Recycled aggregates are increasingly required by public and private sector clients – helping to preserve natural resources, divert materials from landfill and improve project sustainability.

The quality and supply consistency of recycled aggregates match that of primary aggregates and can lead to cost savings. This sheet provides advice on their procurement and use tailored towards the needs of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), with suggestions on how to raise the issue of using recycled aggregates with clients and specifiers.

**Why use recycled aggregates?**

- Recycled content in construction projects is increasingly required on many project types by both public and private sector clients. Contractors with access to quality recycled aggregates are able to satisfy this demand from clients.

- Recycled aggregates are usually competitive on price - use quality recycled aggregates to gain a cost advantage on projects.

- Recycled aggregates present an opportunity to demonstrate sustainability and show ‘green credentials’ to clients in tenders – giving a competitive advantage.

**Where to use them**

All British Standards for aggregates are for aggregates from natural, recycled and manufactured (secondary) materials. Recycled aggregates are fully integrated into the Specification for Highways Works.

The list below indicates general areas of use. Use the ‘Specifier’ tool and the ‘Opportunities’ section on the AggRegain website (www.aggregain.org.uk) for further details.

- Concrete.
- Asphalt.
- Pipe bedding.
- Unbound and hydraulically bound sub base.
- Capping.
- Structural fill.

- Using recycled aggregates reduces the need to quarry, saving natural resources.

- Recycling waste into aggregates reduces the loss of resources to landfill, and reduces pressure on landfill capacity.

- When used locally, recycled aggregates reduce the impact of transport and cut carbon emissions.

Most recycled aggregates are produced from inert construction, demolition and excavation waste, and asphalt planings. When processed to a quality standard, they are referred to as ‘Recycled Aggregates’. Secondary aggregates come from a variety of sources such as colliery spoil and blast furnace slag.
Working with clients, specifiers and inspectors

Tendering: Where a material preference is not stated by the client, point out that recycled aggregates meet the specification and can also provide cost savings and environmental benefits – clients are increasingly likely to be receptive. When acting as a main contractor, ensure that requirements are set in tender specifications for sub-contractors to use recycled aggregates.

Contract negotiations: Demonstrate compliance to specification and suitability for purpose by showing evidence of supplier quality (test certificates/quality procedures), or by giving examples of previous similar projects using recycled aggregates (either own, or from AggRegain case study database). Ensure that clients/specifiers are aware of the latest specifications which permit recycled aggregate use.

Clients’ Managers/Inspectors: Where clients’ project managers/inspectors are unfamiliar with recycled aggregates, ensure that they are aware that recycled aggregates have been approved for the project and explain that they may look different to primary materials but meet the same specification. Go to the site with the first delivery to discuss and resolve any concerns.

Things to do

To ensure you source a satisfactory recycled product:

- order to a recognised specification, e.g. the Specification for Highway Works;
- always insist that recycled aggregates are produced in line with the WRAP Quality Protocol;
- ask to see test results and quality procedures;
- if in doubt - visit the supplier. Ask to see production processes and view aggregate stock piles to determine quality and consistency;
- use established and reputable suppliers - if you are happy with the quality of material from your supplier of primary aggregates, ask if they can also supply recycled. Alternatively, search using the supplier directory on the AggRegain website (www.aggregain.org.uk); and
- as with primary aggregates, ensure recycled aggregates are checked on delivery.

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