

## **Serco signs new Business Link contract for South East England**

**7<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

Serco Group plc (Serco), the international service company, announces that it has signed a contract with the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) to provide Business Link services across the South East region of the UK. Serco announced in August 2009 that it had been appointed preferred bidder for this contract. The contract is expected to commence in April 2010, and is valued at around £80m over three years, with an option to extend for a further two years.

Under the contract, Serco will maximise the quality, efficiency and consistency of the service by integrating the six existing Business Link operations in the South East, which serve businesses in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Surrey, Hampshire, Sussex and Kent. The new service will simplify and improve access for the region's 750,000 businesses to an extensive range of support, increase focus on frontline advice and one-to-one support, and place a particular emphasis on small and medium sized enterprises and new business ventures.

Serco is a leading provider of business support services, and delivers the UK's national online portal [businesslink.gov.uk](http://businesslink.gov.uk) as well as regional Business Link services in London, and in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. In London, awareness of the Business Link service has increased by 40% over the past year, leading to a 50% increase in calls handled by the contact centre, and in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, innovation and operational efficiency improvements have resulted in 50% more businesses receiving intensive help and guidance over the last 18 months.

Pam Alexander, SEEDA Chief Executive, said: "The new Business Link contract comes at a pivotal time for the economy in the South East. It will be a great boost to South East businesses

and aspiring entrepreneurs to take advantage of the services as they prepare for the upturn.

Business Link will support the region's economy, helping to create prosperity for all. Serco has an extensive track record in delivering Business Link services in other regions so we have confidence that business support within the South East will go from strength to strength."

Christopher Hyman, Chief Executive of Serco Group, said: "The work we do in helping businesses to start-up and thrive is a key part of addressing unemployment, encouraging entrepreneurship, and creating sustainable economic growth in the current challenging economic environment. I am delighted that the value and quality of the work we do both nationally and in the regions we serve has been recognised in our selection for this contract."

## **Ends**

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### **About Serco**

Serco is a FTSE 100 international service company, which combines commercial know-how with a deep public service ethos.

We improve essential services by managing people, processes, technology and assets more effectively. We advise policy makers, design innovative solutions, integrate systems and - most of all - deliver to the public.

Serco supports governments, agencies and companies who seek a trusted partner with a solid track record of providing assured service excellence. Our people offer operational, management and consulting expertise in the aviation, BPO, defence, education, environmental services,

facilities management, health, home affairs, information and communications technology, knowledge services, local government, science, transport, welfare to work and the commercial sectors.

More information can be found at [www.serco.com](http://www.serco.com)