



Summary report

on the research project:

“Vision statement for the construction value chain, phase 2: academic support stage”

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1 Research aims

The German Federal Government's coalition agreement contains the following statement: "We will support the construction sector in its efforts to develop a vision statement as the general framework for a modern construction policy that seeks to safeguard investment and jobs through innovation and quality".

This declaration of intent has been put into practice in the course of a process that has lasted around 2½ years. The "Vision Statement for the Construction Value Chain" constitutes the industry's strategic framework; it contains both a declaration of objectives and a set of action-based guidelines derived from those objectives. Thus its function is to provide guidance, to foster integration by creating a sense of community, to provide assistance in decision-making and, through the development of common rules, to help the actors in the design and construction value chain in their efforts to improve coordination.

The purpose of the research project was to provide academic support for the development process.

2 Carrying out the research work

Important associations representing all the stages of the design and construction value chain contributed to the process of developing a vision statement for the construction value chain:

- Bundesarchitektenkammer/The Federal Chamber of German Architects
- Bundesingenieurkammer/Federal Chamber of German Engineers
- Bundesverband Baustoffe - Steine und Erden/German Building Materials Association - Non-Metallic Minerals
- Bundesvereinigung Mittelständischer Bauunternehmen/Federal Association of Medium-Sized Construction Companies
- GEFMA German Facility Management Association
- Hauptverband der Deutschen Bauindustrie/German Construction Industry Confederation
- Industriegewerkschaft Bauen-Agrar-Umwelt/Construction, Agriculture and Environment Trade Union

- Verband Beratender Ingenieure/German Consultant Engineers' Association
- Verband Deutscher Maschinen- und Anlagenbau/German Engineering Federation
- Zentralverband des Deutschen Baugewerbes/German Construction Confederation
- Zweckverbund Ostdeutscher Bauverbände/Confederation of East German Construction Associations

On the Federal Government's side, the process of developing the vision statement was led by the Federal Ministry for Transport, Buildings and Urban Affairs, with assistance from the Federal Ministry for Work and Social Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology. The academic support was provided in the course of the research project by Prof. Dr. Gerhard Bosch of the Institut Arbeit und Qualifikation, Gelsenkirchen (concept study and text of the vision statement), Prof. Dr. Stefanie Streck of the Bergische Universität Wuppertal and Karsten Wischhof, Unternehmensberatung WSG, Hamburg (both: workshop documentation and background papers). A steering committee set up specifically for the purpose served as the coordinating body for all the parties involved.

Prior to the actual process of developing the vision statement (from autumn 2006 onwards) and following numerous discussions with actors and experts in the design and construction value chain, seven thematic areas of relevance to the vision statement were identified in the course of a “conceptual study on the development of a vision statement for the construction value chain in the Federal Republic of Germany”:

- the importance of the construction sector in the economy and in society;
- markets for the future;
- work force skills and qualifications;
- innovations in the design and construction value chain;
- quality and life cycle of buildings;
- cooperation in the industry;
- legality and values-based management.

Thirteen workshops on the main themes were organised by the associations involved, with documentation being provided for each one. Seven expert reports were commissioned by

way of support, most of which were funded from the resources made available under “The Future of Construction” research initiative. The results of the workshops and expert reports (in so far as they have been completed) can be viewed at www.bmvbs.de/Bauwesen/Bauwirtschaft-,2982/Leitbild-Bauwirtschaft.htm (from autumn 2007 onwards).

On the basis of the workshops and expert reports, the dialogue within the steering committee and further discussions, work began in the autumn of 2008 on drafting the actual text of the vision statement and background papers on each of the seven thematic areas. The background papers have been collected together in a resources book. This volume presents the current state of the debate in the thematic areas as seen by Prof. Dr. Stefanie Streck and management consultant Karsten Wischhof, the researchers who provided support for the process. It constitutes a rich repository of resources for those engaged in putting the vision statement into practice.

Prof. Dr. Stefanie Streck produced the background papers on

- workforce skills and qualifications,
- quality and lifecycle of buildings and
- legality and values-based management

and did some preliminary work for the background paper on markets for the future.

Karsten Wischhof was responsible for the background papers on

- the importance of the construction sector in the economy and in society,
- markets for the future,
- innovations in the design and construction value chain and
- cooperation in the industry.

The vision statement will be given a high-profile launch on 24 March 2009. The resources book will also make the background papers available to a wide audience within the industry (also available on the Internet at www.bmvbs.de/Bauwesen/Bauwirtschaft-,2982/Leitbild-Bauwirtschaft.htm). It documents the important stages in the process of developing the vision statement from the perspective of the researchers who supported the process and wrote the

background papers and offers a wealth of suggestions for putting the vision statement into practice.

3 Summary of the results

The vision statement for the construction value chain can be summarised as follows:

Our vision is of a highly professional, adaptive construction value chain, with innovative firms and a skilled workforce cooperating with each other in various ways and in different kinds of networks in order to provide their customers with a comprehensive range of high-quality, tailor-made services.

This vision gives rise to the following six guidelines:

1. The actors in the construction value chain are creators and problem solvers

The actors in the construction value chain are active problem solvers, who take responsibility not only for individual solutions but also for complex undertakings up to and including the operation and running of buildings. They advise their customers on the design and planning of buildings and on issues for the future, such as energy saving and accommodation adapted to the needs of the elderly, and offer them a comprehensive range of tailor-made services.

2. Customer focus, partnership and fairness form the basis for cooperation in the construction value chain

The future of the construction value chain also lies in the optimisation of cooperation throughout the whole value added chain. Construction projects differ in scale and complexity, and customers all have their own particular preferences. As a result, different forms of cooperation (e.g. consortiums, construction teams and partnering) have developed alongside each other. All cooperation is based on partnership on equal terms, fairness and guarantees of reasonable prices and wages at all stages of the value added chain.

3. Quality of construction to be assessed over the entire life cycle and improved in line with economic, environmental and social sustainability criteria

The notion of construction quality applies to a building's entire life cycle and does not end with its completion. The challenging sustainability criteria will not be met and companies will not be able to create new markets without a new focus on quality. Considered over a building's life cycle, high quality and reasonable prices are not conflicting objectives. The legal framework should contain incentives to encourage a stronger focus on sustainability and the life cycle while adhering to market principles. The state and private companies should assume a pioneering role in sustainable construction with high product and design quality.

4. Training is the key to quality, innovation, job security and competitiveness

In view of the emergence of new technologies, new forms of cooperation and new customer requirements, the 'good training' trade mark is to be developed further. The school leavers' market is becoming tighter and recruitment of trainees will be difficult unless they are offered high quality initial and further training and good promotion opportunities, as well as employment stability and attractive working conditions. In addition, continuing training must be expanded. The various categories of employees must also be trained together in order further to develop the necessary crosscutting competences.

5. The construction value chain's innovative capacity is to be strengthened in order to make Germany a leader in innovative construction

The construction value chain's innovative potential has to be mobilised if new markets are to be opened up and developed. The diffusion of new materials, processes and internal technical fittings can be accelerated by cooperation on research and development as well as initial and further training.

6. Legality and values-based leadership are the preconditions for fair competition, job security and sustainable business success

Adherence to values such as compliance with the law and the rejection of illegal employment practices by all partners in the construction value chain is a fundamental precondition for fair

competition, sustainable business success and the safeguarding of German jobs and welfare systems. The key to success is preventive risk management in companies and a corporate culture that lives and breathes values such as honesty, integrity and trustworthiness.