

# NPS



BiP's NEWSLETTER FOR THE PROCUREMENT SERVICE

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For further details on the PASS Manual email: [pass@bipsolutions.com](mailto:pass@bipsolutions.com)

## Everything you need to know: SRG2

### WHAT IS SRG2?

SRG2 is the project name for a new opportunities portal that will help small businesses to locate and tender for lower-value public sector contracts, to be launched in spring 2006. It has been initiated by the Small Business Service and the Office of Government Commerce.

### HOW WILL IT WORK?

A single portal will be available to public sector buyers to advertise their lower-value contracts to businesses. In addition to being able to search the site for new contracts, businesses will also be informed daily of the contracts that they may wish to tender for by an email alert. The portal will publish contracts below the value of around £100,000, and will also allow small businesses to publish their business profile online for buyers to view.

### WHY IS THIS GOOD FOR SMALL BUSINESSES?

Contracts above the value of around £100,000 (or around £3.6 million for works contracts) are above the EU thresholds, and as such are required by law to be advertised across the EU. However, there is no similar requirement for contracts below the thresholds. The new opportunities portal will give suppliers access to public contracts in a way that has never been provided by Government before – via an online service and a daily email alert. Best of all, suppliers will be able to receive lower-value contracts in their local area free of charge.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO BUYERS?

Purchasers in the public sector will now be able to stimulate their supplier base and attract more diverse, better value, and perhaps even more innovative local suppliers. They will also be able to access a vast bank of supplier profiles to generate shortlists quickly. Also, for councils at least, the service will help to boost their local economies by making it easier for local businesses to secure public contracts. Use of the portal will also help buyers stay compliant by fulfilling the principles of transparency, competition and non-discrimination demanded by the EC Treaty.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, visit [www.supplyinggovernment.gov.uk](http://www.supplyinggovernment.gov.uk)

## Small business wins big business

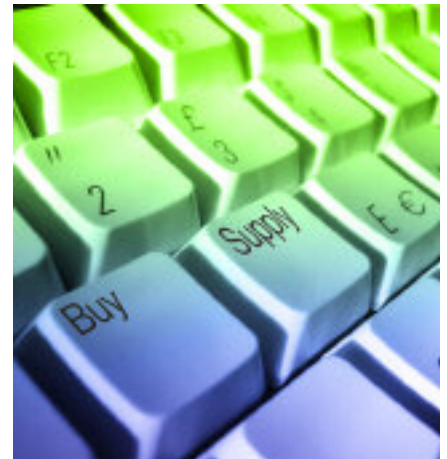
BiP SOLUTIONS HAS been celebrating the news that it has been appointed as the service provider for a new Government-backed web portal which is set to make it easier for small businesses to source lower-value contracts from the public sector.

The portal has the working title SRG2 – Supplier Route to Government (Phase 2). BiP has won a five-year contract from the Small Business Service (SBS) to design and build the portal, as well as stimulate buyer and supplier interest in it. The portal will be launched in spring 2006 and will publicise contracts generally under £100,000 in value. It enables public sector organisations to publicise such contracts and, for the first time, will provide all businesses that register with a single portal to access lower-value contracts.

SRG2 is the first Government-backed online service specifically for lower-value contracts, and aims to make it easier for small businesses to gain access to, and ultimately win, government contracts.

The portal has been created in response to the recommendation of the Better Regulation Task Force in its 2003 report *Government: Supporter and Customer?* Although the report called for lower-value contracts across central government to be publicised online, the SBS in partnership with the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) has expanded the remit of the service to cover contracts across the broader public sector.

Minister for Competitiveness at the Department of Trade and Industry, Barry Gardiner, said: "With more supplier choice available in the one place, the new portal will make public sector buyers seriously question whether they are getting value for money from their current range of providers. The portal will save buyers time and effort in sourcing new suppliers; and help them provide public services more cost-effectively."



As well as helping businesses find lower-value contracts the service will help stimulate the public sector supplier base and help buyers stay compliant with EU public procurement law.

Ron Burges, Chief Executive of BiP Solutions, said: "The award of this contract builds on BiP's longstanding experience in the public procurement arena. It presents an exciting new opportunity for small businesses to identify and tender for lower-value public sector contracts, which in turn will stimulate the private sector's interest and involvement in this important marketplace."

