

Advanced Building News

January 2006

Dutch-Chinese Activities

The work for the Sino-Dutch co-operation in Sustainable Building has continued, and new demonstration projects have been added to the process. The past year the issue of sustainable building has been upgraded in China to one of the top ten policy issues, and there have been many environmental directives from the central government, with strong pressure to establish results. Many items from the joint Dutch-Chinese workshops last year have been taken up and research put in place, and the (draft) green building guide list (from Ministry of Construction) has many items added from our joint findings last year. As well as many other things: last year it was reported that 70 percent (600 million tons) of their huge cement production was produced by small size MSK units (Mechanised Shaft Kiln), with low energy efficiency and high emissions rate. Chinese colleagues report that it is now reduced to 60 percent. New production units have been developed and are operational, although the efficiency of the new production sites is not yet known. Beijing (as well as other cities and the national government) has set "building a resource saving society" as a major goal in its draft of the 11th five-year plan (2006-2011). The Beijing municipality has already developed a adapted version of GOBAS (the rating system based on CASBEE that was developed for the Olympics) for local buildings assessment. And a Beijing newspaper reported that after few years of energy efficiency campaigning with mixed results, energy policing has been introduced: Inspectors will be controlling for excessive lighting in shopping malls and hotels, and the level of cooling in Summer, to ensure that 26 degrees is the lowest set point. I visited the Building Physics department at Tsinghua University Beijing, responsible for Olympics accommodations assessment, and I was told that designs for Olympic accommodations are being changed according to their findings from GOBAS assessments. Better late than never, but the budget will be exceeded...

In our co-operation with large project developers we noticed a great interest and willingness to consider sustainability in their projects, and to adopt new strategies and ways of management to continue this for their portfolios. Of course, many problems remain to be solved. One of the main problems at the moment is that, due to the time pressure, sustainable building in mainstream practice results in add-on measures, and is not yet integrated in conceptual approach and analyses. Other issues are the wide spread adoption of western and US architecture and methodologies, not fitted for local climate and culture. Nevertheless, we are impressed by the ongoing developments, and in a couple of years or so we may go there to learn from their experiences.

Ronald Rovers