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Contact: See below

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Serco TransArctic Expedition 2004 launched at the Science Museum

Serco Group plc ("Serco") has announced, today, its sponsorship of 26-year-old Ben Saunders in his endeavour to be the first ever person to cross the Arctic Ocean without having to be re-supplied. This means that during the expedition Ben will be totally unsupported; no drops of food, fuel or supplies of any kind for what is expected to be a 90-day journey. For the 1,240-mile expedition, Ben will be hauling everything that he needs, from day one, on a sledge that will weigh 178kg fully loaded. His mode of transport? A pair of skis and a specially designed dry suit for crossing stretches of open water (leads).

As if this weren't enough, the conditions he will encounter throughout his journey are extreme, with temperatures as low as -45°C and a wind chill factor that can take temperatures to below -70°C . He also runs the risk of having to deal with polar bears along the Canadian and Russian coastlines.

Ben Saunders, 26, has had a life-long passion for the outdoors and has already established himself as one of today's most exciting and successful polar athletes, already boasting two record-breaking polar expeditions. As Ben says:

"The Serco TransArctic Expedition 2004 is all about exploring human, rather than geographical limits. I hope it will be a message to others worldwide that with enough self-belief and determination, anything is possible."

Christopher Hyman, Serco's Chief Executive, first met Ben after he had spoken at a Duke of Edinburgh Award's ceremony. Having the opportunity to speak with Ben afterwards, he was impressed by his indomitable spirit and desire to push the boundaries of human achievement.

Commenting on the expedition and Serco's sponsorship, Christopher said:

"As a company, Serco relies on its people and culture to provide world-class innovative solutions across a variety of geographies and markets, while continually pushing our business boundaries. The "can do" attitude that I see every day across our business is personified by what Ben is attempting.

The determination, enthusiasm and commitment that Ben's expedition will require is something that epitomises the attitude of Serco employees around the world and this is why we have decided to support Ben's record breaking expedition"

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Serco Group plc
Serco House, 16 Bartley Wood Business Park
Bartley Way, Hook, Hampshire
RG27 9UY, United Kingdom

T +44 (0) 1256 745900
F +44 (0) 1256 744111

Serco Group Pty Limited
Level 10, 90 Arthur Street
North Sydney, NSW 2060
Australia

T +61 (0) 2 9964 9733
F +61 (0) 2 9964 9924

Serco Group, Inc.
20 E Clementon Road, Suite 102 South
Gibbsboro, New Jersey 08026
United States

T +1 856 346 8800
F +1 856 346 8463

For further information please contact Serco Group plc:

T: +44 (0) 1256 745 900

Kevin Johnson

Head of Media & Public Relations, Serco Group plc

Notes to Editors

- Born in Plymouth, Ben Saunders (26) was educated at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, where he completed the ten-week “Rowallan Company”, one of the most challenging courses in the British Army.
- Ben went on to become an instructor at the John Ridgway Adventure School in Scotland, often referred to as the UK’s toughest management training school. Much of his inspiration comes from his time with John Ridgway and, like John, Ben wants to use his experiences to inspire others to change how they view their own potential and to encourage others to follow their dreams.
- Ben is a leadership and motivational speaker and spends much of his time supporting the Duke of Edinburgh Award’s Scheme and talking to young people across the country.
- Ben has experience of two groundbreaking North Pole expeditions;
 - North Pole 2003
Solo round trip to the North Pole from 89 degrees
Pioneering technology – first ever, live video expedition updates (incl. First ever video from the Pole)
Youngest person ever to complete this journey (at 25)
 - North Pole 2001
Unsupported two-man expedition from Russia to the North Pole
23 years old (world record)
Worst conditions for over 15 years
Survived polar bear attack and serious frostbite
- Full details on the expedition, and regular updates from Ben directly from the polar icecap, are available at www.sercotransarctic.com
- Serco is one of the world’s largest public service companies operating on a global basis in a diverse range of sectors, including defence, aerospace and science, public transport and traffic management, health, education, justice and local government
- Serco is primarily focused on the public sector, which represents around 90% of its business and has a strong public service ethos. In partnership with customers and staff Serco aims to enhance service levels and operational efficiency by shortening decision making chains, reducing bureaucracy and achieving continuous improvement
- More information on the Company can be found at www.serco.com