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Purposely
Greener
Infrastructure

Supplier's Guide to Recycled First

Transport Infrastructure Projects – April 2026

An initiative of Victoria's Big Build



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1. Introduction

The Supplier’s Guide to Recycled First (guide) is part of a strategic government commitment to support greater use of recycled materials in construction.

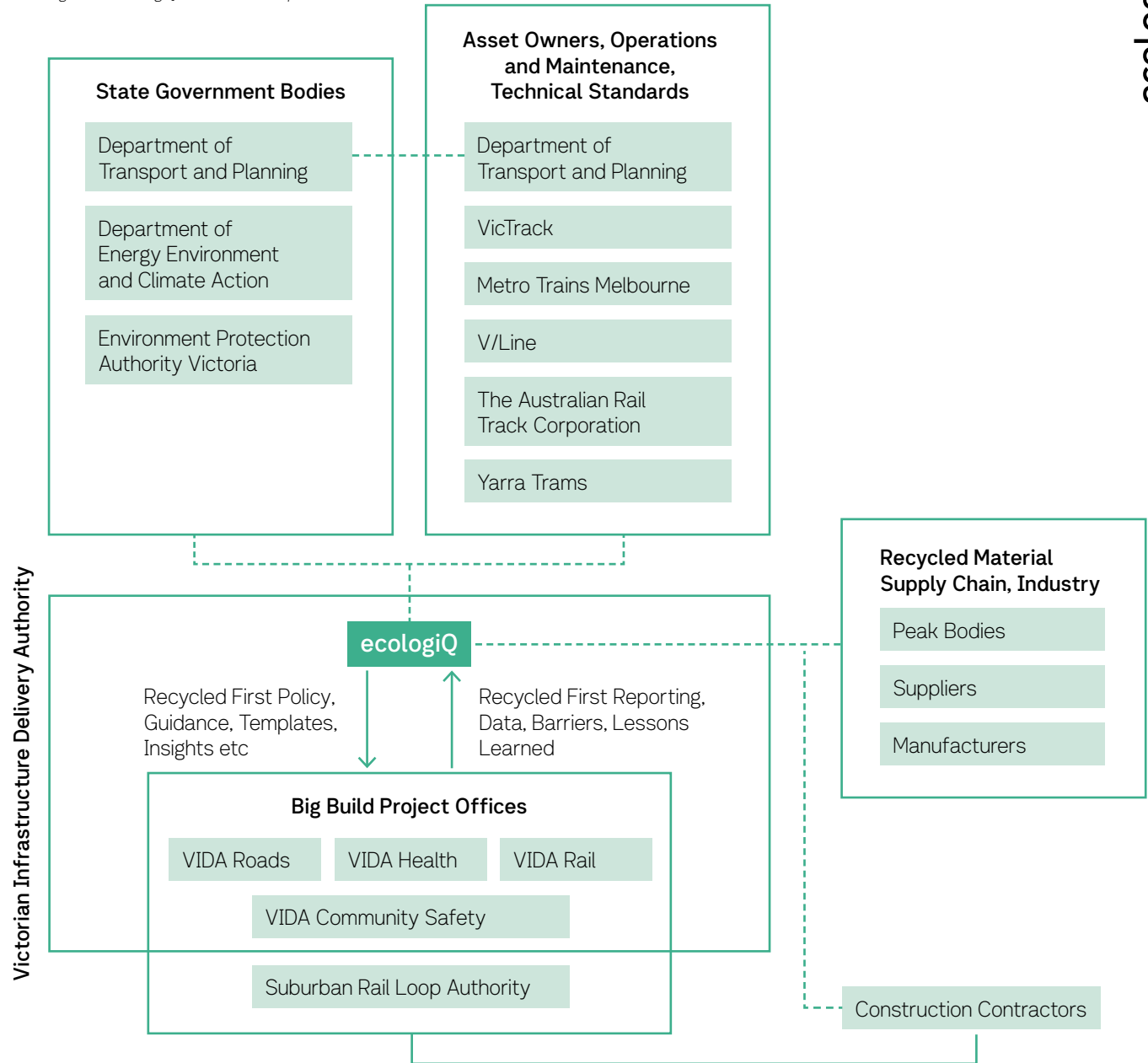
The guide provides a high-level overview of the Recycled First Policy and ecologiQ initiative, roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in infrastructure construction, and performance requirements of products for use in Big Build.

The guide is intended for use by suppliers and manufacturers of recycled and reused materials and products, suitable for use in transport infrastructure projects in Victoria.

The guide can be used as a reference to help suppliers understand the complexities around Big Build projects. Due to the vastly different project contract models, and broad range of products and materials used across projects, this guide provides a high-level overview only. It is not intended as a comprehensive manual, and referral must always be made to the relevant standards, specifications and contract documents. As such, limited instructive content is included.

Information in this guide has been drawn from publicly available resources at the time of publishing, with context from Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority and Department of Transport and Planning subject matter experts.

Figure 1 – ecologiQ stakeholder map



2. Glossary of acronyms

ANZS	Australian and New Zealand Standard	LCA	Life Cycle Assessment	RRR	Regional Rail Revival
ARTC	Australian Rail Track Corporation	LGA	Local Government Authority	RTO	Rail Transport Operator
AS	Australian Standard	LXRP	Level Crossing Removal Project	SCM	Supplementary Cementitious Material
BB	Big Build	MAR	Melbourne Airport Rail	SEPA	South Eastern Program Alliance
BBR	Big Build Roads	MCI	Material Circularity Indicator	SPA	Southern Program Alliance
CR	Crumb Rubber	MRPA	Metropolitan Roads Program Alliance	SPF	Social Procurement Framework
CSBA	Community Safety Building Authority	MTP	Metro Tunnel Project	SRL	Suburban Rail Loop
D&C	Design and Construct	MTM	Metro Trains Melbourne	SRLA	Suburban Rail Loop Authority
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	NATA	National Association of Testing Authorities	SUP	Shared User Path
DPO	Delivery Phase Offer	NELP	North East Link Project	TA	Type Approval
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning	NIST	Network Infrastructure Standard (V/Line)	TOC	Target Outturn Cost
ECI	Early Contractor Involvement	NTRO	National Transport Research Organisation	VHBA	Victorian Health Building Authority
EOI	Expression of Interest	NWPA	North Western Program Alliance	VIDA	Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority
EOL	End of Life	PCR	Post Consumer Recycled	VRL	VIDA Rail
EPA	Environment Protection Authority	PDA	Program Delivery Approach	VRD	VIDA Roads
EPD	Environmental Product Declaration	PIR	Post Industrial Recycled	WGTP	West Gate Tunnel Project
HVHR	High Value High Risk	PO	Project Office	WPA	Western Program Alliance
IFC	Issued for Construction	PPP	Public Private Partnership	WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design
ISO	International Organisation for Standards	RAP	Reclaimed Asphalt Pavement		
ITC	Incentivised Target Costs	RFP	Recycled First Policy		
JV	Joint Venture	RFP	Request For Proposal		
		RFQ	Request For Quote		

