



Extended Technical Brief

Public Procurement for Wooden Buildings

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Technical Working Group Building
Subgroup on Public Procurement

 **Forest Fund
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Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgement</i>	2
<i>Introduction</i>	3
<i>Country reports</i>	7
<i>Austria</i>	7
<i>Czech Republic</i>	12
<i>Finland</i>	14
<i>France</i>	17
<i>Germany</i>	20
<i>Slovenia</i>	26
<i>Spain</i>	29
<i>Recognised challenges</i>	34
<i>Process</i>	34
<i>Definitions</i>	34
<i>Conclusions</i>	36
<i>Annexes</i>	39
<i>Annex A – Consulted Experts</i>	39
<i>Annex B – Public Procurement Subgroup Members</i>	41

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this information product reflect those of WoodPoP's Technical Working Group 'Building' and do not in any way represent the opinions of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental Protection, Regions and Water Management.

Introduction

Governments around the world increasingly recognise timber's vital role in decarbonising construction. While many policies and strategies express ambition for greater use of wood, they often lack clear implementation pathways.

The European Wood Policy Platform (WoodPoP) brings together policymakers, industry and research to contribute to shaping framework conditions for sustainable wood-based value chains and developing policy solutions, measures and recommendations.

The Policy Paper 'A Wood-based Circular Bioeconomy for a Sustainable Europe' highlights in its principles the importance of wood for building and renovations of small to high-rise buildings for both public and private construction, pointing to the need for targeted policy interventions to promote sustainable practices and unlock the full potential of wood products in the market.¹

This extended technical brief, *Public Procurement for Wooden Buildings*, illustrates how six European regions are supporting the transition to low-carbon construction through public procurement. It aims to inspire policymakers at all levels.

Public procurers face a complex mix of societal, political, and economic demands. They must balance science-based evidence supporting the environmental performance of natural building materials with principles such as material and technology neutrality. In the construction sector dominated by fossil-intensive materials, promoting nature-based alternatives remains a major challenge: despite increasingly available technical and practical information on timber construction, trust in new approaches appears to remain limited in public procurement.

This technical brief is intended as a knowledge-sharing document, offering insights into the varied measures used by the public sector to encourage the construction of public buildings with wood. In order to better understand the overall framework of public procurement actions, the brief also refers to related legislation, as part of the available measures at hand.

As the following country reports will illustrate, developing a wood-building culture within the public sector is a complex and multifaceted task.

The resulting conclusions and policy recommendations on support measures for public procurement of buildings are intended to bolster the decision-making of policymakers at national, regional and municipal levels.

¹ <https://woodpop.eu/resources/wood-policy-paper/>

Excuse: EU-level policies

In the 2024–2029 Political Guidelines, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced plans to revise public procurement directives to:

- Allow preference for European products in strategic sectors;
- Strengthen EU value creation and supply security for key technologies and services; and,
- Modernise and simplify procurement rules, particularly for EU start-ups and innovators.

Efficient public procurement is essential to maintaining the EU’s global competitiveness. It is a key lever for fostering innovation and creating lead markets in clean and strategic technologies.

Public buildings account for approximately 15-20% of all construction activity in Europe. These projects represent long-term investment in the future of states, regions and municipalities.

A study conducted by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) in 2023 on Green Public Procurement (GPP) revealed that, while GPP is increasingly viewed as a key policy tool for achieving climate targets, its implementation remains extremely fragmented across and within member states. Many challenges remain due to the legal, technical and behavioural complexity of public procurement. Despite a flourishing list of tools, criteria and best practices, current procurement practices fail to systematically harness their tremendous potential to accelerate the decarbonisation of the construction and transport sectors, sectors with significant environmental impact and job creation potential that support responsible business practices².

In 2024, the European Commission published a Call for Evidence (C4E) and a public consultation on the following Public Procurement Directives:

- Directive 2014/23/EU on the award of concession contracts
- Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement
- Directive 2014/25/EU on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors

The evaluation will assess whether these rules are working as intended. The Commission is expected to adopt revisions in the fourth quarter of 2026.

Further reading

Background report for the revision of EU Green Public Procurement criteria for Buildings:
<https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC138891/>

Green Public Procurement – EU Commission

https://green-forum.ec.europa.eu/green-business/green-public-procurement_en

² <https://www.sei.org/publications/green-public-procurement-eu/>

Methodology of this Extended Technical Brief

The Technical Working Group on 'Building' (TWG BU) of the European Wood Policy Platform (WoodPoP) initiated this brief by collecting and analysing relevant examples of existing programs that support the procurement of wooden buildings. This unfolded in two phases:

Phase 1: Desk research (2024)

Qualitative and quantitative data on existing national-level programs and support measures to foster timber construction were collected from six (6) selected countries that were deemed to have the best practices in this area. This was followed by a distribution of a structured survey to key informants in Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Slovenia and Spain.

Phase 2: Interviews (2025)

Interviews with public procurers followed to assess their awareness of, and experiences with, existing support measures in countries identified as best practice examples. While the interviews were limited to the six countries mentioned above, additional insights from France were also considered relevant. This phase was carried out by a consultant under the guidance of the Subgroup Public Procurement.

Building on these two phases, this current extended technical brief was compiled, and its conclusions were put together.

Policies for sustainability covered in this report

Studies related to policies targeting sustainability improvements imply that a change in practice needs both regulatory and persuasive measures, as well as financial incentives or encumbrances, to be successful. Hard measures correspond to regulations and soft measures to incentives from the public sector to change behaviour.

Given the variety of stakeholders involved, including semi-private and private associations, government bodies, and private service providers and their varying operational structures, policy tools to support sustainability actions in public procurement include:

Legal Instruments

Public procurement is governed by European legislation and further shaped by national, regional, and local laws. These legal frameworks translate political goals into practice at each administrative level.

Support programmes

Various support programs are implemented at various levels of public administration, that is, at the national, regional and local levels. Depending on the country's structure, there are differences.

Financial instruments

These instruments leverage public funds to attract private investment, share risk, and direct capital toward projects that generate positive social or environmental outcomes.

Information and Advisory Services

Given the complexity and breadth of the field, centralised knowledge hubs are essential. These hubs provide support such as knowledge and advisory services to practitioners and professionals, and their existence is often a result of deliberate policy decisions at any level of public administration.

Practical Tools for Practitioners

These practical tools provide practitioners with support towards successfully implementing sustainable public procurement processes. These tools include guidebooks, standardised tender text blocks, and best practice databases. It should be noted that stakeholder organisations are active in producing these tools.

Labels and Certification

Various labels and certification systems are proven to be effective tools for defining the desired end quality of construction projects. These include eco-labels, certification systems, and quality systems.

Awards & Competitions

The public sector often promotes best practices in building through awards. The criteria for these awards and competitions are aligned with specific policy goals.

Educational Programmes and Training

The complexity of the construction sector, combined with evolving regulations, including EU legislation, presents challenges for practitioners. Further training of professionals in this field allows them to keep up with regulatory changes and gives them the opportunity to share best practices following these changes.

Country reports

Austria

Austria considers public procurement of wooden buildings a key strategy for achieving climate goals, supporting its strong forestry and timber sector, and fostering a more sustainable built environment.

In 2020, the Austrian Federal Government launched the Austrian Forest Fund in response to climate change impacts on forests. Alongside financial aid for forest owners to enhance the climate resilience of their forests, the Forest Fund supports projects to increase the material and energetic use of sustainable wood.

Through the Austrian Wood Initiative, targeted measures are implemented to strengthen the political, legal, ecological, financial, and structural frameworks for sustainable wood use. The initiative fosters cross-sector dialogue and collaboration among businesses, research institutions, public administrations, and policymakers, aiming to position Austria as a leading example in timber construction. The public sector is a key audience for knowledge-sharing and support.

Austria's state procurement structures and programmes

The **naBe** platform, integrated within the Federal Procurement Ltd. (Bundesbeschaffung GmbH or BBG), Austria's central procurement unit, plays a key role in consolidating public demand and providing contractual frameworks.

Austria's Action Plan for Sustainable Public Procurement (*Aktionsplan nachhaltige öffentliche Beschaffung* or **naBe**) serves as the federal sustainable procurement platform. The naBe action plan puts focus on general recommendations and consists of criteria for 16 different product groups, including construction services. While binding for federal entities, it provides guidance for regional and municipal levels.

