

EBC position on Digital Building Logbooks and Building Renovation Passports

About EBC

Established in 1990, the European Builders Confederation (EBC) is a European professional organisation representing national construction employer associations of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. EBC is a member and partner of SMEunited, the European association of SMEs, and Small Business Standards (SBS), the European association representing SMEs in standardisation.

The construction sector is of vital importance to the European economy. With 3.4 million enterprises and a total direct workforce of 13 million (EU-27)¹, the construction sector contributes at around 9% to the GDP of the European Union. 99.9% of the European construction sector is composed of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

General remarks

Energy use in the buildings sector (residential and commercial) is responsible for about 40% of final energy consumption and 36% of CO₂ emissions in the EU. Hence, improvements with regard to energy efficiency have a big potential to reduce the energy consumption and to contribute to the climate and environmental challenges the EU is facing.

Although it is difficult to make proper assessments, due to a lack of consistent and accurate data on the features of the existing buildings as well as on renovation rates and deepness, estimations suggest that about 97% of the buildings in the EU are energy inefficient². About 75% to 85% of these will still be in use in 30 years, making their upgrading a necessity to reach a decarbonised building stock by 2050³. However, with renovation rates currently appraised between 0.5% and 2.5% per year, the EU appears to have little chance to reach its 2050 goal⁴.

A central problem is that building owners often lack knowledge, information and assistance on building renovation possibilities. One valuable option to help with this challenge is the Digital Building Logbook, referring to a unique digital document that allows the storage of all relevant information related to a specific building, thus enabling the property owner and other authorised parties to follow the buildings'

¹ Eurostat (2020). National accounts employment data by industry. Retrieved from

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/product?code=nama_10_a64_e

² BPIE (n.d.). 97% of buildings in the EU need to be upgraded. Retrieved from http://bpie.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/State-of-the-building-stock-briefing_Dic6.pdf

³ ADENE and VEA (2018). The logbook data quest: Setting up indicators and other requirements for a renovation passport. Retrieved from <https://ibroad-project.eu/news/the-logbook-data-quest/>.

⁴ European Parliament (2016). Boosting Building Renovation: What potential and value for Europe? Retrieved from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/587326/IPOL_STU\(2016\)587326_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/587326/IPOL_STU(2016)587326_EN.pdf)

long-term evolution. Another valuable option to tackle the challenge and to help drive renovations of single-family houses and condominiums are Building Renovation Passports. Building Renovation Passports refer to a document that contains a customised and systematic guidance on how to renovate a specific building, often complemented by information on funding and financing possibilities as well as technical assistance and goes hand in hand with a Digital Building Logbook.

Based upon this, EBC supports Digital Building Logbooks and Building Renovation Passports as interesting tools to improve knowledge about the EU building stock, to enhance construction services and to increase renovation rates.

Specific EBC proposals on Digital Building Logbooks

Digital Building Logbooks can be a valuable tool, because they allow to follow the long-term evolution of each house by storing all data on the building and documents related to the building at a central place. This can positively influence owners' knowledge and professionals' services, e.g. when renovating or maintaining equipment in the house. However, storing information online, and especially critical data, always implies risks in terms of unauthorised access. In addition, a clear framework concerning questions on data ownership and data liability responsibilities needs to exist before recommendations for a Digital Building Logbook or a large-scale rollout are proposed. Therefore, EBC recommends the following points with regard to a Digital Building Logbook:

- Undertake a study in all EU-27 Member States focusing on current data ownership, access rights to the data, and responsibilities regarding data liability as a priority.
- Make sure that Digital Building Logbooks take existing initiatives at the national and regional level into account in order to avoid overlaps and additional administrative burdens.
- Ensure that all available technical data about the building (e.g. building characteristics, design plans, equipment descriptions and design) is available in the logbook.
- Use the Digital Building Logbook to pool as much information as possible, without making each information a requirement for the development of the logbook, e.g. single-family houses will most likely not have a BIM model.
- Host the data in a secure environment, provided by a Public Authority in the respective Member State, and guarantee the server stands in the European Union.
- Based on feasibility, involve functionalities in the logbook that inform and update the owner about the status of the building and its components, e.g. notifications on consumption, predictive maintenance alerts.
- Public authorities and building professionals should have limited and/or project-based access to a Digital Building Logbook upon agreement from the owner, because the data available can improve their advice and service.
- Promote and support the digital transformation of the construction sector and specifically its SMEs through European funding programs.
- Develop trainings open to all qualified professionals, including construction SMEs, which school them in the proper creation of Digital Building Logbooks.
- Ensure that the Digital Building Logbook is affordable for building owners, e.g. through specific funding to boost this instrument.

Specific EBC proposals on Building Renovation Passports

While Building Renovation Passports may vary in form and information, they all feature a long-term and systematic renovation roadmap for a specific building that outlines relevant measures and renovations improving the buildings' energy performance. Additionally, Building Renovation Passports often include technical and financial advice, which helps to address the building owners' lack of awareness, improve his/her information basis further, and support the decision-making process. Based on the considerable number of Building Renovation Passports and related initiatives already in place, which differ e.g. with regard to information deepness, EBC would like to highlight the following important points for a possible EU initiative on Building Renovation Passports:

- Ensure that Building Renovation Passports take existing initiatives at the national and regional level into account in order to avoid overlaps and additional administrative burdens.
- Include information on funding and financing opportunities that are specific to the building examined.
- In conjunction with the roll-out of Building Renovation Passports, develop one-stop-shops at the local and regional level that accompany the building owner in his/her renovation journey, including technical assistance from skilled staff.
- Make sure Building Renovation Passports factor in regional cost differences by providing price frames rather than fixed prices, in order to avoid varying information that may lead the building owner to shy away from investment.
- Encourage training schemes accessible to all qualified professionals, including construction SMEs, which teach about the proper steps to develop a Building Renovation Passport and ensure its high quality.
- Ensure that the Building Renovation Passport comes at an affordable cost for building owners and consider appropriate funding to boost this instrument.