

**WORKING GROUP  
SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION METHODS AND TECHNIQUES**

**MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING (SHORT VERSION)**

**ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE OFFICES  
BRUSSELS**

**2003/04/01 from 10.30 until 17.30**

- 1.0 Welcome to all the participants;**
- 2.0 Brief introduction of the new participants, the group's Rapporteur, and the responsibilities associated with the role;**
- 3.0 Administrative business and introduction to the new working structure and status of the working group;**

**4.0 Information by the European Commission, DG Environment;**

*Parallel Process*

DG Environment is working in parallel with the SCMT working group.

*Scope of the SCMT working group*

There is a close relation between the Urban Design working group and SCMT working group. The interface is defined as follows: the SCMT working group is looking at the building itself and its quality, also in relation to its environment, replacing it in a global context, i.e. with a holistic and integrated approach. The Urban Design group is working on urban design (planning, ...) also with a holistic and integrated approach and it therefore needs to look at how this interacts with the sustainability of buildings. There is no real limit to the scope of each – having a group of experts from very different kinds, there is always a very large prospective – both groups can follow each other; integration will be done by DG Environment.

The Built Environment is a very broad term: it also covers infrastructures, buildings, transport, but the key element is the city.

To solve this question, it is necessary to think of the output we are looking for; we need quite specific measures for the big issues. Everything that is considered as an important issue should be included. Take into account that there is a scope of each measure and not one scope for all measures.

*The UK Initiative*

On 7th of March a meeting was held in the UK at government level, inviting all the UK Experts of the urban thematic strategy. Nigel Mortimer and Chris Luebkehan also took part. This initiative was meant as a kind of exercise to make the local officials aware of what is happening. It is suggested to organize similar workshops in every country.

Conclusions:

- 1. Contacts with member ministers are very useful, if not later on, they might put objections.
- 2. Communication between the different working groups is necessary.

Minutes of all groups will be exchanged.

- 5.0 Approval of the Minutes of the first meeting held on the 24th February 2003 in the ACE's offices (long version – circulated);**
- 6.0 Approval of the revised Terms of Reference of this working group (ToR – circulated);**
- 7.0 Approval of the revised list of experts of the working group (List of experts – circulated);**  
New expert: Catherine Bouland from the IBGE (end-users).
- 8.0 Approval of the 'Abstract' articulated by Prof. Nigel Mortimer, to introduce the working group (Abstract – circulated);**

It is proposed the abstract shall be called 'Vision'. The vision is an aspiration of all those involved in the chain trying to reach people in the field.  
All participants shall comment on it by e-mail and Livia Tirone will revise it.

**9.0 Tour de table (Everyone makes a short presentation of their (written) contributions called for at the first meeting on the following themes a) State of the Art of sustainable construction; b) What are the barriers that are preventing the mainstreaming of good practice; c) What are the recommendations to overcome these barriers; d) Examples of quantitative and qualitative targets);**

**André Sougné** (*Summarises paper*)

1. State of art: There is a need to codify the available information.
2. Barriers: Sustainable building is expensive, it is not sure, it is no trend, and people do not want to invest for someone else.
3. Measures:
  - On side of Seller: Education; Increasing margins; Reducing Risks; Creating a Label for Professionals.
  - On side of Purchaser: Marketing (publicity, newspaper, demonstration), Financial motivation (VAT, deductibility, through certification, certitude to recover investment).

**John Goodall** (*Summarises paper*)

4 most important issues:

1. Market is not yet ready;
2. Real challenge is the existing stock;
3. Important Measure: Reduction VAT on labour intensive activities;
4. Energy aspect is incredibly difficult; Recommendation: tax on carbon. No easy answers!

**Juan Campos**

Mentions a report about whole life costing assessment where some benchmarking exercises on whole life costing were made and good methodologies are shown.

**Simon Goss** (*On behalf of DG ENV*)

We received two kind of advises so far:

1. General needs
  - Example: Market transformation, this is not easy.
2. Specific measures: That is what we need! A list of needs and (simple) answers with immediate action at EU-level.
  - Examples:
    - To accelerate standardization process, which pragmatic measures could work?
    - How could VAT measures look exactly?
    - Education: How could we satisfy training needs?
    - Conditions to building permitting. Is it a feasible proposition?
    - Performance requirements. For example: Directive on energy. Re-edit with other aspects? Passports? National building codes? Environmental impact assesments?

*What about good (research) results of the EC already available?*

DG ENV will go through the information, but welcomes any further conclusion on it.

**Eduardo de Oliveira Fernandes**

- How are we going to tackle sustainability? Performance approach (targets, indicators).

- The problem is acting at the same level of progress that we have on technology. We are looking for a Methodology.
- How to promote this methodology? Principle of subsidiarity. Examples: Creating a kind of annex for public procurement; Creating a new trend.
- We need still some kind of procedures approach (because of nature of design process) such as ISO 14000.
- Other important aspect are indoor quality and post occupational monitoring.
- The creating of standards is a priority, barrier and a potential;
- Education takes to much time; it is better to focus on professional training and to establish professional standards.
- We shall not forget the building industry, which is most indigenous.

