

## Background and history

The knowledge and the political goals about climate protection have been reason for the initiators to create the association altbau<sup>plus</sup>. Aachen already has been member of the Climate Alliance of European Cities. In addition to the general climate protection goals Aachen is also affected by a specific geographic situation. It is situated in a caldron that enforces problems with air pollution. So Aachen decided to concentrate on one of the big reduction potentials for CO<sub>2</sub>: energetic refurbishment of old buildings. The organisation altbau<sup>plus</sup> was established 27.01.2004.

## Network

The main actor taking the initiative was the city of Aachen. The council of the town commissioned the administration to initiate an organisation with the below-mentioned goals. It was intended to get all organisations involved who are confronted with this subject as well users, proprietors, sciences, craftsmen, universities, energy-suppliers, etc. The idea was to get a good cooperation between the different actors and to bundle the knowledge. So the costumers have one partner to deal with and can be sure to get independent information. In the beginning there has been a bit of suspicion among the members, if the advices given in deed are independent. Independence is a very important aspect. Many of the members are interested in the issue itself, as it represents one main focus of their daily work.

altbau<sup>plus</sup> was established by the following local and regional organisations:

- ⇒ Aachener Stiftung Kathy Beys (private operative foundation promoting sustainability projects at the linkage between ecology and economy for dematerialisation)
- ⇒ University of applied sciences, Aachen
- ⇒ Guild of heating, ventilation, air conditioning, Aachen
- ⇒ District of Aachen
- ⇒ Craftspeople of the district
- ⇒ Association for the protection of tenants
- ⇒ Tenants self help
- ⇒ Mineral oil group
- ⇒ Chimney-sweepers guild
- ⇒ City of Aachen
- ⇒ Public utility company Aachen
- ⇒ Consumer Association North-Rhine Westfalia

The number of members is increasing since the beginning.

## Issues

altbau<sup>plus</sup> practically offers the provision of multiple services that aim to promote energy efficiency to householders. This includes:

- ⇒ Setting up a network of all relevant regional actors in the subject of energy efficient refurbishment of old buildings.

- ⇒ Offering advice independent of interest of energy-suppliers or providers to citizens about possibilities to refurbish the heating or the building, funding possibilities, cost effectiveness of measures and the environmental effect.
- ⇒ Informing about qualified providers in the region
- ⇒ Initiate and organise further training for crafts men
- ⇒ To enforce, promote, implement and publish best-practice examples
- ⇒ Public relations.

## Success factors and evaluation

altbau<sup>plus</sup> has a wide and specialised knowledgebase, which we are able to transfer to our customers on an individually fitted base. So our “lectures” are called Refurbishment-Meeting points, there a panel of experts gives short inputs on a certain topic (Heating, insulation, renewables, ...). Afterwards every one can ask his individual questions.

As altbau<sup>plus</sup> is independent of economic interest of enterprises or retailers it has a high credibility. Also if i. e. a craftsman serves as an expert in a refurbishment meeting point, he is doing so, as a member of an association, not in his own name. It also creates trustiness that all stakeholders are involved and so no single interests are being spread.

The presence in the town and the personal contact towards the customers and the stakeholders are seen as important factors for the successful work. So the advisors also can tell, which craftsmen are qualified in certain techniques, etc.

The good local contacts also result in a frequent presence in the local media. Every four weeks a constant column on refurbishment is published. The word-of-mouth advertising is working very well. A variety of public relations is also a recipe for success.

Another important factor is the continuity of the work. Many customers decide to refurbish one or two years after they had been advised for the first time. After that time, they still find the same institution and the same offer. Some customers always come again until they finished their refurbishment.

There are two mechanisms used to evaluate the work. The one is a simple statistic on contacts in the consultancy and other events. The other one is a biannual sample asking earlier participants of the consultancy about the results.

The indicators used by altbau<sup>plus</sup> to measure our work are

- ⇒ Customer contacts
- ⇒ Participants in lectures
- ⇒ Number of applications for regional grants and subsidies for energy-efficiency measures
- ⇒ A annually sample of proprietors, who have been consulted a year ago or longer, is asked about their investments resulting of the consultancy. The results of this sample are transferred to the induced investments and to the CO<sub>2</sub> reduction.