



European Commission

Directorate-General  
Enterprise and Industry

# EU approach towards sustainable construction

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## Sustainable construction

- A relatively new concept - integration of sustainable development objectives in construction activities
- Generally understood in relation with energy/environmental performances of construction products/assets – need for a more balanced economical, ecological and social approach
- Existing evaluation models and methods but some dimensions (impact on biodiversity, local value creation, etc.) are not easily quantifiable

## Some EU policies related to sustainable construction

- Integration of Environmental Aspects into European Standardisation (COM(2004)206)
- Energy Efficiency Action Plan (COM (2006)545)
- Green Public Procurement
- Sustainable Industrial Policy/Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan (2008)
- EC Lead Market Initiative (COM(2007)860)

## Lead Markets - Policy context

- COM (2006) 502 final “A broad-based innovation strategy for EU”
- Accelerate the developments of new large scale markets with great international potential
- Better anticipate necessary legal and regulatory changes and use existing policy mechanisms in a more targeted and consistent manner
- Design and implement such a concerted action in a small set of promising markets

## Scope of the Lead Market initiative

« Lead Markets are not about protectionism, picking winners or creating national champions. The purpose is to enable innovation to emerge and come to market. In order to ensure success, an integrated effort is needed across all services and policy areas, as well as between public authorities and industry [...] »

***Vice-President Verheugen***

## Innovation issues

- Innovation manifests itself in many forms, at the level of the construction product and/or the service provided by the supply chain
- Need to transform the supply chain:
  - Construction industrialisation
  - Collaborative working
  - Life Cycle expertise
  - New service models



# Factors affecting market development

- Building related regulations: a fragmented responsibility within national administrations
- Budget constraints and accountability criteria of the public sector
- Long service life of construction assets
- Construction: mostly a locally based economic activity of many small contractors
- Education and qualification needs for innovation uptake



## Roadmap – Legislation

- Screening of national building regulations versus sustainability requirements
- Framework for the construction supply chain to cope with improved building energy performances requirements
- Industry panel to assess the innovation potential and cumulative effects of EU and national legislations



## Roadmap - Public Procurement

- Guidance and pilot schemes on award criterion and the use of Life Cycle Costing
- Networking activities to support innovation in public procurement, including Intellectual Property Rights aspects



## Roadmap - Standardisation

- Framework, assessment methods and benchmarks for sustainability performances of buildings and supply chain
- Integration of sustainability aspects in construction design standards (Eurocodes)
- Sustainability criteria and technical assessment of innovative construction products



## Roadmap - systemic policies

- Study to assess the business case for collaborative working in construction projects, including guidance for SMEs
- Feasibility study on the role of insurance to support innovative and sustainable construction
- Study on future qualifications and skills needs to uptake innovation in construction



## Concluding remarks

- A « Lead Market » initiative might stimulate the emergence of innovative products and services for sustainable construction
- The ambition is to set up the market conditions appropriately for whatever product, service and technology
- Pilot nature of the initiative - «Proof of concept » for a systematic and integrated approach