In Austria, the use of wood has a long tradition. In the last decades, the development of innovative engineered wood products has led to an increase in the timber share. At the national level, the role of wood with regard to its given positive ecological impact is not yet fully covered in relevant guidelines. In general, public procurement faces several challenges. These include the national zoning strategies and the potential for mandatory timber-use thresholds in public tenders. Since the individual federal states of Austria are responsible for construction, there are no uniform building regulations. Progress has been made in aligning the building regulations of the federal states with the guidelines of the Austrian Institute for Building Technology (Österreichisches Institut für Bautechnik or OIB), which set out technical and safety-related requirements for buildings. However, there is still scope for further harmonisation of the regulations for medium

and high-rise buildings. Besides these specific topics, naBe advises that timber construction should always be considered for new builds, renovations, extensions, and expansions. It also promotes the use of renewable building materials, but raises concerns about imports from regions with lower sustainability standards. All materials should be subject to impartial scrutiny.

There is a recognised need for a monitoring system to track compliance with the action plan, though data collection remains a challenge. Several ongoing projects aim to develop models offering a more complete picture of the long-term benefits of wood use in construction by integrating broader considerations on environmental impact, including carbon footprint analysis of construction services as well as external costs.

Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) and Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) are already standard in many areas, especially for larger construction projects and as part of recognised building certification systems such as *klimaaktiv*, ÖGNB or the BIG's (Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft m.b.H.) Holistic Building Program.

The naBe action plan refers to quality labels like “baubook” and respective data bases to manage construction materials. At the project level naBe also requires the calculation of the “Ökoindex” of the Austrian Institute for Building and Ecology (*Österreichisches Institut für Bauen und Ökologie* or IBO) in order to holistically assess the environmental impact of the production of a building based on three impact categories (GWP, acidification potential and non-renewable primary energy content). A new OIB guideline 7 is planned for the sustainable use of natural resources in the building sector in 2027.

Showcasing good practices is seen as essential to promoting timber construction and sustainability in public procurement. This includes clear, engaging communication to motivate public procurers to adopt sustainable practices.

The CO₂ Bonus³ (National Wood Construction Fund)

One notable financial incentive is the CO₂ Bonus, which, while not exclusive to public buildings, is highly relevant. The Wood Initiative, as an essential part of the Austrian Forest Fund, promotes the systematic and efficient use of wood in the interests of climate protection and a sustainable bioeconomy. The funding programme “CO₂ Bonus” encourages large-volume timber buildings in order to increase the share of wood construction in Austria.

The subsidy is available for new buildings, extensions, and enlargements intended for residential or public use (e.g. schools, kindergartens), as well as infrastructure projects involving large-volume timber construction. It is granted as an investment premium of €1 per kilogram of sustainably sourced wood, with an additional €0.10 per kilogram if insulation materials made from renewable raw materials are used.

³ *Kommunalkredit Public Consulting GmbH. Wooden Buildings – Austrian Wood Initiative (in German).*
<https://www.umweltfoerderung.at/betriebe/gebäude-in-holzbauweise-oesterreichische-holzinitiative/>

The evaluation criteria place special attention on the efficient and innovative use of wood. As of August 2025, six funding rounds have supported 194 timber construction projects across Austria. These buildings are expected to store approximately 70,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent over their lifetimes. An expert jury also identifies lighthouse projects, which are showcased on the Forest Fund website. The CO₂ Bonus scheme is administered by Kommunalkredit Public Consulting (KPC).

The CO₂ Bonus, in particular, guides behavioural change towards using more wood in building within its project cycle. This is also seen in the results of the past calls of the CO₂ Bonus, where the demand has increased since 2021. Due to the given time span of shifting to more sustainable building projects and the increased need for funding, a special focus has to be set on the future public sector budgeting processes. This reality decidedly calls for even better coordination and cooperation between the public and private sectors, as well as science.

Besides the observed contribution to increasing the share of timber buildings in Austria, the specific impact on public behaviour change for the long term is hard to estimate. A further study concerning the issue is needed to observe the status quo and to increase awareness of sustainable timber use.

To lower the complexity throughout the procurement process, aligned activities and measurements regarding continuous education and communications have to be set. An existing instrument for increased cooperation is the regular networking event “woodCircle” of the Austrian Wood Initiative.

Knowledge transfer, expert advice and awareness (national/ regional)

The organisation proHolz Austria and its regional branches form a nationwide network offering free consultancy and technical support to architects, planners, and public authorities considering timber construction. Their services span from the early planning phases to detailed technical advice. This support addresses a perceived lack of information and the continued dominance of mineral-based materials in architectural education in schools and universities.

A timber consulting network of eight regional experts supported by the Austrian Forest Fund provides fast, free, and independent advice to builders, planners and authorities for large-scale urban timber projects and public buildings like schools and community centres.

Austria benefits from a strong regional network supporting timber construction. Since 2001, many Austrian regions have introduced wood building awards and design prizes for joiners and cabinetmakers. For example, Tyrol hosts a biennial award recognising excellence in both timber design and construction. Although these awards do not offer monetary prizes, they bring recognition and visibility through media coverage and public relations. The region’s Local Agenda 21 programme supports small villages by covering the costs of organising architectural competitions and related planning services, particularly for projects involving wood. ProHolz

Tirol works in partnership with this programme to promote the use of locally sourced timber. In Styria, housing projects were informally encouraged to use at least 20% timber to qualify for financial support, reflecting strong political support.

Austria | Country-Specific Resources:

National Platforms and Procurement Agencies

- [naBe Platform and Action Plan \(in German\)](#) – Austria’s national platform for sustainable public procurement
- [Bundesbeschaffung GmbH \(BBG\)](#) – Austria’s central public procurement agency
- [BIG Holistic Building Programme \(BIG HBP\)](#) – Federal Real Estate Company’s approach to holistic, sustainable construction

National Guideline

- Austrian Institute of Building Technology OIB Guideline 7: <https://www.oib.or.at/>

Forests and the Wood Sector

- [Austria’s Forests – Overview \(Federal Ministry of Agriculture\)](#)
- [Austrian Forest Report 2023](#)
- [Österreichische Holzinitiative - Projekte und Maßnahmen - Umsetzung 2021–2024 – Waldfonds Publication \(PDF\) \(in German\)](#)
- [Waldfonds - Leuchtturmprojekte – Overview](#) lighthouse projects (in German)

Organisations, Databases and Events

- [Austrian Federal Forests – English Site](#)
- [proHolz Holzbau Database – 350+ Timber Projects \(in German\)](#)
- [Service Portal for SMEs – Forest Statistics \(in German\)](#)
- [holzbau austria \(in German\)](#)
[Catalogue of reviewed timber building components - dataholz.eu](#)

Research and Education

- [University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences \(BOKU\) – Institute of Agricultural and Forestry Economics](#)

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic has published its National Wood Policy in June 2024, which is valid until 2035, providing its government with a strategic framework for the entire Czech wood value chain. It defines focus areas for strategic investments, updating legislation and standards, directing basic and applied research, and defining state support.

Total wood stocks in the forests in the Czech Republic are increasing; since the 1930s, they have more than doubled. Also, harvesting levels are growing, but only about 80% of the annual increment is logged.

The National Wood Policy is a tool to develop the wood-based value chain and end-use domestically. The policy aims to contribute to climate protection by increasing wood use in society, especially in construction. This is achieved by supporting the production of higher-value wood-based products and increasing domestic consumption to scale up the use of raw timber and primary processed wood.

Two key activities underpin this approach: normative changes to enable the construction of high-rise timber buildings, and guidelines and mandatory goals for some public actors to promote the use of wood.

The initial target was set for the Ministry of Agriculture and its subordinates to include a certain proportion of wood in their new construction contracts. The experiences from this are used to encourage broader adoption by other state and public contracting authorities. The policy also explores mechanisms to combine public and private financing and considers potential tax incentives to promote and support wooden construction.

In 2021, the first practical guide on public procurement for wooden buildings was published for use by 40 state institutions⁴. It includes case studies of public buildings, interiors, infrastructure, and outdoor furniture, and provides guidance on integrating timber requirements into project documentation and contracts. A shortened English version is also available.

The Platform of Public Procurement⁵, coordinated by the Ministry of Regional Development, connects national, regional, and municipal authorities. One of its working groups focuses specifically on construction procurement, including the use of wood as a renewable material.

Overall, support for public procurement professionals is seen as essential. A dedicated competence centre could serve as a national hub, offering technical expertise in timber design, construction, and procurement. Targeted communication measures are also needed to engage and activate state contracting authorities.

