

Summary of International Survey on Effective GHG Mitigation Actions in the Built Environment

There is general agreement about the urgent need to reduce the emission of greenhouses gases (GHG) in order to slow the pace of climate change. COP21 agreed on a goal of 2°C maximum increase in global temperature, with an aspirational goal of 1.5°C. Many national and regional governments, and also major NGOs, have developed general strategies aimed at achieving these goals, with EU governments and IEA being at the forefront. Existing initiatives of this type tend inevitably to be broad and general.

An unresolved issue is how to turn strategies into tactics, specific policies and programs in individual regions and locations, especially outside EU countries. This reflects the fact that there is broad variation in geographic, climatic, as well as development status, as well as economic status and professional competencies in various locations. When we add the great variation in the performance of the existing building stock and performance requirements (and enforcement) for new buildings, it will be seen that there is a major need for a better understanding of the relative effectiveness of GHG-reduction action that may be launched in specific locations.

The proponents of this project take the view that an international survey of individuals in major global regions who are active in the built environment sector will be valuable in eliciting a bottom-up view of effective actions, by individuals who are very familiar with their local or regional conditions, to complement current broad and top-down efforts.

In late October 2015, the International Initiative for a Sustainable Built Environment (iiSBE, www.iisbe.org) prepared a pilot survey of people in its network to obtain a ground-level view of what might be the most effective actions within the built environment sector to control climate change, as an informal contribution to COP21. The pilot survey was carried out in an Excel format, and responses were analyzed for 120 responses, with very good results.

Three other international organizations, the *International Council for Research and Innovation in Building and Construction (CIB)*, www.cibworld.nl), UN Environment (www.unenvironment.org) and the *International Federation of Consulting Engineers*, (FIDIC) www.fidic.org, have now joined the project so that we can carry out a much larger international survey. The University of Malta has agreed to carry out analysis of the results.



A draft version of the international survey was prepared, and the content was examined in a series of workshops held in conjunction with several research-oriented conferences that are part of an on-going series operated by the four partners since 2000. The series is called the Sustainable Built Environment (SBE) series (see www.sbe-series.org). The survey feedback workshops were held at SBE16 events in Torino, Hamburg, Malta and Utrecht during 2016, and valuable suggestions influenced the final content of the survey. Members of the *Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction* (Global ABC), of which iiSBE is a member may support us in making the project known in many countries represented by their members.

A large response (>5,000) is required for the subsequent analysis to result in identification of actions considered to be effective to various degrees at general, urban and building-scale levels, in specific regions, and taking into account the type and experience of respondent. The survey is designed so that mitigation actions selected by individuals are weighted according to their perceived effectiveness.

The target group of respondents is broad, reflecting the nature of the industry and also the wide range of regions to be included.

A web-based survey platform has been developed under the guidance of Dr. Ruben Paul Borg at the University of Malta. The work is being led by iiSBE, in close consultation with the partners and a group of advisors. We plan to publicly launch the survey during the Spring of 2019, in order to have the analysis and report released in early 2020.

Nils Larsson
Executive Director, iiSBE
larsson@iisbe.org

