

The EU SHE project “Sustainable Housing in Europe”
moving from the extraordinary to the ordinary
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- **Short summary**

The oral presentation will introduce:

- (1) the objectives of the five-year demonstration project called “SHE - Sustainable Housing in Europe”, which is lead by social housing organisations and funded under the Fifth Framework R&D Programme of the EC;
- (2) the methodology applied to move towards an everyday practice of sustainability in new social housing projects.

The conclusions will emphasize the five-year project results and first impacts in the building sector and social housing practices.

- **Main objectives of the SHE project**

The project aims at sending a clear message to all urban stakeholders and citizens that today moving towards an everyday practice of sustainability in social housing sector, involving all stakeholders and especially the final users in the building process, is possible.

Based on this rethinking of its societal mission, since march 2003, eight social housing organisations together with a team of scientific experts, have been working to design, build and monitor sustainable homes for about 600 families and to promote the inclusion of sustainable housing, of sustainable urban management in political agenda and policies at national, regional and local levels in 4 countries - Denmark, France, Italy and Portugal.

The main objective of the SHE project was to reduce the distance between what is to be done and what is normally done - moving from the extraordinary to the ordinary - by:

- Ensuring the participation of the stakeholders, especially the final users, throughout the building process;
- Improving the environmental performances of new social housing projects and providing a healthy environment for the citizens;
- Raising the awareness of the urban actors towards the benefits of sustainable housing and promoting sustainable approaches in local and national policies;
- Developing practical guidelines with technical, economical and managerial recommendations for social housing providers;
- Developing a global cost tool to illustrate the benefits for all the stakeholders;
- Evaluating the environmental performance of housing projects and the satisfaction of the users;
-on two words: to demonstrate the feasibility of sustainable social homes in order to accelerate their “democratization”.

- **Innovative outcomes**

- an integrated roadmap with practical recommendations aimed at supporting social housing organisations to introduce sustainability in the daily practice;
- a dwelling manual for each SHE pilot project aimed to educate future inhabitants in the use and maintenance of sustainable dwellings;
- the development of a global life cycle costing methodology for sustainable housing.

SHE PARTNERS	Country
Coordinator	
Federabitazione Europe- Confcooperative	Italy
Social Housing Organisations	
OPAC38 -Office d'Aménagement et de Construction de l'Isère	France - Grenoble
NORBICETA - União Cooperativas de habitação	Portugal- Matosinhos
RINGAARDEN	Denmark- Aarhus
Consorzio CCI casa	Italy- Teramo
COIPES- Consorzio di Iniziativa e Promozione dell'Edilizia Sociale	Italy- Preganziol
CONSEDI - Consorzio Bresciano per l'Edilizia Economico Popolare	Italy- Mazzano
COPALC -Consorzio Provinciale Abitazioni Lavoratori Cristiani di Bologna	Italy- Ozzano
COPEs- Consorzio Organizzazione e Promozione Edilizia Sociale	Italy - Pesaro
Scientific partners	
University of Porto	Portugal
Fenache- National Federation of Housing Cooperatives	Portugal
Istituto Nazionale di Bioarchitettura	Italy
Ricerca & Progetto - Galassi, Mingozzi e associati	Italy
Casaqualità	Italy
La Calade	France
Centre Scientifique et Technique du Bâtiment	France
Carl Bro Group	Denmark
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens	Greece

In February 2007, the SHE project was awarded with the **Energy Prize of the European Commission, in the context of the Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign 2005-2008, in the category “Public-Private Partnership”**. The prize was motivated by the fact the fact that *“SHE represents a shining example of a public-private partnership where social housing cooperatives on a local, regional and European level have partnered with building companies, scientific institutions and technical organizations to demonstrate the feasibility of sustainable housing and communities. SHE focuses on raising awareness among end-users and wants to improve the lives of citizens by offering healthy and sustainable environments. The partnership is demonstrating an integrated approach to the development and construction of sustainable housing by making the extraordinary ordinary. By the end of the project, 600 families in Denmark, France, Italy and Portugal will be living in sustainable dwellings. SHE will develop best-practices guidelines so that sustainable dwellings can be replicated by others.”*

In April 2008, the SHE project was awarded with the **ENERGY GLOBE Award for Italy 2007**.

Avoiding any self-celebration, the national and international awards shows the wide recognition of the hard work and the results achieved and represent important platforms for spreading the SHE message and to boost the commitment of sceptic stakeholders !

Actual state of advancement

From the beginning of 2008, All the EC-funded dwellings are concluded. Now, the monitoring of both the building performance and user satisfaction is proceeding and the first results are very encouraging: thanks to the EC extension, the SHE team is fully convinced that the first full year of energy and social monitoring will fully confirm the resource cost reduction and that these new neighbourhoods encourage people to adopt sustainable and healthy lifestyles.



Some statements

it's important to highlight that, at the beginning of the SHE project, in 2003, the decision to make an effort to lower the major barriers in order to “move from extraordinary to ordinary” was a big challenge. In all the countries of the SHE partners, the government efforts were either almost inexistent or fragmented, the process of mainstreaming sustainable practices was happening very slowly and key EU documents, as the *Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment* or *Energy Performance of Buildings Directive*, were not published yet.

In light of this, it is easy to understand how the SHE thinking was marginalised and considered as a very long-term vision, or even an illusion of some utopian co-operators, and often met by resistance.

However, in the last years, due to e.g. the increased focus on climate change, natural resources and energy prices, we have experienced a tremendous increase of interest. New technical knowledge, products, projects, literature, and local regulations are coming out every day and actors of all parts of the building sector are now realizing that they can actually make an impact. The sustainable building initiatives are coming out of both the non-governmental sector and from all the levels (national, regional, provincial and local) of government within in countries.

By vigorously promoting the inclusion of sustainable housing and sustainable urban management on the political agenda and in policies at national, regional and local level, the SHE team has surely contributed to boost keys stakeholders to understand the importance of the issues and that it is time for action.

The different SHE teams have acted as critical friends to the local governments in their area and as ambassadors for sustainable housing development.

In some countries, the SHE project has marked a turning point in how to implement a more sustainable planning, local government and building process. In fact, up to now, whereas everyone would agree that sustainability was a good thing and that there was a need to do things differently, they would not agree on what sustainability was, how or when to achieve it.

In Portugal, for instance, an agreement has been reached as expressed by Mr. João Ferrão, Under Secretary of State for Land and City Management, who said during the inauguration of the SHE building in Portugal that “*from now on, we do not have any excuses not to do - at least - the same*”. We can therefore affirm that the SHE project contribution was to go from a “non-culture” to a culture of implementation of sustainability.