



briefing note 30

briefing note contents

Introduction

What is Responsible Sourcing?

What are the drivers?

Responsible Sourcing of Timber

Industry Standards

BS 8902:2009 - Responsible Sourcing Sector Certification Scheme

BES 6001 (BRE Environmental & sustainability Standard)

Responsible sourcing of timber

Current Availability

Barriers to Responsible Sourcing

Our approach to Responsible Sourcing

Responsible Sourcing

Version A: October 2011

Introduction

The construction industry has a large negative impact on the environment through its use of natural resources in creating buildings and infrastructure.

As such, it has an absolute responsibility to reduce this impact, bringing about reductions in both the consumption of primary resources whilst ensuring that materials are ethically and responsibly sourced.

What is responsible sourcing?

Responsible sourcing (RS) is the management of sustainable development in the provision or procurement of a product. It requires the entire procurement process to be independently verifiable throughout its various supply chains.

Some of the key risks relating to the sourcing of construction products:

Raw materials

These are extracted through mining, from forests or from other plant or animal life, agriculturally managed or not. Minerals are generally non-renewable and some are scarce. Others are hard to extract and cause environmental degradation and pollution. They may be linked to the theft of now-valuable land, loss of biodiversity on pre-existing land and unethical employment issues such as low pay or unsafe practices.

Manufacture & Processing

This stage requires energy and labour. Possible risks include environmental pollution and the release of hazardous chemicals or gases, and the poor health, safety and welfare of employees.

To achieving responsible sourcing requires credible, independently verifiable schemes that seek to minimise environmental, social and economic impacts and improve performance in a transparent and accountable manner. Various recognisable standards currently exist for timber and other construction products.

Consumer Brands

Responsible sourcing is not just something to worry about at work. Have you ever wondered what goes into the products you use every day? There are examples of well-known brands from clothes to electronics whose supply chain practices have been called into question.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/oct/14/environment-home-mobile-phones-laptops>

What are the Drivers?

Market pressure

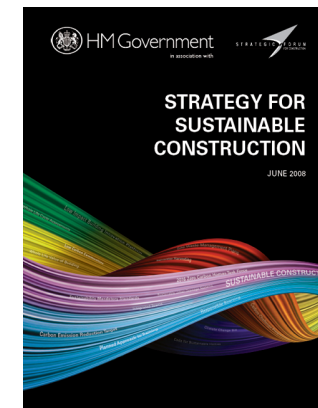
In the 1990s, RS schemes to manage timber appeared response to the rapid loss of tropical forests

Since then, customers, clients, stakeholders and contractors have increasingly demanded that RS was embedded within the supply chain.

They want to know where materials and products come from and how the workers in the supply chain are treated. They also look to be assured that the environmental impacts of the materials are being actively managed and minimised in a drive to increase ethical procurement and overall corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Government: the Strategic Forum for Construction

The Strategy for Sustainable Construction (SfSC) was launched in 2008 and is a joint government and industry initiative. This strategy tries to address sustainability issues within the UK construction industry and includes responsible sourcing targets. The strategy states that by 2012, 25% of products used in construction projects should be from schemes recognised for responsible sourcing.



BREEAM & Code for Sustainable Homes (CfSH)

Increasing attention is being paid by manufacturers and specifiers towards responsible sourcing of construction products. Under popular and often-client-mandated sustainable frameworks, BREEAM and the CfSH, credits are awarded for demonstrating materials have been responsibly sourced. There are a number of standards required to be met in order to prove responsibly sourced materials contained within the scheme manuals.

Industry Standards for RS

BS 8902

BS 8902:2009 is titled 'Responsible sourcing sector certification schemes for construction products' and provides a framework for the development of a certification scheme specific to the sector. It is one of two standards that were developed in response to the Strategy for Sustainable Construction target.

Requirements include the establishment of a council to manage and progress the scheme, which requires a balanced representation of both procurers and clients and operate a process of stakeholder engagement.

The council is required to set relevant social, economic and environmental objectives under the framework and certify companies against the standard

BES 6001

The BRE Environmental & Sustainability Standard, BES 6001 was launched in 2010 and is the second standard developed in response to the Strategy for Sustainable Construction target.

