

## A protocol to conduct the visits and interviews of the reclamation dealers or allied businesses

19 March 2019

*The first version of this document (18 Feb. 2019) was used as a basis for discussion during the meeting with Salvo, Bellastock and Rotor on 22 Feb. 2019. It has been updated following the discussions held at this meeting.*

Interreg NWE - FCRBE - WP1 - Enhancing the visibility and representation of the reuse sector within the construction industry.

AT1.1 Documenting and publishing more than 1500 reclamation dealers or allied businesses in the project area on existing online directories

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## A methodology to establish a listing of the operators specialised in selling reclaimed building elements

Despite the lack of a global approach concerning the documentation of the existing reuse sector, the reclamation dealers and allied businesses are not totally unknown. Previous initiatives already started to list them and investigate their activities. However, the information gathered this way remains scattered, especially when it comes to a transregional approach.

The partners of the project will independently collect relevant information about the reclamation dealers and allied businesses. The information will contain both practical information about the identified operators and the history of the follow-up (contacts, visits, etc.). The partners will collect this information either by means of dedicated lists or directly on the web directories databases (SalvoWEB and Opalis).

Different sources are consulted to establish and feed this table of active operators:

- Web research<sup>1</sup>
- Professional profiles on second hand websites such as leboncoin.fr, tweedehands.be, etc.
- Previous operations carried out at a local level (student workshop "Tolosa" at ENSA Toulouse in 2014, studio "Déconstruction et réemploi" at ENSA Paris Val de Seine in 2018, Opalis UK at the AA School in London in 2018, etc.)
- Pre-existing listings, such as *Guide des entreprises spécialisées matériaux anciens et rééditions* (Éditions du Chevalier, 2010) and SalvoWEB.
- New information gathered during the visits

This information will be combined in a common table by Rotor, that will list 1500 operators in total. This deliverable (D1.2) is targeted for the end of September 2019. Of those 1500 operators, approximately 500 will be located in the UK and Ireland, 800 in France, and 200 in the Benelux.

## A methodology to select the operators

To include an operator in the listing, it has to meet a series of requirements.

### Minimal criterias

- For Belgium and France: being identified by a company number (VAT number in Belgium, SIRET in France)
- For the UK: A company number and/or a VAT number as an ID check. Businesses without either would be required to have a confirmed email address, a confirmed

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<sup>1</sup> The web search use the following keywords (non-exhaustive listing): salvaging, salvaged construction material, salvaged construction elements, antique construction, demolition salvage, reclamation salvage, reclamation yard, salvage yard, second hand building, reclaimed construction elements, matériaux anciens, matériaux de réemploi, matériaux de seconde main, réutilisation, hergebruik, hergebruikte bouwmaterialen / constructie-elementen, gerecupereerde bouwmaterialen / constructie-elementen, antieke / rustieke bouwmaterialen, etc.

This list can be broadened out to product areas.

mobile number, and a confirmed utility bill or bank statement in the name of the business or sole trader.

- Undertaking a constant activity related to the reuse of construction elements.

The general idea here is to identify stable and well-established suppliers, in opposition to informal or occasional resellers of reclaimed construction elements. The degree of professionalism can be measured differently in different contexts.

For the operators that sell materials, this means having a stock that can be visited (either with defined business hours or on demand), or, at least, allowing a detailed inspection of the materials before transaction.

Businesses providing allied services without a stocking place, have to demonstrate that a significative part of their activities are directly linked to a chain of operations that encourages and allows the reclamation and reuse of construction products (for instance: conduct reuse assessments in buildings under transformation, providing cleaning services for specific elements (sandblasting of wood or stone components, pickling of metals, etc.)). 15% of the 1500 operators to be listed can be allied businesses as such (this is to be seen as a guideline, rather than as a fixed number).

