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Local builders join forces to win opportunity to bid for £500m contracts

Builders in the south west who joined forces to set up a consortium have won the opportunity to bid for public sector contracts worth more than £500m over the next four years.

Their success could act as an inspiration for small and medium size business throughout the country who feel excluded from tendering for large-scale projects because of their size.

The four local businesses - E R Hemmings (Building) from Bristol (lead contractor), Pearce Construction from Barnstaple, R J Leighfield from Swindon and C S Williams from Taunton - have been invited to join Construction Framework South West which has been developed by Devon County Council to deliver construction projects in excess of £1 million. They have been included on the final list along with 10 major contractors.

The four companies – known as Builders Consortium South West (BCSW) – are all members of the National Federation of Builders (NFB). The combination of the four companies delivers an unrivalled level of regional experience and is a big boost to the local communities these companies reside in, who aim to use local skills and experience to fulfil contracts.

Julia Evans, chief executive of the NFB, whose 'Bid to Win' advisory service assisted in the formation of the consortium said: "This pioneering breakthrough will act as an example and inspiration for local contractors throughout the country.

"Many building firms with the capability to tackle large projects are excluded from bidding for the work because of their size. This success has shown how they can join together and win a place on large framework agreements.

"Local contractors operate at the heart of their community, employing and training local people and making major contributions to local economies so it is only right that they are given the opportunity to bid for this work."

"The NFB has members in every region of England as well as throughout Wales and we will be looking to use the success achieved in the south west as a model for others to follow."

BCSW were selected from an original group of over 40 applicants, from which 25 were invited to tender. The framework development has been led by Devon CC with financial support from South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. Over 20 public bodies have already expressed an interest in using the framework, including local authorities, FE colleges, universities and emergency services. The first time it will be used is on an Exeter Primary School project which starts in August of this year.

