natureplus: advantages of standards on information for builders, buyers, and manufacturers

Conference:
Innovation and Sustainability for the Construction Sector

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Preliminary note

- We *may* use clay, lime, straw for new and better architecture
- We *must* change paradigms if we want mankind to survive this century
- We *must* change the design to zero-carbon economy
- natureplus wants to help all construction work to become better in terms of sustainable choice of building materials
  – no matter whether revolutionary or conventional
Introducing natureplus

European sustainability label for building products

• Eco: production, raw materials
• Toxicology, indoor air quality
• Quality and durability

Ambition: for most advanced products in each sector based on public, fair, scientific criteria

• Label contains sustainability information
• Supports transmission to addressee/recipient
What is important - relevant?

- Raw materials: only renewable/recycled resources?
- What about health effects from natural ingredients?
- Acceptance of synthetic additives to improve technical properties?
- What, if “sympathic” products contain pollutants?
- Which is the right balance between different criteria e.g.
  - indoor air quality, human toxicology
  - saving resources, ecology of product chain?
  - occupational hazards in production or application?
  - recyclability after use?
answer: naturplus criteria development

• naturplus Criteria Commission: experts from all fields
• criteria sets, threshold values = best available knowledge
• offers the most advanced and reliable information when comparing sustainable properties
• naturplus criteria are an “open source”
• naturplus label concentrates this into a single glance.
natureplus: democratic?

- Democratic by participation of all societal groups
- Negotiated agreements about the terms of sustainability
- Stakeholders:
  - Building trade
  - Distributors
  - Building material industry
  - Scientific institutes
  - eco-NGO
  - Trade Unions
  - Consumer organisations
consumers need *relevant* information

- Problem of publicity: information overflow, exaggerations, and false claims about sustainability
- Consumers don’t believe manufacturer's declarations
  - High costs of information search consultancy
  - Risk of wrong decisions
  - Resignation on sustainability, disinterest

➤ *natureplus becomes brand for credibility and relevance for consumer’s benefit*
Public authorities need criteria

- Public is increasingly committed to sustainability
- legal obligation for procurement: reliable, scientific criteria
- Employees in procurement departments have
  - limited knowledge
  - lack of time for investigation
  - no budget for external advice
- GPP *needs* reliable information: natureplus label indicate credible sustainability advantages
  - natureplus becomes benchmark for GPP and subsidies
Manufacturers need to know

- Which topic is relevant for their product and progress in sustainability
- Which improvements will be rewarded
- Which properties of products meet the (coming) societal demands and generate turnover

- Efficient, target-oriented research and development
- Saved costs for market communication by credibility on sustainability benefits
economic benefits

Standards on information generate benefits, for
• Builders/professionals: architects, craftspeople, trade
• Buyers: private or (green) public procurement (GPP)
• Manufacturers
  – R & D direction and efforts: what to develop?
  – Communication: how to convince the market?

☑ natureplus label is not only for ecology
  – it is an economic advantage
Global aspect: welfare economy

Not only individual, but societal benefits:

- Economists: "reduction of transaction costs“:
  - Lowering the work load and costs of information
  - higher efficiency in the market,
- sustainable products become cheaper/more competitive
- better market spread of sustainable products
- reduction of inefficient legal measures
  - Society benefits from savings by standards
Thanks to our partners ANAB and ICEA

Thank you for your attention

More information: