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Promoting Energy efficiency to Local Organisations
through dissemination Partnerships in Europe
Best Actions for Collaboration in Countries
for a High efficient Use of energy in Structural funds

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Environmental standards for large housing construction - Vienna - Austria

The "Viennese Model": increasing sustainability and quality standards in the housing sector by competition on public subsidies.

Target Groups	Sector	Field
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local authority - Regional authorities - Domestic consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buildings (including municipal properties) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RES - DSM - Monitoring & Management

ANALYSIS

FRAMEWORK OF THE VIENNESE MODEL

Traditionally, the housing sector is a strong policy field in Austria, and especially in Vienna. Hence, public funding of the social housing sector (applied to new construction and renovation) is a key issue of state and federal social policy. Actually every year new housing projects comprising about 6.000 apartments – that amounts to 90% of annual Viennese construction volume of new apartments – are granted public subsidies.

From 1995 on the city of Vienna adopted a new way of granting subsidies to the social housing sector. Every developer of social housing projects has to take part in quality competitions to obtain public subsidies. This policy framework challenged a structural revolution in the social housing sector and a dramatic raise of project qualities. Principle goal was to raise environmental standards, living conditions and economical efficiency in construction of high volume, multi storey residential buildings.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The jury and the expert group, holding planners and scientific experts, representatives of the housing sector and key actors of the administration, evaluate all residential building projects that rely on public subsidies and select best projects to be realized. The weight of environmental criteria contributes by 1/3 to the choice. There are assessment fields each holding 4 major assessment categories and more than 50 assessment criteria, namely

PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE

- quality of the development
- functionality, living and working conditions
- architecture, urban design

ECONOMY

- construction costs
- costs for users
- relation of costs to quality
- consumer-friendly contracts

ECOLOGY

- Construction and technical facilities: energy use, energy supply, water/waste water, facility management concepts
- Building ecology, construction materials, physical characteristics and qualities of materials (thermal comfort, ventilation etc.)
- Indoor quality, sunlight exposition, lighting, human toxics
- Urban ecology (ecosystems approach), landscape architecture, open and green spaces

COST AND BENEFITS

Since end of 1995 more than 170 projects were assessed in large scale competitions, more than 250 projects by the expert group, all together more than 55.000 apartment units were assessed. Thereof projects totalling more than 25.000 apartments were recommended to be realised and granted public subsidies. The projects are actually under construction or in state of final planning. Overall financing volume of the recommended projects yields to approximately 3 billion Euro.

General outcomes of the Viennese model are:

- Large scale competitions set up and established new common standards for all of the Viennese residential building sector
- Environmental quality standards of new buildings have risen significantly
- Competition evolved a dynamic increase of quality: for being positively assessed today projects have to match comparatively higher quality standards than projects launched a year ago
- Total construction costs lowered by more than 10 % despite of better environmental standards and improved planning and architectural qualities
- Extra costs for ecological measures amount to EUR 22 to 110 per m² net area (where average net construction costs amount to approximately EUR 1.000 to 1.150 per m²)
- Total extra investments for ecologically sound measures from 1996 until now sum up to more than 180 million Euro
- Regional innovation potentials got a remarkable kick-off, especially concerning the promotion of higher planning standards, and new construction and environment technologies.

PARTNERSHIP

Target group are the housing sector and developers, hence in the first place investors were forced to think about quality and not architects and planners

Quality driving mechanism is developers' competition for public subsidies by

- a) Direct competition on large scale development areas, where best of competing projects are selected by an interdisciplinary jury (approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the annual construction volume), and
- b) Relative competition by assessment of single projects by an expert group equivalent to the jury (appr. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the construction volume)

RECOMMENDATIONS

THE MAIN ACTION FOR THE FUTURE: RETROFITTING

In the medium-term perspective the emphasis of house building is likely to shift more and more from construction of new residential houses to retrofitting of what exists already. Since about two years ecological criteria are considered more and more when retrofitting projects are tackled.

MOST IMPORTANT ARE THE STRUCTURAL INNOVATIONS

This is where the results of the so-called Viennese Way are getting completed: Even more important and more sustainable than the gratifying improvements of the planning and environmental standards are the structural innovations contributed by the Vienna Model:

- Quality is generated by intelligence: a high planning and environmental quality is the result of integrative project development and planning.
- The present development gives impulses to sustainable progress of the economy in the Vienna region
- An innovative building and housing trade is a major factor of modernization of the regional economy
- House-building subsidization tomorrow: away from mass promotion, replacing it by quality promotion and structure improvement
- On the Viennese way of quality competitions a networking of knowledge, expertise, economic power and social responsibility is taking place at several levels
- New developments and competences need to be communicated broadly so that they can become a natural component of the philosophy in the field of housing.

TO KNOW MORE

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USEFUL INFORMATION

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