3. ecologiQ and the Recycled First Policy

3.1. What is the Recycled First Policy

The [Recycled First Policy](#) was introduced by the Victorian Government in 2020 with the intent to optimise the use of recycled and reused materials, drive supply, demand and technical development, encourage innovation, and help achieve sustainable outcomes for Victorian transport infrastructure projects.

It will also provide data on recycled and reused materials to help inform a better understanding of the supply chain, market development issues and opportunities, and future recycling infrastructure needs.

The Recycled First Policy supports the Victorian Government's broader efforts to foster a circular economy, reduce waste and promote sustainability in line with the initiatives of the Victorian Government's circular economy policy and plan, [Recycling Victoria: a new economy](#).

The policy makes specific reference to materials containing Victorian waste streams, and to the use of recycled and reused materials at levels allowed under current standards and specifications.

The policy applies to all Big Build projects procured after March 2020.

3.2. ecologiQ and its role

ecologiQ is a Victorian Government initiative, whose aim is to optimise the integration of recycled and reused content into Victoria's Big Build.

The team is embedded within the Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority (VIDA), enabling integration with projects from the outset and providing wraparound support for project teams to navigate barriers and opportunities, supporting them to successfully implement the policy.

One of ecologiQ's strategic pillars is building a thriving marketplace for recycled and reused materials in infrastructure. ecologiQ's Industry team leads this objective by supporting suppliers and manufacturers to establish and thrive in the marketplace, navigate requirements, and connect with project teams. This is done via a range of avenues, summarised in the ['Checklist of ecologiQ resources'](#) at the end of this Guide.

As of end-January 2026, an impressive 7.0 million tonnes of recycled and reused materials have been used on Big Build projects since the policy came into effect – enough to fill 2.7 MCGs.

eQ: Look for the eQs throughout this Guide to see how and where ecologiQ can help.

3.3. Changes under Recycled First

For projects that fall under the Recycled First Policy, there are two key requirements:

- 1. Incorporation of recycled materials.** Tenderers must demonstrate how they will optimise the use of recycled materials.
- 2. Reporting and compliance.** Contractors must report on the types and quantities of recycled products they have used as per their contract requirements.

With these requirements in mind, it may be beneficial for suppliers to take certain steps to support contractors to comply with the policy. These include but are not limited to:

- **Data provision.** Suppliers and manufacturers will now be asked to provide detailed data on the recycled content of their materials, such as the percentage of each recycled material type, and source of the feedstock. A pre-prepared template or process for communicating this information may help save time.
- **Certification and verification.** Suppliers may be asked to provide certification or third-party verification to prove the recycled content and sustainable credentials of their products. This will help contractors meet their reporting and compliance obligations under the policy. Third-party verifications, such as Life Cycle Assessments (LCA) or Environmental Product Declarations (EPD), support those procuring your products to illustrate the wider benefits of using recycled materials, such as circularity, end of life, and embodied carbon, which are likely to become key focus areas.
- **Product development.** Suppliers are encouraged to continuously improve existing recycled material products and develop new solutions to meet the evolving needs of the construction sector.

TIP



Create a 'procurement pack', a single PDF document or zip file of relevant information that can easily be shared with contractors. Timing is crucial during procurement, and procurement teams may revert to their usual suppliers if new suppliers are slow to produce requested information.

ALEX FRASER GROUP BUILDING GREENER ROADS.

Sustainable Outcomes Certificate

This is to certify that

McConnell Dowell Decmil Joint Venture
are building greener roads at the
Mordialloc Freeway

Using Green Roads Construction Materials on this project has resulted in:

- 249,739 tonnes diverted from landfill,
- 2,692 tonnes of carbon emissions* reduced, and
- 204 million glass bottles recycled, equivalent to 512,511 wheelie bins.

December 2022

*CO₂ emissions are calculated based on a carbon footprint for material. Actual emissions calculated using product data or Product Declaration (PD) or the Alex Fraser Green Roads Construction Materials (GRM) PD (2020).

asphalt . aggregates . roadbase . sand

phone: 130 135 info@alexfraser.com.au alexfraser.com.au

Case study: Alex Fraser's Sustainable Outcomes Calculator and Certificate

Alex Fraser have been proactive in developing resources which support contractors to comply with Recycled First requirements.

Their interactive online calculator estimates sustainability outcomes such as carbon emissions savings and recycled material quantities, enabling contractors to provide more detailed forecasts at the tender stage.

At the completion of a project, a 'Sustainable Outcomes Certificate' is issued to the contractor. The certificate summarises quantities of recycled material supplied and can be used to substantiate claims in final reports during project close out.

4. Lifecycle of a Big Build project

Construction projects can have vastly different timelines in terms of design, procurement, construction commencement and duration depending on the nature and scope of the project. This section seeks to broadly explain the different contract models and how they can influence project phases, and the roles and responsibilities of project stakeholders.



4.1. The role of Project Offices

Victoria’s Big Build is overseen by the Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority (VIDA) and the Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA). In this Guide, the term Project Office (PO) refers to all transport project delivery offices under VIDA, as well as SRLA.

POs act as the day-to-day delivery and coordination hubs for these projects, including managing interface with stakeholders and helping coordinate construction activities and associated disruptions across the transport network.

VIDA and SRLA work closely with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).

Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority

VIDA delivers the state’s transport, health and community safety infrastructure programs via its Project Offices. The Recycled First Policy applies to all VIDA transport projects (road and rail), where contracts are signed after March 2020. Pre-existing contracts do not have the policy retrospectively applied.

