

Procurement of Steel

Support for British Industry

The British steel producing industry contributes £9.5 billion per year to the UK economy and directly employs 20,000 people. British-based steel producers are facing strong international competition which has led to debate on whether more could be done to support them through the procurement process.

Build UK members are committed to providing opportunities for British-based steel producers to support local economies, create jobs, and reduce carbon emissions from transport.

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EU procurement rules require fair and open competition between Member States and prevent public sector organisations involved in public sector projects from stating that they will only buy British steel. This does not apply to private sector organisations which can state a preference for British steel, unless they are buying on behalf of the public sector or certain private utilities covered by EU directives¹.

Build UK supports the approach taken by Government through its procurement guidance, [Procurement Policy Note 16/15](#), which aims to address barriers that prevent British-based steel producers competing effectively for contracts.

Where Build UK members are responsible for the procurement of structural and reinforcing steel, the priority should always be to deliver a quality product to customers, with procurement decisions based on an assessment of risk, cost, and social and environmental factors.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Build UK members consider the following factors on steel procurement:

- Adherence to British quality standards and all applicable European Directives and Regulations²
- Compliance with a recognised responsible sourcing scheme³
- Positive environmental outcomes associated with shorter delivery distances
- Support for local employment and training opportunities.

Build UK members will also look to influence clients, architects and others who may specify the use of materials to consider these factors.

Notes

¹ [Directive 2014/25/EU](#) on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors. Implemented in the UK by the [Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016](#).

² British Standard [BS 4449:2005+A3:2016](#) Steel for the Reinforcement of Concrete, and [CE marking](#) for other steel products.

³ Third party certification schemes include but are not limited to [BES 6001](#), [Eco-Reinforcement](#), and [UK CARES Sustainable Construction Steel Scheme](#).

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