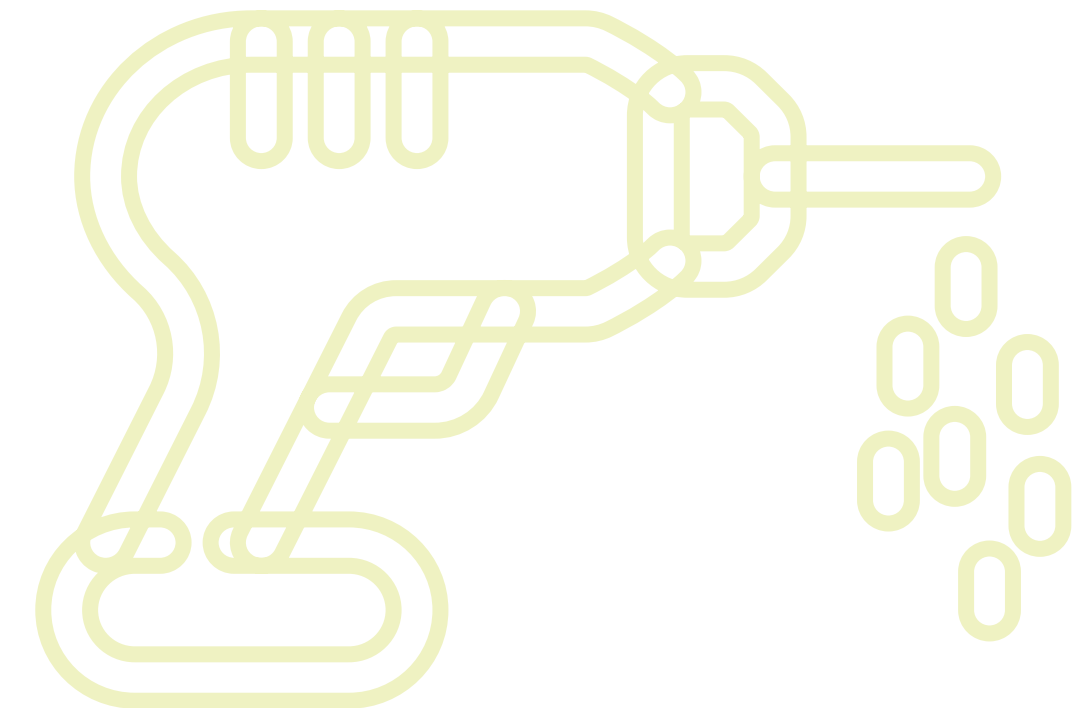
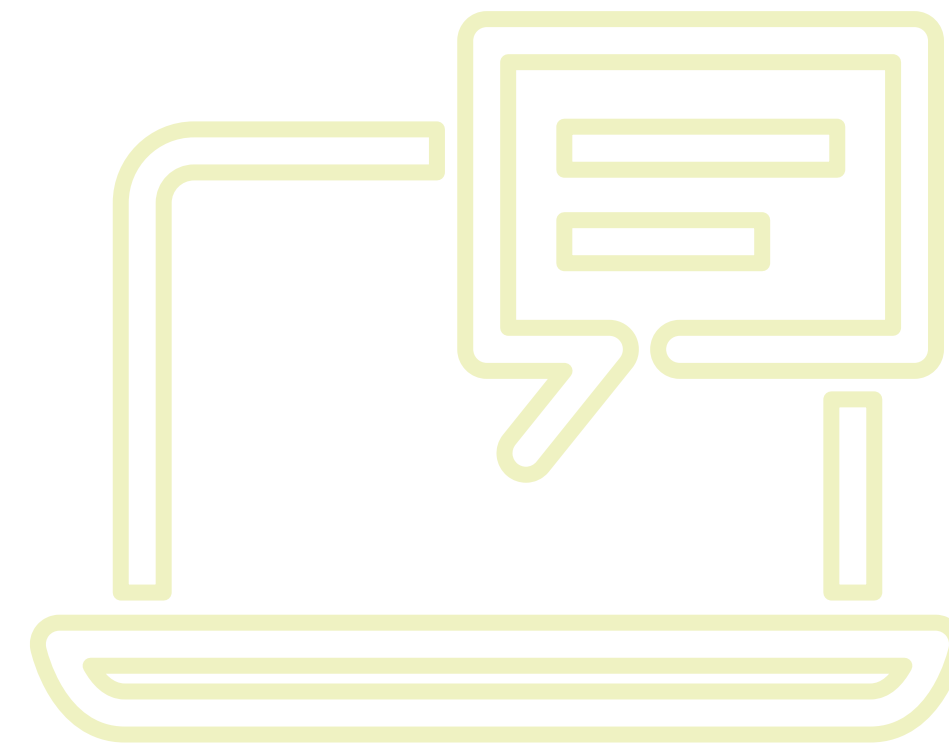