A series of hints can be detected during a visit of the companies' websites to check to which extent the operators provide professional services:

- Selling large quantities of specific elements
- Ensuring a stable supply of one or several specific elements
- Providing related services for the remanufacturing and the commercialisation of construction elements (by which the reclaimed elements are sold in a state very comparable to new products)
- Having a website that is regularly updated and complete (possibly presenting an online inventory of the supply)

Furthermore, companies supplying construction materials sourced from overstocks or unsold goods can be taken into account if they also propose a minimal offer of construction materials sourced from deconstructions. Per se, these companies are not directly focused in this research as they are only marginally useful to reach the main objective of the project (i.e. enhancing the quantity of construction elements being reused in NWE). Their presence in the listing should thus be kept at a very limited proportion of the whole.

## **Objectives of the visits**

Salvo, Bellastock and Rotor are responsible for the contacts and visits in respectively, UK & Ireland, France, and the Benelux. Each partner is free to visit and publish businesses outside its territory, as long as it is well communicated to the other partners. A limited number of shared visits is also possible.

The main objective of the project is to increase the amount of reclaimed building elements being circulated in NWE. It is thus important to make a distinction between:

- The cases where the effort is firstly targeted at documenting the activities of the dealers. This will concern the dealers who will be contacted for the first time, and who are unfamiliar with the partners and the existing platforms.
- The cases where the effort is mostly targeted at involving the dealers in expanding or adapting their supply so as to meet the ultimate objective of the project (increasing by +50% the amount of reclaimed building materials being circulated in NWE). This approach mostly concerns the dealers that are already familiar with the partners and their platforms, and with whom an expansion of the quantity and/or the types of materials they offer can be discussed.

Given the fact that Salvo has been active in the reuse sector much longer than Rotor and Bellastock, and that they are well-known among the traders (with many of whom they established contact years ago), most of their work will mostly focus on the second target. In addition to the documentation effort, this involves a variety of suggestions that can be made to the dealers, such as enlarging their supply to integrate more contemporary materials, inform them on possible collaborations with architects and clients willing to integrate reuse as part of their projects, provide detailed data to sustain the statistical survey of the sector (WP T1, Act. 2), invite them to take part in case studies of reclamation or salvage and the reuse of reclaimed items in new building developments (cf. pilot operations undertaken as part of WP T2 and WP T3), etc.

Rotor and Bellastock will mostly focus on the first target although, depending on the reaction of the contacted dealers, similar suggestions and invitations can also be made during the first visits.

A flyer explaining the main objectives and outcomes of the project will be prepared to give to each documented reuse trader. It will be designed so as to reach this specific target group, allowing those of them willing to engage further in the project to be kept in touch.

## **First contact**

To contact a company for the first time, two successive phone contacts are established:

- The first one is done a few days before the actual visit, to check and complete the first information gathered during the pre-identification phase. Information found online can indeed be outdated. This first contact ensures that the company is still in business and serves to arrange an appointment for a visit in the near future.
- A second call, the day before the visit, helps ensuring that the company owners will be available and haven't forgotten about the meeting.

In both cases, it is important to avoid attitudes that could be interpreted as a canvassing action. It is better to present the approach as a sort of enquiry about the reuse sector. Previous experience have shown that it is more favourable not to go into too much detail about the project during the phone contact. Some operators are reluctant to take part in

this kind of approach and could refuse to arrange a future visit. A more fruitful posture consists in demonstrating an interest in the products and services provided by the company as part of an architectural project, to stimulate a collaborative context. During the actual visit, the conversation can be gradually switched to the development of the online directories and the general aim of the project.

For the operators that cannot be visited, it can be mentioned that we wish to write an article about their activities as part of a more general documentation project. The form that is filled with the information collected through the phone contact is sent to the company afterwards, so as to get their feedback and approbation on this information.

For partners contacting traders or allied businesses with whom they are already in contact and in good terms (which will be the case for most visits operated by Salvo in UK), the communication about the project can be more direct. In such cases, the phone contact mostly serves to present the FCRBE project and its objectives, and to identify the operating traders which are willing to discuss a possible expansion of their stock and the types of materials they sell.

## **A method to conduct the visits**

The phone contacts allow for the identification of the most interesting companies in terms of reclaiming construction elements. These are then visited. The visits can be done in parallel to the identification process, or after a phase of preliminary research.

