

Flanders

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Platform Coordinator

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VMSW - Vlaamse Maatschappij voor Sociaal Wonen is a public body operating under private company law that is mainly charged with the implementation of the Flemish housing policy priorities. VMSW plans, assists and finances the activities of 102 social housing companies which build, promote, construct, refurbish, let and sell social housing, both rental and ownership. It also provides technical, legal and financial assistance (VMSW operates as a bank in that by financing these operations and also grants mortgage loans to private buyers of social houses) and collects existing data in order to feed into and assist in the future policy making process.

Description of the Platform

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The VSMW platform has established an energy first-aid 'hotline' service which provides their members with practical advice and information on all energy related issues. The service has three thematic pillars: the first on all issues related to rational use of energy, such as grants available for energy efficiency and fuel poverty. The second on all certification-related questions and the third on renewable energy, best practice examples and technical queries. The Platform hosts workshops and seminars to boost communication between partners. Direct Platform partners are the members of VMSW with cooperation extending to the social housing federations throughout Belgium. The Platform also rely on expertise from the education and private sector and collaborates with key policy makers and partners in the construction sector.

Platform Strategy

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"Our members are being faced with a number of challenges and obstacles. They include the fragmentation of funding instruments in the region which is confusing for those wishing to access grants. Authorities also have placed a strong focus on low energy new-build as opposed to existing housing. Members want more information on long-term performance, maintenance needs remarking that this type of information is not available once a pilot project has been completed. The issues of residents' energy related behaviour is also insufficiently dealt with. With this platform we will start by ensuring that our members have enough information on what their obligations are in terms of energy certification, financial assistance available at regional level. We will highlight good practices and work towards the integration of energy performance data in our stock databases. In the longer term we aim to provide a one-stop-shop on all energy related issues for our members and advance collaboration with other

social partners.” - Mr Bernard Wallyn, Flemish POWER HOUSE Platform coordinator.

Following a performance review, the Platform Coordinator has issued an updated strategy statement and priorities going forward:

“We would need to know how other Federations and Social Housing Organisations are dealing with the 2020 targets, particularly when it comes to new Nearly Zero Energy buildings. The design and technical aspects of energy refurbishment of the existing building stock needs time to be developed and accepted by professionals in the construction and building sector; to this end, we should continue the work undergone by the Flemish POWER HOUSE Platform and go beyond national frontiers to cooperate with our colleagues from all across Europe, even if specific information on social housing projects is, in some cases, difficult to find. We should continue our cooperation on social, financial and organizational aspects bearing in mind the specificities of each country and find both information and inspiration from what our colleagues are doing in order to overcome the barriers that our sector is facing.” - Mr Bernard Wallyn, Flemish POWER HOUSE Platform coordinator.

Click here to visit the Flemish POWER HOUSE Platform website

Source: http://www.powerhouseeurope.eu/national_platforms/flanders/overview/