# Accessing Public Procurement:

## A Guide for Sustainable Construction Companies



## Making public procurement more accessible for Brussels-based businesses

Applying for a public contract may seem complex at first glance, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises. Yet, those who take the step quickly discover that public procurement offers real opportunities for growth and stability. That is why **hub.brussels**, the Brussels Agency for Entrepreneurship, aims to support Brussels-based businesses throughout the process, guiding them step by step and helping to **remove existing barriers**.

Among the sectors considered strategically important for the future of the Brussels-Capital Region, **sustainable construction** holds a prominent place. To support this sector, **ecobuild.brussels** was created: a **hub.brussels** cluster that brings together companies, experts, public authorities and field actors around collaborative and sustainable projects.

It is within this framework that a working group was set up, leading to the creation of this brand-new guide. Its objective is clear: **to better equip companies active in sustainable construction to engage with public procurement**. The guide helps them understand procedures more clearly, prepare effectively, and submit their applications with confidence.



# 1.

# Introduction

Public procurement represents a strategic opportunity for companies active in sustainable construction.

This guide aims to provide members of the **ecobuild.brussels** cluster with a clear and structured overview of the resources, procedures, and key actors involved in accessing these markets, with a particular focus on integrating **sustainability** and circularity.



# 2.

## Understanding Public Procurement

### 2.1. General Information

Public procurement refers to contracts awarded by public authorities for the acquisition of works, supplies, or services. It is governed by specific legislation designed to ensure **transparency**, competition, and equal access.

### 2.2. Federal Public Procurement Portal

The **Public Procurement portal** centralises federal-level information on various aspects of public procurement – from legislation to the electronic management of contracts. It provides manuals, model documents, and useful contacts.



# 3.

## Support & Contact Points in Brussels



### 3.1. Regional Helpdesk

Any company can contact the regional helpdesk dedicated to public procurement through the **hub.info** website. This portal provides free answers to business-related questions. If specific expertise is required, you will be referred to a legal, accounting, or financial expert.

### 3.2. Professional Federations

EMBUILD offers its members a **free information service** on public procurement. This service provides a practical guide, explanatory sheets, model letters, and publications on the latest regulatory developments to assist them efficiently.

### 3.3. Training

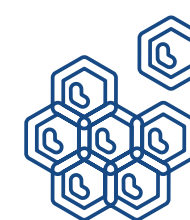
Several organisations offer training and support to help entrepreneurs and public officials better integrate sustainability criteria into public procurement: :

- **Bruxelles Formation** provides general training on public procurement, helping companies understand procedures, obligations, and business opportunities.
- **SYNTRA Brussels:** Dutch-speaking training center specializing in vocational and entrepreneurial training for young people and adults.
- Bruxelles Environnement regularly organises training sessions, workshops, and webinars specifically dedicated to sustainable public procurement. These sessions allow participants to familiarise themselves with the principles of the circular economy, environmental clauses, and available tools.
- The Federal Public Service for Policy and Support (BOSA) provides useful resources for entrepreneurs and businesses seeking to better understand public procurement. It offers lists of trainers, training organisations, and accredited knowledge centres that can assist entrepreneurs in preparing, submitting, and managing their bids. These partners can also provide specialised advice or collaborate in complex projects.

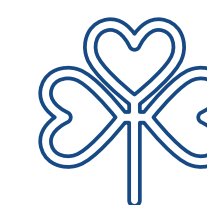
4.

# Federal Measures to Facilitate SME Access

Since 2017, several concrete measures have been introduced to make it easier for SMEs to access public procurement:



Obligation to divide contracts **exceeding €144,000 (excl. VAT)** into smaller lots to improve SME participation.



Integration of qualitative, social, and **environmental criteria** in bid evaluation.



Introduction of the **“accepted invoice”** principle for contracts up to **€30,000**.



