



Wood use or encouragement policies around the world

1997 – Finland: Time for Wood campaign

The Finnish government's Time for Wood campaign, which commenced in 1997, aims to increase the use of wood products, to promote value-added wood processing and manufacturing, to increase wood product export and create new jobs in the wood industry.

2009 – Switzerland: Wood Resource Policy & Wood Action Plan

The aim of the Wood Resource Policy is to ensure that wood from Swiss forests is supplied, processed and used in a way that is sustainable and resource-efficient. The Wood Action Plan is the most important policy instrument for the implementation of the Wood Resource Policy. Over 200 projects, which contributed to the fulfilment of the programme objectives, were implemented between 2009 and 2016.

The 2017–2020 Wood Action Plan was focused on three priority areas:

- Optimised cascade use questions relating to the optimum use of wood and the advantages and disadvantages of multiple use (cascade use) are dealt with from both an ecological and economic perspective.
- Climate-appropriate building and refurbishment his sector offers considerable potential when it comes to climate and energy policy – not only in relation to the construction of new buildings but also when it comes to the densification of existing urban space.
- Communication, knowledge transfer and cooperation. Architects, planners, engineers, and the property and finance sector require target-group-specific information. Greater cooperation between science, business and the public sector is considered necessary.

The purpose of the Swiss Wood Resource Policy is to support the consistent and sustainable harvesting of wood from Swiss forests and the resource-efficient use of wood as a raw material for a range of products. It establishes clear standards and targets for the use of wood as part of a cross-cutting mechanism to reduce the embodied energy and carbon in buildings, while increasing the opportunities for the local wood industry.

2009 – British Columbia, Canada: Wood First policy

The purpose of the Wood first Act is to facilitate a culture of wood by requiring the use of wood as the primary building material in all new provincially funded buildings, in a manner consistent with the building regulations within the meaning of the Building Act.

In order to promote the use of wood in provincially funded buildings, the Minister may do the following:

- recommend best practices for the use of wood in provincially funded buildings in a manner consistent with the building regulations within the meaning of the Building Act
- advise on the form and content of agreements and other arrangements for the design or construction of provincially funded buildings
- carry out prescribed responsibilities

Throughout the province, more than 50 local governments have developed their own pro-wood policies.

2010 - Japan: law to promote more use of natural wood materials for public buildings

In June 2010 Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery (MAFF) drafted a bill to promote the use of wood in public buildings. The bill became a law on May 26, 2010 (Law Concerning Promotion of Use of Wood Materials for Public Buildings, Law No. 36 of 2010.)

The Law obligates the national and local governments to utilise wood materials for public buildings that have three stories or less. The Law also extends the due date for government loans given to qualified wood material manufacturers and eases development permits for qualified wood material manufacturers (Law No. 36 of 2010, arts. 10-12.)

2011 – United Kingdom: BES 6001 Standard for Responsible Sourcing of Construction Products

The British Research Establishment (BRE) developed the BES 6001 Standard for the Responsible Sourcing of Construction Products, along with an associated independent third-party certification scheme to help organisations manage and reduce the impacts throughout the construction supply chain. It requires a range of life-cycle criteria to be met as part of a construction materials procurement process, including the use of Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs). It has the potential to influence the entire life-cycle of materials. However, as it stands it is likely to most greatly impact upon the production and consumption life-cycle phases.

2015 – Rotorua Lakes Council, New Zealand: Wood First Policy and Action Plan

The Rotorua Lakes Council's Wood First Policy and Action Plan, aimed at encouraging use of wood products and supporting the district's vital wood industry, has three key broad objectives:

- Facilitating and encouraging the use of wood as a preferred, sustainable building material for all projects in the district
- Requiring wood to be used in all council building projects
- Actively supporting and advocating for wood and the wood industry – locally, regionally and at a national level

2016 – Finland: The Wood Building Programme

The Finnish Wood Building Program is a joint government undertaking coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment aimed at increasing the use of wood in urban development, public buildings as well as large constructions such as bridges and halls. The programme also aims to diversify and expand different applications for wood while creating as much value added as possible. Wood construction is promoted as part of the government's spearhead project Wood on the Move and new products from forests.

The Wood Building Program promotes the use of wood by strengthening the skills base in the industry, updating legislation and building regulations relevant to wood construction and by providing evidence-based information on wood construction. The goal of the programme is to entrench wood construction as an integral facet of the Finnish construction industry by 2020.

The program incorporates government subsidies for municipally funded wood construction projects, e.g. housing development, guidelines for innovative planning and development models, engagement with developers together with the client organisations.

2017 – Tasmania, Australia: Wood Encouragement Policy

Tasmania's state-wide Wood Encouragement Policy was incorporated as a procurement policy within the Tasmanian Government Treasurer's Instructions. The policy ensures that sustainably sourced wood is fully considered, where feasible, in Tasmanian Government procurement, particularly for new buildings and refurbishment projects.

2017 – New Zealand: build-in-wood option at the initial concept or request-for-proposals stage

The current New Zealand (Labour) government's 2017 manifesto states that; "All government-funded project proposals for new buildings up to four storeys high shall require a build-in-wood option at the initial concept and/or request-for-proposals stage", and subsequently that; "Due to advances in engineering and wood processing technologies, we will increase the four storey requirement to 10 stories".

2019 – Western Australia: Wood Encouragement Policy

The Wood Encouragement Policy (WEP) for Western Australia aims to support the forestry industry by encouraging the use of responsibly sourced wood in the construction and fit-out of buildings in Western Australia. The WEP is, in first instance, aimed at State Government procurement, and in particular at agencies undertaking construction and/or infrastructure projects such as office and public transport buildings, housing and schools. Other organisations, such as Local Governments and private companies, are encouraged to also adopt the WEP or similar wood encouragement policies.

The WEP does not mandate or give preference to the use of wood, rather it aims to encourage the use of responsibly sourced wood in construction where:

- it represents value for money;
- it provides quality and functionality;
- it complies with other relevant legislation, policies and guidelines; and
- it complies with relevant Australian Standards

2020 – France: sustainability law that will ensure all new public buildings are built from at least 50 per cent timber

In February 2020 the French government announced plans for a sustainability law that will ensure all new public buildings are built from at least 50 per cent timber or other natural materials. The measure will be implemented by 2022 and affect all public buildings financed by the French state.

This follows the introduction of a law encouraging the use of bio-based materials for the construction of the 2024 Paris Olympics complex, which requires that any building in the development that rises more than eight storeys will be built entirely from timber.

The proposal aligns with France's Sustainable City Plan launched in 2009, and also president Emmanuel Macron's drive for the country to be carbon-neutral by 2050.