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news release

## Serco selected to provide flagship service to help UK small businesses

7 November 2005

Serco Group plc (“Serco”) today announces that it has been selected as prime contractor to provide the UK government with web-based information services to support the nation’s growing small businesses.

The contract with the Department of Trade and Industry (“DTI”) is due to start immediately. The service will run for five years with up to four additional one-year renewals, and could be valued at more than £125m over this extended period.

The successful bid, originating in Serco Solutions, draws on skills and experience from across the group to deliver the contract requirements.

The DTI’s Small Business Service (“SBS”) aims to make the UK the best place in the world to grow a business. Its strategy is to focus on policy and build partnership arrangements with suppliers to implement its programmes.

Under the contract, Serco will be responsible for developing and delivering the ‘**business.gov**’ programme. This will involve working with SBS and a growing number of government departments including DTI, the Treasury, Companies House, the Cabinet Office and HM Revenue and Customs.

The programme’s objective is to stimulate a new generation of UK businesses, help firms grow, ensure that SMEs are heard by government and help shape government services according to the demands of SMEs.

Services to be provided include operation of the [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk) portal, which makes advice and guidance available to small businesses from across local, regional and national government, presenting information in ways that minimise red tape and address the real needs of business.

Serco Group Chief Executive Christopher Hyman said: “The Small Business Service is a Government flagship service for SMEs. Part of the SBS mission is to foster entrepreneurial cultures and help people achieve their potential. Serco shares these ambitions. We will draw on capability from across Serco to support their achievement through this contract.

“We have supported Government’s drive for innovation and competitiveness for more than a decade, by managing the National Physical Laboratory, communications for the Envirowise programme and the Knowledge Transfer Partnership initiative. The **business.gov** programme has achieved a great deal to improve UK enterprise and benefit the nation’s economic health. We will support the growth of this programme through continuous innovation and multi-dimensional marketing.”

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**Notes to editors**

Serco is a leading international service company operating in a broad range of sectors including science, education, IT and IT-managed services, local government, transport, health, home affairs, defence and aerospace.

The SBS' key areas of focus include releasing the potential of ethnic minority groups, improving access to finance for small businesses, improving small businesses' experience of government services and developing better regulation and policy.

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