**Open data** made available via [data.gov.be](https://data.gov.be) for greater transparency

## Educational tools

explanatory videos, practical guides, and the Charter of Good Practices for Contracting Authorities.

How **to participate** in public procurement as a company?

Public procurement: how **to register** as a company?

Public procurement: how **to submit** your bid?

Public procurement: how and where **to find** them?

Charter for SME Access **to Public** Procurement.

# 5.

## Contractor Accreditation

Accreditation is an **official recognition** granted by the Belgian State certifying that a company has the technical, financial, and administrative capabilities required to execute certain public works. It is mandatory for tenders exceeding specific thresholds.

### 5.1. When Is Accreditation Required?

Accreditation **becomes mandatory** when the contract amount exceeds:

- **75.000 € (excl. VAT)** for main work categories (e.g., structural works, roadworks, etc.);
- **50.000 € (excl. VAT)** for more specific subcategories (e.g., waterproofing, carpentry, etc.).

### 5.2. How Is It Structured?

Classe	Montant [T.V.A. non comprise]
1	Up to 162.000 euros
2	Up to 330.000 euros
3	Up to 600.000 euros
4	Up to 1.080.000 euros
5	Up to 2.172.000 euros
6	Up to 3.870.000 euros
7	Up to 6.396.000 euros
8	Up to 6.396.000 euros

Accreditation is based on two criteria:

- The **nature of the works**, classified into categories and subcategories according to activity type.
- The contract amount, **divided into classes** (1 to 8), each corresponding to a financial ceiling.

### 5.3. Where to Apply?

The certification procedure is detailed on the **FPS Economy** website, which checks forms, access conditions, and required documents before submitting them to the Certification Commission. Processing may take several weeks.

### 5.4. Who Can Assist You?

Companies can receive personalised assistance via **EMBUILD**, which helps its members prepare their files, choose the right categories and classes, and understand administrative requirements.

# 6.

## Finding & Responding to Tenders

In Belgium, the management of public procurement is done through the **federal e-Procurement platform**, a centralised tool that enables users to consult, publish, and submit tenders online.

### 6.1. Main Features

In Belgium, the management of public procurement is done through the federal e-Procurement platform, a centralised tool that enables users to consult, publish, and submit tenders online.

- It allows companies to view published tender notices, filtered by sector, location, or contract type.
- It provides a secure space for electronic bid submission, ensuring traceability and confidentiality.
- Users can post questions through an integrated forum, track tender progress, and access EU-compliant tools (eForms).

### 6.2. Access Conditions

Registration is mandatory to fully use the platform. It enables advanced features such as creating **personalised alerts and tracking** ongoing procedures.

### 6.3. Publication Obligations

Since 2017, publication via **e-Notification** has been mandatory for all public contracts exceeding **€144,000 (excl. VAT)**. Below this threshold, publication remains strongly recommended to ensure transparency and broaden competition.



# 7.

## Public Procurement & Architecture

Public procurement in the field of architecture has distinctive features, particularly regarding the quality of the built **environment, procedural transparency, and project innovation.**

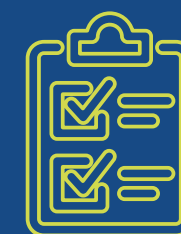
In Brussels, the Bouwmeester Maître Architecte (BMA) plays a central role in supporting public and private contracting authorities in their architectural projects.

The BMA's mission is to promote quality architecture and sustainable urban planning. Within public procurement, it intervenes at several levels:



### Strategic advice:

The BMA assists contracting authorities from the earliest project stages, helping them define clear objectives in terms of architectural quality, urban integration, and sustainability.



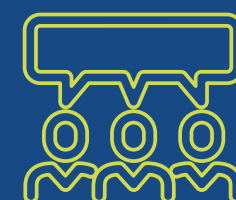
### Support in selection procedures:

It proposes appropriate competitive formats (competitions, calls for applications, competitive dialogues, etc.) ensuring transparency, fairness, and project quality.



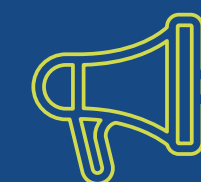
### Preparation of tender documents:

The BMA can help draft specifications, integrating qualitative criteria and specific requirements related to innovation, sustainability, or circularity.



### Participation in juries:

In certain cases, the BMA takes part in selection juries to ensure consistency with the project's original objectives.