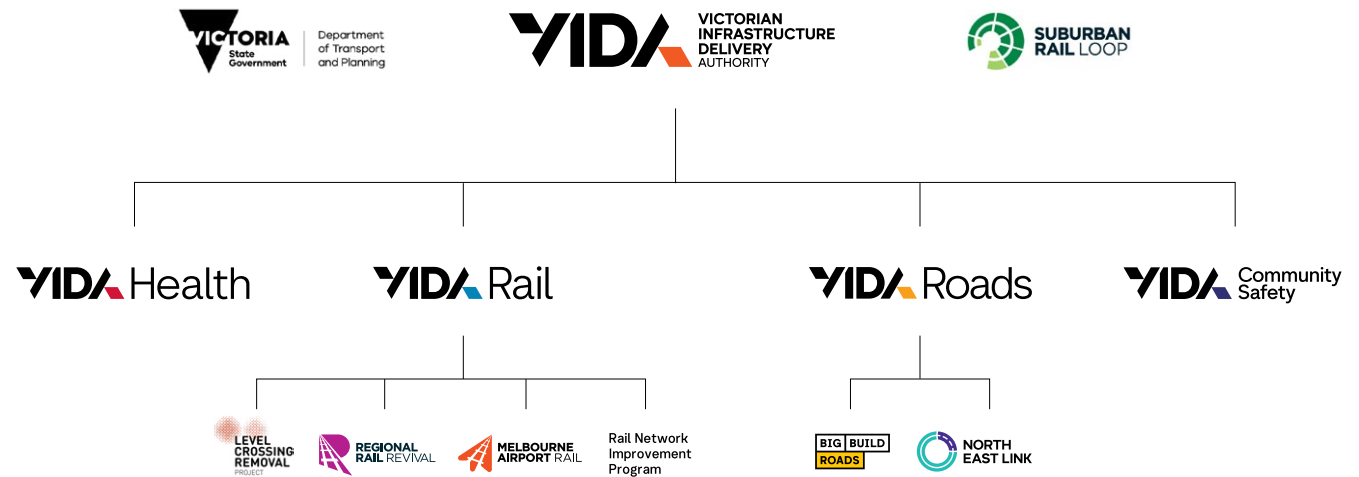
VIDA transport projects outside of Recycled First scope may still elect to be guided by Recycled First principles. Recycled First will also apply to VIDA Health and VIDA Community Safety projects tendered after they joined VIDA, however being non-transport they are not covered by this guide.

Suburban Rail Loop Authority

SRLA is responsible for the planning and delivery of the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL).

SRL is a 90km orbital rail line through Melbourne’s middle suburban areas, linking in with the existing Melbourne Metro rail network and creating new precincts from Cheltenham to Werribee. The Recycled First Policy applies to all SRL packages.

Figure 2 – DTP, VIDA and SRLA organisational structure





4.2. Business case

Prior to a project receiving funding, a business case is prepared to consider and evaluate the planning, safety, design, environmental, social and economic impacts of each project, and to analyse the benefits, risks and costs. Projects nominated as High Value High Risk (HVHR) will be required to go through additional processes, resulting in recommendations which may impact the design and procurement of a project.

As part of this process, several pre-concept designs are developed, with one nominated as the preferred design solution in the business case.

Where possible, it is recommended that Recycled First requirements are considered during business case development to give recycled materials the best chance of being included in design and procurement.

Once the business case is endorsed by Government, a preferred design solution is confirmed. The Project Office then commences the pre-construction phase, further developing the design into a reference design in preparation for delivery.

DID YOU KNOW



In 2024, VIDA published the [Transport Infrastructure Decarbonisation Strategy](#). Under the strategy, carbon will be considered in all stages of decision making, from business case to completion, in order to achieve the target of Net Zero by 2045.

4.3. Contract models, tender process, and design

Projects are tendered in a range of ways, and while they all have similar phases, they are vastly different in the way these phases play out, particularly between the road and rail industries.

The phases and associated processes and timelines can vary depending on the contract model selected and which Project Office is responsible for delivering the asset.

For a broad overview of the phases and respective stakeholder responsibilities, refer to Figure 3.

A contract model is the agreement between the Government (as the client) and the contractor, with the Project Office acting as the Government entity responsible for delivering the asset. The contract model is selected based on the project's scope, complexity, and risk. It outlines each party's responsibilities and supports the achievement of improved project outcomes.

The contract model also shapes the procurement methodology and construction lead times, and it affects the Project Office's ability to influence decision making.

The most common contract models in infrastructure construction are:

- Construct only.
- Design and Construct (D&C).
- Alliance.
- Incentivised Target Cost (ITC) Contract Suite.
- Public Private Partnership (PPP).

The tender phase varies depending on the contract model, but it often involves bidders supplying documentation that demonstrates their ability to construct in line with the Project Office's safety, environment & sustainability, and procurement requirements, and other requirements.

Contractors aim to demonstrate how they can deliver the project in a safe, sustainable, and cost-effective way. This is a confidential process and information is tightly restricted until the successful bidder has been awarded the contract.

