Towards a low-carbon building sector: Applying a skills ecosystem approach to the construction industry in Cornwall.

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UK Climate Change Act 2008:
CO2 emission reduction:
• 34% by 2020
• 60% by 2050 (1990 baseline)

The importance of buildings:
Emissions from buildings accounted for 37% of total UK greenhouse gas emissions (2012).

CO2 emissions from refurbishment and new-build housing (in a scenario achieving 75% CO2 reduction by 2050):

Building facts Cornwall:
• 50% of existing housing stock is ‘hard to treat’
• 50% of households are off the gas network
• 25% of Cornish households are in fuel poverty
• 33% of private sector homes are energy inefficient
• Slow stock expansion: 75% of 2050 dwellings already exist
• Second homes: 20-40% of the local housing stock
• Deprived area: lower incomes

Proposed Methods:
The skill ecosystem framework
(Finegold, 1999; Buchanan 2001, Windsor and Alcorso, 2008)

Skill ecosystem: A skill ecosystem is a self-sustaining network of workforce skills and knowledge in an industry or region

• A holistic attempt to integrate skills policy within a broader business and economic development agenda
• Focus on the interdependency of multiple actors and policies in creating and sustaining conditions to develop appropriate skills in a particular region
• The network consists of 4 stakeholder groups: firms, education and training providers, policy makers and individuals

Requirements for successful skill ecosystems:
• Cultural awareness
• Understanding of organisational change
• Knowledge sharing
• Multidisciplinary teams
• Flexible skill ecosystem partnerships
• Future orientated thinking
• Skill ecosystem agent (SEA) as steering intermediary

Characteristics of skills & training development in SMEs (OECD, 2013)
• Better results for informal training
• Main drivers for SMEs skills development are market forces
• Type of training varies for low-skilled and high-skilled employees

Conclusion
Requirements:
• Form strong alliances between all stakeholder groups in the region.
• Strengthen existing linkages.
• Establish clear overview on skills requirements (demand) and training activities (supply) in Cornwall.

Further work:
• Semi-structured interviews with all stakeholder groups to further map out and analyse the local skills landscape.
• Identify interdependencies between the multiple actors.
• Develop holistic, multi-stakeholder, skill strategy to enable transition to low carbon building sector.

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