

Level(s) Newsletter

13 November 2020



Contents

- Level(s) in the spotlight
- Policy Insights
- The Lindblom Interview
- Meanwhile in...
- Star Tweet
- Level(s) takes the floor
- What's your level?

Level(s) in the spotlight

Level(s) website gets a new look

Following the launch of the Level(s) framework in mid-October, the Level(s) website has been revamped, with all the information and materials now being accessible from the new website landing page.

In welcoming the first appearance of the [new-look site](#), Kestutis Sadauskas (Director for ENV.B – Circular Economy and Green Growth at the European Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment) said "It has been fantastic to witness the enthusiasm of the building sector, with companies and

authorities from start to end of the building chain, in testing and promoting Level(s) as a reliable, future-proofed framework. It bodes well for a sustainable future in the building sector, and for the adoption of Level(s) across Europe now that the final version of the framework has been launched”.

In one click you will now be able to find and access all the technical manuals which describe how to work with Level(s) and its indicators.

In addition, some interesting new resources, from translated e-flyers to specimen specialised articles, have also been made available for you to explore. You can find them under the [Resources tab](#).

Level(s) Stakeholder Briefings

On 19th October, business leaders and policymakers who had previously interacted with the Level(s) project in the testing phase discussed their experience of the framework.

The participants heard from Josefina Lindblom (DG Environment, European Commission), Anna Åkesson (Skanska), Jean-Pierre Pigeolet (Knauf Insulation) and Philippa Gill (Evora).

The ease with which Level(s) could be used quickly became apparent, with Anna highlighting its use as a common language for discussing circularity, especially as it is important to be able to signpost the benefits of sustainable building and how to measure their performance. Jean-Pierre praised the flexibility of Level(s) when describing how his company used the framework to complement the DGNB private guidelines and assess their building project with the help of the Level(s) indicators. Level(s) is voluntary and can be used partially or fully, which makes it attractive to construction firms.

Greener buildings will also be beneficial for investors. Philippa discussed the pressure on investors to maintain a green reputation and explained that the high level of expertise and technical knowledge that produced Level(s) is reassuring for portfolio managers. Josefina added that all stakeholders involved (planners, investors, contractors, and construction) benefit from a pan-European building framework.

The panel noted that, while Level(s) was only launched in mid-October, it has already received praise from stakeholders and will continue to grow.

Level(s): Bringing buildings into the circular economy

The purpose of the Circular Economy Stakeholder Conference was to present the Circular Economy Action Plan to stakeholders from across Europe, and together discuss the next steps in the transition to a circular economy.

On the 3rd November, Emmanuelle Maire, Head of Unit at DG ENV, chaired the 'Level(s): Bringing buildings into the circular economy' session. Following a brief introduction to Level(s) by Josefina Lindblom, Policy Officer at DG ENV, this session was an opportunity for building professionals to hear about the possibilities that Level(s) has to drive market transformation and policy development by listening to Philippa Gill, Director, Europe at EVORA Global, Roy Antik, Senior Vice President, International Policy Coordination at Stora Enso, and Kristina Einarsson, Environmental and Climate Policy Expert and Project manager at Boverket.

The discussion highlighted the necessity for the European building sector to use a common language, which would eventually create a green building marketplace. Philippa Gill stressed how her motivation to use Level(s) was the unique analysis of the full building's life cycle, the possibility to use it at every stage of the production, and its holistic approach. Roy Antik pointed out the added value of Level(s) in the way it allows users to develop their skills to future-proof buildings. Kristina Einarsson's view was that the EU framework is a leader for future national policies.

At the conclusion of the session, Josefina Lindblom announced that, from next year, the Commission will be launching new online projects to further help Level(s) users working with the framework.

In case you missed our session, or you just want to watch it again, the presentations, key highlights and the video recording of it will be available on the website of the [Circular Economy Stakeholder Conference](#) very soon.



Policy Insights

Europe's Green Deal: the Renovation Wave

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In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, plans are being laid for Europe's recovery. The demands are many, but one ambition stands out: to achieve the decarbonisation of Europe's economy as a central aspect of our adaptation to, and mitigation of, the climate crisis. So, the inclusion of the Renovation Wave in the European Commission's Green Deal is a much-welcomed initiative. What is the Renovation Wave? And how does it integrate with the Level(s) framework?

Read more by clicking the link below.



Permalink

[Main URL](#)

More

The Lindblom Interview

Pascal Eveillard, Saint-Gobain

Each month, Josefina Lindblom, DG ENV's lead on the Level(s) initiative and member of the Sustainable Production, Products and Consumption Unit, talks to someone who really understands Level(s) and the benefits of the framework for building professionals and occupants. This month she talked to Pascal Eveillard, Group Director, Sustainable Business Development at Saint-Gobain, the EU based building distribution, construction products, and innovative materials multinational



On this Level(s) newsletter issue, Josefina Lindblom (left) interviews Pascal Eveillard (right) from Saint-Gobain

Josefina: Pascal, you have personally been involved in Level(s) since the very beginning, indeed you had been urging the European Commission to come up with a harmonised set of indicators for sustainable buildings even before the development of Level(s). What has been your experience as a member of the Level(s) Steering Group?

