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European Federation of Engineering Consultancy Associations

Representing FIDIC in Europe



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New standards can ease the way for better cross-border cooperation in construction industry

There will be better cross-border cooperation in the European Union (EU) and a more level playing field for tenderers in the construction and engineering sector with the adoption of two milestone standards recently published by CEN, the European Standardisation Organisation. The European Federation of Consulting Engineers Associations (EFCA) was the driving force that brought them together and is now pushing for their use in the market place.

Jean Félix, a distinct member of EFCA, presided over the CEN Technical Committee 395 that took three years of painstaking work between CEN, AFNOR (F) and NEN (NL) to finalise the standards documents. Dik Spekkink, convenor of one of the two committee working groups, is aware of the real benefits such standards can bring. "There are language and cultural barriers to cross-border cooperation," explains Mr Spekkink, "but there are also 'hidden' hurdles erected by numerous meanings being accorded to engineering terms and definitions, and the many different ways of seeing the life-cycle of a project."



Dik Spekkink

"The standards are not about standardising the consulting engineering trade," he adds, "but about standardising the way we communicate about the trade. They help prepare the conditions for free competition."

Greater EU efficiency – better value for the taxpayer

"We really want EU officials to see that both standards are meant to enable and facilitate cross-border cooperation between architects and consulting engineers within the EU. It is important that these creative services from different countries, with different backgrounds, cultures and building habits, can use one common frame of reference to enable them to understand each other on a project level."

"Besides that," he adds, "it would be very good for public clients to use the same frame of reference in their European tender procedures."

Awarding authorities in the EU Member States have long seen big differences in the response to their tenders, reflecting cultural approaches or leaning on different interpretations of their specifications. This is sometimes the cause of delays during project implementation when the different interpretations become apparent. Mr Spekkink, and EFCA, are now calling on the EU institutions to embrace the standards in their own purchasing activities – as a contribution towards the modernisation of European public procurement.

Using the standards could help avoid costly delays during project implementation

"The taxpayer will gain in the long run," says Mr Spekkink. "Using the standards when issuing tenders will contribute to EU efforts for greater efficiency, reliability and innovation

Knowledge services leverage 88% investment in works and equipment

The knowledge-based services in engineering consultancy, architecture, and related R&D services, are providing leverage of over 8 times their own worth in built and industrial assets in the European Union (EU). Early results from the first ever global survey of macro-economic data on engineering and architectural services are showing that in the EU these important, 'creative', services, including related R&D, represent an average of 12% of total investment in the sector. "We know the services act as a trigger for further investment," says Jan Van der Putten, Secretary General of EFCA. "But this survey shows just how significant a role they are playing – generating a further 88% investment in works and equipment."

The study also revealed that as gross capital fixed formation (non-financial investment) rises, so does the use of these knowledge services. This correlation was reflected in the 11% decline in these services in 2011 (though they appear set for a rise in 2012).

The aggregated supply and demand for engineering, architecture and research & development services in the domestic EU-27 market have been estimated at €351 billion (Eurostat). In 2012, these services facilitated a €2,924 billion investment in the EU.

The services are provided mainly (51%) by dedicated professionals, particularly by the engineering consultancy industry and architects, partially (23%) by public and private in-house services, and by other industries (26 %) like contractors and suppliers of industrial equipment as an additional service.

EFCA commissioned the survey in conjunction with FIDIC, the international federation of engineering consultancy industry.

Passion and communication important to engineering consultancies

EFCA Young Professional of the Year 2013

Bringing technical innovations to a drinking water project in Cambodia and complementing it with excellent communication skills has earned Julien Dupont of SAFEGE (subsidiary of SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT) the title of EFCA Young Professional Engineer of 2013. Working with the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority (PPWSA) to provide water for the region with very low tariffs, Julien has been recognised for his efforts towards the master plan using original methodology for demand forecasts, a probability decision management system for a more reliable water supply, an innovative system of variable speed pumps to save energy, and a strong communication and training plan to ease implementation by the staff. The PPWSA praised his passion and conviction as well as his natural ability to pass on knowledge while introducing technical solutions. Julien wins a trip to Barcelona to participate in the 15-18 September 2013 FIDIC Conference and the Business Day, where the competition awards will be presented.

