



BUILDINGS & BUILDING MATERIALS

Energy efficiency buildings PPP lauched

A €1 billion initiative to encourage environmental innovation in the construction sector was launched this month following a meeting between EU Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potočnik and representatives of the construction sector. A joint statement affirming an agreement to move ahead with a public private partnership (PPP) for Energy efficient Buildings (EeB) was made, which aims to benefit the construction sector at large. The industry accounts for more than 10% of the EU's GDP and employs 32 million people. Of the 2.7 million construction enterprises in the EU, 95% are SMEs.

The PPP Energy efficient Buildings (EeB) will promote green technologies and the development of energy efficient systems and materials in new and renovated buildings. This is significant as the energy consumption of houses and buildings, taking into account the whole life cycle, is responsible for 40% of total EU energy consumption and is the main contributor to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Reducing energy consumption during the whole life-cycle of the buildings is therefore seen as an effective action against climate change and will also contribute to decreasing the EU's energy import dependence.

The PPP EeB will achieve this by encouraging research on key technologies and a construction industry focus on energy-efficient processes, products and services. The idea is to transform the challenge of achieving a 20% reduction in energy consumption by 2020 into a business opportunity. Specific attention will be given to the development and integration of design and simulation tools, new materials and building systems that aim to achieve energy efficiency. The Commission should launch cross-thematic calls for research proposals from the FP7 thematic areas Nanotechnologies, Materials and Production technologies, Environment, Energy and ICT in July 2009 with deadlines at the turn of the year. This should allow the first projects under the PPP to start in spring of 2010.

The programme will be financed jointly by industry and the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7).