It is better to focus on a large diversity of company profiles (the most interesting and surprising), rather than multiplying the visits to very similar types of specialised activities (for instance, three visits of companies specialized in the reclamation of cast-iron heaters are probably enough to understand the main lines of this business).

The discussions held during the visits, at the heart of the stock, are often very rich in information. The visits also allow to take high-quality pictures of the general atmosphere and the specific products. These images help to present the company at its best.

Considering the documentation of unknown or unvisited businesses, the first objective of the visit is to understand their general business model. Therefore, a semi-structured interview is conducted, based on a list of questions prepared in advance. This list contains a few questions linked to the statistical survey (undertaken as part of WP T1 Activity 2), which take advantage of the visits to gather some information needed to draw a better portrait of the main trends currently affecting the reuse sector.

### **Generalities**

- What kind of products do they sell?
- Do they present any specialisation?
- Showroom space: what size, which character...?
- Stocking space: what type (indoor/outdoor), what size, which character...?
- Do they have specific logistic means (trucks, cranes, workshops...)?
- How many people are employed?
  - between 1 and 9
  - between 10 and 19

- between 20 and 49
- between 50 and 99
- between 100 and 499
- between 500 and 999
- more than 1000

### **Stock and services**

- What kind of elements are currently in stock? In which percentage? And in which estimated quantity (mass or volume)?
- Do they effectuate operations on products (before and after selling them)?
- Do they provide related services such as
  - waste treatment (collecting, sorting/managing)
  - demolition
  - dismantling
  - delivery
  - design assistance
  - construction
  - ...
- In case of non-reuse related services, what is the percentage of reuse in their total activity?

### **Inputs/outputs**

- What are the sources of their products (if possible, in what percentage)?
  - Purchase
  - Demolitions/Dismantling
  - Deposits
  - ...
- Who are the main providers of products (if possible, in what percentage)?
  - Private
  - Demolition contractors
  - Building trade
  - Developers
  - ...
- What is the frequency of new arrivals?
- What is the profile of their client (if possible, in what percentage?):
  - professionals
  - individuals
  - merchants
  - ...

### **Economics and estimations on the state of the sector**

- Do they have any pricing strategy?
- What is the price ranges for the most common products?
- Have they seen an increase in the reuse business these last few years?
- Would they be able (technically, logistically...) to increase the quantity of reclaimed elements being circulated in their area?
- Were the sales higher, lower or similar to those of 2018?

- Do they expect sales for 2019 and 2020 to be higher, lower or the same?
- What is their approximate reuse sales turnover?
  - Less than 10k€
  - 10-20k€
  - 20-50k€
  - 50-100k€
  - 100-150k€
  - More than 150k€

### **Further investigations**

- Do they know inspiring examples of their products being used in interesting projects? Something they are proud of?
- Do they want to keep contact with the FCRBE project and its future outcomes (symposium, pilot operations, summer school, etc.)? Are they interested in being contacted for any of these activities?

It is important to note that this fieldwork requires some flexibility, so as to adapt the discussion to the contact person. These guidelines are mostly indicative. Getting a detailed answer to all these questions during a first visit constitutes an ideal, that shouldn't be met at the expense of other aspects such as cordiality, trust in the project, and keeping open the possibilities for future discussions and collaborations.

When visiting companies already familiar with the partners and the web directories, the conversation can focus directly on the specificities of the stock and the details about the activities of the company.

### During the visit

It is recommended to

- ask to visit the whole stock with the business owner
- observe the elements which trigger a reaction from the owner
- make sure that the information gathered during the visit allows to write a description containing general and in-depth information about the company
- take good pictures

### After the visit

When documenting for the first time:

- Collect rough data: take note of all the information collected, write down the first feelings and most important information, the most notable elements...
- Write down the profile: not too late after the visit, distill the unsorted data to write a concise and precise description of the company profile and publish it online.

During a second (or third, or...) visit, evidences that the visit effectively happened should be kept, as well as any relevant outcome of the discussions (concerning the update of a profile in the web directories, a commitment to take part in pilot operations, etc.).