"The contract to build and market the portal is important to BiP Solutions and we look forward to working with our partners in the SBS to deliver an innovative and useful service for buyers and suppliers. As a small business ourselves we appreciate the challenges involved in public procurement – hopefully our success in winning this contract will inspire others."

For further information on the service visit [www.sbs.gov.uk](http://www.sbs.gov.uk) or [www.supplyinggovernment.gov.uk](http://www.supplyinggovernment.gov.uk)

## New-look GO magazine launched

REGULAR READERS OF *Government Opportunities (GO)* magazine will see some changes with effect from the February edition.

*GO* continues to provide the best intelligence and analysis of the public procurement marketplace, but now the magazine has been redesigned and restructured to make it an even sharper read than before.

Seeing is believing, so if you do not already receive the UK's most authoritative public procurement magazine, but think that you should, then email [media@bipsolutions.com](mailto:media@bipsolutions.com) giving your name, position and organisation address to see whether you qualify.



## Deadline approaches for GO Awards



THE DEADLINE FOR the 2006 *Government Opportunities (GO)* magazine Excellence in Public Procurement Awards is fast approaching, so get your entries in soon. The GO Awards have become one of the most sought-after for procurement professionals; but to ensure you or your team or organisation can be considered, you must complete a nomination form.

The deadline for this year's Awards is 31 March.

This year's categories are:

- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Individual Excellence Award
- Team Excellence Award
- Sustainability Award
- e-Government Award
- Best Service Award
- Young Procurement Professional Award

The prestigious GO Awards ceremony will be the centrepiece of National Public Procurement Practitioners Day (N3PD), held on 6 June at the Institution of Civil Engineers, One Great George Street, London.

N3PD is set to host an impressive line-up of speakers, including such industry heavyweights as Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry Sir Digby Jones and European Commissioner Charlie McCreevy, Head of the EU Internal Market and Services.

For details on how you can enter the GO Awards or to register to attend N3PD visit [www.n3pd.com](http://www.n3pd.com)

## New Year, New Directive

WITH THE NEW Consolidated Public Procurement Directive now in force purchasers are under increased pressure to comply with the new regime.

The new Directive brings together three previous Directives into a single text and sets out the procedures that must be followed at each stage of the procurement process, leading to the award of a contract above specific value thresholds. The OGC and the Scottish Executive have now introduced Regulations putting this Directive into effect.

Failure to comply with the new Regulations or implement them effectively could result not only in loss of value for money but also in expensive litigation.

BiP Solutions is set to kick off a nationwide roadshow designed to help clarify the requirements of both the new Consolidated Public Procurement Directive and the interpreting Regulations. The programme

addresses the key elements and will focus on the issues of greatest importance and interest to public procurement personnel. It also addresses some of the wider issues that impact on the UK public procurement process, such as FOIA and recent judgments from the European Court of Justice.

The one-day seminar, Letting Contracts by Applying the New Public Procurement Contract Regulations, will be held in Manchester, Glasgow, London and Birmingham. The first, at the Renaissance Hotel in Manchester, will be on 2 March 2006.

For further information and to register online see [www.bipsolutions.com/events](http://www.bipsolutions.com/events).

The temporary EU thresholds introduced at 1 January 2006 are due to be revised on 31 January. Visit see the page opposite for the most up-to-date information.

## Better value with new Tracker



BEST VALUE THRIVES on competition, but competition relies on potential suppliers receiving the most suitable information on public contracts quickly.

That is why BiP Solutions has further developed its market-leading contract information service, Tracker. The new service, which takes account of user feedback, makes it

easier for businesses to access valuable public sector business opportunities.

In addition to providing comprehensive contract information online and through daily email alerts, Tracker will now supply businesses with market intelligence via its innovative new Market Monitor service. Market Monitor will help companies respond much more effectively to the changing needs of the public sector by keeping them up to date with all the latest developments. And an improved translation facility will provide suppliers with access to new markets. New languages are planned for inclusion in the service in future releases.

Also, for the first time businesses will have access to BiP Solutions' supplier information database, Select, through Tracker. Select allows businesses to submit a profile of their organisation online, which can be viewed by thousands of buyers registered across all areas of the public sector.

