



Intelligent **Transport**
Planning Solutions



Doing business with central government - encouraging SMEs

Despite accounting for 50 per cent of the turnover of the UK business economy, SMEs (Small and Medium sized Enterprises) only win a small proportion of the billions of pounds of public sector business put out to tender each year.

Last week the coalition Government announced measures intended to simplify and accelerate procurement processes for central government with the aim of encouraging more SMEs, charities and social enterprises to compete for government contracts.

The findings of the Lean Review, conducted by Minister for the Cabinet Office, Frances Maude, indicated that measures were needed to increase efficiencies in the procurement process and encourage innovation and participation by SMEs.

Key measures announced include:

- The launch of a [Contracts Finder website](#) which will contain details of public sector contracting opportunities over £10,000. The website has an e-mail alert facility where suppliers can specify which areas they are interested in and tender details will be emailed free of charge as and when they are posted;
- The appointment of Stephen Allott as a new Crown Commercial Representative (CCR) for SMEs. His task will be to build a more strategic dialogue between HM Government and smaller suppliers;
- The launch of SME product surgeries. These events will be led by the new CCR and will give SMEs the opportunity to pitch innovative products directly to central government and the wider public sector rather than waiting for tender opportunities to arise;
- A new approach to assessing companies and organisations who want to do business with Government, with the intention that SMEs are not disadvantaged including:
 - Seeking to eliminate PQQs (Pre-Qualification Questionnaires) for all central government procurements under £100,000;
 - Allowing SMEs to submit their prequalification data once for all procurements in common commodities. The intention is to put an end to companies having to submit the same data time and time again, saving time and money

- 'Mystery Shopper' & SME Panel opportunities. These will allow people to contact the Government if they see a tender that they don't understand, or if they think procurers could be even more open and transparent.

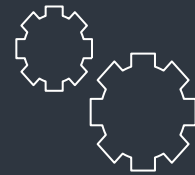
How these measures will play out in practice within the constraints of the European public procurement regime remains to be seen but in the current economic climate any measures aimed at increasing efficiencies in procurement and reducing timescales are surely to be welcomed by contracting authorities and suppliers alike.

For more information and advice please contact:

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We plan and develop *sustainable* transport solutions to ensure that our advice *improves* and *sustains* the quality of people's lives in the *built, natural, economic* and *social* environment. We resolve transport problems through the design and applications of *innovative* technical and engineering solutions.



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We work with our clients to ensure that our in-depth experience & expertise in Development & Regeneration directly benefits the project so that risks & costs are *minimised*, savings & innovation are *optimised*, and progress is *expedited*. What we learned in 25 years of *global* experience will directly *benefit* our clients and their projects.



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