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WASHINGTON-The U.S. Small Business Administration, the Department of Defense, the Office of Management and Budget and the General Services Administration are taking steps to simplify the federal contracting process by creating an integrated database of small businesses that want to do business with the government.

The integration of the existing Pro-Net and DOD's Central Contractor Registration (CCR) databases will create one portal for entering and searching small business sources and will assist small businesses with marketing their goods and services to the federal government. The integration will begin on Jan 1.

The CCR-PRO-Net linkage is part of a comprehensive strategic effort to transfer Pro-Net's functions to the E-Gov Business Partner Network (BPN) in order to simplify government-wide vendor registration. The network is part of the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE), one of the e-government initiatives under the President's Management Agenda. IAE is carrying out OMB's mandate for new processes to streamline federal acquisition by creating common integrated business processes for buyers and sellers in the federal marketplace. The network incorporates DOD's CCR database. Registration in CCR is now a requirement for federal contracts. After Dec. 31, CCR will assume all of Pro-Net's search capabilities and functions and small businesses will no longer need to manually register in both Pro-Net and CCR.

"We are continuing to make strides in simplifying the process to help small businesses conduct business with the government," said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. "By integrating PRO-Net's functions into CCR, the foundation of the Business Partner Network, we are helping to advance the President's goal of a single, user-friendly, integrated acquisition environment."

This merger is another step toward the goals to unify common systems and ensure that data need only be entered once and then reused.

Procuring agencies and contracting officers who rely on Pro-Net as the authoritative source for vendors that are certified in SBA's 8(a) Business Development program, HUBZone Empowerment Contracting Program and Small Disadvantaged Business program will now access this information through CCR. To conduct market research and confirm eligibility for SBA's procurement preference programs, users will go to the CCR Web site at www.ccr.gov and click on the "Dynamic Small Business Search" button. All of the search options and information that existed in Pro-Net will now be found at the CCR Dynamic Small Business Search site.

Within SBA, Pro-Net will be superseded by the Small Business Source System, an internal database of businesses certified by SBA as participants in the 8(a), HUBZone and SDB programs. Businesses will no longer have to self-certify as small businesses. The SBSS system will perform calculations necessary to determine whether companies are small, based on employment or revenue information entered into CCR. Firms will update their records on the CCR Update Web page and should follow the links and directions found there.

For more information about CCR, please visit the CCR Web site at www.ccr.gov.

For more information about IAE, visit the Web site at <http://egov.gsa.gov>. For more about SBA e-Gov activities, please contact Ronald E. Miller, SBA Program Executive Officer for E-Gov at (202) 401-8214.

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