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# Challenges Ahead in Building & Construction 2023



## Pressing Environmental Objectives

To reach the climate targets of the Paris Agreement, the Building & Construction sector needs to transform deeply - and fast. 40% of carbon emissions are related to the built environment (World Green Building Council). Furthermore, the construction sector accounted for more than 34% of the world's energy demand in 2021 (UNEP).

Much progress has been accomplished to decarbonize the sector as energy efficiency investments in the construction sector have risen by 16% year-on-year to reach EUR218 billion in 2021.

"The big challenge is not only how we can build more energy-efficient buildings and renovate the existing stock, but how today, construction as an activity, whether new or renovation, can become more environmentally-friendly by using less CO2 intensive materials and methods: low CO2 materials (glass, concrete, etc.), recycled and bio-sourced raw materials, lighter construction techniques, more construction products innovation, more prefabs, etc.," explains Philippe Bourrat, Managing Principal and Head of Ducker Carlisle Building and Construction practice in Europe.

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## Focusing on Energy Saving, Recycling and Resource Management

This is because a significant amount of carbon emissions happen during the actual construction and infrastructure process, while another source of CO2 is materials: 7% of all global carbon emissions come from the cement industry, for instance. Switching to materials and construction methods with a lower impact on the environment is therefore a priority.

"There are exemplary players out there, such as Saint-Gobain, a world leader in sustainable and light construction or Velux, whose ambition is to be Lifetime Carbon Neutral by 2041. At our modest level, we can bring value and contribute to guide, validate, or enrich strategic decisions, select the right methods and materials for the right applications, comply with new policies and deeply transform operations to become more sustainable. We can do this with our strategic consulting and market intelligence & analysis offering – providing insights and analysis on key topics including low-carbon alternatives and bio-sourced materials, prefabrication, which involves manufacturing construction elements in a controlled environment etc.," points out Philippe Bourrat.

However, how can the sector deliver this vast transformation faced with a severe skills crisis, with nearly a quarter of the current workforce expected to retire in the next ten years in the EU?

“For a long time, construction suffered from its ‘traditional’ image. However, the innovations being rolled out including pre-fabrication and digitalization will make construction work less physical and more open, more women and professionals from varied ethnic, social and economic backgrounds, people with disabilities, will integrate the industry. “This will also foster greater innovation,” Bourrat concludes.

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