

Project procurement systems in the attainment of sustainable construction

Abstract:

The construction industry makes a vital contribution to the social and economic development of every country, but, at the same time, its building sector has major impacts on the environment. Construction is a major consumer of non-renewable resources (energy in particular), a substantial source of waste, a polluter of air and water and an important contributor to land dereliction. This paper focuses specifically on the growing lack of focus on construction sustainability in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) public building sector. It indicates some salient issues on sustainable construction and the need for appropriate procurement systems, using the Botswana public building sector as a case study. It addresses two propositions. First that lack of appropriate focus on sustainable construction is primarily due to an inappropriate project organizational structure. Second that a default traditional construction procurement system (TCPS) provides a poor relationship management system incapable of dealing with sustainability parameters. Information is obtained through questionnaires on the dominant procurement system used. The primary conclusion is that the building procurement system apparently in use in the SADC public building sector differs significantly from that recommended in the theory, resulting in insignificant focus on construction sustainability. Salient steps are proposed with a proviso that the SADC public building sector should establish appropriate methods of selecting building procurement systems and formulate appropriate project organizational structures that will embrace an environmental management system