⁴ Ministry of Agriculture. *Guide to the use of wood in public procurement (in Czech)* - <https://mze.gov.cz/public/portal/-a43636--EypA9s98/metodika-vyuziti-dreva-ve-vz-pdf/>

⁵ Public Procurement Portal (in Czech) - <https://portal-vz.cz/>

Czech Republic | Country-Specific Resources

Policy and Guidelines

- [New Raw Material Policy for Wood \(in Czech\)](#) – National strategy to promote the use of domestic wood across sectors
- [Guide to the Use of Wood in Public Procurement \(in Czech, PDF\)](#) – Methodology for integrating wood into public procurement processes

Public Procurement Platform

- [Czech Public Procurement Portal \(in Czech\)](#) – Official portal for public tenders and procurement information

Finland

Finland has a strong tradition of wood use. Finland views wood as having a central role in advancing the bioeconomy, supporting sustainable forest management, and contributing to the attainment of the national climate and energy targets laid down in its National Energy and Climate Strategy. Increasing the use of wood in buildings is seen as an effective way to reduce Finland's carbon footprint by 2030.

At the state level, the ministry-led ProcurFinland⁶ process aims to improve public procurement through public-private collaboration. Its goals include enhancing the societal impact of procurement, ensuring responsible use of tax revenue, and promoting fiscal sustainability. While sustainable construction is not a specific focus, data sharing on procurement actions is at the core of the initiative.

National wood construction programmes: The Wood Building Programme

The Wood Building Programme (2016–2023), coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment, sought to increase wood use in urban development, public buildings and large constructions such as bridges and halls. It also sought to broaden wood applications and maximise value creation. A key focus was equipping local decision-makers and procurers with the skills to support timber construction and raising awareness of its role in reducing the carbon footprint of building materials.

As part of Finland's carbon neutrality target, the Programme worked with stakeholders to develop national targets on the share of wood within new public construction. The overall target stated that 45% of new public building volume should be from wood by 2025. High-volume building types had their own targets. Based on well-developed building statistics, open data is available on the main materials and building volumes (floor area – m² and built volume – m³) per building type to monitor progress.

A procurement guide for wood construction⁷ was developed in collaboration with stakeholders across the wood value chain, including industry experts, designers, representatives of construction companies, and municipal decision-makers. The guide aimed to support all those involved in construction on an equal footing. Additional guides for market dialogue, municipal wood strategy creation, and existing land-use policy tools were commissioned and published by the Federation of the Woodworking Industries in early 2025.

Other actions were also taken, such as the allocation of targeted funding to support municipalities in developing skills and knowledge, as well as replicable solutions, often in collaboration with academia. A triple-helix approach – linking academia, public authorities, and business – was used to improve and strengthen project outcomes. Other actions included an

⁶ ProcurFinland – making public procurement more effective - <https://vm.fi/en/procurfinland/>

⁷ Use of Wood in Public Construction: Procurement Guide: https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/165313/YM_2023_48.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y/

annual nomination of the most progressive municipality in wood construction. However, the limited resources for effective dissemination and communication of these actions remained a key challenge.

Municipal and regional activities

Around 60% of Finnish municipalities reference wood construction in their municipal strategy. These strategies are periodically renewed after elections. The strategy is often refined and implemented as measures either in the municipality's wood construction or in its climate strategic action programme.

Some municipalities have set quantitative targets for the total number of wooden buildings constructed annually and monitor progress. However, outcomes often depend on the knowledge and commitment of individual procurement officers. Major cities such as Helsinki, Turku and Tampere have used zoning as a strong market instrument for wood construction, designating new areas for wood-frame construction. Recently, carbon emission thresholds have been set for new construction by some cities, operating ahead of the state. In Finland, national limits will come into effect in 2026.

Supporting organisations

The national wood information organisation Puuinfo Oy⁸, in co-operation with the Federation of the Woodworking Industries, actively supports municipalities in specialised questions related to the procurement of wooden buildings.

As an example, an online tool called “ePuu”⁹ helps public administrators to evaluate and compare different wood building systems and review relevant regulations to their needs for floor space and use. References to existing projects with cost indications are also available.

Policy effectiveness and challenges

These various initiatives have helped raise awareness of wood as a viable construction material. The market share of wood is increasing in some public building types. For example, in school buildings, 25% of the built materials used (calculated in m³) are wood.

Nevertheless, the national target of 45% wooden public buildings that was set for 2025 appears to have had limited impact, as it is perceived as a political goal lacking sufficient financial or structural support. The procurement guide alone did not lead to significant changes in procurement practices favouring wood. Effective implementation requires complementary measures such as training, updated contract templates, and municipal support for the additional workload involved in preparing tenders.

⁸ Puuinfo Oy - <https://puuinfo.fi/?lang=en>

⁹ ePuu (in Finnish) - <https://epuu.fi/>

One practical and productive tool for the procurer is to lead an active dialogue with stakeholders across the market. This exchange should not be limited to market surveys or tenders, but should be considered during all phases of the project, from the initial needs assessment and the initiation of project planning to the final procurement process and comments on procurement documents.

Lastly, many municipal decision-makers, including procurement officials and board members, have limited understanding of life cycle costs. As a result, decisions are often driven by an upfront calculation on investment costs rather than long-term value analytics

Finland | Country-Specific Resources

Procurement Guidelines

- [Use of Wood in Public Construction – Procurement Guide 2023 \(in English\)](#)
- [Green Public Building – Procurement Guide by the Ministry of the Environment, 2017 \(in Finnish\)](#)
- [Government Actions for More Efficient Public Procurement](#) – Ministry of Finance’s overview of procurement reforms

Wood Sector Resources

- [Puuinfo](#) – National information service promoting the use of wood in construction (available in English and Finnish)
- <https://puutuoteteollisuus.fi/english> Federation of the Finnish Woodworking Industries tasks are lobbying on national and European level, standardisation, R&D coordination, environmental matters and communication.
- [ePuu tool](#) – tool for preparing a wooden construction project

France

Accounting for ten percent of the European forest cover, France has the fourth largest forest area in the EU behind Sweden, Finland and Spain. Taking stand volume into account, France ranks third with 2.5 billion m³ behind Germany and Sweden.

France is a frontrunner in promoting bio-based building materials. Backed by strong policy, research, and industry initiatives, the country has seen growing use of materials such as wood, straw, hempcrete, and earth in construction. Developing domestic value-chains and use has been very important and integrated. Public procurement actions of the country have aligned with these developments, reflecting this focus on bio-based building materials.

Regulatory Framework

The promotion of bio-based materials within public procurement has been anchored in national legislation since 2015. While this legislation does not include a strict requirement in this sense, it has nevertheless set the tone and articulated national ambitions. The following laws further contribute to strengthening the use of bio-based materials:

The RE2020 regulation, that came into effect on the 1st of January 2022, is of major importance in this regard. This regulation includes embodied carbon limits for new construction, with thresholds decreasing over time. It favours bio-based materials by considering their carbon storage capacity¹⁰.

A specific law of 2021 requires that, from 2030, bio-based or low-carbon materials are to be used in at least 25% of new or majorly renovated public buildings as of 2030¹¹.

The City of Paris has adopted a more ambitious approach than the national regulations. While a national guideline favours the use of bio-based materials in public buildings, it is not legally binding, and implementation varies across municipalities and public entities. Paris, however, has adopted the *Plan local d'urbanisme bioclimatique* (PLUb) in 2024, which includes specific rules promoting bio-based construction¹². These include stricter carbon thresholds, a preference for renovation over demolition, and prioritisation of both bio-based and geo-based materials. The city also provides subsidies for social and intermediate housing projects to be able to attain certain bio-based building labels. Since 2020, all public buildings and social housing renovations in Paris must use bio-based insulation.

¹⁰ *Environmental Regulation 2020* - <https://www.interregeurope.eu/good-practices/environmental-regulation-2020-re2020>

¹¹ *Loi n° 2021-1104 du 22 août 2021 portant lutte contre le dérèglement climatique et renforcement de la résilience face à ses effets*, art. 39, J.O., 24 août 2021, p. 15087, available at <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000043965662> (Fr.)

¹² *Règles d'urbanisme de Paris* - <https://regles-urbanisme.paris.fr/plu-bioclimatique/>

Public Procurement Tools and Incentives

France has developed specific public procurement tools to strengthen the use of bio-based materials. Beyond the requirements of RE2020, public clients can specify lower carbon footprint targets in tenders, require a minimum biomass content per square metre, and use the *Pacte Biosourcé* as a reference. Subsidies are offered for projects that meet recognised bio-based labels, though support programmes vary by region and municipality. Overall, the *Pacte Biosourcé*¹³, a public-private initiative launched by the wood industry, is considered successful. It encourages municipalities, housing corporations, and other signatories to commit to using bio-based materials in a percentage of their projects, providing clear guidelines and usage targets.

