

Bonn, 13 December 2012

Open championships for energy-plus buildings

German entries to the Solar Decathlon Europe 2012

The decathlon is deemed a blue ribbon event in track and field athletics because of the versatility that is required. Precisely this ability to meet different requirements as comprehensively as possible is required with the Solar Decathlon. In this competition for completely solar powered homes, university teams from all over the world compete with their demonstration buildings. The latest BINE-Projektinfo brochure "In competition for the best energy-plus building" (17/2012) presents the two German entries at this year's European event in Madrid. Adopting quite different approaches, teams from Constance and Aachen universities achieved fourth and fifth places among 18 participants.

The house concepts are tested in regards to different competition criteria, including the architecture, energy efficiency, engineering and sustainability. The comfort, indoor conditions and functioning of the buildings are also assessed along with the teams' communication skills. Of the two German designs, the students from Constance offered a perfected modular construction system. Here the focus was on enabling homeowners to individually assemble their energy-plus homes from modules and then later adapt them. With the Aachen team, the focus was on recycling. In order to design the entire lifecycle of the building in a manner that was as resource saving as possible, the team deployed several unusual recycling materials.

In a brief interview, Professor Karsten Voss from the University of Wuppertal, who was a member of the jury in Madrid, comments on this year's Solar Decathlon and the prospects for the future. A discussion has just started in Germany about possible alternative ideas.

The Solar Decathlon competitions are continuing: in 2013, university teams can compete with new concepts at two events in the USA and China. The next European version is taking place in 2014 at Versailles. The BINE-Projektinfo brochure "In competition for the best energy-plus building" (17/2012), which can be obtained free of charge from the BINE Information Service at FIZ Karlsruhe, is available online at www.bine.info or by calling +49 228 92379-0.

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