Tracker will also make it much easier for users to upgrade or add new services online, as well as fine-tuning their contract searches within the UK to a specific region.

For further information on Tracker visit [www.tendermatch.co.uk](http://www.tendermatch.co.uk)

## New contract for HCSA

BiP SOLUTIONS IS delighted to announce that it has signed a new three-year contract with the Health Care Supplies Association (HCSA). The HCSA is the UK's leading organisation for those involved in healthcare procurement, and BiP will continue to provide a broad range of services on its behalf – including production of its website (<http://www.healthcaresupplies.org.uk>), the provision of communication services to its members, publication of its annual procurement guide and the management of its annual conference.

"We are delighted to continue our close relationship with the HCSA," said Ron Burges, Chief Executive of BiP Solutions. "BiP and the HCSA have collaborated extremely well in the past, and the signing of this new contract will enable us to develop some new ideas that will greatly benefit the organisation and its membership."



John Smith (Chairman, HCSA, left), Don Greenslade (Conference Organiser, HCSA, centre) and Scott Smith (Commercial Director, BiP Solutions, right) sign the new three-year contract.

# Ofgem and Scottish Courts connect with aXcess

THE OFFICE OF Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) and the Scottish Courts Service (SCS) are two of the latest organisations to sign up to BiP Solutions' aXcess service to deliver their Buyer Profile websites.

The purpose of a Buyer Profile is to provide details about a contracting authority's procurement practices and intentions, so that potential suppliers will be better informed

about the purchaser and better able to judge whether they want to bid for a particular tender opportunity.



Buyer Profiles hold details on how to do business with a public body as well as hosting a real-time contracts feed powered by BiP Solutions' market-leading Project service.

The sites allow suppliers immediate and unrestricted access to future, current and past contracts as well as giving advice on how a supplier can do business with the organisations.

Suppliers are able to visit the organisations' portals and access procurement information, including contract opportunities, as well as further information on the authorities' procurement strategy, practices, policies and key contacts.

The portals were developed by BiP Solutions using its aXcess service, which, alongside compliance with the EC's requirements for publishing a Buyer Profile, also provides real-time contract information.

Michael Lennox, Public Sector Solutions Manager for BiP, said: "BiP are proud to support and host both Ofgem and the Scottish Courts Service's Buyer Profiles, which will allow them to improve communication channels with suppliers and if required reduce procurement timescales using the principles described within the new UK procurement regulations."

The sites can be found at <http://ofgem.g2b.info> and <http://scotcourts.g2b.info/>

Around 30 public bodies now use BiP's aXcess service, including the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (<http://www.procurementportal.odpm.gov.uk/>) and the Department for Transport (<http://dft.g2b.info/>).

To learn how your organisation can revolutionise its procurement processes with a bespoke aXcess Buyer Profile at low cost, contact the Delta sales on **0845 270 7090** or email [sales@delta-ets.com](mailto:sales@delta-ets.com).

## Project cuts tendering times



FOLLOWING THE introduction of new UK regulations adapting the EC Consolidated Procurement Directive, public authorities can now reduce their tendering timescales by over a week using BiP Solutions' market leading e-notification service, Project.

BiP Solutions has recently upgraded Project to accommodate the reduction in timescales possible by XML submission under the new EU Directives. Project also includes a Contract Report tool to help users stay compliant with the new UK regulations, which have been introduced in the light of the new EU Directives.

Buyers can decide to reduce their Restricted, Open or Negotiated timescales by seven days at the Expression of Interest stage (for the Restricted or Negotiated procedure) or Invitation to Tender stage (for the Open procedure) if they transmit their notice via an approved XML e-sender. Buyers using the Open procedure who also provide all their tender documentation on a dedicated Buyer Profile website, using services such as BiP's aXcess solution, can opt to reduce their timescales by a further five days.

The new tool allows buyers to quickly create and manage a Contract Report, which may be requested at any point by the European Commission during or after the tender stage, within a controlled and auditable electronic environment. The report quickly compiles the original notice and the subsequent award notice.