Supporting organisations

There are support organisations like FIBois¹⁴ and Ekopolis¹⁵ that exist to provide expertise and support to public and private clients implementing bio-based construction. National organisations, including the straw association, also play a key role in knowledge building and advocacy.

Expanding to nature-based materials

In addition to bio-based materials, France is also promoting the use of geo-based materials such as raw earth. These materials are valued for their thermal properties and the availability of excavated earth from infrastructure projects. This approach aligns with the growing movement for frugal architecture, which emphasises the use of local, low-impact materials and complements the promotion of bio-based solutions¹⁶.

Despite this, several challenges remain. These include the complexity of calculating and comparing bio-based material usage across regions, the need for consistent metrics, and the importance of supporting local industries.

In summary, France has adopted a multi-faceted approach to promoting bio-based and geo-based materials in construction. Through a combination of regulations, incentives, and support structures, the country places particular emphasis on the use of these materials in construction within the framework of public procurement.

¹³Pactes bois-biosourcés - <https://fibois-france.fr/les-pactes-bois-biosources/>

¹⁴FIBois France - <https://fibois-france.fr/>

¹⁵Ekopolis: Ile-de-France resource center for sustainable construction and development: <https://www.ekopolis.fr/>

¹⁶Frugalité - "<https://frugalite.org/>"

France | Country-Specific Resources

Policy and Regulation

- [RE2020 Building Regulation Guide \(January 2024, PDF, in French\)](#) – National environmental regulation for new buildings (*Réglementation Environnementale 2020*)
- [Bioclimatic Local Urban Plan – Paris \(PLU Bioclimatique\) \(in French\)](#) – Climate-oriented urban planning rules in Paris

Financial Support and Tools

- [Bâtiment Bas carbone - Low-Carbon Construction Financing Aids Overview \(in French\)](#) – Tools and funding schemes for low-carbon building projects

Networks and Initiatives

- [FIBois France \(in French\)](#) – National network for the forest and wood industry
- [Pactes Bois-Biosourcés – FIBois France \(in French\)](#) – Regional agreements promoting wood and bio-based materials in construction
- [Ekopolis \(in French\)](#) – Resource centre for sustainable construction in Île-de-France
- [La Frugalité Heureuse et Créative \(in French\)](#) – Movement promoting frugal and sustainable architecture

Media and Commentary

- [LinkedIn Post – Jacques Baudrier on “Construire en Biosourcé” \(2024, in French\)](#) – Commentary on bio-based construction policy from a municipal perspective

Germany

Home to Europe's largest timber reserves covering 32% of land area and the world's second-largest furniture exporter, Germany remains a key market for wood products and machinery. The wood industry development is supported by innovation in automation, AI-driven production, and green construction.

Navigating building with wood within a federal system

At the federal level, the German government's timber construction initiative was adopted in June 2023. The initiative is used to implement measures surrounding promotion and funding, research and development, and specialist and consumer information. It also involves a review of the current legal provisions which unjustifiably hinder the use of available technology in wood construction. Another important component of the initiative is dialogue and exchange with the federal states. A round table on the timber construction initiative is held annually with representatives from the federal government, the states, and local authority associations to exchange experiences, identify and prioritise areas where action is needed.

The wood construction initiative runs until 2030 and interfaces with a wide range of other policy strategies and programmes at various levels (at the EU level, notably the EU Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative).¹⁷

Germany's federal system means that, although national building guidelines (*Bundesbaugesetz*) exist, each of the 16 federal states has its own building regulations and traditions. Therefore, regional projects and actions are essential to align with local cultures, competencies, practices, and legal frameworks. Efforts are underway to harmonise building laws and regulations across states, including adapting wood construction regulations to align with climate goals and support digital transformation. This is carried out through the Conference of Building Ministers and the publication of national standards such as the "*Muster-Holzbaurichtlinie*". In October 2024, the Federal Building Ministers' Conference adopted the new Model Timber Construction Directive, aimed at simplifying the construction of wood buildings. For it to be applicable, this directive must be implemented at the federal state level.

Many federal states (*Bundesländer*) have their own wood-building initiatives, varying in scope and permanence. These currently exist in Hamburg, Baden-Württemberg, Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate¹⁸, and Bavaria, to mention a few. These initiatives provide localised support that national programs cannot fully deliver and have proven particularly effective in engaging municipalities.

Berlin is currently developing a residential area ("Buckower Felder") for 900 inhabitants as a climate-friendly wooden neighbourhood. As part of the development, numerous school buildings, sports halls and nurseries have been constructed using modular wooden methods.

¹⁷ Bundesministerium für Landwirtschaft, Ernährung und Heimat, Holzbauintiative (in German). <https://www.bmlch.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Broschueren/holzbauintiative.html>

¹⁸ Rheinland-Pfalz. Klimabündnis Bauen (in German). [Klimabündnis Bauen Rheinland-Pfalz](#)

Legislative and other support mechanisms usually work in unison. For example, Hamburg's Climate Protection Law mandates the Senate to support sustainable construction, complemented by a Climate Action Plan that implements specific programs and measures. While such legislation promoting sustainable buildings is effective, its impact is delayed due to long building planning cycles.

The Federal state's recent decision to establish a funding package for renovation of public infrastructure also supports serial, modular and digital renovation methods, where wood has competitive advantages, particularly in housing projects. ***Charter for Wood 2.0***

Germany's Charter for Wood 2.0 initiative is a dialogue framework initiated by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity (BMLEH) to promote the use of wood from sustainable forestry as a positive contribution to climate protection, resource efficiency and value creation, and through its activities in seven fields of action. Officials from the federal, state, and local governments, as well as from politics, business, science, and civil society, come together within the framework of the Charter to discuss possible solutions. The federal, state, and local governments are encouraged to promote the use of wood as a sustainable building material and advance the transition to climate-friendly construction through concrete projects and targeted support.

The *Fachagentur Nachwachsende Rohstoffe e. V.* (FNR) provides operational support to the individual working groups and organises expert discussions, platforms, and conferences. On behalf of the BMLEH, the FNR supports these goals through informational resources that also address specific topics such as the planning and awarding of public timber construction projects.

Increasing awareness of wood's climate benefits and construction speed

There remains a need to educate stakeholders about the wide range of possibilities offered by wooden construction. Prefabricated wood construction faces hurdles due to outdated public procurement practices. Current systems follow a fragmented, step-by-step process tailored to traditional construction, not prefabricated methods. This misalignment with modern practices that require digital collaboration, such as Building Information Modelling (BIM), hinders progress. In practice, there is a gap between digital tendering tools and fully integrated digital construction workflows, which should be developed in parallel.

Although policies aim for the public sector to lead by example (e.g., using low-carbon construction methods), practical implementation is uneven. Larger cities can innovate due to greater resources, while smaller communities often struggle. Small communities face particular challenges with public procurement, especially when projects exceed budget thresholds that trigger EU-wide procurement requirements. Legal complexity and lack of technical knowledge often discourage innovation or the inclusion of environmental criteria, but the increasing

awareness of wood's climate benefits and construction speed has driven curiosity and demand for accessible practical guidance.

Key focus areas for the sector include the need for serial refurbishment of public buildings (e.g. schools from the 1960s–1970s), where prefabricated wood systems allow for quick renovation, even during school holidays. The sector must also adapt to climate-related changes in forest composition by using alternative wood types (e.g., oak, beech), reusing wood and existing building land. Municipalities must also be equipped with tools to compare the climate impact of modernisation versus demolition and rebuilding.

Federal Funding Programmes¹⁹

At the federal level, new funding programmes have been launched as part of the Federal Funding for Efficient Buildings (*Bundesförderung für effiziente Gebäude* or BEG) programme. The Climate-Friendly New Building (*Klimafreundlicher Neubau* or **KFN**) funding programme is aimed at projects for the construction of new residential and non-residential buildings.²⁰ It links climate protection in the building sector and the creation of living spaces, and it sets high sustainability and climate protection standards as the programme takes into account the entire life cycle of a building. In March 2025, the German government announced a further €300 million for this programme.

