

# W100 - Environmental Assessment of Buildings

(Our thanks to Coordinator Nils Larsson for compiling this comprehensive report which he has circulated as draft minutes to the Commission Members.)

The Meeting opened on 10th June 1998 with mutual introductions on the part of the 20 or so participants who also took the opportunity to indicate what they actually hoped to get out of their involvement.

The Coordinator provided a brief history of TG8 which was the Commission's predecessor and outlined a plan of action for the coming two years.

## Discussion on Plans

The plan defined the main objective as being the development of information on the implementation of performance assessment systems, and the preparation of a substantive report on this subject by the year 2000. The Commission will be chaired by Nils Larsson until mid-2000 and two regional chairs will also take lead roles: Siew Eang Lee for Asia and Chiel Boonstra for Europe.

An informal discussion then ensued, from which the following main points emerged:

- o Jaap Kortman suggested that even though the stated purpose of W100 did not include an analysis of the structure and function of various assessment tools, his hope was that the WC could provide a forum to discuss various tools in depth, since there were no other groups doing this.
- o Sebastian Moffatt suggested that the work of IEA Annex 31 could answer some of these concerns. Annex 31 has been producing a wide range of information on the energy implications of environmental performance assessment systems, primarily focusing on the theoretical and design aspects of such systems. One of the products of the Annex will be a book on existing models for the environmental assessment of buildings. Many tools will be covered and discussion will be included of both scope and structure. When IEA ceases its activity, the work will be "orphaned" unless some person or group volunteers to maintain and update it. W100 could take over responsibility for the work of Annex 31 when this group closes down in November 1998.
- o Wayne Trusty warned against duplicating work of RILEM and ISO.

There was a general discussion about the role of W100.

It was agreed that duplication and overlap with the work of other groups should be minimized. In this regard, it would appear that the initial assumption, to focus on implementation of systems and not their design, was a correct choice. Nevertheless, since most members were unfamiliar with the work of Annex 31, it was felt that the work of the Annex should be made available for review as soon as possible, so that W100 members could determine if there was a need to supplement it in the future.

Stephen Curwell suggested that a paper recently written by Ray Cole for Building Research and Information, could provide a useful starting point for W100. He also suggested that W100 could extend the work of current groups who are looking at environmental assessment tools by broadening the scope to review sustainable development tools. This point led to a general discussion on sustainable development and how it relates to environmental performance assessment. The conclusion was that Sustainable Development work relates mainly to urban scale activities, and that those wishing to work at this level should discuss the formation of a Task Group to do so. This might link into the work of the new Commission W101 which is dealing with urban issues.

## The Goal

The overall goal of W100 was agreed to comprise the following components:

To work towards a situation where environmental performance assessment (EPA) systems are used for all significant building projects.

This will be achieved through a work programme that will develop an understanding of the

implementation of EPA systems and that will identify factors related to the successes and failures of implementation.

The mode of operation of W100 was also discussed. Nils Larsson suggested that it would be unwise to establish a work programme that was so ambitious as to cause "burn-out" on the part of members. He also proposed that meetings be planned to coincide with major conferences related to the subject area.

## **The Main Tasks**

The discussion led to a review and confirmation of the main tasks facing W100. These include:

### **A. Characterization and analysis of the implementation of environmental performance assessment (EPA) systems**

- Review Annex 31 work for completeness; identify gaps that need further work
- Characterize the structure, scope and delivery process of various EPA systems (as needed to supplement Annex 31 work). If not available through Annex 31, develop this in the form of a database
- Assess regional cultural and technical factors that appear to affect the implementation of EPA systems
- Assess the role of EPA systems in causing manufacturers and other industry players to modify their products or services
- Assess the type of markets and players that are most receptive to EPA systems
- Assess marketing approaches used by various EPA systems and their relative success
- Identify skills and human resource requirements identified in various EPA systems
- Characterize, in an objective way, the technical and market performance of various EPA systems
- Identify delivery costs and cost-benefits
- Characterize various implementation strategies and assess their success
- Identify the types of system parameters that appear to be the most/least relevant
- Obtain user feedback directly from system users

### **B. Communications**

- It was agreed to try to reach industry audiences by working with existing industry publications, rather than trying to create its own
- It was also agreed that a listserv should be established
- A website may be established in the future

### **C. Products**

- A database on the characteristics of environmental performance assessment systems, if one is needed to supplement Annex 31 work
- Interim reports on the topics outlined in (A) above, and
- A major report summarizing the work of the group, by mid-2000

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 25 October 1998 in Vancouver, Canada, the day before the Green Building Challenge '98 Conference.