

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT OF BUILDINGS MOVES TO THE NEXT LEVEL

CEMBUREAU members successfully pilot Level(s), the European Commission's building assessment framework

Brussels, 16 October 2019 - Three member-companies of CEMBUREAU, the European Cement Association, have successfully completed a pilot test of the European Commission's new building assessment framework, Level(s).

Level(s) is a voluntary building assessment framework covering six broad areas: greenhouse-gas emissions, resource use, water use, healthy and comfortable spaces, resilience to climate change, and life-cycle cost.

The buildings tested by CEMBUREAU's members were a sustainable single-family housing development in Waterford, UK, by CRH; a social housing development in Saint-Nazaire, France, by LafargeHolcim; and the new HeidelbergCement headquarters in Heidelberg, Germany.

The piloting experience has demonstrated the strengths of Level(s), in that it is a transparent and fair system based on real life-cycle analysis (LCA), relying on existing standards such as those developed by CEN/TC 350. It can therefore be a powerful tool for optimising the whole life sustainability performance of buildings.

The testers had some concrete proposals for improvement of the framework: for example, on providing greater encouragement and guidance to users of Level(s) to assess carbonation of concrete (a property whereby CO₂ from the air is absorbed by concrete during and after its life) as well as the contribution of thermal mass (a property whereby heavyweight materials absorb and release heat) to energy efficiency and comfort. The testers also made specific recommendations about the simplification and usability of the framework.

Vagner Maringolo, Sustainable Construction Manager at CEMBUREAU said: "Level(s) fits perfectly with our philosophy that the right way to assess the sustainability of construction is at the level of the construction work, and over the whole life-cycle. We look forward to continuing to support the European Commission in the roll-out of Level(s)."

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