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SBS CALLS FOR A FAVOURABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF BUILDING INFORMATION MODELLING (BIM) WITHIN THE EU STANDARDISATION SYSTEM

Background information

On 18 December 2013, CEN Technical Board (BT) took the decision to create a CEN/BT/WG 215 'Building Information Modelling (BIM)'. After one year, the participants of the CEN/BT/WG 215 agreed by unanimous consensus on all the elements requested by CEN/BT. The consensus in the group has reflected the importance of 'Building Information Modelling' (BIM) for the participating countries and the need for European standardisation in this area, which led to the creation of a new Technical Committee, CEN/TC 442 'Building Information Modelling'.

The scope of CEN/TC 442 is standardisation in the field of structured semantic life-cycle information for the built environment. The TC will then develop a structured set of standards, specifications and reports which specify methodologies to define, describe, exchange, monitor, record and securely handle asset data, semantics and processes with links to geospatial and other external data.

The introduction of BIM is seen and widely recognised as a solution to the management of the information during the design, construction and operational phases of the asset lifecycle of a building. Ideally, with a BIM information-based construction process, loss of information between processes and/or stages can be eliminated (or, at least, strongly reduced) together with capital and operating cost of construction assets, construction output can be improved with regard to quality, reductions in defects and resource efficiency of construction products and materials while supporting in improving team working and collaboration.

General remarks

The development of BIM is advancing rapidly and requires the application of common standards to ensure future compatibility of data exchange and use. SBS' involvement in CEN/TC 442 is mainly oriented to avoid the development of standards only applicable by a small part of the market or driven by the commercial interests of a limited number of players and to stress on the needs and expectations of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in how to design a European standardised approach to BIM.

T: +32.2.285.07.15

www.sbs-sme.eu

B-1040 Brussels, Rue Jacques de Lalaingstraat 4

Aisbl n°: 546.585.694

Transparency register N°: 653009713663-08

Specific remarks

In light of the general context and of the overall objective, SBS puts forward certain concrete and specific remarks that will drive SBS work in this field and the work of the future SBS expert in CEN TC 442.

- Provide a different picture with regard to the use of BIM tools. Indeed, it is currently shared the impression that the use of digital models can be only applied to construction works of exceptional nature. It is by showing that the use of these tools can be extended also to “traditional” buildings and renovation works that craft businesses and SMEs will get an interest and start to concretely step towards this innovative process.
- Develop BIM tools that can be adapted to the building renovation market. The image of the digital model tools is often associated with new buildings. A widespread use of digital model tools can only take place if these can be applicable to existing buildings, which constitute the main business segment of construction craftsmen and micro-enterprises.
- Develop well-designed tools for construction SMEs. The digital model tools are often too complex and do not reflect the needs of small construction enterprises. A successful spreading of the use of digital models is strictly connected to simplification of existing tools and training of final users.
- Ensure that the use of digital model tools will not constitute ground for exclusion of craftsmen and SMEs. Indeed, many building craft businesses are also manufacturers of those products that they pose, notably in the wood, metal or even stone industry. A key to the development of digital model tools lies in the availability of digitally formatted products’ characteristics and performances, which must be compatible with software tools. The cost of such "digitization" of products must be bearable by SMEs, which otherwise risk to be excluded by this process.
- Ensure that digital model tools will not be prescriptive for particular products. It is essential that the digital model tools will not be prescriptive in terms of product performance, leaving the choice to the companies to offer different products depending on market needs. The digital model tools could well give an idea about equivalent products and/or the equivalence of performance of different products.
- Provide SMEs with economically accessible digital model tools. The costs of digital model tools should be bearable for craft enterprises, both in terms of the price itself of the tool and in terms of training.
- Guarantee that the development of digital model tools will reflect the needs of the sector in terms of contents, technology and interoperability before launching actions to further promote the use of these tools.
- Investigate about the position of insurance providers with regard to the use of digital model tools. The use of digital model tools might reflect a significant change in relation to sharing of responsibilities. It is



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essential to focus the attention on all stakeholders in the construction sector to identify the consequences of such changes in terms of responsibilities and guarantees.

NOTE: Small Business Standards (SBS) is a European non-profit association (aisbl) established with the support of the European Commission to represent European SMEs in the standard making process at European and international levels. The SBS goal is to represent and defend SME interests in the standardisation process at European and international level. Moreover, it aims at raising SME awareness about the benefits of standards and at encouraging them to get involved in the standardisation process.

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