17-06-2015

SMEs have been urged to take advantage of the lucrative public procurement market at this year’s ‘Meet the Buyer’ event in Belfast, taking place today, Wednesday 17 June 2015. Encouraging more firms to bid for public tenders, both locally and on a cross-border basis, is the main aim of the ‘Meet the Buyer’ events.

Full text:

“*These events are part of a range of supports for SMEs in building their share of this very important market*” said Minister of State with special responsibility for Public Procurement, Simon Harris T.D.  “*Given the size of the market and the tremendous opportunity it presents – both north and south of the Border - I am delighted to see that 700 SME representatives attended this year’s event in Belfast”*.

“*At the ‘Meet the Buyer’ events SMEs have the opportunity to have one-to-one meetings with the key buyers from various public sector organisations. The events also provide an important networking space for companies who might not be in a position to tender on their own, but could work with others to form consortia and win increased business. Businesses who innovate, drive efficiency and are competitive can succeed at home and also in new international markets*” emphasised Minister Harris.

In 2014, the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) published new public procurement guidelines which make it easier for small businesses to bid for work across the entire public sector. The new guidelines make public procurement more accessible by SMEs. They promote the setting of relevant and proportionate financial capacity, turnover and insurance levels for tendering firms and the sub-dividing of larger contracts into lots, where possible, to enable SMEs to bid for these opportunities. The guidelines also encourage SMEs to form consortia where they are not of sufficient scale to tender in their own right and to register on [**www.etenders.gov.ie**](http://www.etenders.gov.ie/) to ensure maximum exposure to tendering opportunities.

There will be another opportunity for SMEs to attend a ‘Meet the Buyer’ event in Dublin in October.

Further information about these events is available on: [**www.intertradeireland.com**](http://www.intertradeireland.com/) and on: [**www.procurement.ie**](http://www.procurement.ie/)

**Note to Editors**

The InterTradeIreland ‘Meet the Buyer’ event in Belfast was held in partnership with OGP, CPD, Invest NI, Enterprise Ireland and the Strategic Investment Board.