### Dissemination of good practices:

Through publications, guides, and feedback, the BMA contributes to continuous improvement in public procurement practices in architecture.

This framework applies to both public contracting authorities (municipalities, CPAS, regional institutions) and private clients receiving public support or developing projects of collective interest.

# 8.

## Integrating Sustainability & Circularity

Public procurement serves as a strategic lever to accelerate the transition **toward more sustainable and circular construction**.

In Brussels, several tools, actors, and mechanisms support contracting authorities and companies in this process.

### 8.1. Integration in Tender Documents

Contracting authorities are encouraged to include environmental, social, and circular criteria in their tenders. This may include:

- Requirements for **energy performance**, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, or water management;
- **Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)** of materials and buildings, notably via TOTEM;
- Requirements promoting the use of **bio-based, recycled, or reused materials**;
- Clauses encouraging **modularity**, disassembly, and repairability of building components.

### 8.2. Practical Tools and Guides

#### TOTEM

Belgian platform for assessing the **environmental impact of buildings**, developed by the three regions. It enables comparison of materials and design choices based on life-cycle analysis.

#### Sustainable Building Guide

Developed by Bruxelles Environnement, this online guide offers practical sheets for integrating **sustainability at all stages of a construction** or renovation project.

#### GRO Tool

A tool for assessing the sustainability and circularity of construction projects. It allows clients and designers to set **clear ambition levels** from the design phase. GRO can be used in public procurement, particularly for competitions and calls for projects.

#### Sustainable Building Facilitator (Bruxelles Environnement)

**Free advisory service** supporting the integration of sustainability criteria in projects, including public procurement procedures.

## Guides & training by Bruxelles Environnement

**Guides and training** by Bruxelles Environnement on topics such as reuse, LCA, and drafting sustainable clauses.

### 8.3. Reuse of Materials

The **reuse of materials and integration of sustainability criteria** in public procurement are key priorities in Brussels. To effectively implement these principles, four complementary approaches can be followed:

#### Integrate Reuse from the Design Phase


Reuse potential must be **anticipated as early as the project programming stage**. This involves identifying recoverable materials during pre-demolition audits and including specific clauses in tender specifications. These clauses may set reuse targets, traceability requirements, or award criteria rewarding circular practices.

#### Rely on Specialised Resources and Platforms


Tools like Opalis make it easier to **find locally available reclaimed materials**. Other resources, such as supplier databases or technical guides, help better understand the characteristics, performance, and regulatory constraints of reused materials.

## Work with Experts

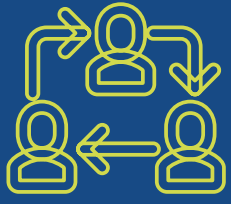
Several specialised organisations in and around Brussels offer technical, legal, and **operational support** to integrate circular economy principles into public procurement:



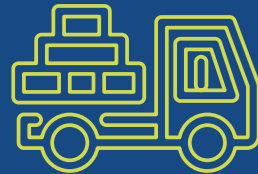
[CERAA](#) provides support in drafting **circular clauses and monitoring GRO criteria**, which are essential for ensuring the sustainability of projects.




[BuildCircular.Brussels](#) provides free guidance to companies operating in Brussels on integrating the circular economy into their **public procurement**.



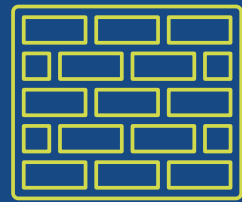
[Ad Vitam](#), a collaborative platform, **facilitates networking between public and private actors** committed to the circular transition.



[Rotor](#), [Batiterre](#), [Coliseum](#) & [Réempro](#) can intervene at various stages: material diagnosis, **recovery logistics**, drafting of specifications and site monitoring.



[ZIROO](#) focuses mainly on projects involving local recovery and implementation of reused materials, with **strong practical expertise**.



[Retrival](#), a non-Brussels-based company, **offers innovative solutions** for large-scale material reuse, with an approach suitable for public procurement.

Local initiatives in your region may also support you in this process. Do not hesitate to contact regional or territorial actors to identify the most relevant partners for your project.

9.

# Learn More

For questions or personalized support:  
[ecobuild@hub.brussels](mailto:ecobuild@hub.brussels)

Produced in collaboration with [hub.info](https://hub.info) and Embuild.