

Communication on the energy performance of buildings: not enough progress

September 24, 2008 – Paris (France) - With the support of the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME), Novethic publishes the 2008 survey on the eco-performance of buildings. The survey assesses the quality of reporting by developers, property owners and managers of listed real estate assets on the energy efficiency of buildings. The aim of the survey is to measure the degree of commitment to policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Nearly a year after a top-level meeting on the subject in France (the so-called Grenelle Environmental Forum), key players in the real estate industry are starting to act, but their efforts so far have been inadequate. Of the 34 businesses surveyed, only 2 give detailed information on energy consumption.

Increasingly involved

For two years, real estate professionals have increased their communication on the energy efficiency of their buildings—those they own, build or manage—and their greenhouse gas emission reductions. Real estate promoters and owners communicate more and better on these issues, partly attributable to the effect of the Grenelle Environmental Forum. In fact, 69% of real estate professionals in the survey sample mention in their reporting the existence of a commitment to acquire HEQ (*Haute Qualité Environnementale*) or equivalent certification. Similarly, information on pilot programs such as the construction of buildings that consume less energy or that generate energy are often mentioned.

Measures are too vague

The primary weakness of such reporting is the near absence of quantified information on specific commitments and timetables. Just 12% of all property owners, including Altaréa and Unibail Rodamco, have adopted the comprehensive goal of cutting their greenhouse gas emissions fourfold, which suggests the existence of a gap between what companies say and what they actually do. Initiatives are being developed, but they remain experimental. In fact, no developers mention low consumption construction with positive energy output. Even more critical, renovation and by extension the existing stock are totally neglected, particularly by property owners which—except for Gecina and Accor—do not make disclosures on their current products. This is in spite of the legal obligation to perform an energy diagnostic assessment when housing is sold.

Different levels of awareness

With an average score of 10%, which corresponds to the quality of information provided in their reporting, asset managers for third parties are clearly behind developers for own account (40%) and property owners (30%). In fact, the reports of asset managers in the survey sample (members of large groups) provide no information on the energy efficiency of their assets under management or on the promises they have made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Only AXA REIM identifies these challenges for its business.

Methodology

The methodology developed by Novethic is based on general reporting guidelines (such as the NRE and GRI) and those specific to real estate issues, such as the objective of cutting by fourfold greenhouse gas emissions.

The survey is structured into four main chapters, weighted appropriately:

- Coverage of the issue of energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions of (CO₂) in real estate: 15%
- Transparency on energy and CO₂ in current business activities: 35%
- Commitments on energy and CO₂ in future business activities: 30%
- Information on financial, technological and managerial innovation on energy performance and CO₂ emissions: 20%

Click on this link to access the full survey: http://www.novethic.com/novethic/v3_uk/upload/Barometre_2008_EN.pdf

About Novethic

A subsidiary of Caisse des Dépôts, Novethic is a leading center for research, information and expertise pertaining to SRI (socially responsible investment) and CSR (corporate social and environmental responsibility). Its web site, www.novethic.fr, is a comprehensive source of information for responsible economic actors.

Media contact: Célia Juère – +33 (0)1.58.50.98.23 – celia.juere@novethic.fr