

Single Government 'solution for business' to help companies succeed

Date: 23 Oct 2008

The Government today launched 'Solutions for Business' - funded by government, a national package of publicly funded business support products.

Peter Mandelson, Secretary of State for Business, speaking at the Northern Regeneration and Renewal Summit revealed the 30 advice, loan and grant products and services that make up the simplified portfolio alongside their common look and feel.

The products will be accessed via Business Link. A new Business Link Strategy Group will ensure customer input directly helps drive up Business Link performance by bringing senior business leaders into the strategic oversight of the service.

All the 'Solutions for Business' products will be in place by March 09 and are a result of a streamlining exercise whereby the government committed to reduce over 3,000 products to less than 100. Monitoring will ensure the number of schemes stays low.

The aim is to make it easier for companies, small and large, new and existing, to find the right products to help them with common business issues such as getting started, growing, finance, export, skills, innovation and the environment.

Businesses had complained they found government support complex and confusing. 'Solutions for Business' responds to their concerns and the business community has been involved in developing the package.

It is estimated tighter targeting of schemes will collectively add up to £1.4bn per year of value for businesses whilst having clearly identifiable products will save them up to £1.4m in saved search costs.

Rationalisation will ensure effective use of taxpayers' money through more efficient delivery. All levels of government - national, regional and local will share the same products for the first time.

Economic, social and environmental goals will be met where the Government needs to intervene.

Secretary of State for Business, Lord Peter Mandelson said:

"Single Government "Solution for Business" will help companies prosper and flourish. We have made it better and simpler for businesses to access the support they need.

"Better business support is about better customer service - reducing backroom wastage and delivering greater impact with the same resources. BSSP is about helping the UK to become the most enterprising economy in the world".

Chair of the BSSP Transition Management Board Martin Temple said:

"For far too long, help which has been available to business has not been taken up because it has been too complex, confusing to understand and hard to find quickly and easily. This programme will simplify access, make clear what is available and improve the quality in order to match business needs.

"As a consequence, government support for business will make a greater contribution to economic growth at a regional and national level and provide better value for money for the taxpayer.

"However, the sheer scale of transition from the current plethora of schemes to a more streamlined approach will take time to be introduced but the benefits of the new system will become apparent within eighteen months"

CBI Deputy Director-General, John Cridland, said:

"Once fully implemented, the simplified portfolio should mean small and growing businesses will find it much easier to understand the support on offer from government. Together with

improvements to Business Link, the delivery of the portfolio comes at a time of tough trading conditions when, more than ever, businesses need access to high quality, independent advice and support to boost their chances of survival and growth."

Notes to editors:

1. The Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP) was announced during the Budget 2006 to reduce the number of publicly funded business support schemes from over 3,000 to less than 100 by 2010.

2. 'Solutions for Business' products are:

1. Export Credit Insurance
2. Grant for Business Investment
3. Maximising Foreign Direct Investment
4. Accessing International Markets
5. Developing Your International Trade Potential
6. Train to Gain
7. Business Collaboration Networks
8. Business Premises
9. Business Growth: Specialist Facilities and Environments
10. Starting a High Growth Business
11. Intensive Start-Up Support
12. Starting a Business
13. Manufacturing Advisory Service
14. Designing Demand
15. Innovation Advice and Guidance
16. Coaching for High Growth
17. Support to Lenders
18. Small Loans for Business
19. Understanding Finance for Business
20. Finance for Business
21. Enterprise Coaching
22. Improving Your Resource Efficiency
23. Environmental Land Management Funding
24. Environmental Land Management Advice
25. Collaborative R&D
26. Networking for Innovation
27. Knowledge Transfer Partnerships
28. Innovation Vouchers
29. Low Carbon Energy Demonstration
30. Grant for Research and Development

3. Products will migrate to 'Solutions for Business' on a rolling basis between now and March 09. Five products join the portfolio today: Grant for Business Investment, Maximising Foreign Direct Investment, Accessing International Markets, Developing Your International Trade Potential and Train to Gain.

4. Businesses looking for support can contact Business Link by phone (0845 600 9006), online (<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk>) or face-to-face by contacting their local provider.

5. The Business Link Strategy Group will consist of Martin Temple as Chair plus businesses, representative members from business organizations, RDAs and Business Link.

6. A similar streamlining exercise undertaken at the former DTI found that, with tighter targeting of products, every £1 spent on support delivered a £2.80 benefit to business. These numbers when scaled up across Government equate to an estimated £1.4bn of economic benefits per year, adjusting for already improved schemes and products with wider benefits. Economic benefits, depending on the support scheme, will include new products, more investment, and improved

productivity. Wider benefits will include greater employment in assisted areas, lower carbon emissions and greater opportunity for minority groups.

7. The Business Support Simplification Programme is led by BERR in central government and the RDAs in the regions.

8. The business community, Local Authorities and other organisations and individuals have been involved in the development of the 'Solutions for Business' package.

9. The Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform helps UK business succeed in an increasingly competitive world. It promotes business growth and a strong enterprise economy, leads the better regulation agenda and champions free and fair markets. It is the shareholder in a number of Government-owned assets and it works to secure, clean and competitively priced energy supplies. More information on BSSP can be found at:

<http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/enterprise/simplifyingbusinesssupport/page44805.html>