



Launch of Circular Building Charta

Circular economy in construction: Twelve big players move forward

When twelve of the biggest builders in Switzerland commit themselves to circular economy, it has an effect. Today, too many raw materials are still irretrievably lost in construction. If fewer non-renewable raw materials and energies are used, the building industry will become much more sustainable and future-proof. In addition to the federal government, the city and the canton of Zurich, a number of large private companies have signed the Circular Building Charta.

Despite great progress in recent years: Too many valuable, non-renewable raw materials are still irretrievably lost during construction. And the net-zero target is still a long way off. The construction and operation of buildings and infrastructures are responsible for about 50 percent of the raw material demand, one third of the CO₂ emissions and over 80 percent of the waste produced in Switzerland. If the construction industry is to become more sustainable and fit for the future, the consumption of non-renewable raw materials in construction must decrease and the embodied greenhouse gas emissions must fall.

Against this backdrop, twelve of the largest public and private builders in Switzerland are setting out on the path towards a circular economy. Together, they are responsible for around CHF 4 billion of construction investments per year. By signing the Circular Building Charta, they committed to a shared ambition to reduce the use of non-renewable primary raw materials to 50 percent of the total mass by 2030, to record and greatly reduce embodied greenhouse gas emissions, and to measure and greatly improve the circularity of renovations and new buildings.

In the construction and maintenance of their properties, innovative solutions are to be developed to achieve these goals: renovate instead of building new, build for the long term, reduce material consumption and reuse. The participating companies confirmed this today by signing the Charta at NEST, Empa/Eawag's modular research and innovation building in Dübendorf. They are determined to take decisive steps forward in the circular economy in the Swiss construction industry. They want to learn together and invite other public and private builders to join the charter.



Circular Building Charta

With the Charta, a number of the most important Swiss builders have committed themselves to the circular economy. The Charta is open for other partners to join. The partners want to pool their knowledge and experience in order to promote the development of the circular economy in the Swiss construction industry, in the awareness of their great responsibility for sustainable, climate-friendly construction in Switzerland. The focus is on voluntary cooperation and networking driven by a pioneering spirit, and on joint learning with the aim of taking concrete steps towards circular construction. The common ambition is to reduce the use of non-renewable primary raw materials to 50 percent of the total mass by 2030, to record and greatly reduce the emission of indirect greenhouse gases, and to record and greatly improve the circularity of renovations and new buildings.

The first signatories of the Charta are:

- Allreal
- AXA Investment Managers Schweiz AG
- Building Department of the Canton of Zurich
- Swiss Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics
- Empa
- Building Department of the city of Zurich
- Post Real Estate Management and Services Ltd
- Swiss Prime Site
- Swiss Life Asset Management AG
- UBS Fund Management (Switzerland) AG
- Zug Estates
- Zurich Invest AG

Circular economy means...

... that products are used longer because they are built more durable and can be repaired. It means keeping less material in circulation thanks to products that require fewer raw materials and by sharing products instead of owning them. It means recycling products completely at the end of their life without loss of value. This reduces the need for landfill space. It reduces the large environmental and climate impact of mining, using and recycling raw materials. The lower energy demand facilitates the switch to 100 per cent renewable energies. And it saves raw materials for future generations.



Media contact

Stephan Kälin
Empa, Communication
Phone +41 58 765 49 93
redaktion@empa.ch

Images and video

Images of the signing of the charta and a short video: www.cbcharta.ch

The signing of the charta at NEST

NEST is the modular research and innovation building of the two Swiss research institutes Empa and Eawag. More than 150 partners from research, industry and the public sector work closely together at NEST. New technologies and building concepts are tested under real conditions, further developed and demonstrated in everyday practice. With the two NEST units Urban Mining & Recycling and Sprint, two showcase projects in the field of circular construction have been realized at NEST. nest.empa.ch