If you would like to use Project or would like a dedicated aXcess Buyer Profile website please contact BiP Solutions on **0845 270 7090** or email [sales@delta-ets.com](mailto:sales@delta-ets.com)

## EC procurement thresholds from 31 January 2006

The table below shows the thresholds applying to public sector bodies for contracts that are subject to the EU procurement rules. The thresholds are net of VAT.

PUBLIC SECTOR THRESHOLDS FROM 31 JANUARY 2006

	SUPPLIES	SERVICES	WORKS
Entities listed in Schedule 1 <sup>1</sup>	£93,738	£93,738 <sup>2</sup>	£3,611,319 <sup>3</sup>
Other Public Sector Contracting Authorities	£144,371	£144,371	£3,611,319 <sup>3</sup>
Indicative Notices	£513,166	£513,166	£3,611,319
Small Lots	£54,738	£54,738	£684,221

<sup>1</sup> Schedule 1 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 lists central government bodies subject to the WTO GPA. These thresholds will also apply to any successor bodies.

<sup>2</sup> With the exception of the following services, which have a threshold of £144,371.

- Part B (residual) services
- Research & Development services (Category 8)
- The following Telecommunications services in Category 5
  - CPC 7524 – Television and Radio Broadcast services
  - CPC 7525 – Interconnection services
  - CPC 7526 – Integrated Telecommunications services
- Subsidised services contracts under Regulation 34.

<sup>3</sup> Including subsidised works contracts under Regulation 34.

The new thresholds are available online at <http://bipsolutions.com/html/ecdirectives.htm>

## Efficiency guru to speak at CBC

THE AUTHOR OF the UK Government's blueprint for public sector efficiency, Sir Peter Gershon, is set to speak at the Central Buying Consortium's Annual Conference and Exhibition, to be held on 16 March 2006 at One Great George Street, Westminster, London.

In addition to Sir Peter's Keynote Address, delegates will also hear from a range of prominent speakers including the Director of the Department for Education and Skills' Centre for Procurement Performance, Ian

Taylor. Like Richard Abbott, Procurement Programmes Director at the Office of Government Commerce, Mr Taylor will discuss collaboration across the public sector.

As in previous years, the CBC is offering delegates the opportunity to attend a choice of seminars on a range of relevant topics. These offer a higher degree of participation and an opportunity for delegates to engage and discuss important issues in more depth.

To register for the Conference online visit [www.bipsolutions.com/events](http://www.bipsolutions.com/events).

## NPS EVENTS GUIDE

Conferences, exhibitions and seminars aimed at procurement professionals.