## **Publishing the information in the online directories**

The companies that will have been identified by Salvo will be published on Salvoweb. The companies identified by Bellastock and Rotor will be published on Opalis.eu.

The complete profile consists of:

### A presentation text

A short text to present the company. It should be relatively general, so as to avoid having it being outdated too quickly, but it should also give the visitor a good idea about the specificities of the company. A few words about the history of the company can be useful. Further details about the installations and the services provided can be mentioned here.

### A selection of 4-10 pictures

Good pictures are indispensable. They should convey the atmosphere and the size of the stock. Ideally, 4 to 10 images are to be added to the page of every operator, with a resolution of around 4 to 5 MB.

In general the pictures for Opalis are taken in landscape format. The main pictures for Salvo are square, other pictures can be of any format.

### A set of practical information

At minima, each referenced company should at least mention the following information:

- Address(es). The same company can have distinct addresses (the head office and the stock, for instance). It is preferable to highlight the site accessible to the clients.
- Tel / Fax. Please indicate the phone country code to facilitate international implementation.
- Website.
- Logo.
- "Focus" (cf. *infra* material categories).
- "Also Offers" (cf. *infra* material categories).
- Services (cf. *infra* services categories).
- Contractor missions. A free description of the missions provided by the company, for instance: salvaging reclaimed building material, interior decoration, etc.
- Product operations. A free description of the services provided to remanufacture the materials, for instance: cleaning and sorting, fabricating joinery and furniture, restoration, etc.
- Depending on the web directories respective policies:
  - Business hours
  - Professional email to contact the company

## Material Categories

On Opalis, the structuration of the material categories follows a double logica :

On the one hand, it reflects the categories usually met on the existing market of reclaimed construction elements. For instance, most of the time, a company selling setts will sell pavers as well. These two categories are thus grouped.

On the other hand, the classification of material categories follows the main steps of the construction works. It also reflects the way the specifications books are organized. Architects and building professionals are familiar with such a structure.

- *Landscaping and paving:*
  - Cobble stone and pavers
  - Floors in natural stone
- *Structure and shell*
  - Timber framing
  - Steps in stone
  - Steel structure
  - Bricks
  - Insulation
  - Late, roof tiles and wall covers
  - Cladding
- *Woodwork*
  - Windows
  - Doors
  - Stairs
- *Interior finishings*
  - Floors in natural stone (repeated)
  - Parquet and wooden floors
  - Tiles
  - Partitions and suspended ceilings
  - Cladding (repeated)
- *Equipment*
  - Sanitary
  - Technical installations
  - Radiators
  - Lights
- *Decoration*
  - Architectural antiques
  - Metal work
  - Chimneys

Note that the meta-categories (in italic above) are not used to tag the documented traders. They only have a function to facilitate the navigation within the different categories.

We suggest to use this taxonomy to structure the list of operators (D1.2).

The following table summarizes the material categories taxonomy used in French, Dutch and English.

	<b>FR</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>EN</b>
1	Pavés, bordures et klinkers	Kasseien, boordstenen en klinkers	Setts, cobbles, kerb, clay pavers
2	Dallage en pierre	Stenen vloeren	Flagstones, marble, floor tiles
3	Structure bois	Structuureel hout	Structural timbers
4	Seuils, marches et moellons en pierre	Stenen dorpels, treden en breukstenen	Stone or marble, steps and staircases
5	Structure acier	Stalen structuur	Structural steel
6	Briques	Baksteen	Bricks
7	Isolants	Isolatiemateriaal	Insulation
8	Tuiles, ardoises et couvre-murs	Dakpannen, leistenen en muurdeksels	Roof slates, roof tiles, wall tiles
9	Bardage et lambris bois	Houten gevelbekleding en lambrisering	Timber cladding
10	Châssis de fenêtres	Raamkozijnen	Windows
11	Portes	Deuren	Doors
12	Escaliers	Trappen	Staircases
13	Planchers / Parquets	Planken- en parketvloeren	Timber flooring, woodblock, parquet
14	Carrelages	Tegels	Floor and wall tiles
15	Cloisons et faux-plafonds	Scheidingswanden en verlaagde plafonds	Partitions and suspended ceilings
16	Sanitaires	Sanitair	Sanitaryware
17	Installations techniques	Technische installatie	Mechanical & Electrical (M&E)
18	Radiateurs	Radiatoren	Radiators
19	Luminaires	Verlichtingsarmaturen	Lamps and lighting
20	Antiquités architecturales	Architecturaal antiek	Architectural antiques
21	Ferronneries	Smeedwerk	Iron and steelwork