On 1 October 2024, the new funding programme, Climate-friendly New Construction in the Low-price Segment (*Klimafreundlicher Neubau im Niedrigpreissegment* or **KNN**) started, which will specifically complement the social housing promotion and the energy-efficient promotion "Climate-friendly new construction" (KFN)²¹. The focus is on limiting construction costs, reducing CO₂ emissions and the optimisation of living space. This will make the new living space not only affordable, but also climate-adapted. In 2024, €350 million is available for the programme, and another € .65 billion in 2025. The KNN program is intended to boost demand for prefabricated construction.

National guidebooks as support tools

To support communities in implementing wooden construction projects, guidebooks were created, i.e. in collaboration with the German municipal association and the national authority FNR²². The guides provide step-by-step instructions and are available both online and in print. These guides are supported by:

¹⁹ Bundesministerium für Wohnen, Stadtentwicklung und Bauwesen. Bessere Förderkonditionen bei Neubauförderprogrammen KFN und KNN (in German).

<https://www.bmwsb.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2025/09/kfn-knn.html>

²⁰ Bundesförderung für effiziente Gebäude (BEG) (in English and German). <https://www.dgnb.de/en/certification/qng-and-beg-funding>

²¹ Modular construction primed for massive government support in Germany.

<https://builtoffsite.com.au/news/modular-construction-primed-for-massive-government-support-in-germany/>

²² For Example: Fachagentur Nachwachsende Rohstoffe e.V. Leitfaden Bauvergabe Öffentliches Bauen & Sanieren mit Holz (in German).

https://www.fnr.de/fileadmin/beschaffung/pdf/Brosch_Leitfaden_Bauvergabe_Web_bf_final.pdf

- National-level conferences focusing on procurement processes
- State-level everyday consultations, where project teams advise municipalities directly
- Help desks and Institutes, such as the *Holzbau Deutschland* Institute, which offer technical and procurement advice (primarily for professionals, not private citizens).

While it is evident that there is a need for replicable and easy-to-adopt models that can be scaled to numerous small municipalities, there is also a gap between political ambition and practical execution, especially in regions with limited administrative capacity.

Financial incentives for wood and/or carbon storage

Cities like Munich and Hamburg have introduced financial bonuses for construction projects that store carbon, such as wood buildings. For example, builders receive a monetary reward in Munich of €0.80 per kilogram of wood used^{23 24} based on the amount of wood used, which equates to the carbon stored in the structure. Financial incentives for CO₂ storage in construction are a promising approach, especially when managed by well-resourced cities.

While scaling such initiatives to smaller cities may be limited by expertise and administrative capacity, technical progress, particularly in prefabrication in a digital planning and production chain, increases the competitiveness of wooden construction. In this, the sector is embracing digitalisation more effectively than the rest of the construction industry.

Munich implemented this policy (financial support) in a major urban development project on a former military barracks site. It served as a model for climate-conscious urban planning and included many innovative wooden constructions. The policy targets private investors rather than public procurement, and its success is attributed to the city's capacity and expertise in managing such complex programmes. The city owned the Land and sold it to private developers after a competitive application process. Applicants were required to submit a dossier of their climate protection strategies, including plans for wooden construction. Land was also sold to citizen-led building cooperatives. This model allowed public authorities to guide sustainability outcomes while leveraging private investment.

Munich's building department later stated that the bonus was not economically necessary, since prefabricated wood buildings are already cost-competitive compared to traditional construction. However, the incentive played a key role in raising interest, sharing knowledge, and advancing solutions.

²³ Stadt München, *Nachwachsende Rohstoffe*. <https://stadt.muenchen.de/infos/bonusmassnahmen/>

²⁴ IFB Hamburg, *Modul "Klimaschonender Neubau" (KSN) für Nichtwohngebäude*. <https://www.ifbhh.de/programme/immobilienwirtschaft/nichtwohngebaeude-bauen-und-modernisieren/nichtwohngebaeude-bauen/nachhaltiges-bauen#downloads/>

Implementing quality assurance systems

Hamburg has implemented a set of actions to support wood construction. Its approach includes showcasing successful wooden buildings to build trust and counter misconceptions (e.g., mould, structural decay). A quality assurance system that was implemented to prevent or minimise failures and negative publicity. Cultural and emotional acceptance is seen as crucial to elicit neutral or even positive reactions to building with wood. This has already been observed from parents of school children or the public when experiencing wooden buildings first-hand. Allowing people to visit these spaces is vital to challenging preconceptions.

Key features of Hamburg's legislative and support actions include:

- Encouragement of FSC/PEFC-certified wood, recycled concrete, and reused building components (circularity in material use)
- Requirements for Global Warming Potential (GWP) analysis and BNB/DGNB²⁵ certification.
- Buildings must be designed to allow the use of a range of materials (wood, concrete, steel), ensuring flexibility in early planning stages (technology-neutral approach).

Support programs also exist for the use of wood in industrial buildings and social housing, which embody wood use incentives. In general, policies are moving away from wood-specific support to broader CO₂ reduction strategies. While the concept of promoting timber construction has expanded, the quality assurance for it remains a relevant part of the funding.

Conclusion

Most of the authority lies at the state level, not the municipal level. The federal level plays a key role in harmonising building and procurement regulations. Across all levels, building public trust and acceptance through best-practice examples, high-quality construction, and emotional connection is key to expanding the use of wood in construction.

Public land policy can be leveraged to guide sustainability, even in private construction. Wood construction is becoming increasingly viable without subsidies, thanks to technological advances. Major opportunities lie in refurbishment, circularity, and smarter forest resource management. However, despite all that, Germany still faces major challenges in digitalising its public building and procurement systems.

²⁵ **BNB** stands for *Bewertungssystem Nachhaltiges Bauen* or the *Assessment System for Sustainable Building*;
DGNB stands for *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltiges Bauen* or the *German Sustainable Building Council*

Germany | Country-Specific Resources

Procurement and Construction Guidelines

- [Planungsleistungen bei Holzbau-Vergaben – Handreichung für öffentliche Bauprojekte \(FNR, PDF, in German, 2025\)](#) - Planning Services in Timber Construction Tenders – Guidance for Public Construction Projects, published by Fachagentur Nachwachsende Rohstoffe e.V. (FNR)
- [Losbündelung bei Holzbau-Vergaben – Handreichung für öffentliche Bauprojekte \(FNR, PDF, in German, 2025\)](#) - Lot Unbundling in Timber Construction Tenders – Guidance for Public Construction Projects, published by Fachagentur Nachwachsende Rohstoffe e.V. (FNR)
- [Leitfaden Bauvergabe – Öffentliches Bauen & Sanieren mit Holz \(FNR, PDF, in German, 2022\)](#) – Federal guide on timber use in public construction and renovation, published by Fachagentur Nachwachsende Rohstoffe e.V. (FNR)
- [Handlungsleitfaden für Holzbau in der öffentlichen Beschaffung \(Baden-Württemberg Cluster Initiative, PDF, in German, 2022\)](#) – Procurement guide published by the cluster initiative of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg

Strategies and Platforms

- [Charta für Holz 2.0 \(in German\)](#) – National wood policy framework promoting the sustainable use of wood in Germany
- [Holzbauinitiative - Strategie der Bundesregierung zur Stärkung des Holzbaus als ein wichtiger Beitrag für ein klimagerechtes und ressourceneffizientes Bauen \(in German\)](#) - Wood construction initiative – Strategy of the German Federal Government to strengthen wood construction as a contribution for climate-just and resource efficient construction
- [Klimabündnis Bauen Rheinland-Pfalz \(in German\)](#) – State-level initiative supporting climate-friendly construction practices in Rhineland-Palatinate

Federal funding Programs

- [Bessere Förderkonditionen bei Neubauförderprogrammen KFN und KNN \(in German\)](#) by Bundesministerium für Wohnen, Stadtentwicklung und Bauwesen.
- [Bunderförderung für effiziente Gebäude \(BEG\) \(in English and German\)](#) by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltiges Bauen – DGNB e.V.
- [Modular construction primed for massive government support in Germany](#) by Built Offsite

Slovenia

Slovenia is one of Europe's most forested nations, with forests covering 65% of its territory, and wood has historically been central to its economy. During the communist era, forestry and wood industry value chains were well developed. However, in the post-communist period, other materials were perceived as more modern, and wood came to be seen as outdated. Only in the past 15 years, Slovenia has actively promoted the sustainable use of wood in construction again.

Local authorities have increasingly developed strategic capacity, contrasting with the previously centralised system. Mayors now play a key role in developing and implementing public building projects at the municipal level. However, the "personalisation" of such projects, where individual preferences or leadership styles dominate, can present challenges.

Slovenia has recently been recognised for having a strong national foundation for promoting the use of wood in construction, including through public procurement and green public procurement (GPP)²⁶. This is bolstered by ecological awareness, emerging technical expertise, the development of specialised manufacturing companies, and subsidies for wood use. Despite this, implementation of GPP is hindered by bureaucracy, higher cost and limited local capacity.

Construction activities in Slovenia are governed at the state level. Even construction permitting and compliance with building plans are managed at the state level, with municipalities having no mandate over them. Procuring wooden buildings still requires specific knowledge of the market and possibilities available, as well as a step-by-step process to identify appropriate actors who can meet project requirements.

Regulation on green public procurement

Slovenia's centralised policy system ensures that national strategies and legislation apply uniformly, even to the smallest municipalities. GPP regulations require a certain percentage of wood in public buildings. Passive building codes further support energy efficiency and ecological performance, reinforcing the use of wood.

The GPP regulation mandates that at least 30% of the volume of materials used in public buildings (excluding furniture and cabinets, ground floor slabs, and substructures) must be wood or nature-based materials. If regulations or the intended use prohibit or preclude it, the requirement is reduced by one-third, provided that at least 10% of the building products carry a mark Type I or III. However, the use of wood and natural materials often depends on the knowledge and resources available within individual municipalities. In many cases, wood is only considered for interior fixtures and fittings.

²⁶ Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia. Green Public Procurement Regulation (in Slovenian). <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=URED7202/>

To support public procurers, EU-funded initiatives such as LIFE IP Care4Climate²⁷ are carried out. These initiatives aim to build capacity and promote sustainable construction practices.

Funding Mechanisms and Institutional Support

There are both permanent and semi-permanent funding mechanisms available to municipalities related to the use of wood:

- Direct support from the Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport for wood use in public buildings
- Funding from the National Ecological Fund for passive construction, with additional incentives for using wood
- High-level support for the refurbishment and renovation projects that incorporate wood

However, the availability of funding changes year by year, creating difficulties for the municipalities.

Barriers to implementation

Strategic support and substantial subsidies exist for ecological and passive buildings. Institutions like the Wooden Building Institute and university programs provide technical knowledge. Nevertheless, municipal capacity gaps exist. According to one interviewee, the majority of the Slovenia's 212 municipalities lack the internal expertise to handle the requirements of sustainable building projects. Smaller municipalities struggle with the complex procurement processes and sustainable design requirements. The regulatory and administrative burden deters local governments from pursuing wood-based projects. Many give up on subsidies due to the difficulty of navigating the application and compliance process.

Sustainable building projects often take 3-5 years due to planning, stakeholder alignment, and design intricacies. External experts are often needed for the whole process, but budgets do not always allow for this. Although subsidies exist, they do not always cover the additional effort, risk, and time involved. As a result, municipalities often choose traditional buildings, forfeiting available ecological subsidies.

Support is available through the Energy and Climate Agencies, Regional Development Agencies and Forestry and Construction Experts. However, municipalities often lack the time, resources, or awareness to fully engage with these systems.

²⁷ SAMO1Planet. SAMO1PLANET CARE4CLIMATE(in Slovenian). <https://www.samo1planet.si/zeleno-javno-narocanje/>

Slovenia | Country-Specific Resources

Policy & Regulation

- [Decree on Green Public Procurement \(in Slovenian\)](#) – Official regulation governing green public procurement practices in Slovenia

Projects and Awareness Initiatives

- [LIFE IP – "Only One Planet" Project on Green Public Procurement \(in Slovenian\)](#) – National awareness and implementation campaign for green procurement under the LIFE programme

Spain

56% of Spain's territory is forest land²⁸, offering significant raw material potential for sustainable construction. Wood has been used as a traditional construction material for roofs, slabs and wall framing in Spanish buildings, especially in regions where it was abundant. However, the use of wood in construction was progressively reduced due to the specific prohibition of its use in structures according to the design standards for social housing in the 1970s, among other reasons.²⁹ In recent years, Spain has started to use local resources to produce engineered wood products, coinciding with the development of mid-rise timber buildings. Forestry and construction activities in Spain are governed at the regional level by the 17 Autonomous Communities.^{30 31}

Spain has taken steps to promote the use of wood in construction, but significant barriers remain, particularly in the regulatory context and the integration of climate and environmental criteria in public procurement. The implementation of the GPP and the focus on specific materials like wood vary significantly across regions. For example, while initiatives exist in the Basque Country and Catalonia, a more systematic national approach is lacking. Galicia stands out as a forerunner, with specific timber construction initiatives and the objective of achieving up to 20% use timber use in public building structures.

Contracting bodies often lack standardised models and expert assistance for incorporating GPP, which presents as an organisational barrier. Although Spain's Contract Law mandates the integration of social and environmental criteria, many contracting bodies perceive this as voluntary, making implementation dependent on political will. Specifically, regarding wood, its use in public procurement remains limited.

There is a lack of standardisation in GPP contracts, and procurers often lack the technical knowledge to understand and apply environmental criteria effectively. Additionally, the varying complexity of projects further complicates the application of uniform procurement rules. The tribunal interpretations regarding conflicting procurement rules vary from prioritising environmental impact to prioritising supply quality, which creates legal uncertainty for contracting authorities and difficulties for a systematic application of environmental criteria.

Although not specific to public procurement, regional environmental regulations increasingly address issues like circularity and promote the use of wood. However, binding environmental standards in public construction are still largely originate from EU legislation. Tools like

²⁸ MITECO. (2023). Advance of the forestry statistics yearbook 2022 Spain.

<https://www.miteco.gob.es/content/dam/miteco/es/biodiversidad/estadisticas/anuario-estadistica-forestal-2022-avance.pdf>

²⁹ Irastorza. UVA edita el libro "Construcción de Estructuras de Madera", de Luis-Alfonso Bastera (in Spanish).

<https://www.irastorza.com/uva-edita-el-libro-construccion-de-estructuras-de-madera-de-luis-alfonso-bastera-29-de-marzo-de-2010/>

³⁰ Martilegui Arriaga, Francisco. PANORAMICA DE LA MADERA LAMINADA EN ESPANA.

https://infomadera.net/uploads/articulos/archivo_2501_17235.pdf

³¹ Bastera, A., Baño, V., López, G., Cabrera, G., & Vallelado-Cordobés, P. (2023). Identification and Trend Analysis of Multistorey Timber Buildings in the SUDOE Region. *Buildings*, 13(6), 1501. <https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings13061501>

ecolabels exist for everyday items such as paper, but their equivalents in construction remain limited.

National activities

A. Mass Madera Network

A national project, “Mass Madera”, was launched in 2022 as a network to accelerate the use of industrialised solid wood in Spain. Supported by Built by Nature, its main mission is to accelerate the use of industrialised solid wood as a solution to reduce emissions associated with the construction sector while supporting the housing and urban development needs of a growing population.

Following the success of international experiences, the network aims to establish, coordinate and connect key actors, leaders and pioneers to mainstream the use of these wood construction systems and position it as one of the only ecological alternatives in the current climate emergency context.

B. EGURALT: An Interreg Project

The EGURALT project, funded through the Interreg programme, targeted both public and private stakeholders involved in the public procurement of buildings. It aimed to promote mid-rise timber construction in the SUDOE (Spain, Portugal and South-West France) region. Eight beneficiary entities from six regions collaborated in three areas:

- Promotion of high-rise public housing made of wood
- Development of new wood-based technological products
- Transformation of the wood sector to support a construction paradigm shift³²

A detailed presentation of some of the mid-rise timber buildings built in Spain until 2022, both public and private developments, can be found in the EGURALT book.³³

³² EGURALT. Interreg SUDOE Project Overview (in English). <https://eguralt.eu/the-project>

³³ Basterra, A., Baño, V., López, G., Vallelado, P., García, I., Moltini, G., & Cabrera, G. (2023). Application and dissemination of innovative solutions for the promotion of mid-rise timber construction in the SUDOE area: Identification and Analysis (p. 515). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7870473>

Regional programmes

Galicia

In 2020, a bi-annual funding programme was launched by the Galician government to boost the use of wood as a structural material in construction. The initiative funds the writing of execution projects and/or the purchase of timber products and timber construction works for single-family houses, residential buildings, warehouses, etc., developed by private owners, SMEs, NGOs, cooperatives, etc.³⁴ In 2023, Galicia published a guide to promoting wood use in public procurement for sustainable buildings. Aimed at public administration staff responsible for building contracts, the guide provides practical advice for incorporating environmental and efficiency criteria in public procurement of wood to be used in construction, supporting the region's 20% target share of wooden buildings.³⁵

Other initiatives are being taken at the city level. The city of Lugo (Galicia) has developed a Biodynamic Plan³⁶ to establish an urban framework for the creation of the first multi-ecological neighbourhood in Spain. The strategy aims to ensure an integrated territorial approach, with a focus on stimulating the growth of a green and circular economy by promoting the wood sector. The construction of 1,200 homes is planned, with timber to be used as the structural material for the building construction.