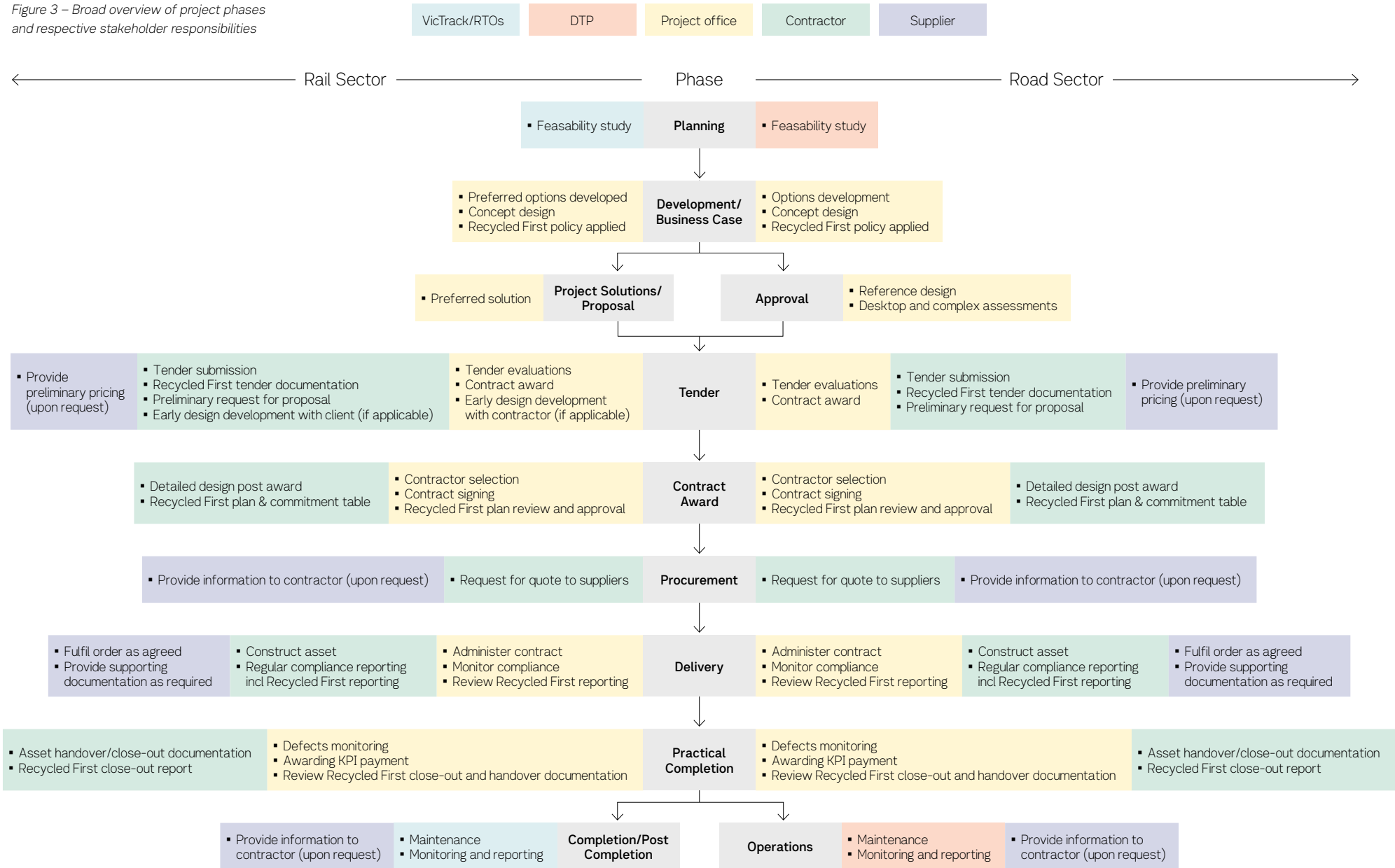


TIP Bidders may submit requests for quote (RFQs) to suppliers during the tender process. As the contract has not been awarded, these should not be considered as confirmed. It may be worth keeping a record of all RFQs provided, and looking out for when the contract is awarded so you can follow up on your RFQ, or seek to contact the winning contractor.

Regardless of the contract model and tender process, where the policy applies, bidders are required to prepare a Recycled First Plan as part of their tender submission. At this stage, they must demonstrate an understanding of the policy and show how they intend to comply, for example by nominating responsible personnel. Once the contract has been awarded, the successful contractor will prepare a more detailed plan. This plan will include nominated recycled and reused materials and potential suppliers, and will form the basis of Recycled First reporting throughout construction.

The contract model is the key driver of how the above will differ. A summary of a typical project under each model is provided in the following section; it must be noted that no two projects are the same, and there may be variations from the process outlined.

Figure 3 – Broad overview of project phases and respective stakeholder responsibilities





4.3.1. Construct only

Used by Big Build Roads for projects categorised as less complex and lower risk.

Contract model description: Also referred to as fixed price contracts, construct only contracts are typically used on projects that are fairly simple designs. The client provides a clear scope of work and specifications which the contractor is expected to align with for a fixed sum.

Reference & detailed design: There is limited flexibility in these contracts as the Project Office completes the design and finalises the Issued for Construction (IFC) design prior to construction.

Tender phase: Construct only contracts follow a typical tender process, where bidders submit a tender price and strategy for completing the build based on the design they are given by the client.

4.3.2. Design and Construct (D&C)

Used in some Big Build Road projects, in addition to North East Link and Metro Tunnel Project. Often also used as part of a PPP.

Contract model description: D&C contracts are very common within the construction industry. Under this model, contractors complete the project's design as well as the construction work. This increases their risk but creates more opportunity to design innovation into the project.

Reference & detailed design: The client produces a reference design, which is provided to the contractor to develop into the detailed design. The contractor has the flexibility to refine and modify the design and the construction approach, provided the final design meets the client's requirements and remains consistent with the reference design.

Tender phase: D&C contracts follow a typical tender process, where bidders submit a tender price and strategy for completing the build based on the reference design they are given by the client.

4.3.3. Alliance

Used by Level Crossing Removal Projects and North East Link.

Contract model description: Often described as collaborative contracting, alliance contracts are typically used where the project scope is less defined and the risks are greater or harder to quantify. The model enables these risks to be shared between the client and contractor through Incentivised Target Costs (ITC) and supports collaborative decision making to achieve the client's project objectives. Alliances are usually delivered by a mix of Project Office and contractor staff and are more common in the rail industry.

Reference design: Typically initiated by the client, however prior to contract award, alliance models often include a period of Early Contractor Involvement (ECI). This allows contractors to come on board early to help refine the design.

TIP



ECI gives the contractor the opportunity to engage with the market earlier.

Tender phase: Competing contractors are shortlisted based on non-price criteria such as credentials and experience, or through a competitive tender pricing process. Bidders then develop project proposals in collaboration with the client. Typically, the contract is awarded to the contractor involved in the ECI phase, although there are instances where the contract is awarded to a different contractor.

4.3.4. Incentivised Target Cost Contract Suite

Developed by and used on Big Build Road projects since 2020, as part of the Program Delivery Approach (PDA).

DID YOU KNOW



The PDA Model is a procurement pathway and refers to the use of Panels. It is not a contract model, which is a common misconception.

Contract model description: The ITC Contract Suite comprises of an ITC Development Agreement where the client collaborates with a contractor to further define project scope, risks and design. At the end of the development phase, the contractor submits a Delivery Phase Offer (DPO).