Pascal: The experience has been very positive from the start. The inclusive approach with different types of stakeholders was needed for the challenging topic of developing a sustainability assessment framework for buildings that is able to work for all the different actors in the market. The iterative approach combined with a strong anchoring within the EU policy objectives make it a stable, meaningful and promising framework.

Josefina: Your organisation was also involved in hosting four Level(s) pilot projects in France, Italy, Finland and Spain. What was your experience of the pilot projects?

Pascal: The experiences were challenging and enriching. As all four projects were already completed, it was too late to influence the design and construction of the four buildings, but it did allow us to check the robustness of their design. We were also able to compare some of the Level(s) criteria with our own Saint-Gobain reference for sustainable buildings called the Multi-Comfort framework. We will strengthen its alignment with Level(s).

Josefina: Could you tell us about one of these projects in more detail?

Pascal: We decided to test Level(s) on our new headquarters in Paris. This iconic 38 storey building with a floor surface of 49000 m² has been awarded multiple certifications at their best levels (HQE, BREEAM, LEED, Effinergie+). Testing Level(s) on this project allowed us to compare the indicators in the framework with the requirements in the different labelling schemes and how compatible they were. The same consultants carried out the different

calculations and assessments: their feedback was used to deliver a detailed report on the experienced strengths and weaknesses of Level(s).

Josefina: How would you rate their implementation?

Pascal: Overall, the pilot projects have been an interesting experience and we learnt a lot. The experience gained on the pilot projects has definitely helped to improve the framework and the guidance to implement it. Yet the challenge remains to navigate between the implementation on individual buildings and the evolutions of the European policy for buildings in the short, medium and long term.

Josefina: What is your advice to the European Commission, what should be the next step now that Level(s) is launched?

Pascal: The first priority is to enlarge the understanding of Level(s) beyond the community of primary supporters and testers. Securing outreach to architects, designers and engineers will be essential to secure the objectives of “mainstreaming”.

The second priority, which supports the first one, is to integrate Level(s) in Public Procurement, in order to generate a positive dynamic on the market.

Finally, we expect a policy development, as Level(s) holds the key to the “beyond kWh/m²” regulatory questions. The indicators developed in Level(s) can indeed support essential evolutions of the EU policy framework. We hope that the preparation of a more comprehensive directive for buildings could be started soon, to at least cover the whole carbon life cycle of a buildings, beyond the operational phase.

Level(s) should target at first new buildings (this could be complemented by specific segments, e.g. commercial buildings) and major renovations, as described in the EPBD: major renovations usually follow the same design and construction path as new building constructions.

Being a flexible tool, Level(s) allows for **a gradual integration of the indicators**, building on a growing learning path. At a minimum, and going beyond the current focus on the operational energy, we suggest to start with the integration of Global Warming Potential and Indoor Air Quality indicators, alongside the Life-Cycle Assessment tool. Reflections should also focus on circular economy. The indoor environment quality dimension should be complemented by visual and acoustic comfort.

Josefina: What are the next steps for Level(s) in your organisation?

Pascal: In Saint-Gobain we will disseminate the final version of Level(s) now that it is out, generate knowledge and understanding about the rationale and the methodological approach, but also about the benefits, as part of our internal training programme (we run “sustainability talks” every six weeks, with a wide audience including management levels).

We will encourage its use amongst our building partners. And importantly, we will engage in public discussions to ensure smooth engagement by public authorities, notably those working with green public procurement.

As previously mentioned, we will also align the indicators in our own internal framework for sustainable buildings with those of Level(s).

Josefina: Is the world ready for Level(s)?

Pascal: I believe that the context is more favourable than ever to implement Level(s), in particular across the different policy initiatives in the Green Deal. Stakeholders in the market are asking more and more for increased sustainability in the built environment.

If Level(s) were a climb to the top of a mountain, I would say that we have the map, we’ve analysed the journey, done our basic training, and secured our basic materiel and food. We know we want to get there together. We have the motivation, and we want to aim high. But now it’s time for teams to get started. Experiencing Level(s) will make it real.

Meanwhile in...

Testing Level(s) on Stora Enso’s School Concept in Finland

Stora Enso has launched a concept for a modular wooden school building to overcome barriers and inspire customers and other value chain members to design, construct and maintain sustainable buildings from wood. A wooden school is a low carbon, renewable alternative that can help combat global warming and lower material manufacturing and processing emissions.

According to Roy Antink (Senior Vice President, International Policy Coordination at Stora Enso), “Level(s) has the potential to help mainstream

circular and low-carbon building. It can be the common language that aligns the value chain and drives life cycle thinking from early idea inception. What is more, it can provide for a tool that can be used by (sub)national governments to measure progress on key issues such as embodied carbon and resource use (circularity)”.