Barcelona (Catalonia)

Faced with urgent housing needs across the country and within the city of Barcelona itself, the *Institut Municipal de l'Habitatge i Rehabilitació de Barcelona* (IMHAB), a municipal company owned by the Barcelona City Council, adopted a three-pronged strategy to accelerate housing construction:

- Closer collaboration with the Department of Permits to speed up the granting of Building Licenses.
- Tendering construction projects through the Design and Build procedure, where the construction company (or contractor) is also responsible for drafting the architectural project
- Promoting the industrialisation of the construction process and the reduction of environmental impact through the public tendering process³⁷

³⁴ Xunta de Galicia. *Ayudas para la realización de proyectos y obras que utilicen productos de madera como elementos estructurales 2024* (in Spanish). <https://xera.xunta.gal/es/la-agencia/ayudas/ayudas-2024/xera-madera-mr502>

³⁵ Xunta de Galicia. *Guía para el uso de la madera en la contratación pública para edificios sostenibles en Galicia* (in Spanish). https://xera.xunta.gal/sites/default/files/formacion/GUIA%20USO%20MADERA%20CONSTRUCCION%20PUBLICA%20XERA_cast_v1.pdf

³⁶ LUGO Council. *Plan Lugo Biodinámico*. <https://www.lugobiodinamico.eu/results/multiecolological-neighbourhood/>

³⁷ Institut Municipal de l'Habitatge. *Industrialised Public Housing Projects* (in English). <https://www.habitatge.barcelona/en/access-to-housing/public-housing-stock/industrialised-public-housing>

Wood construction and the promotion of industrialisation in the construction process and the environmental impact through the public tendering process are closely linked. Nevertheless, individual actions, such as the role of architects by introducing new techniques, such as the Design and Build procedure, which streamlines the project delivery method in one single entity from design to construction, remain important for the development of the sector.

Under this approach, speed and low environmental impact are key priorities, making prefabrication attractive. Based on the databases of the Construction Technology Institute of Catalonia (ITEC), five of the six winning proposals in recent tenders featured timber structures (including enclosures and façades). These were primarily built using cross-laminated timber (CLT), although some used glued laminated timber (GLT).

As a public sector company, IMHAB acts both as a developer and a social agent, contributing to the sector's economic dynamisation – helping to energise and grow the construction industry— particularly through innovation, investment, job creation, and the adoption of sustainable building practices like timber construction.³⁸ Support from IMHAB is not limit to a single construction method and will remain open to other building systems in its upcoming projects, provided they can achieve very low environmental impact.

In 2022, the City of Barcelona also published internal technical instructions and rules on the use of wood in public buildings, helping to further institutionalise sustainable construction practices.³⁹

³⁸ Catalan News. *Barcelona Looks to Industrial Methods for Social Housing Projects (in English)*. <https://www.catalannews.com/housing-crisis/item/barcelona-looks-to-industrial-methods-for-new-social-housing-projects>

³⁹ City of Barcelona. *Internal Technical Wood Use Guide (in Spanish)*. https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/contractaciopublica/sites/default/files/ins_cast_cap_madera.pdf

Spain | Country-specific Resources

Policy and Guidelines

- [Guía para el uso de la madera en la contratación pública para edificios sostenibles – Galicia \(2023, PDF, in Spanish\)](#) – Practical guide for integrating wood in public procurement in Galicia
- [City of Barcelona – Technical Instructions on the Use of Wood in Public Buildings \(2022, PDF, in Spanish\)](#) – Internal municipal guidelines promoting sustainable wood construction
- [Advance of the Forestry Statistics Yearbook 2022 \(MITECO, PDF, in Spanish, 2023\)](#) – Overview of forestry-related data in Spain

National and Regional Initiatives

- [Mass Madera Network \(in Spanish\)](#) – National platform launched in 2022 to promote industrialised solid wood construction, supported by MIVAU and Built by Nature
- [EGURALT – Interreg SUDOE Project \(in English\)](#) – EU-funded project promoting mid-rise timber buildings and innovation in the wood construction sector
- [Plan Lugo Biodinámico – Multiecológico Neighbourhood \(in Spanish\)](#) – Urban plan incorporating sustainability and wood construction in Lugo

Public Housing and Municipal Programmes

- [Institut Municipal de l’Habitatge – Industrialised Public Housing \(in English\)](#) – Overview of Barcelona’s strategy for accelerating housing through industrialised and sustainable construction
- [LIMHAB’s Strategy for Sustainability and Industrialised Construction \(2023, in Catalan/Spanish\)](#) – Presentation at the Fira Construmat on environmental efficiency and timber use in housing
- [Barcelona Looks to Industrial Methods for Social Housing – Catalan News \(2023, in English\)](#) – Media coverage on the role of prefabrication and timber in tackling the housing crisis

Research, Data, & Technical Resources

- [Identification and Trend Analysis of Multistorey Timber Buildings in the SUDOE Region – Buildings Journal \(2023, in English\)](#) –
- [Panorámica de la Madera Laminada en España – Francisco Martilegui \(in Spanish\)](#) – Overview of laminated wood applications and market in Spain
- [Construcción de Estructuras de Madera – Luis-Alfonso Basterra \(2010, in Spanish\)](#) – University of Valladolid publication on timber structure design

Recognised challenges

Process

Researching public procurement of buildings, particularly with a focus on sustainability and the use of specific materials such as wood, presented several challenges. These stem from the inherent complexities of public sector operations, the nature of construction projects, and the evolving landscape of sustainable practices.

In this extended technical brief, access to key informants and relevant professionals, such as procurement officers, was facilitated by WoodPoP representatives, which significantly eased the process. Nonetheless, securing input from decision-makers, procurement officers, and project managers within public institutions is often difficult due to time constraints, shifting priorities, and internal policy considerations.

Given the limited resources available, the findings reflect the views of a small number of experts per country. Additionally, the perspectives of the interviewed stakeholders may be influenced by conscious or unconscious biases.

Definitions

There is currently no universally accepted definition of a “wooden building” because there are no standardised systems for building statistics that consistently recognise construction materials.

In this publication, a “public building” refers to a building built by operators whose procurement process must comply with the national and/or the EU Act on Public Procurement and Concession Contracts. A “wooden building” refers to a building with a load-bearing frame that is mainly made of wood, specifically where wood is the main material responsible for vertical load-bearing structures in more than 50% of the building’s above-ground floor area.

This definition is used, for example, in Finland to compile statistics on buildings. It also reflects how buildings are typically categorised either as concrete or steel buildings in countries where wood does not yet have a significant market share and is not separately recognised in national statistics.

It is important to recognise that wood can be and is used in non-load-bearing structures as well, and the volumes can be significant. A construction project must always be considered as a whole, and the use of wood can be significantly increased in the non-load-bearing structures.

In every wood construction project, it must be determined whether the project qualifies as a “wooden building” under the definition above, or whether it qualifies as something else. Those

responsible for the definition should pay attention to what the project is aiming for and, on this basis, draw up an appropriate definition of the building.

Terminology related to wood construction often confuses not only non-professionals but also professionals. Policies promoting the use of wood in construction are frequently tied to specific percentages or prioritisation criteria. To comply effectively, it requires a full understanding of the terminology, and policymakers must ensure that definitions are clear and consistent.

“Pre-fabrication” and “off-site construction” refer to a process where the major share of the wall (intermediate and envelope) and floor elements are manufactured on a site different to the building site, normally in a factory setting, and then delivered to the building site to be installed. Various building systems are used individually or in combination, such as prefabricated modular and panelised elements, as well as post, beam and slab structures.

At present, comparison of wood use between countries based, for example, on the market share of different building materials remains difficult. National statistics as well as targets can be expressed in various units – by weight, volume, monetary value, floor area (m²), building volume (m³), or number of buildings constructed, completed, planned, or permitted. The diversity of approaches leads to frequent misunderstandings and inconsistencies in data interpretation.

A promising example of how to address this issue is Austria’s development of a new survey system to track the share of timber construction. Carried out by proHolz Austria, existing survey structures will be used to provide policymakers, associations, authorities and decision-makers in the construction industry with a reliable database for future decisions. This approach not only improves national data availability but also serves as a model for enhancing comparability across countries.