**Philip Bennett** (*Contribution on following 3 topics will be written*):

- Environmental health aspects of construction
- LCA-thinking:
- Methodology ISO 14025, which is used as an input into existing models for assessment of buildings in Europe. Example: BREEAM in the UK.
- Demolition waste: 80% of the construction material is mineral fraction and can be recycled. Main concern is the large volumes. Problem is to know who is responsible (developer, buyer, constructor). Good examples in the Netherlands.

**Chris Luebke** (*Summarises paper about Barriers (B) and Recommendations (R)*)

1. B: Tools for assessing sustainable construction are not developed enough;  
R: The development of measuring systems and assessment systems is a very important step (Mention of interesting paper on SPEAR Sustainable Project Environmental Assessment Routine);
2. B: Organisations simply do not know what impact they have in sustainability terms;  
R: Performance-based approach;
3. B: the value of future costs by the discounting process is so low that there is no incentive to spend more on capital now in order to reduce running costs later;  
R: Introduce Environmental principles into Economy Science;
4. B: The separation of manufacturer, builder and occupier means that the running costs borne by the latter have minimal impact on product development by the former;  
R: Think of 'Take back' legislation for buildings;
5. B: Full costs are not internalised of conventional materials;  
R: Crude methods of legislation (Landfill taxes, Aggregates Tax, Tax for recycled content, Tax for Radius of supply).

**Manfred Hegger**

1. State of the Art: There is not really a market failure. The failure is in the technology, which should explain itself.
2. Barriers:
  - We are always looking at primary costs, not running time costs. Life cycle costs are needed;
  - There is not enough documentation, dissemination done;
  - The practice has got a big inertia; architects and engineers rather do the same than risk to do new things;
  - There is awareness but it is not brought into practice. There is a gap between public awareness and action.
3. Measures:
  - More education (e-learning);
  - Monitoring incentives;

- Non-monitoring incentives (e.g. awards) improving the image of sustainable architecture, creating proudness, creating a movement.

**Nigel Mortimer** (*Adds some comments to his paper*)

- There is a need for information in the non-domestic sector and even more in the field of renovation where the problem is the lack of replicability, combined by diversification;
- There is no standard in measuring;
- Life cycle assessment: ISO is mature; methods of calculation are not standardized. A database is necessary. Data are geographically specific;
- The problem is that people perceive a market failure, rather than the market failure itself; The buyers and sellers perceive that sustainable construction is more expensive;
- Essence of the problem is: how to market a new product. Example of the change from single glazing to double-glazing.
- We should worry about 80 % of problem, rather than remaining 20% (big fishes).
- It is extremely difficult coming up with measures for all Europe. The different member states have different frameworks;

**Luc Bourdeau** (*Summarises the paper prepared for Agenda 21*)

Main barriers:

- Poor understanding of the problem;
- Inadequate or defective vehicles for participation by stakeholders.

Challenges/recommendations:

- Develop evaluation methods: There is a lack of an indicator at level of whole of construction sector;
- Determining priority targets, a good strategy;
- Re-engineering of the building process;
- Integrated design process;
- More recommendations: education; public awareness, standards and regulation, human resources and developing labelling (there exist some examples in France).

**Adele Lydon**

- Stress to be put on following important aspects:
  - Effect on local authority;
  - Importance of the behaviour of the people, education;
  - Impact of the building in urban area, participation of community.
- It might be interesting to make a time scale, by when it is reasonable?
- It might be interesting to mention where funding can come from. Recommendation on finance is not the scope of this working group, but comments are necessary where needed.

**Livia Tirone**

The report resulting from the SCMT working group's work will have to be based on a consensus among all the experts and all actors involved in the construction process in all EU MS with their specific characteristics will have to be taken into account in the resulting measures.

**Alain Sagne**

This expert group is not acting like a brainstorming group, the Commission is expecting of us to come up with policy recommendations. It is about finding the right balance and the feasibility of what we are going to propose.

**10.0 Discussion of these contributions aiming at reaching a consensus on the content to be covered under each of these headings – scope of the theme sustainable construction;**

(Results of this discussion have been included in point 9.0)

**11.0 Discussion on the proposed structure for the report (a first draft will be circulated soon);**

**12.0 Discussion of necessary activities / tasks to cover all relevant areas of the report to the appropriate depth (Activities draft April – circulated);**

(See Action list disseminated)

***Discussion on state of the art***

State of the art = what we have as good practice and not only the best practice possible.

It is good to divide into issues and themes.

It is crucial to focus on gaps: What does not exist on the shelf? We need to make a research wish list.

It is interesting to work on an existing state of the art. Example: Document produced in the FRESCO project. (Will be circulated)

The state of the art in terms of legislation EU will be analysed looking at it from the point of view what could be missing?

**13.0 Confirm deliverable for inception report;**

The Commission agrees that there will be no inception report after all, as this would not be fully productive anymore at this stage. It is better to go directly for a draft interim report.

**14.0 Distribution of tasks - who does what by when – which will result in the detailed work plan;**

(See Action list disseminated)

**15.0 Discussion of the methodology of work – how – which will result in the methodology to be undertaken;**

**16.0 Communication and circulation of documents (CIRCA);**

This will not be used after all. Communication and circulation of documents is done by email.

**17.0 Dates for future meetings;**

5<sup>th</sup> of June and 12<sup>th</sup> of September.