

For a Europe where a high quality living
in a sustainable built environment
is the common standard praxis.

A Collective Initiative for a New Culture of Built Environment in Europe

Making the built environment sustainable

The building sector is a cornerstone of the Europe2020 strategy, of the EU climate protection programme and of the flagship initiative for a resource efficient Europe. Most of us spend a majority of our lifetime inside buildings. Therefore, ensuring a sustainable built environment is of high importance all over Europe. However, this is currently not the case: The plethora and mismatch of building regulations at regional, national and EU-level leads to considerable administrative burdens, confusion among the actors and to a very fragmented sustainable construction market. There are more than 80 building assessment systems in Europe. A comparison of building assessment results is nearly impossible and the application of building assessment systems is limited.

CESBA: initiative for a sustainable built environment in Europe

A harmonization of building assessment systems is desirable in order to make the quality of the built environment comparable, to improve the control of the quality of buildings and to eliminate export burdens. Actors from transnational EU-projects have understood this problem and in 2011, they started the CESBA-Initiative. CESBA stands for *Common European Sustainable Building Assessment* and is a collective European bottom-up-initiative that facilitates tools, experiences and know-how on a harmonized, holistic building assessment. Since Europe consists of a mélange of different building cultures, a harmonized building assessment system has to consider regional needs and circumstances. CESBA serves as a framework that allows for this regional diversity.

The goals of CESBA

1. Creation of a collective, holistic approach towards a European building assessment through harmonized indicators
2. Support of initiatives for user friendly incentive systems, regulations and laws on regional, national and European level
3. Dissemination of CESBA through approved processes like certifications, trainings, and services
4. Certifications harmonized by CESBA reach a high number of constructions in Europe.

The CESBA circle conveys the concept of CESBA: harmonized indicators are the heart of the initiative; trainings and services help with the application of those indicators during the whole building life cycle. CESBA is in dialogue with the European society.



CESBA: Holistic approach and harmonized indicators in dialogue with the European society

The nine principles of CESBA

CESBA is based on the following nine principles:

1. The main focus is laid on the users of buildings.
2. The assessment covers all aspects of sustainability.
3. A regional contextualization of CESBA-indicators is possible all over Europe.
4. A Europe-wide comparability of CESBA-indicators is possible.
5. CESBA follows a mass-oriented approach.
6. Tools and services offered by CESBA are simple to use.
7. CESBA follows an open-source approach.
8. CESBA is a co-creation of many actors from various European regions.
9. CESBA is a fully transparent initiative.



The user first! – This is the maxim of CESBA

CESBA concerns us all!

The target group of CESBA involves a large group of actors. It encompasses end-users of buildings, architects and designers, SMEs and craftsmen in the building sector, builders, public administration, policy makers, energy institutes, universities, research centres, and all the others who are experts of a sustainable building culture.

CESBA-Wiki: knowledge hub on harmonized building assessment in Europe

The open-source platform wiki.cesba.eu collects knowledge on sustainable building assessment in Europe and serves as a base for the dissemination of the CESBA philosophy, the CESBA-indicators, of best-practice-examples, services and training materials. The CESBA-Wiki enables experts from all over Europe to exchange knowledge on sustainable building assessment. Everybody who is interested will be able to assemble information material and tools for their specific building project using the CESBA Wiki. The CESBA Wiki is a multi-lingual platform and thus promotes the transnational transfer of knowledge.

CESBA – what has happened so far

During a conference in Brussels in 2011, actors from different EU-project first raised the problem of various building assessment systems. The term „CESBA“ was initially defined in June 2012. The 1st CESBA conference took place in October 2012 in Brussels, where actors from the EU-projects IRH-Med, CONSTRUCTION21, ENERBUILD, OpenHOUSE and SuPerBUILDINGS met in order to exchange their ideas. In October 2013, more than 100 actors from 11 European countries met in Vorarlberg, Austria, for the 2nd CESBA conference (CESBA-SPRINT-Workshop) and elaborated the CESBA guide.

CESBA – the next steps

In 2014, the CESBA guide will be presented at the European commission in Brussels. The CESBA initiative will be introduced at several European events. Within the scope of CESBA-SPRINT-Workshops, further actors will be included in the development of CESBA. The CESBA Wiki will be expanded to an active platform and the structure of this young, European bottom-up initiative will be strengthened.

Contact

Network Enterprise Alps (NENA)
DI Mag (FH) Markus Berchtold-Domig
Phone: +43-(0)664-3833792
E-mail: markus.berchtold@nena-network.eu