If the contractor demonstrates that their DPO represents value for money, they are awarded an ITC Delivery Contract- a collaborative contractual agreement between the client and the contractor. It features an ITC payment mechanism, which reimburses direct costs and non-cost incentives.

Reference design: Completed by the client, prior to commencement of the project development phase of delivery.

Tender phase: The ITC Contract Suite is commonly procured through the PDA Model. Projects are awarded to contractors that are on one of six panels forming the VIDA Roads Construction Panel. Learn more about the PDA Model on [Victoria's Big Build website](#).

4.3.5. Public Private Partnership

Currently being used on North East Link Primary Package, and is common on pay-per-use projects, such as toll roads.

Contract model description: PPP contracts are typically used when the project is highly complex and/or high value. They are a contractual agreement between a government body and a private entity to provide an asset or service as a public benefit. The private partner hires, pays, and supervises the contractor, and participates in designing, financing, operating, and maintaining the asset.

Reference design: A concept design is completed by the client and further developed collaboratively during the interactive tender.

Tender phase: An expression of interest (EOI) phase results in a shortlist of two or more consortia, who prepare a detailed submission in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP). Each response is priced according to whole of life costs and is assessed against a set of requirements specified by the client.

When a consortium is nominated as the preferred tenderer there is likely to be a further negotiation phase prior to the contract signing.



4.4. Post award and procurement

Detailed design is commenced either pre- or post-contract award, depending on the agreement type. Procurement may begin before detailed design is finalised, and is usually completed in stages, or ‘packages’, in line with project timelines and work commencement.

TIP 1



Once procurement starts, many contractors will require suppliers to complete prequalification surveys or meet certain criteria. Requested information may include product standards, testing, material details, and certifications like LCAs/EPDs. Having a ‘procurement pack’ with this information ready can be helpful and make your products more appealing to contractors.

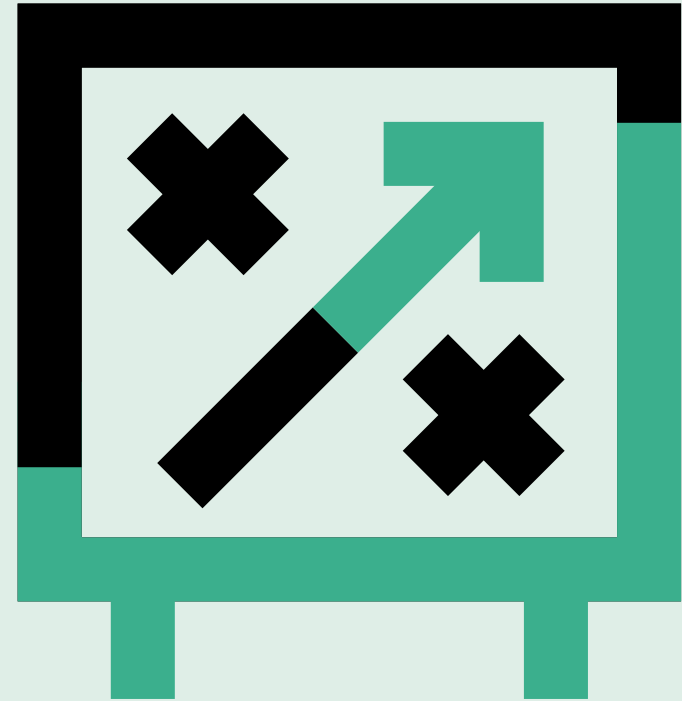
TIP 2



In a lot of cases, contractors will request regular materials supply quantity reports from suppliers. When providing quotes, consider and factor into your quote that additional administration and reporting activities may be required.

Delivery timeframes can vary greatly at this stage. It’s not unusual for construction commencement dates to change regularly – these can be brought forward or pushed back and may have significant impacts on procurement timeframes.

In addition to Recycled First, many projects must also comply with other Government policies, such as [Local Jobs First](#), the [Social Procurement Framework \(SPF\)](#), and targets that will come under the [VIDA Transport Infrastructure Decarbonisation Strategy](#). Contractors may also have internally set targets relating to company policies and strategies, such as carbon reduction. Suppliers who can demonstrate compliance with multiple policies or requirements may be at an advantage.



eQ: During this stage, ecologiQ offer workshops to project teams. These sessions cover Recycled First requirements and provide recommendations for appropriate recycled products and materials as per the project scope.

4.5. Delivery

Delivery refers to the construction of a project.

Procurement of materials happens throughout the delivery phase, and contractors typically receive goods, products and materials in stages due to factors such as space constraints on site. Procurement timelines can change if works are delayed, such as by weather, design or budget changes, environmental or heritage considerations, as well as others.

eQ: contractors will procure goods at different stages throughout delivery. Participating in ecologiQ resources and events, such as being listed on the [Supplier Map](#), can help project teams connect with you.

Throughout delivery, contractors must complete compliance reporting across a range of areas, including safety, communications and stakeholder management, environment and sustainability, in addition to Recycled First.

Post contract award, the contractor must finalise their commitments under the policy. These commitments are recorded in the Recycled First Commitments and Reporting Table, with actual reused and recycled materials delivered on the project recorded alongside them. Reporting is expected to be detailed, with any issues or barriers to meeting commitment clearly substantiated. The table is submitted to the Project Office and ecologiQ at agreed intervals throughout delivery.

Project Offices are responsible for ensuring that contractors meet their contractual requirements for the project. For Recycled First, this includes ensuring they set realistic commitments, make genuine efforts to achieve them, meet agreed reporting intervals, and comply with Recycled First Policy guidelines.

Towards practical completion of a project, the contractor will commence their handover and completion process, which outlines everything the asset owner needs to know about the asset for its operational phase and ongoing maintenance.

TIP



Being aware of the nature of the compliance reporting a contractor must adhere to can be very helpful. For example, being able to provide information on embodied emissions may help the contractor fulfil their obligations for carbon reporting.

4.6. Operations and maintenance

Once an asset is handed back, the asset owner is responsible for operations and maintenance. In some cases, the asset owner will commence a tender process for maintenance works.

These contracts encompass a broad range of work, such as routine inspections, subsequent maintenance, data collection and monitoring.

In this space, authorities are moving to a procurement system where the work is packaged up in a partnering contract and given to a single contractor to deliver through a typical tender process.

