

# **natureplus: advantages of standards on information for builders, buyers, and manufacturers**

**Conference:**

**Innovation and Sustainability for the Construction Sector**

**30/05/2014 Bologna**

# Preliminary note



- We *may* use clay, lime, straw for new and better architecture
- We *must* change paradigms if we want mankind to survive this century
- We *must* change the design to zero-carbon economy
- natureplus wants to help all construction work to become better in terms of sustainable choice of building materials
  - no matter whether revolutionary or conventional

# Introducing natureplus



European sustainability label for building products

- Eco: production, raw materials
- Toxicology, indoor air quality
- Quality and durability



Ambition: for most advanced products in each sector based on public, fair, scientific criteria

- Label contains sustainability information
- Supports transmission to addressee/recipient

# What is important - relevant?



- Raw materials: only renewable/recycled resources?
- What about health effects from natural ingredients?
- Acceptance of synthetic additives to improve technical properties?
- What, if “sympathic” products contain pollutants?
- Which is the right *balance* between different criteria e.g.
  - indoor air quality, human toxicology
  - saving resources, ecology of product chain?
  - occupational hazards in production or application?
  - recyclability after use?



# answer: naturplus criteria development



- natureplus Criteria Commission: experts from all fields
- criteria sets, threshold values  
= best available knowledge
- offers the most advanced and reliable information  
when comparing sustainable properties
- natureplus criteria are an “open source”
- natureplus label concentrates this into a single glance.

# natureplus: democratic?



- Democratic by participation of all societal groups
- Negotiated agreements about the terms of sustainability
- Stakeholders:
  - Building trade
  - Distributors
  - Building material industry
  - Scientific institutes
  - eco-NGO
  - Trade Unions
  - Consumer organisations



# consumers need *relevant* information



- Problem of publicity: information overflow, exaggerations, and false claims about sustainability
- Consumers don't believe manufacturer's declarations
  - High costs of information search consultancy
  - Risk of wrong decisions
  - Resignation on sustainability, disinterest
- natureplus becomes brand for credibility and relevance for consumer's benefit

# Public authorities need criteria



- Public is increasingly committed to sustainability
- legal obligation for procurement: reliable, scientific criteria
- Employees in procurement departments have
  - limited knowledge
  - lack of time for investigation
  - no budget for external advice
- GPP *needs* reliable information:  
natureplus label indicate credible sustainability advantages
- natureplus becomes benchmark for GPP and subsidies

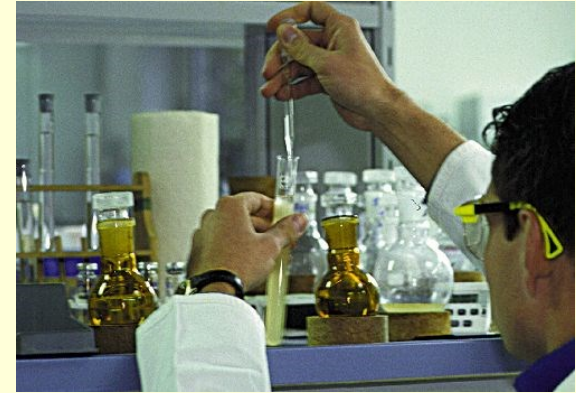




# manufacturers need lighthousing



- Manufacturers need to know
  - Which topic is relevant for their product and progress in sustainability
  - which improvements will be rewarded
  - which properties of products meet the (coming) societal demands and generate turnover
- Efficient, target-oriented research and development
- - and saved costs for market communication by credibility on sustainability benefits



Standards on information generate benefits, for

- Builders/professionals: architects, craftspeople, trade
  - Buyers: private or (green) public procurement (GPP)
  - Manufacturers
    - R & D direction and efforts: what to develop?
    - Communication: how to convince the market?
- natureplus label is not only for ecology
- it is an economic advantage

# Global aspect: welfare economy



Not only individual, but societal benefits:

- Economists: "reduction of transaction costs":
  - Lowering the work load and costs of information
  - higher efficiency in the market,
- sustainable products become cheaper/more competitive
- better market spread of sustainable products
- reduction of inefficient legal measures
- Society benefits from savings by standards

Thanks to our partners ANAB and ICEA

Thank you for your attention

More information:

