

How do we ensure ambitious national implementation of WLC regulation within the EU?

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Programme

11.00–11.10: Welcome and introduction to RGO's new briefing paper, 'Building for the future: Why EU member states must take ambitious steps in implementing the whole life carbon requirements in the EPBD'; *Lone Mikkelsen, Green Transition Denmark*

11.10–11.28: Why ambitious limit values are important for the build environment; *Harpa Birgisdottir, Professor at Department of the Built Environment, Aalborg University*

11.28–11.46: Learnings from the Danish implementation of WLC requirements; *Albert Østerbye, The Danish Authority of Social Services and Housing*

11.46–11.55: Why ambitious limit values are important for the construction industry; *Peter Andreas Sattrup, Head of Green Transition, NCC*

11.55–12.00: Wrap up

Introduction

- The building sector in the EU is responsible for around 36 per cent of the EU's total CO2 emissions
- Whole life carbon
 - Operational carbon (from energy use)
 - Embedded carbon (from construction materials)
-> expected to rise as operational carbon emissions decrease through efficiency improvements
- WLC regulations introduced in several member states and from May 2024 also incorporated in revised EPBD
- Only full potential realized through ambitious national implementation

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE:

- Why EU member states must take ambitious steps in implementing the whole life carbon requirements in the EPBD



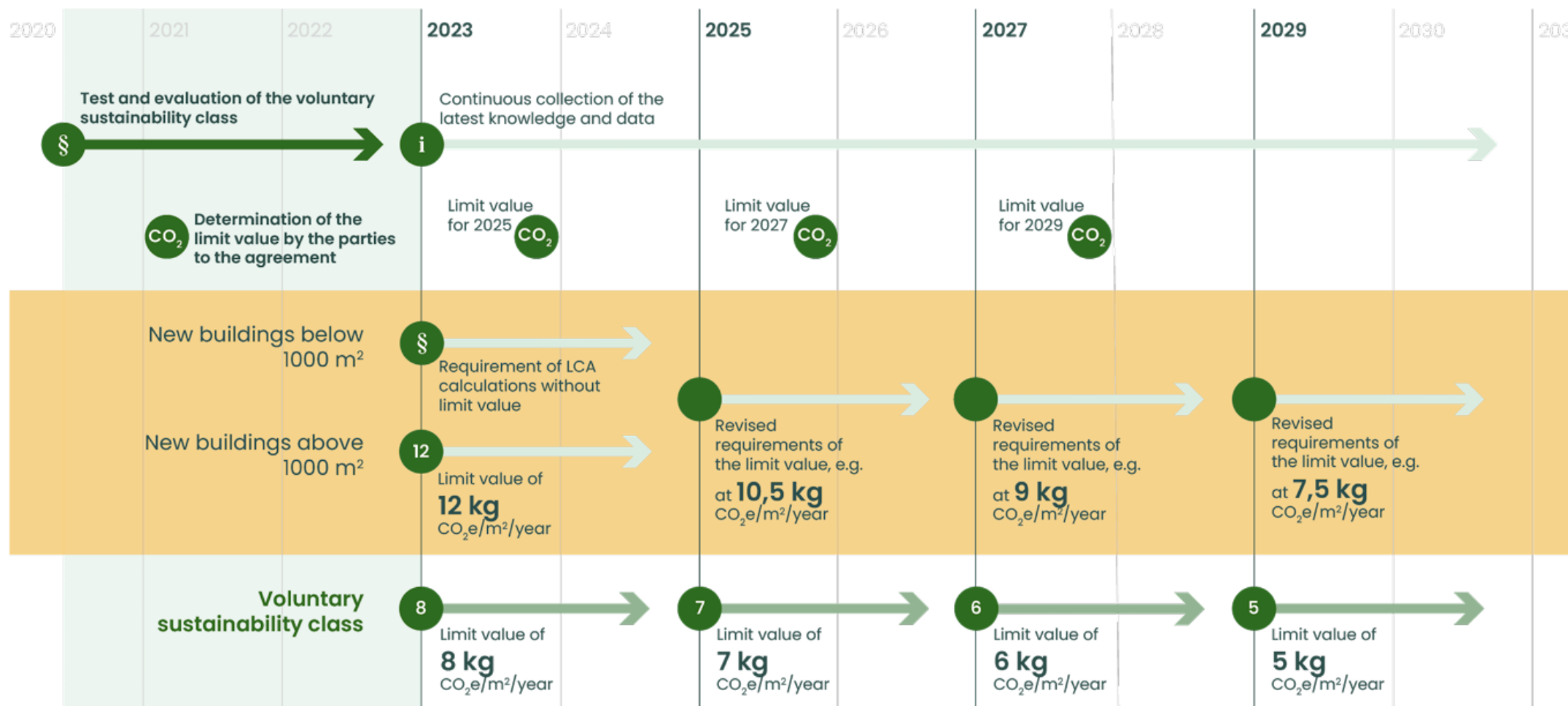
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The test phase

- May 2020: Denmark introduced a test phase for a **voluntary** sustainability class
- Developers tested the sustainability requirements on specific new constructions, renovations, and transformations
- March 2021: A roadmap for reducing limit values was presented in the National Strategy for Sustainable Construction (2021)

Initial Danish roadmap



Mobilisation of the construction industry

- The limit values should be more ambitious
 - The current limit value was 12 kg CO₂-eq/m²/year
 - The average new building in Denmark emits 9,5 kg CO₂-eq/m²/year
- 630+ stakeholders from the Danish building and construction sector signed up for more ambitious limit values
 - Backed the call to lower the limit values to 5.8 kg CO₂-eq/m²/year in 2025 (Reduction Roadmap 2.0)
- Shows that industry already have the solutions
- Ended at 7.1 kg CO₂-eq/m²/year (from July 2025)
 - and thus, is more ambitious than the Danish National Strategy for Sustainable Construction from 2021

Recommendations for effective implementation in member states:

- **Data is a crucial factor** – advocate to start collecting data and calculating the climate impact of buildings from a life cycle perspective now
- **Initiate the uptake of the national roadmap immediately.** The WLC requirements in Denmark, Finland, Estonia, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden show that it is possible
- **Include a voluntary sustainability class** with even higher ambitions in the roadmap. In that way, a carrot is introduced for developers to choose more ambitious paths, enabling them to communicate the aspect further
- **Make reused building materials count for zero** in the calculation until more accurate data is in place

Push for more circularity?

- **WLC regulation can be considered a lever** for more circularity
 - As the limit values decrease it will incentivise the use of more sustainable and reused and recycled materials
- **Renovate** existing buildings rather than building new

Thank you

This work will continue in 2025 with a new funding from European Climate Foundation

‘Aims to overcome existing barriers to WLC adoption through targeted capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and sharing of best practices, ultimately driving substantial reductions in carbon emissions and resource consumption within the construction sector.’

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