TIP



Operations and maintenance projects may have Recycled First obligations. Ensuring you are connected with a broad range of contractors may lead to opportunities during maintenance works.

5. Standards, specifications and approvals

Before being implemented on a project, many materials and products will need to demonstrate they are fit for purpose and safe, as outlined within the standards and specifications.

This section aims to explain what standards, specifications and approvals are, where to find them, from whom approval must be sought, and how to go about seeking it.

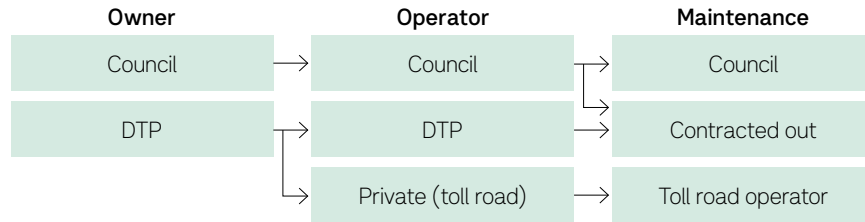


5.1. Definitions

5.1.1. Owners and operators

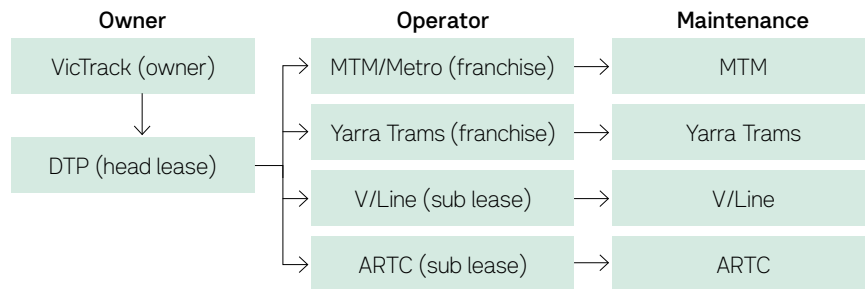
Each piece of infrastructure, or asset, must have an entity who is responsible for its performance, operations, and maintenance. Road and rail function quite differently in this respect.

Road



Assets are owned by the state (DTP) or council. The asset owner is responsible for operating the road, except in the case of toll roads. Maintenance is done by either the operator or is contracted out to a private entity.

Rail



Land, infrastructure and buildings are owned by VicTrack, a state-owned organisation. Assets are leased to DTP, who manage franchise agreements and sub leases of these assets to MTM (publicly known as Metro), Yarra Trams, V/Line and ARTC– collectively called the rail transport operators (RTOs). The RTOs are responsible for maintenance of the assets and network, and delivery of public transport and freight services.





5.1.2. Asset owners

The term 'asset owners' in this Guide refers to the entity responsible for ensuring the asset is safe and fit for purpose. Asset owners determine which standards and specifications apply to products and materials used on the network, and whether approvals and/or trials are required.

In the context of this Guide, asset owners are DTP and councils for roads, and the RTOs (MTM, V/Line and ARTC) for rail.

It is worth noting that each asset owner may have a different set of standards, specifications, and approvals to which they refer or maintain. Meeting the requirements as set by one asset owner will only apply to use within their network or jurisdiction.

5.1.3. Standards

Standards set out a range of performance requirements, procedures and/or guidelines that ensure the safety and reliability of products, services, and systems. Commonly used standards in Australia are Australian Standards (AS), Australian and New Zealand Standards (ANZS), and International Standards (ISO). Find out more and purchase standards on the [Standards Australia website](#).

5.1.4. Specifications

Specifications, or specs, are like an instruction manual that bring all the elements together. They are generally owned at a government (DTP, council), RTO (MTM, V/Line, ARTC), or peak body (Austroads) level, and set out which standard/s must be met, testing parameters, relevant technical documents, conditions of use etc.

5.1.5. Approvals

Approvals are an additional step required in particular instances, as defined by the relevant asset owner. They apply largely to products and materials that are safety or service critical, novel, or require a variation to the specification. They may also set out conditions of use which must be adhered to.

5.2. From product to project

The journey of a product or material from manufacture to use on a project can be long and complex. This section explains where to start, and what steps may need to be taken along the way.

The process looks different for each asset owner and can vary greatly depending on the product category and application. The following information is general in nature.

5.2.1. Start with the specification

The best place to start when looking to have products validated for use is with the specification. Compliance with specifications is required regardless of whether the product or material has recycled content.

Specifications are designed to be objective, unambiguous, and make clear to all parties (asset owner, Project Office, contractor, manufacturer) what the expectations are. From an asset owner and Project Office perspective, specifications ensure the project is value for money, safe and fit for purpose. For contractors, specifications outline what needs to be priced in, and performance expectations and requirements of the build. For suppliers, specifications define what performance and testing requirements must be met.

The specification provides information and instruction about what is required to use a product or material, within the scope of the asset owner's jurisdiction. Content will vary depending on the product and application, and may include information such as:

- Standards to be met.
- Definitions.
- Material requirements.
- Conditions of use and installation.
- Testing requirements.
- Requirement for approval by the asset owner.

In some cases, specifications include explainers of phrases and language which are extremely useful.

Where a product falls outside a specification, for example if it's previously unseen in the Australian context or manufactured from a material not covered by the existing specification, there may still be recourse to gain an approval. Specifications evolve over time with advances in technique, technology, and knowledge.

5.2.2. Where to find specifications

Road specifications tend to be fairly consistent. [Austroads](#) maintain a range of specifications which are reflected in asset owner's specifications across Australia. Each state will modify as necessary for their unique geological conditions, climate, and road type.

Rail specifications can be more difficult to navigate. MTM, V/Line and ARTC each maintain their own specifications, which are different from RTOs in other states.

Specifications are freely available through each asset owner's website—creation of a guest account may be required to access. They are each linked here: [DTP](#), [MTM](#), [V/Line](#).

eQ: ecologiQ has developed a range of [Reference Guides](#) which provide a summary of recycled content allowed within specifications in Victoria, and links to access them.

Council owned assets, such as suburban roads and footpaths, will be subject to the requirements of the relevant council. These can vary significantly between councils, even where they share borders.

Reach out to the relevant council to find out more.

5.2.3. Demonstrate compliance

Once requirements have been identified in the specification, compliance must be demonstrated. This is likely to include meeting one or more standards.

