

BVB

BYGGVARUBEDÖMNINGEN™

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION OF BUILDING PRODUCTS

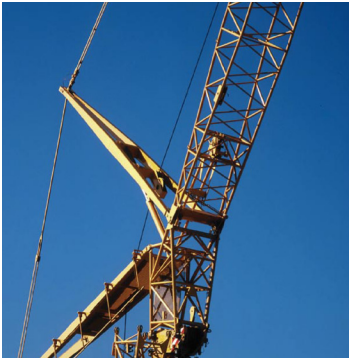


This is an introduction to the unique collaboration in Swedish construction, called BVB. The organisation sets common criteria for environmental evaluation of building products. The aim is to provide a standard for the entire Swedish building sector.

WHY MAKE AN ECO-FRIENDLY CHOICE IN BUILDING PRODUCTS?

Asbestos, PCB, CFCs, Cadmium – a long list could be made of the hazardous substances that were built into our homes during the late 20th century. These substances have had an adverse impact on the environment and have contributed to lung cancer, fertility problems and numerous other health issues. To property owners and developers, and not least tenants, this has caused many an unpleasant surprise.

Normally, a substance used as building material is not easily declared illegal. But once it is, it poses great problems for owners of the buildings containing it. On most occasions, the law imposes the owner to go through with the costly procedure of decontaminating the whole building. Now, who knows what building materials will be banned in the future? How can we tell, already today, which building materials are environmentally friendly?



THE IDEAL AND THE REAL

Ideally, a chemist and an environmentalist would make every choice concerning which building products to use in construction. The chemist would provide the correct information about the product, while the environmentalist would make sure to pick the one best for the environment. But we do not live in an ideal world. Choices are often made without the correct information and without the environment first in mind. In other words, what holds us back from choosing the best building products are the problems of Information and of Incentive.



THE BVB SYSTEM

During the last few years, the major property owners and developers in Sweden have joined forces to solve these problems. The goal is that tomorrow's buildings will be constructed using only products that have been environmentally evaluated and approved. For this reason, the collaboration of companies has resulted in a standard for the environmental evolution of building products. The system is called Byggvarubedömningen, or BVB, which translates as "Building Material Assessment."

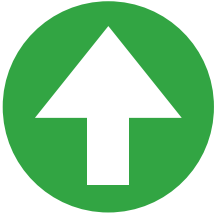


BVB evaluates, proactively and systematically, the contents of a product and of the production process. In this sense, BVB is like any environmental evolution system. However, BVB also provides the market with a common criteria and an evaluation standard. This standard, we have learned, is increasingly important in a globalized and complex world. As large and stable clients, we ensure both producers and users of building products a high standard of knowledge as well as large-scale use of the system. All companies affiliated to BVB insist on the use of environmentally approved products in their construction and management projects.

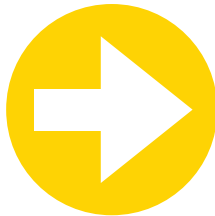


WHAT PRODUCTS ARE INCLUDED?

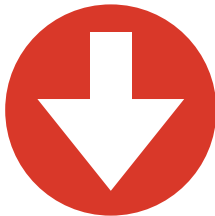
The BVB database currently contains more than 7,000 evaluated building products and new ones are added continuously. Building products are usually evaluated when there is a need among the members, but it is also possible for a building materials producer to make the first move towards getting their products evaluated. The interaction between BVB, members, and producers is intended to guarantee a continuously updated database of relevant products. This process makes it easier for a contractor to live up to the tough environmental stipulations. (The Swedish parliament has set up a goal to reduce the hazardous chemicals in Sweden to almost zero by 2025.)



RECOMMENDED



ACCEPTED



TO BE AVOIDED

HOW DOES THE BVB DATABASE WORK?

The BVB user is usually a contractor inquiring into the environmental qualities of a certain product (the use of the BVB database requires a user licence). On the BVB website, the users enter the name of the product or producer they need information about in a user-friendly search engine. The search engine connects to the BVB system and gives a simple answer about the product: “Recommended”, “Accepted” or “To be avoided”. These are simple answers to usually very complex decisions that the contractor has to make. The background for the answer, however, is a thorough analysis by the BVB experts.

In the online search engine, every building product has a product card containing the declaration of contents and the evolution outcome. The product cards are adapted for inclusion in the supporting documentation for product procurement and in the documentation of the construction project. Also, the system includes a function for uploading information about one’s own construction project and the building products involved in it. This makes it easy to go back and see which products were used and how they were rated.

THE ANALYSIS

The strength of BVB is the widespread endorsement of its evolution criteria. The products are evaluated in seven areas, each of which is separately evaluated. The areas are then weighted before the overall environmental evolution is finalized.

THE SEVEN AREAS:

- Chemical content (declaration of contents)
- Input materials (raw materials)
- The construction phase
- The management phase
- Demolition
- Residual and waste products
- Indoor environment

CONTACT:

Jerker Nyblom
– Environmental coordinator,
Akademiska Hus Stockholm
jerker.nyblom@akademiskahus.se
+46 8 685 75 34
+46 (0)706 34 34 24

Mia Torpe
– Environmental Manager, HSB
mia.torpe@hsb.se
+46 8 785 32 94
+46 (0)70 643 00 08

BVB IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:



CONTACT:

Jerker Nyblom

– Environmental coordinator, Akademiska Hus Stockholm

jerker.nyblom@akademiskahus.se

+46 8 685 75 34 +46 (0)706 34 34 24

Mia Torpe

– Environmental Manager, HSB

mia.torpe@hsb.se

+46 8 785 32 94 +46 (0)70 643 00 08