

# HS2 to streamline procurement process for civils sub-contractors

Four of HS2 Ltd's biggest contractors will introduce a standardized pre-qualification (PQ) system for subcontractors in a bid to streamline the process, reduce costs and boost productivity.

The new Common Assessment Standard will ensure that bidders looking for work with the high speed rail company's four main civils contractors – Align, BBV, EK and SCS Railways – will go through identical pre-qualification processes.

Developed as part of HS2's 'Collaboration Hub' initiative, the contractors worked with two of the sector's biggest representative organisations, Build UK and the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA), and through industry body, High Speed Rail Industry Leaders Group (HSRIL), to agree the new system.

According to research, it is estimated that suppliers in the construction industry are currently spending up to £1bn per year on tendering for work. This new system will help avoid duplication and cut costs. Build UK, CECA, and HSRIL joined forces two years ago to deliver the new PQ system and have just launched its first phase. HS2's contractors will be the pioneers of the new system, implementing it at scale through the future HS2 supply chain.

The Common Assessment Standard for PQ's will mean suppliers have a choice in assurance provider creating market competition and reducing the costs associated with infrastructure procurement. It ensures that all suppliers meet a high-quality standard, essential for HS2 to deliver a safe and quality supply chain.

HS2's Collaboration Hub enables HS2's Main Works Civils Contractors to work together to find common approaches and initiatives that will ensure consistency across the HS2 programme, and that the best procurement decisions are made for the project. HS2 will represent approximately 11% of UK infrastructure spend over the next decade and will be the largest individual client in the sector. The approaches taken to procurement on the project will not only have an impact on HS2 but the wider construction sector.

Andy Cross, Procurement Director, HS2 Ltd said:

Building Britain's new high speed railway provides a significant opportunity for the construction industry to innovate and work together, to leave lasting improvements on the sector as a whole. By adopting new approaches, such as the Common Assessment Standard, we can potentially transform the way in which the industry works, and procures goods and services.

Jo Fautley, Deputy Chief Executive, Build UK said:

The construction industry is making great strides towards more collaborative working and the Common Assessment Standard has been developed by industry, for industry, based on standards that clients, contractors and the supply chain have all agreed on. The adoption of the Common Assessment Standard by leading clients such as HS2 will help to improve efficiency and reduce duplication and cost, supporting the future delivery of world-class infrastructure.

Under the new trailblazing system, a supplier will be able to take the accreditation to any sector of the construction industry, beyond the rail sector. Not only will this reduce the costly, complex and repetitive burden the current procurement approach takes, but could improve standards across the board in the sector.