Standards are a baseline. Asset owners may elect to set their performance requirements at a higher level than what is nominated in the standard. This depends on a range of factors such as risk profile.

Where testing is required, it must be conducted by a [NATA approved laboratory](#). The cost and time to conduct testing will vary depending on what the test entails.

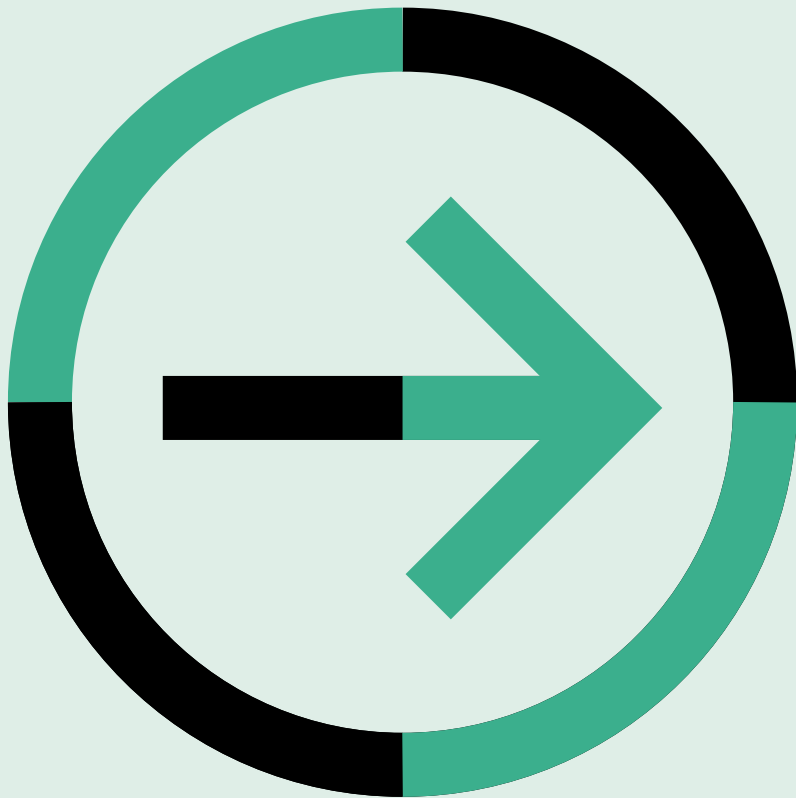


TIP

Testing can be an expensive exercise. It's worth taking the time to research exactly what tests are required to avoid any unnecessary costs. At completion, a summary of results will be issued. Collate these in a PDF or zip file for ease of sharing with prospective projects, or to upload as evidence when seeking asset owner approval.

The specification will also outline if repeat testing is required, for example after a certain time period, or at volumetric intervals.

For some product or material categories, once compliance to the specification has been sufficiently demonstrated, it is ready for use in projects. The onus is on the contractor to ensure products meet specification, so it's important to make sure you can give the contractor that evidence and assurance.



eQ: Approvals must be sought directly from the asset owner. In most cases, DTP and V/Line will work directly with suppliers and manufacturers, while MTM require a project sponsor. ecologiQ can help facilitate this process.

5.2.4. Asset owner approval

Where products or materials are safety or service critical, novel, innovative, untested or otherwise deviate from an existing specification, an approval from the asset owner may be required prior to use; this is at the discretion of the asset owner. Any approval granted is applicable to that asset owner's network only, meaning products may require approval by multiple asset owners.

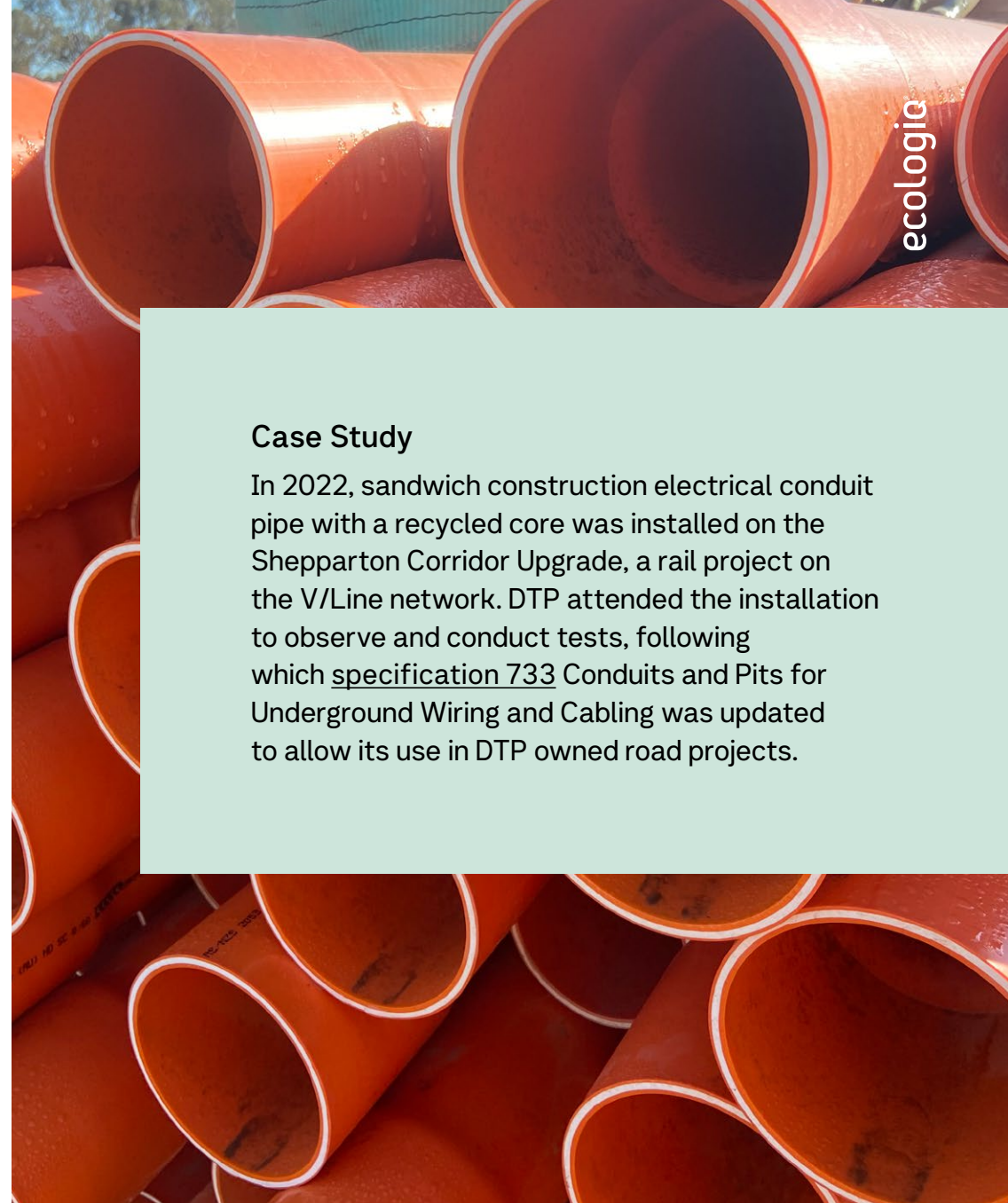
As a product or material becomes more common, the requirement to test new versions may become less frequent due to the asset owner's assurance of its performance. This leads to broader product acceptance, and possibly the development of guidelines, registers and/or specifications which may streamline or replace the approval process.