22	Cheminées	Schouwen	Fireplaces, chimneypieces
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## Services categories

Beside the free description of the services provided by the companies, 5 general categories of services can be ticked:

	FR	NL	EN
1	Transport	Transport	Transport
2	Conception	Ontwerp	Design
3	Démolition	Afbraak	Demolition
4	Démantèlement	Ontmanteling	Dismantling
5	Mise en œuvre	Plaatsing	Fitting

## Languages

Different elements are to be taken into account when it comes to chose the language(s) used on the web directories. Some reuse traders are operating at a regional level, for which the language of the territory is the most relevant, whereas other work at an interregional or even international level, for which English is useful as well.

In general, the business of reusing construction elements relies on some “regionalisms”, which reflects on the type and even the names of the elements being traded. Although, at the same time, these regional specificities are also precisely what makes some elements very appreciated in other countries (sometimes even outside Europe).

It is proposed to opt for a the following approach for the documentation of the operators:

- The description is written in the language commonly used on the territory where the trader is located.
- The description is translated in English.

This means that traders located in English-speaking contexts will only be documented in English, and that traders located in bilingual contexts (such as Belgium) could be documented in several languages.

## Update and maintenance

By definition, all the information gathered on the web directories is likely to become obsolete, sooner or later. The business models are evolving, some traders stop working with some elements but switch their supply to others, some companies stop their

activities, new operators start up their own businesses, etc. Dealing with these issues is a challenge for any web platform.

Concretely, different steps are taken by the online directories to mitigate the risk of presenting outdated information:

- In general, there is an effort to present information that is, at the same time, as precise as possible and relatively general so that it remains potentially valid during a long period of time.
- The directories use different methods to let the documented traders update their information (either by sending an automated and periodical email asking for update, and by mentioning an email address on the website via which changes can be reported (Opalis), or by giving access to the traders to their information (SalvoWEB)).
- A disclaimer warns the visitors that the information presented on the directories, although being the result of a work undertaken is seriously and precisely as possible, is subject to become obsolete. It is thus recommended to take directly contact with the relevant traders by mail or by phone.

The maintenance of these tools is further examined in other parts of the FCRBE project (Cf. long term effects Work Package).

## **Confidentiality**

In general, the directories function under a principle of transparency. The documented traders have access to the information concerning their activities and have the possibility to adapt or delete this information. However, this principle is declined in different ways on SalvoWEB and Opalis.

- On SalvoWEB, the traders have the possibility to create a user profile and therefore have a direct access to all the information concerning their business. They can update, adapt or delete it at any moment, by simply logging in their account via the content management system.
- On Opalis, the description of the dealers (text and images) elaborated by the fieldworkers is sent to the traders for approbation. At any moment, a documented trader can ask to update, adapt or remove from the directory any information concerning their activities by sending an email to Opalis.

## **Credits**

The texts and pictures added to the web directories as part of the FCRBE project are licensed under the Creative Common Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike format (CC BY-NC-SA). It means that they are available to anyone for any use, (with the exception of commercial algorithmic content aggregation) provided that the new creations:

- Credit the original source.

- License their creations under identical terms.

This seems a good balance between the accessibility and openness of the content on the one hand, and a minimum of protection on the other hand. Check <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/?lang=en> for more information.

Pre-existing material in the web directories that is licensed under other conditions (copyright, for instance) would remain unaffected by this principle.

## **Revisions and approbation**

The documents written in the web directories as part of the FCRBE project are submitted to other partners for revisions and approbation :

- A first loop of revisions is organised between the partners directly involved in this activity.
- A second loop is then organised within the whole partnership.