Runners-up

Gonçalo Rocheta Mateus (Portugal), a structural design engineer at COBA and Anne Rosborg (Denmark) of COWI were both runners up. Gonçalo was recognised particularly for his understanding of customer needs and ability to translate them into economic and reliable technical solutions within demanding schedules; and Anne was praised for her ability to bring all parties involved together to join forces for the development of new innovative solutions during a project. Both win €500 towards attending the international FIDIC conference.

FIDIC Centenary Conference

The FIDIC Centenary Conference will take place in Barcelona from 15-18 September 2013. This World Consulting Engineers Conference will provide an opportunity for consulting engineers, their clients and partners, for politicians and financiers, the media and civil society to gather together to help celebrate the achievements of consulting engineers and to become involved in identifying strategies for broader and more sustainable solutions to global challenges. For more information and registration: www.fidic2013.org.



www.efcanet.org

in the construction sector. It also helps multi-disciplinary partnerships, between various sectors or countries, work more easily together." National standardisation bodies are already working towards adopting the standards this summer.

Clear description of building process – a particular need

Standard EN 16310 concerns terminology for engineering services for the construction of buildings, infrastructure and industrial facilities.

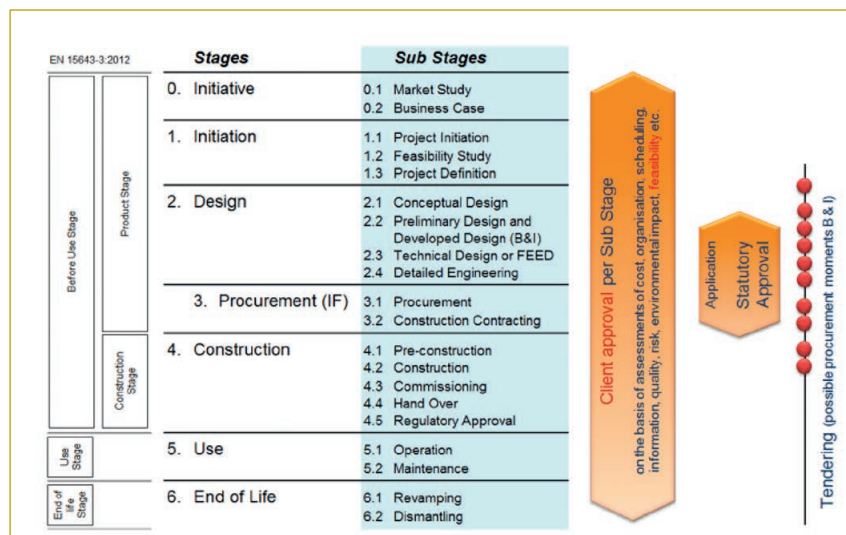
Standard EN 16311 deals with terminology to describe engineering services for industrial products. This includes intellectual services which have historically been under-recognised. As this has often limited the value placed on inputs from consulting engineering and architectural sectors, the standards help to show the need to have such services properly acknowledged.

The terms that are incorporated in the glossary are in line with those developed for other industries. But while the glossary serves a clear, specific purpose for a relatively limited number of terms, the real achievement of the standard lies in the definitions of a building project.

The annexes are particularly important in this sense. "That is where you get a description of the building process in all its stages, right through from Initial stage to end-of-life," says Mr Spekkink. "It would be excellent if clients submitting European tenders use the informative annex to define their requests and then everybody can look at it and map it to their own standards. They can consider a tender and say this is different from our own country but we do know what it means. It is a framework for countries within the EU." The standards ultimately help project developers to lay out their specifications.

Construction projects are managed through a series of stages as are their related national plans of work of engineering service providers (including architects) and they differ from country to country; they may also be governed by different legislation. According to CEN, the new standards do not harmonise national work plans but do provide a way for all parties concerned to have a common view on the actual staging and the engineering activities that take place within each stage. Annex A, devoted to stages, may offer a common reference framework to which engineering service providers (including architects) can 'map' their project specific scope of work in cross-border projects. The actual scope of work is still always specified in a contract.

Stages and sub-stages



Stages and sub stages in the life cycle of built assets

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EFCA has member associations in 24 countries, and is the sole European federation lobbying on behalf of engineering consultancy and related services, a sector that employs around one million staff in Europe. EFCA contributes with a strong and cohesive input to legislative actions of its national associations on issues affecting market conditions. Furthermore, the organisation works as a Europe-wide platform for national associations and their member firms to gather relevant facts and discuss issues with their counterparts.