

Resource efficiency and responsibly sourced materials

Clients, designers, manufacturers, suppliers, contractors, and installers have an important role in ensuring that the materials and products that form a construction project are both sourced and used with sustainability in mind.

Each site is different, and will have many different factors to take into consideration for different phases of the project.



Timber and chain of custody certificate number

Before any work starts on site

- At the planning and design stage, early involvement of stakeholders is crucial for communicating project requirements to all parties, and for inclusion in tender documents and pre-construction information.
- Specify non-hazardous, low-impact materials with low embodied-carbon materials, and products from responsible, sustainable sources (recycled and locally sourced).
- Source materials from manufacturers and suppliers that are closer to the construction area, to lower the carbon footprint of the overall project and any added transportation distances and costs.
- Use pre-assembled products of standard sizes to avoid on-site cutting and designing, to allow for a cut/fill balance by utilising surplus materials in site features.
- Look for opportunities to source excess materials from other projects, to improve efficiency and reduce the generation of waste throughout the construction phase.
- Make sure that the supply chain procures products from reputable and sustainable sources, such as timber grown under sustainable timber schemes, and monitors supply chains to report and avoid manufacturers who use slave labour.
- Avoid over-ordering materials: identify and order the correct type and quantity of materials at the size required, to avoid off-cuts and to reduce the amount of packaging.

See also information on 'Managing energy'.

When work has started on site

Make sure that procedures are in place and maintained for:

- monitoring materials and products arriving on site, to ensure that they are procured from reputable and sustainable sources
- inspecting deliveries: to avoid damage during unloading, and to prevent deliveries to wrong areas of the site or accepting the incorrect specification or quantity
- hazardous/control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) substances and materials being stored, used, and disposed of correctly
- materials stored in suitable environments and locations, to avoid damage, theft, cross-contamination and double handling, and to reduce risks to the rest of the site
- avoiding over-excavation, and stockpiling of excavation arisings and materials away from sensitive areas, drains or watercourses to avoid pollution
- segregating surplus materials for re-use and crushing existing demolition waste for re-use, to avoid the need for virgin materials
- keeping records in line with legislation, site management plans and for traceability purposes.

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