Due to the number of asset owners and broad range of products in infrastructure, there is no clear-cut rule as to what will or won't require approval. The process is different for each asset owner and product category, such as complexity of forms, evidence required, time to review, project sponsorship, and whether a trial is required.

Approval types can include:

- **Provisional:** product requires a trial, with view to full approval.
- **Conditional:** approved for use under certain conditions.
- **Full:** with or without conditions.
- **Waiver:** approval waived due to satisfying criteria.

Adding another layer of complexity, a project may span multiple asset owners. Councils and utilities have their own requirements which must be met on any sections of the project that cross into their jurisdiction. In such instances, approval may need to be sought from more than one asset owner for a single install. If approval is not given, product type may change where jurisdiction changes, or the contractor may elect to use a different product that is approved for use by all relevant asset owners.



5.2.5. Trials

Whether a trial is required is at the discretion of the asset owner. Further, each asset owner may elect to conduct a trial on their network. Similarly, an asset owner may deem a trial or installation on another's network as adequate evidence to grant approval.

Trials are more likely to be required where a product is safety or service critical, novel, innovative, untested or otherwise deviates from an existing specification. The asset owner will set the trial parameters, including location criteria, success criteria, and the duration of the trial. The onus is on the supplier or manufacturer to secure an appropriate trial site.

For projects where Recycled First applies, there is a section in the Recycled First Plan where trials can be proposed and approved.

eQ: ecologiQ have developed a Recycled Materials Trials Guide and Template to help streamline the process. The team routinely engage with project teams and provide platforms for suppliers, and can help suppliers to find suitable trial sites.

Case Study

In 2022, sandwich construction electrical conduit pipe with a recycled core was installed on the Shepparton Corridor Upgrade, a rail project on the V/Line network. DTP attended the installation to observe and conduct tests, following which specification 733 Conduits and Pits for Underground Wiring and Cabling was updated to allow its use in DTP owned road projects.



5.3. Advice from those in the know

In writing this guide, we asked the experts what advice they would give to suppliers and manufacturers who are demonstrating compliance and seeking approvals.

This is what they said:

- Always have evidence to substantiate the claims you make.
- Think about it from the client's point of view– replacing a product can mean ripping up a road.
- Do all the testing you can to prove that it works.
- Getting the tick of approval takes time, and having it does not mean your product will be used.
- Know the marketplace. What's the commercial reality, is there a demand?
- Complete a cost benefit analysis for your product, especially if hoping to replace an existing product. This is often the first question from teams in infrastructure.

6. Checklist of ecologiQ resources

ecologiQ is here to support suppliers of recycled and reused materials and products. Below is a summary of the ongoing activities and resources. Our team works closely with project teams across the Victorian public infrastructure construction sector; we encourage you to stay connected so you can access opportunities as they emerge.

- **Supplier Map** – database of known recycled and reused material suppliers in Victoria. Housed on ecologiQ’s Knowledge Hub, the Map is accessed by project teams working on Big Build projects. The Map is intended as a starting point for stakeholders looking for alternative suppliers, providing key information such as product range, certifications or approvals. To submit a registration, [please complete the linked form](#), and to update a current listing reach out to the team at ecologiQ@vida.vic.gov.au.
- **Innovation Showcase** – an online event designed to give suppliers, manufacturers and peak bodies the opportunity to present their products to a panel of road and rail experts for feedback. Attended by a broad audience of government, contractors, sustainability professionals and consultants, this event is ideal for launching new products, seeking trials, or escalating barriers to adoption. To register your interest in presenting, [please complete the linked form here](#).
- **Materials Catalogue** – a visual resource housed on the Knowledge Hub that shows recycled products available in Victoria, organised by application and recycled material type. The Catalogue is designed to be used alongside the Supplier Map as a starting point for contractors and project teams to identify more sustainable materials. The Materials Catalogue is currently in development, with a planned launch in 2026. Sign up to the ecologiQ mailing list to be notified when it goes live.
- **Mailing list** – stay up to date with news, opportunities and upcoming events by signing up to the ecologiQ mailing list. Email us at ecologiQ@vida.vic.gov.au to sign up.
- **LinkedIn** – stay up to date with news, opportunities and upcoming events by following us on [LinkedIn](#).
- **Knowledge Hub** – access ecologiQ’s suite of resources, including Reference Guides, Visual Guides, Case Studies, the Supplier Map, Innovations Register, links to session recordings on [YouTube](#) and more. Email ecologiQ@vida.vic.gov.au to request access.
- **Email** – if you’re a Victorian recycled and reused product or material supplier and looking to engage with Victorian Big build projects, reach out to us at ecologiQ@vida.vic.gov.au and ask to be put in touch with the Industry team.
- **Supplier’s Guide to Recycled First** – a reference to help suppliers understand the complexities around Big Build projects. We welcome your feedback on this resource, please submit comments and suggestions for improvement at [the linked form here](#).



Purposely Greener Infrastructure

Contact us

For more information on the program and to find out how we can support your team:

ecologiQ@vida.vic.gov.au

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