

EC Working Group
Sustainable Construction Methods and Techniques (SCMT)
DG Environment / Expert Group on the Urban Environment
(6th Environment Action Programme – Urban Environment Thematic Strategy)

Draft final Terms of Reference

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Supporting organisation: Architects' Council of Europe (EC Contract B4-3050/2003/352567/SER/B4)

Co-ordination of best information currently available on subject matter. Synthesis of gathered information to form meaningful input to the overall task of the DG ENV for the preparation of the Urban Environment Thematic Strategy within the framework of the 6th Environmental Action Programme.

Main parameters:

• **Time scale:**

Twelve months, January 2003-December 2003.

• **Reporting**

Inception report after first meeting in early 2003. Interim Report, with substance and draft recommendations, in July 2003. Draft Final Report by the end of October 2003. Final report: End 2003.

Adequate linking with the Urban Design for Sustainability Working Group will be ensured.

• **Number of meetings:** Three or four

• **Experts:** Cross-disciplinary competencies are required, drawing from as wide a range of players within the construction sector.

• **Tasks:**

- 1.0 To describe existing conditions and practice, as well as relevant policy in Member States;
- 2.0 To identify relevant research work e.g. within the framework of the 'City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage' and other relevant Key Actions, CRISP, PRESCO, E-CORE and EnerBuild Thematic Networks, DG Enterprise Sustainable Construction Reports already available on Environmentally Friendly Construction Materials, Energy Efficiency in Performance of Buildings and Construction and Demolition Waste, and the work under way within the Task Group Whole Life Cycle in construction (DG ENTR, chaired by ACE).
- 3.0 To elaborate on available recommendations:

- How do we minimise resource inputs for construction and ensure that they are sustainable and, as far as possible, locally sourced from local sources?

- How do we construct buildings so as to make optimal use of the materials and resources used to maximise optimise energy efficiency performance etc.

- How do we construct buildings to ensure that they can adapt to unknown future needs and to ensure that the material inputs can be re-used and recycled if the building has to be deconstructed in the future?

- How can we minimise permanent damage to the natural environment from construction e.g. via surface sealing etc?
- How do we get the public and the private sector to commit to principles of sustainable construction?
- What recommendations can the group come up with in terms of co-ordination measures that the Commission could propose to the Member States in relation to taxation, incentives and regulatory issues?

Within the areas of design and construction of buildings the built environment, the group will address the following definition of targets (measurable), all aiming toward an increased quality of life of the user:

- Optimisation of Energy performance efficiency (reducing CO2 emissions and running costs)
- Resource (materials, water, sewage) efficiency (reducing resource input and outputs as well as maintenance costs and environmental construction costs)
- Indoor and outdoor air quality (toxicity of materials and systems, ill-health prevention)
- Longevity Durability (construction methods and design for flexibility, reduction of maintenance and conversion costs)

The group will also define a set of aims for not quantifiable qualities that contribute to the quality of life of the user:

- Identity and character of the built environment
- Diversity and variety of texture, colour, form, typology and property

Objectives:

The group aims:

- To supply relevant information on the impact of buildings on the environment (covering design and construction phase as well as maintenance), in order to enable policymakers to evaluate the seriousness of the current situation,
- To support policy development and the setting of priorities to considerably improve the impact of buildings on the environment, by identifying key factors that cause pressure on the environment and by listing the appropriate methods and techniques to be implemented across Europe.
- To identify the barriers and make recommendations within the framework of the Urban Environment Thematic Strategy as to how to mainstream the pockets of good practice found in many Member States.
- It shall also define a methodology as how to monitor the effects of policy responses.

Indicators are not only needed in order to supply information about the state, condition and causalities of the urban built environment, but also to assess the effectiveness of alternative responses.

Expected Outputs:

- Setting priority objectives
- Defining targets
- Indicators to measure progress
- Measures to be brought forward at EU and local levels.

The mandate of the group allows to make recommendations for e.g. Europe-wide Legislation Measures, Soft Measures, Performance based Regulations, accompanying measures, ...

A start-up An Inception report will be produced after the first meeting providing consolidated Terms of Reference, the description of the activities to be undertaken, the adopted methodology, a detailed work plan (what will be done by when and by whom), the final list of experts, stakeholders and organisations/networks involved in the work.

An interim report will be produced that will provide an initial overview of the latest thinking and work being undertaken on the key areas for investigation. It will feature an outline for recommendations and, where necessary, refine the key issues upon which recommendations will be made in the final report.

The final report will make recommendations on good practice (including models for successful projects) and, in particular, on actions required at the EU level to support the design, construction and regeneration/retro-fitting of physical infrastructure to support the sustainable functioning of urban areas. These recommendations might also include some innovative and creative solutions and measures that could be proposed at EU level, while fully respecting the subsidiarity principle.

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