However, this system is not yet integrated into the EU Building Stock Observatory⁴⁰. Effective communication and coordination at the European level, including the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, is essential to harmonise methodologies.

⁴⁰ European Commission, EU Building Stock Observatory. https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency/energy-performance-buildings/eu-building-stock-observatory_en

Conclusions

Public Procurement as a Strategic Policy Tool?

This mapping of policies and adjunct measures across seven European countries assessed the effectiveness of public procurement strategies in promoting wood in construction. Public construction and procurement law are mandatory collaborators; when applied correctly, procurement law can serve as a toolbox for successful timber construction projects.

Public procurement has the potential to act as a strategic policy tool, one that can accelerate decarbonisation, achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and lower the overall environmental impact of public infrastructure and services. To realise this potential, procurement officers must be given a clear mandate and organisational capacity to contribute meaningfully to sustainability goals.

Many countries and regions across Europe have demonstrated a variety of innovative approaches to green procurement that could be scaled up. These national measures can be further supported by the EU through impactful procurement and GPP practices by introducing standardised reporting methods and tools, and by establishing mandatory requirements for key sectors.

Public procurement laws and sustainable building regulations are constantly evolving. This dynamic environment means that past data may not be directly comparable to current practices, and research findings can quickly become outdated. Even with common regulations, such as the EU Directives, interpretation and implementation can vary significantly across different public bodies, or even within the same organisation. Notably, the relevant EU Directives are currently under revision.

Following the principle of subsidiarity certain decisions, such as those related to building and regulations on construction, can be delegated to the local level, which can, in certain cases, override national regulations. This approach respects local building culture and material availability while maintaining overall policy coherence and allowing to better streamline construction techniques across regions. All in all, supporting a wood building culture remains a multifaceted task that requires coordinated, multi-level action.

Moving from initial investment cost thinking to a more long-term approach of Life Cycle Costing and integration of qualitative criteria

Currently, traditional procurement practices often prioritize initial investment costs, inadvertently sidelining the broader economic and environmental implications that can occur over a building's lifecycle. This short-term focus can obscure hidden costs related to maintenance, energy consumption, durability, and end-of-life disposal — all of which significantly impact long-term value and sustainability outcomes.

To fully leverage the transformative potential of public procurement in advancing sustainability efforts, a more sophisticated understanding of life cycle costing (LCC) would be needed. However, at the current stage, LCC remains poorly understood among public procurers and several challenges hinder the mainstream adoption of LCC among public organisations. Environmental and qualitative criteria are often undervalued in favour of cost-effective alternatives⁴¹.

Public procurers often lack access to reliable data on product or service life cycles (e.g. purchase price, initial costs, etc), as some information, such as future maintenance costs, is held only by suppliers. Verified data need be made more accessible.

Moreover, when it comes to environmental considerations in the LCC calculation, LCC analyses cannot properly translate environmental problems into a price or a monetary unit because this leads to an oversimplification of reality.

Recommended Actions

Given the wide variety of actions available and based on the country cases and interviews, the following actions are recommended to raise attractiveness of timber construction and wooden products within public procurement efforts:

A. Capacity Building

- Create public procurement knowledge centres with expertise in the procurement of wooden buildings and design
- Fund targeted training and advisory support regarding wood building systems and their benefits for municipal officials, including Life Cycle Costing (LCC) knowledge
- Promote the use of long-term overall value criteria - including both sustainability and financial aspects - over the lowest initial price selection
- Enable constant market dialogue with the suppliers and experts
- Offer simplified templates and toolkits for sustainable procurement

A. Streamlining Bureaucracy

- Simplify procurement, especially GPP, compliance and reporting for small municipalities
- Bundle multiple supports (e.g. financial + technical) into a single programme

B. Raising Awareness & Incentives

- Demonstrate long-term savings from wood construction (e.g. energy, maintenance, resilience)
- Improve understanding of Life Cycle Costing (LCC) of investments
- Improve outreach about available subsidies and how to access them

⁴¹ Angela Ranea Palma, et al., *Challenging elements in LCC*. P. 93.
<https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC138891/>

- Engage users of public spaces in dialogues and site visits to exemplary wooden buildings

C. Peer Learning Models

- Use successful nations and municipalities as mentors or hubs for others.
- Encourage existing city networks and mayors to include wood construction on their agenda

D. Policy Adjustment

- Align subsidy levels more closely with project complexity and timeline
- Introduce additional incentives for small or under-resourced municipalities

Aligning Public Procurement with Climate Goals: Unlocking the Potential of Wood in Construction

To conclude, increasing the share of wood in construction requires public entities to send clear, consistent, and long-term signals to the market. This entails setting measurable targets, developing reliable market forecasts, offering targeted support instruments, enhancing buyer competence, and formally recognizing exemplary practices. A market share of at least ten percent is widely considered the threshold at which timber becomes a structurally relevant material in the construction sector. Once this critical mass is reached, less material specific support may be required.

Wood, like all construction materials, is subject to supply constraints and should be used wisely. Maximising the efficiency of conventional materials, in combination with timber, can lead to great reduction gains of the sector's overall emissions. Therefore, decarbonisation efforts must extend across the entire construction industry. To support this transition, economic incentives should be leveraged to promote resource efficiency where these are not yet the norm.

Public procurement should be leveraged as a strategic tool to advance environmentally friendly construction and accelerate long-term decarbonisation in the construction sector. Both public authorities and construction stakeholders are urged to embed sustainability, with particular focus on climate impact, into current procurement practices and decision-making processes. Aligning procurement practices with climate objectives is essential to achieving a meaningful and lasting transformation throughout the built environment.

Annexes

Annex A – Consulted Experts

The following experts were consulted during the course of this study. The experts listed below have agreed to have their names, affiliations, and professional details published as part of this annex.

Austria

- **Simon Holzknecht**
Key Informant
proHolz Tirol
- **Philipp Zingerle**
Key Informant
proHolz Tirol
- **Mag. Nikolaus Summer, MBA**
Public Procurement Professional
Project Manager, Plattform Nachhaltige Beschaffung

Czech Republic

- **Pavel Broum**
Key Informant
Ministry of Agriculture

France

- **CHRITH architects & Emma Diehl Studio**
Key Informants

Finland

- **Sini Koskinen**
Key Informant / Business Stakeholder
Project Manager, Federation of the Finnish Woodworking Industries
- **Jani Saarinen**
Public Procurer
Managing Partner, Market Dialogues, Vison Oy
- **Juha Vuorenmaa**
Public Procurer
Head of Construction, City of Vantaa

Germany

- **Holzbau-Cluster Rheinland-Pfalz**
c/o Baugewerbeverband Rheinland-Pfalz, Geschäftsstelle Koblenz / Timber Construction Cluster Rheinland-Pfalz
- **Dr. Stefan Diederichs**
Public Procurer
Stadt Hamburg Behörde für Umwelt, Klima, Energie und Agrarwirtschaft,
Energieeffizientes und nachhaltiges Bauen

Slovenia

- **Janja Ribic**
Key Informant
Ministry of the Economy, Tourism, and Sport
- **Vlasta Krmelj**
Public Procurement Professional
Mayor of the Municipality of Selnica ob Dravi
Director of Energy and Climate Agency of the Podravje Region
Expert in Sustainable Energy & Climate Development

Spain

- **José Pernas García**
Key Informant
Professor of administrative law at Universidade da Coruña
- **Josep M. Manich Navarro**
Public Procurer
Architect & Project Manager, Barcelona City Council

Annex B – Public Procurement Subgroup Members

The following members formed the sub-group that supported the preparation and finalisation of this extended technical brief by assisting the consultant responsible for drafting the report in verifying case study information and identifying national experts for interviews.

- Christian Aebischer (Federal Office for the Environment)
- Vanesa Baño (Innovawood)
- Martin Behrens (Fachagentur Nachwachsende Rohstoffe e.V.)
- Mathias Deutz (Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental Protection, Regions and Water Management)
- Petri Heino (Consultant)
- Lena Holzer (Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental Protection, Regions and Water Management)
- Fernando Sanz (Galician Agency for Forest-Based Industry)
- Dieter Lechner (Fachverband der Holzindustrie Österreichs)
- Gregory Richards (Storaenso)
- Kris Wijnendaele (Europanels)

With support from the WoodPoP Secretariat:

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- *Veronika Steinhofer-Juch (IUFRO)*