

Timber – financial incentives – bottom up (i.e. grassroots movements) or top down (E.U directives > federal government > actual legislation)

Workgroup led by: Erik Konze

**Workgroup theme:** Timber – financial incentives – bottom up (i.e. grassroots movements) or top down (E.U directives > federal government > actual legislation)

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**Output recorded by:** Erik Konze

**Synopsis:** The primary goal of the workshop was to attempt to determine if and what financial incentives could be implemented to promote the use of timber by method of active dialogue between the participants. The participants would be directed to analyse and compare the effectiveness of grassroots movement vs. a top down structured approach led by a governmental body.

As in life, where plans are often made, but quite often circumvented was the fate that befell this workgroup. Though to be quite fair, it is important to note that the reasons that the initial plan was circumvented was due to issues and ideas that were presented by speakers during the presentations that preceded the breakout to the workshops.

The presentation made by Jerg Hilt representing Thuringia, Germany made very interesting use of the cluster concept. Ultimately the group concurred that using the cluster method would be the best method to yield the most feedback from all of the workgroup participants. Each participant was asked to name an issue/idea that in their opinion was specifically relevant to timber.

**Workgroup:** The followings issues/ideas/concepts were identified by the participants: **paper, communication, heating, renewable, waste, design, acoustics, biodiversity, transport, re-useable and construction.** From this list the group determined what they felt were the three (3) most important points that warranted the most emphasis. (see below)

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**Workgroup:**

- ◊ **Paper**
  - usage
  
- ⊕ **Communication (1)**
  - Education
  - In actuality – a lack of communication, hence a greater need for effective communication
  - Acknowledgement of the need to communicate demographically specifically
  
- ⊕ **Heating**
  - efficiency
  
- ⊕ **Renewable**
  - resources
  
- ⊕ **Waste (3)**
  - Waste vs.no waste (communication)
  
- ⊕ **Design (2)**
  - Implementation
  - Need for more timber emphasis in colleges and universities (communication)
  - Public awareness (communication)
  
- ◊ **Acoustics**
  - A positive environment
  
- ⊕ **Biodiversity**
  - Less harm
  
- ⊕ **Transport**
  - Introduction of “green miles” (communication)
  
- ⊕ **Re-useable**
  - flexibility
  
- ⊕ **Construction (2)**
  - Speed
  - Sustainability
  - Quality and quality control

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**Workgroup:** In addition to identifying the areas that warranted the greatest attention, participants noted sub points they felt related and important. After this was completed the group continued to further explore and discuss ideas pertaining to the top three. The following shows what was discussed and in what order.

**Communication > education > dialogue**

The need to focus on education became very apparent. All levels of the educational system warrant review, such that new methods can be developed to integrate into the academic curriculum. This will ultimately likely have the greatest impact on the way timber is identified and used in the future.

The group even toyed with certain catch phrases that could be used to better relate to student bodies, ie. “Wood rules in schools!”

**Education > dialogue > communication > kids educating parents**

The more the group discussed the importance and relevance of communication, particularly toward children via education; it became ever so clear that focusing on children will ultimately help create a situation where children will educate/re-educate their siblings and parents with regard to timber and its importance in today’s and tomorrow’s society and global environment.

Relevant ideas that surfaced during the discussion of this primary topic were:

- ⌘ The continued need to encourage children to participate in tree planting field trips
- ⌘ The need to establish defined programs that associate forestry with academic community
- ⌘ Idea competitions aimed at students with the intention of finding new and more innovative communication solutions
- ⌘ The need to develop timber based projects, ideally, interactive and capable of crossing borders and boundaries’

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**Design > timber architecture > timber architecture competition's > real examples of timber**

Design incorporating timber and wood penetrates much further than one may initially assume. It was acknowledged that people have become, in essence, blind to timber in their immediate environment. People tend to take certain aspects of timber use for granted and consequently, tend not to actually identify with any particular traits or inherent properties of the material.

Erik Konze then briefly discussed his personal experiences with regard to the **Estonian Timber Structure Architectural Competition** that he has hosted/organized for the past four years in Estonia. During the first year of the competition, many of those that were involved with the project for the first time were openly skeptical regarding its need and purpose. Diligence and commitment to set standards have helped bring the competition to a place where it is respected by architects, citizens and the local media. Not only does the competition bring to the forefront timber structure achievements, but also addresses the importance of proper building practices and quality control. The consequent media attention that the competition attracts helps distribute the positive values of timber design and construction to the general public.

Erik Konze concluded his review of the **Estonian Timber Structure Architectural Competition** by acknowledging its positive role in promoting the notion that wood is good amongst designers, architects and the general public. Years of positive experiences and feedback tend to suggest that competitions of this type are an excellent way by which to attract the attention of both designers and architects as well as members of the general public.

The participants of the workshop also acknowledged that competitions of that nature have inherent advantages to promoting cross border exchanges of ideas, skills and design practices.

Participants also agreed, that more thought should be given to developing new competitions that focus on the innovative use of timber by students of design and architecture.

**Waste > no waste**

As time began to run out, this topic was not further explored.

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**Conclusion:** While attempting to answer if financial incentives for timber use could be more effectively adapted by a grassroots movement or by E.U directives and federal legislation, the workgroup reached the following consensus:

As they agreed that the likelihood of implanting tangible financial incentives that would promote the use of timber is poor, they redefined their task. They felt it was more important to determine what the fundamental issues are that are related to timber and consequently try to analyse and assess which are most important. This approach was largely influenced by Jerg Hiltz (Thuringia, Germany) use of the cluster method in his presentation. Of the all the issues that were identified, the workgroup agreed that the **single most important aspect that can affect the present and future use and understanding of timber is communication**. The next key areas that they identified were **architecture/design and construction**. The issue that was established as **third most important priority** was the notion of **waste/no waste**.

The common denominator of nearly all the issues that were discussed was communication and education. The workgroup reached the conclusion that it is far more likely that communication and education aimed at school children will create a situation where **kids will educate/re-educate their parents and siblings** regarding timber and its role in society.

The workgroup determined that effort should be made to create an item that is essential to daily life or school that be made of wood. Ideally this would be an item that could be made by children. This item could become a symbol for a **grassroots movement that would be led by school children**.

When the workshops time came to an end, the participants felt satisfied that they not only redefined the task, but that they were able to establish what they believed to be key issues that will have the most profound impact on the use and understanding of timber.

**Thus was concluded that the key to promoting greater understanding with regard to the use of timber, is communication and education aimed at students studying in the various levels of academic institutions.**

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