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Harmonisation of Building Regulations in the Nordic Countries

Project meeting

The Nordic project “Harmonisation of building regulations in the Nordic countries” has started. All participants in the project were invited to the first project meeting on the 11th of January in Stockholm. The project forms a part of “Norden som et velfungerende indre marked og en grenseløs region” (The Nordic Countries as one well-functioning market and an integrated region), a project of the Nordic Innovation Center (NICE). It is financed by NICE together with industries in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. The project goes on during 2007 and will be finished during 2008.

Objective

The objective of the project is to strengthen the Nordic industry through similar and transparent requirements, so that with a minimum of technical “trade obstacles” the market can increase with the intention to further develop the building of wooden houses. The aim is to compile a package of measures to influence a reduction of the differences in the current Nordic regulations, which the industries experience as obstacles.

Background

The transformation of the wood manufacturing industries from local suppliers of finished products to creators of concepts establishes conditions for new companies and company groups. However, the ability of companies to adjust to new markets can take time and generate high costs. It is therefore important to make it easier for the industries to address larger markets. By removing obstacles like differences in the building regulations and simplify for the industry to reach a larger market the productivity can be increased and give

opportunities for development of new, innovative and non-standard products. Considered over a longer period the simplifications will also reduce the costs for houses.



Part 1 Analysis of obstacles

The project is divided into three parts. Gathering impact from the industry is included in the first part, where the project will try to find as many obstacles and problems as possible experienced by the industry related to export of wooden houses and products. The information from all countries will be compiled in a short report and will then be analysed to produce a proposal for a package of measures that will be presented in a final report.

What is included in the project?

Included are regulations and requirements that give problems and extra work or costs to get houses accepted by an authority or future proprietor in any participating country. It can for example relate to sizes and dimensions, design of rooms and houses, building products or design rules.

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Part 2 Communication solutions

Part 2 of the project includes a survey and description of the ongoing work of developing digital information and communication systems in the Nordic countries (and partly EU). The aim is to clarify the principles of the systems, the used communication standards and their compatibility, and also how well they describe the properties and functions of building products. Some tests of using the systems will also be made. Part 2 will analyse if the development of these systems contribute to conserve or remove or create new trade obstacles. The importance for different users will be evaluated and possibly give advice for a harmonisation in this area.

Part 3 Innovative standardization

In part 3 the product standards and performance standards for wood products that are relevant for building permits will be studied and compared to the requirements in the Nordic building regulations. Basis for the contents of performance standards will be analysed. Proposals for a Nordic organisation of the standardization work and a report will complement the survey in part 1.



Participants

Sweden:

SP Wood Technology

WoodCenter North

Forum for Building Costs, The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning

Swedish Federation of Wood and Furniture Industries

Skanska Residential Development Nordic AB

Norway:

SINTEF

Norwegian Homebuilders Association

Denmark:

Danish Technological Institute, Timber

Danish Standard – Building

NørlundViskum Wood

Finland:

Finnish Forest Industry Federation,

Confederation of Finnish Construction

Industries RT, Wood Products Indust

Finnish House Manufacturers Association

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