**FEBRUARY-MAY 2006**

### UNDERSTANDING THE NEW OJEU CONTRACT NOTICE PROFORMAS FOR EU DIRECTIVE 2004/18

21 Feb	Bristol	27 Apr	London
3 Mar	Manchester	24 May	Birmingham
30 Mar	Glasgow		

**FEBRUARY-JUNE 2006**

### HOW TO LET COMPLIANT PUBLIC CONTRACTS

21 Feb	London	20 Apr	London
28 Feb	Manchester	15 Jun	Birmingham

**FEBRUARY-JUNE 2006**

### HOW TO PROTECT YOUR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS WHEN TENDERING

22 Feb	London	16 May	Manchester
7 Mar	Birmingham	8 Jun	London

**FEBRUARY-JUNE 2006**

### AN INTRODUCTION TO NEW PURCHASING TECHNIQUES

22 Feb	London	21 Jun	London
2 May	Manchester		

**FEBRUARY-JUNE 2006**

### PERFECTING COMPLIANT EVALUATION PROCESSES ROADSHOW

22 Feb	London	3 May	Manchester
20 Apr	Bristol	22 Jun	London

**FEBRUARY-JUNE 2006**

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) LESSONS LEARNT - PUBLIC SECTOR CONTRACTING & FOIA

23 Feb	London	6 Jun	London
29 Mar	Birmingham		

**FEBRUARY-APRIL 2006**

### HELPING SMES

28 Feb	London	25 Apr	Glasgow
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**MARCH-MAY 2006**

### THE CHANGING FACE OF PUBLIC TENDERING

1 Mar	Manchester	18 May	Birmingham
19 Apr	London		

**MARCH-JUNE 2006**

### LETTING CONTRACTS BY APPLYING THE NEW PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CONTRACT REGULATIONS

2 Mar	Manchester	23 May	Birmingham
29 Mar	Glasgow	8 Jun	London
25 Apr	London		

**MARCH-JUNE 2006**

### SELLING TO PUBLIC SECTOR CONSORTIA

2 Mar	London	20 Jun	London
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**7 MARCH 2006**

### SOPO - SELLING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Bristol Marriott City Centre

**MARCH-JUNE 2006**

### HOW TO WIN TENDERS

8 Mar	Birmingham	10 May	London
23 Mar	London	15 Jun	London

**9 MARCH 2006**

### HOW TO SELL TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Renaissance Hotel, London Heathrow

**MARCH-JUNE 2006**

### PREPARING PERFECT TENDERS

9 Mar	London	21 Jun	Bristol
28 Mar	Birmingham	22 Jun	London
11 May	Glasgow	28 Jun	Manchester
25 May	Leeds		

**MARCH-JUNE 2006**

### DELIVERING SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

15 Mar	London	17 May	Manchester
9 May	Glasgow	7 Jun	London

**16 MARCH 2006**

### CBC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2006 - COLLABORATING ACROSS THE PUBLIC SECTOR

One Great George Street, Westminster, London

To book visit [www.bipsolutions.com/events](http://www.bipsolutions.com/events) or for further information on advertising your event, email our Events Team at [events@bipsolutions.com](mailto:events@bipsolutions.com)

## Top Tip: Environmental and social procurement

ONE OF THE biggest challenges that the public sector faces in 2006 and beyond is how it leads the drive for sustainability through its own procurement practices. The EU Public Procurement Directives dictate that social and environmental issues can only be considered provided that they are linked directly to the requirement being tendered for. Procurement personnel are quite aware of this and often ask for relevant information from potential contractors – however, they rarely seek the same assurances on the methods employed by sub-contractors within the winning supplier's supply chain, who will often be relied on to deliver the requirement.

This month's top tip is – when considering sustainability in your procurement, think just as far downstream as you do upstream.

## GO ahead... Law & Order

*Government Opportunities* (GO) magazine is currently inviting contributions for its forthcoming April Law & Order Special Issue.

If you have an interesting story, an example of best practice or an opinion on the subject of police procurement that buyers or suppliers would benefit from, then GO would like to hear from you.

The magazine is looking for submissions ranging from 700 to 1600 words on this or any of the other public procurement-related themes below.

If you have an issue or viewpoint that others could benefit from reading about, then email [gary.atkinson@bipsolutions.com](mailto:gary.atkinson@bipsolutions.com) with a brief outline of the proposed editorial.

### Government Opportunities THEMES FOR 2006

MAY	HEALTH
JUNE	IT
JULY	EDUCATION
AUGUST	EMERGENCY SERVICES
SEPTEMBER	SUSTAINABILITY
OCTOBER	COMMUNICATIONS
NOVEMBER	REGENERATION
DECEMBER	TRAVEL

## BiP in the framework for e-auctions

BiP SOLUTIONS HAS been accepted onto a framework for e-auction suppliers by the Department of Finance in the Republic of Ireland.

Most of the requirements for e-auctions in Ireland this year are likely to be for below-threshold contract values. No e-auction has yet been conducted by an Irish public sector body, other than by one utility company.

The Department of Finance's new framework aims to improve the lack of awareness within the public sector in Ireland of the value of using e-auctions.

BiP Solutions provides a flexible e-auction solution, allowing buyers to choose which services they require, such as support, consultancy or number of e-auctions.

Single-event auctions start from as little as £1000.

If you are interested please contact BiP's Public Sector Solutions Team on **0845 270 7090** or email [sales@delta-ets.com](mailto:sales@delta-ets.com)

## IN MARCH'S ...



GOVERNMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### SPECIAL TRANSPORT ISSUE

- Garth Goddard, Project Manager for Transport at the North West Centre of Excellence, discusses how local authorities can make efficiencies in the school run.
- Iain Greenshields from Glasgow City Council discusses how the city is benefiting from travel information technology.
- Paul O'Brien, Chief Executive of the Association for Public Service Excellence, explains how the drive to curb anti-social behaviour could save councils in the long run.

*(Writers and contents subject to change)*

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