In 2018, Stora Enso tested Level(s) in the design stage of a modular wooden eco-school and multi-purpose facility of 5780 square metres. The testing examined how material choices are reflected in the environmental impact of a building’s life cycle. This analysis compared two alternatives: cross-laminated timber (CLT) and concrete-framed.

In addition, Stora Enso successfully piloted the commercial software and dataset One Click LCA to support its calculations.

The test contributed to a survey that was arranged by the Ministry of the Environment and Green Building Council Finland with the aim to investigate how robust and easily approachable the beta version of Level(s) was.

Because Level(s) represents the future of building construction, Roy Antink advises companies in the construction sector to “**consider the Level(s) framework as part of their product and innovation and management, regardless its current status as voluntary tool. Doing so will help business future proof products and assets”.**



Star Tweet

Star Tweet

This issue's Star Tweet is by the European Federation of the Precast Concrete Industry.



Bureau International du Béton Manufacturé (BIBM) is the European Federation of the Precast Concrete Industry. BIBM represents and defends the interests of the precast concrete industry at the European level.

Be sure to share your insights on the future of the built environment with the Level(s) community by using the #BuildCircular hashtag.

Level(s) takes the floor

Construction products – Fit for the future?

One of the greatest achievements of European integration is the Single Market and its free movement of goods. Thanks to harmonised European standards, the construction industry is able to sell its products everywhere in Europe. As the legal basis for marketing construction products, the Construction Products Regulation needs to keep up with constantly changing technology. In addition to creating a functioning Single Market for construction products while ensuring building structure safety, we need to overcome the standstill in standardisation. Greater attention should also be paid to subjects such as health, climate change mitigation, sustainability and the circular economy. The European Green Deal has already set out a number of goals.



Date

18/11/2020



Venue

Online



Register

cpr-conference.de/

Final meeting of the Interreg project Build2LC

The on-line meeting will count on high level presentations concerning Interreg Europe project results, the S3 Interregional Partnership, the European way of bringing buildings into the circular economy, as well as Technical Sessions related with New Financial Instruments; Professionalisation of the Construction Sector; New energy culture, citizens involvement and energy poverty; and Innovation. The BUILD2LC Boosting Low Carbon Innovative Building Rehabilitation in European Regions project, aims at increasing the energy rehabilitation of buildings in Europe, reducing energy consumption and enhancing policies which favour the creation of a market for specialised companies in this sector.



Date

03/12/2020



Venue

Online



Register

www.interregeurope.eu/build2lc/events/ev...

What's your level?

Renovation Wave Quiz

Do you think you know the Renovation Wave inside out? Take our quiz to find out (1 point per correct answer).

Q1. Which of these actions is not part of the main priorities of the Renovation Wave?

- Decarbonisation of heating and cooling
- Renovation of public buildings
- More effective local recycling initiatives

Q2. The Renovation Wave aims to match sustainability with style. What is the name of the project that will nurture a new European aesthetic?

- The New European Bauhaus
- Architecture for the Future
- A Modern Europe

Q3. What is the main objective of the Renovation Wave?

- Replace 20% of existing buildings with modern and efficient architecture by 2030.
- Double the annual energy and resource renovation rate of buildings by 2030.
- Ban the construction of buildings with non-renewable materials within 5 years.

Q4: Which kind of buildings will be in focus when the Commission develops green public procurement criteria based on Level(s)?

- Hospitals and care homes
- Offices and schools
- Retail

Q5: An additional noted benefit of the Renovation Wave is...

- Fewer tower blocks in central areas of cities.
- Research which can be used in other sectors to improve sustainability.
- The creation of over 160,000 jobs.

Q6: The Renovation Wave aims to tackle energy poverty in Europe. How many Europeans are currently unable to keep their home adequately warm?

- 7 million
- 22 million
- 34 million

Q7: The renovation wave announced that the Commission will develop a roadmap. What will it be about?

- reducing whole life carbon
- improving green public procurement
- design for deconstruction

Q8. What percentage of EU buildings were built over 20 years ago?

- 85%
- 95%
- 74%

Q9. According to a study for the European Environment Agency, what proportion of greenhouse gases emitted across the total life cycle of buildings can be saved by taking circular economy actions?

- 20%
- 40%
- 60%

Q10. What is the digital tool being developed by the European Commission to be used to store data over a building's life time?

- the European Building Register
- the Digital Building Logbook
- the Online Construction Record

Your score:

0-4 – Hmm, it looks like there is still a lot about the Circular Economy Action Plan for you to discover.

5-8 – Not bad – you have the Circular Economy Action Plan basics covered, but are still missing a few details.

9-10 – Good job! You really know your Circular Economy Action Plan by heart

Check you score and the answers in the document attached below.



Document

[Renovation Wave Quiz Answers](#) (246 Kb)

About this Newsletter

This newsletter is issued at least four times a year as part of the Level(s) initiative, and managed by a consortium on behalf of DG ENV.

Visit the [Level\(s\) page](#)

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