

Contracts Finder - a new way to do business with Government.

The Chamber has been actively involved in the lobby process for changes in purchases made by local and county councils and it is encouraging that central Government has now recognised the scale of the problem, with the announcement of changes to Government procurement contracts and web portal as below.



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME

MINISTER, 11 February 2011

When we came into government, we inherited a system of doing business that was wasteful, inefficient and inflexible. In his efficiency review last year, Sir Philip Green uncovered some shocking examples: departments paying anything between £8 and £73 for a box of paper, for example. One problem was secrecy – contracts being signed behind closed doors, with no opportunity for public scrutiny. Another was the lack of competition, with small and medium-sized businesses, charities and social enterprises being actively discouraged by the system from competing for government contracts.

We launched a feedback portal on the Number 10 website for businesses like you to tell us what was going wrong and how we should fix it. Many of you have responded. We have heard about organisations being told they could only compete for government contracts if they had sold to government before; companies with new ideas but no mechanism to present them to us; and complaints about the complexity and lengthiness of our processes. As a result, despite accounting for 50 per cent of the turnover of the UK business economy, we estimate that SMEs only win a small proportion of the billions of pounds of public sector business.

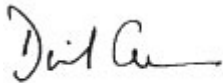
This is unacceptable, so today we are announcing a package of measures to make doing business with government more transparent, and more welcoming to smaller companies, charities and social enterprises. Last month, we started to publish every central government contract worth over £25,000 in full, opening them up to scrutiny by potential competitors and the general public. In order to help companies find this business, we are today launching an online tool, [Contracts finder](#) which will display every central government tender opportunity, with an email alert facility to let you know when new ones in your area of business come up.

To reduce the time and bureaucracy in competing for a government contract, we will seek to eliminate the prequalification process for lower-value procurements, and are introducing a

straightforward questionnaire for the rest that you will only need to complete once for common goods and services, rather than resubmitting the same data every time. We are also announcing a series of surgeries where companies with innovative products and services will be able to come and pitch to government – rather than waiting for the right tender to be issued.

Our ambition is that 25 per cent of government business should go to SMEs, and that many more contracts should be won by charities and social enterprises. In order to achieve this, we need your help. You can see the [Number 10 portal](#) here – if you have experience of doing business with government, continue to give us your feedback, including what you think about the announcements we are making today; and please log on to [Contracts finder](#) and use it to start bidding for government contracts.

There are opportunities here for all of us. By opening up government business to you, you can help us to make government less wasteful, to promote enterprise, and to modernise our public services by encouraging competition and innovation. If you think you can provide a great service to government, or you know a friend, family member, business or charity that could, then get online, get involved, be creative, be innovative and start searching for contracts now.



RT HON DAVID CAMERON MP
PRIME MINISTER