BES 6001 enables construction product manufacturers to ensure and then to prove that their products have been made with constituent materials that have been responsibly sourced. The standard describes a framework for organisational governance, supply chain management and environmental and social aspects that must be addressed.

Independent, third party assessment and certification against the requirements of BES 6001 provides organisations the ability to prove that an effective system for ensuring responsible sourcing exists and added credibility to any claims made. There are mandatory requirements set out in BES 6001 with others being optional which provides four levels of certification, Pass, Good, Very Good and Excellent.

The full database of BES 6001 certificates can be viewed at the BRE <http://www.greenbooklive.com/search/scheme.jsp?id=153>

Responsible Sourcing of Timber

Forests provide fuel, building materials, paper, furniture and play a pivotal role in balancing and protecting our environment absorbing and storing CO₂ whilst releasing oxygen. They prevent soil erosion and provide a habitat for many species: key to maintaining our biodiversity. For RS of timber there are two established standards:

FSC

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) was established in 1993 in the wake of the Rio Summit to improve forest management, developing standards and policy using a multi-stakeholder approach.



PEFC

The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) was established in 1999 in response to specific requirements of smaller forest-owners as an international umbrella organisation providing independent assessment in recognition of a national forest certification system.

The North American schemes – Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) and the Malaysian Timber Certification scheme are all PEFC-endorsed.

07TBN30 Reponsible Sourcing		Page 3 of 4
FM-RE-07	Revision Status: A	Effective Date: 18/10/2011
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Current Availability of RS

As of October 2011 a total of 37 companies have received BES 6001 certification covering 64 individual products ranging across all types of building materials.

We are not currently aware of any product sector schemes that are certified under BS 8902.

Concrete

Based on 2009 production 81% of concrete in the UK was responsibly sourced to BES 6001 and in 2010 has risen to 88% of all concrete production in the UK.

<http://www.concretecentre.com/sustainability.aspx>

Steel Reinforcement

Figures recently published by MPA state that in 2010 55% of steel reinforcement sold in the UK through fabricators is responsibly sourced to BES 6001 through the Eco-Reinforcement sector scheme.

Willmott Dixon are scheme council members of Eco-Reinforcement which is a third-party certification scheme which assesses and recognises responsibly sourced reinforcing steel products. It has been developed as a sector-specific standard which complies with the requirements of BRE's BES 6001 Framework Standard for the Responsible Sourcing of Construction Products.

<http://www.eco-reinforcement.org/ecoreinforcement-scheme-council/>

Plasterboard

One of the largest manufacturers of plasterboard in the UK has recently achieved certification under BES 6001.

Momentum

We are seeing more demand from clients and other contractors for responsible sourcing and expect demand to grow over the next few years.

Barriers to RS

There are a number of barriers to be overcome to enable all construction products to be able to achieve responsible sourcing certification.

- Demonstrating a minimum percent material traceability through the supply chain by volume and mass. Many construction materials such as steel, copper, aluminium and glass are part of a global market and requires the full support of many international stakeholders.
- Materials that are sourced from outside the EU are likely to require an appropriate risk assessment to demonstrate due diligence in monitoring compliance with the UN International Labour Organisation www.ilo.org
- The need to reduce the financial and administration burden on SME's.

The international aluminium sector carried out a scoping exercise in 2010 to look at possible options for a voluntary responsible sourcing scheme for aluminium to start a consultation process during 2011. The report highlights some of the current issues on traceability and includes various options with preliminary costs and likely timescales to get a scheme in place.

<http://aluminium.trackrecordglobal.com/>

Our approach to RS

As a company, we are reducing the impact of our activities, bringing about reductions in both the consumption of primary resources and the total embodied impacts from our operations and the buildings we construct.

We are engaging with stakeholders in a drive to improve procurement practices and the sustainable performance of the products and materials by setting challenging but realistic targets and then working with the industry in meeting them.

Willmott Dixons Sustainable Procurement Policy requires that:

- All fixed timber and timber products (including hoarding) must be sourced with either PEFC or FSC and the appropriate chain of custody documentation.
- We will procure materials and products with a strong preference towards manufacturers that have formal certification of responsible sourcing such as BES 6001 or BS8902.

07TBN30 Reponsible Sourcing		Page 4 of 4
FM-RE-07	Revision Status: A	Effective Date: 18/10/2011
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