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Press information

EU research project develops standardized criteria for sustainable building

"Open House" presents interim results

Stuttgart, 8 October 2012. At present, many different systems are being used across Europe to evaluate sustainable buildings. However, not every country and building culture has the basis needed to map the relevant criteria at the required level of quality.

In response to this, the European Union initiated a research project called "Open House", which is designed to increase transparency, raise awareness and establish a standardized interpretation of key aspects relating to sustainable building. For two years, the existing certification systems and their respective attributes were examined carefully and were tested by the relevant national organizations with a view to gauging their usability and future viability. The objective is to specify criteria that can be used in all European countries and which prepare the building and real estate sector as effectively as possible for the requirements of the future.

A total of 20 partner companies from 12 European countries have joined forces for this project. The scientific study was conducted primarily by the Fraunhofer Institute for Building Physics (IBP), while the project is overseen by Spanish construction and engineering company acciona. The German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB) assumed responsibility for communications as well as contributing its extensive sustainable building expertise. At this point, it is possible to take stock of progress for the first time.

Dr. Natalie Essig, project manager at the Fraunhofer Institute for Building Physics, summed

up: "It was important for us to conduct a scientific analysis of all relevant evaluation criteria and to determine the extent to which these are internationally applicable. Out of the 900 potential individual criteria, we have put together a list of 56 criteria that are suitable for use in Europe. The next step is to use this list to start up a test phase."

The DGNB is extremely happy with the outcome, as expressed by Chairman Manfred Hegger: "Around 80 percent of the criteria that were selected for the Open House list are ones that are also implemented in the DGNB certification system. This shows that our system is very suitable for international use. We will keep a close eye on how it is used in practice and will analyze how the new findings can be used to further develop our system."

The list of criteria is now to be put to the test in a total of 63 projects all over Europe. The results will be presented in April 2013 as part of a final workshop. There are also plans to make this list of criteria and the results accessible free of charge to all interested parties on an internet platform. These guidelines are to serve as a standardized and scientifically reliable basis for planning.

German Sustainable Building Council

The German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltiges Bauen) was founded in Stuttgart in 2007. In an effort to promote sustainable building, the non-profit organization has developed the DGNB Certificate, a certification system to assess buildings and urban districts that demonstrate a high level of environmental and economic efficiency, conserve resources and offer users optimized comfort.

The DGNB has more than 1,100 members from all branches of the German construction and real estate industries. Its network of partner organizations extends to numerous countries, ensuring international adaptation and application of the certification system.

Additional information

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